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# The Beaver

27 October 2009  
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London School of Economics  
Students' Union  
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## LSE students unite against BNP



Photo: Flickr user Coneee

Estelle Cooch

LSE students took part in the protests against BNP leader Nick Griffin's appearance on a BBC programme, where participants experienced police aggression.

Last Thursday, twenty LSE students travelled to the BBC studios in White City to protest against the appearance of BNP leader Nick Griffin on the BBC's flagship Question Time programme. The students had petitioned on the LSE campus since Festival Fair to build support for the demonstration which was called by Unite Against Fascism.

One LSE student, who does not wish to be named, was arrested during the protests. The student said: "The police response was completely disproportionate.

Every one of us was there to condemn a man who does not believe that 11 million Jews, socialists, homosexuals and Roma were gassed in the Holocaust. The real criminal was inside the BBC."

The students had been campaigning in favour of passing a 'No Platform' motion in the Union General Meeting, which prevents students from inviting fascists to speak in the Students' Union. The motion was finally passed last Thursday. Following the UGM, students gathered outside the Old Building and met students from Kings College to travel to the demonstration. The students chanted "Nazi Scum-Off our streets" and "We are Black, White and Asian and we're Jews, there are many, many more of us than you".

2,000 protesters had gathered from 4pm outside the BBC headquarters in White City. Some of the protesters scaled

the gates into the BBC and were dragged out by BBC security personnel. The protesters blocked the roads completely between Wood Green and White City tube stations and orange flares were let off, preventing Nick Griffin from entering the BBC studios and delaying filming for some time. Griffin was eventually smuggled into the studio through a back entrance.

As news reached the protesters that filming of Question Time had begun, around 400 protesters gathered at the main gates in front of the police. The protesters managed to break through police lines and into the BBC twice.

One protester, a member of the National Union of Students' National Executive Council, James Haywood, said: "After breaking through two gates and a line of police and BBC security, about 25 of us made it to the lobby where we blocked the

escalators. What a great moment! The police were rough with us but when film crew got inside they stepped aside for the BBC security to man-handle us and physically drag us away."

Goldsmiths Students' Union sabbatical officer Jennifer Jones remarked: "About 30 of us managed to break through the gates, ran into the BBC main foyer and managed to get all the way to the stage doors of where Question Time is filmed. Eventually the security team started dragging people away. We re-joined the street protest. I'm really glad we demonstrated opposition to the BNP by taking action. It showed that lots of people are willing to stand up against a fascist organisation being given a platform, rather than allowing their followers to gain confidence."

The demonstration, which continued late into the evening, brought together stu-

dents, trade unionists, local residents and other anti-fascist campaigners. Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Andy Slaughter and union general secretaries Christine Blower of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and Jeremy Dear of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) were among the protesters.

Chair of LSESU Israel Society and second year Government and Economics student Ben Grabiner said: "Words cannot describe what a disgusting, vile and racist man Nick Griffin is. The protest was an opportunity for those from all walks of life and political leanings to stand together united against fascism and against racism. We must continue to fight together against the BNP and must not allow them to take advantage of the difficult current economic and political climate ahead of next year's General Election."

## SLC loan delays escape LSE students

>> School's financial infrastructure strained

Nicola Alexander

LSE students have been largely unscathed by recent loan delays by Student Loans Company (SLC).

As the first accommodation bills are being issued by residences across the country, the consequences of loan delays from SLC are of increasing concern. According to SLC, 88,000 university students across the UK have been unable to access the financial support necessary to pay bills such as rent and school fees in a 'crisis' that has been deemed "unacceptable" by Higher Education Minister David Lammy.

As a result of this, universities nationally are finding that their internal financial infrastructures are being tested. So far, LSE's experience has been somewhat different.

Under the current system, all LSE students experiencing difficulties obtaining funds as a result of delays with maintenance loans are eligible to apply to the

Financial Support Office for a short-term loan to cover their living expenses. This has resulted in an expression of broad appreciation for the efforts of the Fees Office and halls of residence, which have granted deadline extensions to those who students who have not been able to meet initial deadlines.

First year Law student Anne Oyin-Adeniji commented: "It is comforting to know that I won't be kicked out of LSE tomorrow or evicted from my room".

However, concern has been raised over the fact that it is often difficult to get hold of the Financial Support Office over the hotline that is advertised on their website, with some calls not being answered. The Financial Support Office has stated that the first point of call should be the website and then, following this, the students should visit the office during the drop-in hours.

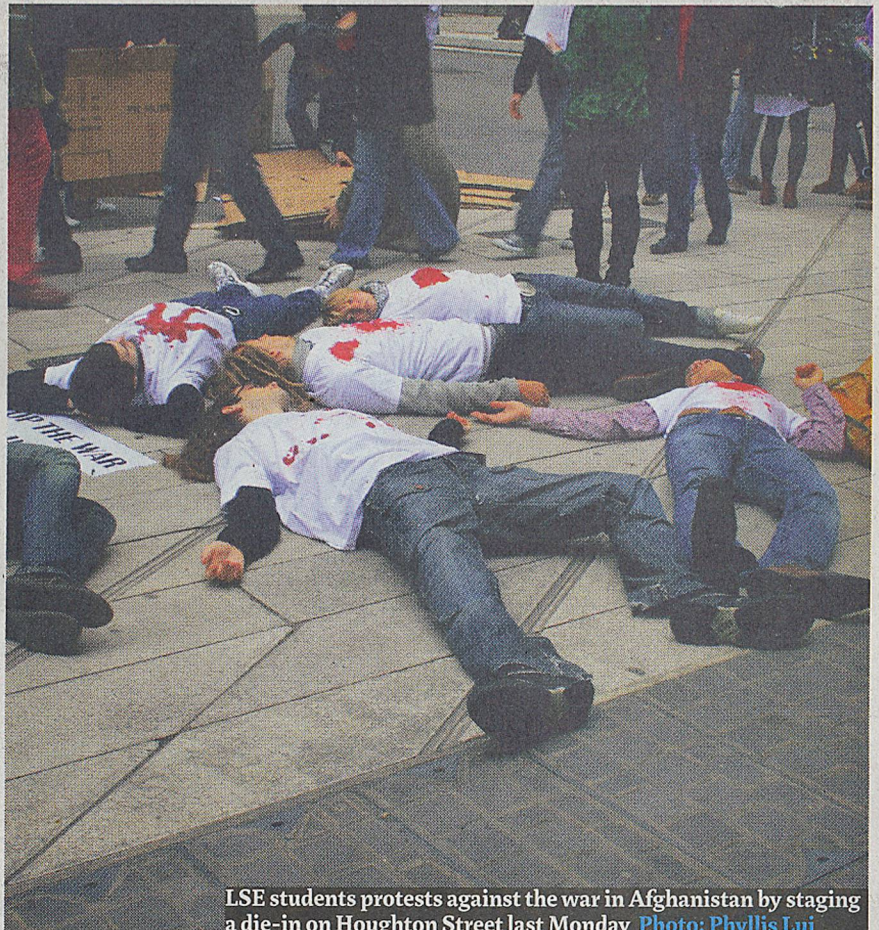
There are also a number of students whose loans have not yet been processed, causing additional financial strain. This is because LSE students receive grants from the School, the amount of which is equiv-

alent to the size of the grant made out by the SLC. These SLC grants take into consideration the income status of a student's family, and as such take an extended period of time to process. "It would be much more helpful if you could get a grant without having to go through student finance", stated another first year student Tomas Thurogood-Hyde.

It appears that there are far fewer LSE students than expected to have sought assistance regarding loan delays.

"The delays have not affected that many of our students," said LSESU Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang, adding that he himself has had no personal enquiries by concerned students.

LSE Financial Support Manager Sue Plater believed that the extensions that are being granted by halls of residence and the fact that students "may borrow money from parents or friends" are possible reasons that the number of LSE students requesting financial support is so low. She further noted: "It is very difficult to judge the overall situation for LSE students."



LSE students protests against the war in Afghanistan by staging a die-in on Houghton Street last Monday Photo: Phyllis Lui



## Collective

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

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

**Climate Change Policy: why has so little been achieved?**  
Professor Dieter Helm  
Tonight, SZT, 1830-2000

**When China Rules the World**  
Martin Jacques  
Tonight, New Theatre, 1900-2010

**The International economy, and the process of the citizen's revolution in Ecuador**  
President Rafael Correa Delgado  
Tonight, Old Theatre, 1900-2000 (Ticketed)

**China: the global economic crisis and its implications**  
Sir Christopher Hum  
Wednesday, S78, 1300-1400

**The New Economic Settlement: building sustainable growth**  
Xavier Rolet  
Wednesday, Old Theatre, 1830-2000 (Ticketed)

**What next for Sudan?**  
Ashraf Qazi  
Thursday, Wolfson Theatre, 1300-1400

**Human Rights in the 21st Century**  
Professor Noam Chomsky  
Thursday, Old Theatre, 1830-2000 (Ticketed)

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

**International Organisations Day 2009**  
See who is attending, who will be interviewing on campus, and how to apply by visiting the Careers Service website

**Financial Times**  
Graduate Trainee Journalist Scheme 2010

**Big Issue Invest**  
Business Analyst

**PHD Media Ltd**  
Barter Executive

**Buckingham Palace**  
Part Time Seasonal Wardens

**Bar Pro Bono Unit**  
Volunteers

**Open Europe**  
Research Intern

**Barclays Retail Bank**  
Part Time Customer Advisors

**International Air Transport Association**  
Intern, Service Center Human Capital

**Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD**  
International Policy Intern

### Interested?

For details of these posts and over 350 more, visit My Careers Service at [www.lse.ac.uk/careers](http://www.lse.ac.uk/careers).

# COLLECTIVE MEETING

## Elections for News Editor and Web Editor



Thursday 29 October - 7pm

Email [collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk) for more details. Anyone can stand for election, and no prior experience is required!



# Thriving theft on campus

Phyllis Lui

The presence of a neighbourhood police van on corner of Clare Market last week has raised concerns about security on campus.

An LSE spokesman stated: "The van was there as part of a continuing operation by the neighbourhood police team to deter and prevent bike thefts. Since the start of term there have been seven bicycle thefts, almost all from Westminster borough cycle racks in this area, and LSE security are very keen to work with police to try and reduce this crime."

Although the official statistics show that crime in the August-September period this year was lower than the same period last year, the estimated cash losses arising from personal property has gone up from £7,017 to £10,503.

The Beaver was also informed that two laptops were stolen on campus last Thursday and Friday, respectively from the computer room C120 and the SU venue, the Three Tuns.

One of the students who had their laptop stolen stated: "It felt like a part of me had been taken. I cannot believe that these people would target a SU, when a student's life work could be on their laptop."

Furthermore, according to the statistics, the following buildings have had increased incidences of theft from the same period last year: Columbia House, Garrick, New Academic Building, Kings' Chambers and the Library.

LSESU Treasurer George Wetz commented: "Having an open campus in the centre of London naturally means that LSE students should take extra care of their belongings. We are sorry to hear that students have been the victims of theft over the past few weeks. The police have reacted to reports of increased crime in the area and are working to deter thieves from targeting LSE students."

**>> See right for top tips from the LSESU**



Photo: Cherie Leung

**Bikes - Buy a good lock!** It's well worth the money. Check out [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com) for Home Office approved locks.

**Bags - Keep it on you all the time!** If you're in a cafe, then make sure it is beneath you. Put one leg through the strap for extra safety.

**Phones, keys and wallets - Keep them in the front pockets of your trousers.** Out of sight is safest!

**Laptops - Don't flash it about!** Don't leave it in the library, even if you're just off to the toilet. Keep it very close to you at all times.

**Be mindful of strangers -** If someone comes and talks to you when you have your belongings on show, think about your things! If you suspect something, keep your hands close to your pockets and make sure your bag is secure.

# BNP denied platform at LSE



Photo: Angelina Castellini

Vivek Kotecha

Students at the Union General Meeting (UGM) voted to deny the British National Party (BNP) a platform at the LSESU.

The motion, seconded by LSESU Education and Welfare officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang, called for the LSESU to adopt a no platform policy to fascist organisations and to support demonstrations last Thursday against the appearance of British National Party (BNP) leader Nick Griffin on BBC's Question Time programme. Akpan-Inwang also went on to explain that such groups as the BNP would divide the diversity of the LSE community, thereby having no place within LSE.

However an amendment was proposed to the motion by LSESU LGBT Officer Scott MacDonald, which would have removed the SU's ban on giving platforms to fascist parties: leaving open the option of them coming on campus.

MacDonald called for students to support the amendment saying that all organisations should have the right to free speech, including fascist organisations such as the BNP, and that open debate against them was the only way to show that their views were racist and wrong.

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher spoke against the amendment saying that, "just as in one's home, the Union has the right to deny access to people or organisations that it does not feel comfortable with and this included the BNP". Citing previous cases of Unions inviting far-right parties Fisher added that "wherever the BNP goes violence follows" and that its presence could damage the racially diverse mix of students at LSE and affect student safety which it is his duty to

protect.

The amendment was defeated by majority vote and the debate turned onto the original motion. MacDonald then spoke against the motion and argued that the right to free speech was an important one to maintain in the SU and that LSE students were intelligent to make up their own minds about the policies and views of fascist parties.

Arguments for the motion included the idea of preventing far-right parties from getting any publicity and as an example one speaker spoke of the rise of Mrs. Le Penn (a far-right leader) in France after he was given more publicity.

Speaking after the UGM, MacDonald said that the passing of the motion was "symbolic of the ever widening paternalism and patronisation of the student body by SU hacks."

**"As a uni that prides itself on being so diverse, we shouldn't limit anybody who wants to express their opinion however much I disagree with it."**

Alex White

3rd Year Government Student  
**"Freedom of speech being curtailed at the expense of some abstract, sensationalised BNP threat stinks of paternalism on the part of the motion's proposers who like free speech only when they agree with it. Let LSE students listen to the debates themselves before you make up their minds for them."**

Judith Jacob

2nd Year Govt and History Student

## Union Jack UGM sketch



Jack is the Beaver's anonymous mole at the Union General Meeting, every Thursday at 1pm

Jack spent the last week salivating at the prospect of watching some new blood take to our stage. Elections tend to offer up the most tasty morsels of the oratory variety; from the sublime to the ridiculous.

So it was with great sorrow that he looked on from his privileged vantage point as the same old faces sought to hijack the arena to peddle their sentiments in the customary manner; straight postures, smooth words and self satisfaction.

The self righteous harping of our General Understudy and Looking Out For My Political Welfare Secretary was made all the more grating by some wonderful performances from lesser known lights. Although the newbies were let down by the garish attempts of a politically naive Sam Tempest Weaking to do a 'sabb' himself and use the discourse to serve his own purposes, albeit admirably anarchic ones.

A sturdy fellow who sported an accent from the American deep south belying a wealth of charisma was Jack's personal highlight. In response to a query from the audience he proudly proclaimed "Hell Yeah" in the style of Jack's favourite pro wrestler The Rock. For a fleeting moment Jack let go of all the bitterness and scorn which has built up over the years as this showman wowed the crowd (of just over 100). Dreams of a Union which actually appeals to the common man descended from the heavens and settled in his consciousness.

Alas his optimism was short lived. Drawing-Figures had opened the meeting by reiterating his point from last week's debacle that what goes on in the UGM really matters. If this is really the case then it would be nice to see some actual students get up on stage to propose changes rather than the permanent resi-

dents of the Queensley Rooms.

Looking Out For My Political Welfare couldn't wait to get his grubby little mits on the microphone to condemn yet another individual for "espousing their filth" on campus. Perhaps he should use the money he usually allots for his daily 24 pack of crispy creams to buy a dictionary and develop some new insults.

However, whereas the pro lifers he valiantly expelled from campus last year were indeed a very real threat, his vitriol was this time reserved for a more incorporeal campus monster: that of nasty Nick and his fascist floozies.

While Jack is no Nazi, the arguments alluding to the possibility of beatings taking place on campus seemed a tad tenuous to say the least. Especially when we are in the grips of a recession and crime on campus is rife. God forbid if Political Welfare's little laptop was to go missing. Nobody

without a LSE card, let alone a fascist, would be allowed on campus then.

To skip to the nub of the issue for Jack, almost every motion from this term has been proposed or seconded by a Sabpratical officer. Now correct Jack if he's wrong but he thought they were supposed to be representing student views, not foisting their own upon them. Thankfully someone from the crown allayed Jack's fears that he was barking up the wrong tree by uttering that fateful term: "Paternalism".

And what is the point of all this musing? It's that fact that Knob Lowe appears to be the only member of the team doing his job. Jack thought hell would have frozen over before he would utter that statement.



## Stormy prediction made by top academic

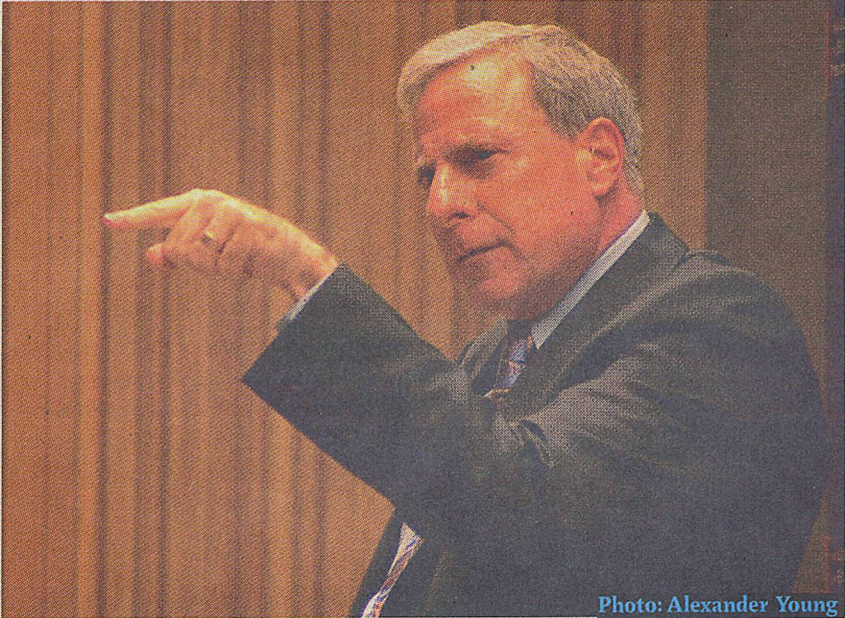


Photo: Alexander Young

Edmond Lee

A top US academic has claimed that the upcoming Copenhagen Climate Conference will fail to produce any serious discussion of environmental issues facing the planet.

Speaking at a public lecture held by LSE's Department of Management, Professor Bruce Bueno de Mesquita explained that for any agreement to have any chance of halting climate change there would need to be a punishment mechanism in place for countries which did not adhere to its terms. However there is unlikely to be universal agreement over what form this should take.

He cited the fact that 137 out of 175 signatories complied with Kyoto Protocol "by doing nothing" as evidence in support of his findings. Such conferences could only delay making of environmental policies domestically, he added.

Bueno de Mesquita uses a complex game theoretical model to place probabilities on given outcomes of a decision making process. In the past he has used this to comment on events such as the collapse of

Enron and US negotiations with Iran.

The lecture was intended to celebrate the publication of his new book, "Predictioneer". He defines game theory as a way to "deal with people who don't want what you want".

After opening with an introduction from Professor Richard Steinberg, Chair in Operations Research at the LSE, Bueno de Mesquita went on to elucidate on the key aspects of his methodology. To start an analysis he first identifies the influencers in a decision making process. These include heads of state, ministers and advisors, and their respective advisors, and so on. He also stated that his method assumed all players are rational, in the sense they all use the best way to achieve their goals.

Interactions between them are then placed into his model where possible. actions are given probabilities. In order to give these figures real world relevance, a researcher must also know do the players say what they want, how focused are the players compared to other issues, as well as how much persuasive power each player could exert, and the kind of resolution that each player would like to get.

Neither culture nor history, the professor stressed, has any weight in his

analysis. In his own words, they "shaped the data... having the data, you don't need them".

Bueno de Mesquita predictions have appeared to be remarkably robust. He told Arthur Andersen to stop auditing Enron before the fraud bursts, and predicted, correctly, that President Bush's hard-line approach to Iran's nuclear enrichment project would only meet hostile response. A CIA study says his predictions are correct in 90% of time.

When asked during the Q&A to gaze into his crystal ball for Palestine, the professor was optimistic of a solution built upon sharing of the Holy Land's tourism revenues, where mutual benefits would ensure an enduring peace. He also commended sanctions placed upon Hamas, as it had helped "softer elements in Hamas to get upper hand".

Challenged with a what-if case where every player uses his model, he ensures the audience the decision-making process would become "faster and more efficient and satisfactory", and "closer to the optimal solution". He also said if only one player has the model, he could engineer the outcome of the game.

## Stuff White People Like



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Emily Roberts

LSE had the honour of welcoming Christian Lander, who gave a public lecture focussing mostly on his world-famous blog and now-published book 'Stuff White People Like' last week.

Continually throughout the hour and the half lecture the audience was in stitches over the constant banter and jokes. LSE student Emily Jones said, "They were jokes that tastefully crossed the lines of ethnicities, to the point where the audience could easily laugh with him and at each other with no tension between anyone."

Banned from talking at Oxford because of his 'distasteful' blog entries, Lander shared with the audience his own personal story of 'rags to riches'; from working in a copyright firm, writing this blog as a joke between him and his friend about what white people liked instead of "The Wire" (which according to them is the best show created), to how from sharing it with friends they started gaining thousands of more views one week after the next. Then literary agents and talent agencies met him (where others laughed at him because he had a bike instead of a chauffeur driver), he went on Conan

O'Brien and the recent publishing of his book became a New York Times Best-seller. This occurred within two years of the start of the blog.

But the main focus of the lecture then aimed towards why his blog became such a huge success. According to Lander, in the white upper-middle class of America and Britain, there are new levels of competition between white people; it used to be just about money, and now it is about culture and taste too, such as what songs you have on your iPod, whether you eat organic food, and other factors. Mr. Lander explains how he "knows that it is stupid, but we can't stop. Why?"

Mr. Lander went on to explain how it is the changing roles and classes in society, especially during his time the working class was 'pushed out', so many white people now stood on the same playing field. These are the new stereotypes, and the blog was a success because it was this addressed instead of the expected old-fashioned stereotypes, and had home truths to many people. Mr. Lander then went on to finishing his lecture by reading entries from his blog.

## Why I Grew to Love America and You Should Too

Madeha Ansari  
Shibani Mahtani

BBC North America editor Justin Webb spoke about American politics and the media at a witty and well-attended lecture last Tuesday.

The event was hosted by LSE's POLIS, headed by Charlie Beckett, and The Media Society, a charity that hosts regular debates and meetings to discuss media issues.

The LSE alumnus started off the lecture with humorous but trivial observations about the differences in culture between the two continents, and contrasted European cynicism with the innocence of the American public.

Webb also believes that one of the myths about America is that it is "inward looking", and cited the fact that a large number of the greatest universities in the world are in America. In line with the title of the lecture, "Why I Grew to Love America and You Should Too", Webb stated that one needs to understand American culture to understand the detachment of the public from macro problems.

Remembering his experience in cover-

ing the 2009 Presidential elections, Webb discussed Obama's success. He felt the American President's turning point leading up to the elections was his composure, in comparison with his opponent Hillary Clinton.

During the question round, Webb spoke about how race relations remained an issue and Obama took the conscious decision not to exploit his ethnicity. He also compared the freedom of press in Europe with the more accepting attitude in America.

As far as the question of healthcare was concerned he predicted a more watered down version of the NHS to be installed in the States, due to the resistance of the people to overt state intervention. The questions, though well-informed, did not raise too much controversy.

The event was part of a series of media lectures that will continue to be organised by POLIS in the coming weeks.



Photo: Edmond Lee



# Taps turned off again at bars in LSE halls

Sanjiv Nanwani

Bars at numerous LSE halls of residence face an uncertain future despite them being regarded as an important part of the social lives of freshers.

"The current situation [of bars] is varied across different halls - some are operating successfully, whilst others remain closed due to differing a number of issues," said LSESU Residences Officer Andrew Wright.

In particular, students at High Holborn, Carr-Saunders, Rosebery and Passfield have expressed significant dissatisfaction at the deteriorating situation, as they had expected a vibrant bar scene upon their arrival earlier this year.

When asked about the reason behind their decline, LSESU Education and Welfare Office Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang said, "Most hall bars have gradually closed over the past few years and opened sporadically for a number of events. But by and large, they are no longer commercially viable, and the School has been forced to take steps that would mitigate any losses associated with bar operations."

The President of the Rosebery hall committee, Alex Peters-day, went one step further and accused the Rosebery hall management of dithering in their reasons for the bar's decline. "The reason I have been given for the bar currently being closed is a licensing matter; the license is held in the name of [a former] facilities manager who left over summer. But if this is case, I'm unsure as to why it has taken them this long to correct what should be a fairly simply matter, and why they did not rectify this before term. Furthermore, the original reason I was given for the bar being closed on the first night of term was that stocks hadn't been ordered in time. It has not been open since, and I received no more correspondence about it," she remarked.

In another sign of the difficulties associated with the issue, Wright noted that

"there is an argument for [the management to allow] some form of control on drinking consumption within the safe environment of the residence, as opposed to students going outside the hall to get drunk on cheap alcohol from shops and bars and therefore putting their safety at risk."

The issue was raised at the Residences User Group meeting held last Thursday. The Group reports to the Student Affairs Committee, which is in turn overseen by the Academic Board - the committee that is principally responsible for "all major issues of general policy affecting the academic life of the School and its development."

The Group is comprised of the wardens and committee presidents of each residence, as well as selected Union officials. In addition, the Head of Residential Services, Ian Spencer, as well as representatives of the Accommodation Office, were in attendance.

During the meeting, the Students'

Union tabled the issue of bar usage for formal discussion. The Group then mandated the Union to carry out an extensive consultation exercise concerning the use of social spaces at the halls, amongst other issues such as governance and hall committee elections.

The consultation is due to be carried out in Week 6 of Michaelmas term, spearheaded by Akpan-Inwang, Wright, and LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher. The Union is due to report its findings back to the Group by the next meeting, which has been scheduled for 4 February 2010.

Akpan-Inwang exclaimed confidence in the process, noting that the Union was best placed to conduct the consultation. "At the moment, the School and Accommodation Office are on board [with the consultation]. They are supporting us in our endeavours. The school has been very supportive on a number of issues and we have been speaking to them regularly," he added.

Wright noted that halls' management had made little effort in consulting students on the future of the bars, though this may be partly attributed to the high turnover rate of hall committees, which are re-elected annually.

This was confirmed by Jonathan Weir, the Chairperson of the Bankside hall committee, "Last year there were some semblances of democracy and consultation in making decisions about the bar. This year, however, there has been no official consultation with the committee about the bars future. There is certainly no consensus drawn between the management and actual students - it's all done through the committee."

Casual staff working behind the bars also seem to have been hit by the situation. "There have been problems at Rosebery, where casual student staff were not notified of changes taking place and therefore the most appropriate treatment was perhaps not undertaken," said Wright. The Union is also actively studying in-

novative ways and means of injecting life into these social spaces, "Carr-Saunders have come up with an innovative way of making their bar work through running a 'raffle' where every ticket 'wins' a drink - this is perfectly legal as far as I am aware," asserted Wright.

At Bankside, the committee organises social events on a weekly basis, and often hosts 'free soft drink nights' during which the committee picks up the tab for all soft drinks purchased by students.

"Whilst Bankside residents can be deeply anti-social, particularly in their drinking habits, they are forced into the bar by a need for a relaxation space," commented Weir.

Meanwhile, the Union has extended some support to all halls of residence. In particular, a training day was organised before the start of Michaelmas term, during which all hall committee presidents received training on conducting effective campaigns by Union staff.

Members of the School's Residential Services division were not available for comment as of the time of writing.

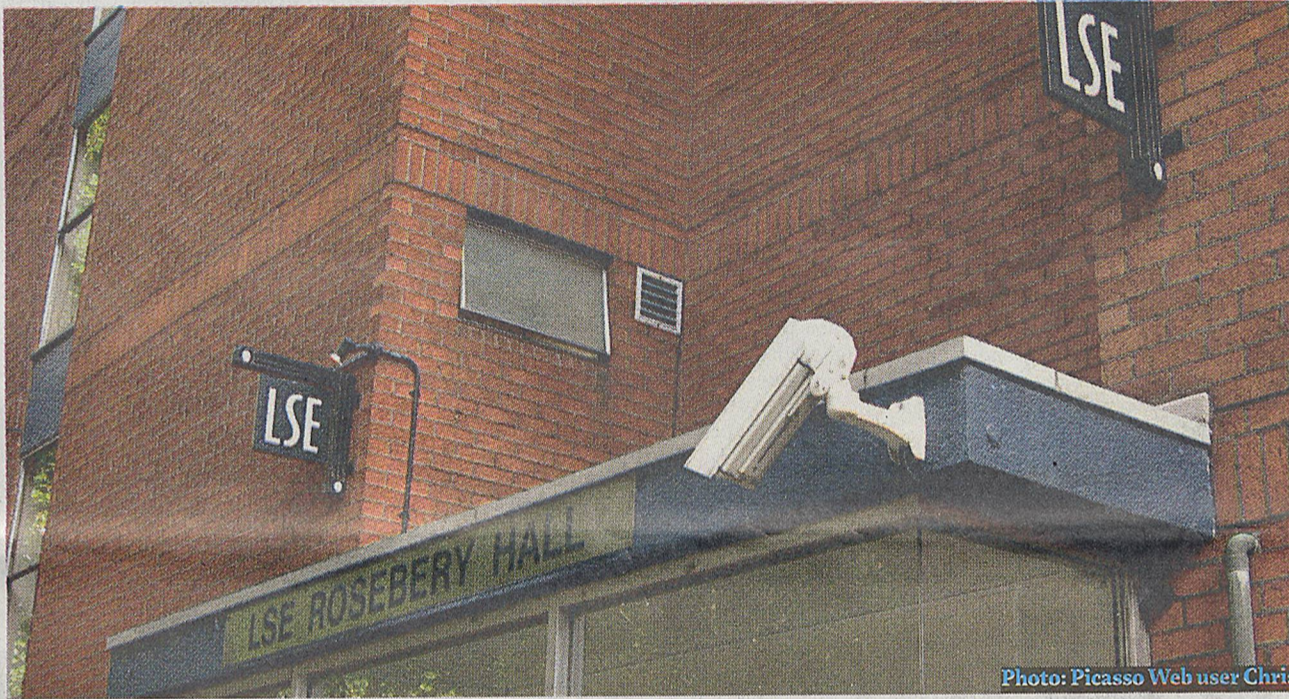


Photo: Picasso Web user Chris



Photo: www.lse.ac.uk

# PhD students not consulted on GTA contracts

Shibani Mahtani

Standardisation of Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) contracts has led to growing dissatisfaction amongst graduate teachers at the LSE.

This move has come as a result of the Teaching Taskforce, an internal research initiative meant to address issues of teaching standards at LSE. This has raised dissatisfaction amongst graduate teachers, who feel underpaid and undervalued. The steps implemented by the Teaching Taskforce was done without consultation of any PhD students or GTAs.

Graduates have presented a report to the school claiming that while they work average of 502 hours to teach a typical 20-week course, they are paid for 289 hours.

According to a survey of 160 PhD students at the LSE, conducted in March this year, 94 said they will not teach at the LSE next year, or are not sure whether they will continue to teach at the LSE. Out of these, 38.3% cited poor wages for teachers at the LSE as a reason. 19.1% believed they needed another job that pays better in order to fund their studies at the LSE.

Further to this, the school has encouraged GTAs to spend 20 minutes marking assignments, and will only pay them for the amount of time spent on grading. According to the survey, students in the Government and Sociology departments were most satisfied with the quality of their GTAs, who spent an average of 40 minutes grading assignments.

Max Hänska-Ahy, who leads the PhD campaign steering group, added, "This is a topic directly related to teaching quality as obviously it is about the conditions of those who teach."

Graduate students have a number of other concerns, such as supervision. Many PhD students have not managed to get a supervisor in time and go for months without one. The PhD steering group have been pushing for enforceable regulations

that guarantees them basic rights regarding supervision.

PhD students also feel that there is a lack of cross-departmental opportunities for engagement between them. A PhD common room that was promised last year has now been pushed back on the school's agenda.

Representatives from the school could not be reached for comment at the time of print.

While PhD students have approached the Students' Union on several occasions, Hänska-Ahy stated that, "the SU has had no involvement with any PhD issues since I started my PhD in 2007."

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher admitted to this, "The union has and continues to fail PhD students through our inaccessible structures."

In the long term, we need to reform our structures to put an autonomous PhD campaign, run by PhD students for PhD students, at the heart of the union's educa-

tion campaigns.

In the short term, having met with Max and others last week and recently to hear PhD issues, we will work with the PhD steering group on GTA issues, supervision problems and encouraging cross departmental contact."

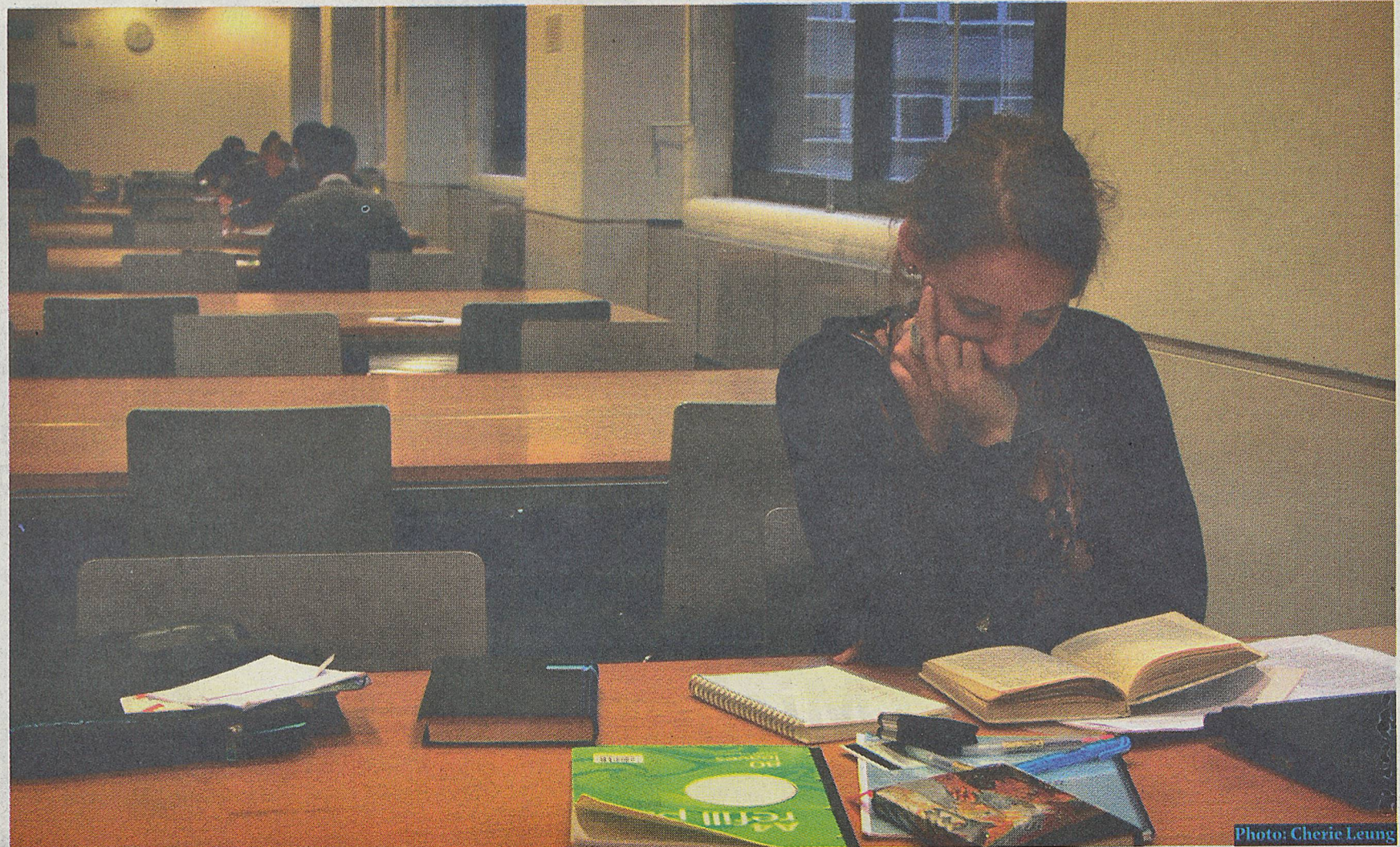
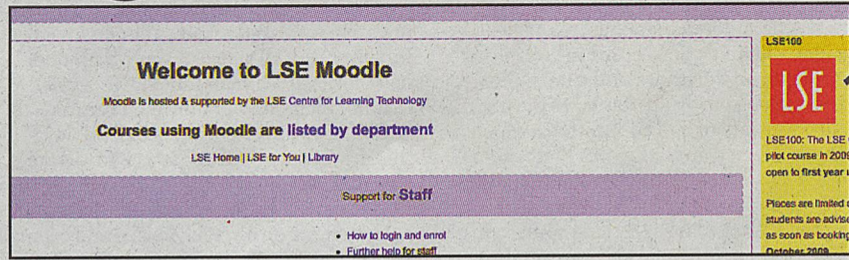


Photo: Cherie Leung



## LSE course reading hacked



Eunice Ng

A piece of reading hosted at an external website for a history course at the LSE was hacked into earlier this term.

A hacking took place during Week 1 of this term, which led to students in Arab-Israeli Conflict course HY03 not being able to access one of their key readings. The reading was "Der Judenstaat" by Theodore Herzl, a pamphlet published in 1896 about the creation of a Jewish state, which has been considered a keystone publication in the creation of Zionism, the political movement that advocates the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Literally translated as "The Jewish State", "Der Judenstaat" remains a potentially controversial document in the study of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Students in HY203 were asked to read the pamphlet as part of their key reading, which was posted on Moodle as a link to a pdf on [www.mideastweb.org](http://www.mideastweb.org), a site devoted to the Middle-East conflict. When students clicked the link on Moodle, they were taken to a blank document. Dr. Kirsten Schulze, the course convener, contacted the site and was told that the situation was the result of a hacking on the website.

Speaking to the Beaver, Steve Bond, a member of the LSE's e-learning department who has worked closely on inte-

grating Moodle into the LSE system, confirmed that this was not a Moodle hacking. Since Moodle records every action taken by every user within Moodle, Bond quickly and easily checked the logs for HY203. He found that the only changes that had ever been made to the course have all been done by a single member of the International History administrative staff known on Moodle as the "editor".

"Moodle certainly wasn't hacked last week, nor has it been since we set it up," said Bond. "It seems pretty clear that it is the external site that has been compromised, not ours."

He added that neither he nor any of his colleagues received complaints relating to the HY03 course. The link to the pdf document is now fully functional.

The hacking drew the attention of LSESU Israel Society president Ben Grabner, who contacted Dr. Schulze expressing his concern, "It is very worrying that an academic course has fallen prey to a political attack of this nature. However, it is a relief to discover that the breach did not come through the Moodle system."

Even so, there are others who remain skeptical. "I'm still not clear why everyone is so sure that this is hacking and not just a mistake at [mideastweb.org](http://mideastweb.org)," added Steve Bond. "All that I can determine from what I've read is that the document mysteriously became inaccessible for a period. There are about a million non-conspiracy reasons why that might happen."

## New initiative by LSE to link Palestinian and British universities

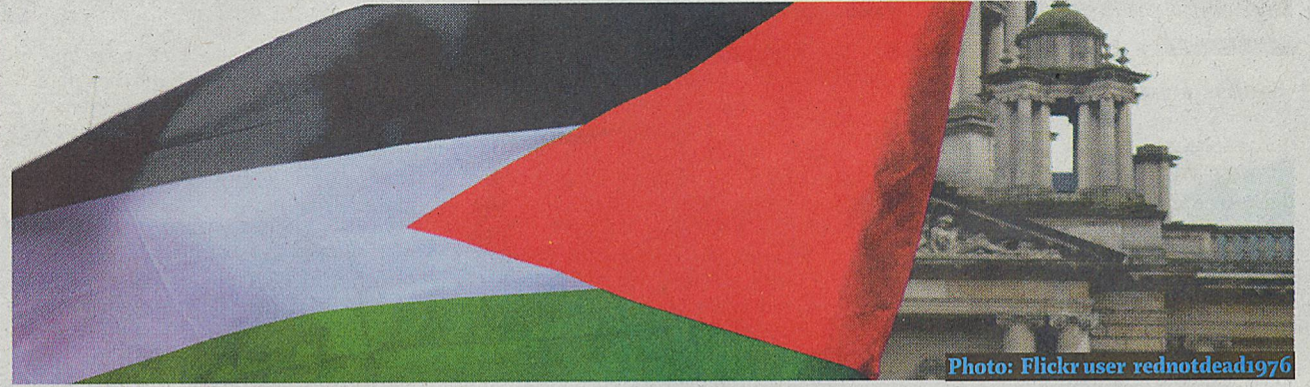


Photo: Flickr user rednotdead1976

Georgina Butler

A top US academic has claimed that the upcoming Copenhagen Climate Conference will fail to produce any serious discussion of environmental issues facing the planet.

Speaking at a public lecture held by LSE's Department of Management, Professor Bruce Bueno de Mesquita explained that for any agreement to have any chance of halting climate change there would need to be a punishment mechanism in place for countries which did not adhere to its terms. However there is unlikely to be universal agreement over what form this should take.

He cited the fact that 137 out of 175 signatories complied with Kyoto Protocol "by doing nothing" as evidence in support of his findings. Such conferences could only delay making of environmental policies domestically, he added.

Bueno de Mesquita uses a complex game theoretical model to place probabilities on given outcomes of a decision making process. In the past he has used this to comment on events such as the collapse of

Enron and US negotiations with Iran.

The lecture was intended to celebrate the publication of his new book, "Predictioneer". He defines game theory as a way to "deal with people who don't want what you want".

After opening with an introduction from Professor Richard Steinberg, Chair in Operations Research at the LSE, Bueno de Mesquita went on to elucidate on the key aspects of his methodology. To start an analysis he first identifies the influencers in a decision making process. These include heads of state, ministers and advisors, and their respective advisors, and so on. He also stated that his method assumed all players are rational, in the sense they all use the best way to achieve their goals.

Interactions between them are then placed into his model where possible actions are given probabilities. In order to give these figures real world relevance, a researcher must also know do the players say what they want, how focused are the players compared to other issues, as well as how much persuasive power each player could exert, and the kind of resolution that each player would like to get.

Neither culture nor history, the professor stressed, has any weight in his

analysis. In his own words, they "shaped the data... having the data, you don't need them".

Bueno de Mesquita predictions have appeared to be remarkably robust. He told Arthur Andersen to stop auditing Enron before the fraud bursts, and predicted, correctly, that President Bush's hard-line approach to Iran's nuclear enrichment project would only meet hostile response. A CIA study says his predictions are correct in 90% of time.

When asked during the Q&A to gaze into his crystal ball for Palestine, the professor was optimistic of a solution built upon sharing of the Holy Land's tourism revenues, where mutual benefits would ensure an enduring peace. He also commended sanctions placed upon Hamas, as it had helped "softer elements in Hamas to get upper hand".

Challenged with a what-if case where every player uses his model, he ensures the audience the decision-making process would become "faster and more efficient and satisfactory", and "closer to the optimal solution". He also said if only one player has the model, he could engineer the outcome of the game.

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# Comment



## The Beaver

Established in 1949  
Issue No. 711

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### A platform for goodness knows what

It has been quiet on the UGM front this year: motions have passed with a large majority, heckling has been kept to a minimum, and controversy has been lacking. This paper has also found attendance dwindling from the politically charged masses of yesteryear.

This week, however, in the midst of the weekly political gameshow, a motion denying fascist organisations a platform at our revered Union was passed. Its slim majority and ill-consideration warrants an immediate revisit.

It is questionable that an issue this divisive should be even brought before the UGM. Sure, we have voted on controversial motions on Israel and

Palestine in the past, but should we really be fracturing our student body when opinion in the nation is already so divided?

An invalid logical deuction seemed to rumour its way through the chambers of the Old Theatre that fateful Thursday afternoon: anyone who voted against the motion because they believed that the BNP deserved a platform was labelled a fascist, and hence a right-wing Nazi.

The inability of some members of this Union to see outside their boxed world isolates a good portion of the student body, something this paper believes the Union should not aim to do.

This paper also questions the

General Secretary's role in this motion - or any that could court controversy on campus. We believe that the UGM should be a forum for anyone to express their views, but to speak so strongly when he should be mediating between different opinions on campus is unnecessarily polarising. Yes, we have now established a Dialogue Commission which serves that very role, but Aled Fisher has a fiduciary duty to all students to represent (and reflect) their views as an elected official. Fisher should be a stronger Secretary and a weaker General, but he has failed to strike this fundamental balance.

Finally, we have to question - what does "not giving fascists a platform"

actually mean? Do we start preventing fervently right-wing academics from lecturing at the School? Do we stand in the way of pro-BNP views being expressed in these pages?

Debate and dialogue is something this paper has always held close to us, and upholding the right to free speech is a cornerstone of our existence.

Believe it or not, but many students, and certainly this paper, adopt a libertarian philosophy to free speech; the Union should not be paternalistic in its approach and management. Its officers have an uncanny tendency for demonstrating such behaviour in past situations, implying their lack of faith in our ability to discern between good

and bad, saint and devil.

Make no mistake: we unreservedly believe Nick Griffin to be a hardline fascist. We condemn his grotesque views, which reveal a misguided man who has lost faith in humanity. Regardless, Griffin must be given an opportunity to discredit himself. The British people - and students of the world's finest social science university - certainly have the intellectual capacity to deal with his garbage, as unappealing as it may be. This painful route to a liberal democracy will only strengthen us in the long run.

### An honorary farce

Othman Sakallah and Shimon Peres have very, very, very little in common. They live on different sides of a conflict that has been waging on for decades; one is a hopeful student who has been an unfortunate victim of oppression, while the other is the President of what this paper believes to be a warring state.

They are, however, both competing for the glory of being the honorary president of our Union.

Let us forget for a second the

discussion of what being the "honorary president" of a Union actually means.

Bizarrely, the nomination for Shimon Peres was submitted by the chair of the Israel society, and the nomination for Othman Sakallah was submitted by the chair of the Palestine society (who would have guessed?). This might be a complete coincidence, however we at the Beaver cannot help but cynically, or logically, identify a link between the two nominations. Perhaps this may be a way of one society wag-

ing a silent war against another; an extension of the tensions that plagued the student population for the good part of last year.

We at the Beaver wonder why members of the Union relentlessly choose to split the student population at every opportunity. The election of Barack Obama, a man who represents broad bipartisanship and cooperation, as the Union's honorary president last year was a promising start to the long route towards harmony. Again, call us

cynics, but this doesn't seem like it'll last for long.

And we then wonder: what's the purpose of having an honorary (vice) president to begin with? This faceless figure, once elected, remains unknown to most students. His/her name is never again mentioned until twelve months later, when the title is bestowed onto yet another figure. Given this figure's lack of significance, it is insulting, to say the very least, to symbolically elect them into a position

that bears no relevance.

If we are forced to persist with this joke of a tradition, then let us elect someone unifying who simultaneously embodies the values that we seek to attain in common. The world has been blessed with Nobel laureates, peacemakers and industrious leaders who have fought hard for our core ideals of freedom, liberty, and meritocracy. The sooner we look beyond ourselves in the mirror and reach across the isle, the better we'll be in time to come.



## Leon Fellas

Last week the executive committee of the Students Union took the action of gagging an article. It is a sad day for The Beaver and for the students of LSE in general, when its own Sabbatical officers - those elected democratically by the student body - start censoring its own version of the free press. Add to that the thinly-veiled threats at The Beaver and it paints a sorry picture of those elected in good faith by the students of LSE.

Our Sabbatical officers deemed the article in question "improper", supposedly because it would have violated a seemingly confidential agreement made between the Union and somebody, somewhere, sometime ago. Surely it is in the public interest to know what agreements the Union

is signing, especially if they limit freedom of speech on the LSE campus.

The Beaver was able to contact Dr. Andrew Scott, an expert in media law. He clarified for us in his letter to the editor everything we needed to know; that there was no basis for censoring the article in question due to "commercial activities". This begs the question, could the Sabbatical officers not have gone to Dr. Scott in the first instance and asked him about the legal implications of said story? Could they have not done the same last year when they failed to spot libellous claims? It beggars belief that, though we are one of the top institutions in the world for Law, in the eyes of the Sabbs, infringing on the liberty of The Beaver is an easier way of resolving the issue, rather than consulting with a readily available authority on the subject. Was the promoter even contacted to ask their viewpoint on the matter at hand? You cannot help but feel that this is all rather murky and suspicious given that these questions need to be asked.

Eventually it would seem that Fisher backed down and "permitted" the article

to be published; however, with many strings attached. Does this mean that he backtracked on believing that the article was libellous? Putting an advertisement into the paper does not change whether the article was defamatory or not. Finally, the original story was gagged once more after The Beaver refused to curtail its ability to cover news in an impartial manner.

The Beaver has the responsibility as part of the National Union of Journalists' code of conduct, to "defend the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed". I am sure the student body are interested in what the Union is doing behind the scenes. In fact, in trying to make The Beaver accept the story with strings attached they are overlooking their own Codes of Practice that awards The Beaver "full editorial and managerial independence."

When defending the gag, Fisher claimed The Beaver should be focusing on other issues. But if we cannot hold the Union responsible for its decisions then there will be no incentive for the SU to provide quality student events. The track

record speaks for itself: we have lost two events; none have replaced them. The censored article was about a failure of an event as well. Clearly, it is a recurring theme. Some events in question have been poorly marketed and have had very poor attendance - the Orientation Week Crush excepted, which had problems on the opposite end of the scale. These are definitely issues that many LSE students feel strongly about.

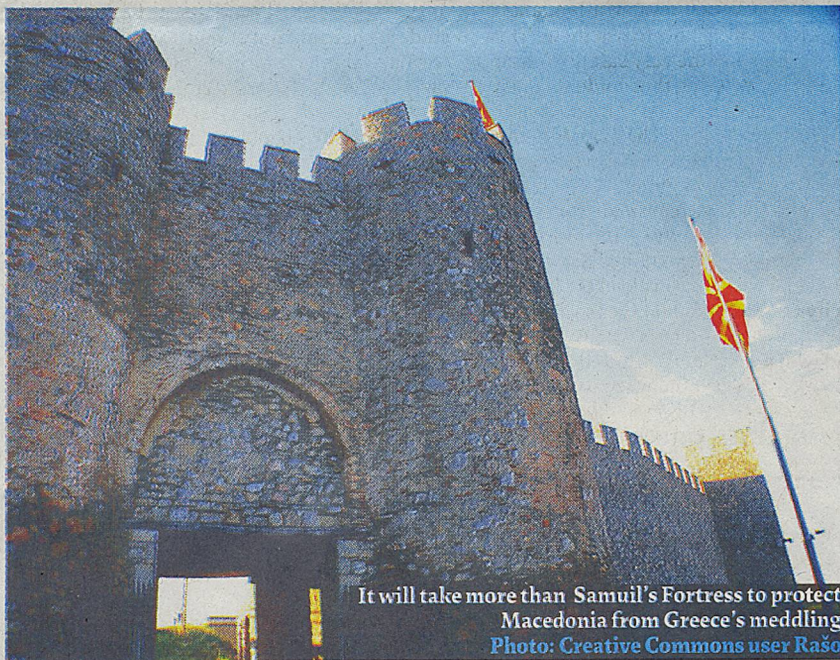
It would appear that all the Sabbs are interested in is their profile, and that they wish to deflect away as much criticism from themselves as possible. Mr Low's comments in The Beaver last week are not going to stop people from asking the important questions that need to be asked. The SU prides itself on keeping debate on the cards, particularly with regards to the UGM, so now must be the time for more transparency in the actions of its Sabbatical officers. Or would they prefer if debate was off the record, on the QT, and very hush-hush.

## Gagging order

The Sabbatical officers' pernicious act of censorship is legally tentative and does not serve the interests of the student body

# What's in a name?

Greece's continued efforts to deny Macedonia the right to its constitutional name is indicative of a petty but harmful dispute



It will take more than Samuil's Fortress to protect Macedonia from Greece's meddling  
Photo: Creative Commons user Rašo

## Alexander Kamp

When Macedonia's further integration into Nato was vetoed by Greece in March 2008, it was clear that this was to be yet another episode in the notorious name dispute between the two countries. This dispute has been ongoing since Macedonia's declaration of independence in 1991 and culminated in a Greek embargo on Macedonia in 1994. The countries realised the dangerousness of the situation and signed an interim agreement in 1995 in order to prevent a further conflict in the region. Greece agreed to support Macedonia's integration into international organisations under the acronym FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), while Macedonia agreed to desist from using its constitutional name in international fora. That Greece has nevertheless blocked Macedonia's accession may be interpreted as a breach of the interim agreement and Macedonia has already filed a case against Greece in this respect in front of the International Court of Justice.

More important and more interesting is the question of why Greece is still vehemently opposing Macedonia's use of its constitutional name. The official justification is that Greece wants to protect itself from Macedonian irredentism and wants to prevent Macedonians from adopting an identity that many Greeks perceive as their own. While these arguments are usually received with some understanding, most foreign spectators will find it hard to believe and ultimately unconvinc-

ing, that these should be the reasons for a year-long dispute that is holding back and threatening the security of the entire region.

And indeed there is more to it than Greece likes to admit. It is the argument about Macedonian irredentism that strikes close to the core of the dispute. What is at stake for Greece is not its territorial integrity but the integrity of the Greek nation and the doctrine of the inexistence of foreign minorities on Greek soil. Greece has never recognised more than the existence of a "slavophone" minority in its northern regions. A maturing Macedonian nation north of the border may however lead to a strengthened sense of identity for Macedonians south of the border. This is also why the incumbent Greek government has extended its demands beyond the name of the country. What is now at stake is the name of the Macedonian language and the name of its nation - issues relating to the very identity of every ethnic Macedonian. Greece is aware that a western-integrated Republic of Macedonia that is no longer dependent on Greece's support and no longer prone to a Greek veto may be more outspoken in defending the rights of ethnic Macedonians in Greece.

Also, the Greek insistence on the inexistence of an ethnic Macedonian minority in the province of Macedonia in northern Greece is an attempt to cover up the region's multicultural - and for a long time predominantly Slavonic - heritage. The expulsion and persecution of ethnic Macedonians following the Greek civil war is one of the darker chapters of the country's history. While the expulsion itself may have been an immediate reaction to the alignment of many ethnic Macedonians with the defeated socialist side, the subsequent complete denial of the issue by the majority of Greek politicians remains a disgrace. Few tragedies

in history have attracted less interest than the expulsion of ethnic Macedonians from northern Greece. And yet, few tragedies have political repercussions that are as obvious and as relevant for the current political situation of the region.

Viewed against this background it is remarkable that the Greek behaviour has attracted no or very little protest. Not only has there been no public outcry about or concern with the fate of a vulnerable nation but also, and more significantly, Macedonia has received no political backing from the vast majority of western nations. Despite the fact that Greece has elevated a bilateral dispute to block Macedonia's accession to a multilateral treaty, so far only the United States have clearly expressed their support. European nations on the other hand seem to accept Greece's dictate of power over justice.

The Greek position in the name dispute infringes on the rights of ethnic Macedonians in Greece and on the rights of the people of the Republic of Macedonia to choose the name of their nation. It goes without saying that such a stance is unworthy of a western liberal democracy. But it also harms Greece's image in the world. The newly-elected Greek government now has the chance to bid farewell to the notion of an ethnically pure nation state and to accept the existence of foreign minorities on its territory - something other European nations have long done. It lies in their hands to take this necessary step. Once it becomes clear to Greeks that this step is a necessity, both countries can work towards a meaningful compromise that will allow Greece and Macedonia to catch up on the good neighbourly relations that the business communities of both countries have long established. Maybe then, the region will finally move on from the ethno-nationalist ghosts of its past, to become a part of Europe, and worthy of its name.

# Letters to the Editor

**Madam** - One day after Nick Griffin's appearance on Question Time a YouGov poll in the Daily Telegraph told us that twenty-two per cent of people would now "seriously consider" voting BNP. This is why the passing of a 'No Platform' policy in the Union General Meeting last Thursday was a victory for anti-racist activists everywhere. No Platform is not a principle, but a tactic. In the 1970s, as the National Front infiltrated trade unions and racist and homophobic attacks increased, trade unionists fought hard for a no platform policy. No Platform is not about free speech. The BNP are welcome to spout racist lies on the street, but why would we give them a megaphone?

Opponents to the motion argued that it was patronising to students. LSE students are educated and articulate - why would they be taken in by fascism? Education has little to do with this; let's not forget Nick Griffin went to Cambridge. More importantly, do opponents to the motion think that Albert Einstein left Germany because he was unable to articulate his opposition to the Nazis? Did six million Jews die in the gas chambers because they were unable to articulate an argument?

They died because fascism is not an argument built on rational debate, but one that uses democratic structures to smash freedom of speech for the majority.

Nick Griffin is not interested in convincing the majority of international students at LSE, but he is interested in convincing the small minority of white British students who believe that immigration is our country's most pressing concern. As someone who has petitioned against the BNP on Houghton Street for three weeks (which those who opposed the motion have not) I can assure you that racist students do exist at the LSE.

When Griffin spoke on Question Time last week, of course Bonnie Greer was not converted to fascism. Of course the vast majority of those in the audience will not vote BNP, but if even one in every thousand of the eight million viewers now vote Nazi, the BNP's support will have doubled. No Platform is about preventing the hardening of soft Nazi support and protecting those who the BNP threaten.

On Saturday two fascists turned up at an anti-war march in London to heckle Tony Benn. This would not have happened ten years ago. Fascists are ever more con-

fidant because their leader is being invited into the mainstream.

Adolf Hitler never won an election. The majority of Germans never voted for the Nazis, but he did say "Only one thing could have stopped our movement. If our adversaries had understood its principle, and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our new movement." That is why genuine anti-fascism campaigning comes from uniting communities on the streets, in the tradition of Cable Street and the Battle of Lewisham. Next time the BNP try to speak I hope all of us can be there to stop them.

**Emma Clewer**  
**Lois Clifton**  
1st Year Sociology Students

**Madam** - I was appalled to read Alex Young's article in last week's Beaver which claimed "The BNP is the only mainstream political party to offer anything to Northerners." While I agree with the general sentiment of the article and the right of the BNP to appear on last week's Question Time, Alex is completely wrong about the appeal of the BNP up north. Northerners are no more drawn to the BNP than anyone else around the country. Indeed it is in London that the BNP won an assembly member last year, and in Barking and Dagenham where the BNP is the largest opposition party.

The BNP won two seats in May's European Elections in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. But that doesn't mean they have widespread support up North. In both European constituencies the BNP gained just enough votes to elect an MEP. In my home city of Manchester the BNP came a very poor sixth, and this level of BNP support is the same in all of the great Northern cities. Surely this proves that it is the many other mainstream political parties who offer something to Northerners.

The BNP's support up North is often in isolated pockets of deprivation and poverty. They do well in smaller towns with ethnic diversity such as Oldham and Barnsley, where they can whip up ethnic unrest. But even there, their support is still limited to people who feel they have been let down by Labour and the Conservatives. Only the Liberal Democrats have successfully addressed these voters' disaffection with the other big parties and tackled the BNP head-on in their heartlands. In the European Elections the Lib Dems were able to push the BNP into fifth place and gain top spot in Burnley - once considered an area of strength for the BNP.

I'm very proud to be from the North, but I'm also very ashamed that I'm represented in Europe by a racist, Islamophobic and homophobic nutter. And this view is shared by the vast majority of Northerners from across the political spectrum. We may not always agree politically, but we can all agree that the BNP has nothing to offer Northerners, and that the BNP is never the answer.

**Victor Chamberlain**  
Former Chair, LSESU Liberal Democrats



# “A harrowing, poorly planned process”

The failures of the LSE’s administrative and organisational departments are to blame for its change in fortunes

**O**n October 13, 2009, The Beaver published an article showing LSE’s dramatic fall in rankings from 11th world-wide to 67th. As shocking as that news may have been, it only confirmed what we were already thinking: LSE fails to deliver on its promises of good education, both in terms of its academics, and its services.

Our complaints lie not on the side of academics but on the side of administration and organisation of the LSE. We applaud the high calibre of discussions, reading material and debate. Within days of arrival, we were given the opportunity to personally meet with advisors, and get to speak to professors on a first name basis. Additionally, we find the course materials and reading lists on Moodle an excellent resource to make learning accessible and efficient. These examples highlight LSE’s strengths and potential for true greatness. However, not all facets of the educational experience here have the same high calibre.

We students of LSE have chosen this university because of its supposed quality of education, and for the opportunities that it promises. Yet, as our experience and these new rankings show, there is a significant discord between the reputation of the school and its true quality. Overall, we feel that the school has become known for being a “brand name” rather than for its quality as a serious educational institution. Rampant disorganisation, poor IT services, and blatant disregard for student welfare make studying at this university both disappointing and frustrating. As customers paying dearly for an important service — namely, our education — we demand, and deserve, better.

First and foremost, class registration and admittance is a harrowing, poorly planned process, which leaves many students upset, and many more confused. Registering for courses shouldn’t be a difficult part of our education at such a respectable school as the LSE. In large part, this confusion is due to the labyrinthine design of the websites — in particular the outdated, ugly mess of the timetable website. Both LSEforYou and the timetable website ought to be overhauled into one simple, streamlined process. Students should be able to view course descriptions, course times, as well as their required and optional courses from one simple, user friendly, optically pleasing website. Currently, LSE forces students to search for this vital information using three poorly maintained, confusing, and

visually unappealing websites, which are not linked to one another. Providing decent websites is the bare minimum that we as students can expect from an expensive, globally competitive university, and yet LSE fails to meet even this minimum requirement. This makes the initial days unnecessarily confusing and only adds to the anxiety and stress all students initially feel.

However, it isn’t only the mechanical process of registering for classes which lacks proper organisation, but also the method of allocating spaces which fails in this regard. In many departments, numerous popular courses were capped, limiting the number of students who could take them. Students who were interested in taking such a capped course had to write essays describing their interest in the course, and were informed — often a week later — if they actually received a place in that course or not. There are several problems with this. First, students were informed far too late in the term. Considering the uncertainty one had when selecting a course, it would have been much better to open course registration weeks before the begin of the course, so that students could buy books and prepare before the start of a term. Then, students could be allowed a ‘drop period’ i.e. time they could use to change courses. Not knowing of their acceptance until the

**“The library is a noisy, uncomfortable learning environment with draconian laws on food and drink.”**

second week of term also forces students to spend a week in anxious anticipation, attending multiple classes for every unit they are allowed to fill, in the fear that they will be rejected from a capped course and will have to select a second — or in some cases, third — choice. They will not want to select this choice in a moment of desperation during second week, once they have already missed the initial lecture and

fallen behind on readings.

Finally, these capped courses are often popular — for a variety of reasons — and are in some cases the reasons why students came to the LSE (to study that particular subject, or under a certain teacher). Considering the amount that students are paying to be at the LSE, and considering the school’s reputation for providing students with unmatched, high-quality academic opportunities, it is a serious disappointment that students who have done so much to come here may be turned away from the classes that interest them most. We should at least be warned in advance that getting here is only a minor part of the struggle when it comes to getting what we might want out of our education. This process does not reveal a serious commitment to education, nor dedication to students. It should be less the responsibility of the student to adapt to LSE’s rigid and arbitrary provisions, than it should be the responsibility of the LSE to adapt to its students needs and preferences. Who, after all, is the paying client?

The horrendous course registration process is enough to warrant major complaints, but LSE’s failures do not end there. Our student prospectus was filled with empty promises of the LSE library, hailed to be “truly a 21st Century Resource” and a “superb study environment”. Yet this feature has failed to live up to its pledge. The library — at best — is a noisy, uncomfortable learning environment with draconian laws on food and drink. Allowing small amounts of food unlikely to damage books (such as granola bars, or carrot sticks) would encourage students to study, rather than fill them with hungry resentment or require them to break from their studying (potentially losing a much-desired spot at one of the few computers or study spaces in the library). At worst, the library is filled with broken printers, unresponsive computers, and long queues of students waiting to use computers and printers, since there are obviously not enough of these fundamental items to accommodate the needs of the large number of students at the LSE. Similarly, required readings for many courses include books that are either out of print or unable to be purchased at the bookstore. Using the library to find such readings would be perfectly reasonable, if there were a reasonable supply of these books on hand for the number of students required to read them. This is presently not the case, which says a lot about the institution’s commitment to an equal, fair, or non-arbitrary access to education. The

library is an essential tool for students’ learning at the LSE — of all things at the school, it should at least be designed and run with the students’ needs in mind. At present, it seems to be maintained without regard to the needs of students, and with no apparent consideration for the important role that a library should play in fostering education — especially at such a prestigious university.

Since the library — a critical resource for students’ education — is in such poor shape, it is unsurprising (yet still very

**“These shortfalls are truly inexcusable at an institution with such a strong reputation.”**

disappointing) that so many other student services are inadequate or also in poor condition. The LSE student gym is a prime example of the outdated, overused, and poorly maintained nature of the LSE. The LSE gym constantly smells; the machines are dusty and grimy; and some weight benches are held together with nothing more than duct tape. During a tour of the facilities, several screws came out of the machines as the weight room attendant was demonstrating how to use them. This calls into question the very safety of these facilities. Considering that students must pay additional fees on top of their already steep tuition just to join the gym, it seems like it is reasonable to wonder where, exactly, that money is going.

Despite all these legitimate frustrations and disappointments, the most concerning of them all is that the LSE seems incapable of coordinating events with the capacity to accommodate the (sometimes large) number of students who would like — and who are arguably entitled — to attend. The Noam Chomsky lecture, scheduled for October 29th, is the most recent, glaring example of the school’s incompetence and lack of foresight when it comes to event planning. Although it could easily be foreseen that this would be a popular lecture, the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (who organised the lecture)

failed to book a room that would even have the capacity to handle the number of students in its Human Rights programme, much less the large number of faculty and members of the public who would want to attend. Students were unable to request tickets online; hundreds queued; tickets ran out within fifteen minutes. Despite assurances that Human Rights students “shouldn’t worry” about gaining access, only a small minority of them actually succeeded in gaining access to their own programme’s “public” lecture. Similarly, the Volunteering Fair organised at the start of the term had a limited capacity, and a poor showing of organisations. This, again, says a lot about the institution’s commitment to providing students with non-academic resources and encouraging student participation in the London community. That the word “public” is attached to such highly competitive, restrictive programmes seems laughable. Yet, what is not funny is the fact that these shortfalls are truly inexcusable at an institution with such a strong — albeit unjustified — reputation as the LSE.

We, the students, have entered with high hopes of furthering our education in a world-class environment. Yet for all our expectations, we have been disappointed. Not only are there moral reasons for the LSE to improve its resources and facilities (to abate or end the disillusionment of students) but there are also reasons of self-interest that should prompt reform on the part of the LSE: because of the name and reputation of the school, students are extremely tolerant with its shortcomings, knowing (unfortunately) well that they are paying for the “brand” of the LSE. But students here are not stupid and, although we may value a name on our CV, we are not completely impartial to the quality of education we are paying for and receiving. Ratings for this school are falling and will continue to do so, so long as students are dissatisfied with their education. These dropping ratings may discourage bright and talented students from applying or coming to the LSE. It may also be a matter of pride, or honour, or some form of moral integrity, that should prompt the LSE into making changes so as to match the name of this school to the quality of education that it provides.

• This article was submitted under the condition of anonymity by a group of students at the LSE.

**Madam** - I am writing in response to the article entitled “Failing at Skool” in last week’s paper. Does being part of an SU really mean helping students to have fun? This is certainly an important function, and is highlighted quite clearly through the fact that societies and sports are so well funded. The Students’ Union’s primary function, however, is to represent students to The School and to involve students in campaigns to improve our education and wider societal issues.

The lack of care Mr. Fellas referred to in regards to ‘letting Afterskool and Chuckle Club stroll off down the Strand’ is just misguided, as is the suggestion that these two events were populated by LSE students. When they left as a result of misinformation, they were asked back and refused, leaving us with no option but to pursue other options for the Saturday.

Are we seriously being told that we should spend £200,000 on reducing the price of 400,000 pints by 50p? In my mind that would quite clearly be a gross misuse of Union funds, especially when our social spaces were in a serious state of disrepair, which actually dissuaded many acts from coming. Our entertainments need to reflect the wider student body, and cannot be solely alcohol-focused. The

fact that other universities provide ‘better’ entertainment is indicative of their size and the lack of competition they face — remember that we are based in the capital, with some of the world’s best clubs. We are clearly not best placed to be competing with these London clubs, especially when the person sitting next to you in class has spent £13,000 just to be there and be put through the same poor quality of teaching as you are. Are we really expected to spend our time as club promoters, or should we be fighting so that every student gets the quality of teaching that they expect when they sign up to LSE? Just to point something out, the AU is one of the most active parts of the Students’ Union (I am currently in my fifth year playing for the Football Club), and any events it puts on receive whatever support the AU Executive Committee requires from the Students Union, as do all its clubs. Finally, as long as I am a sabbatical officer and the School is not providing the level of service that is expected and required (especially when such extortionate fees are charged), then surely this is where our focus should be.

**Robin Low**  
Communications Officer  
LSE Students Union

**Madam** - Whilst the censorship of the Beaver is not on the scale Trafigura’s injunction against the Guardian, it is nevertheless disturbing manifestation of a tendency by the SU executive to excessively control activities within the Union.

Potential remedy for this and future actions against the Beaver may be found in the LSE’s Code of Practice on Free Speech, adopted under requirement in section 43 Education (No. 2) Act 1986. The 1986 act is mainly focused on freedom of vocal expression, having been passed against a background where politicians such as Norman Tebbit had enough of being prevented from speaking on university campuses. However, the impact of the 1986 Act is broader as it requires universities to adopt a code of practice dealing with meetings and such other “activities” that take place on university premises (including student union premises) as the university “sees fit”. The protection of this section then applies to all activities covered by the code of practice regardless of whether they fall outside the core sections relating to meetings.

Paragraph 2.2 of LSE’s Code (available on the web) states that it applies to “any lawful activities in which students, staff, visitors and other members of

the School engage in” anywhere on the premises. Such activities are then defined as “events”, but it does not matter that publication of the Beaver and decisions as to its editorial content do not fall within the natural meaning of “event”, so long as they fall within this extended definition the Code applies. The references in the Code to freedom of “expression” (rather than just speech) and to Art 10 ECHR clearly suggest that it extends far beyond speech at public meetings.

For activities covered by the Code, the LSE is required to ensure “freedom of expression within the law, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas”, in conformity with section 1 of the Code.

If members of the collective (or maybe even readers) are dissatisfied with the Exec’s decision it would appear that they have the right to appeal to the Director (section 6.1 of the Code). Sub-section 43(4) of the 1986 Act requires the LSE to “take such steps as are reasonably practicable (including where appropriate the initiation of disciplinary measures) to secure that the requirements of the code of practice... are complied with.”

LSE SU can be rightly proud of its democratic credentials, by which the

SU executive is held to account through both the UGM and the independent Media Group outlets (the Beaver and Pulse). From your edition of 20 October it appears that the Exec may have been in part motivated by a wish to avoid such scrutiny due to its demand that the Beaver should neither report nor editorialise the ban as a condition of reporting the original story.

Given such controlling tendencies by the SU Exec and the impending constitutional review, the student body should be alert to ensure that these benefits are protected for future generations. Freedom is difficult to win but easy to lose.

**Michael Blackwell**  
Postgraduate Student

**YOU’VE GOT BEEF. WE’VE GOT BEAVER. SEND YOUR CORRESPONDENCE TO**  
**comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk**



# Bombs for ballots is a load of bull

The vacillation of the Government over the true reasons for continuing the war in Afghanistan no longer holds sway with the British public



Photo: flickr user The U.S. Army

## Anna Krausova & Joe Sammut

The war in Afghanistan has been bloodily dragging on for eight years and the future looks bleak, with Gordon Brown's recent announcement that five hundred more soldiers are to be sent to Afghanistan to join the nine thousand already there. Fifty-one of the British soldiers who have died are twenty-one years of age or under. This is younger than both authors of this article and probably most of you. Ninety-one years after another, equally farcical war, not much seems to have changed. Still more youths are sent to die, ardent for some desperate glory, while our noble political leaders retell that old lie: *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*.

However, it is a shocking indictment of our society that these tragic deaths are the cause of the growing public unease, rather than the thousands of Afghans that have been annihilated. The verdict of the media seems to be that a British death is worth hundreds of deaths of the 'other'.

While we can read the personal stories of every UK soldier killed in Afghanistan; see what they looked like; practically know what they ate for breakfast, the death of an Afghan is a mere statistic.

Moreover, it is likely to be an unknown statistic. There has been no count of the civilians that have died. The best picture we can get of the extent of the catastrophe is that between nine and twenty-eight thousand people have died under the blade of the "Enduring Freedom" Coalition. Note that this is only an estimate of civilian deaths. What more damning evidence is needed that these people are relegated to the level of unpeople in the British national psyche?

As the death toll has risen, so the motives for the war have been contorted. It used to be that we were going in to find Bin Laden. That was quietly dropped when it became too obvious that it was a matter that required investigation and detective work, as opposed to destroying a country with thousands of grunts and bombs.

Then the liberal humanitarian argument came to the fore. With beautiful hypocrisy the battle cry of the freedom forces became the equivalent of "bombs for ballots" or "civilisation" on the back of carnage. The recent Afghan election

## "Is bombing civilians really an effective way of stopping terrorists from attacking Britain?"

mocks the claim that Afghanistan is now democratic. Turnout was extremely low in many areas and the legitimacy of the poll has been repeatedly marred by reports of widespread electoral fraud. Is this the promised "triumph of democracy", and was it worth the destruction of a country?

Now the motive paraded by the masters of the war is the prevention of terrorist attacks in the UK. Forget about the logical gap in this argument; the only terrorist attack in the UK related to War on Terror was committed by British citizens from Bradford. Is bombing civilians really an effective way of stopping terrorists from having the desire to attack Britain? It sounds like a hoary old saying but is there not truth in the phrase, "violence begets violence"?

Apparently not, from the perspective of a certain panel in Stockholm. Obama has joined the famous pacifist and human rights activist Henry Kissinger in the honour of being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Obama, a man who has called Afghanistan the "smart war" and has suggested a willingness to escalate the number of US troops, now has a positive proof of his anti-war agenda. And so are we to believe the West is waging a 'good' war, for the promotion of peace?

Leaving aside ethics, this is a war that we can ill afford in the current economic climate. The rise in unemployment and the slump in the economy suggests more money needs to be invested to encourage demand in the economy. Rather than attacking the poorest by bludgeoning to death the remnants of the welfare state, as the Tories are threatening to do, we should reconsider a war that has cost the UK, in just the last financial year, over £2.5 billion.

With the echo of bombs in the background, Britain parades its 'moral obligations' to the rest of the world. The Stern Report estimates that climate change could be tackled if the world were to spend one per cent of its GDP on addressing it. Surely Britain could take the lead, by using the money now channelled towards destruction and death into global progress instead. As the word terrorism seems to lie at the heart of all pro-war arguments, why not fight some of its root causes, such as global economic inequality?

It is time that the UK government revises its attitude towards the rest of the world. Listening to the numerous and diverse voices who attended the national anti-war demonstration last Friday would seem like a good way to start.

# A balance of rights

Is the 'Denying the BNP a Platform' motion a triumph for student safety over freedom of speech, or a lamentable blow to the tenets of democracy and an informed electorate?

## Franck Magennis

The successful passing of last week's 'Denying the BNP a Platform' motion in the UGM is a significant victory in the fight against racism on our campus and in wider society. It is only worrying that the motion engendered such considerable opposition, and was indirectly undermined by the shameful decision of the BBC to allow Nick Griffin to appear on Question Time.

It would seem that the opponents of a no platform policy are all-too-committed to a rigid and immutable reading of 'free speech', one which ascribes this right hallowed status above all others. This viewpoint fails to take into account the fact that rights often conflict. Just as a person's right to free speech is limited to non-slanderous/libellous statements, it is similarly limited if their actions incite racial hatred. In the case of the BNP, there

is demonstrable link between that party's appearances and racially motivated violence. I hold the firm conviction that LSE students' right not to be racially abused trumps the right of fascists to abuse their freedom of speech to spread their hateful and harmful propaganda.

The unswerving commitment to a flawed conception of 'free speech' demonstrated by so many in the UGM would be forgivable if it wasn't so pernicious. I can't help but notice that it is almost without exception white middle class people who remain so vocally committed to allowing the BNP a platform. It is very easy for people who are not visibly a member of a minority to vehemently defend the right of the BNP to speak - it won't be them getting beaten up outside.

The level of debate at the UGM was poor even by its own standards. The opposition to the motion deliberately sought to conflate the no platform debate with the BBC Question Time debate. Perhaps this is a more appropriate forum for that discussion. Those who argued so strongly for allowing Nick Griffin to appear on Question Time claimed that he would be demolished in front of the nation and his popularity would decrease commensu-

rately. Indeed, the popular press seems to have convinced itself that Griffin was given a run for his money on Thursday and that his appearance will have convinced BNP voters to look elsewhere. Such a self-congratulatory approach is dangerously deluded. By at least one measure, BNP membership has risen as a direct consequence of Griffin's appearance.

The risk of Griffin appearing was never that he would win over the vast majority of people committed to a multicultural Britain. Rather, the risk, now realised, was that Griffin's increased legitimacy would empower the growing minority in this country who were already committed to racist politics. Furthermore, those who claimed Griffin being denied an appearance would render him a 'free speech martyr' have had the eventuality they feared realised. Griffin now enjoys martyr status among those who support him, legitimately claiming that the programme's format was changed to facilitate an attack on him by the entire panel and audience.

The point that needs to be stressed is that this is not an academic debate. It is a matter of the personal safety of millions of the citizens of this country and, by extension, this university.

## Marie Dunaway

I was greatly saddened by the 'Denying the BNP a Platform' motion that was passed at Thursday's UGM. Unfortunately, for anyone who voted against the motion or spoke against it, there was the undertone that such people were right-wing, apathetic or indeed held sympathetic views to those of the BNP. I must preface this piece by expressing my disgust of the BNP, their abhorrent views and the many who elected them as MEPs. I am by no means someone who frequently promotes their views on campus; however, this issue I feel cannot be overlooked.

Sadly, as of June 4, the British public elected Nick Griffin and Andrew Brons to be MEPs for the North West and Yorkshire and Humber Regions. Altogether they secured 6.2 per cent of the British vote, with just under one million votes across the UK. They have obviously managed to convince a large number of people that their views are legitimate and that they represent their electorates.

It disgusts me that of a voting population of just over forty-five million, fifteen million people (a little over a third) actually voted. It is due to this apathetic attitude that the BNP holds seats in the European Parliament. By looking at the British public's views on the "horrific undemocratic elections" in Iran, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan, I can't help thinking that all this complaining is all a little ironic. In Britain, people pride themselves on our long established democracy and universal suffrage. It is now a little too late for such

vocal opposition. Indeed, as Plato claimed, "the price of apathy towards public affairs is to be ruled by evil men".

With this in mind, I was in full support of the BBC's decision to allow Nick Griffin to appear on Question Time. Mark Thompson, Director General of the BBC said in the Guardian "Question Time is an opportunity for the British public to put questions to politicians of every ideological hue. Politicians from the UK's biggest parties appear most frequently, but from time to time representatives of parties with many fewer supporters... also take their seats on the stage." It was vital for the BNP to appear on Question Time because they now represent a substantial section of the voting public. To silence this would, ultimately, be to silence democracy.

Therefore the motion that the Union passed, though it claimed it expressly denied its impact on freedom of speech, in its very nature, did. It also denies LSE students a right to debate these issues in an academic environment. Obviously, we must do all we can to protect students regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, political views and religious beliefs. However, as a Union which prides itself on freedom of expression we must allow students to make their own opinions on the actions and opinions expressed on and off campus. Judging by the evidence of the actual broadcasted programme, liberal government does truly work, since the BNP was soundly ridiculed and seen to be what it is. If, in the longer term, the furore over the BNP's unacceptable policies dies down, perhaps we should address the much larger issue of voter apathy instead of stamping on freedom of speech and ultimately democracy. As Potter Stewart commented, "Censorship reflects society's lack of confidence in itself. It is a hallmark of an authoritarian regime."



# YOUR GUIDE TO THE MICHAELMAS TERM ELECTIONS 2009



**INSIDE:** CANDIDATE MANIFESTOS AND  
VOTING INSTRUCTIONS



## POST-GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE OFFICER

Your first point of contact regarding accommodation. The officer's job is to offer advice and listen to your complaints. In addition, the student elected for this role will also liaise with Hall committees.



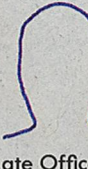
**Arnab Majumdar**

I'm running on the simple theme of accessibility. Based on my conversations with some of the (many!) impressive postgraduates that I've met over the past few weeks, there are a host of common concerns that undoubtedly will be addressed by whichever candidate that gains the confidence of your vote. The need for greater academic support, increasing allocations toward graduate funding and social services, addressing course capping and registration issues, gearing union events to the postgraduate body... What I can promise is to not just address these issues and lobby on your behalf, but to be directly available to you, so we can respond immediately to the various challenges and issues that we'll face this year, and push for real solutions. I'm running because I enjoy the challenge, and it would be a privilege to represent and meet such a diverse and talented group of people. I'm excited at the opportunity.



**Bobby Mills**

VOTE for me, Bobby "Robert" Mills, as your LSE Post Graduate Officer because: Bobby Mills Will: - VISA guidance - Decrease Printing Costs - Library Laptop Rental Program - Meal Plan - Streamline Course & Seminar website - Extend library hours - Act on what you want & need! PLAN: We have already developed a 5 page plan of action and will be ready from day one to work for you. Experience: As student body president of my undergraduate institution (30,000+ student body) I gained experience by working on similar issues & effectively implementing improvements. As a student representative you have to work with all university bodies (students, faculty & staff) to effectively make change. Keeping students 1st & knowing the faculty & staff (Like Dan, Manager of George IV) we will improve this institution! Thanks for your vote and support. Have a "Better than Good" day! Bobby Mills



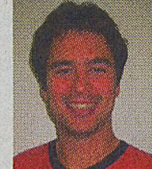
**Meral Demir**

My name is Meral Demir and I am a student at Media and Communications Department. I am running for Postgraduate Officer Position. I held similar position during my undergraduate study as an International Relations Student Representative for one year. I am a happy, energetic person who likes to take responsibilities and wants to work for the postgraduate students to make their studies at LSE an unforgettable time of their lives. I will aim to solve any problem that is brought to my attention. I will attempt to work closely with the Student Union, lecturers and staff to provide assistance that the students need. We know that there are a lot of printing facilities on campus but mostly they are poorly managed, I will do my best to improve this. Also, I believe that all the courses must have course packs, since printing the readings for every course can be annoying.



**Saqeb Mahbub**

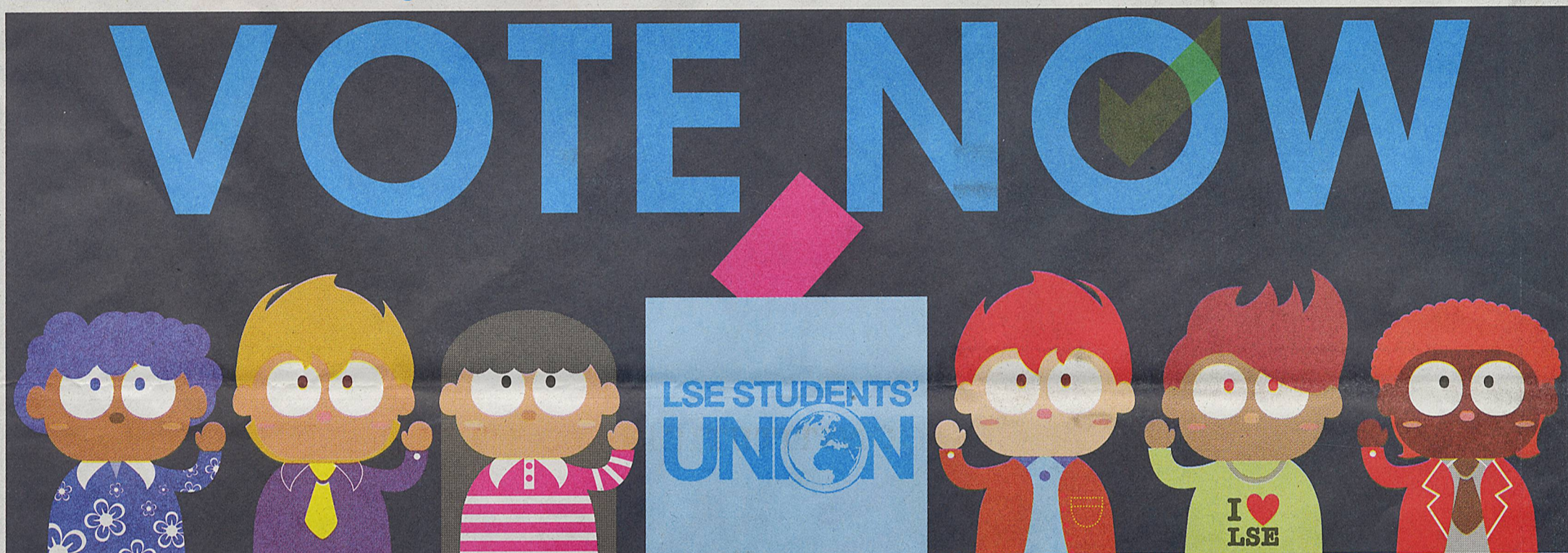
Saqeb Mahbub promises: A Union for all - Bring back postgraduate confidence and interest in the Student's Union and make the union relevant to all. A Postgraduate Forum - Set up a bi-annual forum for postgraduates to raise their concerns about the School, be consulted on SU policies and hold their SU officers to account. More events - Make postgraduates feel at home with more events that are better planned, better organised and better marketed. More scholarships and funding - Campaign for more funding to be made available by the School for scholarships and hardship funds to ease pressure on postgraduates. Limit class sizes - Campaign for class sizes to be limited by the School to provide a better learning environment for everyone. Free Wednesday afternoons - For everyone to get an opportunity to be involved in AU activities.



**Thomas Santiago Overmeer**

LSE Colleagues, My name is Thomas Santiago Overmeer, I am a MSc Economics student and I would like to be your postgraduate representative. Most of us, postgraduate students, have only one short and intense year at LSE and we want get the most out of this experience, from an academic and social perspective. I believe I can work helping it to come true. What do you think? LSE is one of the most expensive schools in the UK and internationally, we work hard and we pay hard, do we get what we pay for? What is important for you? We have necessities, which affect our experience here: they must be captured and effectively communicated to the school. Are our needs listened and met by the school? That's my commitment, your voice louder, your voice stronger! Thank you, Thomas. "I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am." -Descartes

### ALSO RUNNING: Monagala Venkatesh



## ACADEMIC BOARD

Three students will be elected to sit on the academic board, the highest committee within LSE. Its members meet to discuss issues regarding the academic standards of LSE. Sir Howard Davies is the chair of the board.



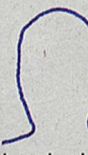
**Nizar Manek**

Academic change from the bottom-up: (1) Open disclosure of committee minutes: transparency in major policy decisions affecting LSE's academic life and development, and regulation of teaching standards. (In the absence of School compliance, I would hope to achieve disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act 2000) (2) To encourage a supportive, as opposed to punitive, approach to academic conduct when heard before Complaints and Disciplinary Panel (3) To make compulsory personal tutors request at least termly meetings with tutees: some do not know even the names of their tutees; concerning, given tutors' reference-writing commitments (4) Compulsory feedback on coursework and examinations, with consistency across Departments (5) Comprehensive teacher training for all new teaching staff, with balance in teacher selection tilted toward teaching ability, as opposed to research volume. (6) No lifting of cap on domestic fees. Lower fees for international and postgraduate students: fees of up to £18,000 are extortionate



**Janna Miletzki**

When I arrived at LSE, I was amazed by all the opportunities there are but at the same time I could not believe that I had to APPLY for certain courses. Did you have the same? In the academic board, I'd like to influence decisions on capped courses and class size. Let's call for FREEDOM of choice! Did you ever think of what would happen if you missed an exam being sick?? There simply are no resits...Equal CHANCES for all; it should be possible to redo an exam! In the rankings, LSE is falling continuously. How can we solve the problems at hand? By voting for me, you will have a representative very interested in ensuring ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. With my experience of studying, working and holding various positions at University College Maastricht previously, I hope to make a difference for YOU and the Board.



**Dea Markova**

Current Postgraduate, former General Course, I know how quickly a year passes by and how much we need it to be absolutely worth our time and money. I have 3goals: (1) Foster academia/ students feedback on ONE, expectations from taught courses and TWO, their delivery THROUGHOUT THE YEAR; push for transfer of best practices in teaching and course organization across departments. (2) Communicate degree awarding and withdrawal permitting procedures clearly and consult with students who have such issues. (3) Work for long-term changes - students, especially postgrads, should know well in advance availability of taught courses and actual alternatives should be available.



**Jake Baron**

I'm running on the simple theme of accessibility. Based on my conversations with some of the (many!) impressive postgraduates that I've met over the past few weeks, there are a host of common concerns that undoubtedly will be addressed by whichever candidate that gains the confidence of your vote. The need for greater academic support, increasing allocations toward graduate funding and social services, addressing course capping and registration issues, gearing union events to the postgraduate body... What I can promise is to not just address these issues and lobby on your behalf, but to be directly available to you, so we can respond immediately to the various challenges and issues that we'll face this year, and push for real solutions. I'm running because I enjoy the challenge, and it would be a privilege to represent and meet such a diverse and talented group of people. I'm excited at the opportunity.



**Olivia Capra**

Your success at the LSE shouldn't be dependent upon whether you got lucky with the teachers you had. Regardless of your course, or the level that you're studying at, YOU are entitled to teachers who are more than lecture notes and course packs. Standardised, student-ratified curriculums must be implemented to ensure that teaching is accountable and of a high standard. Flexibility in office hours and lecturer availability should be extended not just to undergraduates, but postgrads as well. Perhaps it's the LSE's declining world ranking. Maybe it's your declining satisfaction. Let's make LSE truly for you. Vote Capra.



**Judith Jacob**

WHY BOTHER? LSE has been slipping in the rankings and this affects the value of our degree. We're here to get an education and a fulfilling career. We need to improve academics at LSE so that our degrees are worth something. SO? Better Teaching - Graduate students need more training. Need channels for continual feedback throughout the term. More Books in the Course Collection - 16:1 = Too Few Books. More Online Resources. More Scholarships. Wednesday Afternoons Free! Longer Library Opening Hours. Resits - LSE's policies need to maximize student welfare.



**Tasnim Begum**

TASNIM #1 FOR ACADEMIC BOARD You will be electing an individual that's dedicated, approachable and experienced (Social Policy 1st Year Rep, Consultative Forum Departmental Rep, Widening Participation Advisory Board member.) Representing what LSE Students deserve: 1. Higher Standards: LSE is 67th in the World Rankings. Why? Change is imperative! 2. Better Teaching: Academic Board initiatives like the Teaching Taskforce must be followed up to ensure our teachers are the best they can be. 3. More Resources: core textbooks, computers, feedback. This is our goal; you can help me achieve it as your representative: Vote Tasnim # 1 for Academic Board



**Filipe Martins**

I'm Filipe, and I'm applying to be your Academic Board Representative. In this role, I will: Push for Summer Resits for all first year students who have not passed one or more of their subjects; Support a greater flexibility in choosing module options; Represent your views - from teaching quality to special circumstances you may have.



**Luke Moore**

Also running for Court of Governors



**Nik Adhia**

Also running for Court of Governors



**Joy Damschroder**

Also running for Court of Governors



**Huaizih Chen**

Also running for Court of Governors



## GENERAL COURSE REPRESENTATIVES

This is the primary representative for all General Course students to the Executive Committee and the School.



**Andrew Moore**

I am running for General Course Representative to be a strong voice for General Course students in the Student's Union. The concerns of General Course students are not represented in the SU; I believe this can and should change. My campaign will focus on three areas: Experience, Advocacy, and Service. **EXPERIENCE:** At George Washington University, I worked with new international students to translate their ideas into tangible results. **ADVOCACY:** As General Course Representative, I will be an advocate for your needs and will always be ready to stand up for the changes you want on campus. **SERVICE:** I grew up with my two brothers and single mother, below the poverty line, and on welfare in south Louisiana. This instilled service as an integral part of my life and at the LSE I want to bring together the General Course through service opportunities. Elect Andrew - MOORE FOR THE GENERAL COURSE.



**Hao Li**

My name is Hao Li and I am a student from the University of Southern California, originally from SF Bay Area. I'm asking you for the opportunity to be your General Course Representative. I am friendly, easily approachable, willing to listen and will advocate on your behalf for your interests. Since we're paying so much tuition here I thought we should have more free stuff, weekend trips, dinners, parties, pub-crawls and events catered to us as GC students. I will advocate that for you, as well as whatever interests and proposals you would have yourselves. My experiences have been: In high school, I was the President of my senior class and student body VP. In university, I've been a college senator and worked on various committees in the student government. I believe with these past experiences, I am qualified for the job and hope to get your support! Thanks!



**Joshua Lee**

Hello, my name is Joshua and I am a General Course student from George Washington University. As a double major of International Relations and Economics, I decided to come to LSE after a semester of exchange program in Sciences Po Paris. Like most of you, I came to LSE with excitement and high expectations. Yes, LSE is great, but there are rooms to improve and our study abroad experience could be even better. Have you ever wished that LSE dining facilities open till late so that we can grab something quick for dinner and continue working at the Library? What about the printers that get jammed so often? I will work with you to satisfy our needs and organize social events. I believe that studying abroad will widen our views and give us a life-long experience. Let's make it unforgettable! I will be there for you.



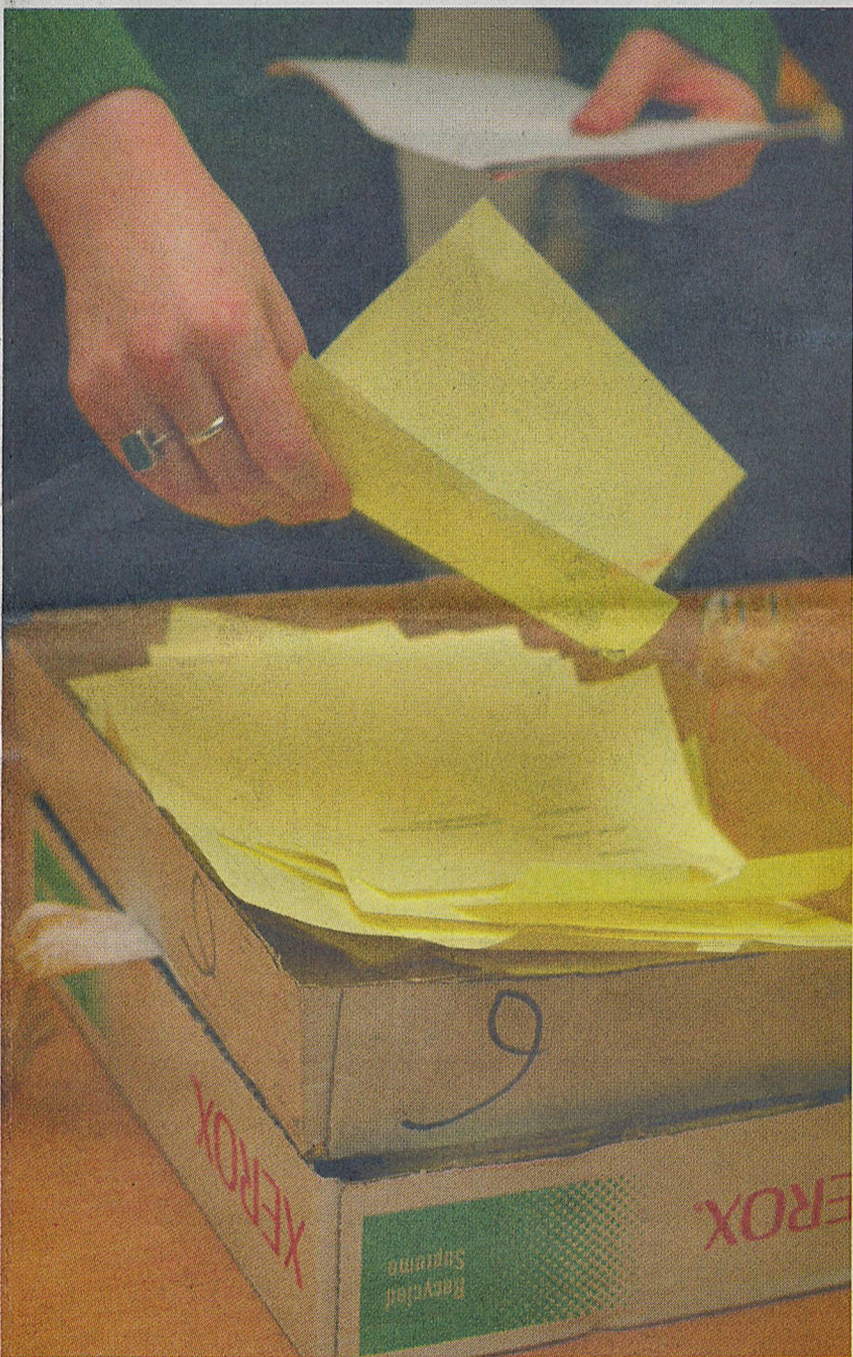
**Matt Hellauer**

We have one year in London, so we gotta do it right. Let's go BIG, then go home. I would be honoured to represent all of you at the LSE Student's Union and will guarantee the best Michaelmas and Lent of your lives. There are some great events that I would love to bring to the General Course that would make each fortnight unforgettable. To wet your palette - Boat Party Round II on the River Thames, General Course Lecture Series, Residence Hall Potluck Dinners are just a few events we have in the works. It has been an amazing Michaelmas thus far and if elected, I will keep this momentum rolling throughout the year. Making the most of London and the LSE is a necessity while we're here. That's why you should vote Matt Hellauer, so we can all go BIG, then go home.



**Philip Maynard**

Hi Everyone! I'm Phil, a GC-er from Brown. I'm running for General Course Representative because I want to get involved with LSE's Student Union, and represent the voice of the General Course students. Many of the LSE's students are staying for only one year, and it's essential that we are all heard. I plan to work for more General Course events, such as a Thanksgiving Dinner, our own black tie event, and our very own theme-parties at the Three Tuns. I also want to follow through with any previous efforts to create a General Course Alumni network. I plan on taking notes at the UGMs, and making concise reports about what is going on in the Student's Union (if you want to know)! I'm very outgoing and dedicated, and would love to hear from you about ideas/issues for this year, or for future classes



## NUS DELEGATES

Five students will be elected as representatives to the National Union of Students' annual conference. They will vote on issues that affect students nationally.



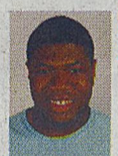
**Eve Gutterman**

Elect Eve Gutterman to be your # 1 NUS delegate! A Vote for Eve is a vote for Independence: I will vote in the interest of the LSE community. I have no agenda but to represent you. Transparency: I will be completely accessible to you and your concerns. Let me be your voice. Anti-Racism: More now than ever, the N.U.S. should remain a forum of co-existence. Reject racism and extremism. Student issues before international issues. A Fresh Voice: As an American student I will bring a fresh voice to the N.U.S. and to the LSE.



**Mira Hammad**

It is about time that NUS realised its potential and achieved some real impact on the LSE campus- for this to become a reality I will campaign in a passionate manner for issues that matter to you. I have extensive experience of running campaigns: as Chair of LSESU Palestine Society, through the Citizens for Social Justice living wage and listening campaigns. I will use my experience for dedicated campaigning to achieve: 1) A freeze on tuition fees. The proposals to increase tuition fees in 2010 must be defeated. 2) Justice for international students. 3) Ethical investment at a national level.

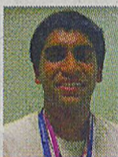


**Emmanuel Akpang-Inwang**

As your Education and Welfare Officer I feel that I am perfectly placed to ensure that your voice does not go unheard by the NUS. As a delegate last I was instrumental in the introduction of postgraduate campaigning and representation into the NUS, and have been an avid defender of the rights of international students; continuously encouraging the NUS to do more to stand up for their rights. My experience with student issues on a national level is extensive. So to ensure that your vision continues to be delivered nationally RE-ELECT EMMANUEL NUS DELEGATE.

## CONSTITUTION AND STEERING

A group of seven who interpret/advise on the Codes of Practice and Constitution of the Union. Two positions are up for election.



**Gaurav Srivastava**

My name is Gaurav Srivastava, but most people know me as 'G-Man'. And if you're confused by the ballot box, tick every box apart from that good for nothing RON! Why C&S? Because it is a crucial part of SU work and can genuinely increase the welfare of every LSE student, especially by keeping you better informed on the SU's activities. As part of C & S, I would ensure that the UGM motions are practical, fair and constitutionally valid as well as being credible. I had a leading role in developing and working with my school council, and my principles of making it for the benefit of students and to strengthen their voice, will not change. Please vote for both Seb and me. He is a cool guy with a lot of experience and I am a fresher with a lot of time. We are the dream team.



**Sebastian Steinfeld**

When I was a baby, my Mum once used a company constitution as a table mat for yummy food. Since then, I have associated constitutions with good feelings. C&S is the most important position on the committee. It alone ensures the SU respects the rule of law. Having qualified as a solicitor in a magic circle law firm, I would be amongst the most experienced in the C&S. In short, if you cut me, I bleed article numbers and appendices. It would give me warm and glowy feelings applying this expertise and skill set to improve the lives of my fellow LSE brothers and sisters. Also, G-Man's awesome and, given his constitutional experience, he'll be effective and we'll work well together. RON, however, has a proven record for inaction and dithering. If you come to him with problems, he'll say, "talk to the hand cos I just don't care!"

## HONORARY PRESIDENT

**Othman Sakallah**

Othman Sakallah is a Palestinian postgraduate LSE offer holder who cannot be here at the LSE because he is trapped in Gaza due to the Israeli siege. Electing Othman as our honorary president would uphold the values upon which the LSE was founded - the right to education for all and the protection of human intellect and dignity both inside and beyond the LSE. The SU must do all everything it can to send out a message of support to all LSE students- it must not abandon those in the most dire need. Othman is not an internationally renowned celebrity, he is simply a talented and studious guy who deserves to be at the LSE. Electing Othman will therefore not simply serve as an empty gesture to add a miniscule footnote to his collection of international plaudits; it will change his life by bringing a level of international attention to his plight which will assist him in his attempt to escape Gaza. Othman cannot be here in person, bring him here in spirit. A vote for Othman is a vote for freedom and education.

**Shimon Peres**

When you have two alternatives, the first thing you have to do is to look for the third that you didn't think about, that doesn't exist Israeli President Shimon Peres. Peres is a world leader in every sense- hailing from the volatile Middle East, he has been revolutionary in promoting peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, influential in peace talks with the Palestinians and unlike other leaders on both sides of the conflict, is able to search out solutions, to find answers and to reach understandings. He is a Nobel Peace Prize winner and has held his hand outstretched for peace, calling on all Arab neighbours to take up the initiative. Shimon Peres is the leader who was never actually elected - he has had the ambition and perseverance to maintain his dovish outlook throughout his lifetime, despite losing consistently in Israeli elections. This is what an Honorary President of the LSE SU should represent- concrete hopes and goals for peace and understanding, unfazed by the circumstances and paving a road to a better world. Even at his 86 years, Shimon Peres is a diligent and inspiring leader, regardless of political and national background, who continues to search for peace.



## HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT

The Honorary Vice-President is another nominated position. In the past it has been someone who has shown the capacity to represent what best symbolises the best attributes of the Union.

**Kaya Eldridge**



Kaya Eldridge has acted as an impressive activist and ambassador for human rights. After graduating from the LSE Kaya went to India on an internship working with women's group Mahila Swaraj Abhiyan. In August of this year she was sexually assaulted in her flat. When she took the case to court she was humiliated and asked a series of "irrelevant questions" such as whether she smoked, drank or had bathed on the day of her assault. She described the experience as being like a 'second assault'. Kaya has used this as an opportunity to raise awareness of the sexist treatment experienced by women in courts of law across the world. She has helped to lift some of the silences that surround the fear and reality of rape and sexual assault, and has helped to challenge the global maltreatment of women under the law.



## COURT OF GOVERNORS

Five students are elected to represent student views to the second highest decision making body at the LSE. The Court discusses major decisions that will affect the LSE's future development.



**Huaizih Chen**

Being a student at LSE is an exciting yet sometimes daunting experience. We live in different accommodation scattered all over Greater London. We study under some of the world's most brilliant professors, all during the worst economic crisis of our generation. As your representative to the Court of Governors and the Academic Board, I will alleviate some of that pressure to ensure you are able to build the best future for yourself after graduating from LSE. I am committed to ensure that your professors are regularly reminded that your future careers after graduating are of the utmost importance and that they should be actively working with you to provide with the prospects and opportunities that you deserve to flourish. With my extensive leadership experience during undergrad, I am well positioned to deliver on these commitments for you.



**Nik Adhia**

Fed up of NOT KNOWING what goes on in YOUR UNIVERSITY? Feel like a number and part of the 'LSE BRAND'? My name is NIK ADHIA (Nikhilkumar Adhia) and I can and will do ANYTHING to make OUR VOICES be heard as you will have JUDGED :- by seeing my lovely team and I on campus. I will stand up for what WE collectively believe in, even if that means standing up alone! LSE - Lets See Change: Increased governor interaction in student life. Stricter teacher vetting and exam feedback. Focus on the PERSONAL development of students. Greater support for LSE SU Societies. Improved facilities including proposal for sports complex. Proposals to reduce LSE student accommodation fees. VOTE NIKHILKUMAR ADHIA (NIK ADHIA) #1 COURT OF GOVERNORS and ACADEMIC BOARD. I want to 'BE THE CHANGE' so that WE can collectively 'MAKE THE CHANGE'



**Divya Chandran**

As a highly driven individual with an unwavering determination to make the impossible possible, I truly believe I deserve to be elected to the Court of Governors. I am standing for this position because I believe I can make a difference. My enthusiasm for this role stems from the 3Ps - Priority, Passion and Perseverance. LSE's priority is its students and I will ensure this is reflected in all the key decisions affecting the School's policies by representing the student body's views and concerns in the Court of Governors. My aim is to lobby for academic and funding-related policies which affect ALL students. I stand for impartiality and transparency. Therefore, I want to work towards increasing awareness regarding the school's governance structure on campus. My passion and perseverance set me apart because when the going gets tough, Divya gets going!



**Jake Baron**

Hi, I'm Jake. As a post-grad student new to LSE I won't claim intimate familiarity with the School's esoteric intricacies, but I will claim experience making change and a unique perspective the governing bodies would find invaluable. As LSE's institutional identity crises play out in overcrowded classrooms and scathing Beaver columns-undergrad v. postgrad, teaching v. research, supporting students v. pinching pennies-everyone looks to US universities for guidance. How do things work in the Ivy League, America's best? As a 2009 graduate of an Ivy League university, Dartmouth College, I've personally experienced the answers. Believe it or not, Dartmouth and LSE suffer the same never-ending institutional debates. At Dartmouth, I hounded administrators through columns and panels to give students more-more classes, more resources, more support-and to cut bureaucratic waste. Result: smaller classes, better educational experience. I'll do the same at LSE..



**Andrew Wright**

As your Residences Officer, I've been working hard to make students' time in halls, private accommodation and on campus a better, more supported and enjoyable experience through innovations such as the rent guarantor scheme and by working with School and hall committees. By voting for me this week I assure you LSE can be a place where realistic change can ensure student experience is put first, where enrichment and development through activities, support services and improved facilities is raised to its rightful place and where issues that directly affect students are acted on and engage all. The School consistently fails to deliver the 'student experience' - for too long complacency with brand recognition has delivered under-resourced services for a diverse student body from arrivals to graduation. Disengagement and poor satisfaction results require immediate attention. Strengthening your voice! Vote for experience, commitment and dedication - VOTE ANDREW WRIGHT #1 FOR COURT!



**Anna Gagiano**

Who's she? I'm a postgrad international student living in Roseberry Hall who's held positions of responsibility previously in both educational and professional settings. Why's she running? I've got a lot of questions and criticisms of things like tuition fee levels (where our money goes and how much students will be charged after the election next year), assessment (why can't students get more formal written feedback) etc. and want to represent students on the body that makes strategic and financial decisions. Why are only 4 out of 17 student exec positions held by women? And why are so few positions held by post-grads and non-Brits? I wondered that myself. But the only way to change it is to vote in capable: female candidates, postgrads (who do after all know what it's like to be an undergrad) and international students. By a happy coincidence of fate and self-promotion: I am all three.



**Imtiaz Shamsuddin**

LSE's blasé treatment of students getting on your nerves? Me too, and that's why I'm running to sit on the governing body committee, and make a change. First years have complained about the lack of support for freshers (especially international), and the lack of a gradual induction process into their studies, instead being asked to read 50-100 pages in total of unintelligible text in the first week. I don't particularly enjoy politics, but something has to be done. \* On the Board of Directors for a college (2500+ students) and a theatre for a 4 year term. \* 2 years professional work experience within the public schooling sector. \* Transparent, I don't play political games. Last year LSE dropped like a stone in the league tables, primarily because of abysmal student satisfaction, where 1 in 4 LSE students were dissatisfied enough by LSE's service to complain. Go figure?



**Sarwar Zaman**

I want to be YOUR Governor in court. I will work tirelessly to make our school one that we can be proud of, and one that caters to our needs. Priorities: 1) "Seeing is believing" - urging external governors to spend a day in the life of a student to understand the problems we face as students today. 2) Right to quality education - enough is enough: no more to tuition fee hikes. 3) Facilities - ensuring multi-million pound profits are invested back into student resources. 4) Lobby for an environmentally conscious, ethical and just LSE. 5) Respecting diversity - counter all forms of discrimination. Experience: UK Prime Minister's Global Fellow - represented PM in China for 6 weeks. Bank of America Student Leader - advocated young people's views at Leadership Summit in US. Vote #1 for me, Sarwar Zaman, and I'll make sure the big wigs hear. OUR NEEDS - YOUR VOICE - MY FIGHT



**Luke Moore**

I am Luke Moore a third year government student. During my time at LSE I have been actively involved in student union politics and I am currently the SU Students with Disability officer. If elected to the Court of Governors I will lobby the school for: No increases in student fees for undergraduates or postgraduates. A reduction in international student fees. Greater provision of affordable university accommodation. The right to education for everyone accepted at the LSE. If elected to the academic board I will lobby the school for: An improved quality of teaching. That all lecture notes should be provided in advance on Moodle. Greater feedback on exam results and assessed essays.



**Filipe Martins**

I'm Filipe, and I'm applying to be your Court of Governors Representative. In this role, I will: Encourage greater support from the School for student initiatives such as 'TIMELESS!', which is unique to LSE and gives students a chance to do something big and meaningful, and that they've probably never done before; Raise awareness of on-campus divisions between students from different backgrounds and putting forward initiatives that help settle differences and encourage cross-cultural understanding and cooperation.



**H. Puentes**

Reputation Counts. Of greatest concern to me as a member of the Court of Governors will be the recent declining reputation of the LSE. This decrease in standing among universities has occurred due to various factors including, but not limited to, the lack of supervisor-student contact, poor student to teacher ratio, and no exam feedback. As a Governor, I will submit a report to be presented to the Council outlining the causes of this recent drop in reputation and propose a set of actions that can be taken by the Governors to ensure tangible results. As students, we have a shared responsibility to protect the LSE's reputation, for our own benefit as well as future students of the LSE.



**Joy Damschroder**

STRESSED? CONFUSED? FRUSTRATED? OVERWHELMED? PISSED OFF with LSE? - CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION ????? Me too - That's why I'm running. And I've got the business, professional, and organizational background to get the job done (and a loud voice). I own my own company. Five years professional work experience in business and production. Lived, studied and worked in UK, China, India, Egypt, Mexico, USA, Albania & Kosovo. I care about the students needs. I'll get you student satisfaction by cutting through the LSE bureaucracy and getting the job done - simple as that.



**Robin Low**

Last year I was elected to represent you in a full-time capacity as a sabbatical officer. You elected me then so that all day everyday I would be thinking about you (not in a creepy way). This makes electing me onto the Court of Governors all the more important. It is a natural extension of my position as a sabbatical officer, and will be able to significantly help in the work I am already doing for you. Specifically the work on the Rent Guarantor Scheme, which is aimed mainly at international students, but also for students facing financial difficulty. Having been mandated to get the school to provide such a scheme it will be crucial for me to be on the Court of Governors for this to be realised, as well as ensuring everything that goes through here is for the benefit of all students. IN ROB WE TRUST.



**George Wetz**

As elected Treasurer of the Students' Union, you already trust me with your money, so now I ask you to trust me with your views at the Court of Governors. I spend every day pushing for positive change and representing you to the School - it's what gets me out of bed each morning. I want to spend each evening when Court is held doing exactly the same thing: making LSE the place it should be. I've delivered a big chunk of my 57 policies already - improving our social space, letting clubs and societies develop, and making our Union greener. But there's lots more to do, and being on the Court will let me push the School to invest ethically and realise just how important the Union is to "the student experience". You've seen me get things done. Choose me, and I'll get on and do even more.

### ALSO RUNNING FOR COURT OF GOVERNORS:

**Ashley Tan**  
**Scott Macdonald**

## GET READY TO VOTE MICHAELMAS TERM ELECTIONS 2009

Vote online  
Wednesday and Thursday  
<https://elections.lse.ac.uk/elections/>

### Results Night

Thursday, 8pm-10pm in the Quad  
Music, Commentary  
and the Final Count.



LSE STUDENTS' UNION

### THE VOTING SYSTEM

**SINGLE**

**TRANSFERABLE VOTE**

The Single Transferable Vote system (STV) is a complex system designed to minimize wasted votes and provide proportional representation. Voters rank candidates in order of preference. STV initially allocates an elector's vote to his or her most preferred candidate and then, after candidates have been either elected or eliminated, transfers surplus or unused votes according to the voter's stated preferences.





Photo: Flickr user ross mcross.

# The freedom to offend

**Marion Koob** discusses how the British National Party's right to freedom of speech affects us all

**T**his Thursday's Question Time had a definite atmosphere of playground bullying. Indeed, throughout the hour, the audience and the rest of the panel took turns pouncing on the BNP leader Nick Griffin, whether on a psychological or political level. While one couldn't but feel satisfied at the sight of his humiliation, the question remains as to whether his presence on the public platform was a sign of a healthy democracy, or rather, a dangerous symptom.

The controversy regarding whether such an extremist party should be given such a wide public exposure is a curious one in a culture which prizes freedom of speech as a cornerstone of human rights. However, in advocating such absolute values, we eventually arrive at situations in which we find ourselves thinking that it is actually better to place limits on the original ideal. We then have a tendency to refer back to John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*. He states that freedom of speech ought to be allowed as long as it does not provoke direct harm. However, Mill's definition of what counts as harm is still under heated debate and hence, so is the moral dilemma which we must confront in such situations.

It is a form of hypocrisy to say that we are an absolutely free society in matters of speech. Rules still limit what we are allowed to say: for instance, Geert Wilders was refused entry to the UK on the basis of his islamophobic discourse. Nevertheless, we are freer than most. Yet, how can we criticize states such as China on the basis

**It is a form of hypocrisy to say that we are an absolutely free society in matters of speech**

of their censorship given our virulent outcries when a controversial political candidate is given air-time?

Which kind of harm does the BNP's public exposure warrant? We above all fear that it will be an occasion to further increase his support among voters. This is, however, a highly un-democratic premise. The fact that the views of other voters are dramatically opposed to our own, does not make them invalid, or worthless of attention. In constructing a democratic state, it is agreed that a vote has no greater or less worth than another. Hence, we cannot disregard some preferences on the basis that they are far more than unsavoury.

Therefore we might say that in considering democracy in the purest and simplest definition you may want to give it, it is indeed undemocratic to refuse Nick Griffin the right to express himself on television. If there exists a million individuals in the United Kingdom whom are willing to see the BNP in government, then surely it seems reasonable enough to allow its members media coverage. To do otherwise would go against the basis of democratic thought. In other words, should we have an overshadowing morality deciding which preferences voters are allowed to have.

But like most, I find Nick Griffin's values repulsive to the highest degree. In the view of my interests, his pathetic performance on Thursday night is a cause for celebration. And indeed, the clear opposition of the rest of those participating in the show, was part of a valid democratic process. It is therefore possible to con-

**The fact that the views of other voters are dramatically opposed to our own, does not make them invalid, or worthless of attention**

sider the whole event as a good signal of a well-working democracy. Bringing them into the limelight displays the absurdity and abhorrence of their thought, hopefully signalling to the public at large to abandon them in their racial hatred. What many forget is that listening to a racist, prejudiced individual does not make you one, and so, Nick Griffin's appearance will not create a sudden transformation of beliefs. He has solely aroused those whom already think along these lines.

Or, we may want to revise our definition of democracy. If we define tolerance and open-mindedness as universally accepted goods, we may want to give up some of our freedoms as to secure them. In this light, Thursday evening was a dramatic mistake.

I propose to view the event as a failure. The BNP had indeed the right to appear on the BBC, just as the audience and panel had the right to attack their views. However, the fact that an extreme-right party manages to secure enough support as to be in the position to legitimately demand to be on public television, is where the catastrophic failing resides. That a million individuals are willing to support a party which seeks to oust a good proportion of the population out of its borders is intolerable. There is clearly an urgent need for further education on acceptance across cultures, not solely in the UK, but across Europe, where the rise of extremist parties is also a growing problem. That racial hatred still exists to such a scale is horrifying.





Photo: Flickr user shari le baron

# Aiding development

**Teresa Goncalves** examines how development must go hand-in-hand with independence

**T**he exploitation of developing countries is a problem prevalent throughout the world, often with harrowing consequences.

When we think of these cases we often think of dictators, military leaders or insurgents that use violence and corruption to gain or maintain control. However, we also need to begin to question major power involvement in these states and how many autocratic leaders are able to secure their positions through beneficial deals with international states.

Take China for example. Emerging as a new world economy, it is rolling through Africa creating new trade alliances and deals wherever, with whomsoever, regardless of political or humanitarian consequences. In recent headlines we have heard how China plans to build new roads, railways, schools and hospitals in return for access to mineral reserves in Guinea. In theory this should be a good thing; African states have often complained of Western 'drop aid' which does not offer longer term solutions to most problems. In reality, we need to be aware of exactly what this means for countries like Guinea, which suffer from such great political instability and repression.

The 28th of September marked the vicious militia attacks which resulted in the death of over 150 demonstrators protesting against Captain Moussa Camara, Guinea's military ruler. Less than a month later came the news that China planned to invest heavily in the country, thereby helping in securing Camara's position. It seems as though the protection of human

rights and the fragility of the geopolitics in Africa was not even thought of as an issue.

These kinds of deals hinder the efforts to promote transparency, legitimacy and honesty in developing countries. Whilst the idea of helping to build emerging economies through infrastructure is a good one, we need to be worried about the greater implications of making deals with dictators.

At the same time, China has provided visible infrastructure aid that has helped many African states. In Angola and Nigeria, leaders hope that oil deals with the Asian nation will help create the environment for peace. Militants in Nigeria have sought a truce with the government, laying down weapons used to destroy oil pipelines and other important networks systems. Several scholarships have also been offered to African students to study in China and many training centres have been set up to offer education, including courses in agricultural studies.

Supporters of Chinese investment suggest that, unlike the West, China does not seek to exert political or economic pressure on the African states. However, it has been lending its support to different incumbent governments, for example in Zambia 2006 and Ghana 2008, to keep out opposition leaders that may have otherwise won the elections. This is an obvious breach on the democratic process of these nations.

Intervening in the process of democratisation can severely hinder a country's attempt at stabilising and raises questions about the difference between assistance

**I am often left uneasy with the level of interference that can be seen, not only in Afghanistan but also elsewhere in the world**

and meddling in a sovereign state.

In the recent Afghan elections there has been heavy pressure both from Europe and America on current president, Hamid Karzai, to accept the invalidation of 1.3 million votes that would have given him a majority. Whilst adjudication should be maintained in regards to free and fair elections, a second runoff may still not guarantee that a majority leader is found, nor that fraud will not be present, particularly amongst predictions that voter turnout will be lower than ever. Western pressures for a coalition between Karzai and his main opponent Abdullah Abdullah seem to verge on the incredible. The potential fragmentation and political disruption that could occur would completely reverse the steps that Afghanistan has so far taken towards democracy. Whispers that 'veiled threats' were made have also emerged. On Sunday White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, stated that no decision on America's military presence in Afghanistan would be made until all uncertainty was cleared up.

I am not advocating that we allow elections to be fraudulent or that America and other international states just 'leave them to it', but I am often left uneasy with the level of interference that can be seen, not only in Afghanistan but also elsewhere in the world. When do we allow a country to fly free of its international constraints so that it can truly establish an effective and legitimate government? Whilst states attempt to 'prop up' these new democracies, they forget that all they can do for now is learn to crawl.

It is all well and good wanting to establish democracies in place of governments that drain or ignore their population but this cannot be achieved through the veil of free and fair elections alone. Democracy is about much more than that. One needs to take into account that human rights need to be maintained; participation sought and the rule of law upheld, amongst other important necessary conditions. Many of these criteria cannot be achieved if a government is weak and unable to protect its population against breaches of basic human and civil rights. The more major powers seek to 'meddle' in these countries affairs the more difficult it will be become for them to truly stabilise, and stand independent of other nations.



## LSE Diary

### Conversing with correspondents

#### Madeeha Ansari relates her experience of an interview with Justin Webb



As North America Editor for the BBC and now presenter of the "Today" program on Radio 4, Justin Webb is among the school's most eminent alumni in the field of journalism. Even if my flatmates were unimpressed, his name is a byword in The Beaver office. It follows that when I set out to interview him after his public lecture, the ideal conversation as mapped out in my head involved clever witticisms about his time at the LSE, and how it was instrumental in shaping his future.

In the first five minutes of the lecture I discovered that he did not remember his exact undergraduate degree.

That set the trend for the rest of the evening, which turned out to be an exercise in thinking on my feet. After the lecture I approached one of the organisers and requested an audience with Mr. Webb. She stared at me kindly, took me by the hand and led me to the front of the book-signing queue. Later I discovered that my mentor was Geraldine Sharpe-Newton, who is President of the Media Society and has been associated with the communications departments for giants like CBS news, CNN and The Economist. Let's hope she took my amateurishness to be an assertiveness I really didn't feel. After all, about four feet away stood Owen Bennett-Jones, BBC presenter and author of "Pakistan: The Eye of the Storm".

It was all I could do to maintain my composure when they decided to head to "Ye Old White Horse" and invited me to join them. With no idea of how I was going to handle the interview, I clung to a vague but unshakable conviction that the secret of journalistic success was just within reach. Apparently, it starts with what has been unimaginatively titled the

way to being a journalist."

We then moved on to talk about the future of print journalism, which some think is becoming obsolete. He didn't.

"There is still a real hunger for media that challenges, interests and engages. (Print media) is plainly going through this desperate phase in which a business model is needed to make it work. Whether it's through the Internet - some papers in America like the Christian Science Monitor have gone Internet-only - (the models) have been known to work. But for someone who is starting out in the media to say that I'm not going into print media because it's finished would be completely wrong."

If he is to be believed, it is only at first glance that broadcasting seems more glamorous as well as widely accessible.

"Television is finished as a news medium! Now, the numbers who are watching television news are decreasing year on year."

"I went to see a senior minister and on the way there I went through Victoria Station. Some old geiser who had seen better days in Victoria Station came up to me from the bench where he'd been sitting and said: I recognise you and I want to talk about Barack Obama."

The anecdote continued till he reached his destination and met "a very very swish private secretary" who came up, shook his hand and said: "Now what do you do?"

"This was the year that I had done a lot of TV. If you're bright and young you are not watching ten o'clock news, whereas if you're slightly older and slightly less (exciting) you probably still do."

The title of the lecture of the day was "Why I Grew to Love America and You Should Too". I finally got the opportunity to question the expansiveness of that

"Graduate Training Scheme". As Mr. Webb explained, the BBC has two.

"(Owen) joined a production training scheme and I joined a news training scheme, and I think both now exist again. We - both of us - are in this odd position of having worked in the BBC our whole adult lives, which I think would be unusual now. But you can still join straight from university."

Seeing that he considered it to be quite a natural transition, I explained that much of the LSE was set to enter corporate life. That got me a funny little squint.

"Well, who were our contemporaries? Danny Finkelstein is Associate Editor of The Times, Kirstie Lang was there. Who else do we know who has done things in the media? It was much more a media place. Simon Garfield I didn't really know, but he made an amazing career writing books about current events - he wrote a fantastic book about AIDS."

OBJ - I presume to abbreviate - looked mildly cynical when it seemed that it was the institution that was responsible for breeding this generation. That prompted some recapitulation.

"Perhaps there were just a lot of people who were always obviously going to go into it. There probably were corporate people but I don't think I knew them. I think they may have come in in the morning - we just stayed in bed."

As far as his oft-quoted association with the Beaver was concerned, he very politely put it in perspective.

"I wrote for it a bit. What it does is it sorts whether you can do it or not. If you can write cogent interesting things - anything, whether it's for a student paper, blog, a letter home to your mum - if you can prove to yourself that you can do it, that you like doing it, then (you are) half-

statement, and ask about what it meant in terms of journalistic objectivity. The Sheikh Zayed theatre had housed a hugely appreciative audience, which had not raised any British-style objections to his slightly cheeky stance. In that respect, too, he found the LSE had changed.

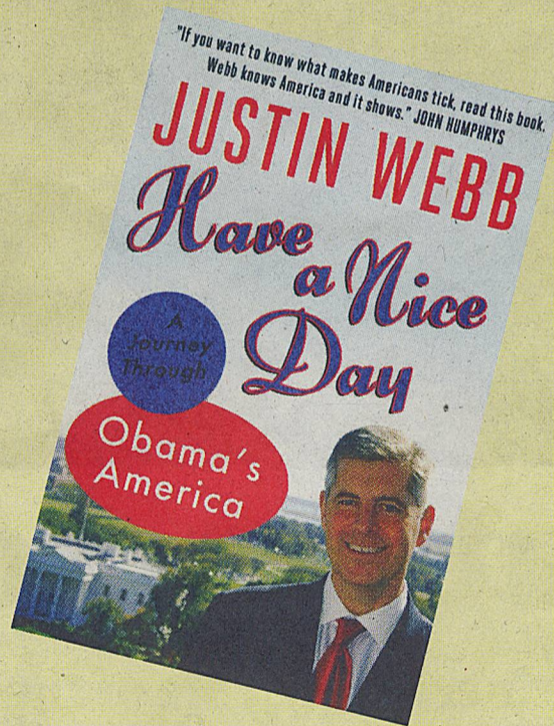
"Someone who was expounding the view that I would have been eaten alive. I came ready to do battle!"

It was one of the few times that evening I saw him speaking purely in earnest.

"It's important for foreign correspondents to get under the skin of the place they're in, to deal with people and form relationships with people. I think the idea of you going and just being cynical and apart is wrong. To an extent the title of my talk is slightly ironic, but I do think that it's totally acceptable to come out after 8 years and say it was a good place."

We went on to talk a little about the merits of appreciating irony; about the American work ethic and British alcoholism. By the end of it I was reconciled to his nuanced view of America, in spite of Owen Bennett-Jones' exasperatedly dismissive gesture.

I did not have the courage to stay on and see what scintillating twists the conversation could take when there was no pressure of going on the record. I did, however, pause for a moment outside the door of "Ye Old White Horse". There was the picture of four colleagues, comfortable in their niche, casually chatting of people, places, perhaps philosophy and politics. For twenty minutes, I too had stood awkwardly at the threshold of their world.



## What if...

### The Peloponnesian War never happened?

Gareth Tan

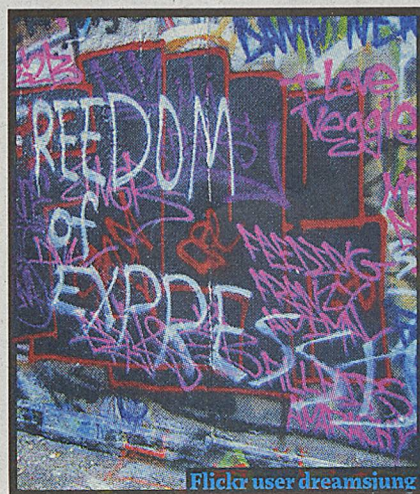
Yet another day: airplanes hum, cars drone and conurbations grow, but in this fanciful retelling of the tale of history, it is the dawn of the 11th century AD and the capital of the world is the Athens/Sparta metropolis. The Peloponnesian War has never occurred. In 434 BC the Athenian Empire and Peloponnesian League, rather sagaciously realizing that they were perfect complements, held talks which resulted in an alliance of over a thousand years. Much of the West we know is under its domination and speaks, quite understandably, Greek.

The Academies, modeled after the first by Plato and Aristotle, both embody the populace's supreme principle of the sacred prominence of the intellect and serve as the symbols of the apotheosis of Thought. In them students are drilled for eighteen years in the venerated disciplines of philosophy, science, and mathematics, and for the last millennium the energetic rivalry among these veritable churches of the mind has produced a lush plain of illuminating scholarship on the nature of the universe. Due in part to these Academies science has progressed with breathtaking speed, encouraged by the unwavering promotion of rational discourse and free speech.

In this Greek world politics is largely conducted by direct democracy. Citizens contribute substantial portions of their time to the government of the community by serving on legislative assemblies and committees, and frequently perform jury duty with a surprising degree of enthusiasm. By our standards, these committees are large, consisting of thousands of people. The tender doctor by day can be a ferocious politician by night. The laws and courts have fortuitously managed to maintain a remarkably stable society. Unfortunately, universal suffrage is not yet a reality: there being no Enlightenment, slaves are chained against a backdrop of levitating trains and holographic projections, and women continue to suffer discrimination and be excluded from political life.

The swiftness of scientific development too, sadly, has not come gratis. If our Western tradition is the heritage of the Greeks and Christianity, the absence of the latter has resulted in the shocking disappearance of much of our greatest art, music, and architecture. After the golden age of figures such as Sophocles and Euripides, the drama and sculpture of this fantastic world would never again reach equally original and creative heights. Without, additionally, the circumstances making possible Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War, the subject of history and many social sciences have yet to be developed into the disciplines we know today. Banal video-shows and mass-produced sculpture replicas flood the streets. The plays of Aeschylus are still drearily re-enacted in its few remaining theaters. Art, this world's Nietzsche would say, is dead.

## Measured musings



The internet has led to a fundamental re-think of the nature of democracy and freedom of speech, the likes of which have not been witnessed since the invention of the Gutenberg Printing Press. The internet has changed our world from one where ideas are filtered then published, to one where publishing occurs in an instant, and filtration by a mass audience then follows. Blogs, Twitter feeds and Facebook are all symptomatic of this brave new world in which we are constantly bombarded with information, much of which is useless.

Yet, a world which allows the instant accessing of information also adds a new dimension to freedom of speech. A dimension unforeseen by John Stuart Mill, in that it allows us to instantly connect with individuals with similar passions, interests and occupations. This can have incredibly positive effects, as was seen in the use of 'MyBo' during Barack Obama's campaign for the presidency or the surge of meetings by so called 'stay-at-home moms', in the USA, coordinated by the

website 'Meetup'. Similarly, cyberspace is also home to terrorists, paedophiles and 'pro-mia' groups encouraging anorexia; groups which are, in essence, expressing their freedom of speech on the internet.

The internet lowers transactions costs (the price of exchange) dramatically, in some cases to almost zero. Thus we have seen the rise of websites such as 'Flickr' or 'ebay', which exploit this. Most importantly, these websites are organised by their users. They are a service, but one in which the producer and the consumer are the same. Thus these lower transactions costs make it cheaper to connect with other individuals, whether to share photographs, sell old records or exchange tips on how to create an explosive device.

Thus the cheaper exchange of everything, including information, leads to the breaking down of old hegemonies and the rise of a more aware, more interested electorate. Thus the control of information is slowly moving away from newspaper outlets and large corporates, as was

recently seen in the Trafifigura incident, which received sustained pressure from the social networking site, Twitter. News and information can now be published in the public domain instantly, where audience is not limited to county, nation or continent. Without a doubt this has led to a more interested and aware electorate who are more selective in their interests, for example the wide range of support given to green issues and the use of online polls for issues ranging from Student Loans to immigration policies.

The internet empowers, but it does this irrespective of the intentions of the individual or group in question. Which explains the rise of file sharing and P2P networks, of forums promoting radical views and ideologies and of websites allowing housewives to group together. State policies which seek to limit the extent of information diffusion, will almost certainly impinge upon the ability for other - non-illicit - sharing to occur. Thus it is likely that debates about the extent of

free speech have only just begun, and it will be for society to decide where, in this post-publishing world, freedom of speech stops, and illegal activities begin.

Ossie Fikret  
Features Editor





Photo: Flickr user mlamla

# The private sector plague

**Kyle Packer** examines the increasing role of the market in our public services

Looking down three stories from my Vauxhall flat on a dreary Thursday afternoon, I see a group of large, balding, professionally dressed gentlemen. They appraise the building with arms folded, while a less prosperous looking man stands before them and waves his arms with an air of desperation. Given the economic challenges facing the government at the moment, it is perhaps fitting that I should discover the thin man to be a local council representative, and the larger gentlemen his prospective clientele of private property buyers.

I am fortunate enough not to be housed by the Council. Instead I belong to an organisation that allows me to pay cheap rent upon the condition that I agree to live in "vacated grey-areas" – mostly council owned properties that are slowly being sold off. The fact that there are still families living as council tenants in the building has allowed me to witness exactly how local government deals with people in these situations.

The local council is selling off affordable government housing, which since the 1970s has perhaps been the fastest depleting asset in the public domain. Unsurprisingly, the resistance they face is not delivered from the working class, but rather from the rats who are a product

of the council's long term neglect of these properties. Cementing the sewage entrance did nothing to deter the giant ground-floor rats. Some of the pipes have been so neglected that they simply cannot be repaired. The important point to be recognised is that the council in question had obviously made no reasonable attempts at improvement – for which they are accountable – before the prospective buyers came out of the woodwork. They are catering more for the proprietors from Surrey and Kent than for the subsistence of their own constituents. This example is a microcosmic illustration of a new reality: it is the market and no longer the polling station that decides the fate of our public services.

I use the term 'market', though without any intention of evoking any Smithian notions of an 'Invisible Hand' that guides the economy to its self-sustaining nirvana. When one speaks of such a politically decisive market, the reference is to a wallet dictatorship. It is tempting to say that power has always been exclusively in the hands of the rich – those who, irrespective of what happens, can guarantee their own healthcare, education and well-being in old age – but there was a time that followed the democratic revolution of universal suffrage in which social democracy was respected. The masses had secured

## It is the market and no longer the polling station that decides the fate of our public services

themselves the vote, and in so doing took power out of individual bank accounts and put it into the ballot box. After the devastation of the Second World War, it was upon socialised institutions that the nation chose to build the front line services that so many of us take for granted today.

The growing strength of privatisation is no illusion. Major public expenditure cuts are looming – a fate which has been sealed by the apparent agreement of all major political parties. How much this will affect the common man's political freedoms and general livelihood is not yet known; seeing as no political leaders are keen to elaborate on the economic particulars of their own plans. Which areas will be hit the hardest and by how much, remains suspiciously obscure. The one real assurance is that, with a current national debt of over 700 billion pounds that is rising at a steady rate of around half-a-Billion a day, we will soon experience "the biggest squeeze on spending in generations". The size of the state will unconditionally shrink unless drastic measures are taken to save it.

The National Health Service (NHS) is an obvious example, where Professor Chris Ham (former strategist at the Department of Health) has predicted that the NHS needs to produce five per cent efficiency savings a year until 2014 in order

to maintain itself. And this is all within a rather humorous and defeatist context in which not one of the political parties seems willing to have an open and honest debate about what this kind of financial strangulation could mean for the future of the nation's health.

Primarily, a country should be judged by whether the needs of its people are met, and not just by whether it has made a temporary profit. Since the Enlightenment we have accepted that the true, lasting wealth of a nation is rooted in that nation's productivity and happiness, not its financial reserves. When will we begin, once more, to take these lessons seriously? The health of a nation is a national interest, as much as is its education.

The magnitude of these kinds of cuts needs to be realised; even Thatcher refused to touch the NHS. Its neglect, along with the slow erosion of other frontline public services, is causing the post-WWII Welfare State to rot as irreparably as the pipes in my Vauxhall building, while this creeping infestation of private interest and insurance companies within our public services are growing as pestilent as the rats on my ground floor. It would be wise to address these issues soon; before they reach the foundations of society.



# Social

## A distasteful philanthropy

**Karina Vachani** denounces the trend of ethical consumerism

The life of an individual can be juxtaposed with each one's unique stepping-stone path of aspirations. Every action can therefore be paired with a narrow-minded desire to conquer the next goal that lies ahead of them. The question is however; do these conceptualized trails eventually converge to reveal the ultimate pursuit of equality in human development and welfare? Or are we simply selfish, power seeking individuals in a battle to reach the top?

At LSE, members of the sixteen societies linked with philanthropy and equality seem to conform to the first of these stereotypes. With "fundraising" and "raising awareness" as their central aims, societies including Oxfam, Amnesty International and UNICEF actively attempt to make a difference. The interesting thing however, is that although all sixteen societies at LSE of this nature place emphasis on opening our eyes to such crucial global dilemmas, how many of us can actually pinpoint and distinguish between these three institutions? In other words - if given the choice to donate to just one of these charities, on what grounds does one base their decision? Be it the global reputation due to celebrity publicity, or the 'convenience' of selecting a particular cause, the irony of it is that in reality, a minority of us are very "aware" at all.

In contrast to these universally recognized organizations, LSE societies have incorporated specific targets to groups including Feminism, Social Justice and Racism. To an extent, these societies are in fact more benevolent than the international welfare seekers advertised around us. Week 3 at LSE was labeled the "LSESU Islamic Society charity week" where funds were raised in collaboration with Islamic Relief targeted at orphans around the world. On interviewing committee members, their enthusiasm for the specific cause on a personal level shone through as an explanation for their immense success. This is one of many advantages of small-scale, targeted philanthropy. However, the dark side to this shiny coin begs the question: If these members truly envision global justice and human rights at the end of the tunnel, can a single student-led society actually have a substantial influence on the world? Or is the word "charity"

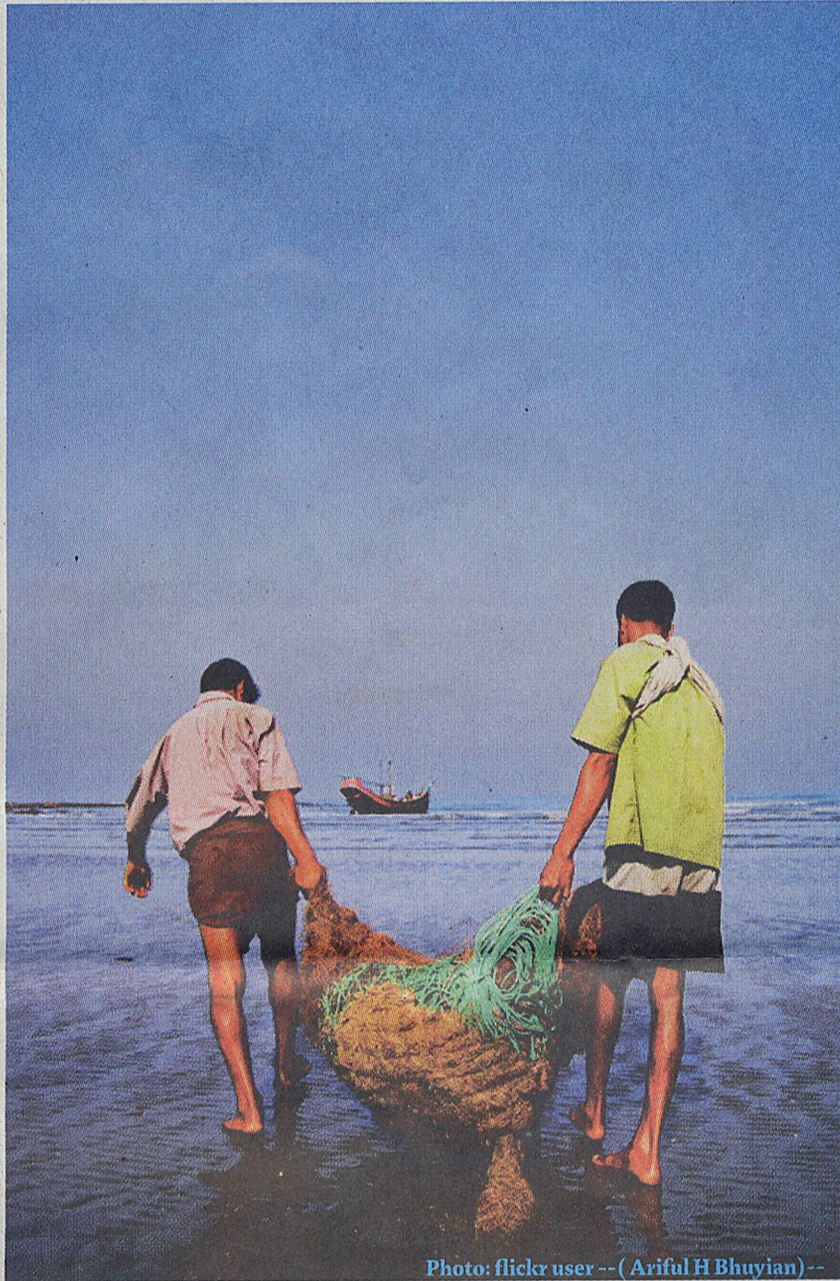


Photo: flickr user -- ( Ariful H Bhuyian ) --

used as a mask to conceal an underlying motivation?

As students attending a university with a reputable "Banking Culture", the role of the consumer and the producer is familiar to us all. The next stepping stone

modeling our new "MAC" lipstick, satisfied that our purchase has lifted a rural peasant out of poverty. What an efficient method of maximizing utility! This concept of "Brand Aid" publicized by the likes of Bono and Angelina Jolie has recently been seen as little more than transforming the definition of product consumption into a mechanism for 'compassion'. Further, the Marxist concept of "commodity fetishism" gives rise to the fundamental question: If these products are aimed at eliminating poverty, what justifies the manufacture of the very t-shirt advocating philanthropy in a South East Asian sweatshop?

We have been sucked into this whirlpool of consumption intertwined with the act of 'giving', with the view that our purchase has somehow placed a small dent in making the world a better place. Slogans flashed in front of us questioning whether "the shirt off your back can change the world", or providing us with the satisfaction that our decision to "Do the (RED) thing" has actually made an impact. On the surface, this is all well and good - but beneath messages from the smiling celebrities and the flashy ad campaigns, our purchase has acted as little more than a substitute for the 'old style' charity of volunteer and social work we may have otherwise done. Not only is this apparent on an individual level, but the pressure on governments as AID donors has been weakened due to the misconception through publicity that global welfare is finally under control.

Consumption of items marked "fair trade" add another dimension. The familiar green and blue symbol plastered on our favorite foods adds a sugar coating of contentment to the counteract the guilty pleasure of consuming the calories in that Cadbury's Dairy Milk chocolate bar. Have we once stopped to think that purchasing the subsidized farm produce is a disguise for simply paying peasants to remain in the very profession that has kept them from development in the first place? We can all infer that as our demand increases for such products, so must the supply to maintain equilibrium at this subsidized price. The result: over-reliant primary sector workers sinking deeper into a comfort zone chained to the rock-bottom stage of development.

Not only is the consumer to blame for this, but the producer and entrepreneur have used the notion of "charity" as nothing more than a marketing tool to maximize profits. A simple addition of the phrase "some of the profits go to charity" acts as a magnet luring us into purchasing their product. According to the independent, "Many charities - do not help the most needy... the charitable sector gives a "misleading" impression of alleviating poverty in order to secure tax breaks and voluntary support". Further, charities phenomenal administration costs are presented as 5 to 13 per cent of expenditure. When this is seen as a numerical figure, the example of UNICEF's current 2 million US dollars spent annually on management makes us question whether smaller scale activity could have put this money to better use.

LSE societies have without a doubt managed to raise a considerable amount for charity through RAG events, Timeless and Student Auctions to name a few. As students at the school, we should take pride that a student organized production is not a mask for corruption and profit maximization, and that the proceeds of the bake sale on Houghton street is not discounted to cover the cost of raw materials in production, or the wages of an underpaid factory worker. Although these small gestures may seem minuscule in comparison to Live 8, or the sale of Starbucks fairtrade coffee - we can confidently recognize our action as a genuine one.

So whether your particular trail is headed in the direction to obtain universal equality for all, or to one day be a thriving entrepreneur - be proud that the two extremes were not mixed getting to the next stepping stone at LSE, and the fight for humanity was not used as an tool to fulfill selfish desires. In the words of Mother Teresa, "We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." In my opinion, a small pure drop is a hundred times more efficient than a large poisonous one contributed by powerful global welfare institutions. Take pride in LSE's contribution to humanity, because you never know - we just might change the world one day.

## The art of lending

**Kieran Garvey and Ines Gramegna** have found their niche in the domain of microfinance

According to the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP), Microfinance "offers poor people access to basic financial services such as loans, savings, money transfer services and micro-insurance". This allows the vast proportion of humanity typically excluded from the formal financial economy to "run their businesses, build assets, smooth consumption and manage risks". Since Muhammad Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, the profile of this sector has been greatly heightened. In 1976 the disillusioned Economics Professor gave a \$27 loan to 42 women and their families. Now microfinance, in its multitude of forms, has exploded into a multi-billion dollar industry serving over 100 million poor people at the end of 2007 - what is micro about that!

Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Give a woman access to financial services, and she will be empowered to sustain herself and her family for a lifetime. This revolutionary approach is having a resounding impact throughout the world, in rich and poor countries alike. "Billionaires, global leaders and Nobel Prize winners are hailing direct loans to uncollateralized would-be entrepreneurs as a way to lift them out of poverty while creating self-sustaining businesses."

While microfinance has been portrayed as a phenomenal success, and indeed to great extent it is, nothing is perfect; nor should be accepted as being so.

During the summer, a group of LSE students, including myself, were fortunate enough to visit the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to analyze, first hand, how this poverty alleviation system functions and its effect on the lives of poor rural Bangladeshi families. Many micro-entrepreneurs had significantly improved their living conditions through access to these micro-financial services. I listened to awe-inspiring stories of women who had once lived in appalling conditions but who had, by fructifying their loans, improved significantly their quality of life. Their achievements were multi-faceted. After gaining support from their fellow borrowers, they succeeded in sending their children to school, improving their housing and access to clean drinking water, and learned about their legal rights. Some had even established their own businesses, creating employment for many people. It was easy to see the confidence and sense of self accomplishment which emanated from these successful women as they described how Grameen had helped them transform their lives. Clearly, the Grameen Bank is profoundly impacting its borrowers' lives. The bank's ethos

focuses on women as they have proved to be far more reliable at repaying their loans and also investing in their families. With a repayment rate exceeding 98 per cent, Grameen demonstrates that it delivers sustainable services despite its lack of borrower collateral.

We also visited the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the world's largest NGO. It also provides microfinance amongst a great many other services to the poor. BRAC however recognises that microfinance is unsuit-

able for the ultra poor. Instead it provides agricultural assets and a weekly stipend for 2 years, by which time the ultra poor will hopefully be in a position to join their mainstream microfinance program. The selection process for the ultra poor is profound. In a village, all members record their assets and income, and are ranked openly for all to see. Even the very poor acknowledge those who are poorer, willing to concede that the latter are more deserving of the Ultra Poor Program support. Recognizing that microfinance

is not suitable for everyone is crucial, as it ensures that borrowers enter into financial agreements in which they can meet their obligations. Despite Grameen Bank's success, they must continue to develop their framework to ensure that more people are affected positively, particularly in light of the current economic crisis. It is unreasonable to expect perfection, but not unreasonable to strive for it.

To accommodate for the growing interest in microfinance, LSE students in early 2009 created the Student Microfinance Development Initiative (SMDI). By providing students with the opportunity to go on internships and conducting research for partner microfinance organisations, the organisation seeks to actively contribute to the evolution of microfinance, while building a network of universities interested in heightening the profile of microfinance on their campus. Microfinance is an exciting sector, expanding at an extraordinary pace. However what are the motives and interests driving this remarkable expansion? If it is a purely profit driven agenda, will this be at the expense of the poor? After all, they are already paying more per unit for most things; food, land, utilities, hygiene products and apparently finance too. Can microfinance bridge the gap?

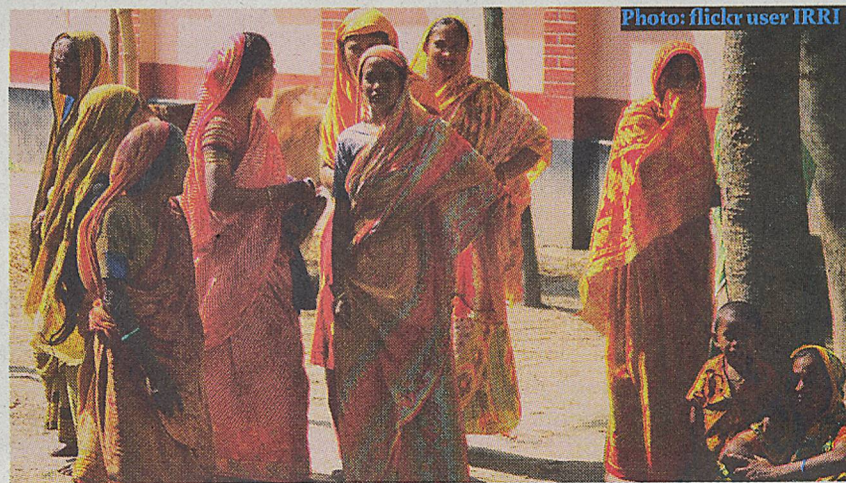


Photo: flickr user IRR1



# A passion for the morbid

**Cameron Paige** experiences Halloween through different cultures and generations

I love Halloween. Frankly, any excuse to trawl London's East End vintage stores and then go out on town and test Londoners' tolerance of the weird is good enough for me. Be it a friend's birthday party, Talk Like A Pirate Day, or New Year's masked ball – I'm there. But Halloween... Halloween's special. It's not just the dressing up, it's the whole idea of making fun of death.

Of course, different cultures approach the day differently, if at all, and my Halloween-mania is something rather new to me. Instead of dressing up, watching horror films and trick-or-treating, I grew up spending the 31st of October kicking up leaves at a local cemetery and lighting stubs of candles on abandoned graves. There were no dead in my own immediate family at the time, so while the rest of Poland traversed the country on a pilgrimage to visit their deceased, I was making do with strangers. My mother kept up the tradition for a few short years, but by the time I was eight, she got bored of it, and I was going to the cemetery on my own. Having spent the preceding year collecting candle ends (and there would be many, as the frequent power cuts meant I often had to do my homework by candlelight), I'd leave the house in the cool misty morning with a shoulder bag filled to overflowing, and briskly make my way along the tram tracks, past the park, and to the tall dark cemetery gates. Walking through them was like walking into another world. All fell silent. Behind the thick stone walls, I could no longer hear the cars, and people talked in whispers. I figured they didn't want to wake the dead. I used to think I wouldn't have minded. The place seemed so tranquil and serenely beautiful, it was hard to imagine its inhabitants could be anything else.

I'd spend the day, and only walk home after sunset, after I'd sat down on a decrepit bench watching the candles flicker ever brighter in the thickening twilight. I never was afraid of dark. (That is not to say there weren't any monsters under my bed. There were, and every bedtime I was terrified. But they were localised, and as long as I stayed out of bed, I was fine. Cue

early onset insomnia, which only made me even more at home in the dead of the night.)

By twelve, we moved house, the power cuts ended, and there were no picturesque abandoned graveyards nearby. 31st of October was just another day off. Around fifteen, however, I started getting nostalgic. I missed my tranquil nameless dead. I bought a bagful of enclosed candles from a stall outside a church (the day was becoming as commercialised as anything else) and got on a cross-city tram. An hour later, I was standing outside the gates of the cemetery. That year, the frost curdled the leaves early, and instead of bursting into flames of colour on their branches, they were turning from muddy green to rotten in the streets. The trees were bare. It was raining. The wind picked up. Even though enclosed, the candles wouldn't stay lit. I gave up and went home.

By seventeen, I was 'the only Goth in the village'. I didn't know that at the time. I'd never seen a Goth or heard of death-obsessed people dressed in black. Convinced I was one hundred percent original, I wore black lipstick and a pair of Dr Marten's boots with black miniskirts. I told jokes at my grandfather's funeral and maintained that crying was against my religion. (We all believed he was a good man on his way to Heaven, right? So why was everybody carrying on like that?) I was a pest and proud of it.

By seventeen and a half, I made it to an allegedly haunted medieval castle, joined a performance troupe and spent my weekends crossing swords with Black Knights. I was more into fighting than dancing, but the group was quite conservative, so I did end up with a court dress that I had to wear on performance days. But I'd simply tuck in the long white chiffon cuffs into the gold-edged, cornflower-blue satin sleeves, take the sword up and throw somebody else's chain-mail glove into the dust of the inner courtyard.

Between the tournaments, I'd climb the battlements and skip from one to another above a fifty-foot drop. In costume, we were a tourist attraction, so nobody ever stopped us going anywhere we pleased. That day, I was wearing the dress,

waiting for the evening show to start. I had my dancing shoes on and twirled on the edge of the precipice as usual, when a woman with a daughter all in pink came by.

"Mommy, mommy, look!" the girl squealed, pulling her mother's sleeve, "A real princess!"

With that, my Goth days were over.

bench flashed by. It took me a moment to realise he was wearing a mask. I laughed, and for the first time didn't feel guilty for making light of death. For once, it was allowed.

A few years more, and there isn't a shop I can visit that something in black and orange isn't flaunted on the shelves. There are ghoulish masks everywhere.



Photo: flickr user Ateo Fiel

When the show started, I liked my arms with the other girls and danced. Back in the city for the week, I got a tattoo of a cornflower on my ankle, so I could flash it as we did the number on the inner court's stone well's rim. I loved the dress, the character, the away performances we started being invited to on other towns' historic days.

My mother never noticed that something had changed. She was convinced the castle was haunted, and that I must have been possessed. She called in an exorcist. I was eighteen and no longer under her legal guardianship. I fled.

It wasn't until I eventually settled in the UK that I once more heard of Halloween, though there was one disconcerting moment in Sweden, as I was on my way to work one early morning, that a contorted face of a man sprawled on a bus stop

And I'm taking to this new tradition like a duck to water.

The first year, I conservatively carved a pumpkin with a jagged smile. By third, the pumpkins were getting inventively revolting, and I'd learned how to oven-roast pumpkin, to make spicy pumpkin soup, or bake pumpkin pie. By now, I'm ready to take on the Halloween party scene. And with a boyfriend in tow, choosing a costume is twice the fun.

The English tradition, it turns out, is more specific than the American one. It's not enough to dress up, and sexy angel or slutty Alice in Wonderland won't cut the mustard. I wanted our outfits to match, but without too much of a cliché. No generic vampires, no witches or mummies. Figuring as long as I stuck to horror films I should have been fine, I started running ideas past my other half.

"How about I make you a paper mache head and we go as The Alien? I'll wear a pilot's jumpsuit and you can drip saliva all over the place?" I asked expectantly. He vetoed it right off the bat. Wrong kind of horror, apparently. I gave it another try.

"Frankenstein's monster and his bride?"

With the crazy lightning-streaked updo and a bedsheet dress, the bride's costume seemed easy and effective enough, but the monster posed a problem, and my other half, though not against the idea per se, was not exactly jumping with excitement.

"Jack Skellington and Sally from 'The Nightmare Before Christmas'?"

For a while, I was allowed to pursue the idea. Once again, Sally's outfit was easy enough, but Jack's head as sold by Disney's stores was tacky, and when at £25 I got outbid on eBay trying to buy a worn tatters coat with tails, I called it a day and went back to the drawing board. This time, instead of guessing, I went through the lists of top horror films of all times. The answer came at number 13 on IMDb.

This, then, is what I'll be wearing this October the 31st: a Victorian-style long nightgown with ruffles, own hair (slightly tangled), and a pair of white socks with lace trim (as the nights are getting colder), while my beloved has been already fitted with black coat, fedora, trousers and shirt, and the shirt with a stiff white insert to make him look like a priest. He's Father Damien, I'm Regan. We're doing 'The Exorcist'.

I look at the costumes neatly folded on the table, awaiting their big day, and laugh. I've come the full circle. From being threatened with sacerdotal intervention to acting it out on a whim. From loitering at cemeteries to joining the jolly dance macabre of Western Halloween. I can laugh in the face of human mortality more easily now, but I'm less at home with death. There are days, when the sun rolls over a misted-over sky and the trees turn, that I wish I could still walk among the graves kicking up the leaves, thinking it nothing but beautiful and still, lighting candle stubs and not being afraid of anything. If I miss anything, it's the serenity.

## Grade me, please

**Shrayans Agrawal** thinks we ought to study a lot more

Moving from a structured education system to university is a shock in its own right. However, the LSE comes as a bigger shock than most universities, and adjusting isn't very easy.

Let us first discuss the way assignments function at the LSE. The weekly homework is essential in order to see how you are progressing with the theory, but the class system is flawed. Students will never know if they are doing the homework properly unless it is corrected. It makes no sense to not collect each assignment, as there is never enough time to discuss the all of the content in class. Teachers are paid an ample amount, so it shouldn't be too much to ask for each homework assignment to be graded. If this becomes a burden, the LSE should then hire more teachers so that each has fewer classes, and hence assignments to mark. I am sure the fees we pay (particularly the international) is sufficient enough to cover these costs. There are two ways of going about this, though; move everything online, and get feedback if you get a multiple choice question wrong, or have homework to take in each week and continue giving more difficult homework assignments twice a term. Clearly these are better options to put in place.

Moving onto the related topic of examinations, the current system is very clever in its guise. As is very clear to everyone, it allows students to slack off the whole year. Most of our time is spent on internship applications, personal development, and partying without a care in the world for academics, because we know that we have about 8 weeks to pull our academics up to scratch. I am completely against this idea. We come to forget the

reason why we are at university, and that is to study, not to improve your CV. If you can improve your resume without sacrificing your academics, then kudos and that is how it should be. At the same time, I am against constant assessment because that puts a lot of pressure on students and with the intensity of university examinations, it may not be feasible. This is a harder problem to solve, but the solution I offer is of continual homework checks. This way, student performance can be monitored, and hence academic focus checked.

**Most of our time is spent on internship applications, personal development, and partying without a care in the world for academics.**

Many universities, such as Edinburgh, do have continual assessments, but then these exams are less challenging because each covers less material. Even Oxford and Cambridge mostly have end of year exams and it does test the students in the

right manner. Yet students there still seem to be more academically focused—perhaps it's just the type of students that go there. Oxford and Cambridge are a cut above us, but that cut is not very pronounced in many fields. How you define "the cut" makes more of a difference, frankly. The point is about the work load, and the LSE work load is quite significant— but only if you decide to do the work! In the tutorial format of these universities, it forces students to go to the books. You may otherwise see the occasional Oxbridge student slacking off, but at the same time, our system doesn't have a mechanism to stave off lazy people. In the end, you get out what you want out of your LSE degree. If you aim to make it academic you can do so, but if you choose not to, nothing will stop you.

Certain improvements can obviously be made in respect to the teaching methodology, and this could actually increase the student satisfaction ratings which the LSE is craving to ameliorate. The paradox, however, is that although those whom truly care about the academics at LSE are few and far between, there just seems to be an influx of wannabe-bankers who want an amazing degree and just get a job at the end of it. One can't blame them, and one can't blame the LSE either, but the combination of the two can affect the learning environment significantly. As long as the LSE keeps working on improving the quality of education, I am sure we will come to a point when everyone is satiated and the marginal improvement will no longer be significant. I leave today however with a thought. What would happen if the LSE banned students from applying for internships during their academic tenure? Now that would be a twist worth thinking about.

## Oktoberfest 2009



[www.lsegs.de](http://www.lsegs.de)



Join us on Thursday, 29/10/2009 and have the time of your life at the Underground with German beer – and, yes, free beer and free pretzels! Tickets will be sold on Houghton Street from Tuesday to Thursday (around noon). Fancy dress welcome, looking forward to seeing you!





**HAVE A  
BREAK,  
HAVE A  
CHIT CHAT.**

Photo: Angelina Castellini



Photo: Angelina Castellini



Photo: Jaynesh Patel



Photo: Katy Staten



Photo: Georgina Carter

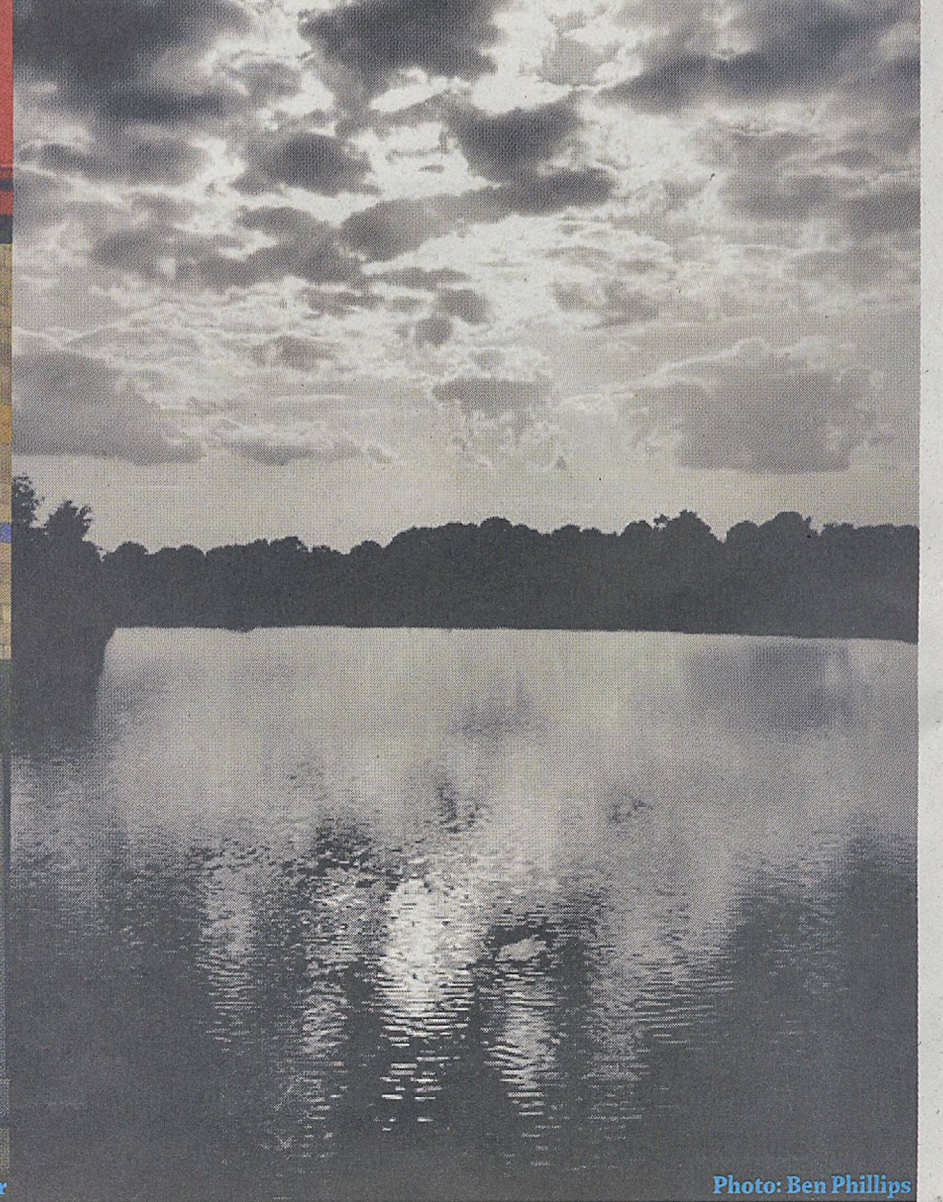


Photo: Ben Phillips



# A-poly-clypse for Kings women's hockey

Heap's of goals for LSE, as their defence terrifies Kings before moving on to the male AU contingent

Ivana Humpa-Lott  
Hockey Social Secs

The day started in usual hockey fashion, Alison's face disappearing as the train doors pulled away, uncontended dick of the day given she had the whole team's kit. We arrived at their luxurious pitch in good time, but we saw that you can't take the Poly out of the Strand as they arrived in drabs and drabs, with no real kit to speak of – the Poly budget doesn't stretch that far.

Injury follows our team like Gary Glitter follows children. Literally 3 minutes after pushback Alison's knee twists and rips again leaving us with only one sub and a lovely trip for Alison and Pickles to St Guy's Minor injuries after the match – if the hospital had a loyalty card then our team would have one. However, as we've discovered, a definite benefit of playing hockey is that sticks double up as great crutches.

The game continued nonetheless and we were on fire for the first twenty minutes, never out of their half, with Caroline on fire in her acquired role as centre mid, and Bridget feeding the midfield and constant penetration of their D. Their defence were rattled, their team apparently didn't know each other's names (definitely no AU bonding at Kings then) and instead of marking they just bitched that someone else should be. We gained our first goal from the first short corner, ZaZa thwacking one past their five defenders – don't worry Kings, our defence would have scarpetered too. ZaZa also scored the second goal, a sweet sweep off a Pickles feed.

Soon after, Kings managed to get a goal. A break of play allowed one of them to slip behind our defensive line unnoticed, to receive the ball and knock it over Serene's footpad. We did feel that we should give them something; it must suck to be a poly. Heaps thought differently and after screeching threats about dinners we wore our lungs out and let Haugh ejaculate over the foot of their unsuspecting goalie. Standard Haugh, but maybe she'll have a hard job retaining her Golden Stick award with ZaZa in the race.

Our fourth goal to make it 4-1 was an epic shot by Heaps into the top corner of their goal. No one knew where she pulled it from and she obviously didn't either; turning to the umpire to see if it was too dangerous to be allowed. Luckily it was given, a great ending to the first half. Half time allowed us to mull over how many we were capable of scoring. Back on the pitch and raring to go we quickly bagged another two.

Textbook summed up the fifth – a corker of a short corner. Heaps to Zaza; Zaza to Heaps. Over the goalie. Bang. Unhappy with two, Zaza ensured she got a thoroughly deserved hat-trick and landed a "nice" Man of the Match drink in the process. Unfortunately the Poly managed to break our defensive line again, despite a fantastic match from our defensive players, Bridget "incest but no Archers (LAD)" Parker, Kathryn "Lethal" Eastwood and Mary "most Scottish name ever" MacTaggart. Their ability to pick up loose balls and unmarked players continued solidly into the evening as well – by the end of the year it'll be the AU men that are more scared of our defence than the opposition.

To top off a great day, team dinners followed the match. We can't go back to La Porchetta so our social secretary Christina had to scope out a different unsuspecting Italian restaurant. Maybe we won't be allowed back there after Caroline and Haugh, partners in crime, collapsed the electric's cupboard in the toilet and moved the plates around in the kitchen. But then again, with Haugh's boobs anything goes and after trying to steal the manager's own dinner he remarked, 'I'll give you anything you want, baby', um, cheers?

The journey from Dinners to Zoo was almost more entertaining than the game itself. Pickles, desperate not to slip into a GoldenBalls second again, tried to pull by asking a random man how many pubes he has (none it turns out), and seeing as we were tired we felt that demanding a free rickshaw ride for the six of us was fair game. Unfortunately Caroline just didn't have the strength to cycle after we'd uprooted the driver.

And of course; Zoo Bar. Another sticky, sweaty, leery night – in other words a top night at Zoo, helped no doubt by the free cocktails and hardcore cheese. Incest also seems popular amongst the hockey ranks this year, but of course this is gross so details will be withheld and names will not be mentioned. Just ask Kathryn, Glen, Bridget, Sophie, Fiona, Dan, Ian, Octavia, Roberta and Luke yourselves.

So a bloody good day was had – it'd be hard not with a Strand Poly victory behind us. Christina "Givemeapoint" Inanova set the tone for the year by obediently following Peltons advice about being thrown out of Zoo when bored and Luke ensured that the night continued into the next morning... treating the non-AU bores to a glimpse of the neon lights of Zoo Bar.

>> Top Picture: Hockey girls in a Heap after a night on the tiles  
Photo: Zaza Zabert



## Results

Men's Rugby:  
1st XV 20-7 Canterbury Christchurch 1's  
2nd XV 7-10 Reading 4ths  
3rd XV 22-19 Creative Arts

Men's Football:  
LSE 1s 4-3 Portsmouth 4s  
LSE 2s 0-1 Holloway 3s  
LSE 3s 2-1 London South Bank 2s  
LSE 4s 2-3 UCL 5s  
LSE 5s 4-3 UCL 7s  
LSE 6s - Walkover  
LSE 7s 2-1 Royal Vets

Women's Football:  
LSE 1s 10-2 Queen Mary's

Women's Hockey 6- Strand Poly 2

Womens Basketball 37 - 27 QM

LSE Badminton 1st 3-5 Kent.

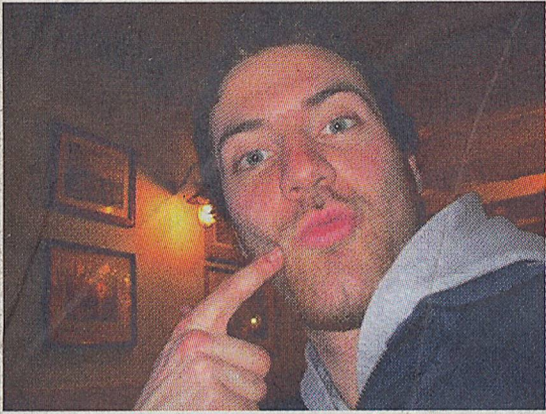
Table Tennis:  
LSE 1sts 2 - 15 Imperial 1sts  
LSE 2nds 6 - 10 Kings 1sts  
LSE Womens 1 - 3 London Met

Men's basketball:  
LSE 76-63 University of Hertfordshire



# 6 Degrees of AU Separation

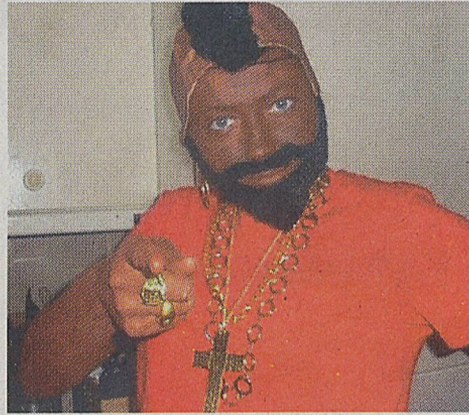
Ollie Townsend is welcomed into the folds of The Beaver as it swaps one hairy Sport Editor for another



Sam Tempest Keeping



Went out with...



Charlie Glyn



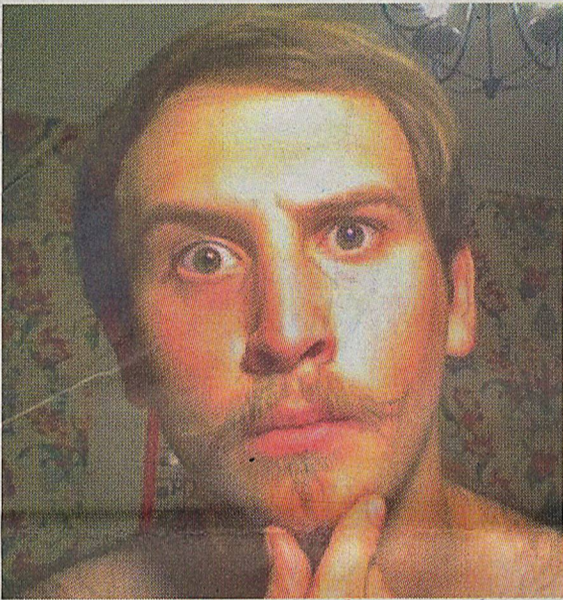
Who is on the AU Exec with...



Rees Sutton



Who played first team rugby with...



Ollie Townsend



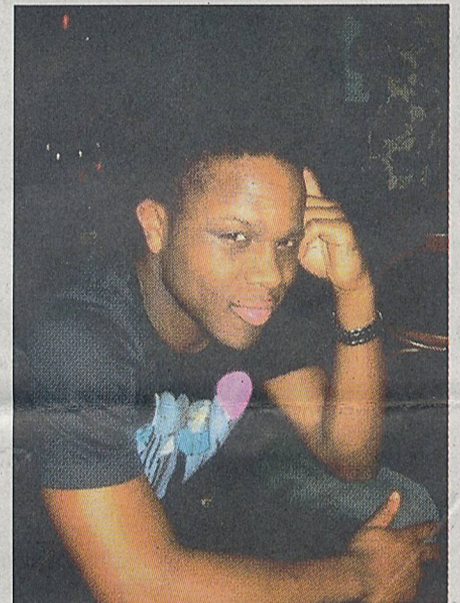
Who drunkenly kissed in front of Josh...



Jazmine Bradfield



Who is seeing...



Josh Olam!ayar%shed3alaye

Alice Pelton  
Sports Editor

**Name, rank and serial number:**

Oliver Townsend, former 2nd team rugby captain, ski club vice president.

**Also known as:**

Wolfman, Wolverine, Oliviero, Lolly.

**What sports do you play/engage in?**

Rugby, squash, snowboarding.

**What teams do you follow?**

FC Barcelona, London Irish.

**If you could be any sportsman/woman, who would you be and why?**

Lewis Hamilton; great job, hot girlfriend, loadsamoney!

**What's been your worst experience at LSE?**

The AU wax - never again will I go through that, not for love nor money (though it seems that I may in fact be doing it again for charity...)

**Are you single?**

Yes. Ladies, one at a time or all at once...

**Favourite position?**

Fly half by day and reverse rodeo by night.

**Were are we most likely to find you...? What are you most likely to be doing...?**

I'm usually to be found in the Tuns, working behind the bar or on the beers with the rugby lads.

**What's your most embarrassing moment?**

(Allegedly) having sex at the AU ball, at the table, at the front of the room, during the presentation ceremony (so when everyone was looking forward). Needless to say I don't remember a thing, and have only got the photos that got sent round the rugby list to go on...

**What do you want to do with your life?**

Win.

**Percentage body-hair coverage:**

75% it seems to be in equilibrium - it's spreading as fast on my body as it's receding on my head

**Zoo/Walkabout attendance rate:**

23%

**Wednesday conversion rate:**

on the pitch 60%  
off the pitch 20%

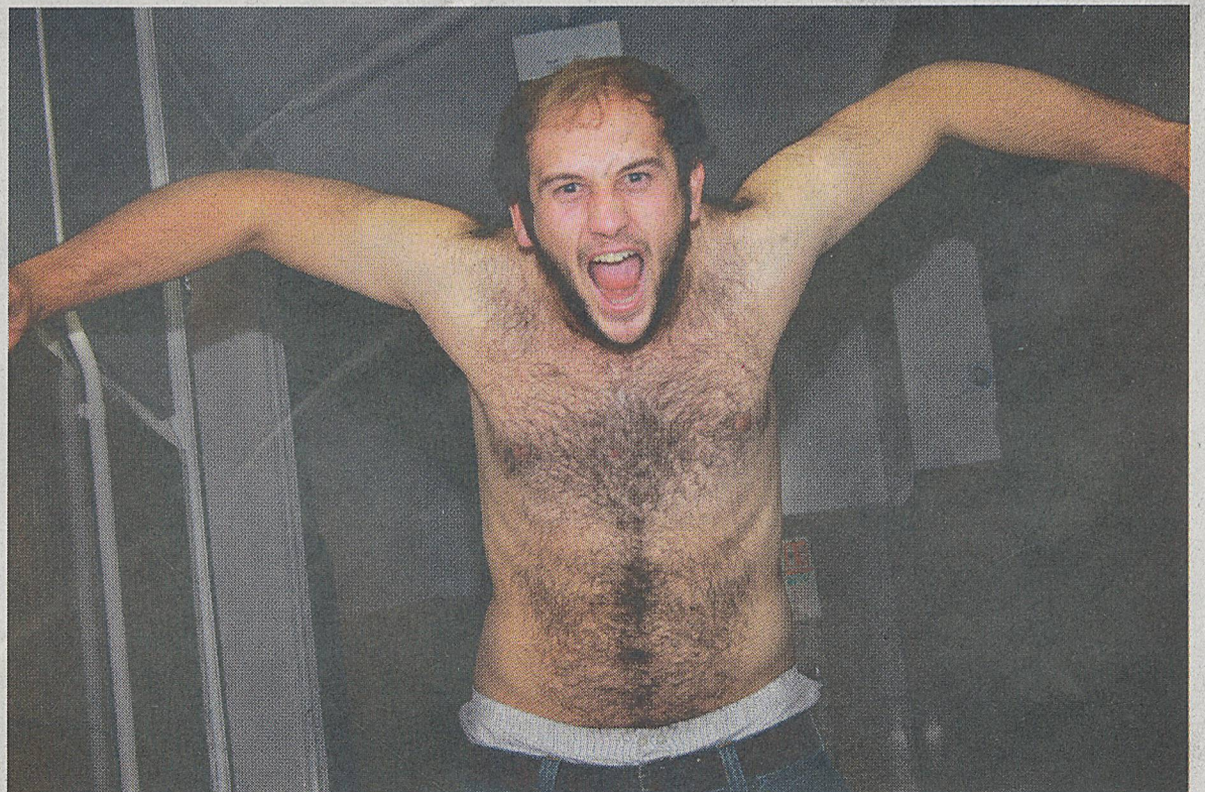
**Number of tuns bar staff pulled: 3**

**Any of them female? 100%**

**3 words to describe yourself?**

Hairy. Scarv. Maiestic.

## TORSO OF THE WEEK







## Third XV leaves seconds looking sheepish

3rds leapfrog 2nds in the BUCS league table after historic 22-19 win over Creative Arts

Bryan Ong  
3rds Scrumhalf

Wednesday 21st October saw the LSE 3rd XV face off against University of Creative Arts' 1sts, with both teams looking for their first victory of the season. LSE started the first half strongly, building on rampaging pack play led by captain Ben "Judas" Leith and Teddy "The Machine" Groves. Sustained pressure from the LSE forwards led to a series of overlaps result-

### "Folajomi Fawehinmi embarked on a highlight reel run through the opposition"

ing in constant line-breaks by the backs, culminating in a brilliant darting try from inside centre Alexey Teplukhin.

LSE showed no signs of letting up after the restart. A period of relentless pressure lead to a quick second try after some delightful offload play by the forwards sent hooker Lawrence "Birthday Boy" Koo over the try line. A third try soon followed, making the score 17-0 to LSE. However, as half-time approached, the opposition exposed Alvin Chat's lack of pace, which he later blamed on poor visibility, delayed

reactions, the consumption of 47 pints and 92 vodka shots the night before, etc. A speculative cross-field kick resulted in a corner try for Creative Arts.

Complacency crept in at the start of the second half, with LSE allowing their 17-5 lead to turn into a 17-19 deficit after giving away two tries in the space of 5 minutes. Battling bravely, LSE were not about to let an elusive first victory slip away. 10 minutes from time, replacement centre Folajomi Fawehinmi embarked on a highlight reel run through the opposition pack, putting on a tackle-breaking clinic featuring multiple handoffs and a cheeky Joe Rokocoko spin move that saw LSE go up 22-19.

Confident play closed out the match and LSE were unlucky not to add to the score following the dominating pack assault orchestrated by scrumhalf Bong. A gorgeous looping cross-field kick from the boot of Campbell McElroy was unfortunately knocked on just 10 metres from the try line in the dying seconds.

Most importantly, the famous victory has resulted in the LSE 3rd XV leapfrogging the 2nd XV in the BUCS league table, despite their league-worst point difference of -130. When pressed for comment, LSE "2nd" XV Captain Dewi Hall Evans was visibly distraught - "Devastated. Just devastated. We will be back". Brave words, but with a brief hiatus from matches for both teams lying ahead, the LSE 3rd XV will hold on to their title as The Real Second XV for at least another two weeks.

>> Top Picture - The victorious 'savage' thirds celebrate their historic win

>> Bottom Picture - Dewi Evans down but supposedly not out



And the response from the 2nd team captain Dewi Hall Evans...

"I believe congratulations are in order. Congratulations to the 3rds (Yes, they are still the 3rds) for their first win in recent years. A historic occasion some said, for others it was seen as a crushing blow for the seconds. B\*\*\*ocks! It would be fair to say that the 2nds haven't had their best ever start to the season. It is true that they are yet to register a win, but in adversity true leaders are born. And what about their leader? "Inspirational", "charismatic", "Welsh". He sounds well qualified. The message is clear, we will be back. We may have a team made up of murderers and Russians but we will be back. In style. As a wise man once said: "Twill tin pob sais."

Former second team captain Ollie Townsend had the following to say:

"It's an utter disgrace. Whilst it's a fantastic achievement for the third team to win their first match in 1073 competitive fixtures, it also marks an equally historic event in the second team's history; namely their worst ever start to a season. And that's before we take into account the indignity of falling below the thirds in the league. It's too easy for Dewi to blame the players or the referee; ultimately the buck has to stop with the captain, and with a growing number of players from within the team calling for club captain Arun Kalra to bring back Murderer to lead the seconds, the pressure is really on Dewi to record a win in the next outing. This would have never have happened under my watch."

## Will sinks his balls for whopping win

Pool team cue up to play in the second annual Fresher's Tournament

Lee Mager  
Pool Club Captain

Sunday 11th October saw the second ever LSE Fresher's Tournament at JFK's Pool Club in Peckham. What a spectacle it turned out to be; players of all levels, upset victories and hill-hill matches all round. To get as many games played as possible we first went through a group stage: 8 groups of 4 with the 2 best going through to the last 16. Due to some latecomers and no-showers (that is: noshowerers, not people who don't take showers a.k.a. the French), we needed some creative reorganisation of the groups, but we got there in the end.

The matches were played first-to-win 3 frames in the last 16, first-to-4 in the quarters, and then 5 in the semis and final. Also entering in the last 16 were the 4 "big guns" of LSE pool; Will Dee, Martin Rydland, Dan Steene and Alpesh Varsani who played for the 1st and 2nd teams in the All-British Universities tournaments last year, winning the LSE massive glory in university pool circles.

The last 16 started out with no great upsets, but not much can be told from a 5 frame match. Winning 3-0 does not make one three times better than the opponent, as I can tell from personal experience when Rifeng missed more or less three blacks, handing me victory on a silver platter.

A grueling match was simultaneously taking place at table 5 where Michael Dalgado defeated Will Xie 3-2 after a great safety battle in the final frame.

However, the first upset came in the quarters where experienced traveller Dan was beaten 4-2 by Yibo after a convincing display. One table away Michael was put through another exhausting match when he beat seasoned veteran Martin Rydland 4-3 after a lovely little 5-ball clearance to land him perfectly on the black.

Will Dee seemed to have shaken off the early nerves and won convincingly against fellow Waterloo league team player Hadi 4-1 to go into the semi-finals facing tournament favorite and ladder-league topspot Alpesh Varsani.

The two contestants followed each other diligently, with Alpesh one step ahead throughout. In the final frame this was however reversed as Alpesh missed a difficult black to leave Will in a similar position. Will kept his nerves in check and sank it after rattling in the jaws for what must have seemed an eternity.

The final frame had it all, great potting, quality tactics and an intense finish. On the neighbouring table the two newcomers Michael and Yibo were also playing for a spot in the final and when that game also ended 4-4 before the final frame we knew we were in for a thriller. However, due to the excellent potting of both players it was over before we knew it, with Michael clinching the spot in the final.

Sadly the final ended with somewhat of an anticlimax (particularly compared with the semis) and it was clear from the second game how it was going to end up. Will played a superb match, hardly making a single mistake, while Michael seemed tired from the exhausting previous games (in all fairness, winning all previous

matches by virtue of deciding frames takes a lot out of you). However, both players took their time and when the final score (5-0) was announced it had taken 50 minutes.

In general it was an amazing tournament with lots of players announcing their potential for one of the team spots for when the LSE once again travels to the almighty metropolis of Great Yarmouth to compete at BUCS in February next year. However, everyone will have loads of chances to

show us what they're worth as there are plenty more tournaments coming along after the success of the Fresher's tournament.

The next LSE tournament is the Autumn 9-ball Championship (free entry) on Sunday 1st November - to sign up, email Lee Mager (a.l.mager@lse.ac.uk)

The video of the entire final is below for everyone who wishes to check it out: [www.lsepool.co.uk](http://www.lsepool.co.uk)

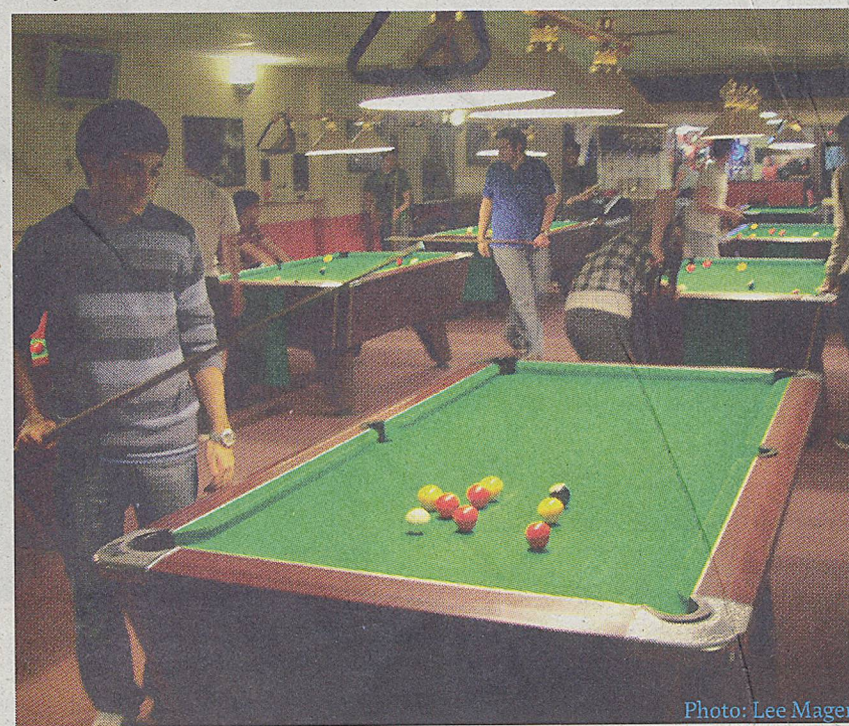


Photo: Lee Mager

the home of petty slander  
**BEAVER**  
SPORTS



# PARADISE

mortal man  
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visions and  
dreams  
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limits of art  
will only interfere  
these barriers are broken  
the realms of child  
and dream





# 27.10.09

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## 16 SEX & GENDER

# EDITORIAL

Come bunk with us on the perimeter fence of culture.

Journey down a B-road of discovery, to a land where the foreign begins at home

As we pull back the coarse knit-wear of perception and reveal the lime green Jock-strap of reality.

Remembering always; that wit is truth unknown, and beauty is the promise of happiness.

(may contain traces of pretentiousness)

**Graeme Birrell and Calum Young**

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## COVER DESIGN BY:

AMIE ROGERS

PARTB-DESIGN@

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# JUST SPLIFFING

LUKAS SLOTHUUS IS WEEDING OUT THE NONSENSE

When the UK Government reclassified Cannabis from Class C to Class B in January the arguments were entirely ridiculous. "Skunk now dominates in the UK", the Home Office stated. Maybe the policy advisors were test-smoking at the time? That might explain where the ludicrous legislation came from at least.

Those grey-haired ignoramuses in Westminster fundamentally fail to understand drug use and its appeal. Why is it that our dear Jacqui Smith and her straight laced posse seriously think they know better than pharmaceutical experts? Clearly, they don't.

So why is skunk now dominating the market? The obvious answer is that when people are already stigmatised as criminals and outlaws when buying half a gram of 'hash' (to distinguish it from the whole Cannabis class), they might as well go all in and buy a few grams of skunk instead. The risk of being caught and punished is exactly the same and the predicted pleasure from smoking skunk rather than hash is higher in terms of THC content (for Jacqui Smith and those in the back row: the key psychoactive substance in Cannabis). Skunk is more harmful to the body than regular hash. No discussion. Surely, not one level-headed proponent of drug legalisation would explicitly want people to do more, or stronger, drugs. In fact, the reclassification of Cannabis could have adverse effects: given that 'Cannabis' encompasses both skunk and hash, the issue of increased consumption of skunk is not addressed at all. It is a downright farce: Drug users will move from hash to skunk, but we would rather have people smoke hash than skunk. So we reclassify both? Cracking.

The alternative for people smoking skunk is not suddenly eating Cadbury choc-

olate bars or buying Subway sandwiches. The alternative is obviously other drugs, and if people want to do drugs, they're going to go ahead and get high. The American Journal of Public Health published a report in 2004 stating that regular Cannabis users largely disregard legislation, and toughening drug laws has minimal impact. This is why figures of addicts seeking help doubled in Portugal after they loosened legislation in 2001, but the number of Cannabis users didn't increase. The same happened in the Netherlands. Simple: when skunk possession holds higher penalties, users will simply migrate to other substances, or not care at all and still smoke skunk. In other words a 'drug-vacuum' appears which granny's chocolate chip cookies can't fill, because they taste like hell and don't get me stoned.

The UK is not the only country holding soft drugs hostage. George W. Bush said in 2001 that "If you quit drugs, you join the fight against terror in America." In what way does that make sense? This typical Conservative approach to drug use is really rather pathetic. And nowadays there doesn't seem to be any room for change, President Obama refuses to do anything to reinstate just drug policies. What a surprise. So, back to Jacqui Smith. I can't keep my thoughts off her, that mynx. She wrote in the Drug Strategy last year that "we want a society free of the problems caused by drugs." Wise. Lets go ahead and give her a Nobel Peace Prize! The Drug Strategy was from last year, you say? No problem. She can still have this year's prize. Or next year's. They're doling them out like candy, apparently.

I cannot understand why politicians today are too short sighted to appreciate that when drugs are legal you can impose a quality-control and tax them. This means making

sure that youngsters don't get their hands on obscure derivatives and dangerous forgeries, which in fact goes for all drugs. The judicial system exists to protect its citizens but in the current landscape, everyone is worse off except murky drug dealers. Why not let the money flow between law-abiding citizens, certified farmers, and the government instead? In July the Home Office released a report stating that drug use is skyrocketing. Not in line with the cerebral haemorrhage of a decision Jacqui Smith made when she went against the experts. Her strategy failed, Alan Johnson will commit political suicide if he goes against it, and the Conservatives won't improve the situation. The anti-legalisation propaganda machine is oiled as always and irrationality prevails once again. This is why I hate populism.



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# PHONEY IN THE RYE

A SEQUEL TO THE CATCHER IN THE RYE MAKES US ALL LOOK LIKE IDIOTS, WRITES **GARETH LEWIS**

I can well imagine a period of time when having your book banned by the paper police might have been a big deal. I've little doubt that the first public reading of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* - captured in all its tantric anarchism in the pages of Kerouac's *Dharma Bums* - really was quite the event. I'm still very taken by the idea of Burroughs in Tangiers, gibbous-eyed and crooked over his typewriter, stewing a postmodern nightmare in the grim cauldron of his mind. Without a doubt, he knew that novels had narks too, always on the lookout for junk to cell. But all the fuss about *Dorian Gray* just seems a bit embarrassing now, as does the expurgatory fondling of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Was that really us? Did a bit of sepulchral buggery and a little wood amidst the trees really make us mad? In a time where, strangely, every book is both freely available and completely forbidden - for what novel is not accessible, illegally, on the internet? - censoring, silencing or outright condemnation is just, well, a bit naff really.

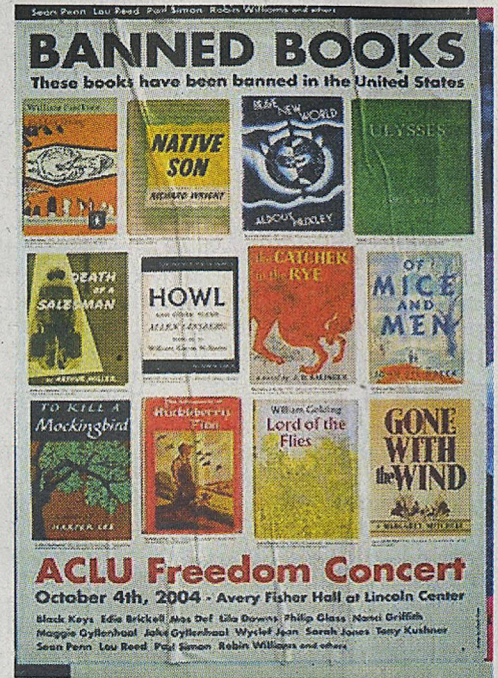
Which is one of the many reasons why a man who calls himself J.D. California is a spectacular prick. For those of you who don't, won't or can't read (if this is you, you're probably in the wrong section, by the way), here are a couple of pieces of information you'll need in order to make any sense of what follows. Firstly, in 1951 a man called J.D. Salinger wrote a novel called *The Catcher In The Rye*. It became a classic and is now a GCSE exam-board favourite (the alternative for most British 16-year olds is *Educating Rita*, a double-edged sword if you ask me, though perhaps

more of a dual-pointed, used, soggy, sodden, spinached, toothpick). Secondly, earlier this year a sequel to *Catcher* was published, written by a man called J.D. California. And therein lies the problem - these are two very different J.D.'s (to clarify, that Womble-face off of *Scrubs* is another, totally different person). J.D. Salinger didn't write this sequel, nor did he want it written. Nor, dear readers, does he want it read. Hence the importance of Nietzsche. Apologies - hence the big red sticker on the front of my copy that says, like some terrible Springsteen tribute, 'BANNED IN THE U.S.A.'. Salinger took California to court, and won.

This silly book by this silly man has a silly title. It's called '60 Years Later: Coming Through the Rye'. Yuk. Sounds like a chapter from old Chatterley. But it doesn't end there. An awkward sub-sub-title and whimpering apologia follows: 'An Unauthorized Fictional Examination of the Relationship Between J.D. Salinger and his Most Famous Character'. By the time you've dragged your screaming eyeballs across all this, you don't care if it's 'A Fictional Re-Daydreaming of an Imagined Fantasy in Which Harry Potter joins the BNP and Appears on Question Time Wearing Nothing But The Emperor's New Clothes and a Pair of J.K. From Jamiroquai's *Lace Pantaloons*'. You really don't (spot the Salengerism?).

And then, of course, there's his name. What kind of a *Saved-By-The-Bell* nom de plume is J.D. California? This palm-tree parable all gets a lot less exotic when we learn that the author is actually a Swede called Fredrik Colting. Joyously, the only quote I could find from this snivelling idiot was the following: 'I am not a pirate'. What I want to know is, why the hell not? We're all pirates now, J.D., and if you're not one of Us then you're one of Them.

But perhaps this quote was taken out of context. Perhaps he'd just arrived at a fancy-dress party garbed as a musketeer, and an already soused host had mistakenly exclaimed 'Why Fredrik! You're a pirate! I am not a pirate!', Freddy ejaculates. But again - why not J.D.? Pirates are much better than musketeers, with their poncey wigs and gold buttons. Frankly - given all the bad press - admitting to a swash-buckling history of plunder on the high seas might have helped your case.



You might ask why I seem so angry about all of this, and the truth is, I'm really not. I hardly care. I didn't much like *The Catcher In The Rye*. I got the impression it's a book which - if it comes along at the right time in your life, and if you're the right kind of person - can be transformative. Well it didn't, and I'm not. But what I do understand is the importance of *Catcher* as a springboard for other things. Without Holden Caulfield we would never have had *Vernon God Little*. Nor would we have Christopher John Francis Boone (from *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time*). The claustrophobic subjectivity and grim unease that permeates both these books - each wonderful and important for its own reasons - owe their deep traumatic force to the characterisation worked through Salinger's text. Has it dated over time? Well, yes actually. Most kids nowadays would just expect Holden to take a Prozac and get over it. But I expect that says more about today's sprogs than it does about yesterday's literature.

We don't need a *Slaughterhouse 6* or a 1985, and we don't need a sequel to a classic nearly 60 years old. J.D. Salinger, a notorious recluse and bitter guardian of his rights and his privacy, has taken photographers and biographers to court on numerous occasions in the past. Whatever made Frederik Colting think he could sneak under the Salinger censor, let alone the US copyright beam, is beyond me. I hope he's out there somewhere now, wandering aimlessly about the grey city, reading this cruddy article, thinking to himself, 'what a prince I am, what a phoney'.

I read  
banned books.  
...because I'm  
a wanker.



# HOW IT IS

SENSORY DEPRIVATION AT THE TATE WITH **SARA DOWNES**

**T**he Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, that vast warehouse-cum-gallery, once controversially home to a crack in the floor and what can only be described as an adventure playground, is now occupied by what seems to be a gargantuan shipping container. It is not, however, what it seems; it is in fact the Turbine Hall's latest artwork; Miroslaw Balka's 'How It Is'.

The installation is now open to the public, who may walk up its steep, unwelcoming ramp and tentatively enter the pitch black void of the container measuring a whopping 13 metres high, 10 metres wide and 30 metres long. As you enter the steel structure the light begins to fade with each step until you are deep inside and are plunged into the darkest of dark spaces, like nothing you have experienced before in our light polluted world. You are surrounded by up to 60 other curious visitors all attempting to navigate their way round. You may bump into people, hands outstretched in a brave foray into the unknown, or creep nervously along the velvet lined walls hoping to avoid any unwanted intimacy. You tune into your other senses now that you cannot see, and listen intently to people talking, some huddle together mumbling in hushed whispers while a group of school children are screaming and shouting. Everyone has a different reaction but you are all just faceless souls in this awkward and uneasy darkness. One turn, however, and you can see light again, the grey walls of the turbine hall welcoming you back to reality.

Balka has created this blank sculpture for you, the gallery visitor, and it is your reaction and your interpretation of the experience that transforms the outsized shipping container into a truly inspiring, emotional piece of art. The experience can be frightening,

unnerving, exciting; it all depends on you, your fellow visitors, and how you react. For the howling and stomping school children it is all fun and games but for many people the experience leaves a far more sinister taste. The large numbers of people, slowly marching up the slope into the void evokes thoughts of the Holocaust and human suffering and suppression.

While the piece doesn't tell you anything explicitly, a brief look into the artist's background explains a lot. Born in Poland in the 1950s, Miroslaw Balka's work often deals with the Holocaust. 'How it is' itself is based on the Samuel Beckett prose from which it takes its name, in which the narrator basically crawls through mud for 150 pages in a bleak, depressing depiction of human struggle.

Depression, struggle and war are always popular topics among artists, particularly World War Two. Few have managed to create such emotional pieces however. Francis Bacon's Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion is perhaps a stronger, more tortured piece, but that was painted at the end of the war itself by a first hand witness. Balka's twenty first century approach is different in its openness to interpretation at the same time as having a very deep and important message hidden within its giant steel frame. It is perhaps not entirely unique in its vision; Antony Gormley put people in a smoke filled glass box in his 'Blind Light' of 2007, provoking similar feelings of confu-

sion and sensory deprivation, and the Jewish Museum in Berlin is home to a similar empty steel sculpture by Daniel Libeskind.

Nevertheless, it's powerful stuff and while the installation does not in any way provide an accurate representation of the true horrors of the holocaust, it does evoke an emotion, a tiny, but still incredibly disconcerting sense of human suppression. Perhaps it could be described as a very tame attraction at an amusement park; it's really quite scary but at the same time you know you're in England in 2009 and Health and Safety regulation has got your back. But for a big black box, it does tease out some pretty intense emotions.

The artwork has the ability to make you think, make you feel emotions and make you forget you're really just a content LSE student pottering around the South Bank, and for that it is a really great piece of art. For me, art is there to provoke something in you, even if it is just momentarily. I believe it should make you learn, think or feel something and this piece is a refreshing escape from some of the boring art of recent times which is there taking up my time simply as a comment on the existence of art itself.

I would definitely recommend people to go and experience 'How It Is'. It's interesting and fun if nothing else. You'll soon be snapped out of your daze when you see the families wheeling buggies full of pink squealing toddlers down the slope; past the man in the yellow vest with a torch at hand in case anyone gets themselves into a panic while inside. You'll quickly re-enter London and remember you really ought to get on reading those library books that are already overdue. However, for those few minutes of reflection, it's worth a visit, even if you don't like art.

*The Unilever Series:  
Miroslaw Balka is free at  
the Tate Modern  
until 5 April  
2010.*





# THE FASTEST CLOCK

JOE MEEGAN TAKES HIS TIME

# IN THE UNIVERSE

In a play which takes an unsettling gawp at our obsession with youth, an occasionally clumsy production at the Hampstead Theatre still doesn't take the shine off Philip Ridley's visceral writing.

Cougar Glass (Alec Newman), a man so preoccupied with his age that he stubbornly celebrates his 19th birthday every year, is a disturbing embodiment of our dark obsession with youth, eroticism, and the jealous violence it can provoke as he singles out and seduces his sole party guest, school-

boy Fox Trot Darling (Neet Mohan). Sex and death are barely separable in Cougar's self-indulgent existence, and as the story unfolds the inevitable conclusion of his birthday party seems to be seduction, rape, and murder.

Cougar is waited on hand and foot by the ageing Captain Tock (Finbar Lynch), who is transfixed by Cougar's magnetic charm. Everything is going to plan until an uninvited guest arrives at the party: Fox Trot's brash, dominating, pregnant girlfriend, Sherbet Gravel (Jaime Winstone) – and it appears she knows Cougar's secret.

There are some beautifully delivered monologues with fantastically evocative imagery – a decaying bird, a lustful pursuit, a longing fairytale – interspersed with all-too-human interjections, as the undercurrent of desire between the various characters threatens to bubble over.

Despite the dark subject matter, Ridley's writing ensures plenty of laughs, and in this respect the production delivers. Lynch effortlessly shines as the conflicted, downtrodden Captain Tock, and his sense of comic timing is first class. Meanwhile, Winstone's Sherbet – who makes her first appearance at the half-way point – grabs the audience's attention in a blur of energy, infuriating traits and scything put-downs, maintaining a car-crash captivation until the curtain falls. The set, a single East London room designed by Mark Thomp-

son, is suitably gloomy; a crumbling throwback that tumbles past the confines of the stage, misshapen, sickly, and packed to the rafters with stuffed birds.

The text of *The Fastest Clock* is something of an actor's dream; razor sharp and brimming with insight, which is why it is such a shame that Mohan comes up short when emotional stretching is required of his recently bereaved Fox Trot. Eileen Page, who plays Cougar's ancient neighbour Cheetah Bee, is a disappointment, teetering between caricature and sober judge, without really succeeding in either direction. Indeed, one suspects direction is the key issue, as the man in charge behind the scenes – young director Edward Dick – shows only flashes of control over his cast. The devil may be in the detail, but it seems Dick loses sight of the bigger picture at times.

able Captain Tock protects the monstrous Cougar to the very end, is born from love. It is for this reason that, despite the shortcomings of this production, the closing line of the play still sends a shiver down the spine. 'Enjoyable' is not a word easily attached to Philip Ridley's work, but this production comes pretty close.

*The Fastest Clock in the Universe*  
played at the Hampstead Theatre from  
17th September - 17th October.



## PICK OF THE WEEK

### Jump

A mixture of Tae Kwon Do, dance and movement in the guise of a sitcom this innovative piece is well worth investigating. Peacock Theatre 3 - 21 November Box Office 0844 412 4322.

### Comedians

Following the lives of six wannabe comedian's and starring Matthew Kelly among others this promises bags of laughs. Lyric Hammersmith until 14 November Box Office 0871 221 1729.

### Mother Courage and Her Children

A new translation of a Brecht Classic. National Theatre until 8 December. Box Office 020 7452 3000.

LSE  
THEATRE

Drama Society Welcome Party  
Tuesday 3rd November  
Underground  
Email [su.soc.drama@lse.ac.uk](mailto:su.soc.drama@lse.ac.uk)



**ADETOUN & JACQUI HUNT FOR STYLE AT UNI**

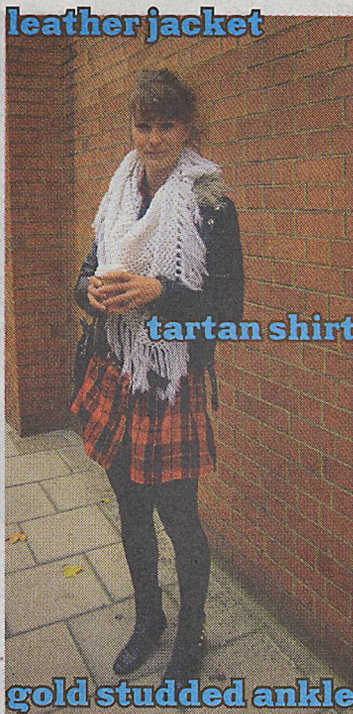
Following on from last week's column, and the popular response it garnered, we thought we'd give you a second helping of style in LSE! Even though randomly picked (we promise!), all the outfits match in some shape or form. Through a combination of layering, block colouring, textures and patterns, similarities seem to emerge. Leather jackets pop up more than once, tartan rears its head, brogues are making a comeback and colour seeps through every outfit. One major theme we noticed that ran through all these pictures is comfort! Here are our favourites - enjoy!



**eskimo hat**

**patterned leggings**

**dolly shoes**



**leather jacket**

**tartan skirt**

**gold studded ankle boots**



**oversized 80's glasses**

**large vintage messenger bag**



**printed tee**

**boyfriend jeans**

**plimsolls**



**stone washed jeans**

**adidas trainers**



**floral leotard**

**charm bracelet**

**pointed brogues**



# Sam Parfitt's Award Winning Chicken and Avocado Blog

Sunday, 5 April 2009

Fleet Foxes' Beard Hierarchy Uncovered!

It first dawned on me that there was something sinister behind the Seattle indie band's impressive display of facial hair when I was watching their performance at the Crossing Border festival in The Hague, November 21st last year. Below are the reasons for my suspicion that we have a rather hairy power struggle on our hands.

## EVIDENCE:



(Where possible, pictures from the Crossing Border gig I attended have been used, in order to ensure that beard size has remained constant and shaving has been kept to a minimum)

Undoubtedly the owner of the mightiest beard in the Foxes' repertoire is Robin Peckhold, lead singer and frontman. And therefore, in the caste-style system common of a beard hierarchy, he holds an autocratic position of authority over the rest of the band, often ordering them to iron his many checked shirts.



Next up, at a tie in terms of beard strength and density, are drummer J. Tillman and keyboardist Casey Wescott. Both feature prominently in the harmony, however noticeably lower in the mix.



Having lost his razor on a psilocybin-soaked picnic outing with the band only a few days prior to the gig in question, Christian Wargo is somewhat behind the others with a poor display of 'tramp stubble'. As a result, he sits even lower in the mix and has been forced to sing the obscurest of harmonies, with many sharp signs and numbers in their musical names.

Last is Skye Skjelset. At the tender age of 22, he has yet to be able to grow a beard and LOOK!! NO MIC!!! HE ISN'T EVEN ALLOWED TO SING YET! COINCIDENCE?! I THINK NOT.

My theory is quite simple - the bigger the beard, the more they are allowed to sing. It's quite a conspiracy.

In conclusion, I'd recommend you see them soon, before we have a Gillette-sponsored revolution on our hands - they are great live.

Posted by Sam at 22:24

Labels: Beards, Fleet Foxes

## Memorable Posts

- \* The Fleet Foxes Beard Hierarchy Conspiracy
- \* Crabs
- \* Lo-Fi Garage Covers
- \* Some Bukowski Introspection
- \* The Story Of My Cursed Silver Jews Tee
- \* Writing Portfolio

## Links

- \* Last.fm Profile
- \* Work It. Make It. Do It.
- \* Did It Leak?
- \* Trippy Television
- \* Google Earth Owned

## Twitter Feed

### My Twitter Feed

- \* is wondering if breastfeeding in public for women relates in any way to peeing in public for men? 10 days ago
- \* Screw that Doobie Bro, I want to see a 'While You Wait For The Others' b-side featuring Jay-Z! @http://tiny.cc/WPRg8 52 days ago
- \* Having trouble thinking of a simile to express the complete defeat-of-the-point that is Monopoly on the Wii. Any suggestions? 54 days ago
- \* @whyanticon just made this, thought you'd appreciate it: http://tinyurl.com/n9mft9 (i agree that the italics could be funkier) 55 days ago

follow me on Twitter

## A GENTLEMAN

MY CRISP, neat st

IT WAS LIKE FOR IN THE PERFORMA

The THEATRE RECOGNISE THAT that mattered. TH THE MURMURING, A ING FOR THE SHO UTTER LIGHTLESS ITS QUAINT MAHO THAN MY LITTLE SEEKING REASSUR certing not

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# Frank!

by Mark Twyford





**EN FORM BOHEMIA** (a short story by Joan Tay) *When I was but a boy, THERE WAS AN OLD, RICKETY THEATRE JUST AROUND THE CORNER OF*  
*street. ITS SHODDY WOODEN PANELING BORDERED A STRANGE, OAKEN DOORWAY, BENT CURIOUSLY AT THE KNOBBLY, GNARLED FRAME.*

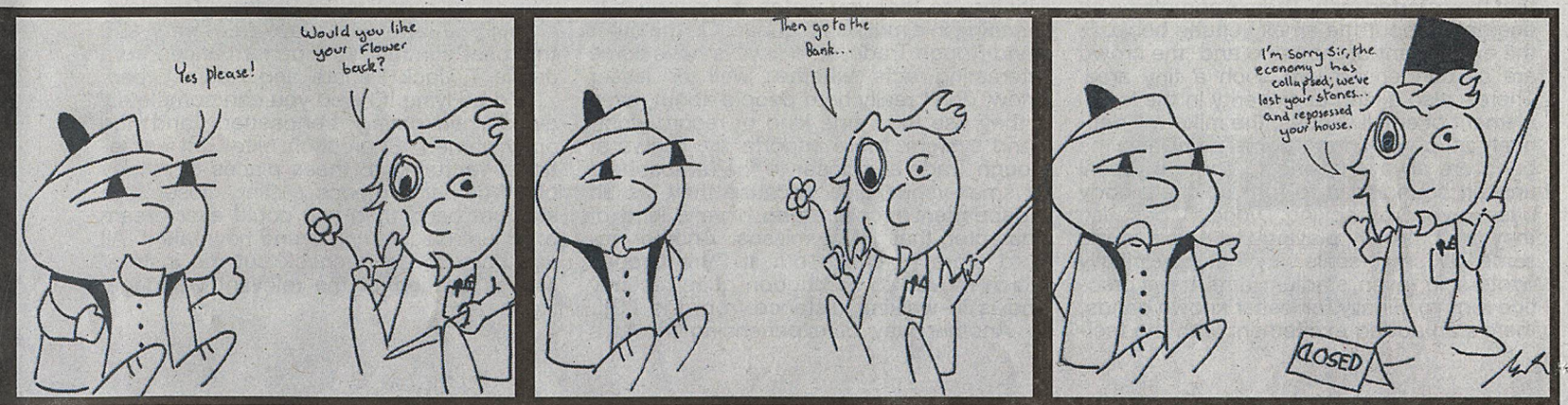
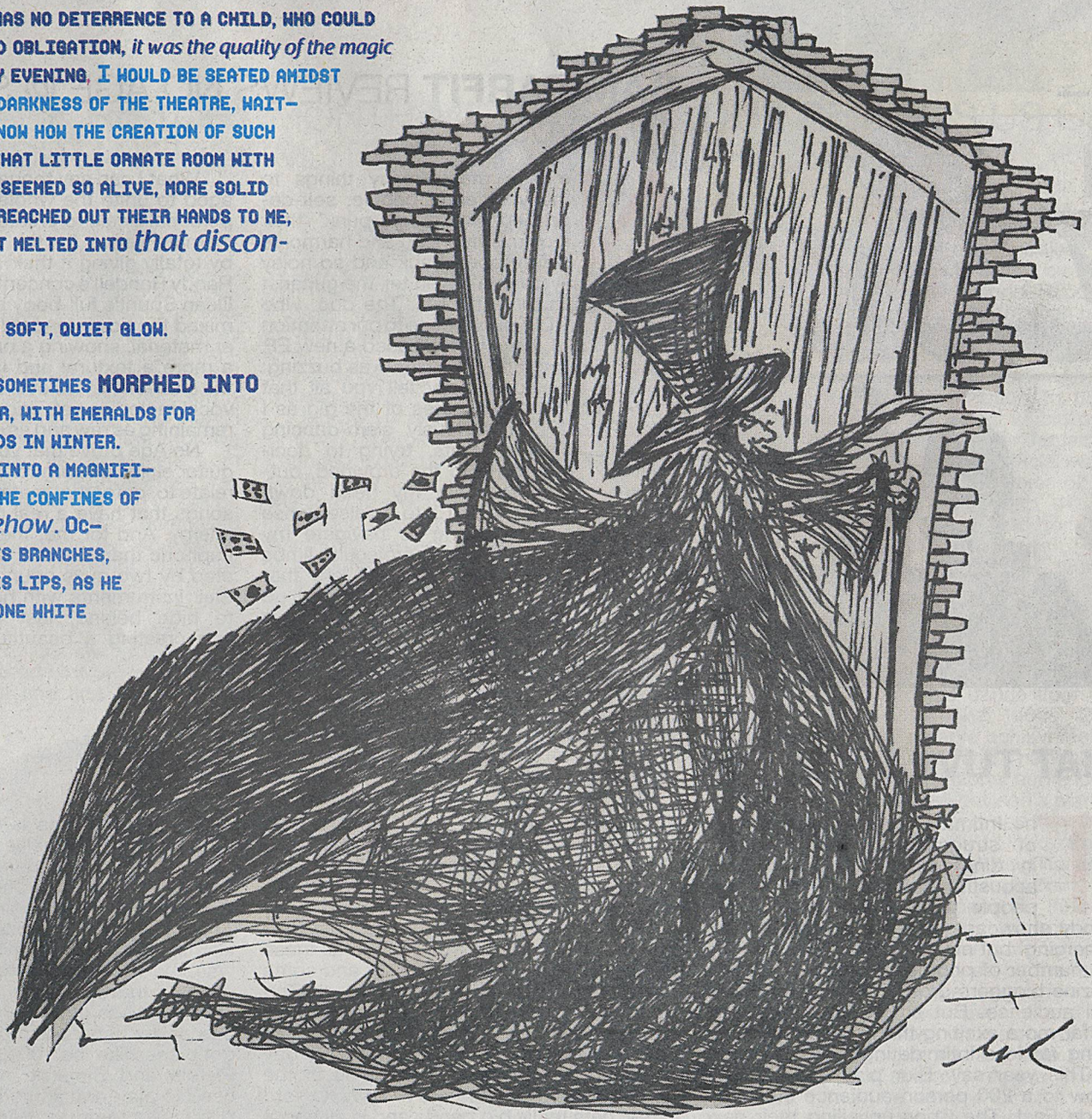
*RESHADOWING; WALKING THROUGH THAT DOORWAY HAS LIKE EXPERIENCING A TASTE OF THE DISTORTION OF THE PERFECT ANGLES OF REALITY THAT WAS TO COME*  
*ANCES PUT ON BY THE STRANGE GENTLEMAN WHO OWNED THE THEATRE.*

*E HAS NO 'PALACE', BUT THAT HAS NO DETERRENCE TO A CHILD, WHO COULD*  
*FAR ABOVE SOCIAL STATUS AND OBLIGATION, it was the quality of the magic*  
*US IT WAS THAT EVERY FRIDAY EVENING, I WOULD BE SEATED AMIDST*  
*ANXIOUS CROWD IN THE THICK DARKNESS OF THE THEATRE, WAIT-*  
*TO BEGIN. I TRULY DO NOT KNOW HOW THE CREATION OF SUCH*  
*NESS WAS POSSIBLE, BUT IN THAT LITTLE ORNATE ROOM WITH*  
*OGANY CARVINGS, THE SHADOWS SEEMED SO ALIVE, MORE SOLID*  
*COMPANIONS THAT SOMETIMES REACHED OUT THEIR HANDS TO ME,*  
*RANCE THAT THE WORLD HAD NOT MELTED INTO that discon-*  
*ningness.*

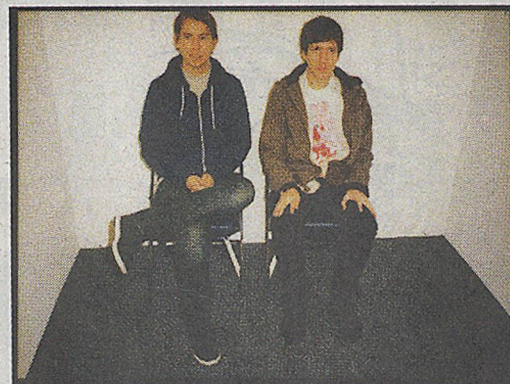
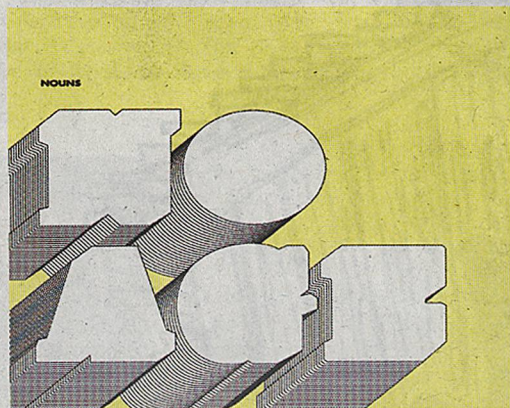
*always commence WITH A SOFT, QUIET GLOW.*

*HERE ONCE SHODDY WITH DUST SOMETIMES MORPHED INTO*  
*S, MAJESTIC IN AGED GRANDEUR, WITH EMERALDS FOR*  
*ER, RUBIES IN AUTUMN, DIAMONDS IN WINTER.*  
*ONES REARRANGE THEMSELVES INTO A MAGNIFI-*  
*TOO TALL TO FIT INTO THE CONFINES OF*  
*E, AND YET managing somehow. Oc-*  
*CONJURER WOULD PERCH IN ITS BRANCHES,*  
*E TWISTING SERPENTINE ON HIS LIPS, AS HE*  
*RED JEWEL OF AN APPLE FROM ONE WHITE*  
*ANOTHER.*

*ERS ON AN EVEN GREATER*  
*THAT. THE AUDIENCE WOULD*  
*HE, AS BEFORE OUR VERY*  
*HIRLED AND SPIRALED OUT*  
*MINATING INTO THE FORM*  
*FANTASTICAL L SPIRES*  
*HER OF PEARL, PALACE*  
*OLD, STREETS PAVED WITH*  
*Y OF KINGS. FAIR MAID-*  
*IPED FLOWING SKIRTS*  
*ED INTO THEIR HAIR,*  
*LES WITH A SOFT, ACH-*  
*THAT COULD MOVE EVEN*  
*LESS.*







## SAM PARFIT REVIEWS NO AGE @ SCALA 19/10/09

**N**o Age mean many things to many different people, self-described as 'dream-punk' their music is hypnotic and harmonic yet stripped-back and so noisy you probably couldn't even tell the guitarist is only using three chords. The duo, who brought LA's DIY punk scene to our attention back in 2008, have just released a new EP, *Losing Feeling*, and the Scala was buzzing.

Now, I couldn't really tell you all that much about the intricacies of the gig as I spent most of it furiously slam-dancing to frenetic noise blasts, trying to decipher and sing along to the drowned, out-of-tune vocals, or with my head down and eyes-closed, lulled into a false sense of security whilst trying to navigate my way around the various projectile limbs of crowd surfers and stage divers that came my way, most of whom ended up in a direct impact with my face and lower jaw, helping to transform the inside of my mouth and cheeks into a charmingly cratered scale replica of a WW1 battlefield.

What I can say though is that they managed to unite the whole of the usually impersonal Scala to create a noticeably more intimate venue for the duration of the set by totally giving it their all, be that through Randy Randall's concentrated thrashings or Dean Spunt's full-body snare hits. Their set mixed the now standard classics with newer material, showing a progression towards a more a textural and layered sound with the closest they've ever come to hummable vocal melodies yet, and with the older stuff remaining as raw and as ramshackle as ever.

No Age prove that you don't need fancy guitar skills, discernable lyrics that you can relate to, or for that matter, a bassist, to play songs that have a real profound feeling or energy. And for me, there is nothing more euphoric than the raw tangible energy created by two guys pounding the shit out of their instruments with no fancy metaphors to hide behind, just putting everything into creating a beautiful, beautiful noise.

## LIAT TUV GETS INTIMATE

**T**he Intimate gig. It raises images of struggling singer-songwriters in dingy bars, strumming their acoustic guitars to the three people there. Either that, or the trendy showcase of the latest perpetually 'emerging' but never emerged band where the number of photographers and zealous fanzine bloggers grossly outweigh the actual audience. But small-venue gigs can be far more exciting than the former while being far less intimidating than the latter.

This year saw Blur play a comeback show to a 200 person audience in Rough Trade East, The Cribs unveiling their new material at the Camden Barfly and many others playing acoustic sessions and in-stores. It's not surprising that these big bands like to get back to the small-size gigs that they started with. There's something so energetic about the small venues because the excitement of the band and the crowd are all condensed into such a tiny area. There's also a kind of sincerity in the low-fi element of small venues; the mike will definitely stop working at some point and the band are always saying to some mystical unseen sound man to turn up the bloody bass/keyboard/backing vocals because they are basically playing the music in the same DIY, small-scale way that they initially wrote it in (even stadium acts have practice rooms). Finally for lesser known bands, there's an added excitement with the feel-

ing that you're really part of something (imagine watching the Beatles at the Cavern). Because not all 'emerging' bands are awful. The result of all of this is that the audience feel much closer to the performers.

And you don't always need to know-a-guy-who-knows-a-guy to get into all these exclusive gigs - just the internet and some fanaticism. First there are band mailing lists which are quite good for giving fans a headstart for ticket sales. Second are in-stores which usually happen on the day of the album/single release. However the atmospheres of these vary. HMV Oxford Street gets really big bands and is all about queuing; you queue at 9am to get the record/gig wristband, then queue again at midday only for staff/security to force the crowd into queues in preparation for the signing, so that you watch the band while standing in a makeshift queue. On the other hand Rough Trade, who always have some interesting acts whether well or lesser know, don't really herd people about, even if they use the same kind of record/wristband system. More importantly, shows at Rough Trade are closer to the atmosphere of small-venue gigs because they, as an independent record store, have a kind of character that HMV misses. Another record store to check out is Pure Groove which moved to Farringdon quite recently and is in walking distance from the LSE.

Another way of experiencing the joys

of small-venue gigs is by knowing about the venues themselves and London is filled with these. Indeed it would be impossible to give a comprehensive list but there are a few I can point out. In supercool Shoreditch there's Hoxton Square bar and kitchen, which among many other things was the first gig White Lies played (but don't let that deter you), The Old Blue Last and countless other bars which are mostly free or very cheap entry. In Central you've got places like the 100 Club, where the Sex Pistols and Siouxsie and the Banshees used to play, and sometimes the ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts) has some really interesting bands on. Head further north to Camden where you'll find Proud Galleries, the converted horse hospital. Camden also has a large selection of mostly free or very cheap bars like the Barfly or The Flowerpot. The latter is always free entry and this past summer saw performances from Jamie T, Jack Penate and Adam Green.

I'd be lying if I said you can completely avoid intimidating trendsetters and the aptly named 'Shoreditch elite' but sometimes venturing to these places does pay off. Whether it means getting closer to a stadium band than you could ever dream of or just discovering brand new talent. All you have to do is check out the in-store/listings section of the relevant webpage.



# MOTOWN IN THIS TOWN



FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH **METHELA HAQUE** REMINDS US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTOWN AND ISLAND RECORDS

Listening to my triple CD collection celebrating 50 years of Motown Records, I could instantly recognise the contribution this label has made, not just to the story of soul music or black music, but to music history itself. A quick glance down the track list - Diana Ross & The Supremes, Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, Michael Jackson & The Jackson 5, Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye - shows just how important Motown as a label is. During its golden era from 1961 to 1972 when its headquarters was situated in a white painted house in Detroit that owner Berry Gordy had purchased to serve as the studio for his fledgling label, Motown scored a mammoth 100 plus US top ten hits and 31 number 1's. Since then it has been nicknamed 'Hitsville USA'.

The company debuted in 1959, after which success came quickly. By the 1960s, The Miracles provided Motown with its first number 1 R&B hit and first million seller.

The early Motown sound became immediately recognisable. It was a unique blend of pop, soul, and funk that got hips shaking and fingers clicking during an era emerging from post-war austerity. Dubbed 'the sound of young America', it seduced teenagers all over the world, not to mention young Brits, who clamoured in their thousands to watch the stars of Motown tour across the country.

Motown wasn't just about wooing a girl or saving a broken heart though. As times changed, so did the music its stars made. As the label grew in popularity, it embraced the liberation of the peace and love movement and developed a social conscience. Martha Reeves and The Vandellas' 'Dancing in the Streets' quickly became a civil rights anthem, and when Marvin Gaye's brother, Frankie came back from the Vietnam War, inspired by his brother's experiences, Gaye wrote and recorded the seminal album 'What's Going On'. The album not only provided a commentary on the context in which Gaye was recording music, but also set the mould for the classic soul album.

Set against the backdrop of the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and countless other social transformations in the '60s and '70s, Motown managed to make black music accessible to millions around the world. Many artists during the label's heyday including The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and Dusty Springfield were all indebted to the label, not to mention subsequent generations of musicians who cite Motown as a major influence.

Fifty years on, it's difficult not to be struck by the longevity of Motown's sound and its influence on countless musicians. Few, if any record label has achieved as much.

But while Motown was busy cultivating its own unique sound and providing a home for

black American music, Island Records sought a slightly different trajectory.

Founded in 1959, in Jamaica, by British-born Chris Blackwell, Island Records initially sought to popularize Jamaican music. However, Blackwell's ambitions eventually extended far beyond the shores of Jamaica and by 1962 he had transferred his burgeoning Island operation to London. It was a move he hoped would provide an international platform for Jamaican music. According to Island's official website, Blackwell used to hawk boxes of his imported Jamaican discs around UK record shops in a Mini-Cooper and from the back of that tiny vehicle grew one of the world's most influential recording labels.

Initially, Island marketed its records at the clubs which held the all-night blues parties in Brixton, Notting Hill and the other heartlands of the British Afro-Caribbean community. But early ska recordings soon found their way onto the dance floors of swinging London's trendiest clubs. One of Blackwell's most notable achievements was to bring Bob Marley and The Wailers to the attention of international audiences. Signed in 1973, Blackwell devised a plan to exploit Marley's rebel image and turn him into 'a black Jimi Hendrix'. Unlike Berry Gordy, Blackwell's vision for Island Records was not to merely provide a platform for black artists but also to generate innovative and thoughtful music that transcended musical genres and cultural boundaries; a vision which is still embraced by the label to this day. In doing this, Island records managed to propel the career of one of the most well known black musicians of the 20th century, Bob Marley, and also helping to popularise ska and reggae music.

While it may be somewhat of a misnomer to speak of 'black music', as black artists have produced pretty much most popular genres of music including soul, rock, jazz, funk, pop and reggae (to name but a few), the influence of both Motown and Island records on the history of music and of 'black music' is undeniable.



## GIGS/ EVENTS

With the cold nights drawing in we at Mixed Grill felt it was time for some cockle warming tunes and who else to provide it than man of the moment Louis la Roche?!

£3 before 10pm / £5 after. Last Days of Decadence.  
This Thursday 29.10





# Cheap Eats in Londontown

## THE SEARCH IS ON FOR VICTORIA TERRY

I have a small food problem... I am addicted to voucher deals. I very nearly overdosed on Pizza Express during the fabulous months of their buy-one-get-one-free (or BOGOF for you future Marketers). Yet their new £10 meal voucher leaves me cold... I neither want nor need a starter on top of a main, and quite frankly their attempts to speed me towards a larger waist and extract an extra fiver out of my purse are not appreciated.

I long for my five pound Pizza Express meal. But is it too much to ask for a decent dinner for a fiver in London? I am on a one-woman quest to find out. I could be drawn into the world of fast food and dirty look-

I soon realised that it is perhaps too much to ask for in the classy Covent Garden and no amount of longing will force Wagamama to make their 2-4-1 full time. So on a helpful tip I headed off to Gower Street and here I struck cheap dinner gold, not one but two delicious dining experiences on one street. First, there is Icco's or as it is more commonly known 'the three pound pizza place'. In fact prices have been raised as it is now £3.50 for a margherita but this is still definitely a bargain for it was delicious! Some may class Icco's as a fast food joint due to the speed and the lack of service which makes you feel like you are eating on a production line. Not to mention the stain-

certainly approve of.

My final area of choice has to be Edgware Road. First stop Beirut Express for a perfect Shish Taouk wrap (the classier version of a schwama made from pieces of chicken instead of slightly greasy slices off a rotating meat skewer) at the bargain price of £3.75. With many different choices of wraps available for under a fiver it is a must go for the penny pinchers who appreciate delicious food. The second restaurant I have been recommended is Mandalay, a surprisingly good Burmese restaurant, where you can get a vegetable noodle dish for £4.40 or if you feel like splashing out a chicken and vegetable noodle dish for £5.90.



ing restaurants in this search but I will stay strong, aiming for the best dining experience possible in acceptable surroundings armed with a single green note (for the Americans out there this is a fiver, not one of your lot). The challenge... a whole week of cheap eats in central London!

My first stop was the Internet, aided by the suggestions of voucher websites, I rejoiced in the numerous delicious meals beckoning. But then I felt like I was cheating. After all they could play a dirty trick like Pizza Express and rip these vouchers away leaving me craving my favourite which is now at double the price. So I decided only real deals, no temporary temptations, would do.

less steel tables and chairs which are worse than the ones found in schools. Nevertheless, I had a great pizza sitting with friends in a not too shabby restaurant for only £3.50. The search was off to a good start. Things got even better with my next find, Benito's Hut, once again a self-service establishment but the atmosphere and decoration of the restaurant are far superior and the burritos cannot be beaten... they only cost a fiver!

Another helpful hint sent me towards Soho in search of the 'Veg Buffet'. I could now feast on my five-a-day for only £3.50. What a success, not only did I have enough money left for a coke but my move away from meat was a step eco-warriors would

All in all I would say my search has been a success. I have eaten out every night of the week without jeopardising purchasing those perfect boots in Topshop. I felt pretty good about myself until a friend pointed out that it was all very well finding cheap eats out but the true credit crunch munch was all about eating in, not out, think come dine with me with people you know. Momentarily put out, I soon sniffed out the challenge hidden within those wise words... be the best cook on one night while enjoying three or four free meals on others. Now who shall I call...



# STARS AND STRIPES AND THAT

## NATHAN BRIANT FLOATS ON A BIT OF WEBBAGE

With Justin Webb's visit to the LSE for 'Why I Grew to Love America and You Should Too' being available as a podcast on the internet, and Kirsty Young asking Webb questions the event went off with a bit more pizzazz than initially expected. Webb was recorded in the NAB to promote his forthcoming book but the hour-long interview was entertaining, despite the fact much of it could have probably been read from an American politics textbook. Webb, a former editor of the *Beaver*, more recently North America Editor for the BBC and 'Today' presenter, helped endear himself to the audience by announcing that he couldn't remember what subject he took at the LSE in the mid-1980s. Ah, that old chestnut.

Young tended to press Webb as lightly as she does her guests on *Desert Island Discs* but he managed to flesh his answers out and to a good length. Much of Webb's insights as much as they were witty, warm and funny, can be said to have lacked a major insightful glint into the world of American politics. He describes travelling on *Airforce One* and incidents such as the Republican Senator George Allen spewing out racist abuse at a news conference which killed a possible presidential bid before its conception. This was all great, but hardly brilliant investigative journalism. Allen's escapade can be found through a simple YouTube search and was, as to be expected, a huge story in the USA. Perhaps he didn't want to delve too deep and waste minutes on background minutiae. That said, the only exclusive that was mentioned was an interview given to his BBC colleague Matt Frei to George Bush. This may be telling of the 'special relationship': eight years in the United States and one notable, brief exclusive for the *Beeb*.

According to Webb the USA's flag is collectively theirs - it hasn't been 'stolen'; they haven't got a Morrissey or the BNP to contend with. There was one considerable bone of contention, however. Webb's analysis that Britain 'bends over backwards for 'Arab Street' but it loathes 'America Street' is a bit absurd when regarding what cultural impact America has had in the UK over the last half-century. As far as the America of 2009 goes there's slight hints that he likes Obama, but

was disappointed when the President emitted a less controlled persona such as his infamous 'Special Olympics' gaffe. Despite the mobile phone interference that was recorded onto the podcast nearly all the way through it's well worth a listen.

For ignoramuses like the writer science can appear a bit alien. Everyone knows

that made it so enjoyable. Ants cutting leaves and zooming up in for a close up on a picture from an exhibit isn't usually something that would be deemed excellent viewing but it was like watching a less elderly Attenborough in miniature. It may have been the science of it - ants cutting leaves, then not eating these leaves, but using them to build a

habitat, then waiting for a fungus to grow on the collected leaves in order to eat that fungus and so on - is something that I wasn't expecting to see on iTunes but Dawkins pulled it out the bag.

And all things being equal there's inevitably some pap floating about in the ether. XFM is often seen to be the Mecca for indie music but based on the evidence here the station's quality has dipped. Dave Berry's podcast may have been having an off week, but on a station that launched Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant to the big time, and one that has aired Jimmy Carr and Adam and Joe, this show just doesn't cut it. Sounding worryingly close to Russell Brand at times Berry is Brand minus the negligible jokes. Add to that that whoever cuts the podcast would appear to have severe arthritis in their hands resulting in the sound desk being bashed at random intervals: this may be how the show was cut; very little or no thought has gone into placing the show into cogent pieces which follow-on from each other.

Most of Berry's skits are half a minute to about a minute long which isn't enough for development of anything at any point in time. Evidence of this is an interview with comedian Jason Manford that is so drab that thirds of it are cut and dotted about willy nilly supplemented with clips of Berry and his producer performing kick-ups in between. Listening to

that all the way through would be too much for anyone.

Even worse, the presenter bursts into some kind of uncontrollable laughter every time a joke is told, so much so that it must be questioned whether he finds the things funny, since if he does he must find nearly everything humorous. It could be Berry being nice, an attempt at making his guest feel at ease. If it is, then it's good he's polite but it's bloody annoying. And when half an hour of radio from four days of broadcasting has to be punctuated by a feature with an invited guest naming fish there is clearly something's going desperately wrong somewhere.



about Darwinism - agree with it or not - and Richard Dawkins, someone who's quickly become a figurehead for such theories around the western world, has moved to the medium of pod casting.

Brilliantly simple and easy to watch since they're only a couple of minutes long Dawkins' mini-lectures are a joy to behold. 'Ants that farm, compost and weed' is filmed in front of an exhibition in an American university's exhibition centre. It rings of Open University lessons that are broadcast through the middle of the night. It might have been the light marimba playing in the background or just the brilliant originality of it all



# HALLOWEEN REVIEW SPESH!

## AHMED PEERBUX LOOKS BACK ON THE DADDY OF HOR- ROR COMEDIES: EVIL DEAD II



**Director(s):** Sam Raimi. **Screenplay:** Sam Raimi and Scott Spiegel. **Cast:** Bruce Campbell, Sarah Berry, Denise Bixler, Dan Hicks, Kassie DePaiva, Richard Domeier, John Peaks, Lou Hancock and Ted Raimi. **Runtime:** 84 min. **Cert:** 18. **Year:** 1987.

**S**cary Movie-s? Lesbian Vampire Killers? Jennifer's Body? No thank you. Less a sequel, and more a masterful second-go-of-it, *Evil Dead II* follows our chisel-chinned hero Ash (Bruce Campbell) as he dukes it out with some thirteenth century Sumerian demons who vow to have him dead by dawn. He only wanted a champagne-fuelled romantic getaway, but instead he got devils that bleed crude oil. Six minutes in, Ash has already decapitated his beloved girlfriend with a spade. This is everything I want in a film.

*Evil Dead II* is pure, unabashed sensory appeal; a circus of slapstick madness and farce. Limbs fly, blood geysers out of walls, prize moose heads maniacally laugh. A possessed hand sees Ash whipping plates over himself: this is Charlie Chaplin in a Halloween costume. He's forced to chainsaw it off and keep it strained under a bin. What does he weigh the bin down with? 'A Farewell to Arms.' The scarce dialogue also doesn't disappoint. The demon in the basement yelps 'I'll swallow your soul!' Ash's reply is a cool shotgun to the face: 'swallow this', something thirteen year olds smugly come out with while playing Halo on Xbox Live. Acting? Well, Bruce Campbell's eyebrows say more than Kate Winslet in a Holocaust film.

Raimi's innovative directing has since been countless imitated, with good reason. He breathes life (or death) into the camera, transforming it into a sinister spirit sprinting through the forest for souls to swallow. The breathless chaos of the demonically determined camera chasing Ash room to room, door through door in the cabin, is one of the films most memorable moments. Distorted lens tricks give the film an edge of deliriousness and unhinged madness, and the shaky handheld camera combined with jumpy editing constantly serves to disorientate.

If you're not fond of gore, and offal flying around a film set, you're probably thinking this film isn't for you. But that's the brilliance of *Evil Dead II* – the violence is extra-real, intended not for inducing nausea, but side-splitting laughter to the point where you feel nauseous. *Evil Dead II* encompasses a B-movie no-frills charm that the latest CGI technology could never hope to. It is quite simply, a masterpiece.



## JOAN TAY ON DRACULA (1931)

**I**n light of the fact that most horror films now have the benefit of clever computer graphics, *Dracula* (1931) can no longer be said to be the metonymy of evil and horror that its original audience once deemed it. However, out of the countless vampire movies or Bram Stokeresque adaptations, this one ought to be singled out as the must-watch.

Most memorable for Béla Lugosi's definitive portrayal of Dracula, the role of the Count was depicted with dramatic flair and mesmerising charm, and indeed, ended up coining Lugosi's image. This may not be quite as gory a rendition of vampirism as you might like, but there is great appeal in the subtle thrill of this gothic classic adaptation. Ladies, forget Edward Cullen. As the master of ominous seduction, Maestro Lugosi delivers a compelling performance in this supernatural thriller that has seen, and will continue to see generations' worth of encore to come.

## WILL MCMAHON EVIL DEAD III

**E**vil Dead 3 – The most ridiculous concept for a film ever? Quite possibly. 86 Minutes of pure fun? Definitely. Simply put Ash, an S Mart employee (Bruce Campbell) is sent back in time by a portal whilst fighting evil spirits summoned from *The Necronomicon – The Book of the Dead*. He proceeds to beat up King Arthur, and fight off an army of zombies (or Deadites) using a shotgun and a chainsaw hand (he actually has a stump with a chainsaw on it). Not enough for you? In one scene he uses a giant helicopter blade attached to the front of a car to pretty much lawnmow the zombies. The Lord of the Rings even has an identical scene where Ash invents gunpowder and pushes a candle away from it (I like to think that Sam Raimi, the director of *Evil Dead* and Peter Jackson are friends). Just go see it!



# THE SHORTCOMINGS OF DR. PARNASSUS

MADEEHA ANSARI DELVES INTO GILLIAM'S LATEST CREATION



**Director(s):** Terry Gilliam. **Screenplay:** Terry Gilliam, Charles McKeown. **Cast:** Heath Ledger, Christopher Plummer, Verne Troyer, Lily Cole **Runtime:** 122 min. **Cert:** 12A. **Year:** 2009.

I was lured to the late-night show of "The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus" by a poster on the Underground. The film was Heath Ledger's last - and promised an assortment of eye-candy. I was little prepared for the dark depth of the screenplay that followed.

Heath Ledger's performance is one characterised by energy and complexity. To a large extent he represents a satire of charitable institutions, most obviously of "Save the Children" ("Suffer the little Children"). While his untimely death cast a shadow over the production of the incomplete film, Terry Gilliam refused to abandon the project. Originally considering using special effects to resurrect Tony, he then decided to cast separate actors to present his different faces in the Imaginarium. Johnny Depp is the charmer; Jude Law the cloud-chaser; Colin Farrell the self-serving scam artist.

While other cast members have established reputations that they only had to cash in on in relatively brief roles, Lily Cole had the huge task of holding her own throughout. As Parnassus' daughter, she successfully manages to prove herself as being more than an angelic face with a rosebud mouth. In spite of his



wondrous powers, Dr. Parnassus and his associates lead the sordid lives of urban street-performers. It is not a life that a beautiful young girl would voluntarily choose, and the audience can understand her yearning for comfort and stability.

Part of this sympathy is created by the sharp contrast in images between worlds. Some fantastic feats of cinematography are achieved when presenting the phantasmagoria within the Imaginarium, even more effective when placed beside the squalor of the streets. The cheap, gaudy costumes are transformed in an instant; the dreariness is simply peeled away.

Although it has its moments of humour, "The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus" is not a pleasant film. The safest adjective to use would be "interesting"; that is not an active recommendation, but does mean that people should watch it to come to their own conclusions. (The general statement echoing in the cinema while credits rolled was: "What the hell?") It can be taken at face value, as a colourful and bizarre story starring very many sinfully good-looking people. At the same time, it does grapple with some fairly complicated concepts. Just knowing Heath Ledger's story lends it an eerie, serious touch. At the very least it should spark some introspective thought about one's personal choices and greater role in the "stories sustaining the universe".

## WAKE UP, SID

SHRAYANS AGRAWAL ON BOLLYWOOD'S LATEST OFFERING



**Director(s):** Ayan Mukerji. **Screenplay:** Ayan Mukerji, Niranjan Iyengar. **Cast:** Ranbir Kapoor, Konkona Sen Sharma, Anupam Kher, Supriya Pathak **Runtime:** 138 min. **Cert:** PG. **Year:** 2009.

Karan Johar offers a fresh feel in this new Bollywood flick; for a change the music isn't a separate entity in the movie, but instead flows naturally. There is a song for everyone here, the film is choc full of simple tappable beats.

Sid is a typical college graduate. The few of us who are still clueless in life can completely empathize with this fun-loving and simple character that cares about nothing else as long as he can "have some fun". As far as he's concerned, tomorrow is always there for him. He drives an expensive car,

drink a lot of booze and reads comic books. As cushy as it sounds, even the incongruous Mr. Sid finds out it's simply unsustainable.

One sympathizes with Sid yet mirthfully enjoys his fruitless attempts at doing something productive with life after his sudden departure from home. He finds solace in his new best friend's house, Aisha Banerjee. Aisha has just moved to Bombay and immediately falls in love with the place. She is completely taken aback by the City; its shining bright lights, her insignificance and the ample opportunities that lay in front of her. Sid and Aisha share some memorable moments and one keeps dreaming when they will find their Aisha or their Sid, carefree and in a city where you can easily get lost - in both the hopeful and depressing sense.

Sid finds his inspiration and begins to develop and mature, growing in small leaps and minute bounds to become the man Ai-

sha and his parents never thought he could be. In this sense Sid offers us a chance to reflect; drifting through life like Sid is not an option, but in his progression we find hope.

Typical of any Karan Johar film, there is the love story, between Konkona and Ranbir (a complete mismatch from the get-go), but also a subtle love for Mumbai as well. Sitting on top of a sea-face, with a cup of hot masala tea as the wind graces your face makes not only for good conversation but unforgettable memories. Slowly throughout the movie you appreciate the intricacies of the city, the romance in the air and the feeling of homeliness which isn't found in a new city. One feels like leaping into the screen and going to Mumbai right away!

Wake Up Sid comes highly recommended. Definitely one of Ranbir's best performances with a good supporting cast too. Overall, Sid is a nice reflective break for everyone with a hectic LSE schedule.



# Fetishism and Fiction

LEON MATTHIAS ON RACE AND GENDER IN EROTIC LITERATURE

**E**rotic Literature aims to present the reader with fiction that shows new and unimagined situations beyond what may be possible for them to directly experience; as well as to stimulate – in every sense of the world. Like Caliban's looking glass we see ourselves distorted and represented; the ability to do this is epistemic power. In writing about women and ethnic minorities, and women from ethnic minorities we must be aware of this power and the way the culturally privileged – writers – create and enforce stereotypes of those whose sexuality is presented for consumption.

The frisson of forbidden and exotic fruits is a well-established trope: tragic mulatto women, see *Carmen*; terrific and terrible African Queens, see H. Rider Haggard's *She*; submissive and sexually available East Asian women, see any of Gwen Stefani's music videos or Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*; and the Eastern voluptuary, Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* or *The Dance of the Seven Veils*. Similarly much erotic literature presents stereotypes of women of colour as exotic hot-house flowers. But so what? Aren't these positive portrayals? Can't it work to one's advantage to be seen as a hot, liberated and full-blooded Latina – well this stereotype comes from the idea that Latinas are less civilized and more animalistic than Europeans. There is no such thing as a positive stereotype and using them in writing shows lazy

characterization, a failure to sketch believable and singular characters the reader can identify with, and indeed lust after.

I am a man who writes erotic literature involving men and men; and men and women; and women and women: in the Youth Erotic Press we encourage a diversity of interest and content. But ultimately I am not a woman and have the privileged position of being able to write as a man, my representations of women can be damaging and constitute epistemic violence if I am not continuously aware of this power differential. The postcolonialist thinker Gayatri Spivak asked if the subaltern woman can speak, that is women of colour can be doubly-oppressed: from sexism and racism.

Knowledge is power and to avoid epistemic violence whilst creating erotic fiction that embraces diverse sexuality one should be mindful of race's intersection with gender and the way our characters, who can be women of colour are first sexual subjects and then gendered and racial.

*The Youth Erotic Press was founded in 2009 and encourages submissions from anyone aged sixteen to twenty-four to [youtherothicpress@googlemail.com](mailto:youtherothicpress@googlemail.com)*



## SEXY TIME?

NINA LAZIC JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THE GOOD STUFF

**D**uring your three years at this institution of higher learning, you will get laid five times – if you're lucky. My highly reputable source (Facebook) claims that the average LSE student 'gets it on' 1.8 times a year. So, bear those stats in mind the next time you reject that bespectacled, weedy and slightly dirty looking boy from your econ class – you might be saying no to a rare chance to bonk.

If these stats are true, which I have no doubt that they are, then unfortunately for me, I've already exhausted my LSE sex life. At this stage I might as well go and join a convent, or even better, reform my ways and except a bible from the evangelists who tackle me on Houghton Street

So, why exactly is it that we are so prudish when it comes to sex, unlike our UCL and King's College brethren, who do the nasty at least 80 times a school year (statistic completely made up)? Do our feelings of inadequacy at being 59th in the world magically transform and transfer into general

self-loathing?

Perhaps we're all just too picky. Being future investment wankers, we all have the expectation that at some stage of our lives we'll be ridiculously wealthy. Thus, we shall afford to have ridiculously good looking 'friends' – gold diggers for the boys, and boy-toys for the girls – and so refuse to except anything less, ugly as we ourselves might be. Another hypothesis might be that we are already observing a 'no fraternization with the enemy' rule, in that the only fumbles in the dark that investment wankers do with each other is when they're stabbing each other in the back. Comforting as this theory might be, combining the promise of both future riches and future red-hot chances to get busy, I just don't buy it.

We're all searching for an ideal that just doesn't exist, at least, not at LSE and not really in real-life either. Each and every girl that I know has some kind of illusion built into her system, myself included. We're all looking for some preconceived notion of love, when in reality, we have no concept of

what love is, just the pretty, photo brushed version that we've seen on "The O.C.". The question now is, is it better to give up that concept, that illusion, and instead focus on what is right in front of us; a short, skinny boy with computer-tan? Or, putting it as dramatically as Mischa Barton/Marissa would be inclined to do, would that be some sort of betrayal to our sense of whatever it means to be us.

My ideal? It wasn't all that high. All I wanted was a boy who treated me well, didn't jerk me around and, was interested in me – that is to say, willing to forego dating other girls whilst with me. Of those three requirements, I have none. I've beaten the LSE average of 1.8, but at what price? I don't wish to sound dramatic - it's not as if I'm doing the dirty with a crack head who whores me out for drug money - but all the same, if I'd asked my 17 year old self whether she approved of my current-boy, she would have said no. So, what exactly is the answer? I'm still trying to figure that one out...