

The Beaver

9 January 2007 Issue 654 The newspaper of the LSE SU



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a coalition?

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- KEYS TO EVERY FLAT ROOM IN HIGH HOLBORN FOUND IN UNLOCKED STORAGE ROOM
- IPOD, LCD TV AND PASSPORT FOUND IN UNLOCKED BEDROOM

Sidhanth Kamath
Executive Editor

Lax and ineffectual entrance security and shocking negligence on the part of hall staff were exposed at two LSE halls, in a special investigation by *The Beaver*.

Reporters were able to enter the School's Grosvenor House and High Holborn halls last week without being asked for any form of identification at either hall.

Entrance was gained into Holborn by following residents into the hall, with entrance security not bothering to stop or question 'tailgating' reporters.

Reporters then proceeded to check the hall for flat doors which were either faulty or left open by students, and were in the hall for over 90 minutes and were completely unchallenged during the investigation.

Entry to rooms on corridors at the hall require swipe card access, as do flat doors. However once inside flats, room doors require only a key to gain access. Out of the 72 flat doors checked at least six doors were malfunctioning or left propped open by residents.

Reporters were able to gain access to flats on the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 10th floors and two on the 5th floor.

A room door in one flat was left unlocked and an iPod, flatscreen TV as well as an unlocked safe with the resident's passport in it, were among the items within the reporters' potential reach.

Reporters were also able to climb onto the roof of the hall cafeteria through the window in the same room, and thereby gain potential access to several adjacent rooms through open windows.

However, in the most shocking revelation, an unsecured key cabinet containing the keys to every flat room in High Holborn was found in an unlocked maintenance room in the hall's basement. The cabinet was left wide open and was easily noticeable upon entering the room. The room also contained several microwave ovens, electric kettles and other supplies as well as dummy CCTV cameras.

Reporters were then able to exit the hall through the fire exit route which leads to an enclosed area adjacent to the street. Access to the street was easily gained through a button on an electric gate, providing a

convenient escape route for potential thieves.

Reporters operated in full view of CCTV cameras in areas that are meant to be under constant, 24-hour surveillance, yet were not questioned by security at any point, nor was there any cause to believe that security were aware of their presence.

When contacted, High Holborn Warden Tim Forsyth initially denied that the keys found in the open key cupboard would open flat rooms, but later backtracked admitting the keys were usable, and that the maintenance room being left open was a "mistake" on the part of hall staff.

However he also drew attention to student apathy in relation to hall security, highlighting the propping-open of doors as both a security threat as well as a fire hazard.

At Grosvenor House, reporters were able to convince a receptionist to let them into the hall, claiming to be meeting a resident who was not picking up their room phone. The reporters gave a random room number and after being let in, were able to roam around the hall for over twenty minutes without being questioned, but were not able to access rooms.

A CCTV warning poster at High Holborn Hall
Inset: A 'dummy' CCTV camera found in a storage cupboard broken into by reporters in the hall



HARD FI

FOR YOUR SAFETY AND SECURITY
THIS BUILDING IS UNDER
CCTV
SURVEILLANCE

OPERATED BY THE PROPERTY MAN
MAINTAINED BY SECURITY

OR IS IT? FULL INVESTIGATION REPORT ON PAGES 4-5

Exec censures fall at UGM

Ali Moussavi
News Editor

Motions of censure were called against four Executive Officers of the LSE Students' Union (SU) at the end of the Michelmast Term.

One motion called for the censure of part-time LSE SU Executive Officers Aled Fisher and James Caspell. Another

was directed at Sabbatical Officers Joel Kenrick and Alexandra Vincenti. The two motions were debated in the last week of term's Union General Meeting (UGM). Both of the censures fell however, missing the necessary two-thirds majority to pass. A successful motion of censure is often a prelude to a motion of no-confidence, which would remove an individual from office.

The censures were called for in response to the Executive Officers' roles in the student sit-in of 22 November 2006 at an LSE public lecture delivered by Peter Sutherland. The protestors in question were demonstrating against the appointment of Sutherland as Chair of the LSE's Council (the highest decision-making body of the School), in light of his

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09.01.07

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may receive discount on tuition fees;
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LSE at forefront of growing national debate on government policy towards languages

Rajan Patel
Senior Reporter

Nick Byrne, Director of the LSE Language Centre, is at the forefront of the growing debate over the teaching of foreign languages in British schools.

Byrne was the lead signatory of an open letter to the *Observer* newspaper, published on 3 December, in which 50 leading academics expressed concern over the decline in the number of students taking GCSEs in modern languages.

The letter, which was also sent to the Department for Education and Skills, called for an end to the government policy of allowing students to drop languages at the age of 14. Since the introduction of the policy in 2004, the studying of languages in schools has sharply decreased, with the most popular language at GCSE level, French, declining by over 25 per cent.

The debate has received significant national media attention, with Byrne most significantly appearing on BBC Radio Four's *Today* programme, debating language provision in schools with Baroness Estelle Morris, the former Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Speaking to *The Beaver*, Byrne explained that while the introduction of the



Photograph: Liam Chambers

The LSE is one of many leading universities which have expressed concern over government policy

Government's 2004 policy was accompanied by a new focus on language teaching at the primary school level, this focus has been undermined by the consequences of allowing students to drop languages before their GCSEs.

"Teachers were saying, 'We don't have to do languages any more, we can make cutbacks,'" Byrne said. "Students can find languages difficult to get a good grade in, so a lot of schools were very glad to get rid of it. If you remove it, you move yourself up the league

tables."

Byrne believes that the policy should be reassessed because "it's too early to decide at fourteen that you can give something like that up."

The LSE Language Centre, he noted, receives considerable interest from "UK students who had to give up languages at school and really want to catch up with it now." The alarming disparity in linguistic knowledge between UK and foreign students is a real cause for concern.

"It really is quite sad," he

said, "that so many of our beginners' Spanish or beginners' French classes are [for] UK students. Non-UK students are actually doing two languages...and can speak excellent English."

In competitive employment markets targeted by LSE graduates, whether an applicant can speak a foreign language is seen as a means of differentiating between strong candidates. "English students tend to fall at that first hurdle," Byrne noted.

Some universities are con-

sidering action which may push secondary schools to give increased attention to language teaching.

University College London (UCL) have approved in principle a proposal for a language qualification at the age of sixteen to be a compulsory requirement for all its degree courses.

The proposal was made by Professor Michael Worton, Vice-Provost of UCL and Chair of the university's Academic Committee.

Speaking to *The Beaver*, Worton said that the specifics of the new standard were still being debated, but the changed degree requirements would be introduced in phases, first targeting "subjects where it would seem to be an obvious area." Worton agreed that schools and pupils would need time to adjust to the new standard, with the first students facing the language requirement entering UCL from 2012.

Worton also spoke of the cultural benefits of learning a language and its importance to students' development as "global citizens". They hope that universities would play a more active role in stopping "the decline in knowledge of intercultural issues" through reaffirming the importance of languages.

There are concerns however, that demanding a GCSE or equivalent in a language is

incompatible with the aim of widening participation in higher education. Alexandra Vincenti, the LSE Students' Union (SU) Education and Welfare Officer, said: "The changes UCL has made...are somewhat controversial in that they could be seen to disadvantage students coming from less privileged state schools where language learning has perhaps not been given as much weight."

However, Vincenti also said that leading universities have a key role in "encouraging the government to re-consider the priority it gives to foreign languages in the national curriculum."

Worton agreed, suggesting that a commitment by more UK universities to a policy similar to UCL's would be an "enormously powerful" means of encouraging more language teaching in schools.

According to Worton, other members of the Russell Group of leading universities, which includes Oxford, Cambridge and the LSE, have already been in touch with UCL about the matter.

When asked his opinion of UCL's proposals, Nick Byrne expressed no outright support. He declared the policy "an interesting thing to ruffle feathers and make waves," and confessed to being "surprised" by the move.

CONTINUED FROM
FRONT PAGE

chairmanship of British Petroleum (BP) – a company with alleged human rights and environmental abuses.

Protestors remained on stage with banners and prevented Sutherland from delivering his public lecture. When Sutherland eventually joined the stage to speak, the protestors stood up and blocked him from the audience. The lecture was subsequently moved to the New Theatre, where reporters from *The Beaver* and *PuLSEfm* were not given access.

Controversy had ensued ever since opponents of the sit-in had argued that the protestors had denied Sutherland his right to free speech following their success in preventing Sutherland from speaking in the Old Theatre.

"Controversy had ensued ever since opponents of the sit-in had argued that the protestors had denied Sutherland his right to free speech..."

The proponents of the censures argued that the motion was separate from whether people are in favour or against



Photograph: John Philipson

The UGM voted down the motions of censure proposed against LSE SU Executive Officers

Sutherland becoming the Chair of the LSE's Council, but rather about whether his freedom of speech should have been infringed upon. The proponents also argued that the protestors had been given an opportunity to question Sutherland, and that they had further rejected a democratic vote of the audience at the public lecture, who wanted Sutherland to speak. They also

claimed that the protest damaged relations between the SU and the School.

Opponents of the censures however, said that the censures were not about whether one agreed with the protest, but rather about whether one believed that censures are the right course of action. It was argued that censures are only suitable for much more serious offences, such as the spending

of SU funds illegally and gross mismanagement. Furthermore, the opponents of the censure disputed the argument that the protest had damaged relations between the School and the SU, saying that the School was aware that the action was taken by the protestors in a personal capacity and did not represent the mandate of the SU. The opponents also said that the protest was not intend-

ed to obstruct Sutherland's freedom of speech, but rather to achieve democratic rights for students by asking that Sutherland's appointment as Chair of the LSE's Council face a student referendum.

There was heated debate on the motion, with applause and cheers frequently accompanying the speakers. One particular issue which came to the forefront of the argument was the separation of public and private spheres in the life of a popularly elected representative. The proponents of the censure stated that student representatives should not be permitted to carry out such

"You cannot censure people because they have political views."

**Fatima Manji,
speaking against
the motion**

actions, which don't necessarily represent the views of the student body.

Former Sabbatical Officer Chris Heathcote argued that the distinction between public and private in this case was arbitrary, and the protestors should not have used Joel Kenrick's office to make ban-

ners and Aled Fisher's LSE SU Executive email account for campaigning. However, Kenrick responded by saying that this error had been corrected and the use of an email account did not justify a censure.

At one point, Fatima Manji, speaking against the censures, pointed out that Heathcote had survived a censure last year despite being involved in the Athletics Union (AU) Barrel, in which LSE students caused criminal damage to the King's College London Strand campus. A censure for a peaceful political protest undertaken in a personal capacity was therefore certainly unjustified, she argued. She continued, saying: "You cannot censure people because they have political views."

Since the protest, Lord Grabiner, the outgoing Chair of the LSE's Council, has sent a letter to SU General Secretary Jimmy Tam, outlining the appointment procedure of Sutherland. Furthermore, sources confirm that a UGM motion concerning the appointment of Peter Sutherland is being discussed by those against it. It is understood that the motion calls for a student referendum.

James Ketteringham said: "The motion summarises [our] concerns and objectives. I hope the motion will pass. I hope a referendum is held. It will be an opportunity for the LSE community to voice its opinion on who should fill this position."

Academics call for total freedom

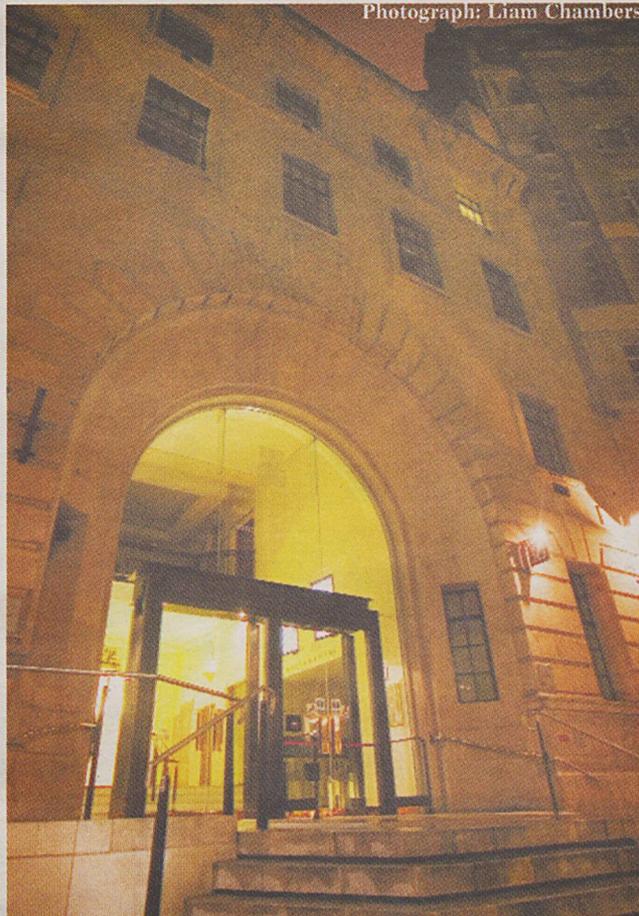
Timothy Root
News Editor

Academics for Academic Freedom (AFAF), an influential group of more than 60 UK academics, issued a statement calling for a change in the law this Christmas to ensure academic freedom in the UK exists entirely uninhibited.

The group, which includes Simon Davies, co-director of the LSE's Policy Engagement Research Group, hopes that academics may become entirely free to "question and test received wisdom, and to put forward unpopular opinions."

This appeal comes at a particularly relevant time, both nationally and at the LSE. Andrew McIntosh, a professor of thermodynamics at the University of Leeds, has recently been heavily criticized for his claim that the world is only 6,000 years old, and that therefore evolutionary theory is wrong. Similarly, Frank Ellis, a lecturer in Russian and Slavonic studies, also at University of Leeds, recently took early retirement before facing a disciplinary enquiry into his comment that white people are more intelligent than black people.

At the LSE, Satoshi Kanazawa, a reader in management and research methodology, recently faced heavy criticism in the national press as well as at the LSE for his recently published paper,



Photograph: Liam Chambers

The LSE appears to accept AFAF calls for academic freedom

which argued that "individuals in wealthier and more egalitarian societies live longer and stay healthier not because they are wealthier or more egalitarian but because they are more

intelligent."

Critics of Kanazawa included Professor George Gaskell, Head of the LSE's Methodology Unit, who argued that "there are serious method-

ological flaws in the paper", ultimately warning that it should be taken "with a bowl, not just a pinch, of salt". Students at the School also spoke out against Kanazawa's work with some students attempting to publicly condemn him at the Union General Meeting (UGM) of the LSE Students' Union (SU).

Kanazawa recently publicly defended himself last December in the Times Higher Education Supplement. He argued: "Academic freedom must be upheld, not because it is an inalienable, God-given right of all scientists, but because it is the best way to attain the truth. Sunlight is the best disinfectant...The only responsibility that scientists have is to the truth. Scientists are not responsible for the potential or actual consequences of the knowledge they create."

The LSE, having not officially intervened or publicly renounced Kanazawa's research, appears to have behaved in accord with AFAF demands. Under its Codes of Practice on Free Speech, the LSE outlines its policy that restricting the academic voice, whether in lectures or published material, does constitute a violation of free speech, also according to UN and EU law cited in the Codes.

Davies is quoted on the AFAF website as saying: "I'm deeply worried about the number of academics who flee in terror at the slightest wisp of

controversy. Rather than engage the world in a spirit of challenge, too many academics have been sedated by an oppressive environment of political correctness and risk aversion."

In its official statement, AFAF explains that "In today's political climate it is harder than ever for academics to defend open debate. Restrictive legislation, and the bureaucratic rules and regulations of government quangos and of universities themselves, have undermined academic freedom. Many academics are fearful of upsetting managers and politicians by expressing controversial opinions. Afraid to challenge mainstream thought, many pursue self-censorship."

The University and College Union (UCU), whose joint president Dennis Hayes leads the AFAF signatories, has warned that this appeal could potentially create further problems for academic freedom. Roger Kline, the UCU's head of equality, said: "We should distinguish between the crucial right of an academic to question and test received wisdom and any suggestions that this is the same as an unlimited right of a university academic to express, for example, anti-Semitic, homophobic or misogynist abuse where they were using a position of authority to bully students or staff, or potentially breach the duty of care that universities have towards students or staff."



Union Jack

Happy new year everyone from your beloved Uncle Jack! However more important than your anonymous interlocutor's festive felicitations is this announcement... 'God is a Green'. As Carys Heathcote (They could share monogrammed towels) rose to de-cry the Green infidels, who had the tenacity to state that they'd rather drown Peter Sutherland in British Petroleum than talk to him, the microphone crackled. Mrs Heathcote's waffle was cut into by something that sounded loosely like Radio 3. 'It's a Caspell Conspiracy', someone cried. Jack fears it was divine intervention.

Aside from this sporadic deity-based episode; Balls-Up O'Brien assured that her 'last involvement in SU politics' (Jack really hopes so) was a wholly Godless affair. Her continuous use of expletives made her seem like a 60's comic on a heroin high. However her liberal use of language was juxtaposed with her 'John Reid-esque' exclusionary style of governance. Four people were thrown from the room and Jack lost count at the amount of ASBO's (Warnings) that Dung-Face O'Brien handed out. Jack's going to miss her - He'll need another hack to mock from now on.

That person may well be 'B' Over Biggs' (BOB for short). Fighting against his ex-co-editor 'Fat-head Manji' he tried to censure the noble Greens. However Dilhole, Green Ken, and Cesspit had providence on their side and BOB spent most of his speech trying to convince Louise Gobinson that he hadn't copied his argument from 'the Economist'.

It looks like BOB's political days in the SU are over. However that need not stop him. After all it hasn't stopped Matt Sinclair from turning up to celebrate his 'Diamond Anniversary' with the LSE SU at the UGM. Legend has it that diamonds are forever. Alas Sinclair is long past his sell-by-date and accordingly his presence repulsed even his once wowed Tory fledglings. In the words of his idol, Maggie Thatcher, 'Get a job you bum'.

Sinclair's one worthwhile contribution to the proceedings was to shake the hand of keeper creator, Rhys Smeggy. Smeggy insisted that that we join him in assuring that someone wear a pointy hat, cape and silent point at the paper offenders. His sole objective? To assure someone looks like a total fool at each UGM. Jack has three words for Smeggy - C&S.

Yet each new year must begin with an honour from the one gone past. Jack presents this honour to our very own Comical Ali. The Dewj Bag wins the 'Jack's Services to Irony Award 2006'. He stood before the jeering mob, greasy charm on stand by, to oppose keeper creation. He told us that to create a position which has no use, nor function to the Union would demean the Union and waste sabbatical time. Don't look now Ali but Jack has the feeling you've just mass-debated your own demise. Maybe he'll have better luck next year?

Bankside House ground floor burgled

Ali Moussavi
News Editor

A room in Bankside House was burgled prior to the start of term last Thursday night.

CCTV confirmed after the incident that a man on a bicycle opened the window of a first floor room from outside and entered for approximately a minute stealing a mobile phone.

The incident occurred around midnight, when the student occupier of the room left the window tilted slightly open and the closed the curtains to leave the room and take a shower. The Bankside House windows are often left tilted open at the top, but seem out of the reach of someone standing at street-level outside.

The burglar rode by on his bicycle once before returning

Photograph: Liam Chambers



The street which the window looks onto lacks lighting

to the site and managing to open the window fully. The closed curtains suggest that the burglar was unsure whether the room was occupied and therefore it is suspected that he peered through to check before entering.

"The incident occurred around midnight, when the student occupier of the room left the window tilted slightly open and the closed the curtains to leave the room and take a shower."

The burglar stole the mobile phone but left too soon to search for other items of value. The student occupier was not in possession of a laptop, and so the burglar is assumed to have had difficulty in finding other items to steal.

The burglary was only realized approximately two hours after the incident when the student noticed her missing phone. After finding a broken piece of the window mechanism on the floor of her bedroom, she opened the curtains to find that the window had been opened fully.

Bankside House security suspects that the window was too high to enter from street-

level and so it is possible that the burglar used his bicycle to elevate himself.

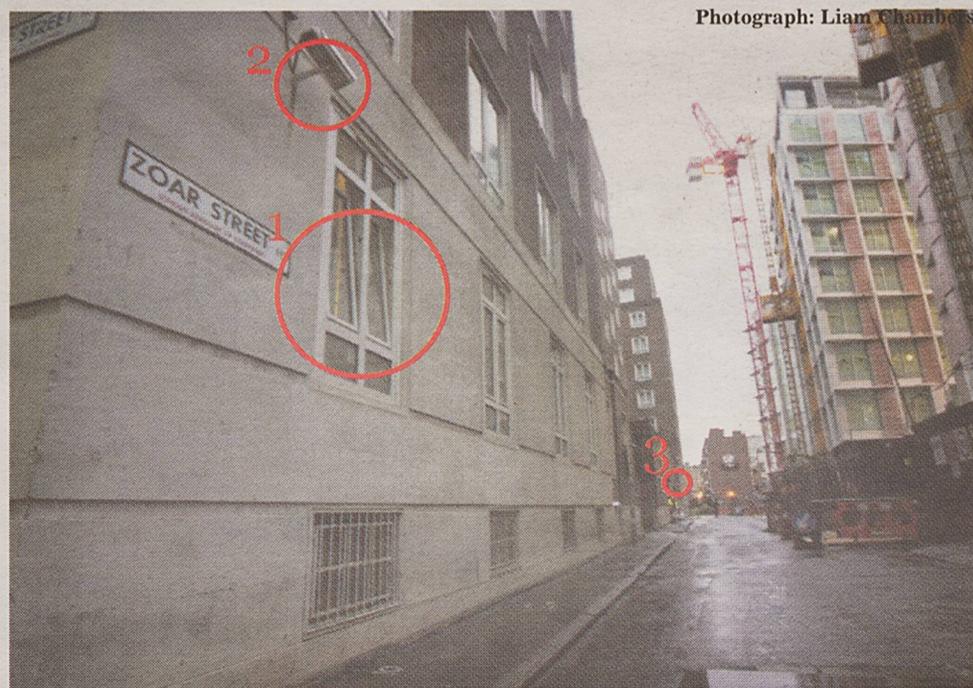
CCTV was placed at too far a distance to obtain clear identification of the burglar and this problem was compounded by the absence of street lighting on that particular side of Bankside.

The student indicated that Bankside House security "could not have been more helpful...We asked to look through CCTV and he did it there and then for us. In the morning as well, reception was really helpful with police and checking to ensure maintenance fixed my window...It is

something that Banksiders living on the ground floor need to be aware of."

The next morning a letter was written to ground floor residents of Bankside House warning students to close their windows when leaving the room and not leaving valuables unattended.

Photograph: Liam Chambers



- 1.) This was the window that the burglar entered to gain access to the room.
- 2.) This CCTV camera was unable to obtain a clear sighting of the burglar due to its angle and proximity in relation to the window.
- 3.) After the incident, the footage from this CCTV camera was used to identify that the burglar had entered the premises.

The absence of street lighting on this road made it even harder for the CCTV cameras to identify the burglar.

Hall security is "wat

On 3 January 2007 four reporters from *The Beaver* walked into security for over an hour and a half, they gained access to

1



The entrance of High Holborn: Despite supposedly needing to swipe a pre-programmed card to enter the hall of residence, *The Beaver* reporters entered without being stopped or questioned by security.

Keeping an eye

Safe because CCTV is watching? Not with these cameras.



This camera should be monitored around the clock. We take a picture looking straight at it. No one does anything

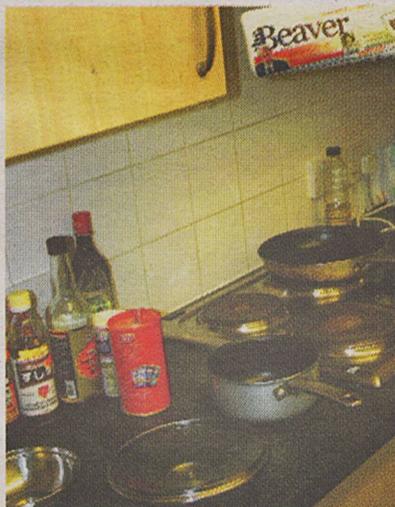
2

Once inside the halls, reporters walked down corridors testing doors to find open flats. Several doors were found to be either malfunctioning or left open carelessly by residents.



3

Over six flats had their main doors open for *Beaver* reporters to walk into easily. Therefore, they had potential access to roughly thirty rooms inside the flats.



Escape



Is this your room?

When *The Beaver* reporters entered one room in one of several open and easily-accessible flats, they found the following important documents and electronics of considerable value.



Clockwise from top left: Flat-screen TV, iPod, banking and personal documents, and passport all lying out in the open.

4



After exploring unlocked rooms, *Beaver* reporters were able to gain access to the roof of the hall lounge. There, they found several open windows from which they could have gained access to more rooms.

5

ching you”

LSE’s High Holborn hall of residence. Unchallenged by at least six flats and several security-sensitive areas.

on things



Escape route B



Climb out of window onto roof of cafeteria, and then over the railing and into the next building.

THIS STUDENT RESIDENCE OF THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE WAS OPENED ON 16 OCTOBER 1995 BY ERIC FORTH MP

BROKEN INTO BY THE BEAVER REPORTERS ON 3 JANUARY 2007

Marylebone
Warwick
Balfour

CONTRACTOR-LOVELL CONSTRUCTION LIMITED
ARCHITECT-IKA PROJECT DESIGN & MANAGEMENT

route A



The fire exit staircase can take you from any floor to a gate at the back of the building. Press a button to open the gate and you are home free.

With goods in hand (in our case, a camera full of pictures and a lead story for *The Beaver*), our reporters tried, and succeeded, in finding an easy escape route out of High Holborn.



6

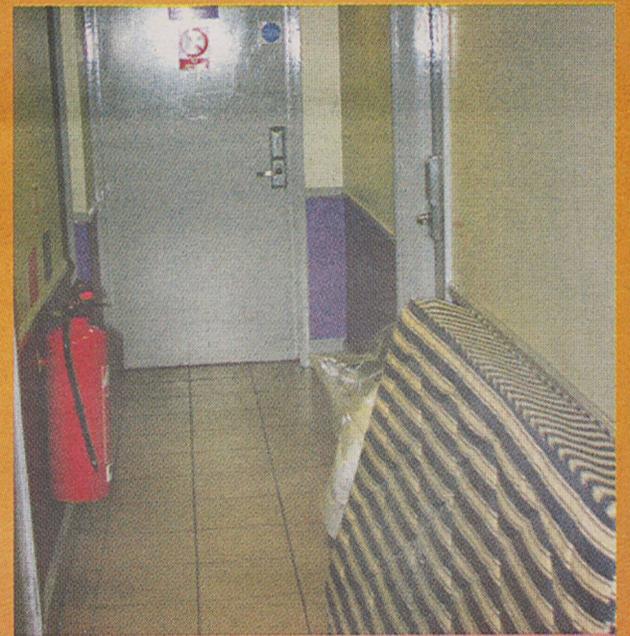
JACKPOT!

The reporters then found an unlocked maintenance room with an open cabinet of keys for every room in the hall. Also in the maintenance room were a stock of microwaves, kettles, and a number of dummy CCTV cameras.

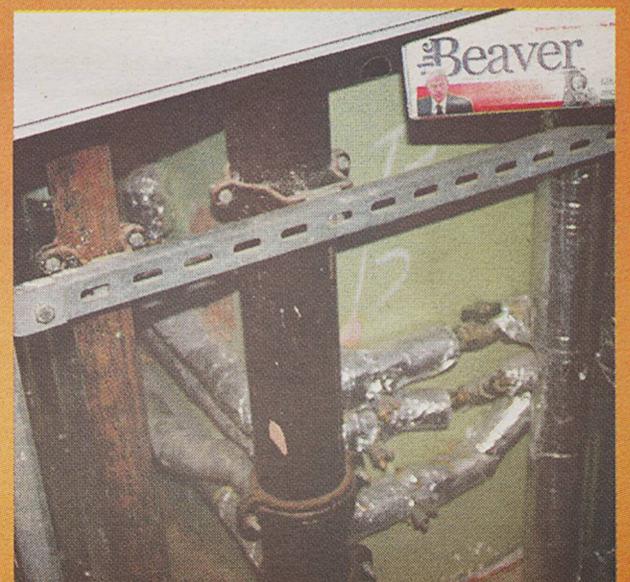


On the way

While in High Holborn, *Beaver* reporters noticed serious hazards to residents' safety.



This mattress lying in the middle of a corridor in High Holborn restricts access to and from the rooms, and poses a serious fire hazard.



Exposed heating pipes lie open in a residential corridor.

Ringmar makes official freedom of speech complaint to the LSE

Laura Deck
News Editor

Former LSE Senior Lecturer in Government, Dr Erik Ringmar, has made a formal complaint to the LSE Free Speech Group about the School's reaction to controversial statements he made at an Open Day on 22 March 2006 and in his online blog.

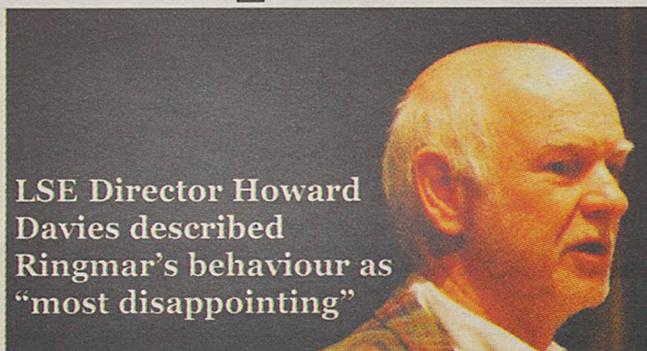
Ringmar claims that the Convener of the Government Department, Dr George Philip, and LSE Director Howard Davies violated his right to freedom of expression according to the LSE Code of Practice on Free Speech.

Ringmar's Open Day speech included, among other remarks, statements that "first-class teachers usually will have their minds elsewhere than on undergraduate teaching," and "an undergraduate today is worth three-thousand pounds."

One entry in Ringmar's blog questioned why more non-British staff at the LSE were not promoted to high-level academic positions. He also posted the text of his Open Day speech on his blog.

Ringmar's comments angered many who felt that Ringmar had damaged the reputation of the School.

Following the remarks Ringmar was reprimanded by Philip. In addition to warning Ringmar about his Open Day comments, Philip demanded that Ringmar "destroy/cancel [his] blog entirely and shut the



LSE Director Howard Davies described Ringmar's behaviour as "most disappointing"

whole thing down."

LSE Director Howard Davies agreed with Philip's recommendations, and in an email to Ringmar he said that he found Ringmar's behaviour "most disappointing".

Ringmar subsequently took down his blog, but later chose to re-post it. He maintained that it was within his right to free speech to keep a blog and to say whatever he wished in that blog.

In his recent letter of 20 December 2006 to the Free Speech Group, Ringmar cited the LSE Code of Practice, which incorporates the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19, which guarantees freedom of expression: "Action by any member of the School or other person contrary to this Code, will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence and, subject to the circumstances of the case, may be subject of proceedings under the relevant disciplinary regulations, as promulgated from time to

time."

Ringmar went on to say that "Philip reprimanded me for speaking to students in my own fashion and Davies issued threats against me for things I wrote in my blog. As a consequence, my right to free speech has been taken away. They have, as far as I understand it, acted 'contrary to this Code' and their actions should be 'regarded as a serious disciplinary offence'."

In a blog entry, shortly after the Open Day in question, Ringmar wrote that "the LSE explicitly incorporates article 19 of the UN Human Rights Declaration in its Charter. This article guarantees the freedom of expression. The LSE must live up to its own rules. There is a difference between a great university and Wal-Mart or the Chinese authorities."

The letter to the Free Speech Group also suggests that the School should establish a formal policy on free speech to address the rights of bloggers and internet users.

Last year, he said that "no one should have to go through the kind of abuse and harassment that I have had to suffer."

The LSE, like many institutions and organisations, does not have specific rules to address the rights and limits of bloggers. Meanwhile, the popularity and the number of blogs on the internet has soared in recent years.

Davies felt that the controversy did not concern blog-specific rules but "whether a colleague can publicly abuse his employer and his colleagues without consequences."

When asked whether the complaint constitutes a violation of his freedom of speech, an LSE spokesperson said: "This matter is the subject of ongoing correspondence between the School and Dr Ringmar so it would be inappropriate to comment at this time."

Since the Open Day incident Ringmar announced he would leave the School after a previously planned leave of absence during which he moved to National Chiao Tung University in Taipei.

Upon his departure, he expressed concern to *The Beaver* that the School's reputation was declining not due to his comments, but because the LSE was turning into "a market-driven educational machine," particularly in light of the recent appointments of non-academics to high-level positions.

Volunteering and part-time students may receive discount on fees

Michael Deas

Students who volunteer or study part-time while working may receive a discount on their tuition fees under new government proposals.

The plans are part of a wider government strategy to encourage young people, especially those from poorer backgrounds, to participate in higher education.

The Government claims its new 'Earn to Learn' programme will make it easier for people to gain a degree while still working part-time. However, part-time students still have to pay their fees upfront rather than after graduation. Critics argue that this is a problem that a small discount in tuition fees would not solve.

NUS Vice-President Wes Streetin welcomed the proposals to reduce the fees of students who carry out a significant amount of volunteer work. He was pleased that the Government recognises the

financial barriers to participation in volunteering, and that giving support is being considered. He said: "While the will to volunteer is there for many students, often it is the financial constraints that make this kind of activity impossible."

Graham Allcott, Chief Executive of Student Volunteering England, also welcomed the proposals but argued that 42,000 students already volunteer of their own free will. He also warned against "a change in the definition of volunteering whereby it is seen as something students do just to reduce tuition fees."

The LSE has indicated that future proposals will be looked at to see if they affect the School. An LSE spokesperson said: "Volunteering can be beneficial for many reasons and the School's Volunteer Centre already works to place students and staff who want to volunteer with external organisations. Over 620 people registered with the Volunteer Centre in the 2005-6 academic year."



Working students hope to save money on tuition

LSE collaborates with UAE for new Middle East Centre

Vishal Banerjee

A new Centre for Middle Eastern Studies is to be opened at the LSE.

The project has been agreed upon by the LSE and the Emirates Foundation, the philanthropic organisation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Also present at the agreement were Prime Minister Tony Blair and the UAE Minister for Economy Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi. Signing the proposal at Zayed University was LSE Director Howard Davies and Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, managing director of the Emirates Foundation.

Al Sayegh welcomed the agreement, saying: "The Emirates Foundation is investing in the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies because we believe the UAE and countries of the region will benefit from research and analysis conducted at the LSE. We are also eager to support initiatives which bring tangible benefits to UAE students, in this case those students interested in pursuing further studies in the UK."

The Emirates Foundation has considered naming the main lecture theatre within the building the Sheikh Zayed Lecture Theatre, after the former ruler of Abu Dhabi who died in 2004, a proposal that will cost £2.5 million. However, the final amount spent on the centre by the Foundation is estimated to reach £9 million.

Both sides of the project

have reached agreement that social science research centres of this kind would enable the Middle East as a region to understand some of its modern day political, economic and social issues, and would be in a better position to tackle them.

The project will specifically target young students from the

£9 million

- estimated endowment of the Emirates Foundation

UAE and other countries within the region, in the hope that they will come to the UK in order to pursue their academic interests at an undergraduate and post-graduate level. The LSE currently has 54 undergraduates, 111 postgraduates and 1,400 alumni from the Middle East.

Howard Davies enthusiastically greeted the centre, saying he was "most grateful to the Foundation for its support, which will get our centre off to a flying start. And we look forward to working closely with the Foundation to try to increase the flow of well-qualified students from the UAE to the UK in general and to LSE in particular."

Professor Fred Halliday of the International Relations Department at the LSE, is the

director designate of the centre for Middle Eastern Studies, although the Emirates Foundation have themselves consented to endow a new chair. The Foundation has also agreed to aid and finance conferences and publications, both of which will be designed to expose the work being done in the UK throughout the Middle East.

The two governments involved in this collaboration have also been enthusiastic towards the centre, saying that "this agreement will have an important role in continuing to develop both academic excellence and mutual exchange and understanding between our young people."

In a speech to business leaders in Dubai, Tony Blair said: "I have agreed in my talks with Their Highness, the President, the Prime Minister and the Crown Prince that we shall be establishing greater educational and traditional exchange. Yesterday, I was present at the signature and agreement between the London School of Economics and the Emirates Foundation on the establishment of the Sheikh Zayed Chair in Regional studies at the LSE's new Middle East Centre, alongside a programme of educational exchange and training in both countries."

The Centre for Middle Eastern Studies will be established at the LSE in 2007, having a location on the central campus itself.

Treasury economist set to return to LSE for Patel Chair

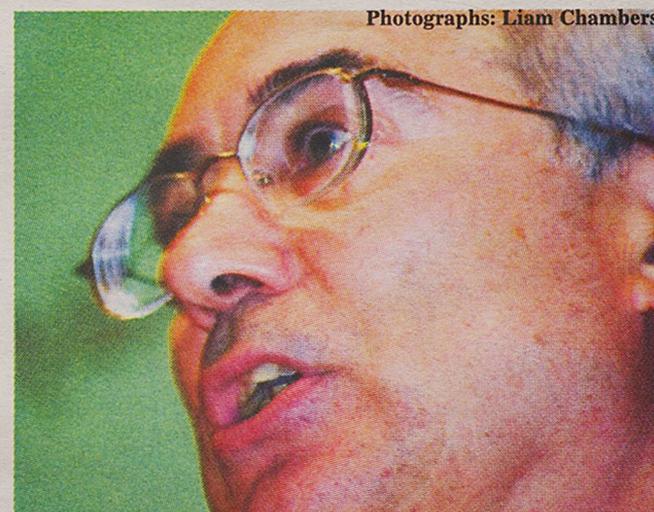
Patrick Cullen
Senior Reporter

Sir Nicholas Stern, economist and author of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, is to become the LSE's first holder of the IG Patel Chair, and with it the Director of the School's new Asia Research Centre and its India unit.

The new position is named in honour of the ninth director of the School from 1984 to 1990. Dr IG Patel, who died in July 2005, was referred to by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as "not only a good Economic Advisor, a good Finance Secretary, a good Central Bank Governor but also a good administrator who excelled in his understanding of the political economy of development." Singh inaugurated the post at a Conference of the LSE Asia Forum.

Stern told *The Times of India* newspaper, "I hope to return to Palampur sometime in the near future, perhaps in the next two to three years." Palampur, where Stern has worked and lived from on and off since 1974, is the location of his new research programme, the India Observatory. It has been established to study the Indian rural economy.

Stern will take up his position at the School in June. Stern is currently the head of the UK Government's Economic Service, and previously held the post of Chief



Photographs: Liam Chambers

Stern recently spoke at the LSE on his climate change report

Economist and Senior Vice-President at the World Bank from 2000 to 2003. Stern will further contribute to climate change economic research at the LSE, in addition to his appointed posts.

Sir Gus O'Donnell, the UK Cabinet Secretary, greeted the announcement that Stern was to take up the post, saying, "I am delighted by his appointment and am sure the LSE will also benefit from his outstanding economic expertise."

Stern told the School that he was "delighted to be coming back to LSE. IG Patel first gave me the opportunity to work at LSE, and it is a great honour to hold the Chair in his name. His friendship and guidance were cherished by all who knew him. Research on Asia and on eco-

nomics development has been at the heart of my academic life. I am pleased to be able to continue this work and to develop and deepen the relationship between the LSE and India."

This is not the first post that Stern has held at the LSE, as he was originally the Sir John Hicks Professor of Economics from 1986 to 1993, being appointed by the then Director, IG Patel.

LSE Director Howard Davies said: "His involvement as head of the Observatory and of our Asia Research Centre will enhance the School's reputation, take forward its work on Asia and continue the intellectual and political dialogue there has been between LSE and India for many years."

Fraud and plagiarism revealed at prestigious universities in the UK

Erica Gornall
Senior Reporter

Questions have been raised about the academic integrity of some universities following investigations revealing fraud and plagiarism at some of the UK's most prestigious institutions.

According to *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 25 UK academics

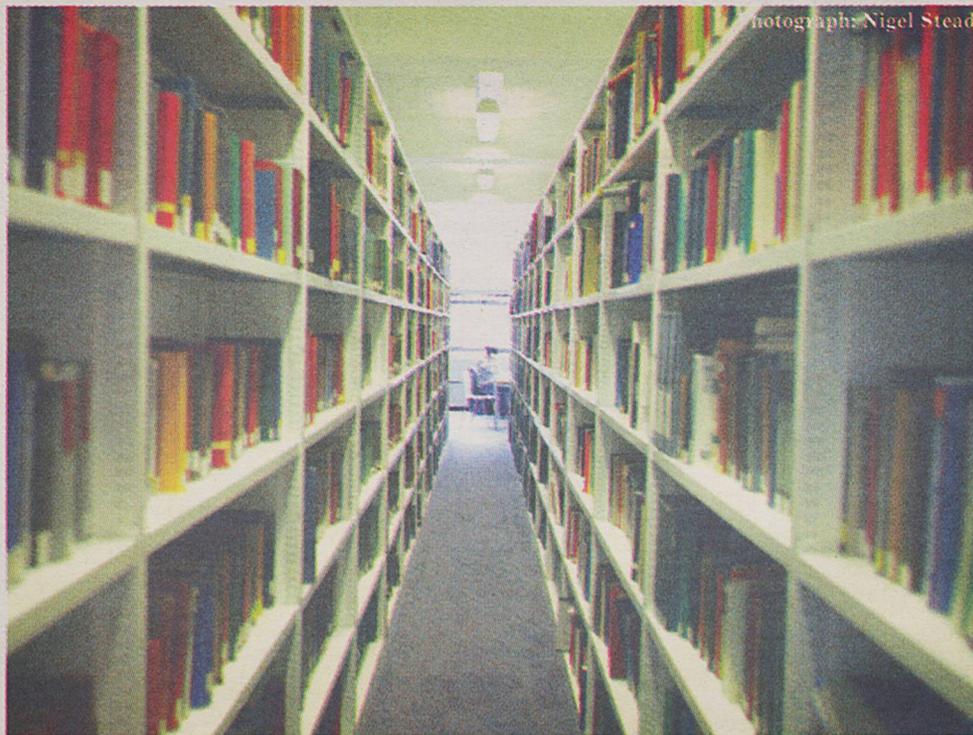
"LSE takes any allegation of staff misconduct, including plagiarism, very seriously... Serious misconduct may lead to staff being dismissed."

LSE spokesperson

have been found guilty of practices which include plagiarism, faking results and the misuse of funds.

The investigation has also shown an increase in cases of academic misconduct. Figures indicate that the number of such cases has tripled since 2003, from nine to 27.

Many believe that the increase in reported cases is the result of more 'zero-tolerance' policies towards academic misconduct, rather than a rise in



The LSE has affirmed its commitment to treating academic misconduct very seriously

actual cases of misconduct.

Michael Farthing, founder of the UK Research Integrity Office, said: "I think it is difficult now for institutions to shy away from taking cases forward."

Some of the universities that were implicated were the University of Leeds, whose lecturer Neil Winn was found guilty of plagiarism, and the University of Glasgow, which had the most reported cases. King's College London had

four reported cases.

However, while such institutions have reported cases of academic misconduct, there is a significant concern for universities that have not reported any cases at all. Reports indicate a lack of pro-activeness at some institutions, including those that are research-intensive.

As one of the most prominent research universities in the UK, the LSE does not appear in the report as one of

the institutions with cases of academic misconduct. A spokesperson for the School said: "LSE takes any allegation of staff misconduct, including plagiarism, very seriously. The School has procedures in place to deal with allegations of staff misconduct, and should an allegation of professional misconduct be made, would investigate each case individually and act according to the findings. Serious misconduct may lead to staff being dismissed."

Universities call for increase in funding after fees cap rises

Doug Oliver
Senior Reporter

Universities from across the UK called on the Government to increase core funding to the sector by almost 20 per cent, last month.

The call came from the umbrella group Universities UK, which represents university Vice-Chancellors. This has come just months after universities were permitted to increase fees to a maximum level of £3,000 per year.

The request for a further £1.3 billion pounds was needed to fund two per cent or 22,000 extra students annually. According to Diana Warwick, the Chief Executive of Universities UK, the quality of teaching and research is heavily reliant on government funding. Warwick said that it needed to be maintained "in order to compete in an international market."

Next year universities are set to receive £6.9 billion, of which £738 million is capital money earmarked for investment in building and infrastructure projects. Therefore, the extra money that Universities UK is requesting is significant despite the organisation being adamant that universities are simply seeking financial stability. Universities UK has said that £750 million is needed for building upgrade work, while

about £90 million is needed to teach more students. The rest would be dedicated to fund teacher-training, part-time courses and to support research and development projects.

Graeme Davis, Funding and Management Policy Committee Chairman of Universities UK, said that the expansion of higher education in the 1990s had been achieved at the expense of long term infrastructural development. While Davis was pleased to note "diversification of our income sources, the most significant being the introduction of variable tuition fees," he expressed concern that "the sector's finances are still in something of a fragile state, and any reduction in public income would put us back into an unsustainable situation."

Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown recently reaffirmed his commitment to higher education in the pre-Budget report, and stressed the importance to the UK of a high-skill knowledge base in order for it to compete in the world economy.

LSE Deputy Director Paul Johnson indicated the School's support for the submission. He said: "More funding is always welcome and we agree with Universities UK's call for the government to maintain its investment in higher education."

Passfield Hall President resigns amid continued controversy

Roger Lewis

Orlando Bama, the President of the LSE's Passfield Hall of Residence, resigned towards the end of the Michlmas Term. His resignation came amid continued controversy over his Presidency of the Hall.

Bama had faced a motion of censure from the Passfield Committee. However, due to disagreement in the committee over whether Bama should be censured, a referendum was called. Bama ended his presidency before the vote took place.

Recently, Bama faced a constitutional complaint by residents, having requested new computers for the Hall's computer room despite the Passfield Committee arguing against this course of action.

After an investigation led by Louise Robinson, the LSE Students' Union (SU) Residences Officer, Bama was cleared of malpractice on the grounds that no official committee vote was taken on the decision of requesting new computers.

However, Bama's actions did raise wider concerns of his allegedly "dictatorial" style. On the other hand, many of Bama's supporters felt that the dispute was personal, citing his status as a postgraduate as potentially angering undergraduates

who differ in outlook.

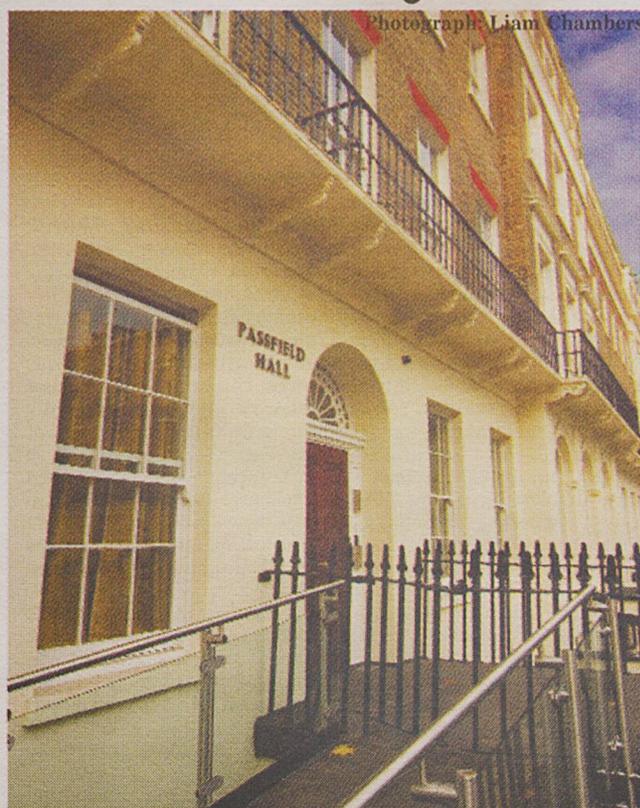
A Passfield Committee member said that most members of the Committee are "relieved" at his decision to resign, despite the belief that Bama was generally popular among residents. One resident said: "Bama was a quality guy who really listened to people. The idea everyone in the Hall wanted him to go is a myth. We voted for him because he was the best guy. His opposition couldn't accept that and that's why last term turned into such a mess."

A source close to the Committee, criticised the

"Passfield Hall loves a good drama and in my view the whole thing is a result of Passfield playing out its own little soap opera."

Passfield Resident

recent disruption, saying: "Orlando has gone and this is will hopefully be the end. But Passfield Hall loves a good drama and in my view the whole thing is a result of Passfield playing out its own little soap opera. The Hall actually enjoys it. It's pathetic."



Passfield Hall has faced controversy under Bama's presidency

Many have cited the controversy at Passfield as being an example of personal clashes becoming an obstacle to effective governance by a hall's committee. Robinson said: "Orlando's resignation saddens me. A replacement will have to be elected this term, and all

hall committees should expect subtle but effective changes during this year to make them more effective and accountable to residents. I am confident the remaining committee will continue to work in the best interests of all Passfield residents."

Are you interested in being a member of *The Beaver's* News Desk?

We are currently searching for new **SENIOR REPORTERS** to man the News Desk.

The Senior Reporter Unit is the main arm of the News Desk.

As Senior Reporter, you will be writing and researching the important stories.

You will work closely with the News Editors, while retaining independence to pursue certain stories and developments as you see fit.

If interested, contact:

TheBeaver.News@lse.ac.uk

and we will send you an application form.

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

James Ketteringham, tells us how we must embrace activism to forward our agendas

Dr Strangelhack Or: How I learned to stop worrying and love student activism



James Ketteringham

We are all members of a society plagued with problems; poverty, deprivation, repression, discrimination, environmental degradation. As students of the LSE we are all members of an organisation with the founding aim of 'The Betterment of Society'.

I have never taken a class in 'The Betterment of Society', there are no lecturers on the subject and there is no degree program in for students to pursue it. Yet this is the School's founding aim. I don't blame the School for this gap in the syllabus. 'The Betterment of Society' cannot be done in lectures, classes or the library. But I believe it can be done and should be done. As students of the LSE we are all automatically members of the Students' Union. I believe through the Students' Union we should be struggling for change in society because we

are able to recognise that society needs changing.

Change is done most easily by those in command of organisations with power over society; but we are not in any government, we are not on the boards of any of the multinational company and we do not have a majority on Westminster City Council nor the Council of the LSE (the LSE's governing body). This means that we cannot commission change by a single order or by winning a single vote.

Without direct access to the mechanisms of power; activism is the way for us to change society for the better. We will need to research, write, report, march, campaign, petition, leaflet and even sit-in to apply pressure to those in power. We must be active to ensure we, and our concerns, cannot be ignored.

Achieving change through student activism is a long, difficult and controversial task. We might not win every fight



Photo: Ali Moussavi

and we will only achieve change in small steps. But this does not make our concerns less valid, nor improving society less important, it just makes it harder. Since change will be difficult we will must work together in an organisation designed to push for change.

This is why the Students' Union becomes important; it is a vehicle for change. The students union has the resources, the funding, the size and the organisational structure to facilitate our campaigns and allow continuity - to allow the next generation of LSE students to carry on our campaigns. It is a vehicle to better society of students; a way of improving life for LSE stu-

dents through providing support, counselling, guidance and representation.

Moreover, the SU is our vehicle for change, it belongs to its members and its aims are solely to serve its members. This means that it can be changed by its members; the best recent example would be the proposals to introduce microwaves to the quad. This isn't betterment of global society, it doesn't end poverty or climate change - but it makes the LSE society better.

The microwave proposal was introduced through a passing a motion at the Union General Meeting. This is the procedure for altering union policy. A motion is not an end in itself, it can only change the internal policy of the SU. But it can be used to change internal policy of the SU to campaign for bigger change; those concerned by low pay used UGM motions to obtain SU support for a Living Wage for LSE cleaning staff, those concerned by climate change

introduced a annual global climate change week. These are only two of the recent campaigns given union backing by the UGM, anyone can submit a motion - it is the means to direct the Union for the betterment of society.

The SU will never end

We must be active to ensure our concerns cannot be ignored

poverty or climate change; that will take innumerable hours of work and the support, not only of those in power, but of hundreds of millions of others. The SU can take steps which bring these ends closer; for instance Climate Change Awareness Week and its support for a Living Wage. Indeed these are small steps, but they are our contribution to the fight.

PuLSE head of production Dan Dolan says the radio can be the hub of creativity in our staid social science institution

Creative Pulse should be beating



Dan Dolan

I think we'd all agree that for all its positive qualities, our university does not possess the most thriving creative community. LSE's student body can be passionate and active. But it's the unfortunate truth that at present the London School of Economics does not buzz with excitement about new music and art.

It's not that the people aren't there. A huge number of students crave a cultural community in tune with the artistic buzz London has always offered. Whilst we live in a city awash with cutting edge entertainment, the university itself does not provide a gateway to this side of London life. I don't think that we should have to escape LSE to find culture, art and music. Whilst it doesn't seem like it now, the university itself can be a cultural centre. This won't happen overnight. It takes a change in the general atmosphere of the institution. I believe that Pulse FM, which in the last few months has developed by leaps and bounds, can be hugely important in making the LSE a more creative, musically and artistically passionate university.

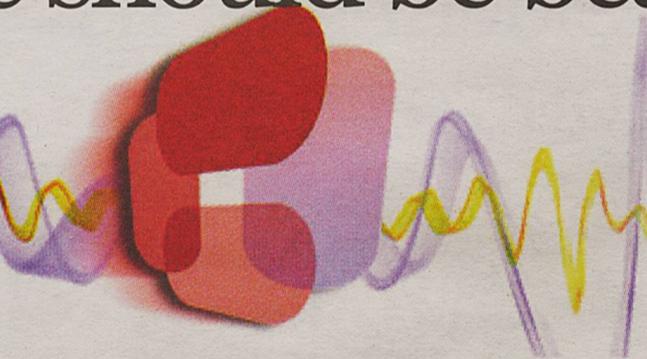
This year, Pulse has committed itself to bringing exciting new music to the airwaves. We now have live bands in the

studio on a regular basis, showcasing some of London's best unsigned acts. Many of us have a love for live music and for new artists. We hope this growing area of the station can play a part in encouraging appreciation of talented musicians, and provide a forum for young singers within the LSE. We are working to connect the university to London's live music scene, and the station's music team works every week to review the best new gigs. The team also does regular write ups of the newest singles and albums, the best of which are put on our regular playlist.

This commitment to great music is sustained and kept alive by our passionate DJs. We have lined up a solid schedule incorporating Indie and

2007 will be a good year for culture at the LSE

Electronica, RnB and Hip-Hop, Alternative bands and Classic Rock. Ministry of Sound's DJ Vigz, one of the city's most successful new DJs, holds the station's highest listenership figures with his 'Urbantainment' show. Close on his heels are Elisa Prosperetti's "Hang and Bang Mondays" and Felix Sullivan's surreal "Big Hits and Nasty



Cuts" - rock classics from a man whose track selections are as volatile as his mental state. There is something for everyone, all available at the click of a mouse on www.pulsefm.co.uk, where we stream 24 hours a day. If you love music, you will find something for you on Pulse.

Music, whilst integral to the station, is only the beginning. Whilst the Beaver publishes one issue every Tuesday, Pulse is played 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This allows us to stay right up to the minute on the latest news stories. The Peter Sutherland protest last term was a perfect example. All hell broke loose as crusading student firebrands took on the new Chair of the LSE council. The nature of the printed news cycle meant that it would be almost a week before the Beaver could publish coverage. The Media Group cooperated like never before, working late into the night to share sound-clips and quotes. The dynamic duo of Erica Gornall and Ali Moussavi, respective newbies at Pulse and the Beaver, made

sure the two offices worked together to give the event the attention it deserved. By the next morning, Pulse were broadcasting recorded interviews with the protesters, along with a now infamous sound clip of the LSE head of security growling repeatedly for journalists to "Get out of his Face". For the first time last term, Pulse established itself as a valuable and up to date news provider and Erica Gornall's stewardship has kept it a rigorous and detailed source.

Significant improvements in the website have led to an ease of access unlike anything the station has seen before. We have recently pioneered a podcasting system which will make key shows, interviews and news available to download online. If you missed Alan Fletcher (Doctor Karl Kennedy from Neighbours) being interviewed live, or didn't catch us dropping the proverbial bomb with the great Tim Westwood, you can just pick up the recording at our website. We are working to make Pulse more and more

Beaver

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thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk
and you will be added to the list in next week's paper.

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

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

The Beaver

Established 1949 - Issue 654

Breaking into halls
couldn't be easier...as strangers can simply walk through the
front door

LSE's provisions for security in Residences are clearly inadequate. This week *The Beaver's* investigations have shown just how simple it is to gain access to a student residence, entering both students' rooms and supposedly secure areas. Unlocked doors and fire exits make for easy access.

Had our reporters been interested in theft they would have been able to acquire amongst other things a British passport, an i-pod, an entire stock of microwaves and a brand new dummy CCTV camera. Not to mention the keys to every room at High Holborn, which were rather conveniently stored in an unlocked basement room, putting every resident at risk. Meanwhile at Bankside, unmonitored CCTV footage recorded a man breaking and entering through a ground floor window into a student's room. In less than a minute, he was able to steal the student's mobile phone and leave entirely unnoticed.

Further, last term *The Beaver* was able to show that the level of security is such that a single individual was able to live illegally in Rosebery Hall and elsewhere on campus for years entirely escaping notice of security and concern from students.

What level of serious incident will need to take place for the School to actually start realising that the failure to secure its buildings is putting the welfare of students at risk? Such poor standards of security are unacceptable and fail to protect LSE students in the very place they should feel most safe: their halls of residence. It is imperative that some action be taken to highlight this issue, and students must speak out against the incompetence of the current security systems in place.

At the same time, students themselves need to take heed of the safety and security advice. In a hall of residence such as High Holborn, there should be no reason that a flat door, with slam locks, should be left open so that anyone can walk in. Central London is one of the greatest places in the world to live, but the reality of the environment is such that we should not be so care-free about our own well-being or that of our belongings.

It is absurd that a student considered his or her room not worth locking when it contained over £1000 worth of electronics, a passport and bank statements. This lackadaisical attitude is commonplace, and we must be careful when criticising LSE security to note that students are as much if not more to blame for their vulnerability. Perhaps this exposure will show students how important it is to take some responsibility for their belongings.

Meanwhile *The Beaver* pledges to its readers that it will continue testing LSE security, providing a much needed test of those systems currently in place.

The apparent conditions
of public life...the protest at the Sutherland talk has raised the
debate over professional versus private lives

At the end of last year, four SU Executive Officers faced motions of censure in the UGM for a sit-in protest which prevented the controversial future Chair of the LSE's Council, Peter Sutherland, from delivering a public lecture. A motion of censure acts as a warning and a prelude to a vote of no-confidence against an elected representative.

The issue which emerged at the forefront of the debate surrounding the censures was the separation of private and public spheres in the life of a popularly elected representative. The Executive Officers claimed that they were acting in a personal capacity, while the proponents of the censure argued that an elected representative and even more so, a paid elected representative, cannot simply draw the line between private and public spheres.

One of the proponents of censure argued that George W. Bush is unable to attend a similar protest for fear that he may be seen as misrepresenting the people of the United States.

Yet this is argument does not stand. The failure of this argument is not because the President of the United States is a purer representative. Nor is it because our Executive consists of student politicians and so the bar of judgment is lowered.

It is because it is unreasonable and unwise for us to expect more from our elected representatives than we expect from ourselves. We all have private lives. Why shouldn't are leaders have them? A fictional US Presidential candidate from a popular TV show once said, "We cling to this fantasy that there's a perfect life and that our leaders should embody it. But if we expect our leaders to live on some higher moral plane than the rest of us, well we're just asking to be deceived."

It is unwise to assume that our leaders are different from us. But further to that, to think that they embody our values which include a separation of private and public spheres of life, is the very essence of a truly representative culture.

Our leaders should be judged in a professional capacity, based on what we elected them to do. We should be proud that we have elected officials who not only hold views, but are willing to express them despite their negative political impact - namely censure.

The Beaver would like to apologise for three articles published last term that were in whole or in part copied from articles in a different publication. The matter has been dealt with and the appropriate action has been taken against the member of staff in question.

Sidhanth Kamath
Executive Editor

Letters to the Editor

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

Religious problem

Dear Sir

As you may well have seen, there has been some controversy of late at Exeter Students' Guild concerning the Evangelical Christian Union. In short, the society, which was renamed from the Christian Union to the Evangelical Christian Union, after a referendum of the Guild of students because of its theological leanings, has imposed a requirement for would-be members of the society to sign what is essentially a declaration of faith that would exclude all non-Christians, and some varieties of Christian. There is an even more stringent requirement for members of the committee. I do not propose to go into the machinations that have taken place at the Exeter Guild of Students, which can be found at www.guild.exeter.ac.uk/ecu, but there are some points that need to be made, which I believe are of relevance to the LSE Students' Union. Suffice to say that while the LSE SU has had illegal dealings because of the issue of paper throwing the Evangelical Christian Union at Exeter is taking the Guild for judicial review at the High Court.

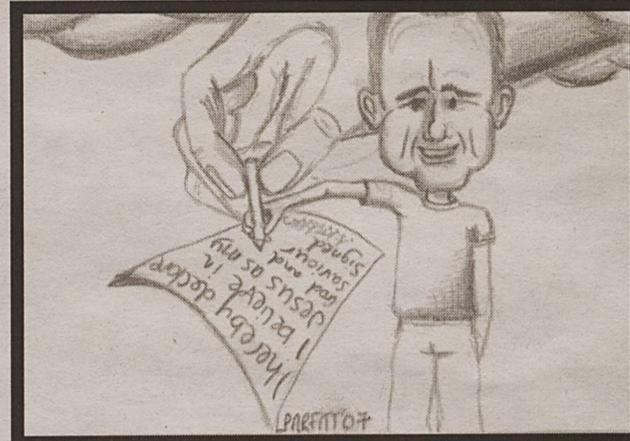
There is a general tendency in society at the moment to say that because somebody's beliefs are based on religion, they are more valid than other beliefs. While I know that one's religious beliefs are a matter of deep conscience, it would be wrong to say that only religious beliefs can occupy that level of conscience, the fact that a particular group holds something to be dear, means that it should be treated sensitively and that reasonable accommodation should be made, but it does not mean that they should receive special treatment. To exclude members of an organisation from a part of that union because they will not subscribe to a particular set of

beliefs, which even within the field of Christianity might be considered somewhat narrow, would lead to other groups doing the same. I would hate to see a situation where each particular flavour of Christianity feels the need to have its own society on campus that excludes all others as much as I would hate to see the Labour Club, or even the Conservatives, Lib Dems, Greens or SWP/Respect making membership of their respective national party a requirement to join the student society.

I remember from PS 102 that forming distinct in-groups leads to the formation of out-groups and, indeed, conflict between groups. I remember similar feelings leading to unpleasant conflicts between the Israeli and Palestinian societies a few years ago, and I am sure that anybody who was involved in any way with the students union at that time would not like to see a repetition of the hostilities on campus.

I find myself questioning the motives of the Evangelical Christian Union at Exeter. They must be aware by now that they are on dodgy legal ground; I feel that they will likely lose their challenge in the High Court at considerable cost to them and, if they cannot cover the Guild's costs, to the services that are provided for the benefit of students at Exeter. It is my sincere hope that this is a genuinely motivated action and not an attempt to generate publicity or sympathy. It is a deeply mistaken way of doing things, particularly as one of the aims of evangelical Christianity is to encourage people to learn about Christianity in general, and the evangelical perspective, in particular.

I understand that one of the problems on campus at Exeter University is the depth of feeling that this gives rise to, and so I would hope that the LSE SU would look at situations like this in advance so that they can be



considered soberly.

Dave Cole
Honorary Student
Former UGM chair

"bids for sabb"

Dear Sir

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

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

Most of us here, at the LSE, have some sort of interest in pol-

itics. So, from this, we all have a responsibility to show young people that politics matters and that they can make a difference. Your newspaper is at the forefront of this fight, please act responsibly.

Ranil Jayawardena
Former Constitution and
Steering committee member

Gerald Ford

Dear Sir

No doubt students at the LSE will have been saddened to hear the passing on of former US President Gerald Ford. Although he has been heavily criticised for having pardoned his predecessor after the Watergate Scandal, ultimately it was this move that ensured the long term stability of the American political system; a system which today is a shining example of democracy and freedom to the entire international community. In the current climate of international terrorism and threats to our freedoms, it is ever important we remember the great men that shaped America.

God bless America and it's friends.

Kimberly McAddams

Arthur Krebbers thinks the LSE should clean up it's act... and it's toilets

LSE: clean image required

Arthur
Krebbers

Restaurants are often judged by the quality of their toilets and general hygiene facilities. If this norm were to apply to universities, I doubt Gordon Ramsey would be very pleased with the LSE. In fact, I'm not sure whether we'd even manage to obtain one single shiny Michelin star.

The criticisms levelled against the school's non-academic facilities are numerous. The bathrooms are littered with hate mongering and idiotic graffiti, toilets appear infected by a chestnut brown fungus and changing rooms feel like tropical, oxygenless cellars.

Though these issues can easily fade into the background, they are by no means trivial. As a world-class insti-

tution, we really ought to improve the quality of our facilities in order to continue to attract the crème de la crème.

The impressions new arrivals have of our campus aren't limited to the academic sphere. The quality of teaching and research facilities go hand in hand with the appearance of class rooms, toilets and changing rooms. Those engaged in sports or fitness will moan repeatedly about the dire state of the changing rooms. Ditto for the early-morning cyclists. Others will lambaste the hygiene of the water closets or the interior of some of the notorious rooms in the XYZ buildings.

These long- or short-term visitors will transfer their overall picture of the school to peers in their home countries, potentially leading to a renewed surge in applications. If we wish to bring about this virtuous circle, we really should clean up our act.

Finger wagging towards students themselves may be a

good start. Not all school facilities are problematic cases: A seasoned undergraduate will have been astonished at the purity of some departmental bathrooms. Most residential halls also appear able to sustain high standards. If we're able to behave ourselves in our



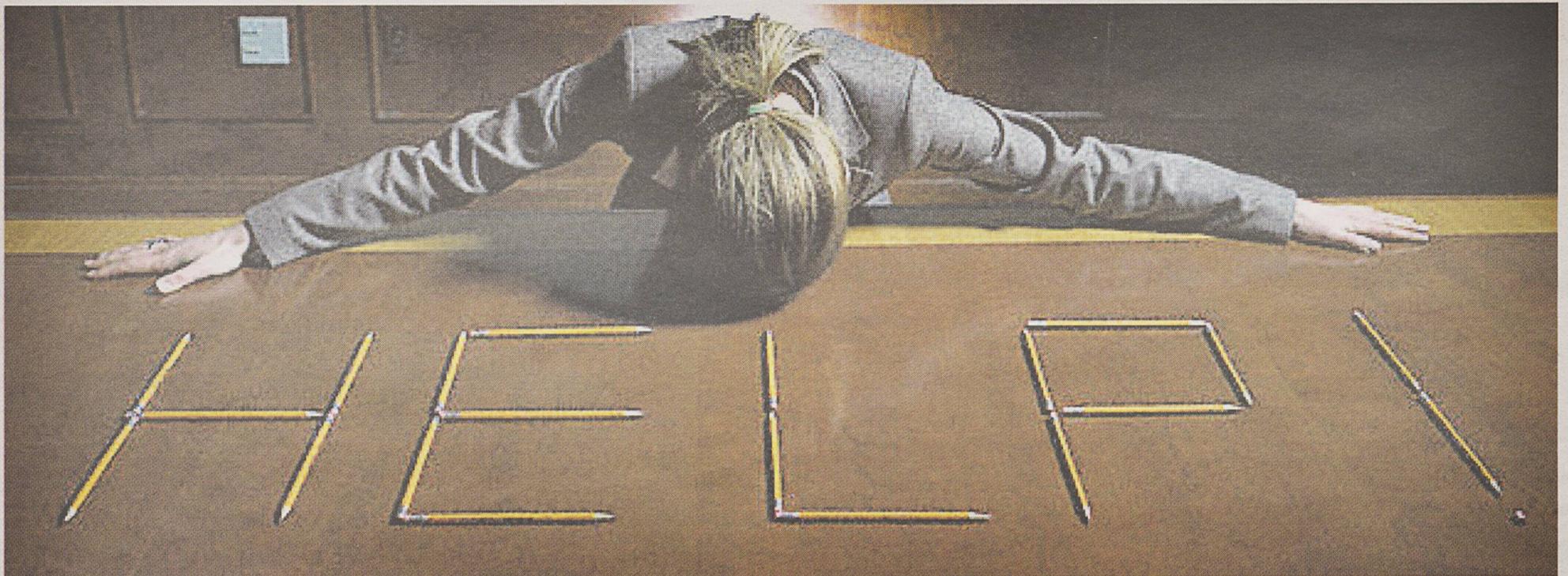
departments and halls, why aren't we equally vigilant with our general Houghton Street utilities?

This is only part of the

story, however. Our campus regularly attracts outsiders, ranging from partygoers at Crush to uninvited, senior Londoners (even some local hobos, so I'm told). The relative openness of our university grounds means our facilities are easy to access. While the majority of 'guests' will use them with due care, others will do whatever possible to trash them. School wardens regularly complain about alcohol-induced rampages in bathrooms that tend to occur on Friday nights.

There is no easy panacea to this hydra. The best way forward is through intensive co-operation between the Students' Union and the LSE Estates division. Problems with individual facilities should be reported swiftly, both by students and staff, and the school should reserve enough funds to enable it to respond quickly and effectively. Only effective communication and prioritisation will help flush this vexed issue down the drain.

the Beaver.....IS HIR



The Beaver is looking to expand its operations in the New Year and has vacancies in multiple departments, from editorial to production to design. Whether you are a third-year looking for distractions or a first-year who wants to get involved after a boring first term, we want YOU!

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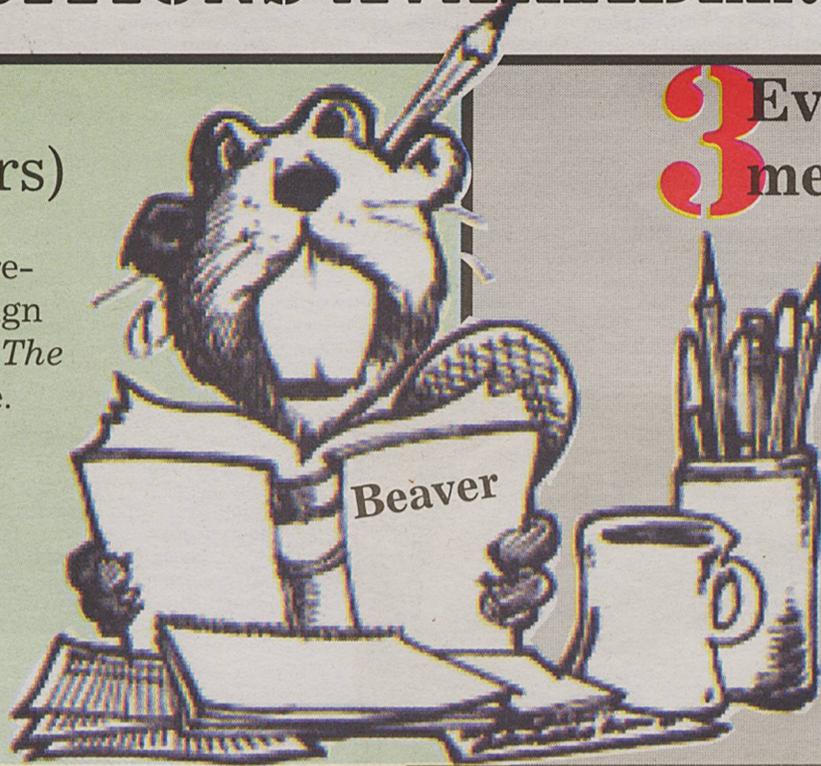
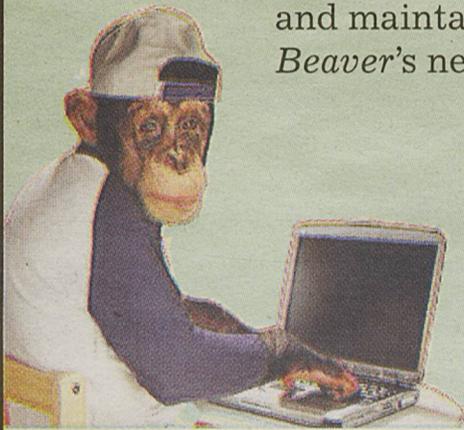
ING AND WANTS YOU!

If you are interested in applying for a position please contact thebeaver.secretary@lse.ac.uk

POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

2 Web editors (uploaders/designers)

The web editors are responsible for the design and maintenance of *The Beaver's* new website.



3 Events team members

The events team is a new venture and the members would be required to organise debates, SU week events (Disabilities week, Womens week etc), social events and the Media Group Awards 2006/07.

6 Sports Desk reporters

Successful applicants would have the opportunity to cover major sporting events (expenses paid) and would also be trained as sports journalists. Forthcoming events which Sports would like to be covered include:

- Champions League Football
- Six Nations Rugby
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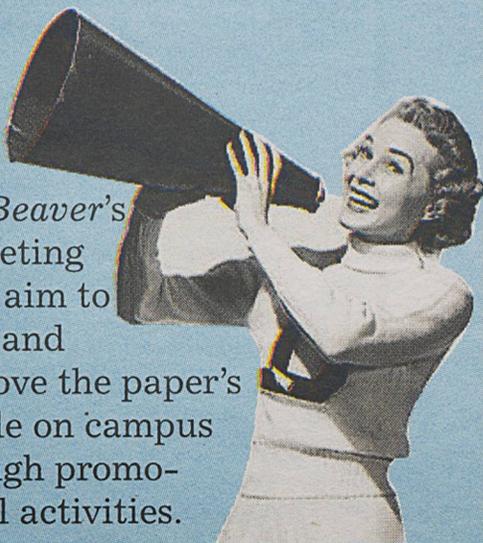
2 Business team members

The Business team are responsible for liaising with *The Beaver's* clients to secure funding. The team deals with high-profile clients to ensure the paper continues to run smoothly and efficiently. The team meets weekly to discuss and conceptualise ideas about how to raise the money required to produce *The Beaver* and even more to ensure the paper is continually growing and improving.



1 marketing team member

The Beaver's marketing team aim to raise and improve the paper's profile on campus through promotional activities.



1 general editorial assistant

The editorial assistant would assist the managing editor with the final edit of the paper and would also help with the general day-to-day running of the paper.



1 features editorial assistant

The features editorial assistant would have similar duties as the general editorial assistant but would specialise in the features section of the paper.

FEATURES

In this section:
Politics/Society/Business

thebeaver.features@lse.ac.uk

Somalia
An untold story of
politics and pain

Dave
Hero of the
working class?



Prostitution
Criminals,
Workers or Victims?



Eyes to the Left



**Amy
Williams**

Whilst most people were welcoming in 2007 and the opportunity to once again create a fresh start at the beginning of a new year, the details of Saddam Hussein's hanging were emerging. From the possibility that the snatched videos and sound clips were taken and leaked out by Iraqi officials, to the abuse shouted at Saddam as he was hung from the gallows, we have seen the ever present danger with capital punishment and how ironically Saddam's death in this manner could backfire on the Iraqi and coalition forces.

It's not that Saddam was the kind of person to keep around. Richard Dawkins seems to think that his brain may have come in use for studying what makes dictators tick - a slightly silly idea from an otherwise sane and rational man. At no point is it possible to compare the killing of Saddam with the many acts of death and torture he sanctioned whilst in power - there is simply no comparison between the sheer destruction and disregard for human life that Saddam showed to the Iraqi people and with that of his own death. We must question whether the sanctioning of the death penalty was the correct way to attempt to end this chapter in the history of the Middle East. The images of Saddam's death are damaging to the Iraqi government's credibility with the Sunni Arabs who may view this as an example of retaliation by the Shia community making the Shia-led government's task even harder.

Tyrants do not deserve our sympathy. In the case of Hitler we never had to worry about what to do with him once captured as he did the job for us when he committed suicide. The Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet was allowed to die peacefully of natural causes outside of custody. Would we have gained any more satisfaction if both of these evil men had been executed by our hands? There is no question over their guilt of crimes against humanity, there is no question over whether they should be punished by society. The death penalty can never be justified by any society whether it is to punish a murderer or a tyrant. It achieves so little other than to belittle the guilty party and, more often than not, humanise them. It brings no sense of ending to crimes perpetrated and advances humans in no sense whatsoever.

The consensus across the globe is quickly developing against the death penalty. In the US over the past thirty years, there have been 123 cases of innocent inmates being reprimed from death row. The neo-cons and religious right wingers of the US have managed to keep its use flowing, but there are increasingly those fighting against its use in the world's supposedly most advanced nation and our only super-power. Florida Governor Jeb Bush and his brother before him over in Texas are particular advocates of its usage.

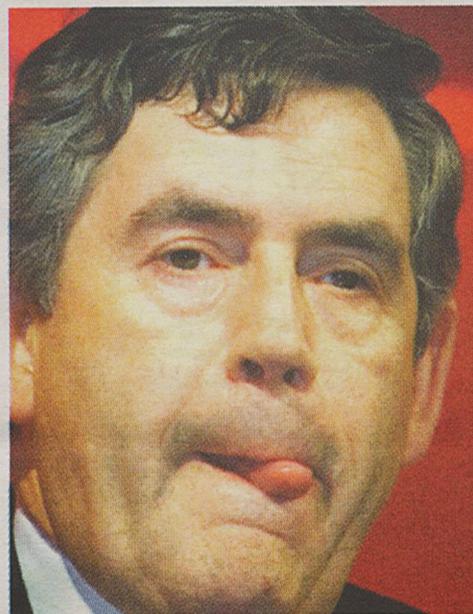
In principle and in practice the UK is against the death penalty. However, the government has so far failed to state that the use of hanging in this case or indeed ANY case should deserve horror. Margaret Beckett declares that we are against the death penalty in principle but we are in fact fine with the actual death of Saddam. If we do not act on principle in a matter of life and death when will we? I do not doubt that condemning the death of Saddam is a difficult thing to do for the government in light of this particular prisoners track record, but condemning the use of the death penalty should be very easy indeed.

Principle needs to play a bigger part in politics. We have stripped away the founding ideologies and principles of politics and have been left with a loose set of promises and personality politics amongst our main political parties. The cynicism directed towards politics is quite deserved when governments fail to choose the right course of action. I praise John Prescott, who is much maligned in the press for his frequent jumbling of the English language, but could not have been any clearer when stating that all those involved in the hanging "should be ashamed of themselves".

the Editors' Blog

In the very first Editor's Blog of 2007, it is time for a brief look back at the last year and ahead to this one to see if British politics is likely to get remotely exciting. Not that you need reminding but 2006 saw, amongst other things; the Cameron honeymoon period draw to a close, Charles Kennedy resign his leadership of the Liberal Democrats, Blair announce his departure, the loans-for-honours scandal, Sir Menzies Campbell take the party reins, and who could forget Mark Oaten and Lembit Opik both ensuring that Westminster never becomes too dull. Two things finally became clear to our politicians which the general public have known for certain, for quite some time. Firstly that global warming should be at the centre of the current political agenda (Mr. Cameron, Gore and Stern deserve much of the credit here). Secondly as politicians tend to be much more interested in themselves than anyone else by the end of 2007, it is almost certain that each of the three main parties will have had leadership contests and done plenty of soul searching in the process ignoring the electorate and focusing on party squabbles.

It is traditional at this point in the new year for commentators to make their predictions as to which major issues will be at the top of the agenda for the next twelve months. It is also worth nothing that current events usually bump most of these issues from the top spots of public concern. After all 2006 was meant to be about, amongst other things, Trident and pensions but ended up with extensive (or endless, take your pick) discussions about wearing the veil or funding of political parties. It would be wonderful, in a liberal and civilized democracy such as ours, to believe that the big issues of 2007 will be funding of the army, Lords reform and debates on taxation (both council tax and inheritance tax were flagged up as 2006 wound down).



However 2007 looks set to be another year of navel-gazing because this May will see local elections in England, Scotland and Wales and shortly before, or shortly after; this country will see a new Prime Minister. What is the likelihood that this is going to lead political fireworks? Almost none. Theoretically the certainty that we will see a new face in No.10 for the first time in a decade should stir up some excitement however, regrettably, much of the news between now and some non-specific date May-June writes itself. Those of you who don't want to hear the news for the next six to eight months look away now. Blair's political obituary will start to be written in the coming weeks and any bold policy moves in the next few months will be seized upon as his attempt to secure his 'legacy' whilst Mr. Brown will flatten any attempt by Dr. John Reid to steal his promised crown. The new cabinet will see Brownites favoured and Blairites snubbed with the notable exceptions of the few bright young things (particularly the Millibands and a Benn) designed to rival a still youthful and still smug, Cameron. Footage of Gordon Brown entering Downing Street and a 10 year old image of Blair doing just the same will be repeatedly shown almost as often as we will hear "renewal in office" from the former Chancellor's lips. Sorry to ruin the surfer in the weeks long cool-down period of one premiership and the warm up period of another.

There is of course always the possibility that "events, dear boy, events" will ensure some fireworks in 2007. Only a few weeks ago Hazel Blears (aka the Poison Dwarf) started a flurry of rumours when she suggested to party activists that an election could be "less than six months away." The idea is that Brown, after having been elected leader of the party and consequently PM would call an election almost immediately to validate his position. Such an outcome was dismissed towards the end of last year as most commentators assumed that having waited so long for the key's to No.10 Brown would be unlikely to take the gamble. However the idea may be back on the agenda particularly since there has been growing disquiet amongst sections of the media, who question the legitimacy of the next prime minister being picked by the trade unions. Nevertheless the plan has the support of Ken Livingstone (not that this means a great deal) and both Cameron and Ming Campbell have been making serious public statements about the possibility.

Although much of the news for the next few months seems wrapped up, already there is at least some chance of a decent scrap before then. Not that such predictability is a bad thing per se in fact it may just be an example of a stable constitution...however it does seem that, in Westminster at least, 2007 could be very dull.

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Labour Leadership Contest; Hang on a Minute!

The Right Approach

**Sam
Burke**



Oh Say Can You See...what a great cousin we have in America. During the holidays, I was back in Washington DC for a much needed break and to see some old friends. But being back in America did something else: it renewed my confidence in the principles of liberal democratic capitalism in the conservative tradition.

Just like every other democracy, everyone knows that America has its problems. The root of this problem was most accurately described by Churchill; the definitive Great Briton: "It had been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all the other forms that have been tried from time to time." America is human (despite what the French think) and humans make mistakes.

None more so than the Democrats. It pains me to say there are more radical Democrats in Washington now due to the failure of the Republican party to maintain the confidence of the American public. I had the misfortune to be cornered by some of them, they expounded their verses arguing for what can only be described as a state-controlled utopia.

No amount of dreaming will escape the fact that utopia does not exist, other than in Robert Moore's great work of fiction. Subscribers to this ever-elusive idea simply fail to recognise man's fallen nature. One only needs to look to works like Huxley's 'Brave New World' or Orwell's '1984' to see it is not long before the fraud of utopia is exposed as a dystopia. If only the bottomless depravity of mankind was confined to the literary world. Unfortunately, history tells us another story, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot.

My view of the recent Congressional elections is that the American people chose to repudiate the Republican party - in terms of efficacy as an administration (national debt), integrity as an organisation (Foley-gate), and judgment in governorship (Iraq). It was not, as many would like to think, a repudiation of the principles of the Republican party. What principles am I talking about? In one word: freedom. And with freedom comes responsibility, which Republicans recognise and seek to encourage. Democrats do not have a monopoly on fighting poverty and social injustice. It is not question of whether to care for those in need but how best to; a belief that the state is not the best benefactor of welfare.

It was Ronald Reagan in America who had the courage to allow the people to regain their economic freedom and to use their hard-earned dollars as they wished. He led American society in building a culture where people had the moral freedom to do what was right. But he led the world, along with Thatcher and Pope John Paul II in proclaiming and insisting that freedom be a right to all, recognising the intrinsic dignity of man, regardless of creed, colour, sex, politics or anything else.

What's my point? America serves as the best reminder to British conservatives, that economic liberalism does work - a free market is usually a good market. Where it is not, let us be imaginative in our proposals, rather than the left's exclusive solution of taking tax-payer's money to feed the problem. More crucially, America's social conservatism as an abiding force in American political culture shows us that values can be protected from moral relativism - we only need to have the courage to recognise and announce the truth. If we don't create the structural conditions for a free society where the truth can be discovered and affirmed, we ought not to be surprised when people turn to the empty pursuits of drugs, crime and narcissism.

So go to America and see some freedom in action. See people work for a living with dignity. Watch how they protect the innocence of their children from the worst the media can throw their way. Listen to them sing with civic pride and a humility to the price paid for their freedom. Pray with them as they abandon themselves to providence. And ask yourself, is there something we can learn from these guys?



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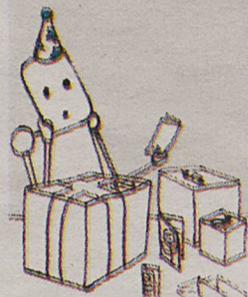


Interview

Milton Jones is funnier and more lively than Milton Friedman

25 issues of PartB

We have been around for far too long

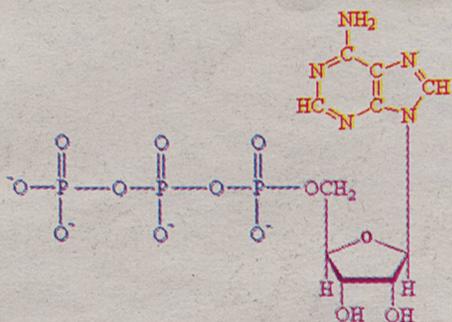


Literature

Michael Moore is being watched a lot

Music

ATP coverage, far too cool for us



Visual Arts

The Turner Prize is a prize for art



Travel

Kisses from Glasgow involve foreheads

Circulus

Milton Jones

This week's cover bitch makes some funny in Covent Garden. Razor sharp one liners rain down from left field.

Where: Funny Side, Covent Garden
When: Friday 12th
Price: £10/£7 concessions

Medieval prog folk-rock band who use a mix of modern and medieval instruments, such as the lute, bongos and the modern bass and electric guitars. They claim to believe in fairies and pixies. Live shows are legendary, but the music is still a bit rubbish.

Where: The Water Rats
When: Wednesday 10th
Price: £6

Stewart Lee

Stewart Lee performs his new solo show, "What Would Judas Do?" for a month. Iconoclasm seems likely from the man who wrote Jerry Springer: The Opera and once made Ang Lee very Anglee.

Where: Bush Theatre
From: Tuesday 9th
Price: £15/£10 concessions

Adem, Vashti Bunyen, Vetiver and Juana Molina

Acoustic sets from the folk-blipper extraordinaire Adem and the woman who once went in a horse and cart to visit Donovan, before benefiting from the folk renaissance. Impeccably good neo-folk.

Where: The Roundhouse
When: Saturday 13th
Price: £13.50 - £18.50

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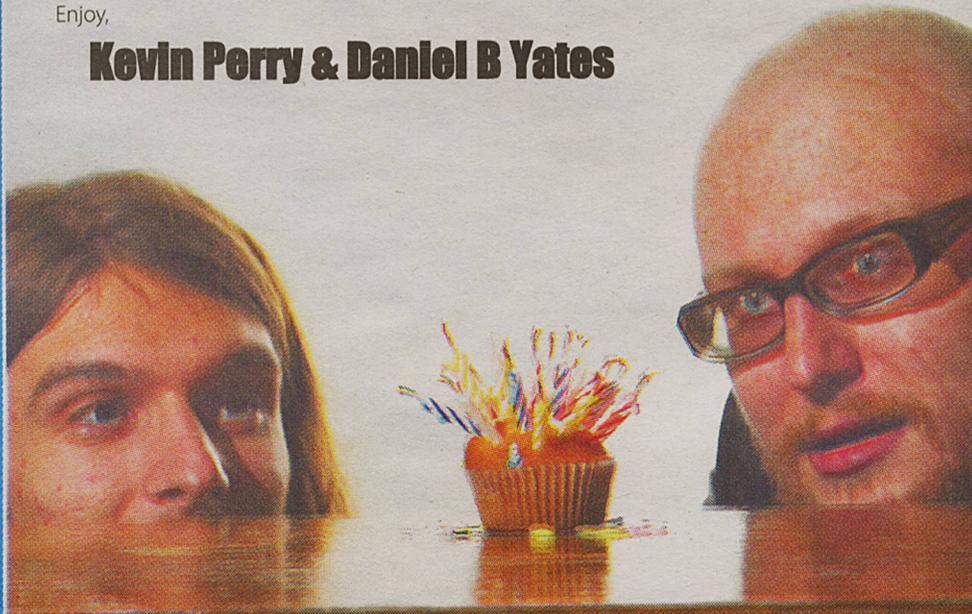
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EDITORIAL

Happy New Thing. This issue is about resolve and resolution. Kevin has undertaken to smoke more regularly and with more conviction, Daniel is too busy breaking last year's resolutions to create any new ones although he has resolved to run the marathon, but only at the point when human beings are digital. Quite frankly we are very lucky to be alive. We no longer care. On another, even more morose note, it is also PartB's twenty fifth issue. As spurious 'an event' as this is we have decided to celebrate the only thing in our lives we ever have any time to do. We burned a cake as we mourned the passing of our normal lives.

Enjoy,

Kevin Perry & Daniel B Yates



new year's revolutions

ambergarrison thinks that resolutions allow us to explore the magic of possibility

joshheller is manic and without possibility

Can you think of one New Year's resolution that concretely changed your life?

I can't. I've never kept a single one beyond January. As a child, the pledge to be nice to my little brother lasted, oh, maybe two days (in a good year). Since then, gym memberships have gathered dust...useless exes have reappeared...lofty goals have languished on the to-do list...all despite my best intentions.

But that's not really the point, is it? We don't make resolutions on New Year's Eve expecting to wake up the next morning bright shiny and new, profoundly better or happier or more fit than we were the previous night. Illusions of fairy grandmothers and instant transformations have gone the way of the Walkman. As adults, we know that real change takes vision, commitment and sustained discipline. And none of that belongs with the sort of celebratory conversation that should come between glasses of bubbly and the balloon drop. Anyway, why would you choose to make a big life change in the depth of winter, the day after you've probably pushed the boundaries of excess?

No, we make resolutions for just one reason: to explore the magic of possibility.

you're not already going to the gym three times a week or volunteering with the deserving charity of your choice, chances are nothing about cold, dark January is going to motivate you. It's never worked for me.

Instead, I make fanciful resolutions - not serious plans or useful projects, not study schedules or fitness regimes. What's the thing you most want from this year? A great voyage? An exotic love affair? Your first tattoo? Me too - well, at least one of the above. Why shouldn't this be the year that brings the best adventures yet?

Of course, fanciful resolutions are dangerous. What if, by some miracle or twist of fate, you get exactly what you want? What then, what next? It's much safer to make mundane resolutions that don't challenge the status quo...but that will probably leave 2007 looking much like every year before it. Bo-ring.

So if you're still having trouble moving beyond good-intentioned vows to wake up half an hour earlier or to drink less (or more), here's a poem from e.e. cummings - an exhortation, really - for the new year:

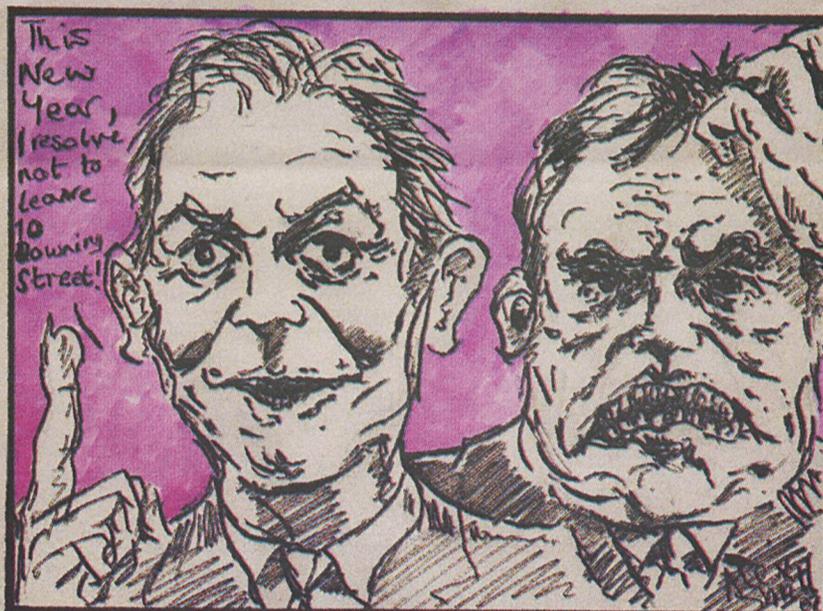
may my heart always be open to little birds who are the secrets of living whatever they sing is better than to

Few traditions exist that are as horrible as New Year's resolutions. They're as pointless as a library in Australia and as irritating as WebCameron. There are two kinds of resolution. The first are those never kept, a futile exercise undertaken for no reason other than attempting to make yourself feel better. These are irritating enough, but the second kind are even worse. Rarely has anything in the history of mankind been more infuriating than the resolution achieved.

Yet before we get on to those kept, let us stay with those not. What an absolute waste of time. I resolve to join a bloody gym. The exercise resolutions are discussed, as families lie bloated from delicious roast dinners, often with a mouthful of chocolate. Stop lying to yourself and to me. Every year in January the gym is full of people who had one, maybe two big roast dinners and decided that's it, this year I'm getting fit. Yet by February the number of people in the gym is back to normal. The annual charges already extracted from their accounts, people make up excuses about how busy they are and fail again to keep their New Year's resolutions. It is not that getting fit is a bad thing, far from it, but it is not achieved by a New Year's resolution, it takes work all year round, not the first two weeks in January. Resolutions simply play right into the hands of advertisers. During the six-month build up to Christmas there is the vast amount of

frequently pointless and for that reason annoying. Yet it is the New Year's resolutions that are kept, it is the people who keep them, that are the worst of all. If you know someone who keeps New Year's resolutions, break their teeth. These are the most putrid and foul people to walk the earth. They make stupid little "to do" lists with little boxes on, then actually tick them when they're finished and write "to done" in a different fucking colour. Their alarm clock is only ever set to a time that's exactly divisible by fifteen. They're tidy. They spell thanks with an x. Even as children their colouring books would have not a single stroke of crayon outside the lines. They iron socks. They have a list of books to read and know exactly which date they'll finish each one. They spout annoying phrases like, "the early bird catches the worm." No. No. The early bird is a dickhead. These are the people with huge numbers of New Year's resolutions and each year they stick to them. "The journey of self improvement has no final destination." They have quarterly sessions where they assess whether the targets for this year's resolutions have been met properly. In different coloured pens notes are neatly written down, "only power-walked six times a day - must improve." "Managed to increase fibre in diet by 18% - well done extra maxi-special gold shining bloody star."

So New Year's resolutions, to con-



On December 31, the year isn't a mystery anymore. It's a fixed narrative with a resounding The End. If 2006 wasn't a banner year, it's an opportunity to turn the page and start over (if only thanks to an arbitrary calendar endorsed by a 16th century pope). If 2006 brought you a new direction or a new city or a new sweetheart, it's an opportunity to expand on that beginning, to see where it takes you.

And that's where the resolutions come in. We don't want to believe that we have no control in how 2007 will unfold. Of course, some things we can't choose. John Lennon reminds us that "life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." Something amazing and totally unexpected could happen this year...and so could something disappointing, even tragic. Any given year is a mixed bag. But somehow that uncertainty, for better or worse, is more palatable in the context of what we hope for.

It's a silly thing, hope - just a little word, but one with immense power. Even cynics and realists, the honest ones, have a tiny kernel of hope left...or wish for one. And what better day to hope for something, anything, than the first day of a new year.

That's why I've given up traditional resolutions, the kind you can discuss at a cocktail party with total strangers. If

know and if men should not hear them men are old

may my mind stroll about hungry and fearless and thirsty and supple and even if it's sunday may i be wrong for whenever men are right they are not young

and may myself do nothing usefully and love yourself so more than truly there's never been quite such a fool who could fail pulling all the sky over him with one smile

With a bit of song, a lot of fearlessness and a small measure of luck, The End on December 31, 2007 will close a narrative richer and more exciting than any we can possibly imagine today. I hope so. Don't you?

food-porn plastered across all media. Iceland even tries to make microwaveable frozen vegetables look delicious (they fail). After a few wonderful dinners over the Christmas period and some excellent chocolate, you're immediately made to feel ashamed about putting on a bit of weight. Get exercising fast! Lose 18lbs in 18 days! Convinced that this is the year you will reach the ideal of Size 0 jeans you make a resolution to strive for it. Your chance of keeping is as likely as a refurbishment of St Peter's Basilica being sponsored by Durex.

There are the ridiculous social resolutions. I will spend less time going out. I will spend more time going out. I will be nicer to people I don't know. As if you're social life and character will be changed by a drunken sentence. Resolutions stem from guilt. Feeling regret about how you're sometimes in a bad mood, how much or how little you go out, you decide to alleviate your guilt with a meaningless solution requiring no actual effort. You have about as much chance of keeping it up as Denis Thatcher did.

So those are the pointless resolutions never kept, made to patch your guilt from the previous year. It may seem as if the above means that New Year's resolutions are bad only because they aren't kept. That they're weak and pathetic and it is because real change is hard and long that they should be frowned upon. That is not the case. It merely demonstrates that they're

clude, are rubbish. If you don't keep them then you're an idiot for making them. Spend your New Year's day doing something productive that you will actually achieve. Instead of resolving to eat more boiled vegetables, slather some goose fat on the roast potatoes. Rather than promising to be nicer to people, argue with your brother a bit more aggressively. To those people who will keep their resolutions, to you train-wrecks of human beings, you must change. You are what is wrong with this planet. Your "proper" attitude and efficient hard work are the very worst thing about our culture. So instead of eating muesli, have some white bread for once. Get drunk on a Tuesday afternoon and lie in until Wednesday evening. Most importantly, abandon all those bloody resolutions you made on New Year's day.

IRRAWANT

keeping up with the milton jones's

partb talks to comedian **milton jones**, about the stupidity of audiences, the state of contemporary british comedy and ripping off his children.

“We’re just flailing around in the darkness here, it’s kind of a metaphor for my career.” We are standing in the pitch black darkness, somewhere around the back of Ealing Studios where Mitchell Jones is due onstage in about, oh, seven minutes. That’s if he can find his way there. Someone has promised us that they’ll find some lights, Milton was told the switches were ‘outside’ which kept us pawing at walls for a precious 3 minutes until we gave up, defeated and blind. Above us looms the dark shape of a fire escape and someone, hopefully Milton, talks quickly and fluently in the darkness. “I wanted to be an actor, it didn’t really work out. I wasn’t working very much, and standup is something you can do quite quickly if you’re prepared to do it. It was interactive and that was the hardest thing with me, because I’d trained as an actor I found it very difficult to shake the fourth wall, but there’s a hard cliff face to get up and once you get to a certain level there’s a kind of plateau where you’ve conquered your own fear of things going wrong and a whole boost of confidence that comes from that.”

Milton Jones has done a fair bit of conquering in his 20 years as a comedian. Timeout, Sony and Perrier awards are tucked under his belt, The Times has called him ‘the King of surreal one-liners’, he is perhaps best known for his string of BBC Radio 4 shows, the sixth series of which is due to begin recording this spring.

“What’s nice about radio is that it provides a different audience, it was kids, it was old people, it was people driving home, which was quite nice but sometimes they’d turn up at a rough old night, somewhere like here or Jongleurs, an old man and two children, and ‘er it’s probably not what you’d like, I’d just leave if I were you’. I still quite like the idea of young people writing in, but it’s usually children which can be quite disturbing, or old people with different coloured inks, writing rambling letters, ‘I’m shocked and appalled’ and it doesn’t really make any sense at all, there are lots of people with too much time on their hands.”

Talking of too much time on your hands, you were a student, how was that?

“I went to Middlesex poly, as it was years ago, to do drama, but I was living at home so I’m not sure it counts. However the thing about standup is that if you’ve never had a proper nine to five job it’s quite easy to think of yourself as a student that gets drunk occasionally and says things, you’re keeping crazy hours and mixing with students as well. But you have to work, and maybe have done some other work as well. Those guys that come straight from university to do standup, they have to talk about elves and pixies like Ross Noble because they’ve never been a civil servant, or been in the war, like me, so they have to have to create a fantasy world. I think students are different now though because when I

was around alternative comedy was more alternative, but now, and perhaps I’m just an old fogey and can’t see it, but there seems less to kick out against. It may just be that students are too busy paying back their loans to have the time to be active. Maybe there is a possibility for a new alternative comedy but right now I can’t see it happening.” If it were to happen, what might alternative comedy look like now? “Well, it’s very difficult to say. Mainstream comedy has moved into the realms sketched out by the alternative comedians of the 1980s so are we all part of the establishment or is everyone alternative? There is an idea that we have, as a society, accepted the cult of the individual, we don’t trust the government, we don’t trust the journalists that write about the government so we don’t trust anyone but ourselves and this may be a way to conceive of today’s comedy.”

“And there is a sense in which the 80s didn’t really deliver. Not many of the standups from that era are still on television, even fewer that have kept their politics. For all the rebellion a lot of it looks like fashion now. The fact that there are only about 6 women stand-ups on the comedy store books, out of 160 acts, I mean what happened there?”

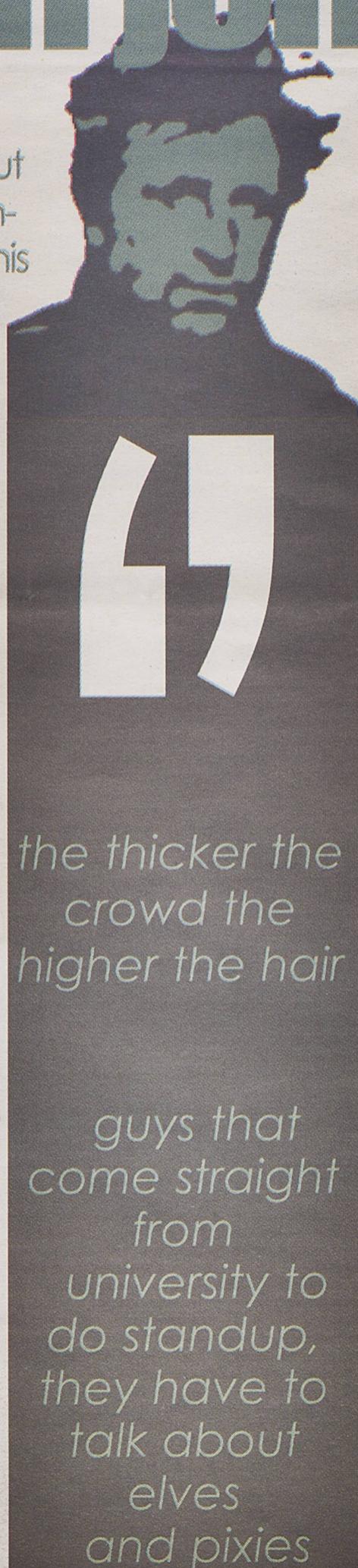
Do you ever have the urge to use your platform to rant and froth?

“Yes. But it’s normally at student gigs and it’s normally things like ‘sit down for goodness sake’ or ‘if that’s your attitude’ or ‘who’s stolen the mic?’ and that kind of thing. But even in the mid-80s, with Ben Elton and co. they were always preaching to the converted, so it would be really interesting for a right wing comedian to get up, not that I’d agree with anything he said, but if he was really good, to see how well he would do.” He pauses and looks thoughtful, “Perhaps in the current climate that might not be such an interesting phenomenon. I have this joke, about ‘tricky isn’t it when you’re in a mosque, everyone’s praying and you really enjoy leap-frog’, right, okay, fine normally, but I dropped it for a bit. Recently I bought it back in gig in Essex or somewhere and everyone went ‘YEEAAAHHH’ and I thought, no you’re probably doing that for the wrong reason, so I dropped it again.”

It’s fair to say that you have quite a well maintained visual image, is that important to your act?

“I have a saying, ‘The thicker the crowd, the higher the hair’, because they need a signpost that says ‘oh, this blokes a bit mad’. And if you’re in Romford and it’s full of stag night, if come in as a slightly middle class bloke doing clever words you’re in trouble. So if you go in looking like you’re selling big issue and ‘is a nutter’ suddenly its far less threatening, even though they are the same gags. And it disguises the technique a little bit because if you think that someone’s quite slow and not really with it you can get away with more... puns basically.”

Do you ever lose an audience so totally -



perhaps you’re a bit too middle-class, perhaps the hair isn’t quite high enough - that they attack you?

“Like any good comic I have plenty of stories of dying. I once did a corporate in Bedford for 700 barmen. It’s a bit odd isn’t it, on your night off getting free food and drink, isn’t that what you do every night of the week? And someone shouted out ‘we don’t get free food every night of the week’ so I said to them ‘How come you’re all so fat then?’. I thought that was alright, but I didn’t realize quite how enormous she was. So she burst into tears. She waddled out with the rest of her table. Half the room followed. The remaining audience surrounded me afterwards, said go in and apologise or we’ll do you over. The promoter didn’t pay me my money and I had to run to the car. A great night out. Another one happened during a gig I was doing at Trades Union Conference years ago. And I used to do this gag ‘I used to go out with a woman who was... (traces curvaceousness in the air with his hands) ...deformed’. And for some reason I forgot to do the gesture, and the whole room went cold, and there was no point in trying to explain it. ‘What I meant.. what I should.. oh no.’ and this old man started heckling me and again I got surrounded and yeah.”

“There are certain jokes that have got a top line, and if they’re clever enough I’ll do the rest of it. And vice versa, if audiences are clever enough they only need know the first line. Occasionally what I’ll do, one I’ll use early on tonight is ‘I’ve just come back from Australia, where I learnt some aborigine words, like the word ‘Boo’ which means return, because when you throw an ordinary meringue...’ But then what quite often I’ll do is pick on someone in the front row and shout ‘Boomerang’. Which is quite unfair, but what it does do is bring up the 20% of the audience that perhaps didn’t get it.”

Like the joke on his Paramount slot, ‘Did you know the pope really likes cats, apparently he’s a catholic’.

“Did you see that on Youtube? I’ve been informed by children that that’s up there. My kids try and sell me gags. They’re getting older now and they realize there’s money in it.”

And you realize their cheap labour.
“Yes exactly, 10p that’s the going rate. Not too expensive... or fair”

How much of your set is written by your children?

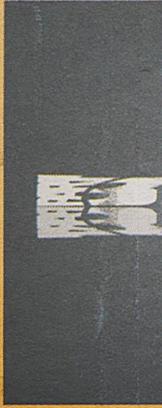
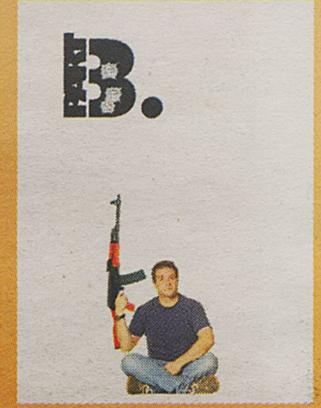
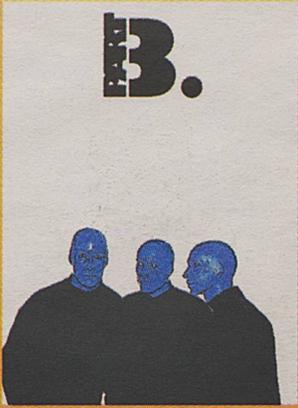
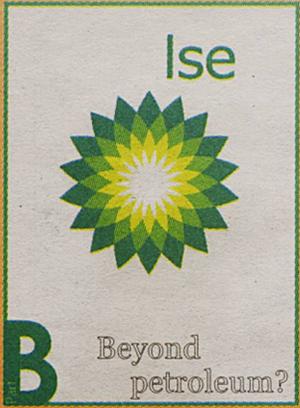
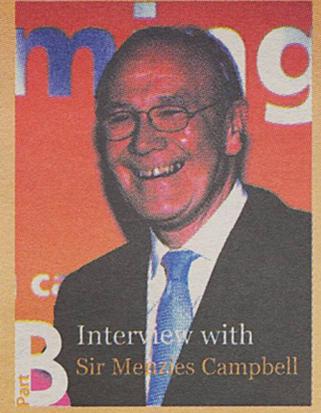
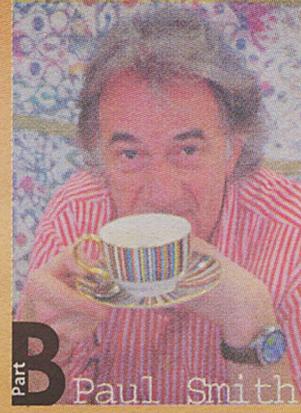
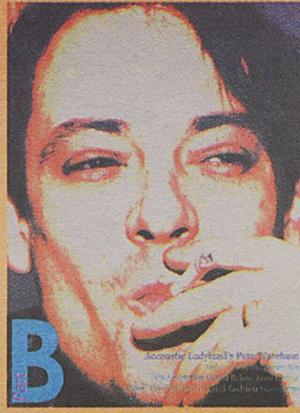
“Yes, well more than... they know. Occasionally they’ve given me good ideas which aren’t fully formed so obviously I can’t pay them ‘big money’ but definitely they have given me good ideas.”

Talking of good ideas a light has come on and we stand there blinking.

Milton Jones is playing at venues around London. His BBC Radio 4 Show ‘The Very World of Milton Jones’ airs later this year



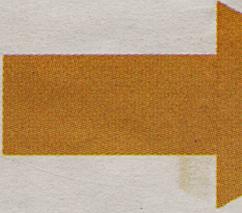
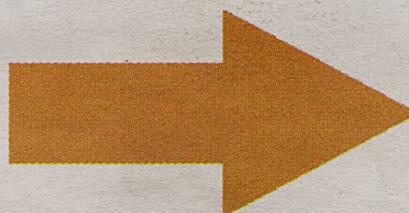
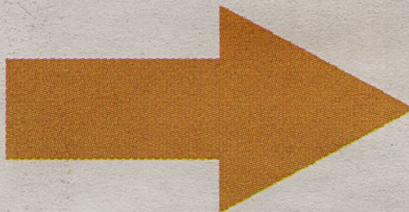
photograph by: liam chambers



25,000,000 years ago in the Eastern African forests Proconsul, an early form of monkey, emerged

250,000 years ago Peking Man, an example of *Homo Erectus*

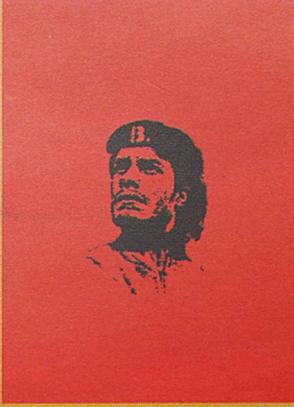
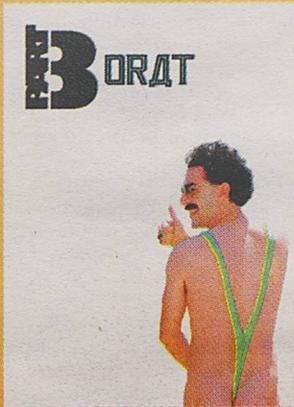
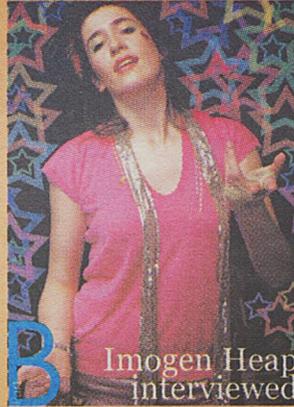
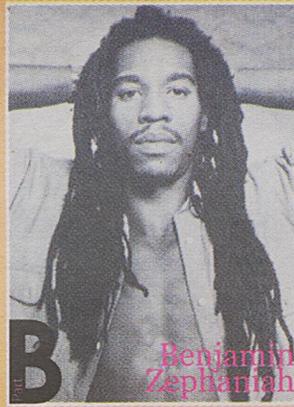
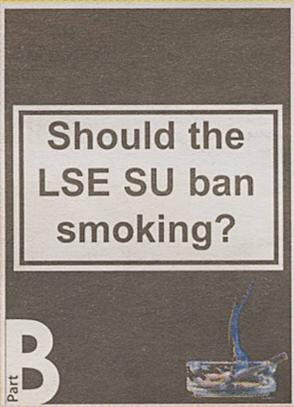
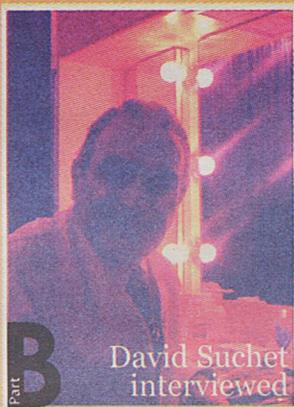
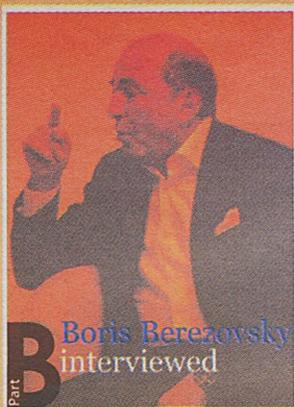
25,000 years ago 'Missing Link' between Peking Man and Modern Man



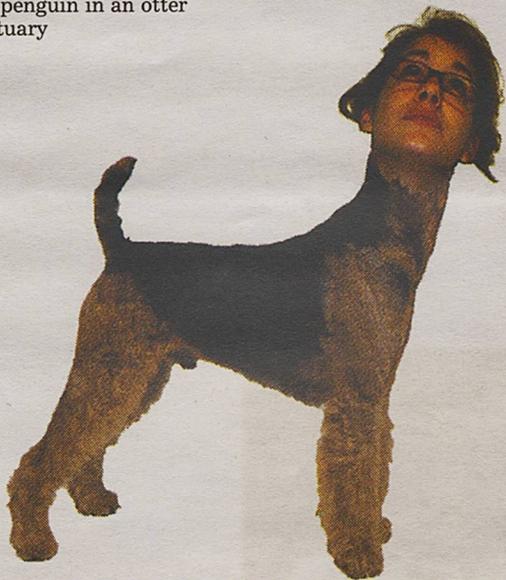
25 years ago John DeLorean, inventor of the eponymous car, was arrested for selling cocaine to an undercover policeman. What he didn't know is that he was set up by the men who had sold him the cocaine, to allow them to steal his time-travelling automobile.



this is our cake, it caught fire. the the right picture is after it was on



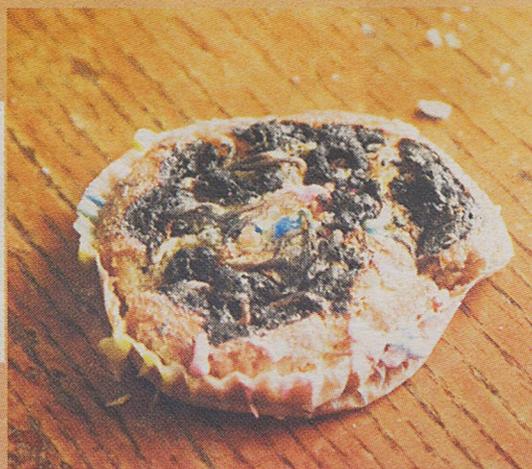
25 issues ago
Pete and Natalie invent
PartB. Natalie was crushed to
death under the weight of her
own genius, while Pete is
living it up in rehab as the
only penguin in an otter
sanctuary



Modern Day
The pinnacle of thousands of
years of human evolution



issues



In its 25 issues PartB has often courted controversy. Contrary to reports these 2006 riots were caused not by Borat, but by a particularly offensive editorial photo. The people of Kazakhstan have since apologised to Borat for implicating him in their angry shouting.

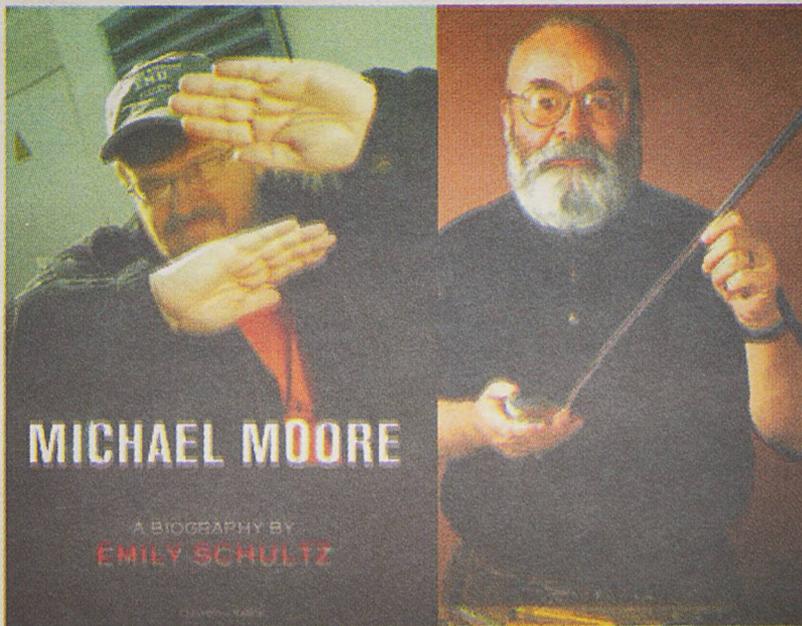
left picture is it when it's on fire.
in fire. we never ate it.

spot the moore

iangordon joins the moore watch

The Moore Watch is getting pretty dull. A visit to the website dedicated to "[Presenting] opposing views and facts to Michael Moore's public assumptions and assertions," delivers only yet another rebuttal of one of Michael's angry e-mails and some speculation on John Kerry's opinion of soldiers. It's about as dull as watching a Stop the War coalition march. Perhaps it is during this lull in Moore activity, when even his most rabid critics have decided to take a respite that we are in the best position to really evaluate what Michael Moore means to the western psyche. It's probably not the best way to sell a book, but that certainly hasn't stopped Emily Schultz

There are many stories that could have been told about Michael Moore. We could have a creation myth of how such a proponent for redressing the wounds of any and all underrepresented minorities trod underfoot by the governance of the most powerful country in the world is born at the centre of that very country. We could have the 'celeb-reality' story of an activist applying simple moral principles to larger and larger issues until he overreaches the scope of those principles in an epic polemic against his own government. Schultz chooses to take the middle ground between the lovers and the haters. We are introduced to Michael Moore as he often introduces himself: using Flint as a proxy. The decaying world of American automobile manufacturing becomes the arena for the immaculate conception of this liberal zeitgeist and within a couple of pages Moore is already penning libellous plays at a catholic school and soon after that running for school board. As far as learning about Moore as an actual person this is about as far as we get. Don't pick up this book expecting any sort of personal anecdotes or deep insights from a man that publicly speaks only in imperatives; this is after all a completely independent



biography. In the 200 pages that follow we learn about Michael Moore through his works, the response of his critics, and the experience of people that worked with him.

Schultz's biography is far from perfect. At times it feels like a series of lengthened movie reviews; at other times it reads like a collection of mini-biographies. Similarly Schultz manages to maintain neutrality in terms of agreeing or disagreeing with Moore's political opinions but it is clear that she does enjoy Moore's films, leaving those that object to Moore on cinematographic grounds rather than political grounds a little nonplussed. And yet beyond these two flaws Schultz has assembled a readable, enjoyable and informative biography of a man who has always deliberately avoided providing any

tangible biographical material beyond press clippings and movie introductions.

In contrast to the Michael Moore Watch, the Tad Moore Watch (pictured, right - www.tadmoorewatch.com) rolls on. I don't know what people expect this guy to do, but if he does it, by God, we are going to catch him.

Interview with the Author: Emily Schultz

Obviously writing a biography is a significant undertaking, why did you choose to devote your time to Michael Moore's life in particular?

Quite by accident I had already followed the career of Michael Moore because of my interest in film and also the types of political and social questions

Moore raises. I grew up in a very small town on the Canadian-American border where life revolved around the factory. Those factories are now largely closed down. I first saw Moore speak in 1995 in Detroit. His television series TV Nation had just wrapped up in North America. He was promoting his film Canadian Bacon, but it was also a fundraiser for Detroit's striking newspaper workers.

But for the most part what drove me was journalistic curiosity and the fact that there were no balanced resources on Michael Moore only opinion.

What role do you feel Michael Moore plays in the American political environment today?

A fairly unique one. This is a filmmaker whose name is mentioned on the Senate floor. Whether you love Moore's work or hate it, that fact alone is fairly jaw-dropping.

At the same time, what you have to realize about Moore is that he has been playing the same role for a very long time. The difference is that he has become more widely known. He has grown into the role of a famous filmmaker and author, but he has always acted as a kind of underdog/watchdog.

How do you feel Moore compares to contemporaries such as Morgan Spurlock or Errol Morris?

There's no question in my mind that Morris is the superior filmmaker. The difference between Spurlock and Moore is 200 pounds and Moore's talent.

Where do you go after a book like this?

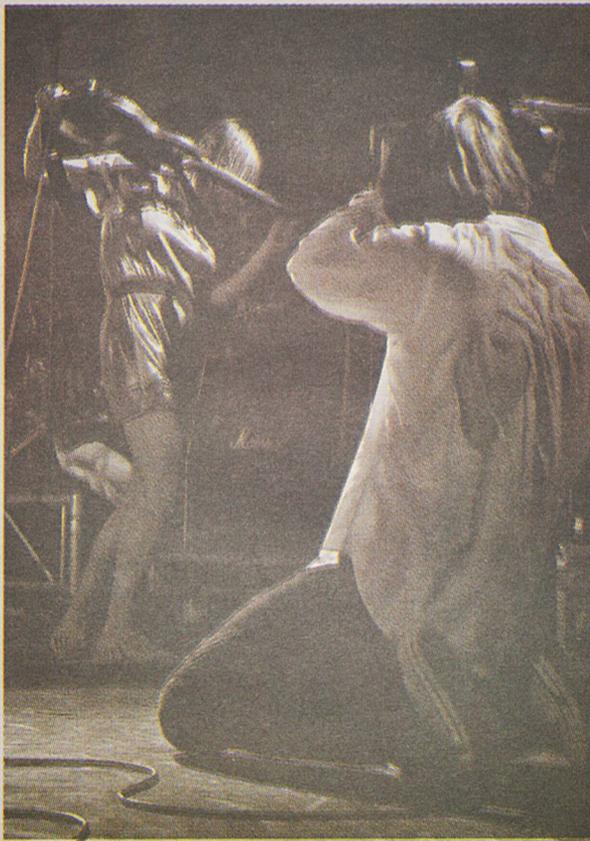
Strangely, back to my career as a novelist.

After a long and tortuous journey from London we settled into our chalet, eating and opening the first of many beers before heading off to see our first band of the weekend. Upon arriving at the stage where Deerhoof were playing we were confronted with an almighty queue, which bayed and surged for a good 40 minutes before we were allowed in. After all the build up of queuing I found my mind distracted and it was difficult to concentrate on Deerhoof's jagged pop songs. However Greg Saunier's frantic drumming continues to impress. After a brief period in the arcade we return to see Bardo Pond take to the stage. Their drone infused stoner rock is incredibly compelling. The songs are dense with instrumentation and complex in structure with only a flute providing scraps of melody in the murk.

I left before the end in order to catch the drone-folk duo Charalambides. I pushed my way to the front and grabbed a seat on the stage as their twin duelling guitars began to ring out from the PA. Their songs are loose and fluid jams, Christina's scratchy dissonant strumming intertwining with Tom's reverb soaked solos for what seems like a blissful eternity. Occasionally Christina would begin to sing, her haunting voice finding its way easily into the mix, lying broken amongst onslaught of guitars. Their music manages to astound at its sonic complexity and stir the heart with its fragile emotive core. Next to play were Fursaxa, whose looped instrument & ethereal vocals were enjoyable, yet never managed to rise above merely pleasant to affect the

listener, or perhaps just this listener, in any meaningful manner. The night was rounded off with an excruciatingly loud set from New Zealand noise-rock legends the Dead C. The music began with waves of serrated sound emanating from their crude analogue noisemakers, themes gradually emerged as guitars and drums were added to the music, swelling and pulsating to viscerous heights.

The next morning brought ringing ears, pounding headaches and Wooden Wand, whose pleasant folk, filled with religious imagery and pretty harmonies, acted as the perfect hangover cure. Next



to magnificent effect.

But the day obviously belonged to Sonic Youth. Having exorcised their noise demons playing in various other bands over the weekends SY treated us to a set of classics alongside a heft of jangly art-

pop numbers from their latest album Rather Ripped. Of course Sonic Youth never play it straight up, most songs departing on lengthy noise jams; Thurston & Lee wrenching feedback from their guitars as Kim dances in a manner far sexier than any 40 year old mother should be capable of. Their set ends with a stunning version of 'Teenage Riot', Thurston & Lee physically battle with their guitars, and they exit the stage with their instruments a tangled mess on the floor.

Sundays sees me reverting to childhood joy with a trip to the swimming pool. Afterwards we watch Alexander Tucker creating densely layered vocal drones and beautiful tone poems, now and again cutting the loops from the mix leaving just strummed guitar and melodic vocals; the juxtaposition was beautiful. Then Six Organs of Admittance provided one of the performances of the weekend. Chasney was rocking out with a drummer and a bassist, his acid fried solos proving Six Organs to be one of the most interesting and varied 'folk' acts out there. For the last song Sir Richard Bishop joined for some extended guitar duelling. Standing back to back with Chasney it seemed bizarrely sexual, their guitars sounding like lovers fighting. The weekend ended with a triumphant set from Sunburned Hand of the Man, who seemed to have incorporated half the bands playing into their voluminous line up. People in masks were waving large sticks, bizarre women were crouched twisting knobs on unknown instruments and a large man in drag and a red wig muttered poetic nonsense over the deranged wall of sound; a fitting end to an awesome weekend.

samashton is blown away by thurston moore's festival of sound

more moore at all tomorrow's parties



top ten of two thousand and six

angustse runs down his run down

1. United 93

This needs to be seen in the cinema rather than at the comfort of home, where you are stuck with the tragic events unfolding in front of you. All credit goes to Paul Greengrass for directing this tribute to the people of the doomed flight in 9/11. No stars, no sensationalism, no melodramatic string scores, no look-at-me-I'm-crying moments, no good and evil divide, no overt patrioticisms, just a honest, realistic portrayal of a group of people struggling to survive in the worst circumstances. It is even thrilling, a small glimmer of hope evoked even though the audience surrendered to the reality beforehand. A docudrama, a sensory overload, or a group catharsis - quite simply, by the time the screen fades out, you know this film was the cinematic experience of the year.

2. The Squid and the Whale

To say it's another American indie study of the dysfunctional family is way wrong. Genuinely poignant and emotionally devastating, showing the breakdown of an intellectual-on-the-surface family, it's a highly personal and moving film.

3. Hidden

Michael Haneke's masterful study of surveillance, paranoia, prejudice, colonialism, complacency, and guilt - all beginning with some sinister videotapes. And

the ending - did you spot what happened?

4. Borat

The movie event of the year, thanks to the free publicity from the Kazakhstan government, bringing confrontational comedy to the mainstream. Aside from the narrow-mindedness and ignorance on display, exposed unintentionally by the bigoted yet innocent reporter, it has so many memorable scenes - the dinner, and the wrestling... At the very least it's hilariously offensive.

5. The Host

Proof that South Korea is still the most exciting area in world cinema, and proof that one can subvert all the genre conventions and clichés and still create entertainment that appeals to the mainstream. Hollywood, please learn.

6. Pan's Labyrinth

Guillermo del Toro uses a surrealist dark fantasy as a backdrop to Fascist Spain. With the memorable set pieces and vivid characters, and the moments of horrifying violence, this is more than just a 'fairy tale for adults'.

7. The Death of Mr. Lazarescu

A socially aware black comedy and a naturalistic exploration of death that can

actually make you feel proud of the NHS (compared to the Romanians).

8. Red Road

With its gritty realism and the creeping tension between the two leads, this was the best British film of the year. Despite the disappointing ending, Andrea Arnold's assured debut has made its mark.

9. The New World

While Terrence Malick's retelling of the Pocahontas story is not for everyone, it's a stunning cinematographic meditation of the ill-fated romance.

10. Superman Returns and Casino Royale

Both reboots of faltering franchises, both succeeding in reminding us why we loved them in the first place - the action, the thrills, the characters.

Notable mentions: Grizzly Man, The Proposition, A Cock and Bull Story, Jarhead, Three Times, A Scanner Darkly, Tallageda Nights, Keane, Marie Antoinette, Volver, Flags of Our Fathers

Films I regret missing: Children of Men, The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada, The Child, Requiem

Over-hyped award: The Queen - Helen Mirren's performance is certainly Oscar-

worthy, but the movie feels fitting for a made-for-TV special rather than a feature film. A case of British pride?

'Seen it all before' award: Little Miss Sunshine- I might be a bit harsh, and it's undeniably entertaining, but it takes the usual indie themes of misfits and quirkiness and wraps it with the ubiquitous family-is-the-most-important ideal. Although I have to say its exposition on child pageants is genuinely horrifying...

Film that will appear on other lists but not this one: The Departed- yes, the dialogue is vulgar, playful and menacing, the performances are top-notch, but 1. The notion that it's Scorsese's 'return to form' is highly arguable. 2. It's dragged out for way too long yet covering the same themes. 3. It lacks the thrill of the cat-and-mouse-chase found in the Hong Kong original (Infernal Affairs). My case of Hong Kong pride?

Disappointment: Miami Vice - Michael Mann's first proper flop, lacking in action and depth; Lady Vengeance - can't decide whether it wants to be a black comedy or wants to be serious about retribution and its effects.

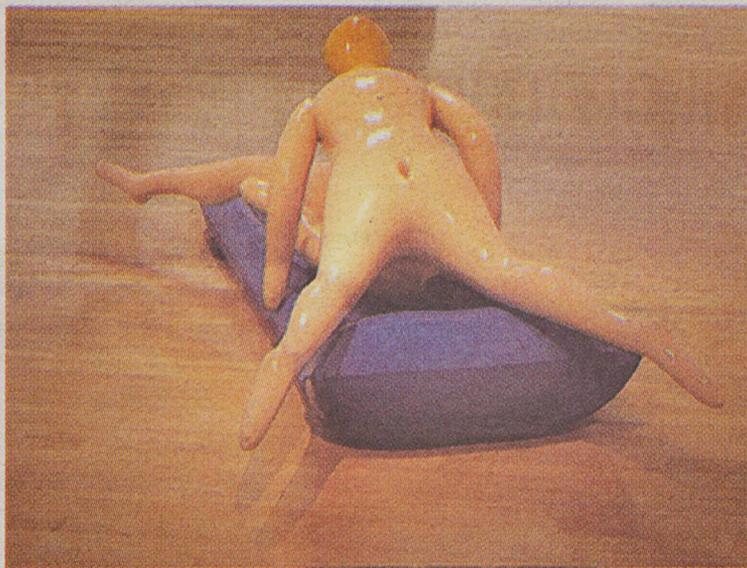
Special mention: Buster Keaton and Isabelle Huppert retrospectives at the NFT, allowing me to fully appreciate a legendary comedian and a legendary actress.



The concept behind the Turner Prize Award is to praise and celebrate "British artists or artists working in Britain under fifty for an outstanding exhibition or other presentation of their work". Tomma Abts, Phil Collins, Mark Titchner and Rebecca Warren were this year's four shortlisted artists: each demonstrating their own personal and unique skill disguised under the shadow of the final piece(s). Walking around this section of Tate Britain, one cannot help but wonder whether the concept and what each of these artists are aiming at achieving - whether it's surprise, shock or simply make the audience think about certain matters - outweighs in terms of importance and strangely, in terms of beauty, the actual piece of work that is exhibited in front of him. At this point, a somewhat pessimistic thought crosses the mind - is it all about the wording, which instead merely complimenting the artwork, now simply replaces it? Has art lost its skill to talk for itself?

The viewer is welcomed by Mark Titchner's sculptural installations, consisting of two pieces - different in form yet carrying a similar message. One of the installations is what Mark calls a 'Psionic instrument', which focuses on the psychic strength that humans possess. According to Mark, we live below our own capabilities and thus the piece is offered to us as a way to discover this innate power. Titchner is fascinated by the high and low culture as well as the importance of words - the authority behind them, the hierarchical society we live in. What both of his pieces try to explore is the way in which one responds within the gallery

space. Rebecca Warren, on the other hand, questions the authority of famous artists such as Degas, Rodin and Picasso by deliberately misrepresenting their exist-



ing images. During the video interviews with all four artists in the last room we see her puffing away on a cigarette, showing the camera her plump, deformed and dare say, ugly sculptures - not knowing which one she will choose for the Turner Prize. In fact, Rebecca herself describes her work as "ugly, big and physical" emphasising on the guts and

courage that one needs to have in order to stand in front of the work and say: I made that! At this point it is important to realize (for art's sake) the first appearance of the constant battle between concept and

the physical work for the attention and centre of the stage. The concept of initial idea vs. final piece/outcome is likely to remain hovering above the viewer's heads throughout the remaining rooms of this exhibition.

This concept is only re-established more assertively by Tomma Abts, whose works consist of drawn sticks, swirls and

unrecognized geometric shapes all decorated in earthy, warm colours. Call me old-fashioned, but the first impression of her work I received was that any 8-year-old with a good knowledge (or talent) of symmetry and asymmetry would be able to re-create this work of "art", which is not only exhibited in the Tate Britain but won the Turner Prize Award. And then the battle begins: the much spoken-of idea behind these geometric shapes gets the full attention and the spotlight. The fact that Tomma is not aware of the definite outcome when she embarks on creating these contemporary 'masterpieces', calling it the 'Inside-Out' strategy alongside with notions of stability vs. instability, rational vs. intuition: these concepts, rather than her actual paintings make Tomma Abts' work stand out.

And thus we come to a disappointing for some, inspiring for others conclusion: everything can be judged as an artwork from a photograph taken of an elephant's dump in the middle of Delhi's busiest road to a blue tack stuck on one of the walls of an empty room. The ever expanding definition of contemporary art has sadly disabled the strive of artists to try and let the pieces of creation speak for themselves. In today's world, art is based on the correct wording accompanying the pieces of work - whether you agree with the artist's understanding of beauty is not important. And what is really heart-breaking is that most of the time the words succeed - the long battle that takes place during your casual stroll across the room of the exhibition is often won by the idea rather than the final piece.

milaaskarova finds concrete endeavour still labouring under the featherweight tyranny of the conceptual

turner round again



glasgow kiss

jameshillier spends a weekend on the far side of hadrian's wall

If it's Scotland it has to be Glasgow. Against a backdrop of stunning Victorian architecture you will find a lively and stylish city with so much to do that your first trip won't be your last. The great atmosphere of the city is supported by enormously friendly and accommodating Glaswegians, including around 30,000 students from three universities so you should feel right at home.

Getting there is easy too. You can fly to Glasgow in just under an hour from Gatwick, Luton or Stansted airports for between £35 and £50. A £5 return bus ticket will then take you to the city centre in about 15 minutes. A good train link runs from Kings Cross or Euston for the more carbon conscious traveller, taking around five and a half hours. You will need to book in advance to avoid expensive tickets.

Once you arrive in the city centre you will soon discover that few places beat Glasgow for shopping, bars and restaurants. Buchanan Street is Glasgow's premier shopping destination where all your shopping needs are catered for as well as cafes and pubs in abundance. It is a place where time and money slip past very quickly! Halfway down Buchanan Street is Princes Square which must not be missed - six floors of tempting designer shops and restaurants contained within the famous Glasgow Art Nouveau emporium.

At the top of Princes Square you will



do! Spend some time in the thriving West End of Glasgow where a visit to the Kelvingrove Museum comes highly recommended. The Museum has just reopened after a £27.9million refurbishment and displays everything from fine and decorative arts to archaeology and is housed in a magnificent Victorian palace. The adjacent Kelvingrove Park is perfect for an afternoon stroll. Another must in the West End is the hidden gem of Ashton Lane. This short cobbled street is full of traditional pubs and fashionable bars with crowds of people eating and drinking outside when the weather permits; it even has a cinema where you can watch a film with a glass of wine from the comfort of a sofa - luxury! Ashton Lane also houses the renowned Ashoka Indian Restaurant and as Glasgow reclaimed the title of 'Curry Capital of Britain' this year, a trip to

Glasgow is not complete without a good Curry!

Glasgow is also a great central location for a visit to Scotland. Taking a walk in the fresh air at Loch Lomond is a superb day trip, just half an hour away by train, offering magnificent scenery and the perfect break from city life. Edinburgh is also only a 50 minutes train ride away.

So take your first trip to Glasgow, if you do I bet it won't be your last!

find Barça, a great restaurant to start your night out. Enjoy tapas, cava and cocktails with the feel of 'alfresco' dining on a beautiful terrace, but with Princes Square's glass roof to protect you from any wind and rain! After dinner head to The Social, classy inside with plenty of comfy chairs to lounge on while sampling from a great range of beers, champagne cocktails or the best Cosmopolitans and French Martinis in the city.

For your clubbing requirements give The Garage a try. The largest club in

Glasgow has five rooms playing anything from indie to R'n'B to, of course, cheese! Put simply you'll either love it or hate it but if you're looking for a good old fashioned student experience then look no further. If you're trying to drag yourself up-market then take your dancing shoes to Bamboo. You'll find a popular club with a great atmosphere that boasts a chic interior, well groomed clubbers and a mix of funky soul, R'n'B and house tunes.

Get yourself out of bed the next day however because there is still plenty to

It was a pretty yet unremarkable morning. In the distance Mount Everest poked its snow covered peak out from the jagged Himalayas that surrounded it and looked down upon me and the slowly waking village of Tingri. I looked up and down the main street. There was no bus but there were several lorries, and most of them were parked facing the border. I was prepared for this, I had got on the internet a few towns back and the Lonely Planet website suggested that the best way to reach the border was to hitch-hike.

I began asking at one end of the street and worked my way along. No one seemed to speak English and my Tibetan is a bit rusty so negotiations were difficult. Eventually I found a friendly couple of guys who seemed willing to take me for a small contribution. They kept making funny walking movements with their fingers which I thought was a bit strange but as they were almost the last people to ask I wasn't fussy.

I climbed into the lorry. There were only the two seats, one for the driver and one for his mate so I sat on top of the lump in-between the two. This was quite comfortable until he started the engine at which point it felt like I was sat on a red hot tumble dryer on full spin.

We set off along the winding and desolate Tibetan roads, climbing for the first two hours into the heart of the surrounding mountains. With the exception of the

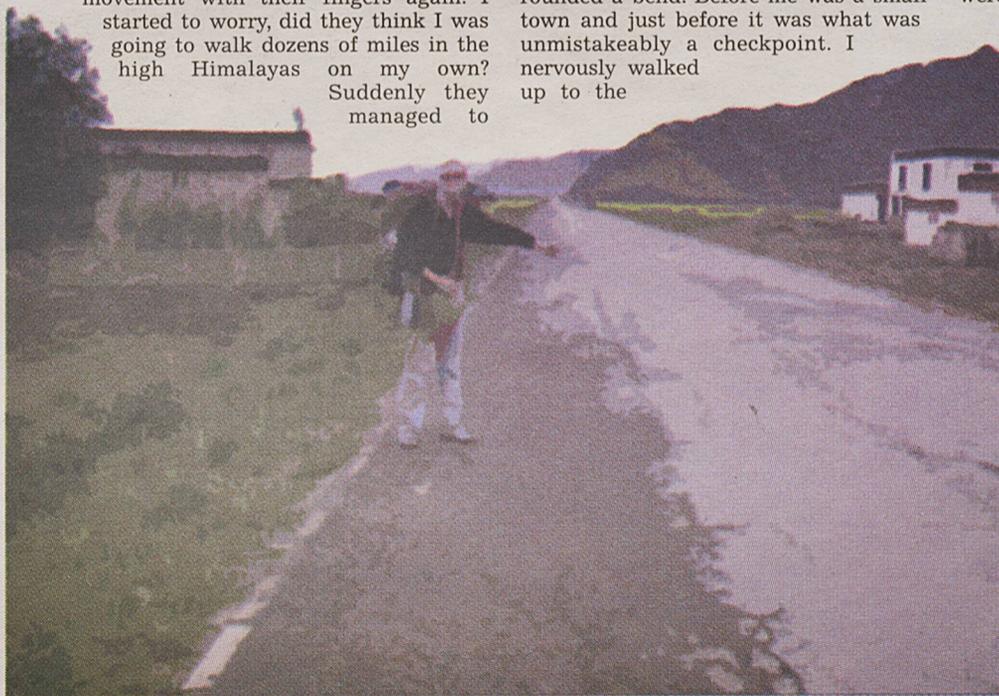
occasional lorry passing us in the opposite direction and the more frequent Chinese army patrols the road was clear and I spent most of the journey with my neck craned upwards at the craggy peaks that towering above us. The brown and grey landscape began to give way at last to patches of snow, glistening in the bright sunshine.

Suddenly my driver pulled over to the side of the road. The guys motioned for me to get out and made that walking movement with their fingers again. I started to worry, did they think I was going to walk dozens of miles in the high Himalayas on my own? Suddenly they managed to

pull the word 'China' out of their beards and I understood. There was a Chinese checkpoint further on and they wanted me to walk through rather than go through with them. I reluctantly agreed and so shouldered my pack, watching them disappear in a cloud of dust. Apprehension doesn't even begin to cover what I felt as I watched that truck leave, although I congratulated myself on having not given them any money. I began to trudge onwards and shortly rounded a bend. Before me was a small town and just before it was what was unmistakably a checkpoint. I nervously walked up to the

barrier. A bored looking Chinese guard looked at me as if I was from Mars and said something totally incomprehensible. I decided to say 'Nepal' and pointed in the direction the road went. He let me through.

After lunch we continued. What had been a slight upward incline in the morning changed, however, to be a very steep decline in the afternoon. We had breasted the Himalayas and were now descending in a very serious way. We were in a valley that seemed to drop steeply for miles. At one point we passed through a snowdrift that was gradually melting. The melt had built up on the road giving it a sharp sideways gradient. Without even slowing down the driver plunged on over it giving the truck such a sharp pitch that from my perch on the engine block I could see hundreds of metres further down into the valley than I really wanted. This was a single track road and yet suddenly there were several trucks trying to come past us and each time one or the other of us would have to teeter on the outside edge. After about six hours of this winding and vertiginous fun I could eventually see the bottom of the valley and the gushing stream of meltwater that had formed it. A short way further on and we were in Dram, the bustling border town on one side of the Friendship Bridge and with Nepal and all the delights of the sub-continent spread out beneath us.



williamjoce sneaks into tibet with a little help from his friends
sticking your thumb in it

would you like a white cow with that?

kimmandeng introduces diner slang

For many people, the beginning of the year means a detox program from their holiday binge, healthy eating and dieting. Gym memberships are probably up by a hundred and fifty percent, the health and fitness craze is definitely on. The craze has not seemed to have affected me however, as I found myself once again this week magnetically pulled towards Little Frankie's, located just off Trafalgar Square. It must be something about the fantastic background music; every song that reaches your ears is a 1950s classic, which draws me back in time and again to this diner-esque restaurant. When I step inside my mood is quickly lifted, anticipating the upcoming sugar rush. Forget celery and carrots sticks, what I want is a milkshake, a strawberry one to be precise. That's a 'Shake one in the hay' for those in the know, or rather those who speak diner slang. Not that 'Little Frankie's' is a picture perfect version of any real diner I have ever come across, but it does succeed in capture the diner ambience.

Little Frankie's menu offers a wide array of dishes to choose from, all falling into what is termed the 'American Italian' cuisine category, so pasta, pizza and burgers. Surprisingly, the burgers do not come with fries, because apparently not everyone likes fries with their burgers. I cannot image this to be true, rather it seems to me like a great way to charge your customers an extra two pounds, rather than a means of sparing them having to eat an order of fries

with their burgers. The fries, or in keeping with my new diner slang vocabulary, frog sticks, are pretty good and can be ordered as a starter with a choice of dips. Which go very well with a milkshake, be it vanilla, also known as a white cow, strawberry, or, if you're really crazy, chocolate. Although not thick enough for some tastes, I find the milkshakes to be satisfyingly sweet, although probably



a diabetic's nightmare.

Aside from the wide range of food, the most fabulous part of 'Little Frankie's' is

the décor. Understated kitsch is probably a good way to describe it. Snapshots align the walls in a haphazard manner, pictures of the 'good old days'. I like to think that some of the photos are of dear Frankie himself, relaxing with his buddies or posing with a plate of pasta. It might just be the perfect place to go if you would

nervous about going to dinner with your guest for the first time, why not brush up your diner slang and impress your guest by totally confusing the waitress when you order a plate of Foreign Entanglements. That's spaghetti to mere mortals. If you cannot however manage to entertain yourself with the décor of the restaurant I can assure you that I have never sat a Little Frankie's and not been amused by the people walking by, and that is not just because I find people amusing generally. Last time I was there a whole fleet of royal marines walked past, I kid you not.

'Little Frankie's' is really an inspiring place. Come to think of it, a friend and I have had some fantastic brainwaves while at 'Little Frankie's', one of which I am sure will make millionaires out of us in the future, when our degrees have had no influence on our employability and we need to make some money fast.

There is something about the kooky surroundings that makes my imagination work overtime. The only way Little Frankie's could really be improved would be if they adopted my new diner slang vocabulary and if the waitresses wore roller skates, preferably ones that had pink wheels and purple glittery laces, oh and they had matching diner uniforms. Although I doubt very much that they would appreciate it as much as me. Nevertheless I will be putting the idea to them next time I am there, which should not be too long in the future, because hey, I like my white cows.

I followed a crazy night at the last 'Crush' of the year by winning, dining and dancing at the Gallery at Sketch. True, it wasn't the usual way I spend a Saturday night - I usually recover from my Friday night induced 'asleep-all-Saturday' hangover just in time to see the sun rise on Sunday. But when close friends rang on Saturday evening promising a late-night table at Sketch and a VIP tour of the venue, I simply couldn't resist. You see, Sketch is so much more than a restaurant and bar. Like the object it's named after, it is a creation of disjointed themes and ideas, culminating into an aesthetically enticing, over-indulgent sensory treat. Classily concealed on Conduit Street, as an artist's doodle might be tucked into the depths of a journal, it can be recognised only by its name illuminated on the wall in alluring red light. A walk into the foyer would lead you to believe you are entering an elite nightclub, which to a certain extent you are. You can't just waltz into Sketch and expect to be seated - you'd be lucky to make it past the doorman without a reservation, even if you are included in Who's Who.

Once inside, you wouldn't be foolish to think you've entered the Wonderland of Alice's dreams. The fantastical interior screams, "Look at me!" and strategically placed projectors create an imaginative laser display on the walls, as a DJ in the corner spins the hottest jams from "Hot Chip" and other trendy bands. The seating arrangement is pleasantly helter-skelter: the vast floor space and high ceilings mean the interior designer had few constraints when laying out the floor plan. Large arty installations are interspersed between the tables, evoking the feeling of picture frames. You, your friends, your table thus combine to create a 'scene'. Each dining chair is unique, either in its style or by the 'graffiti' etched onto its back. It is well-placed pretension that is almost too extreme to be criticised. After all, the tables are linoleum not fine bone

china, and the serviettes are made of paper not 800-count Egyptian cotton (rather cleverly printed with the reservation hotline 'hand-written' on).

Before escorting us to our table, the eccentric French maitre d' flirts with all members of our party despite the fact half of the group don't speak French, and half of the group are boys. Taking my seat, I continue to absorb the sights and sounds when our fetching server arrives inquiring about aperitifs. In this instant, I come to terms with the pre-requisites of Sketch's waiting staff. Evidently, they must be male, they must be French, they must be hot, and (unfortunately for me) they must also be très, très gay. I scan the cocktail menu and wonder if I'm prepared to pay £12.50 for a 'Diamond martini' knowing it will only be the first of many. We place our orders and recline into our seats, partaking in the popular activity of many Londoners at a hip spot - crowd watching. After all, most people present are simply here to see and be seen. On the table to our left sit two nouveau-riche young men, entertaining what could only be a high-class hooker. On the 'high table' by the front of the room, 30-something Sloane rangers down Grand Cru whilst similarly scanning the crowd. As I turn to see who's sitting behind us, my view is obstructed by what I can only assume to be the world's largest breast implants. A size zero waif spray tanned darker than a Sudanese refugee walks past in a black dress which I'm certain used to be a child's sock. As she turns, sending her metre long hair extensions "whishing" behind her, I notice her derriere has also enjoyed some silicon enlargement.



At the end of our decadent but delicious main course, I decide it's time to powder my nose. I walk past the busy bar and alight the stairs to reach the bathroom area. The toilets at Sketch are eggs. I kid you not. To the left are the men's, and to the right, the women's. These 'pods' look like huge white eggs fresh off the set of '2001: A Space Odyssey', and are placed at the top of the platform. Reaching the top of the stairs, one checks if any of the pods are free (indicated by an open door) and steps inside to what is an airplane-style loo. I must admit that thanks to copious amounts of wine, I was actually disappointed to discover just a toilet, and not an alternate universe.

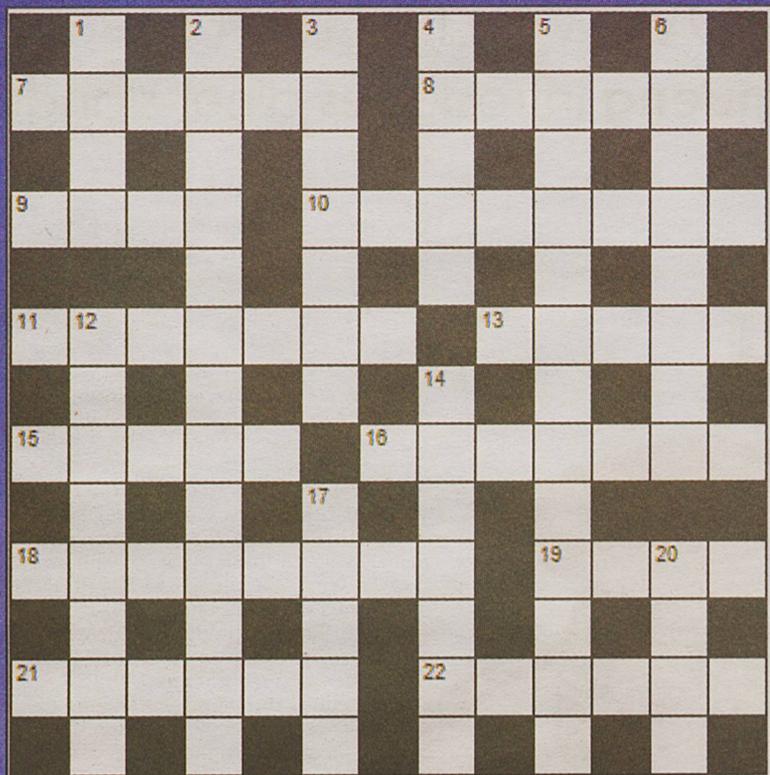
At midnight, the lights in the Gallery are dimmed and waiters place tea-lights on the tables. The DJ pumps up the volume and the remaining diners push back their chairs and get their grooves on. Electronica blasts through the speakers, the trippy projections intensify, and I struggle to pull away from the most pleas-

urable of chocolate puddings as we reach the climax - and it suddenly all makes sense. Sketch is taking each individual to the next level. When it's no longer enough to eat average food in an average place surrounded by average-looking people, you come to Sketch, where each and every sense is taken on a rollercoaster ride. A feast for your eyes, ears and taste buds, from the Gallery to the upstairs VIP area, where you can smoke Cubans on an antique chaise-long and use bathrooms covered entirely in Swarovski crystals - Sketch is the most hedonistic sensory exposure you can get without using Class A's. The bill arrives and I realise that for a student to enjoy such a "meal", they must forgo months of eating and drinking. But I leave smiling, so perhaps it's worth the wait.

abaosunsade rides the new wave of hedonism

sketching out

SET BY KEN RUSSELL

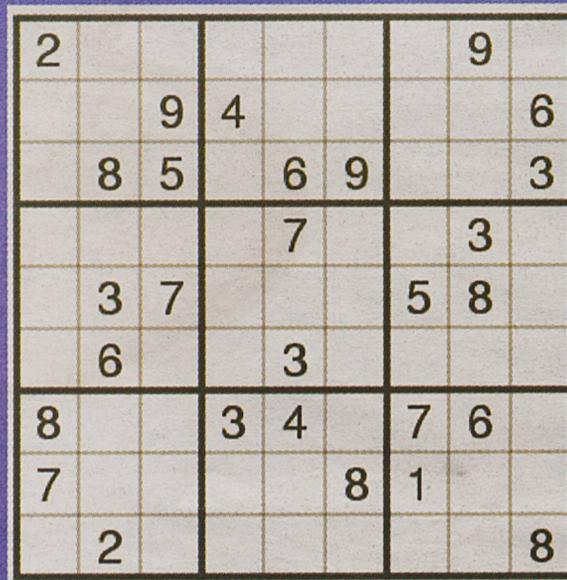
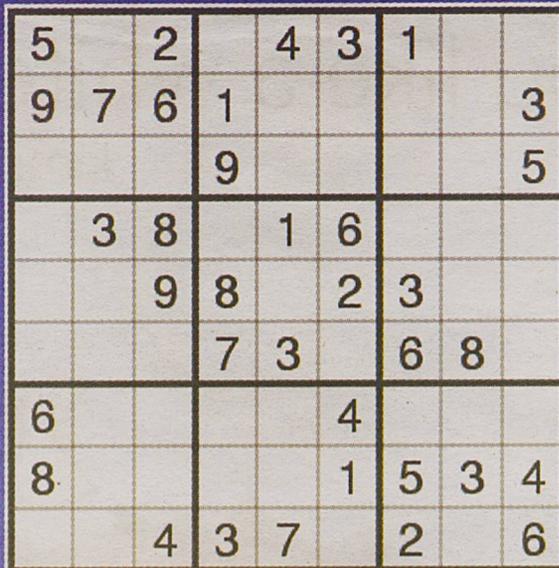


Down

- 1. an indian wrapper (4)
- 2. don't flick cigarettes here (13)
- 3. an imposing building (7)
- 4. a saucy genoan (5)
- 5. where spies keep their guns on planes (10,3)
- 6. copy-cat (8)
- 12. scoring more than average, yet losing(5,3)
- 14. painful toenail (7)
- 17. terrifying (5)
- 20. pixies b-side, "___ the white" (4)

Across

- 7.smoker's despair (3,3)
- 8."A riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an _____" (6)
- 9. Brighton burnt one (4)
- 10. Mortal Kombat - finish him (8)
- 11. u-shaped hoop on a boat (7)
- 13. Whosoever shall _____ thee on thy cheek, turn to him the other(5)
- 15. area in which one excels (5)
- 16. having nature of a whole (7)
- 18. hire-a-auto (4,1,3)
- 19. connected spirals (4)
- 21. bravery in the military (6)
- 22. opposite of scarcity (6)



the c-word

Difficult

Very Difficult

sudoku

Ask

Auntie Shaw



Welcome back, Merry Christmas, Eid Mubarak, Happy Hanukah and Hip-Hop-Hoola-Hoop-Happy New Year! Ooh my boys and girls, what a riveting winter holiday it has been! I would like to announce that a mini Shaw is on it's way soon so I will be taking maternity leave and writing from home this term. Alas, my Shaw library one-on-one sessions have come to an end but I am still available through the medium of written letters, postcards, emails and of course...the marvellous facebook. I shall say no more and let the letters do the talking. We are getting jucier by the issue, and the spelling is getting worse...enjoy!

Dear Auntie
The winter holidays have come and gone and I've piled on the pounds. I look pregnant, and for a man, that can never be a good thing. I'm in the AU so I know how to get back into shape but I need to take drastic measures. My bird is coming back from Berlin on Thursday and I need to look normal by then. Anything for stamina will help aswell!

LSEFC
2nd Year

It's normally the ladies who swarm me with weight issues around this time of the year so it was a nice surprise to hear from you! For drastic measures, there is no official line of action, although if you go to 14 Rathbone Place, Soho I can get you in touch with a friend of a friend who can sort you out. However, I wouldn't worry too much about a bit of flab in the bedroom and you're sure to burn it off with all that action next week! In fact, it can inject something new into your life between the sheets and give her something to grab onto, or bounce on for a change. Consider it trampoline role play if you will!

Put a positive bounce on it!
Auntie Shaw xoxo

Dear Auntie
OH MY GOD. The O.C. has been scrapped and it's ending in February, what the fuck am I going to do now?! When Marissa was killed off, fair enough, it sucked as was tempted to stop watching the show but season four has just been immense, absolutely immense. Just when Ryan and Taylor have started getting together and Kirsten has stopped drinking, not to mention Julie with the male prostitutes and Kaitlin with the Saudis! What the FUCK!?! My world as I know it is officially over.

R.M
High Holborn

Dearest couch potato, I can only assume you are referring to the hit (or not so hit) show The Orange County. I myself was a fan of Dynasty back in my student days and more recently, the golden years of Emmerdale, Heartbeat and occasionally I would push the boat and indulge in Beverly Hills 90210. I understand your pain, I had the same reaction when they cancelled Melrose Place and Thirty-something. All I can say is it does get better. These days, you children have all sorts of alternative viewing to indulge in. Reality Television always goes down well with the young folk and I do hear that there is a reality programme based on this Orange County so all is not lost. Enjoy the rest of the storyline!

Right back where we started from
Auntie Shaw xoxo

Dear Auntie
I have decided to run for one of those sabbatical positions. It probably doesn't mean much in terms of title, but at least you get paid £20 000 to be a student for another year. What do I do, what should I run for and how do I go about doing this?

A.S
LSE '08

Not being in the know in the politics of the union is probably not a good starting point my dear! Start by going along to our Union General Meetings in the Old Theatre and get to know the people at the top. You must forge friendships with these people if you want to make it, however smelly they may be! It is also a good idea to make at least three friends in the media group as they are your publicity platform. In the past, it has been rumoured that getting into bed with students with 'power' helps but this is left to your discretion. When I was Education and Welfare Officer back in the day, I used full frontal nudity as an election campaign but this almost landed me with a disqualification. This year, I would suggest a paintball system where by you shoot students on Houghton. St with your chosen campaign colour and they will instantly become an advertisement for you! I have checked the rules and regulations and there is nothing against this so feel free to start loading your guns and I guarantee a vote for you from Auntie!

Blackmail and bribes work like a charm
Auntie Shaw xoxo

If you want to share (or scare) me with you problems, rants and general nonsense, please do get in touch at thebeaver.partb@lse.ac.uk or through Auntie Shaw on Facebook. As explicit and long as you want; the jucier the better - let's push those editorial boundaries to their limits! You are guaranteed to remain completely anonymous and if you send me chocolate, I'll be delighted. Until next week my bizarre boys, girls and transgender dahlings!
Ever your Auntie xoxo

The Price of Victory

Political Correspondent **Ben Gianforti** argues its time to bring the troops home from Iraq



A typical scene in post-war Iraq

“George, You Ain’t George.” This quote caught my eye in a recent article in the New York Times: “Look, everybody’s trying to write the history of this administration even before it’s over,” Mr. Bush said. “I’m reading about George Washington still. My attitude is, if they’re still analyzing Number One, 43 ought not to worry about it, and just do what he thinks is right, make the tough choices necessary.”

Lest we forget, Washington cautioned against involvement in foreign entanglements and as legend would have it, could not tell a lie. Bush has quite clearly failed at both. The war in

Bush frequently refers to victory in Iraq. He is implying that there is a military solution to what are essentially economic and political problems

Iraq represents an arrogant disregard for Washington’s prescience and moral integrity. To use him to deflect criticism in this way is the height of unrepentant cynicism.

Nonetheless, Bush is correct in saying that he has some very tough choices ahead of him. To quote the Iraq Study Group’s report, the situation in Iraq is “grave and deteriorating.” A phrase such as this is meant to incite swift, resolute action to mini-

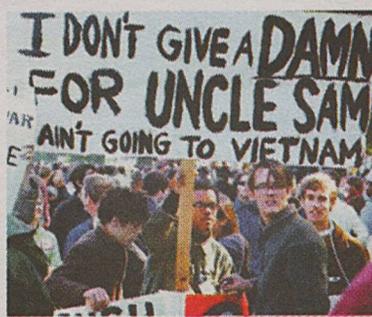
mize American casualties and prevent Iraq from destabilizing the entire Middle East. In order to meet these goals, Bush will make tough decisions but not the toughest.

The first tough decision has already been made: continuing to use the rhetoric of victory vs. defeat. In recent weeks, the administration has taken to describing our position in Iraq as “not winning and not losing.” This minor concession to reality belies the grandiose language typically heard in relation to the War on Terror. Bush frequently refers to victory in Iraq. He is implying that there is a military solution to what are essentially economic and political problems. Wars are won. Our forces will prevail. Problems are managed over long periods of time. Bush realizes that people are impatient and have little time for nuance. But he is living on borrowed time. Using this kind of rhetoric is a tough decision because it sets the bar extremely high. Victory is a black-and-white standard. What happens when the public finally realizes that victory was never possible in the first place? If public support withers sufficiently, it could undermine future constructive solutions.

The second tough decision is likely to be made in the coming week: a temporary surge of 15,000 - 20,000 troops to secure Baghdad and the insurgency-dominated Anbar province. This move would be pure folly. Much of the Pentagon’s top brass has advised against it. The Iraq Study Group is apprehensive. Most importantly, plain old common sense says this is a bad idea. Any increase in troop levels is really just an increase in targets. These soldiers were needed nearly four years ago when the invasion began. There is little they can accomplish today, especially on a tem-

porary basis. The insurgency and Shia militias have time on their side. If US forces are putting the heat on, they can simply blend back into the population and wait it out. Our operational capacity is stretched as it is. This surge will bring our military to its breaking point.

The toughest decisions are those that would be most effective, but also most damaging to the Bush administration. Each would be a tacit admis-



Vietnam was deeply unpopular by the time Congress turned off the tap. Iraq has not yet reached that point but it may in the coming years

sion of the foolishness of the war in Iraq; each would tarnish the legacy of resolute and righteous leadership that

Bush hopes to leave behind. For these reasons, these decisions are unlikely to be made.

First among them would be diplomatic engagement with Iran and Syria as the Iraq Study Group suggests. This approach is far from a silver bullet, but it would go some way towards preventing widespread destabilization. Iran could reign in the uncompromising Shia parties and vengeful militias to some extent. Syria could crack down on Hezbollah’s training camps and gun running. A failed state in Iraq is not in anyone’s interest in the Middle East. Iran may enjoy being the new power broker in the region with Saddam out of the way but they will be less enthused about a full blown proxy war in Iraq against Sunni-sympathizers Saudi Arabia and Egypt that could spill over their border. Unfortunately, Bush continues to refuse to negotiate with members of the so-called “Axis of Evil.” The ideological bent of his foreign policy is proving to be increasingly untenable. It may take an administration change for constructive diplomacy to begin.

My recommendation would be to withdraw all primary combat troops immediately. The Iraq Study Group advocates a gradual withdrawal. I used to be in favour of this strategy but I have since been converted. 3,000 American troops are dead. It’s time to bring our boys home. They are caught in the crossfire of a civil war that they stand no chance of stopping. The Iraqi military deserves our supplemental support in logistics, intelligence and training. But no more American infantrymen patrolling, kicking down doors and stalking a shadowy enemy. We opened the wound but ultimately the Iraqis must heal themselves. This would be the toughest decision for

Bush. It’s cut-and-run; pure and simple.

The final two toughest decisions are the Vietnam options. They are both slightly less acceptable alternatives to immediate withdrawal. One would be for the newly elected Democratic Congress to cut off funding for the war. This is a form of political suicide.

Who wants to look like they’re not supporting the troops? Vietnam was deeply unpopular by the time Congress turned off the tap. Iraq has not yet reached that point but it may in the coming years as progress remains slow and bloody.

The other Vietnam option would be to reopen the draft as Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY) suggests. His basic argument is that if the draft reopened and people like me (white, upper middle class, college educated) were suddenly thrust into the line of fire, we would be out of Iraq faster than I could say “Incoming RPG!” However, the spectre of Vietnam looms large in the national consciousness, rendering the draft another form of political suicide. But this is exactly what’s needed, a few more politicians willing to fall on their swords to get us out of Iraq. This entire misbegotten venture was facilitated by the unwillingness of Republicans and Democrats alike to buck the post-9/11 Bush juggernaut lest they be run through the Rovean meat grinder.

It’s my suspicion that Bush will not be treated kindly by history regardless of the outcome in Iraq and he should worry about it. But perhaps if he makes some of the toughest decisions he will not go down as the fool he has so far proved himself to be. ■

Strife in Somalia

Laura Kyrke-Smith argues the international community has failed to resolve the complex situation in Somalia situation



BAE shareholders - is this where you want your money to go?

Exactly thirty years ago Ethiopia, with strong Soviet and Cuban backing, defeated Somalia in a bloody war for the disputed Ogaden border region. As 2007 dawns, Ethiopia celebrates another military victory over Somalia, claiming Mogadishu and backed this time by the old Cold War rival: the United States. The latest conflict ends six months of peace and stability - the longest Somalia has known in sixteen years - and signifies that the solution to the world's perennial 'failed state' is far from clear. What's more, Ethiopia's action risks setting in motion lethal insurgencies on a par with Iraq today.

The Somali Council of Islamic Courts, a loose affiliation of eleven different clan groups, seized power and effectively established rule over Somalia in the summer of 2006. Only one city, Baidoa, remained under the control of the Transitional Federal Government, a weak authority established after protracted talks in Kenya in 2004. This confirmed that Somalia's fourteenth attempt at forming a government since 1991 had failed too. But in December the new Islamic rulers were also toppled, and remarkably swiftly: after a steady build-up of troops and abrupt threats, 15,000 Ethiopian troops forced the SCIC to retreat in just nine days.

The victory, however, is a fragile one. The people of Somalia had almost unanimously praised the SCIC for establishing at least a modicum of law and order - and as Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi reassures his Parliament that he is 'mopping up the remnants of the extreme forces' the memory of that taste of stability and security powerfully endures. The TFG is nominally back in power, but widespread disorder has necessitated declaration of a state of emergency. The Hawiye clan predominant in Mogadishu distrusts the TFG and failed to hand over guns in the declared three-day amnesty; indeed, the price of an AK 47 is dramatically

on the rise. The warlords - who the TFG failed to appease - have returned, and freelance gunmen roam the streets. Mohamed Qanyare Afrah boasts "I have 1,500 militiamen under my control... And why not? An angry man is an angry man. We need to protect ourselves." The Shabaab fighters - the military wing of the SCIC - preferred to melt back in to the population rather than flee, and Afrah believes "100 percent" that they will launch "urban guerrilla warfare - land mines, explosives. People will live in terror and fear."

In addition to the political crisis, the United Nations World Food Programme warns of impending humanitarian disaster. Somalia was one of the lesser-known victims of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, and continues to suffer heavy flooding. The recent fighting forced suspension of relief air food operations, as well as the displacement of an estimated 10,000 people to whom neighbouring Kenya has shut its borders. UNICEF report the increasing prevalence of child soldiers. I deliberately 'flag up the humanitarian crisis because, in a curious reversal of the international media coverage of the early 1990s - which was seemingly unable to comprehend Somalis as political citizens as well as starving masses - Somali politics has this time received far greater media scrutiny than the dire humanitarian situation.

In the contemporary international climate, where intervention takes place for both humanitarian and political ends, the question inevitably arises of what the international community should do? All sides in the conflict call for firmer international involvement and there is a compelling case for action: Somalia ticks both the 'humanitarian crisis' and the 'potentially harbouring terrorists' boxes. Sixteen years of international hesitation and inaction have only backfired.

The response of the United Nations (and particularly the United States) has so far been deplorable.

There should have been outright criticism of what amounts to an invasion by Ethiopia, but only the EU expressed concern. It was a violation of international law and of a December UN Security Council resolution explicitly forbidding troops from any neighbouring country from joining even the new 8,000-strong peacekeeping force it authorised for Somalia. The UN resolution itself was a farce, proclaiming to 'restore peace and stability' but pushed through by the US at a relatively stable time as a politically motivated show of force against Somalia's first Islamic rulers. By condoning Ethiopia's invasion, the international community has not only brought chaos but has further damaged its own reputation on the ground, already tarnished by the failed 'Black Hawk Down' 1990s

The international community has missed yet another opportunity in Somalia by taking sides in a conflict it barely understands

intervention: "Slit the throats of the Americans!" they cried, at a recent Mogadishu rally.

Somalis are furious at the presence of Ethiopian troops (historically Somalia's regional rival) on their soil. And besides destabilizing Somalia, Ethiopia has also weakened itself. Contrary to the blind assumptions of the international community that it is a firm Christian ally in the 'war on terror', Ethiopia suffers internal disquiet exacerbated by its actions in Somalia. Meles Zenawi's 'victory' in the 2005 elections is widely disputed,

the Oromo and majority Somali Ogaden regions threaten revolt, and the population which is in fact more than half Muslim has been increasingly prone to religious violence such as that in Jimma in 2006.

Ethiopia's actions have furthermore undermined fragile regional stability. Kenya has found itself with a rapid influx of refugees, and called for Ethiopia's immediate withdrawal. Eritrea and Ethiopia fought their own war in 1998-2000 and have never repaired relations; Eritrea is now accused of backing the SCIC with arms and troops to fight a proxy war in Somalia. Other Arab states, including Yemen and Saudi Arabia, are also sending in weapons despite the UN arms embargo. Separately, the campaign for international recognition of Somaliland - the semi-autonomous and stable region in the north of Somalia - has intensified its and success would severely inflate tensions among southern Somalis.

The international community has missed yet another opportunity in Somalia. Instead of taking sides in a conflict it barely understands, it should have pushed much harder for negotiations between the SCIC and the TFG, seizing the moment back in June when impetus to negotiate emanated from both sides as well as regional organizations including the African Union and the Arab League. The SCIC was by no means perfect - criticized for its social conservatism (banning the World Cup from being shown publicly, for example) and the suspected links to bombings in Ethiopia and to Al Qaeda - but nevertheless there were numerous moderates willing to engage in dialogue. Deployment of African Union troops, if negotiations had failed, should have been made a logistically viable and credible option.

The EU and the UK Foreign Office, with a cleaner slate historically than other international agents and on the whole respected by Somalis, had a real opportunity to lead the

way. And the Somali diaspora is a particularly under-used resource. With a strong desire to return to a peaceful and prosperous Somalia, and remittances estimated at \$990m per year (three times the total aid given to Somalia annually) a process of consultation with these globally dispersed local experts could have made all the difference.

Cynics argue that by allowing Somalia to remain a weak 'failed state', the international community aims to steadily increase its influence in this newly oil-rich region. Certainly, there are selfish motives for the failed policy to date. But far more concerning than the inevitable absence of purely altruistic humanitarian sentiment is the international community's conceptual failure. Jendayi Frazer, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, described the SCIC as "extremists to the core, they are terrorists and they are creating this logic of war". Granted, there is a legitimate minor terrorist threat. But there is also a distinct and troubled history of colonial occupation, Cold War interference, regional instability, clan-based conflict and failed statehood - and a present in which these fuse uniquely.

To ignore the complexities of Somali identity and to view it only through the lens of the 'war on terror' will quieten the moderates and encourage those radicals to embrace religious extremism and play on our fears. To endorse war and the chaos of statelessness will facilitate breeding of exactly the destructive terrorism that we desire to eradicate. We still have the chance to bring what remains of the SCIC to the negotiating table and to ensure Ethiopia departs. The only alternative is the spiralling escalation of fear and insurgency. We must actively strive for stability and security - for that of Somalia and the international community is interconnected like never before. ■

The Inside Story

LSE Students of Somali origin; [Hudda Khaireh](#) and [Sulekha Hassan](#) provide a further insight

The Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), which previously had effective control over large swathes of Somalia, faced its final withdrawal after losing its gun battle with Ethiopian troops which had been called on the request of the weak Somali transitional federalist government (TFG). This development in the country's embattled history has led many analysts to fear a further destabilisation across the whole of the horn of Africa, following great floods over the area in November, causing devastation over the years crops, mass displacement and a rise of water-borne diseases. UIC troops have vowed to launch guerrilla warfare against TFG and their Ethiopian backers.

Following the Somali Civil War in 1991, after long time Dictator Mohammed Siad Barre was ousted from power, Somalia has been an anarchic state without an effective central government for 16 years. 14 separate attempts to install a transitional government have all failed. Violent clashes between rivaling warlords and clan fighting have caused Mogadishu to be ranked as the most dangerous city on Earth with its residents suffering from the second to worst standard of living.

Spring of 2006 saw the establishment of the UIC comprising from a

diverse group of Islamic clerics, professionals and business men, in attempt to address the lawlessness that had beset the capital. Distinctive in drawing its support not from traditional clan lines, but from Islam, the official religion of Somalia saw the UIC gaining overwhelming support from tribal elders and residents to remove violent warlords undertake vital civic activities as landmine clearance, building repairs, police enforcement as well as land reparations those who had homes appropriated by warlords.

The removal of the UIC has sparked fears that Mogadishu will regress back into its former archaic state with warlords already entering the city to reclaim their former territories.

Many have condemned the weak transitional government for failing to abide by agreements, reached in Khartoum in late 2006, to have negotiated talks with the UIC. The TFG, which has its base in the small farming town of Baidoa due to the huge security threat it faced from warlords in Mogadishu, has accused the UIC of working with Al-Qaeda after 3 low level UIC members were reported to have connections with suspected Al-Qaeda operatives in Africa, although this has not been proven.



A humanitarian and political disaster; two sides of the Somali conflict

Criticism has also been levelled at neighbouring Ethiopia for entering into Somalia after the United Nations Security Council resolution. This authorised a lifting of the arms embargo against Somalia to allow African Union peacekeepers into the country and entered the key caveat brought by the European Union to bar Ethiopia and the other neigh-

bouring countries around Somalia from contributing troops. This was in recognition of the delicate relationship between Somalia and its neighbours following many regional wars in the 1970s and continued hostilities between the nations, arousing from Ethiopian occupation of ethnic Somali lands the Ogaden. Ethiopia's involvement in the conflict was at the

behest the TFG and Prime Minister Meles Senawi has vowed

Protests in London this Saturday by British Somalis, calling for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops, reflect the great unease felt by many Somalis the world over about the events transpiring back home. ■

America for the Americans

[Santiago Diehl](#) examines the future for the 'other America'

I have been taking classes for a whole term at the LSE and I got to hear a lot the word "America" as a synonym of the USA, as well as their derivatives "Americanism", "Americanization" and "Americanized". I must admit I just can't get used to it, no matter how many times I listen to it. For myself and for many of us, America is the name of a continent, our continent, not just a country. Even when that country turns out to be, still, the most powerful on the planet.

Where does this misunderstanding come from? It started early in the history of the independence of the American countries. The continent "discovered" by Europeans was named *America* likely after the Italian sailor and cartographer Amerigo Vesputio. He was the first man to recognize that the "New World" was not "the Indies", as Columbus had first thought. Paradoxically, in its origins the coined term was used mainly to describe the southern territories of the hemisphere. Only later the concept was expanded to the rest of the territories known today as Americas.

The dispute is bitter, because it carries the weight of Colonialism. It was - it always is - a matter of geopolitics. Summarizing; the French played a key role in aiding the new-found United States financially and in providing direct military and naval support to fight the British during the revolution. The British quickly recognized the independence of the revolted Spanish colonies in South America, when Spain was invaded by Napoleon. British PM George Canning claimed then "if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old", in a (successful) attempt to prevent South America from falling into the French sphere of influence.

In 1823, the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed the United States' opinion

that European powers should no longer colonize America or interfere with the affairs of sovereign nations located in America. The United States planned to stay neutral in wars between European powers and in wars between a European power and its colonies. However, if these latter wars were to occur in the Americas, the United States would view such action as hostile toward itself. This doctrine was issued by President James Monroe during his seventh annual State of the Union address to Congress. It was a defining moment in the foreign policy of the United States, "America for the Americans", such was its claim.

The doctrine was conceived by its authors as a proclamation by the

hemisphere.

In the past year, several signals announce the instability of this "backyard policy" towards the countries of the region; The backlash of MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (ALCA) in the last Summit of the Americas held in Argentina. The fact that MERCOSUR has been growing since then, incorporating Venezuela, Bolivia and soon Ecuador. The failure in imposing US' candidate (Guatemala) to the regional seat in the Security Council in the UN and the need to negotiate a consensus one (Panama). Recent elections in Bolivia, Panama, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Venezuela. All confirm that times are

changing in a considerable part of America. Arguably, this year the same is going to happen in Argentina. Most of the election results in the sub-continent had shown a tendency to demand more democracy, national sovereignty, social justice, and regional integration.

The end of the cold war has led the US to focus on the Middle East, therefore allowing the sub-continent to follow its own way to development. The recent death of Augusto Pinochet (notoriously on International Human Rights Day) is but a meaningful metaphor of this. Judging by the results, Latin Americans are doing it well. The annual rate of GDP regional growth in 2006 was of 5.3% according to the Economic Commission for

Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) of the UN. Furthermore, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay had paid their entire debts to the IMF.

Maybe it's time that we start to recognize this aspect of the new emerging global scenario by calling things by their names. In the next few years, another terms rather than American ("Unitedstern" or "UStern" and its derivatives, to name but just a couple of alternatives) might become more useful in paving the way to a multilateral world. Especially in an environment as the LSE, so tidy when it comes to respectfulness of national and regional identities, words really count. ■

The end of the cold war has led the US to focus on the Middle East, therefore allowing the sub-continent to follow its own way to development

United States of moral opposition to colonialism, but has subsequently been re-interpreted in a wide variety of ways, including by President Theodore Roosevelt as a license for the U.S. to practice its own form of colonialism, known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. In its altered state, the Monroe Doctrine would now consider Latin America as an agency for expanding U.S. commercial interests in the region, along with its original stated purpose of keeping European hegemony from the



Introducing Rio de Janeiro...

How the left helps the British National Party

Graham Fichtling argues the current approach to fighting racism is doing more harm than good

Given the importance of racism and xenophobia in British society, I am deeply disappointed that previous writers in *The Beaver* seem (certainly in this academic year at least) to have not really studied the issue from the perspective of those ethnically white Britons who are fed up with the way issues of inter-ethnic relations are currently being managed in Britain and appear to be increasingly developing racist and xenophobic views. I believe that without considering the issue from the perspective of the people who are actually developing racist and xenophobic views, we can never hope to understand what the cure for this destructive social cancer is. This of course doesn't mean that anyone has to sympathise with racist views, it just means being aware of people's grievances to generate an understanding of the causes of racism, which is surely the way forward in finding a cure.

It seems obvious to me simply from living in Britain for twenty-two years that perhaps tens of millions of white British people increasingly feel fundamentally devalued and disrespected in modern Britain. Don't believe me? Go to most pubs in this country and listen to the chatter for long enough, read the right wing press, visit a few politics-based internet forums or listen to a few radio phone-ins and you'll see that the evidence is abundant, and I think most agree that discontent is on the rise.

Let me give some examples of things which I truly believe increase the hostility from some ethnically white Britons towards ethnic minorities: Ken Livingstone, the left wing Mayor of London, inviting a radical Islamic cleric, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, to London, at the hard-pressed taxpayers expense, who clearly has no respect (hatred is a more accurate term) for British people and culture, as well as many minority groups and

story about a Bengali tiger was justified on the basis of wanting to do something different, but this is a reason so blatantly ridiculous and discriminatory (would a celebration from any other culture be replaced on this basis?) that this can also be classified with the previous examples as giving white Britons reason to feel that their culture or ethnicity is under attack (though I of course accept that anyone could find these incidents offensive). I think it's reasonable to assume these sorts of incidents, which display a blatant lack of respect for British culture, help illustrate why we're increasingly seeing among some white Britons, feelings of disrespect and mistrust, which can easily develop into a perceived need to attack other cultures and ethnicities in response. I realise that it is the right-wing press that often carries these stories the most, and probably over exaggerates their direct impact, but to dismiss them as irrelevant, and say they're not happening, would be a big mistake. Many of these cases are small, isolated examples, but as I've learned simply from talking to people, their power to upset and fuel hostility towards other cultures should not be underestimated.

All these examples illustrate a tragedy: I have never met someone from an ethnic minority community who claims to feel offended by Bonfire night, Christmas, or the national flag of the country in which they reside, nor, I would strongly suspect, have many other white Britons. These common senseless changes, which offend many white Britons and fuel racism and xenophobia, are being carried out in the name of ethnic minorities and multiculturalism by politically correct left wingers found in local government and quangos across Britain (they're also in far from short supply at LSE) who *think* they are acting in the interests of ethnic minorities and helping to promote harmonious community relations, and are often the one's who do the most anti-racism campaigning. The irony is that these people are doing more than most from the political far-right to increase racism and xenophobia in Britain by attacking cultural and religious symbols held dearly by many white Britons in the name of ethnic and religious minority groups. The left must take much of the blame for providing racists like the BNP with the ammunition they need to claim that the white British ethnic group and culture is under attack and are second class citizens, and be perceived in the eyes of many as the only party willing to defend white British people.

Surely multiculturalism can only work when *each and every* ethnic and cultural group feels valued and equal to all others, but this prerequisite has yet to be realised in Britain. I believe we cannot hope to truly tackle racism and xenophobia without a genuinely open and honest debate which involves *all* sections of society, where people feel their views have been heard and considered. Too often, 'debate' on this issue been little more than a lecture by the political elite and chattering classes directed at people who are often badly educated, in the poorest parts of Britain, miles away from the cosmopolitan, intellectual atmosphere of LSE to basically 'accept immigration and multiculturalism, it's good for you', as illustrated in Alex Vincenti's article in *The Beaver* during RISE week, in which



The consequence of political correctness?

she correctly claimed that some people don't recognise how enriching multiculturalism is. My response is very simple: when the political classes tell people that multiculturalism is good for them (often without any reasoning), yet seek to undermine things that are important to them, such as Christmas and their national flag in the name of multiculturalism and ethnic minority sensitivities, can you really be surprised at their inclination to disagree?

In the last edition of *The Beaver*, Shanela Haque wrote an article entitled 'Fighting Fascism is (an) NUS priority', which discussed the role of the NUS 'no-platform' policy in helping achieve this objective. I strongly believe that our Anti-Racism Officer is making a major error of judgement here. Without wishing to repeat

Douglas Oliver's excellently put argument in the last issue of *The Beaver*, I believe that the macro equivalent of the no-platform policy currently in operation in British society, namely the British media blackout of the BNP and racist views, is a major obstacle in the fight against racism. If you want to prove to the general public how awful and idiotic racist views are, surely you need to give everybody the chance to hear them being said by the morons who actually believe it, and the counterarguments, and trust people to be intelligent enough to come to the conclusion that racism and xenophobia do not offer any answers to life's problems.

By allowing the politically correct left to undermine British culture in the name of multiculturalism and ethnic minority sensitivities and con-

tinuing with the censored public debate on immigration, race and multiculturalism we have in Britain today, I believe we are seeing racism and xenophobia (as shown by the increased support for the BNP), rise as a direct consequence. I end this article on a positive note: I hope that in the future that the left and right across Britain can work *together* to end racism, something they've never really done before, I think largely because the left have seen this as 'their' issue. To work together to tackle this social cancer, we must re-think what it is that's causing the surge in racism and xenophobia. I hope this article at the very least offers everyone food for thought, whether they like the taste of it or not. ■

The British media blackout of the BNP and racist views, is a major obstacle in the fight against racism

their cultures, who left-wingers like Livingstone have traditionally fought to defend. Secondly, some councils have decided to tell tenants in council homes not to fly St. George's crosses or Union Jacks in recent years. Thirdly, the widespread replacement of Christmas events in workplaces and schools with 'winter festivals' of some description is a rising phenomenon. The decision by Tower Hamlets Council in 2006 to replace traditional Guy Fawkes night celebrations with a

An MBE for BAE

Kevin Perry speaks out against Labour's unhealthy relationship with a British Arms Firm

It's a New Year, so tradition dictates that there be a New Year's honours list granting the great and the good the privilege of getting on their knees in front of royalty. While it has always been plainly ridiculous to witness the pomp that surrounds the unelected head of the British state clinging to the last vestiges of empire, the honours she dished out felt even more hollow than usual this year. 'Swiss Tony' Blair was interviewed just weeks before their announcement about allegations that many titles have been sold behind closed doors, like used cars with forged MOTs.

But while the honours scandal grabbed the headlines, there were even darker corruptions being buried in the press – the decision, apparently taken at the very top of government, to drop an investigation into alleged slush funds and bribes paid by BAE to ensure Saudi Arabian arms contracts were granted to them. The arms trade activist Mark Thomas argues that BAE systems has "the Labour government in their pocket", but it was not until recently that I realised the true extent of their power, as Tony Blair smilingly took responsibility for the sale of the last scraps of his 'ethical foreign policy' to a cabal of arms dealers. His gall was astounding, but then, as Dostoevsky pointed out, the vastest crimes are often applauded when the same crime on a smaller scale would be condemned.

When questioned about the decision, Blair began by stating that he had to "leave aside the affect on thousands of British jobs and billions worth of pounds for British industry". This was a formality, of course, because if he had stated openly that

this was at the forefront of his mind then he would have been breaking international law (and God forbid he should ever do something like that). However, the fact that he prefaced his comments with this statement illustrates the importance that economics played. As students of LSE, perhaps we should follow the argument that bribery is an inevitability, that even justice has its price, and to quote Shelley, "All things are sold: the very light of heaven is venal". Perhaps it is worth bending a few rules and crossing a few palms with silver if we can protect big British employers like BAE. But as economists we must face the fact that the government and BAE's relationship is now incestuously close. By protecting BAE, both abroad and with massive defence contracts at home, the government is contradicting its own ideology of competition and undermining the operation of the free market by allowing this corporation to grow corpulent under its benevolent gaze. Furthermore, how can Hilary Benn possibly expect to be taken seriously when he lectures African nations that they must crack-down on corruption if they wish to secure aid, when his own Prime Minister endorses it?

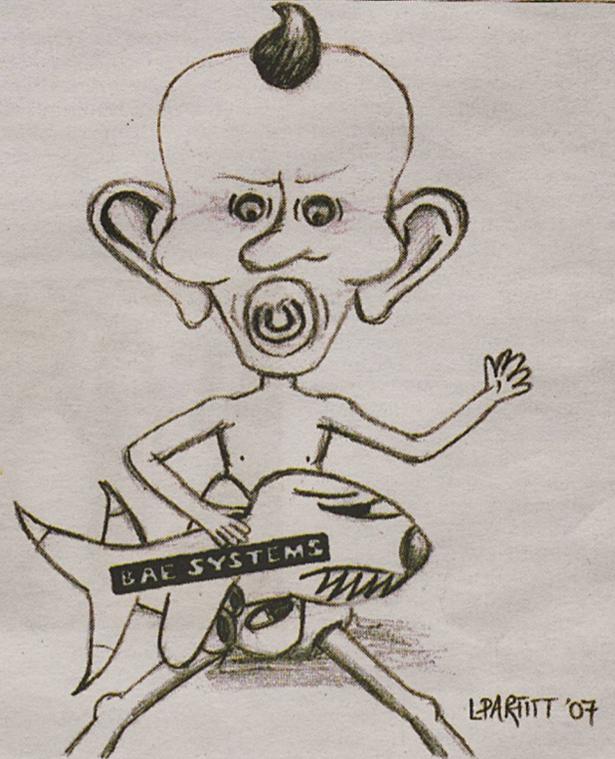
Blair continued "Our relationship with Saudi Arabia is vitally important in terms of counter-terrorism. That strategic interest comes first." By suggesting a Saudi threat to withdraw intelligence, Blair almost implies that he has been blackmailed. He also seems to be romanticising Britain's importance. No matter how badly Saudi Arabia fell out with Britain, the effect on the vastly more critical Saudi-USA relationship

would surely be negligible.

Blair went on to claim that the investigation would stir up "ill feeling between us and a key partner and ally, and probably to no purpose". I'm not a legal expert, but it would appear to me that one cannot assume that the investigation would have no purpose without the investigation being carried out. This is, it would seem to the layman, the reason one has an investigation.

"I take full responsibility. I have no doubt at all that if we had allowed this to go forward we'd have done immense damage to the true interests of this country," concluded Blair, presumably referring to the interests of exporting weapons to the Middle East and getting very, very rich in the process. And who can blame him, when the stakes are set so high? BAE has earned over £40 billion from the Al-Yamamha deals in the last 20 years.

There may just be hope yet. This weekend it became clear that the Serious Fraud Office, stung by the perception that Blair had so easily called them to heel, have moved their attention from Saudi Arabia to the other corners of the globe where they think BAE may have been greasing palms. The most high profile of these cases is in South Africa, but there are also similar investigations being carried out everywhere from the Czech Republic to Chile, and from Romania to Tanzania. These are countries that it is easier for our government to play tough with, we don't rely on any of them for oil supplies or intelligence reports, but, and perhaps ultimately more damningly, the alleged infractions are considerably more recent



Babyish Blair fails to hold BAE to account

than the Saudi bribes which date back to the 80s. Meanwhile, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development will ask Whitehall officials to justify the decision to withdraw the Saudi investigation at a hearing next month. As a society we have a simple choice now. We can reward their directors with

places on 2008 New Year's honours list for services to the country, as Blair would no doubt see fitting, or we can punish the arms dealers just the same as we'd punish any other corrupt, violent punk who bribed his way into a position to peddle his murderous wares. ■

Caring Conservatives?

Gregory White examines Tory policy in the year ahead

Last year was an astonishing year for the Conservative Party in Britain under David Cameron. Once thought of as politically backwards and socially unacceptable, Conservative has suddenly become synonymous with progress in Britain. Who would have thought the party of Margaret Thatcher and John Major would suddenly change its symbol to a green tree in 2006?

Cameron has taken a party whose disciplined, ancient political positions hindered it from competition and turned it into the darling child of the British press. With trips to melting glaciers, bike rides to work, and family shopping trips to Borough Market Cameron has made Conservative look like me and you and not grandma, grandpa, or that well starched businessman with a Land Rover and country house.

It really is a beautiful orchestrated transformation by a once cocaine using communications exec from the city. He has tackled what seem to be the core issues of our time: climate change, social inequality, and communal responsibility without ever really shedding light on his true policy initiatives. Cameron and his party's focus is clear, but the policies have been well disguised with delightful electioneering not seen since the rise of Tony Blair.

With 2007 here, however, the impressive character of David

Cameron is beginning to display for the public just exactly what he is made of. Besides just stating what he and his renaissance conservatives care

Besides just stating what he and his renaissance conservatives care about, Cameron is actually constructing a path to them achieving it

about, he is actually constructing a path to them achieving it.

In a recent speech (14 December) Cameron laid out a set of goals for the redevelopment of social responsibility in Britain. He called on the British public to become less attached to government as the source of aid and, instead, review the importance of community. Charity, he said, could serve to better Britain in ways government could never achieve. A more intimate approach, according to Cameron, would bring progress in

stalled areas of social reform and reshape Britain so dramatically as to mimic the gains of Thatcherism in a social context.

Such statements do not seem that far removed from the policies the Bush administration in the United States came to office with. They too, with this concept of "compassionate conservatism," sought to end government's stranglehold on aid and develop community, even if it was predicated on a more religious background. This theory has been espoused before across the Atlantic, and its policies have only served to shatter much of the hope many middle-class Americans had for their children.

Cameron's policies, while anti large government, never come close to the government welfare endgame the US has experienced. Never will British citizens have to worry about affording to pay for university with loans totaling £50,000 upon graduation. But such is the difference of Cameron's Conservative position and that of an ever welfare-less US. Cameron may have found just what Britain needs to reignite its stagnant social order, a bit of community.

When not fighting against Labour draconian government control in late 2006, Cameron was attempting to highlight his party's new position as that of "The Working Man." While the concept of the Conservative Party, small(er) government low(er) taxes,

does not particularly seem pro-fishmonger, Cameron is doing his best to convince us of just that. In his New Year's message Cameron stated, "As we campaign in 2007 on the NHS, crime, the environment, the cost of living, and the shocking decline in social mobility in our country, we must show that, unlike Labour, we will be a party that is for working people, not rich and powerful vested interests." Now what this means for Britain is for certain: Labour and the Conservatives will be fighting over the same middle-class turf for some time to come.

But what is more concerning is this new definition of what being a Conservative Party member actually means. If it is meant to be a party for working people, as in construction workers, kitchen staff, and taxi cab drivers then where will the rich, self-employed, yacht-dwelling class reside? Cameron's biggest obstacle in 2007 might not be the voters he has to gain, as the middle classes are very much on board, but the benefactors, donors, and core voters he must keep in line to secure his election.

And then there is the looming conflict with Brown. Cameron really has nothing to fear from the hard as nails Scot other than being outsmarted in over the dispatch box. He will never be outwitted, but he might be made to look weak next to the bulldog like Brown. If Cameron can make

Brown seem old-fashioned, distanced from the middle class, and uncompassionate then victory could be at hand for the Conservatives in 2008. Otherwise these chameleon jibes might actually have an impact, and Cameron's renaissance conservatives might fall victim to a New Labour rebirth. ■



My name's Dave and I'm just like you!

Selling sex: a deadly trade

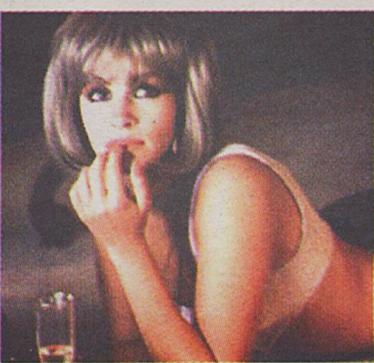
Rosamund Urwin suggests the Ipswich murders highlight the misogyny underlying prostitution

Although on average in England a prostitute is murdered every couple of months, it takes the murder of five women in a very short period for us to take note. Yet much of the interest in the recent murders in Ipswich stems more from the public's mixture of fascination and revulsion with brutal serial killers than from any great sympathy with these women; many have questioned whether these women didn't, in some way at least, bring their fates upon themselves.

This nonsense that women working in prostitution are acting freely must be dismissed. Whilst I do not doubt that some may enjoy certain aspects of their job and certainly, given the huge number of them (an estimated 80,000 in the UK and millions worldwide), there will be a wide range of experiences amongst them. Yet the majority are there through some sort of compulsion: most have a history of abuse, were trafficked or ended up in prostitution to fund their drug habits: an estimated 95% of prostitutes are addicted to drugs or alcohol (*The Guardian*). For many, prostitution is a late stage in a long tale of exploitation. A study in 2001 suggested that women who work as prostitutes receive such frequent beatings that they exhibit the same incidence of traumatic brain injury as victims of torture. Trafficking for sexual exploitation is a common part of their stories and is far more widespread in the UK than is imagined, with its victims offered little protection. A study last year by The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found that 60% of trafficked women had experienced abuse before they were trafficked, further revealing a cycle of abuse. Yet our government has such little regard for these women that the UK has not even signed up to the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings drawn up by the Council of Europe. And in a further insult, when

they finally escape, many of these women are deported to the homes they were so keen to leave.

In general, far too much onus is placed on female behaviour, rather than on the men whose demand creates the supply of prostitutes, by both the law and the media. A police crackdown prior to the murders gave the Ipswich killer easier targets since their attempt to drive women from the red-light area split up the prostitutes. As the body toll rose the police,



Somehow we have come to have some false notion of a 'happy hooker,' one who enjoys sex and is just waiting for Richard Gere to come and sweep her off her feet

rather than telling kerb crawlers to remove themselves from suspicion by

staying at home, advised women to do so for their protection. In their defence, the police stressed that they never want men kerb crawling, either during the murder investigation or after it, but perhaps it would have been sensible to state this. Much worse though, was the media coverage of the murders, which reported every sordid and sad detail of these women's lives and, in the case of Gemma Adams, her descent from an average, middle-class, piano-playing, Brownies-attending girl into a heroin-addled working woman, but was noticeably lacking any information about the men who buy sex from these women.

And what of the Home Office's plan for the creation of mini-brothels which they claim will protect women from exploitation and violence? These plans could not be more misguided. Many women who work in the supposedly more reputable areas of the sex trade - massage parlours and flats, have themselves been trafficked and are little more than sex slaves. Legalised brothels and tolerance zones simply make it easier for men to buy women. This solution stems from a misunderstanding about the nature of prostitution: that it is just about sex. In reality, the demand for prostitution stems from deep-rooted misogyny, a desire to hurt, humiliate and torture women. Legalisation merely implies normalisation: the acceptance that a woman's body can be bought. Some prostitutes have suggested their function is to undergo the bestial rituals which certain men feel necessary for sexual release. Not content with consensual sex, these men seek sadistic pleasure with a woman whose only alternative is starvation. This killer's actions are just an extension of this pleasure; it is surprising the police found the suspect so quickly since they were searching for a man consumed by misogyny, amongst a group of such men. Since we regard racially-motivated attacks as 'hate-crimes,'



Victim or Criminal?

this recent spate of murders should be considered in the same way, loathing being the primary cause. Men who kill women do it for reasons of inadequacy and hatred: they are frightened of women, of rejection, of sex and most of all, they simply detest women. Prostitutes simply make easier victims as they are more vulnerable and are forced to take risks and trust in men, undeserving of that faith.

It is time to decriminalise soliciting, criminalise the demand and provide more extensive assistance networks to help women escape life on the streets. What we need is an inversion of the current system: where men are prosecuted for paying for sex and those who have sex with trafficked women are charged with rape. We should model our laws on those of Sweden, where men who buy sex face fines or imprisonment but selling sex is decriminalised and women are offered help to resolve the problems which drove them to the sex trade in the first place. The men's punishment is reinforced by compulsory education on the harm of the sex trade. Not only have the policies freed prostitutes

from the criminal justice system, allowing them a greater chance to do something else with their lives, but it is also the logical way of approaching prostitution: reducing the suffering of these women by decriminalising what they do. Without the consumers, there would be no trade and men who pay to abuse women would not provide the cover needed for another murderer to carry out his crimes so easily.

Blame 'Pretty Woman,' 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' or 'The Diary of a Manhattan Call-girl,' but somehow we have come to have some false notion of a 'happy hooker,' one who enjoys sex and is just waiting for Richard Gere to come and sweep her off her feet. Perhaps it is easier to kid ourselves that these women will have the fairytale rescue than to accept that so many will share the same appalling fate as those in Ipswich. If any good is to come out of this tragedy, let it be this: let us stop pretending the 'oldest profession' is any kind of profession at all; it is just a new kind of hell for already abused women. ■

Confessions of a selfaholic

Ben Gianforti shares his New Year's resolve to fight against the 'Me Me Me' culture

New Year's resolutions are like the road to Hell, paved with good intentions. Looking back on a year filled with guilty pleasures and bad behaviour, we make empty promises to change our ways. Call me a cynic, but human nature generally compels us to renege rather than reform. It's the path of least resistance. Addictions are particularly hard to shake and are often the target of (quickly discarded) New Year's resolutions.

My New Year's resolution is to conquer a far more insidious addiction than smoking, drinking, over-eating or watching too much television. It's a plague-like addiction rotting

society from the inside out. It's the new crack. It's the addiction to myself.

So in true Alcoholics Anonymous form, let me state for the record, "My name is Ben and I am a selfaholic. I think about myself all the time, I talk about myself all the time and I don't listen to others." Western society, to its long term detriment, is becoming increasingly populated with selfaholics. As we have turned inward, outward civility has crumbled around us. Narcissism is applauded while courtesy is derided as weakness. If the '70s were the 'me decade,' then the '00s are the 'ME decade.' In fact, we are probably on the threshold of the 'ME

century,' if not the 'ME millennium' (assuming we last that long). The so-called 'Information Age' in which we now find ourselves has been marked by the democratisation of internet-based mediums of self-expression. Anyone with a connection not only has access to the greatest repository of knowledge humanity has ever seen, but also a pulpit from which to extol one's own virtues.

You Tube immortalises in living sound and picture the most inane moments of our existence. *MySpace* and *Facebook* profiles are little more than autobiographical shrines of self-worship. Blogs put our deepest hopes and fears on display. All that is internal is too readily made external. We have deemed our entire beings worthy of public scrutiny. However, as we meticulously construct these online simulacra, it is our vanity that is most laid bare.

Many hail this exponential growth in 'participatory media' as the dawning of a new Golden Age based on individual expression, customization and accountability (think about all the politicians who have gone down recently because of *You Tube*). *Time Magazine* went so far as to declare 'You' (the individual) the 'Man of the Year.' This was a bad move. By placing the individual on such a high pedestal, *Time* is enabling mass self-aholism. To celebrate participation as

a virtue unto itself is to celebrate mediocrity. Anyone can participate. Not everyone should be celebrated.

MySpace and *Facebook* profiles are little more than autobiographical shrines of self-worship

With the glorification of democratised self-expression comes haughty self-regard in equal measure. The more time we spend thinking about ourselves, the more time we spend talking about ourselves. Then we eventually log off and engage in actual human interaction. Self-promotion has become a way of life.

When unabashed individual expression is commended in this manner, the problem becomes one of self-enslavement (or the lack thereof). I'm not one to put limits on free speech, but some would do well to think of the First Amendment as a privilege, not a right. I call this the 'car horn method of self-censorship.' People should honk their horn only when they think it will be helpful in moving

things forward, not just because they can. Otherwise, the noise is deafening.

I don't have any data that suggests people are more self-obsessed now than in the past. It's more a feeling I get from popular culture and day-to-day encounters. Celebrity worship and reality TV are the best examples of exalted mediocrity. We are witnessing the industrialisation of personality. But to truly get a sense of how little people listen, one must turn to political debate. Nowhere is self-aholism more rampant than among American talking heads. Political debate has been reduced to shouting matches between petty, narcissistic demagogues. Today, publicity always trumps civility.

I recognise that there is a certain irony in railing against self-aholism in an article written in the first person. Obviously, I'm hoping this piece will be read by as many people as possible. But just like fighting any addiction, the first step is admitting you have a problem. My New Year's resolution is simply to talk less and listen more. I've come to realize that there are few personality characteristics more unattractive, than being a bad listener. And I don't want to contribute any more than I must to the steady erosion of civil society. Fortunately, this doesn't require scrapping my *Facebook* profile or personal website. ■



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The Year of the Woman

Jen Goldstein discusses the changing American political scene

It is both quite an achievement and also a sign of how far we have to go. 2007 is being heralded as a possible 'Year of the Women' in American politics. And yet for all the hoopla, women have managed to claw their way up to only 16.5%. Of course, one of the women does now hold the third highest office in the country. Nancy Pelosi is the new Speaker of the House, and the first woman to ever hold that post. She has called this "breaking the marble ceiling," like the glass ceiling, only harder. She now has more power over her party not to mention the Congressional agenda, than any woman has had before her. Since the first female member, Jeannette Rankin, was elected to Congress in 1917, 203 women have served. Unfortunately, at the current rate of change it will be nearly 100 years before women are half of the Congressional Delegation.

2007 is also not the first time we have had the Year of the Woman. 1992 saw a record six women elected to the U.S. Senate. Many attributed this influx to the Clarence Thomas hearings. Thomas, who was being questioned by the Senate before being placed on the U.S. Supreme Court, had been accused of sexual harassment by a former colleague, Anita Hill. The image of the all white, all male Senate Judiciary Council aggressively questioning Hill, an African-American woman, angered many women voters.

Taglines like 'year of the woman' make for a good sound bite and can even be slightly inspiring. Yet, as Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland said after the first year of the woman, "Calling 1992 the Year of the Woman makes it sound like the Year of the Caribou or the Year of the Asparagus. We're not a fad, a fancy, or a year."

And yet progress is unpredictable. While the elections saw a record number of women elected, female Democratic challengers got trounced. On election night, Rep. Rahm

Emanuel, in charge of the Democratic efforts to take back the house said: "What the f**k happened to my women?" responding to the fact that only three of seventeen women challengers won, which was a much worse showing than male Democratic challengers.

Why all the fuss about electing more women? Is this just symbolic window-dressing or do women really make a difference? The voters seem to think they do. According to research conducted by Lake Research partners; 47% of voters think having more women in office would change the situation in Washington a lot, or some. And they might be right. Research shows women prioritize issues differently. More Democratic women than men rate health care, the War in Iraq and Social Security as the top three issues concerning the country.

And unsurprisingly, there is a pro-choice oriented gender gap among the general population. Increasing num-

Why all the fuss about electing more women? Is this just symbolic window-dressing or do women really make a difference?

bers of female representatives has resulted in bills that probably would not have even been submitted with only male representation. The Women's Caucus claims as achievements; The Retirement Equity Act, The Women's Business Ownership Act, The Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act, The Family and Medical Leave Act, and The Child Support Enforcement Act among oth-

ers.

The Women's Caucus was founded in 1977 with fifteen women, and has been active ever since. It clearly shows the potential difference women politicians can make especially when they work together. And yet for all their hard-work, male politicians' concerns still dominate politics in Washington. Some research suggests this will continue to be the case until a 'critical mass' is reached. Usually stated at about 30% of the total, a group is supposed to start seeing a massive difference in the power and leverage when their numbers hit critical mass. With 2007 seeing female representation at just over 16% this is still a long way off.

Of course, women in Congress isn't the only women in politics story getting buzz these days. Hilary Clinton's expected imminent announcement of a run for the Presidency is getting a fair share of press. Victoria Woodhull was the first woman to run for President in the U.S. in 1872 (on the Equal Rights Party ticket), but Clinton's announcement will be the first time a viable woman candidate has run. She has experience as First Lady of Arkansas, First Lady of the U.S. and Senator from New York. Her fund-raising ability is incredibly impressive and she already has \$14.4 million saved up. She's published four books, three best sellers, and has a husband willing to shake hands and slap shoulders, although we'll see if Bill is more a hindrance than a help. But don't be too hasty - Hilary may be rolling in campaign cash and contacts but she's not the only promising historic candidate. There is also Senator Barack Obama.

Whether its women or African-Americans or any other minority you care to think of, it is slow going in politics. As this article itself helps to show, women are still viewed as female candidates first and foremost, and it's the same for other minorities. There probably won't ever be a day



A woman's place is in the House

when people aren't judged even a little on their sex, sexuality, race or religion. And that might not even be ideal - as we've seen women think differently about many issues, and vote differently on many issues. Being a woman is just like any other attribute from being a fighter pilot to having run your own business - it gives you a specific perspective that influences how you'll be as a politician. The

problem is gender is only one part of how women politicians make decisions, yet its seen as an overwhelming influence. The goal is one day to have enough female representatives for them to be seen as normal, and for gender to be one of many, many things people think about when deciding to vote. That day will come eventually, hopefully much sooner than 100 years! ■

Tesco: Every little helps?

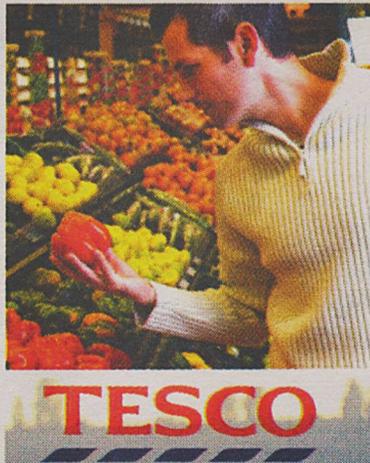
Meryem Torun argues the growth of Tesco is a potentially dangerous phenomenon

Tesco certainly loves the spotlight, be it for criticisms or praise, it loves to make the headlines. Once again, it hasn't failed on this account as the supermarket giant ventured into further expansion of the its empire. Unsurprisingly, the recent expansions are eastward and particularly into China where it has increased its previously small share of the market. It's unsurprising because China, with its market of 1 billion shoppers, is where all retailers aspire to gain share. Tesco is no exception. This is headline news for a different reason. There are more prominent questions surrounding expansion. Is Tesco going too far?

It's easy to understand why we love supermarkets. They are an easy way to shop, they are often cheap and you can expect a certain level of customer service. These are the reasons why Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons have come to dominate the grocery sector, and have gradually broadened their range of goods and services to everything as far as broadband and insurance. The cut-throat competition that exists between these retailers seems advantageous for the industry. The battle exists on all fronts: innovation, quality, customer

service and price. This is why Tesco often receives applause for its success - its huge market share is certainly not accidental. Yet it's questionable whether Tesco is the free-market ideal.

From a customer point-of-view, the Tesco we often see is one that is customer-focused, offering choice and quality at low prices whilst maintaining ethical standards. It is unfortunate then that what's in store is something quite different. As it grows both nationally and globally Tesco is underlining two major problems caused by multinationals such as itself. The first is domination of what appears to be a highly competitive market. Not only has Tesco surpassed its supermarket rivals but even more importantly, it has successfully taken on the small grocery stores and local business. To add to this is the fact that as it becomes more international, it is becoming harder to keep Tesco accountable to its customer promise. Despite the benefits of information technology that allow us to be more informed about what we are buying and who we are buying it from, we seem to know less than ever about where our products come from. One of the reasons that supermarkets can sell



at such low prices is due to the outsourcing which takes place in Asian countries. This begs the question as to whether the ethics and environmental concerns, that Tesco present to customers are in fact held up in reality. In some ways this is not a new problem and neither is it reserved to the supermarket sector, but it presents itself more clearly in a sector dominated by large corporations competing in a brutal price war.

The problem isn't just over ethics either. Being not only a market leader, but also one of the largest retailers in Britain with almost £40 billion revenue, Tesco's increasing power in the global market place is disconcerting. The huge influence that such supermarkets yield is detrimental not just to small business but even more so to consumers. It seems dangerous that we are so reliant on a company such as Tesco to satisfy so much of our shopping needs. This puts us in a particularly vulnerable position as Tesco enlarges its scope worldwide and holds evermore influence over both its consumers, and its suppliers: the farmers. In this sense, there is little benefit from the low prices or the green antics that Tesco displays and any benefit is not enough the offset the potential damage.

Of course Tesco is not the only corporation responsible for this. It is merely a part of the fast-growing trend previously set by the American giant Wal-Mart, and followed by the French chain Carrefour. These corporations have built up the idea of the supermarket to the extreme - to the idea of having a market that is large enough to encompass all smaller ones and provide for all customer needs

under one roof. Whilst consumers might see this as a practical idea, in reality it is a disturbing one. It's really time to ask the question of how much we really know about these enlarged corporations and how much we really want to depend on them?

There are as always advocates of the Tesco saga; and usually these are the champions of the free market. This is why it's so ironic that the supermarkets' dream is one that contradicts the ideals of that free market. It is one that is aimed at eliminating choice and competition, and creating one retailer upon which all must depend. In practice the notion that Tesco or any other supermarket will achieve this kind of great status is highly improbable. Even if Tesco was to extend current UK market share Competition Commission would be on close watch. The concern is more over the oligarchy that is present in today's market, and the lack of control we have over these retailers who dominate our market and increasingly the global landscape. These supermarkets, in their scramble for profits, are causing destruction to everything we might value as consumers. ■

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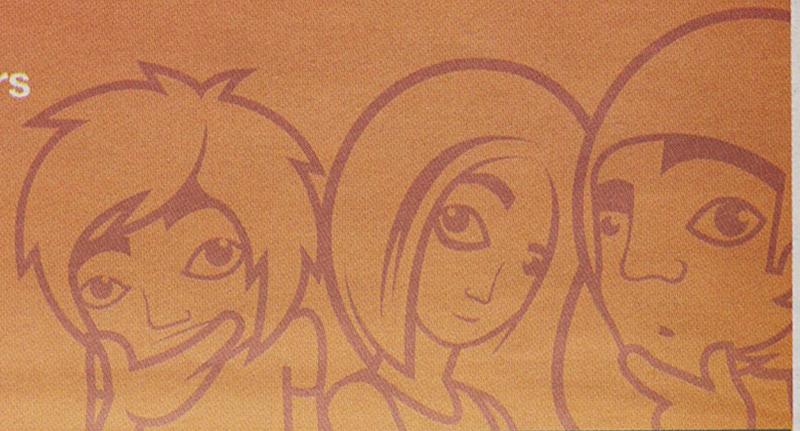
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the Beaver Listings

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TUES 09/01

8:30 All week
CU, Prayer meeting
Chaplaincy

14:00
Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga,
Badminton Court

15:00
CSSA, Chinese B-class
D206

18:00
AIESEC, Weekly
Meeting
S421

18:15
Yoga, Intermediate
Ashtanga Yoga
D002

19:00
Debate, Weekly Meeting
D302

WEDNS 10/01

13.00
Catholic Mass,
Chaplaincy
Hindu, Vedic Lunch
D211

Anime & Manga,
Drawing class
Z129
Accounting, Homework
help session
G107

SU Anti Racism forum
A379
14:00

Yoga, Intermediate Hatha
Yoga D702

15:00
Maths and Stats
Homework help session
Z332

CSSA
Chinese Classes – B-
class V103

16:00
CSSA
Chinese Classes – I-class
H206

18.15
Politics
Discussion forum / meet-
ing H103

19.00
Swing Dance
Improvers Classes
G108

Classes cost £2.50/£3.50
(members/non-members)

Weekly meetings
13.00

Green Party, H104
Student Action for
Refugees A283
Go V101

14:00
Pakistan, U203
Opera, H104

15:00
Chess K05

16:00
Bridge G107

THURS 11/01

11:00
Australia and New
Zealand

Weekly meeting
D9

13:00
SU UGM, Old Theatre

15:00
CSSA
Chinese Classes
K05

17.30
Yoga
Hatha Yoga, Badminton
Court

18.00
People and planet
Weekly meeting
H103
Sikh-Punjab

Music class
S78
Dance
Intermediate hip hop

class S75
Filipino
Tagalong lessons

G107
Visual Arts
Life drawing class
D206

19.00
Debate
Workshop
D302

FRI 12/01

13:00
Yoga
Intermediate Acrobatic
Yoga D702

14:00
CSSA
Chinese Classes (A)
Y115

15:00
Go
Weekly meeting
K05

16:00
CSSA
Chinese Classes – O-
class S221
Hindu

Gita Classes
D11
19:00

Dance
Ballet Class
S75
20.00

Welcome Back Crush
12:00
Knitting Workshop
Quad

Office hours (Quad)

General Secretary
Wednesday 1-2PM
Treasurer
Thursday 2-3PM
LGBT Officer
Thursday 2-3PM (in Alex Vincenti's office,
E299)
Education and Welfare Officer
Thursday 2-3PM
Communications Officer
Friday 2-3PM
Societies Officer
Friday 1-2PM
Environment and Ethics Officer
Monday 1-2PM
International Students
Tuesday 1-2PM
Students with Disabilities
Tuesday 1-2PM
Anti-Racism Officer
Friday 10AM-12PM
Postgraduate Officer
Thursday 3-4PM
Womens' Officer
Thursday 10-11 (D703)
Residences Officer
Thursday 2-3PM
Executive Editor, *The Beaver*
Tuesday 2-3PM (E204)
General Course
Tuesday 1-2PM

REFRESHERS WEEK

8th-12th January 2007

Tuesday

1pm: UGM... U What?! Old Theatre

Our very own Jimmy Tam, General Secretary of the Union, will be making sense of the crazy chaos that is our Union
General Meeting – motion writing, order of business, where to sit...

3pm: Your Union's Future – Have Your Say! Underground Bar

The Students' Union is currently reviewing the services we provide to students over the next 5 years in our strategic plan – probably the most important document for the Union right now. It's your Union, so make sure you come along and give the Executive Committee your opinion on our long-term goals. We will also be bribing you with a free lunch and be on hand to hear any other queries/ideas/holiday stories(!) you have.

Wednesday

2pm-3pm: Q & A – Postgraduates: Ask those questions you were too scared to ask last term!

Parish Hall (Building PH)

An opportunity for postgraduates to come along and put any question to the panel. In attendance will be LSESU General Secretary, Jimmy Tam, LSESU Education & Welfare Officer, Alexandra Vincenti, Head of LSE Student Administration, Mark Maloney, LSE Student Advice and Reception Manager, Katie Porrer, Research Degrees Manager, Derek Cook, and Graduate Dean, Julian Fulbrook (TBC).

3pm-4pm: Q & A – Undergraduates: Ask those questions you were too scared to ask last term!

Parish Hall (Building PH)

Still don't know where the library is? Want to apply for financial support but not sure how? Had a question but been too embarrassed to ask? Don't worry, our panel is here to help any undergraduate out there! In attendance will be LSESU General Secretary, Jimmy Tam, LSESU Education & Welfare Officer, Alexandra Vincenti, LSE Head of Student Administration, Mark Maloney, LSE Student Advice and Reception Manager, Katie Porrer, and Undergraduate Dean, Jan Stockdale.

Thursday

11am-4pm: Refreshers Fair Quad

Check out what new societies have been created, plus another chance to sign up to those societies and sports clubs you wish had at Freshers' Fair. All new societies will be represented, plus you will be able to sign up to all old societies at the Students' Union Stall.

1pm-2pm: Union General Meeting (UGM) Old Theatre

You've heard about it. Here it is. The first UGM of the year, where we'll elect our new chair and vice-chair, hear what your elected officers have been up to, and you'll get the chance to vote and debate on motions that will decide what the Union's direction.

4:30pm-5:30pm: Q & A – Undergraduates: Ask those questions you were too scared to ask last term!

Underground Bar For details see above. Note: you only need to attend one of these sessions.

7:30pm-11pm: Tube Station Party! Underground Bar

Angel? Blackflora? Greenwich? Archway? Dress up as a tube station and head on down to the UNDERGROUND Bar (get the link!). Note: your entrance fee is dependent on the zone your station is in – the further away it is, the cheaper your entry! This party is part of the Students' Union 'TL Discount' campaign in conjunction with ULU to lobby for student discounts on single ticket fares. Come early for transport inspired food.

Friday

3.30pm: Q & A – Postgraduates: Ask those questions you were too scared to ask last term!

For details see above. Note: you only need to attend one of these sessions. Underground Bar

8pm-2am: CRUSH! Tuns/Quad/Underground

The first CRUSH back is NOT to be missed! Arrive early to avoid disappointment.

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Ultimate Frisbee

Winning over easy for hard-boiled LSE



D Piddy

Have you ever thrown a Frisbee? Have you ever run? Have you ever stuck an egg-timer up your ass? If you answered yes to all three of these questions, you could have played Ultimate. Too bad you are stuck with that eight minute 'hard-boiled' pleasure cycle, leaving your once delicate rectum with the circumference and elasticity of used John Holmes condom. I do not write such filth for shock value, I simply want you to know that it is acceptable, cathartic even, to laugh at

things you regret. Now go google 'John Holmes.'

But this should be a happy time! No more shameful thoughts of eleven year old Thai boys, or guilt at those pictures we thought were of Latoya Jackson, for we are kind of a big deal now. One of our team members had some sex with a real lady. Also, we came out of London Winter League II undefeated.

The day started like any regular December 10th: a piece of tasty chocolate from my always tasty O'Reilly Factor Christmas Shield advent calendar, some tooth-brushing, and a generous application of Old Spice and Aqua Velva instead of a shower. Next came the always enjoyable hour commute to Clapham next to a

guy who insisted on calling me 'boss.' I look nothing like Tony Danza, but I was not about to spoil my first flirtation with fame.

I arrived at the fields half an hour late and Team Equilibrium was already up 6-2 against Roehampton. Our team was missing a lot of players but Chubby had convinced Gullnaz and Hannah from the Women's rugby squad and Hanyi from the Netball 1st's to fill our ranks. Although this was their first foray into a real competitive sport they fit in seamlessly. Our three handlers, Yo!, Frenchie and Darkness, were all consistently breaking their marks, and the Roehamptonites were struggling with limited substitutes and ability. The final score of

10-3 was a nice start to the day and we confidently moved on to the next game against Discuits.

At first this team appeared fit, which often holds a strong correlation to athletic prowess, and a few members of their side had recently returned from the World's in Australia which was a bit intimidating. We managed however to get off to a great start with Pagget scoring 4 consecutive points. As he is team president and somehow convinced his mother to wash our jerseys, he is now our Most Reliable Player. By the time the whistle blew, we were up 9-2 and boisterously overconfident.

Our 3rd game was against Fugazee, a team we instantly disliked. The women on their

team prompted an interesting discussion on our sideline regarding the mechanics of sexual reassignment. According to Chubby, the female-male transition is more difficult, especially the genital reconfiguration, although butcher's would recognize it as something close to making bratwurst. They also had a player from Winnipeg, which is close enough to Quebec to make me uncomfortable. We were up 7-5 at the end, but these chin-strapped douches wanted to spend 20 minutes arguing about the time. Finally an organizer came over and told them to pound sand, and we had our third victory of the day.

Our fourth and final match was against PAF, which if my

imagination is correct, stands for something vulgar. Since this is a classy paper, I'll refrain from indulging myself. This team was actually a lot of fun to play against and I can't say a bad word about them, although the 'field' we were on was as sterile as Joseph's sack, and we can't blame this one on a narrow urethra. We nevertheless overcame the elements and won this match 9-7, giving us our first undefeated run at a tournament. So congratulations are due to ourselves, and we shall hopefully carry this impressive momentum into Winter League III on January 14th. Also, congratulations to E-Spot on that sex.

Sports Desk



Photograph: Corbis

BeaverSports needs you!

BeaverSports are recruiting a team of sports reporters for their new sports desk. Successful applicants would have the opportunity to cover major sporting events (expenses paid) and would also be trained as sports journalists. Forthcoming events which Sports would like to be covered include:

- Champions League Football
- Six Nations Rugby
- Darts BDO World Professional Championship
- Cricket One Day Internationals
- ...and many more

Sports Desk members would be required to meet once a week (probably on Fridays) and to cover about one event per week. If you would like to apply for a position on the desk please contact thebeaver.sports@lse.ac.uk for an application form.

The deadline for applications is Friday 12th January at 5pm.

The Punter

Pony up on the Elephants

Matthew
JCG
Partridge

LSE's favourite bookie is back in the new year with up-to-date odds on the forthcoming US election nomination races. Just don't blow all your money at once (that's for you, Richard Holden).

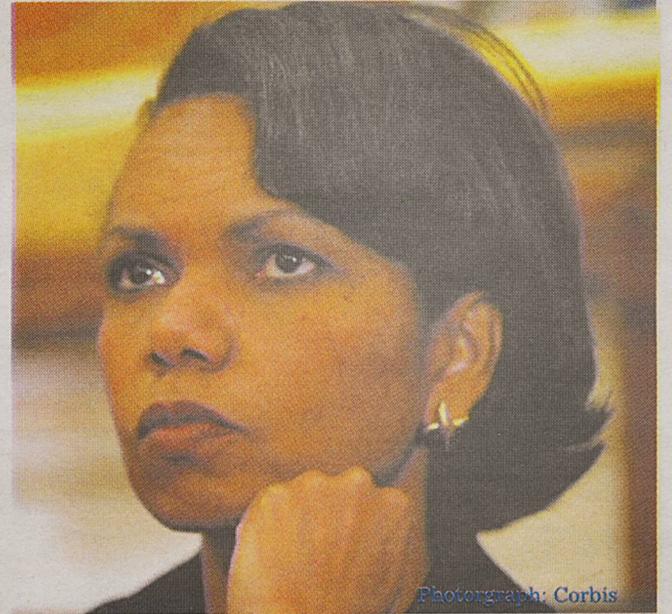
To round up my overview of the current state of play in the battle for the White House I am going to look at the battle for the Republican nomination. Over the Christmas holidays I looked at Dick Morris' book about a possible Presidential contest between Hillary Clinton and Condi Rice. Although Morris' vision of the Secretary of State being drafted into the Republican nomination by acclamation has been overtaken by events, not least the decision of Bush to

sideline her in favour of James Baker, I would not completely write her off. The fact remains that although the markets price her at (2-3) she regularly comes in third amongst the nominees in opinion polls of potential Republican nominees. Although I still think that her non-campaign is going nowhere fast this just means that the odds of her nomination are around 10%, making her the most undervalued candidate in relative terms.

If you like to bet on candi-

dates who are both undervalued and more likely chances I would not hesitate to recommend some money on John McCain (45-46). Although he could very well end up being the Ken Clarke of the GOP I still think that his position as the only candidate from either of the two main parties to advocate increasing the number of troops in Iraq gives him an advantage in the long run. If the race for the Democrat nomination results in the rapid elimination of the few centrist candidates don't be surprised to see large numbers of disillusioned Democrats crossing-over and voting for McCain in the various Republican primaries. I would seriously consider shorting Rudolph Giuliani as he is overvalued at (16-17). Although he is actually ahead in several polls it should be remembered that he was unable to beat Hillary Clinton in his own backyard, a fact that the other candidates will be emphasising to a party eager to retain control of the White House.

Outside of politics there are several good financial betting opportunities. With recent events in Somalia and the possibility of increases in troop levels in Iraq the tide seems to be turning in the fight against Islamic extremism. This would



Photograph: Corbis

seem to suggest that Gold Prices, which went up by over 20% in 2006 alone, are set to fall. Therefore, betting on a dramatic fall, such as a fall to less than \$540 (19-20) would be one possible option, as well as shorting gold futures through a spread betting firm such as IG Index. I am still bullish about PartyGaming.com, which is still languishing at (35-36), despite evidence that US pun-

ters are finding ways to circumvent the restrictions placed on them by Congress.

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



Photograph: Corbis

Ashes

England were Warne-d

Rupert
guest

From the moment Shane Warne sealed Australia's Ashes triumph on a baked Perth pitch, the autopsy into the ineptitudes demonstrated by the English team began. This

Australian team dominated in every aspect of the contest, not least in their sheer desire to banish the demons of 2005. Not content with merely regaining the urn, Australia gorged themselves on England's misery, adding crushing defeats in the last two tests to give Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath the swansong they deserved after more than a decade of tormenting opponents. So where did it all go

to the team despite being a worse batsman and wicket-keeper than his rival Chris Read. Indeed, Warne would refer to the bemused Jones as 'club-pro'. Geraint did not disappoint with the bat and it was often a relief to see him trundling back to the pavilion before he burst into tears in the face of the Australian mental barrage. Chris Read's keeping is first class but it is doubtful whether Fletcher will give him the time he needs to adjust to batting at international level. Nevertheless, his gutless dismissals in the final test may undermine his case for inclusion in the future. Although many commentators have predicted the end of Jones, the dearth of options available to England might see him return to the set up.

The selection of Ashley Giles in front of Monty 'the Sikh of Tweak' Panesar was another travesty. 'The King of Spain' was picked to add depth to the batting which was hardly a vote of confidence in the players taking the crease before him. It was also an indication of the conservative thinking of the selectors; Giles was not a match winner but he would be useful in a defensive context. Come the Second Test, Monty was still confined to bringing waterboy duties. To compound things, Giles joined the list of players who have 'dropped the Ashes', letting Ricky Ponting escape in a potentially series-turning moment. When Monty was



Photograph: Corbis

finally given his chance in Adelaide, he ripped through the Australian top order, taking five wickets on his Ashes debut.

It is doubtful whether Panesar's involvement from the start could have offset the endemic problems with England's approach. The captaincy issue was omnipresent; Flintoff clearly wasn't fully fit and Michael Vaughan's inclusion in the touring party was an unnecessary distraction. Some players didn't have the stomach for the fight. Steve Harmison looked a shade of his former self. Andrew Strauss didn't contribute enough; his demise usually started the familiar England batting collapse. Collingwood's last six innings produced low scores

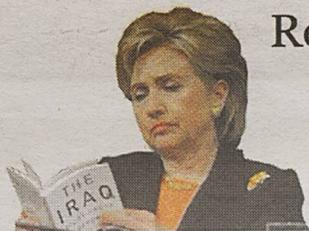
and his untimely sledging of Shane Warne achieved nothing but to highlight his own inadequacies. Anderson and Mahmood only emphasised the degree to which England missed Simon Jones. Added to this was the withdrawal of Marcus Trescothick before a ball was bowled. The England tail ensured that the innings effectively ended when the sixth wicket fell. In the final test Shane Warne bludgeoned 71. England's last five wickets scored a combined total of 4. Truly abysmal.

It took England 16 years to regain the Ashes, and they held them for 463 days—the shortest time of any victorious team. Credit must go to the Australian team. In Ponting, McGrath and Warne they have

three players who deserve more than the MBE's bestowed upon their opponents on the conclusion of the previous series. By 2009, Australia's class of 2006/7 will be decimated. Langer, McGrath, Martyn and Warne have already departed; Gilchrist and Hayden will probably not make it to the rematch in England. Australia's sporting culture is such that they will replace those champions with more world-class players. Most of those humiliated in Australia should have the opportunity to return in 2009. Hopefully they will have the same burning desire for vengeance that their counterparts demonstrated this time around.

wrong? England's preparations were about as thorough as those of the LSE FC's tour to Calella. They didn't play enough warm up games and they didn't learn anything from the games they did partake in. A 14-a-side three day match in which there was no possibility of a result was hardly the most productive way to prepare to face the genius of Ponting and the wizardry of Warne. It would be about as useful as England preparing to face the footballing behemoths by playing friendlies against Belarus and Jamaica.

Selection was also symbolic. Duncan Fletcher and Andrew Flintoff showed the usual blind loyalty we have come to expect from those selecting our national teams. Geraint Jones was recalled



Republican Race

Who's your money going on?

Matthew JCG Partridge

Ashes to Ashes

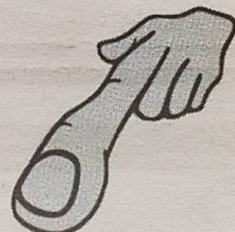
Why England held the Ashes for just 463 days

Rupert Guest



Sports Desk

BeaverSports needs you



09.01.07 thebeaver.sports@lse.ac.uk

Beaver sports

Hockey humble poly scum



Lol Venables

Women's Hockey 8
St Mary's UC 1
Battersea

This Christmas I tumbled from the intellectual pedestal of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* Parts I and II' and found myself racing up to page 93 of Steven Gerrard's *'Autobiography'*. Admittedly, this tome is not quite as well-written as the great Jimmy Greaves' *'The Heart of the Game'*, but it is certainly a lot better at getting to the point than *'Leviathan'*, which is supposed to be the best bit of English political philosophy. Ever. OK, so Stevie feels the need to pop an expletive in every paragraph, and his most common way of describing a situation is: "I was absolutely shitting myself" but he writes

about what he loves with an awful lot of heart. I like that.

You might be wondering what this has to do with the LSEWHC's latest victory. Not much really - I just thought it was time to stick up for sports writers at LSE. I think the LSE team captains, and other volunteer reporters, come in for a bit too much flak; this isn't *The Times*, it's not *'The Torygraph'*, it's not even *The nasty Sun* (Stevie hates this rag, because of Hillsborough). This is *The Beaver* and it is our student newspaper, so we should send in what we like to the Sports Editors. It's up to them to decide whether it's worthy of the back pages. What is more, there are some great writers at LSE who produce fantastic reports after Wednesday afternoon battles, as well as other witty articles. The best thing for me though is that the style of the sports writing; the heart and passion of Stevie, with a smattering of Greaves' wit. Better than the

intellectual Hobbes school of prose, any day.

Right - hopefully that intro has covered up for the fact that I have largely forgotten the above match, played three weeks ago against Simmy's, as they call themselves (I don't understand either). I remember them being a nice team, with some very enviable STASH, which made for little aggro. Also - they were massive! What is it with LSE? We are all titch. Every team we play towers above us (especially the far eastern contingent). But as my Dad told me, 'The bigger they come, the harder they fall'; and 8-1 is quite a tumble.

They scored an extremely quick goal to take the lead. It was well-worked down the right, caught us napping. True to form this season, our heads stayed up and the determination kicked in. There's always a lot of chat on the pitch, all of it constructive (because we're girls) and soon we pulled off a

move straight from the training ground. Sarah Pheely was 'doing her usual thing' at right mid-field, linking up well with Kimmy at right forward, to find herself ready to cross into the D. As if in slow motion (maybe just because I'm not the fleetest of foot) I began my run to top-D, screaming out my intentions. Pheely spotted (or just heard) me and whipped it in duly. I got low to the floor (like our coach Paul advised, so you scrape your knuckles on the astro), closed my eyes (standard, but not advised) and made contact. It went in. Quite slowly.

Sadly, this is the only goal I can remember (well, it was my first of the season for LSE). Although...Kimmy's first half hat trick is coming back to me now. Kimmy Ilsen is a top girl. She is Treasurer and puts in the hours for the WHC, when she isn't doing Sociology projects on people's sexual habits. She has improved beyond recognition this season and

has notched up 5 goals in 7 games for us. Another girl who deals only in prolificness (??) is Gabby Herron. What a bloody legend - 13 goals in 8 games, including 3 hat tricks. She has adapted to centre forward like LSE students have to all-year 24-hour opening at the Library. She loves it. And, she's always up for the propulsive induced lash.

Bravery and heart came from the Yank (again!) who took a whack full on the knee and crumpled in a heap. Poor Like; she was seen in a wheelchair on Houghton Street the next day after suffering a re-collapse. As it goes, she popped out her knee-cap. The last I heard from her was a text contemplating sex-on-crutches. And we can't forget Parf. What a revelation this ex-rugby girl has been this season. She might bring the average height of the team worryingly close to 5 foot, but where would we be without her? For a moment on 6th December, we

almost had to consider a Parf-less future. She got smacked on the head by a (slightly) lifted ball from 5 metres. Pheely defo thought she was dead and let out a squeal. We held our breath as she completed a very necessary roly-poly, then, before anyone had had chance to ask, reassured us she was 'OK'. When she sort stumbled, pissed-like, and turned a snow-colour, I told her to take five.

I'm in a reflective mood. We have scored 36 goals in eight games, winning everything. We train more than ever, anticipate more Stash than ever (that might just be me) and off the pitch the Carol and team dinners were...can't remember. Key games in '07 will be the ULU Cup, the Reading re-match, and the promotion crunch match against King's medics in the ULU league. Big thanks to the LSEWHC for an ace season and a half as captain, now let's make it over the final hurdle.

"My New Year's resolution is to stop drinking" - Kathryn "Nicks Off" Nixon