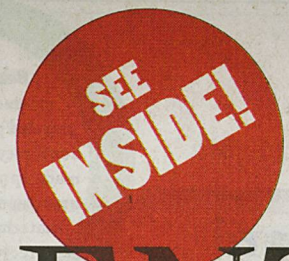




# THE BEAVER DEPENDENT



# The Beaver

7th December 2010  
Newspaper of the  
LSE Students' Union  
thebeaveronline.co.uk  
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## LSE under occupation

Benjamin Butterworth

A group of students have been occupying an LSE conference suite since last Thursday, with the support of the LSE Students' Union.

The occupation followed an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), held on Thursday afternoon by the Students' Union in response to sustained calls for direct action in protest to proposed changes in higher education funding.

The EGM, attended by an estimated 400 students, saw vigorous debate as students exchanged views on whether the Students' Union should back an occupation.

Twenty minutes prior to the end of the EGM, eight students rushed from the Old Theatre to occupy the Old Building's Vera Anstey suite. The initial eight were soon followed by some thirty more students; the number of occupiers later swelled to a reported 140 students during the occupation's first assembly. Numbers have since fluctuated with approximately ten to twenty students remaining overnight.

Organisers issued a statement on Friday evening, condemning the School's stance on proposed changes in higher education funding: "We, the occupiers of the Vera Anstey Suite, have been dismayed by the Directorate of the LSE's failure to speak out against the coalition's proposals to cut funding for further and higher education."

The occupiers' actions followed more than thirty other recent university occupations, at institutions such as UCL, SOAS and London Metropolitan, with students protesting against a proposed increase in the tuition fee cap to £9,000 per year.

The LSE student sit-in was initially the policy of only those students involved; however, an online vote on the motion debated at the EGM allowed students to vote for or against Students' Union backing of it. Those in support and opposition made frantic efforts to win the vote, using banners, Facebook statuses and leafletting across campus. By Friday evening, the motion gained the necessary number of votes, with 464 students voting in favour and 261 voting against.

LSE authorities have publicly condemned the action. In a statement issued to the Beaver, a spokesperson said: "We have made it plain to the occupiers that they are not authorised to be there. We are monitoring any disruption to teaching."

The last occupation at the School

came in 2009, when pro-Gaza protesters took over the Old Theatre for six days. School officials later claimed the occupation cost "a bit more, but not much more, than £10,000" and at the time threatened the Students' Union with this fee. An ongoing occupation at UCL faced legal action last week, the cost of which could be incurred by their Students' Union.

Over the weekend, voices from around the world backed the occupation at the LSE. Biljana Kašić, a lecturer from the University of Zadar in Croatia, said: "I would like to say yes to your courage, your resistance, your critical 'eye'".

Meanwhile hip hop star and radio DJ Lowkey called for "Action! Action! Action!" from students. During a visit on Friday evening, he told protesters: "I totally support what you're doing. If they really believe in this policy, then they should all pay £9,000 a year retrospectively".

Mike Cushman, the University and College Union's branch secretary, also expressed support, arriving on campus shortly after the occupation began. "It isn't acceptable", he said. "We need to be part of a campaign to roll back these attacks - not just on students and lecturers - but on the poor, the vulnerable, patients, even schoolchildren. We need to all be backing this action".

The occupation has faced opposition from some students. Former LGBT officer and third-year Government student, Scott Macdonald, told the emergency meeting: "This is imposing the views of quite a narrow section of students on all of us. It takes away the ability of people who don't agree with this cause to actually say that they object."

Government proposals, which include cuts to the teaching grants of all non-STEM subjects, are expected to become law following a parliamentary vote on Thursday 9th December. Occupiers are demanding that LSE Director Howard Davies condemn the government's policy. In a statement issued on Friday, occupiers called for a "joint open statement by the LSE Students' Union, University and College Union (UCU), and Howard Davies."

Davies has yet to make clear whether the School plans to increase tuition fees and if so, by how much. Having written privately to the government, questioning proposed cuts to non-STEM teaching grants, he has stepped clear of offering specifics on future LSE policy. Those in charge of fee levels are expected to meet in 2011, once government proposals have been resolved.

## From Libya to Lincoln's Inn...



Colonel Gaddafi, the de facto leader of Libya, this week gave a public lecture via satellite to an audience at the LSE | Full story, page 3  
Photo: Shawn Shariati

## Occupiers sit down with Lib Dem deputy

Chris Rogers

Last Saturday a delegation of students from the ongoing occupation at the LSE met with Simon Hughes, deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats and MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark.

Among the delegation was Students' Union Community and Welfare Officer, Hero Austin, who said the group aimed to "convince Simon to vote against the rise in fees".

The meeting had been arranged following the occupation of Hughes' constituency office, two weeks ago, by around 30 students, who demanded that he kept his pre-election promise to vote against any proposed increase in fees.

Students asked Hughes if he had decided how he would vote on the proposed increase in tuition fees. Hughes responded that he had not decided, adding he would "prefer for the vote not to be on Thursday". He said he hoped the vote would be postponed on account of the Welsh Assembly's recent announcement that it would keep tuition fees down for Welsh students. Hughes believed that it would be wise to wait until after the next set of regional elections so an agreement could be created between the four national governments over tuition fees.

When asked what would happen if the bill was not postponed Hughes said that he had "not yet made a decision" and "wanted to hear all views first" and "exhaust all opportunities" before making a final decision. He mentioned that he will have reached a verdict by the Lib Dem parliamentary meeting on Wednesday.

Austin argued that the new system would be deeply flawed and by "marketing fees" it could risk encouraging poorer students to attend lower calibre universities in order to avoid the huge debt incurred from attending an elite institution. Hughes agreed that "there is a strong argument for delaying" the vote and that there should be a more detailed look at the proposals' implications.

Hughes was then asked what would make him vote no, to which he responded he would vote against the proposals if it were shown that there was "a risk of putting off young people from poor families" from going to university.

Hughes's declaration that he might abstain was criticised by Austin who argued, "abstention in reality isn't much different" from voting for, as the Conservative majority could only be overturned if the Liberal Democrats voted against the bill, and that is how people will see it and how [he] will be judged." Hughes responded that "each MP will make their own decision", and warned that ministers

will most likely vote for the bill because of collective responsibility and thus it would be difficult to defeat.

The group of students were told that the factor that would determine his decision was "the impact in my constituency on those who have not made the decision on what to do after they turn 18". Austin commented that based on this criterion he ought to be voting against the proposal.

Hughes asserted that the new system was fairer than the current one. In support of this he noted that some are likely to be taken out of paying fees all together; everyone will pay less per month than now; and over all the rich will pay more. Finally, he stressed that the poorer will be paying 25 per cent less than at present. Hughes admitted, "it won't be perfect but it will be better".

He added that as long as students have full information the new system will work better, while the "non-market system has clearly failed" and a new system where students have "more power and influence is needed".

» continues on page 4

## Israeli students "disappointed" at Palestine Society event decision

Nicola Alexander

The Students' Union's Palestine Society's decision to host Abdel Bari Atwan, the controversial editor of a pan-Arab newspaper, has "disappointed" Jewish and Israeli students on campus, according to the President of the Students' Union's Israel Society.

The Israel Society immediately raised concerns over the event when details of the talk were first released two weeks ago, on 26th November. The reputation of Atwan as well as the subject matter of the talk entitled "How much influence does the Zionist lobby exert on US/UK foreign policy?" were the main points of contention. In a statement released last week, the

Israel Society declared the decision taken by the Palestine Society as "disturbing and polarising".

Atwan is currently the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Quds Al-Arabi, an Arabic newspaper that has in the past been temporarily banned in Egypt, Jordan and Syria for its strong criticism of any Arabic regimes believed to be influenced by Israel or the US.

Named one of the fifty most influential Arabs by Middle East Magazine earlier this year, Atwan is perhaps best known for his controversial statements. Video footage aired on Lebanese television in 2008 shows Atwan declaring that if Iran were to launch a missile attack on Israel he would "go to Trafalgar Square and dance with delight". In the same year Atwan was recorded as stating that a terrorist attack

on Jerusalem's Mercaz Harav Yeshiva was "justified". Atwan has publicly denied making these anti-Zionist claims in a statement on his official website. According to Atwan, the sources that find him making these statements are factually inaccurate and "part of a smear campaign against me".

Last week the Israel Society unsuccessfully sought to prevent Atwan from speaking on campus, holding meetings with both the Students' Union and the Palestine Society.

Disappointed at the outcome of the negotiations, the society said: "The Israel Society is committed to a 'Two States for Two Peoples' solution to the Middle East conflict. We welcome constructive campus debate on the subject. We have attempted to bring a speaker to form a panel

with Abdel Bari Atwan so his views can be effectively challenged. This has been rejected by the Palestine Society."

The Palestine Society agreed to postpone the event from Friday 3rd December to Monday 6th December, so that Jewish students who observe Shabbat on Fridays evenings were able to attend the lecture. The Israel Society were keen to highlight that they "welcome[d] the change of the date of the event, which now enables Jewish student attendance".

Atwan has directly commented on the efforts of the Israel Society to prevent his planned lecture. His website states: "It would be a regrettable thing indeed if Israeli students, rather than engaging in a proper debate, are able to silence one of the few voices that speaks for the Palestinians."

The Palestine Society have said that they invited Atwan to deliver a speech on the basis that he would be denouncing his anti-Zionist views. Zach Sammour, President of the Palestine Society said: "We would never invite a racist to speak on behalf of our society. Mr Atwan has publicly said that his views were misrepresented."

Despite publicly denying any claims made against the state of Israel, Atwan remains a controversial figure. LSE Conferences have admitted that the reason that the event was permitted to go ahead, in spite of the inflammatory nature of some of his remarks, was a "bureaucratic error".

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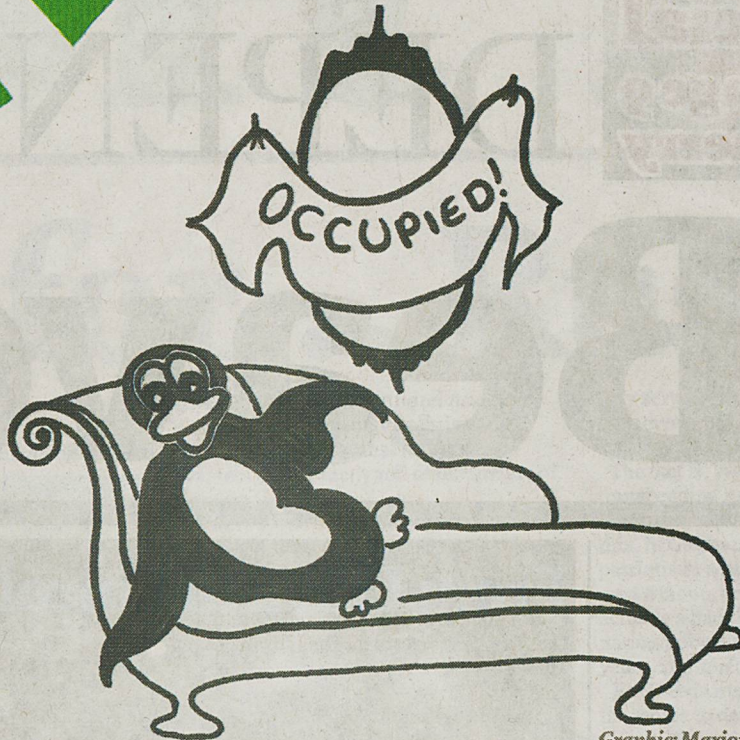
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Graphic: Marion Pierfitte

# The Beaver

Established in 1949

Issue No. 738

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## Armchair revolution

With her wings bruised from the baton of one of London's numerous overzealous policemen and, thanks to the capital's no less intolerable weather, the sensation in her feet long-gone, it is no surprise that the Freeze the Fees Penguin has retired to the warmth and comfort of the Vera Anstey Suite and its executive-friendly chattels. But with banners unfurled and demands thought through, there is more to this sit-in than a penguin coming in from the cold. This newspaper congratulates the occupiers for the demands they have made and agrees that Howard Davies needs to do more for this university. This newspaper, like any serious publication, treats sporting metaphors with considerable circumspection but now really is the time for Howard Davies to, as they say, 'fight our corner'.

Davies has described the current financial climate as "a difficult time for universities" with "difficult decisions" needed to be made. His refutation of untenable, delusional and School-specific suggestions was well-received by this newspaper, but less well-received is his negligence in presenting a coherent refutation of an end to teaching grants for non-STEM subjects and a call for the recognition of the social worth of goings-on at the School. The Director owes us more than a single letter to the government and by now must have learnt that a 'light-touch' approach isn't always favourable.

The occupiers are calling for Davies to do more. This newspaper joins them in that call.

To our friends in the Vera Anstey Suite, some advice to be heeded: LSE students are a unique breed. Though we may all have a laudable concern for the state of the world, it is not the case that everyone wants to be an activist, nor even to be associated with manifestations of direct action. If the occupiers are to gain the trust of the student body at large during their short stay among the Chesterfields and wood-panelling, they must do all they can to dispel notions that they are an overwhelmingly fringe troupe of Trots. We applaud the occupiers for their decisions to date, which do much to aid their cause – no lecture theatre disruptions; no silly stunts; and a relatively open attitude to student journalists – and hope that the forthcoming days see further 'mainstreaming' of their efforts.

A final observation regarding the occupation concerns its timing. As was pointed out in last week's EGM, LSE students have been lagging in their tangible activism in comparison with other universities. If the occupiers truly believe in the worth of their action, what explanation exists for not having done it earlier? Activists have been dragging their heels by focusing efforts exclusively on another campaign all through Michaelmas Term, as this publication has previously discussed, so why have they left a media-friendly sit-in till a mere seven days before

the vote in parliament?

Speaking of parliament, we note with some consternation the shambolic state of affairs currently ensuing in Westminster. Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats are behaving in a manner wholly unsuitable for elected representatives tasked with voting on the future of higher education funding: the former, due to internal divisions borne of dissatisfaction with their fledgling leader; the latter, due to the abandonment of election pledges that were crucial in securing seats. The lack of unity in both parties is giving the senior partner in the coalition a free ride in changing the landscape of higher education.

For those focused on life's simpler pleasures, Merry Christmas. A winter of discontent awaits. ☘

### Union Bashō

#### Chesterfield

So they want a freeze?  
I wonder how much sitting  
in the warm will help.

*Bashō is the Beaver's Euro-sceptic but capitalism-denying haiku don. Next time you see him in a Shoreditch watering hole, ask him to show you his tattoo of Anthony Eden*

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## Editorial Board Announcement

The Beaver says goodbye to three excellent editors this week. We thank them for their dedication throughout their time at the paper, and wish them well in their future endeavours.

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

GOOD RIDDANCE... FOR 4 WEEKS



LOTS OF LOVE,  
THE BEAVER

# Gaddafi beamed into Sheikh Zayed

David De Jong

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, president of Libya, discussed current affairs and recent history with LSE students last Thursday, 2nd December, in an hour-long lecture and question-and-answer-session. Students packed the Sheikh Zayed Theatre last Thursday evening to hear the Libyan leader talk via live video link. Gaddafi discussed Libya's position in the world and broader changes in geo-politics.

Armed with electronic headsets for Arabic translation, students applauded loudly when Gaddafi appeared on a large screen through a direct video connection. But they soon learned the Libyan leader had not prepared a lecture; instead, he sat behind a desk, ready to answer questions from LSE students.

For the next hour, prompted largely by student questions, Gaddafi touched on a variety of issues. Including Libya's relations with Pakistan and Brazil, his views on Arab and African unity, the Lockerbie bombing, and Wikileaks' recent revelation of classified American diplomatic cables. In many of his answers, the Libyan leader also talked about American "imperialism". Gaddafi also granted an interview request

to an LSE student from Libya working on her dissertation.

Gaddafi, the world's longest-serving national leader, has long held ties to the LSE. His son, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, received a PhD from the School in 2009 and donated £1.5m to LSE Global Governance in July of the same year.

The question-and-answer session started when a student asked, "What exactly is Libya's position in the world?" Gaddafi answered the question literally; rather than talking figuratively about Libya's global position, Gaddafi said "Libya is in the North of Africa" and "full of oil and gas".

During the lecture, the camera inside Gaddafi's office frequently switched to a map of the world, which the Libyan leader used to reveal what he thinks the world will look like in the near future. He predicted the "death of the nation-state," adding the whole world will soon live, divided in unions. In response, the Libyan leader received a critical question from an Azerbaijani student, who saw his subsumed as part of a greater Russia on Gaddafi's world map. In response, Gaddafi praised the former Soviet Union as the "only deterrent" to the "imperialist United States" during the Cold War. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Colonel

Gaddafi said, United States "imperialism" was driven by "greed and bad intentions". The Libyan leader went on to compare the 2003 US invasion of Iraq to the expansionism of Nazi Germany.

The Libyan leader also criticised Arab and African leaders, characterising them as "weak" in the ongoing failure of both regions to "unite" in regional unions, as shown on his world map. He also expressed worries about Europe turning into a "black" continent because of ongoing immigration from the "East and South".

Gaddafi distinguished between US policy before and after the election of Barack Obama. He said the current US President is "not a Yankee" and "another person". He said he is worried that, after Obama, the United States will "destroy the world".

One student asked Gaddafi what he thought about Wikileaks' recent release of US diplomatic cables. The Libyan leader said the site was "useful in revealing the hypocrisy of the United States".

Another student asked Gaddafi about the health of Abdelbaset al-Megrahi, a Libyan found guilty of planning the 1988 Lockerbie Bombing who was released from prison last year due to reported health issues. Gaddafi said Al-Megrahi "was considered to be dead, although

he was still alive", adding the Lockerbie bombing was a "fabrication" for which former American President Ronald Reagan and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher were "responsible". Evidence of this conspiracy, Gaddafi said, could be found on Wikipedia.

Many LSE students at the talk were enthusiastic about the question-and-answer session with the Libyan leader. Chris, a second-year international relations student, said the face time with the Libyan leader was "beyond any expectations". David, also in the government department, said it was "interesting" to hear the Libyan leader's "view on the world". Nadejda, a postgraduate in the government department, said that the lecture was "definitely worth going to" but added an Egyptian student told her there were "some problems with the translation".

But not everyone praised the Libyan leader. Yoeri, a postgraduate student in the international history department, said Colonel Gaddafi "seemed disconnected from reality". Anchol, a development studies student, criticised Gaddafi's lack of nuance, saying he was only able to see the world in "black and white".

# China Development Forum promises "much expanded" speaker list

Sachin Patel

A prominent Students' Union society is expecting to fill the Old Theatre when it runs its annual conference on "China's Global Interaction" later on next month.

The China Development Society, whose China Development Forum will take place on 22nd January 2011, has assembled a roster of around 30 speakers from "over 10 well respected companies and think tanks".

The conference is being organised in collaboration with the LSE Asia Research Centre, and will cover topics ranging from "economic relations between China and the West to International Relations between China and south-east Asia", according to a society spokesperson.

The organisers are hoping to attract 450 attendees, who will form the audience for such notable speakers as Jonathan Woetzel (Co-founder, McKinsey & Co. Shanghai Office), James Kynge (China Bureau Chief, Financial Times), and Li Junfeng (Deputy Director, Energy Research Institute, NDRC).

According to promotional material released in advance of the event, the conference will create "a platform for students, academics and professionals to exchange opinions on critical subjects related to China, bridging China and the rest of the world".

Furthermore, the forum hopes to "serve the interest of our attendants by providing a range of learning, networking and career opportunities that connects global experts with future leaders."

On the choice of theme for this year's conference, the society said: "This year, we have seen attacks on China's foreign currency policy, China's economy surpassing that of Japan, the debacle arising in Copenhagen climate summit, China's strained relationship with South Asia and many other interesting spectacle, thus an examination on the possible shift in the paradigm of China's integration with the world provide an exciting platform for discussion."

Demand for the conference is expected to be high, and prospective attendants are encouraged to register their places as early as possible in order to avoid disappointment.

# FSA CEO 'drops in for coffee' with students

Oliver Wiseman

The Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Services Authority (FSA), Hector Sants, spoke on the challenges the organisation faces following the 2008 financial crisis at an informal coffee meeting with members of the Economics Society.

Delivering a cautious message on prospects for London's financial sector. "Most primary drivers of the Financial Crisis still exist, such as the predilection of the system for credit" said Sants.

Extending this argument, Sants put it to students that the crisis is an ongoing phenomenon, arguing that the wider social issue of the embracing and recognition of the merits of easy credit, which has been endorsed by politicians for decades, still exists.

Sants asserted that the crisis is a constantly morphing entity, and though it has abated somewhat, it's simply taken on new forms as well. For example, its current manifestation is the sovereign deficit malaise striking many Eurozone governments. Sants even portended that the next manifestation or form may be in asset price bubbles across Asia.

Sants' speech involved sober reflection on the shortcomings of his regula-

tory authority: "Consumer protection and regulation is generally pretty poor." Sants discussed how global liquidity rules, governing how much liquidity banks need should be tightened. For example, if bank funding stopped, how long would the institution survive? Moreover, he expressed alarm at the fact that there is no central global overseer of the worldwide buildup of risk in financial channels. However, he did express a certain ironic satisfaction in response to how regulation is finally moving along, simply because it has become politicised by the rhetoric of politicians and their parties. "The FSA now takes a proactive approach to regulation," he assured the Shaw Library crowd.

Sants spoke for a short while, saving time to field questions and engage with the society's members.

Leo Wang, a society member who attended the talk was impressed by the FSA CEO. "Hector struck many as extremely humble. This modesty masked an unparalleled understanding of the origins and mechanizations of the financial crisis, as well as an authentic attachment to the subject matter. His responses were extremely well informed and he held nothing back, offering genuine appraisals without restraint."

# Pride Week 'queerly' more fun than last year

Benjamin Butterworth

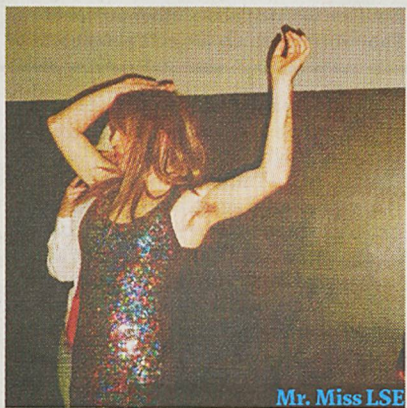
The LSE's second annual Pride Week has been deemed "a storming success" by LGBT leaders of the School.

The five day event, which aimed to raise awareness of issues affecting members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, saw a host of thought-provoking debates and camp celebrations hit Houghton Street.

Reagan Persaud, the Students' Union's LGBT officer and primary organiser of the week, said: "I couldn't have been more happy with how it went. So many new people turned out and we got real support from the likes of the AU."

Among the week's events, the LGBT Society hosted a quiz on LGBT history in The Three Tuns pub for an estimated 50 students. The aim was to inform students of the struggle for equality experienced by minority groups. Teams attempted to answer questions on everything from gay culture in London, to HIV awareness and even musical history. Co-quiz

mistress, Pearl Wong, thought the night really engaged students: "It was so good to see everyone taking an interest - including straight people - in our culture and history. Everyone seemed to love it!" Winning team members were awarded

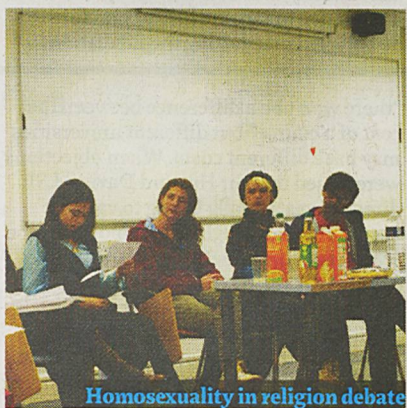


Mr. Miss LSE

with plentiful quantities of wine, as well as tickets to a popular LGBT club.

Wednesday evening witnessed a more sober occasion, with students turning out to reflect on the place of homosexuality

in religious contexts. The debate, hosted in the 20 Kingsway building, lasted more than four hours as students turfed over issues as far-reaching as homosexuality in the Bible and the Qur'an and remarks of the Pope. Ending just short of midnight,



Homosexuality in religion debate

the exchange of views concluded with a popular consensus for world religions to embrace the issues of LGBT communities.

Pride week climaxed with the return of Queer Crush. Hosted in The Under-

ground, the night was billed as "gayer than ever" with five hours of camp classics. Alongside the partying, Friday night also saw the crowning of Mr. Miss LSE - Pride week's own drag competition. Among the contenders, Postgraduate Officer Daniel Kroop adorned a short sparkly dress and long dark locks, requesting fellow revelers refer to him as 'Pandora'. Competitors danced to a favourite gay anthem, whilst party-goers indicated their support by whooping and clapping. Pandora failed to gain sufficiently loud clapping however, prompting LGBT society member Adam Talbot to condemn the result. "I wouldn't consider myself an expert on judging these things, but I really disagreed with the outcome."

The week saw the participation of many students, including support from members of the Athletics' Union, as well as international and home students alike. "As an American only here for a year, it's truly refreshing to know that LSE has such a vibrant and proud LGBT community," said one.

# News in brief

## DEBATE IT OUT

The Debate Society hosted 52 schools last Saturday in one of the country's largest schools' debating competitions. Students from schools around the UK, including several schools involved in the 'Debate Mate' charitable scheme, were invited to attend. The students debated a variety of relevant topics from piracy to banning religious symbols. The four preliminary rounds and a final round were judged by Debate Society members as well as debaters from other universities including Oxford and Bristol. After fierce competition, the A-team from Cheney School in Oxford won.

## HOT HOT HOT RESEARCH

LSE has partnered with the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) to develop research on economic growth. The ISI, based in Kolkata, is recognised as a leading statistical and research organisation that is dedicated to improving understanding of the social sciences. It is hoped that the joint effort between LSE and the ISI will produce world class research on India's long term growth. Pranab Mukerjee, Chairman of the ISI council and Indian Finance Minister said that he was excited about the initiative and believed that this research comes in response to high demand for information on the subject.

## SNOW PROBLEM?

Students and faculty alike have been resigned to wearing coats, scarves, hats and gloves in the Old Building this week, thanks to malfunctions in the building's heating system. Said a statement on the LSE website: "We would like to advise that we are currently experiencing some problems with the heating in the Old Building. Every effort is being made to keep the temperature in the rooms within the LSE guidelines." Students are encouraged to report any problems or heating faults to the Estates Help Desk, according to the website.

## EXECUTIVE ORDER

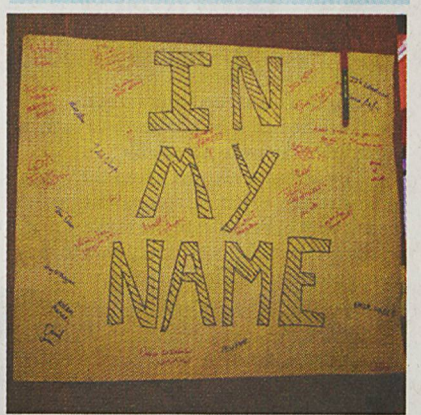
The Financial Times reported last week that the LSE will launch a new executive programme, Strategy in the Age of Global Risk. The course, beginning in September 2011, is slated to include four intensive one-week study sessions, 20 evening seminars, two policy weekend discussions and institutional visits spread across the academic year. Director of the LSE Howard Davies, as well as various former diplomats and government advisers, are expected to be among the programme's faculty. But the programme carries a hefty price tag of £22,912.

## MILFS SPAWN GIRLS

Physically attractive couples will have more daughters than sons according to a study carried out by Dr. Satoshi Kanazawa, an evolutionary psychologist at the LSE. Dr Kanazawa analysed data which surveyed 17,000 babies born in Britain in 1958 and looked at the gender of their children, compared to ratings of the parents' attractiveness. Couples who were rated as attractive were equally likely to have a son or daughter while those who were rated less attractive were more likely to have sons. The reasoning is that physical beauty contributes more to a woman's reproductive success than to a man's.

## MOOTING SUCCESS CONTINUES

The LSE LUMS mooting team once again triumphed at the fourth round of the competition. The dynamic duo of Ahmed Alani and Shi Min Lee secured a comprehensive victory over their Queen Mary counterparts. The pair went into the debate having only just been taught the subject of the moot, with their opposing counsels being third years experienced in the area of Land Law. Despite this disadvantage, the LSE team came out with an 18-3 victory, and Shi Min was awarded best advocate for the moot. LSE currently sits atop the competition league table.



# Students' Union backs occupation after EGM

Chris Rogers

Last Thursday an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), held to debate a proposal to occupy part of LSE, replaced the weekly Union General Meeting (UGM).

The EGM was held after 250 students signed a petition calling for one, in order to propose a motion calling for the LSE to make a public statement against changes to the student funding system and the cuts to teaching grants, where there are heavy cuts expected for the LSE.

Non-violent direct action and the occupation of university property were two of the tactics proposed, in the motion, as a means to encourage the LSE to issue a public statement.

Before the debate began, third-year Philosophy and Economics student Sachin Patel questioned the constitutional legality of the meeting, alleging that there had been "malpractice" in obtaining the required number of signatures (200) needed for an EGM to be convened. UGM Chair Jack Tindale refuted this and assured the audience that any problems had been sorted out.

One of the proposers of the motion, Kimia Pezeski, criticised the near 100 per cent cut in funding the LSE would receive for most of its subjects, according to the government's proposals. She added that the letter the LSE's Director, Sir Howard Davies, wrote to the government opposing the cuts in funding to the social sciences was "obviously weak" due to its lack of effect. Pezeski demanded that Davies and the Students' Union co-author a "much stronger" letter denouncing the cuts. Furthermore she argued that as 30 other universities were already launching occupations the LSE was already "lagging behind".

Speaking in opposition to the motion LSE student, Polly McKinlay, argued that Davies would not bow to the Students' Union simply because of an occupation and that by following this action the Union risked the "alienation of students" and "unnecessary disruption" of education.

Emir Nader, who proposed the motion, asserted that the occupation would not disrupt any lessons, and that it would be effective. Nader argued that already student action had forced a U-turn on the cutting of funding from sports budgets and that 100 Lib Dem MP candidates had signed a petition condemning the changes.

Scott MacDonald spoke as the second speaker in opposition to the motion,

arguing that it would have little impact if the occupiers chose to take over an office, because "no-one will care". MacDonald also warned against "imposing the view of a narrow section of students" on the majority.

The debate was then opened up to questions from the floor. The first questioner asserted that many students didn't want to be acted on behalf of in this way, and that though some students could do it on their own, it was not appropriate to seek "SU backing". Pezeski responded that the occupation "will happen whether the motion passes or not", but that they wanted to know what other students thought.

Hero Austin, the Students' Union's

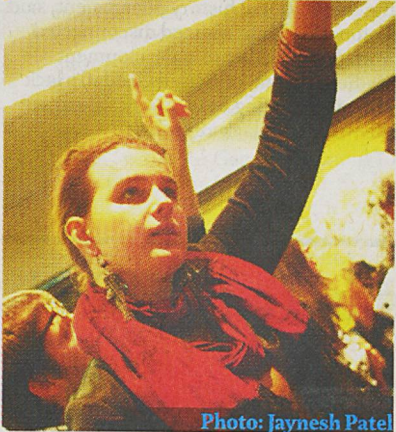


Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Community and Welfare Officer, then stated that they were only seven MPs away from defeating the tuition fees vote, which will be held this Thursday in Parliament, and reiterated that "occupations work, and have worked time and time again".

Josh Stillman, a first-year undergraduate studying Government and History, questioned those opposing the motion asking them whether they thought that the occupation was extreme and whether they would describe Aaron Porter as an extremist. MacDonald stated that he failed to see how "people sitting in a room" would help.

The question was then asked why the proposers hadn't announced which room they intended to occupy. It was explained that the location had been kept a secret in order to prevent LSE security locking the room in anticipation. After some confusion, it was revealed that the occupation would take place in the Vera Anstey suite, located in the Old Building. The announcement was followed by a number of students leaving the EGM to prevent the room being locked and begin the occupation.

Students' Union Education Officer, Ashok Kumar, then made a statement asserting that we should be students of history and remember all the times in the past especially during the 1960s when the School's investment in apartheid-supporting countries was defeated by a student occupation.

Niamh Aisha Hayes, a sociology undergraduate, asserted that the reason why the students at the LSE were so diverse was because of outcomes of civil disobedience in the past. Hayes then attacked those in opposition to the motion stating: "I thank God people like you weren't on the civil rights movement", adding that they should stop being "so bloody ignorant and blind".

Charlotte Gerada, Students' Union General Secretary, informed the EGM that a governor had asked Davies to write another letter, and that she herself had asked him to send a joint letter with her, but he refused both requests. Gerada asked what more could be done other than an occupation.

Finally a question was raised asking that if the room to be occupied was public property, why could the protesters not just protest outside instead, asking, "what makes it an occupation?" Nader argued that "it will have an impact - everyone will see it", adding that the "legalities of it are irrelevant".

At the end of the EGM many of the attending students made their way over to the Vera Anstey suite to join the occupation.

Last Friday the results of the online vote on the EGM motion were announced with the motion passing. The total number of votes cast was 755, with 464 of those votes in favour of the motion.

Responding to the occupation MacDonald, who spoke in opposition to the motion, stated "Most students I have spoken to are confused how exactly the LSE's 'radical heritage' is being upheld by a week-late occupation of a room neither the students nor the LSE administration particularly care about. I would suggest that the occupation of the room will isolate the students and administration far more than any potential 'benefit occupying such a mundane room will have'."

MacDonald added, "I personally found the comparisons made between this issue and that of civil rights movement in the USA or Apartheid South Africa patently offensive. Two years at LSE have taught me that the worst type of socialists, are half-hearted socialists."

# Students speak out over occupation

Conor Rushby

Overall student opinion appears divided over the ongoing occupation of the Old Building's Vera Anstey Suite.

When the target of the occupation was revealed to be the Vera Anstey Suite, however, there was disagreement at Thursday's Extraordinary General Meeting; some students argued the suite was only used for "ceremonial purposes" and any occupation would therefore have limited influence over the actions of the LSE's management. LSE Students' Union General Secretary Charlotte Gerada, when asked her opinion, said: "There is a balance which had to be struck between disturbing learning facilities and the protest."

When Education Office Ashok Kumar encouraged EGM attendees to "be students of history". He added that "occupations helped bring down apartheid, and can help now".

Jennifer Isaacson-Jones, a postgraduate in economics and sociology said: "It's been an embarrassment that the LSE hasn't been in occupation when thirty other universities have", adding, "Howard Davies needs to be running scared and so does the government". David Broder, a second year undergraduate in the history department who spent Thursday night in occupation, said he was "confident we can stand up to the government and win".



Photo: Duncan McKenna

# Fees increase no Barr to access

Phyllis Lui

The LSE Students' Union held a panel debate entitled "The Future of Higher Education: Who Should Pay?" with Professor Nick Barr and Professor David Piachaud last Monday.

Professor Barr was joined by student panelist Scott MacDonald, both arguing for an increase in fees while the Students' Union's Community and Welfare Officer Hero Austin argued against, with Professor Piachaud, a professor in the Department of Social Policy.

"I am against the cuts, for the fees," Professor Barr began, "I am on the side of students."

Calling the shortage of university places available "a disgrace", the School's

Professor of Public Economics set out three bases for why fees should increase: the quality of higher education; widening participation schemes which are "imperative"; and science, where "technological advances have driven up demand for skills". He went on to explain that it all goes wrong before the age of 18, where tests have shown that early childhood matters and that "fees haven't barred access".

Professor Barr believed that competition benefits students, graduates should share in payments and that there should be well-designed graduate loan schemes. Furthermore, he argued that higher education should not be a "free market but regulated". Under what he termed "politics", he held that "higher education is free to students, it is the graduates who pay" and it is not "credit card debt".

Professor Piachaud started by saying that he voted for Vince Cable, and called the Liberal Democrats and their election pledges "furnishing polish". As a supporter of top-up fees and loans, he stated that the "right to higher education should not be free for all, it has to be paid for". However, he saw the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) as bad for society and economy.

Starting with the deficit, he did not believe the cuts being made to be fair since it is not "fair distribution". Drawing from his 1975 paper on drop-out rates, where "most people terminated full time education at the earliest opportunity" and "highest rates of return explain why those stay on". He outlined the reasons for this, namely the costs of staying on which are relative to income level. Therefore he believed that cutting the Education

Maintenance Allowance for children from below average household is one of the most unfair aspects of the CSR, since it is an "opportunity to reach the starting point... foundation has been cut away".

Moving on to whether the fees increase will help universities, Professor Piachaud said: "Not really. It doesn't really help what's been cut from funding."

"That idea that you can learn in three years, a tool kit, seems to me the wrong conception of higher education. We are not a business school or a law college... if people are not inspired by the truth or gain a sense of humility, then higher education has failed," continued Professor Piachaud, "I am not terribly worried about LSE, students learn most from other students, and the students at LSE are extremely bright. But I am worried about other universities, I am worried which subjects people will be

inclined, pressurised to study, such as law and accounting, as they will be reassured to pay back their loan... the picture of the future worries me."

After the speakers finished, questions were taken from the audience. A postgraduate student from America informed the audience that as a result of the student loan she took out as an undergraduate, a mortgage is not available to her and many other American students. Professor Barr responded to that by saying that the American system is a "good example of how not to do it".

Austin closed the panel by saying: "Although both sides of the arguments had academic merit, it is important to remember the reality of the government's proposals are very different, and students should therefore continue to fight against the education cuts and fee increases."

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Hughes also argued that from the evidence he had seen alternatives such as a graduate tax were unfeasible.

The MP also warned about the "high risk" strategy of voting against the proposal, which, because of the make-up of Parliament, could potentially lead to the vote being decided by just a few votes. Hughes argued that he wanted to "avoid this high risk zone" where an imperfect policy could be passed, by simply delaying the vote.

In response to a question about the

protests that flooded London last week, Hughes indicated that he believed that many protesters "didn't understand the full nature of the scheme" and that many are under the impression that it is "just upping the fees". Austin replied that the focus of the march was the huge debt that will be incurred and the broken pre-election promises made by the Lib Dems.

Hughes defended the proposals, arguing that it was not a debt because "you don't have to pay it off unless you earn above the average wage". He added that the Government wants more than just the taxpayer funding higher education: they wish to move to "a shared system by the taxpayer and the people receiving education" and that within a university

"there won't be a difference between the cost of a course" but different universities may have different costs. When objections were raised that Sir Howard Davies, LSE director was actually trying to vary the cost of courses, Hughes responded that he "cannot" and will be "prevented by law" from doing so.

Philosophy and Economics undergraduate Kimia Pezeski said: "Hero [Austin] and I campaigned for you [Simon Hughes]", and asked, "if you are inconsistent how can we be convinced of your integrity?" Austin added, "I'd vote Labour now and campaign for them."

Austin further criticised Hughes by arguing that if Liberal Democrat MPs abstain on Thursday's vote then they will

not be doing everything to stop fee rises as they promised in their joint pledge with the NUS. Hughes reiterated that "I'd rather it didn't get to Thursday and the debate". When pressured again as to why he would not even reveal how he is inclined to vote, he responded that "[his] position is unique as Deputy Leader" having been elected by all Liberal Democrat MPs - and so he has to take into account their views. To make a declaration now would be "unhelpful" in his opinion. He told the delegation that in 2003 when top-up fees were introduced he voted against it because "[he] thought it would deter people from going to university", and that "[he] was wrong".

It was also raised that the recent report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies,

a prominent economic research institute, failed to fully take into account the impact of the government's policies, and that an updated report would not be available until the New Year. Hughes said he would be willing to look further into this for the group.

The meeting ended with Simon Hughes thanking those who attended for their balanced arguments and indicated that he was happy to meet next year with students, regardless of the outcome of the vote. After the meeting Hero Austin concluded, that the meeting had made an impact, and hoped that Simon Hughes would vote against the bill on Thursday.

## Think Smart; go green

Heather Wang

LSE's Sustainable Future Consulting is promoting a renewed interest in Smart Mugs, a project introduced at the LSE in 2009 to increase environmental awareness and sustainability at the School.

Smart Mugs, reusable, insulated tumblers for hot beverages, can be purchased at Students' Union shops and LSE catering outlets. Smart Mugs are insulated with a double wall, intended to keep hands cool and drinks hot.

Smart Mugs supporters say the use of tumblers, such as Smart Mugs, promotes environmental sustainability and reduces individuals' overall carbon footprint. They claim if 5,000 people use reusable mugs, three times per week, over the course of one year, 780,000 cups, lids and sleeves could be saved from the waste stream.

They also point to reports from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, claiming reusable mugs are nine times more efficient than recycling paper cups.

Smart Mugs campaigners also point out the money-saving advantages of reusable mugs. At the School, LSE Students' Union catering outlets offer a 10p discount to customers who bring their own reusable tumblers for hot drinks. Baristas in the Garrick, Quad Café, and Café 54 all willing to serve hot beverages in Smart Mugs.

According to its advocates, the mug is 100 per cent BPA-free.

## 4.6 per cent of students vote to elect new student Governors

Lauren Fedor

Three undergraduate students were elected to one of the LSE's highest governing bodies last week.

Last Friday, Waqas Adenwala, Jack Tindale and Adam Connell were selected as members of the School's Court of Governors after a 24-hour online vote.

According to the current Structure of School Governance, the Court of Governors "discusses the major questions affecting the development of the School". It also "receives reports from the Director and Council" and "authorises the Articles of Association". Of the more than 90 members of the Court of Governors, five are LSE students elected through elections held by the Students' Union.

393 students cast their votes in last week's election out of an estimated 8,600 who were eligible, representing just 4.6 per cent of the student body; in the 11th round of voting, Adenwala, Tindale and Connell received 92, 88 and 82 votes, respectively.

Adenwala, Tindale and Connell were among 12 student candidates seeking to join the Court of Governors. The other students standing in the election were Eugene Resnick, Matthijs Krul, Arsen Fazlovic, Szabolcs Vagvolgyi, Charlotte Glyn, Daniel Kroop, Leo Wang, Griffin Carpenter, and Keith Postler.

In his manifesto, Adenwala said he would "strive to represent student voice regarding tuition fees; address issues faced by international students such as visa woes and the points-based-system of immigration; and try to improve the

general student life on campus by trying to have more student accommodation and promoting more of our sports matches." And, in an email to the Beaver after the election, Adenwala said he was "very excited" to join the Court of Governors.

After his election Tindale said that he will be an "honest and fair-minded voice for the student body here at the LSE" in the new position, adding, "the Union has been good to me and I'm delighted to be able to put something back at another level of the School governance."

Tindale also said he will pay particular interest to student issues related to tuition fee increases and academic well-being: "If I can ensure that the School ensures that students are not disenfranchised by the proposed tuition fee hikes and that the academic lives of students are improved, especially with regard to class sizes and

teaching facilities, I will consider my term to have been successful!"

In his manifesto, Connell said he would "negotiate the cogs and levers of LSE governance to deliver for students present and future the ideals upon which this place was founded: equality, fairness and social justice." After his election Connell told the Beaver that he hopes to "accomplish a situation where LSE listens to students and the SU and LSE can reach a compromise on the way forward on key issues."

"It's important to remember though that we're not just facing a fight against fees at LSE," he added. "We need to stand up for undergraduates and postgraduates on other issues, such as class sizes, feedback from essays and quality of class teaching."

## Timeless launches with a rave

### Party at Funky Buddha brings in £1300 to fund extra rehearsals

Pooja Thakrar

The launch party for Timeless, held on 29th November at Funky Buddha, a Mayfair nightclub, brought in an estimated £1300 for LSE's annual cultural show.

More than 300 people were in attendance, and last week's party marked the first time the Timeless launch has turned a profit; last year's event, held at a similar Mayfair venue, saw a loss.

Profits from Monday's party will allow the Timeless cast to hold a second dress rehearsal at the University of London Union, before its February performance.

This year marks the fourth staging of Timeless, which began during the 2007-2008 academic year; the show's society puts on a launch party each year in an effort to create buzz and excitement in the months leading up to the show.

Sid Viswanat, the show's director, attributed the success of this year's party to the Timeless Society's varied promo-

tional tactics. Organisers used posters and social media tactics, such as Facebook, to advertise the event, he said. They also made an "extra push" to attract students from such School organisations as the LSE Athletics Union and the Students' Union Business Society, as well as students from other London universities. For example, Timeless arranged reciprocal advertising with King's Diwali show.

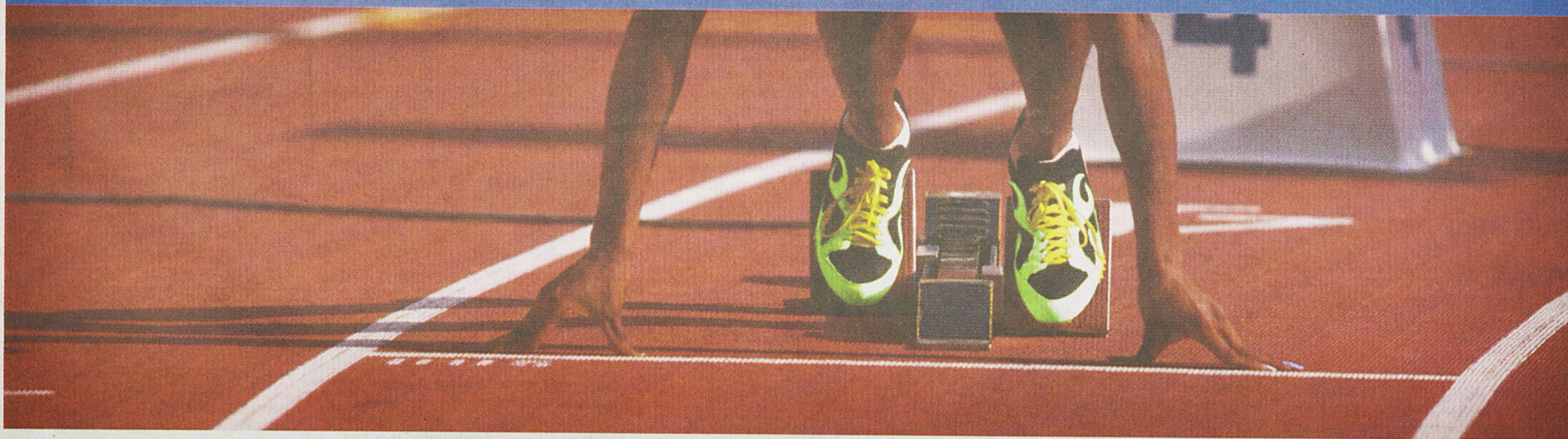
Evie Begy, the show's female dance lead, said such efforts brought in a wider variety of students than ever before. Begy

said the party's attendance was the "most diverse, both culturally and socially" of the three she has attended.

Shakira Chanrai, a second year government student, described the event as a "lovely party", adding, "Everyone seemed to be having fun. It really set the tone for a great Timeless season".

Viswanat said the Timeless team hopes to build off the momentum created by the launch party to sell 3,000 tickets to February's show.

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# Comment

## LSD: London School of Dissatisfaction

Ignoring student satisfaction is an ineffective long-term strategy

Alastair Hill



When I chose to study at the London School of Economics and Political Science I no doubt did so for reasons not too dissimilar to many others. Undoubtedly the school's reputation speaks for itself, and the chance to study at one of the world's leading social science institutions will no doubt attract many students. Yet while the wider reputation remains intact for the moment, the school continues to uniformly slide down both UK and worldwide university rankings. In almost every instance of independent university ranking the LSE has sunk further behind its competitors on the basis of one simple factor: student satisfaction. In the latest Guardian rankings the LSE recorded 77 per cent student satisfaction – 10 per cent lower than any other institution in the other top 10 institutions, and 6 per cent lower than any other institution in the top 30. This exceptionally poor performance is repeated across the board with the LSE sharing the joint lowest student satisfaction score in the top 30 universities in the Complete University Guide, as well as the joint lowest score in the top 60 universities in the Times rankings.

The LSE is now one of the most bureaucratic and faceless academic institutions in the world

Since his appointment to the directorship of the school in 2003 Howard Davies has seemingly presided over a systematic approach which largely ignores student

satisfaction. The LSE feels to me to be one of the most bureaucratic and faceless academic institutions in the world, with much of the rich and critical academic culture that once defined it now lying discarded by the wayside. Instead, the modern LSE is now little more than a degree machine: you pay your money, you receive a small red logo stamped on your CV at the end, and you leave utterly underwhelmed by the entire experience.

Due to graduate this month, none of my own experiences have done anything but re-affirm this view. Further, the feedback from the vast majority of my peers is exclusively negative. Everywhere I turn at the LSE I seem to be faced with a new level of staff inability to complete even the most basic of tasks on a student's behalf, albeit as a result of a rigid centralised administrative system. An example from many: the turnaround for feedback in almost all my MSc work was in cases 10 months (of a 12 month course), and should you wish for the rather standard provision of written feedback you are required to force the information out using the data protection act entailing a 40-day turnaround and, typically, requiring a fee. It's an appalling attitude, one which just seems to say, 'you've got the little red logo stamped on your CV; what's your problem?'. It is such farcical instances which are now what have come to typify the institution as a whole, which, in fairness, many of the staff I have spoken to recognise. Yet the common response I continually heard throughout my time was simply, 'it's not my fault, it's just the LSE system'.

Short of significant changes to the LSE's approach to administration, resource provision and its general attitude to its students, Davies will no doubt continue to preside over the LSE's free-fall down the UK's university rankings. The academic reputation will of course compensate for this in the short-term in order to attract students, however in the long-term an intransigence to recognise the merits of respecting student satisfaction will no doubt come back to bite the LSE. An inability to stem this slide will undoubtedly impact the institutions wider reputation in the future. With students set to pay considerably greater tuition fees, prospective students will scrutinise universities with increasing vigour and rankings tables will no doubt play a major role in this. Indeed, given my choice again, I'd have gone elsewhere, and I say that before the proposed new higher fees have even been legislated for.

## The man who wasn't there

It's time to stop complaining about Niall Ferguson's absence

Patrick Daniel



I understand that many students would like to see Niall Ferguson more often, but let's take a step back and not take it for granted that he decided to take up the Philippe Roman Chair in History and International Affairs for the 2010-11 academic year in the first place. As Arne Westad said, the fact that LSE was able to attract an academic of such standing, demonstrates the School's pulling power in a fiercely competitive world. It also does not go without saying that he took a leave of absence from Harvard University. On the one hand we have Niall Ferguson, who is busy travelling and writing books, and on the other hand we have students

who are keen on going to his lectures but feel that he is not spending enough time on campus. Dominic Lieven recognised the dilemma rather well when he said that frustrations are inevitable when dealing with top-notch professors. So, let's be realistic. Instead of complaining, let's appreciate that he is here and make the most of the time when he is on campus. Further, we should not talk about money, because money is not the issue. His motivation was hardly monetary and his chair is also externally funded by a hedge fund. As much as students want to see him more on campus, simply shouting and complaining will not change anything. I may not change how often Niall Ferguson is going to lecture, but I can make sure that I see him when he is here. If one takes the initiative, there were opportunities to see him: four lectures and one panel discussion during the Michaelmas Term. The problem is not that he is never showing up on campus, but rather that students sometimes do not even know that he is on

campus when he is actually here. His first lecture on the Political Economy of the Cold War was well attended because it was widely advertised in advance. His lecture on the Scramble for Africa, however, which was primarily but not exclusively for History students, had a large audience yet most students were simply not aware that he was lecturing that day. So, as we go forward, let's not talk about things that do not matter, but what we can rather do to improve the situation. It's easy to complain, yet more difficult to offer a solution. By making his lectures more visible and transparent, every student will be able to see him on campus when he is here which is a step in the right direction.

## Why is a university education regarded as essential?

Cedric Fromageot



Listed after by parents, demanded by employers and defended vehemently by students the value of a university education seems so entrenched within our society that it has almost become a fact of life, like gravity or death. Encouraged by a government intent on ensuring 50 per cent of 18-30 year olds have passed through higher education by 2010 people have been eagerly pressing 'Send' on their UCAS applications for years now without questioning the value of what they are engaging in. It appears, somewhat ironically, students have forgotten to apply the critical reasoning skills their education has supposedly endowed them with to questioning the usefulness of a university degree.

A symptom of this blind faith in the value of university education is the emphasis and extra praise attached to those who 'made it' without a university

degree. To 'make it' anywhere in this world society almost unanimously agrees you need a degree. And when confronted with people such as Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg we praise them for succeeding despite having dropped out. While to further dampen any thoughts of following in their footsteps such success stories are presented as once in a generation examples which any smart, hard-working teenager would be a fool to follow. "Get your degree first," the parents, schools and government cry, confident in the belief that having a degree is something worth having. As if to reinforce this belief almost every article about Zuckerberg mentions the fact he dropped out of Harvard.

The point society seems to miss is that a university degree is not the best preparation for real world success. How can it be when it is based on a fundamental contradiction? The university lecturers tell you to be original, and yet then ask you to memorise the assumptions of other people. Naturally, everybody needs a bit of knowledge, but dedicating three years seems excessive. What employers need to realise is the best accountants are not LSE graduates, but probably drug dealers in the Brazilian favelas: after all, for them it is a matter of life and death and so they had

better learn fast.

Moreover, there is clearly something very wrong with the current system if Jan Sramek, one of LSE's most successful recent graduates, can claim "I tend to find lectures too slowly paced and not a very efficient way of learning, same applies for classes – so I don't attend too many. 2-3 weeks before the exams, I sit down, focus and learn everything properly. I got a First, so it seems to work."

Therefore, what society has yet to realise is that a degree is like money; a human construct; a piece of paper with a few scribbled signatures on, its worth derived not from any intrinsic value, but from assumptions people make about the individuals who hold them. It seems appropriate to remind people of this after having witnessed the student protests; the myth of a valuable degree needs to be debunked. The real education bright people need is one which combines the real world and is not limited to the classroom. That's why I echo Chiddy's call: "somebody please tell Roth that I don't love college?"

## EGM 2.0: You Can (Not) Occupy

Jack Tindale



I don't usually write about the UGM, especially with regards to my own performance for a number of reasons. Firstly, I feel that it may affect my impartiality. Secondly, because I worry about having to defend decisions I made on behalf of the student body. Finally, and easily the most important, because the Beaver sketch writers do it better than I ever could. That's "better" in a Simon Hoggart in comparison to Richard Littlejohn sort of way – and I shall leave it up to you to decide who emulates whom. This week, however, I am prepared to make an exception.

I approached the Extraordinary General Meeting in much the same way that I would like to think I would face the morning of my execution. Smartly dressed, black coat swinging asunder in the mood

of a predatory fruit-bat and with a copy of the Times tucked under one arm. Marching along Blackfriars Bridge however, one would be forgiven for thinking that I was just another of London's many eccentrics, so caught up was I in mentally prepping myself for the horrors that would await me in the Old Theatre. Not even the dulcet tones of Megumi Hayashibara could soothe the terror that I felt regarding my forthcoming summons.

General Meetings are curious affairs. And as someone who has attended all but one over the past year and a half, I've gained a fairly good understanding of the mood of the room before proceedings have even begun. Surprisingly, much to my previous apprehension, I was almost taken aback by how civil people seemed as they trooped in.

And troop in they did. I was taken aback by the sheer number of people who made the effort to come in on a wintry lunchtime. The already overheated Old Theatre was stifling by the time the meeting officially opened – for once, it had been delayed to make sure that everyone could find a seat rather than out of desperation

for a lack of attendees. From a two-thirds empty front row at the start of the year to standing room only? The Students' Union seems to have become an inverse Barack Obama.

The usual spiel regarding reports and minutes was no longer present for obvious reasons, instead replaced with the intimidatingly termed "Announcements from the Chair". I was worried, everything I had written down regarding a lack of indicative voting and lack of amendments was constitutionally apt, but then again, so was the slave trade. I was half-expecting a third of the members present to stand up, announce the formation of a union-in-exile based in the NAB and mount a cavalry charge on St Clements, or as I had provisionally termed it, Mjssouri.

Surprisingly, this didn't happen. Indeed, people seemed to be nodding, some rather annoyed, but there was no obvious call for a confidence motion. Tensions seemed to be on the verge of flaring up again though, hence my decision to make an impromptu fellatio joke regarding my proximity to the consistently underpowered microphone. Dignity may

equate to matter to more refined people than myself, but I would rather lose face rather than my trousers, unless becoming bare-legged would save me from an even worse fate.

The meeting itself passed without incident, surprising for such a crucial vote on the future of the Students' Union. Opposition statements were made without cries of "Tory Scum" and the proposition were challenged without tedious insults akin to the best of McCarthyism. Questions and statements from the floor were made, commented on and, baring a few incidents regarding interruptions, without descending into open debate from the floor, or, as the 'hilarious' satirical piece in last week's Beaver would have me state, the ceiling.

As someone who has always been considered a hack and careerist by many, perhaps even a majority, I would hope that events such as the EGM demonstrate the perils of taking a stance at the UGM. There have been many times when the Chair of a meeting has been challenged regarding their personal views of a vote, though I've always maintained a policy of

abstaining, mainly because the last thing I wish to do is affect the way in which I approach sensitive issues. This is not to say that I lack a spine or views on the way in which the Students' Union operates, but simply because I hold a firm belief that the impartiality of the UGM should never be infringed upon. This is not to say that I'm an automaton with an inherent ability to find an inferior pun at every opportunity, I have made mistakes at almost every UGM I've been present for, but I sincerely hope that those who make the effort to come to the Old Theatre every Thursday understand the issue that surrounds a position such as my own.

Regardless of this however, the Union should be very proud indeed of the conduct of the EGM. Debate was strong and feelings were high, but every member present reminded me of why the LSE is such a phenomenal institution. The show of hands at the end of proceedings was an irritating end to the event, especially as it was made clear that such an event was invalid, but the final outcome of the vote is one that I respect and abide by as a loyal union member.

# To occupy or not to occupy?

## Three differing perspectives

### LSE Occupation

**Y**ou must have seen the footage of students taking over the Tory party Head Quarters on the 10th of November. This reaction from the supposed 'apathetic' students proved to the world that they wouldn't accept the Con-Dem attack on education lying down. Since then 100,000 continued to protest against this attack, with students who feared their EMA being cut, joining the tens of thousands of university students on the 17th of November.

The media representation of this has been to show the students in a negative and violent light despite this being opposite to the truth. The police activity has been frequently designed to provoke students or to frighten them off. Their kettling of students for over 7 hours, keeping them enclosed on Whitehall in the freezing cold, was specifically designed to lead to anger and disillusionment amongst the student population. The police have been found to be the more aggressive of the two groups, even charging at students on horseback.

However, the real villain of this piece is the current government. Their systematic attacks on education are tantamount to social cleansing of the university system, making it unattainable for anyone who is from a working class background. The hike of fees to £9000 will lead to a situation where many who would previously have attended university will no longer do so. The Sutton Trust questioned students before the Browne Review was released, finding only less than 30 per cent would consider university if fees rose to £10,000 compared to the current 80 per cent.

Many students at the LSE now believe that they or their relatives will no longer be able to attend university when it costs £9,000. This has led to huge amounts of anger amongst the union as people see degrees as no longer attainable. We must fight back to protect the education of those who are unable to afford the ridiculous

fees the Con-Dem government has proposed. The most convincing argument that has been put forward is the question: what are we supposed to do when the government we elected no longer listens to us? We as a student body have no choice but to take direct action, such as occupations, when all other methods have failed to gain a response. After all the broken promises from Lib Dems, how can we trust them to act in our best interest?

It is not only students who are experiencing the cuts of the government. The public sector, women and ethnic minorities are facing the brunt of the attack on our welfare state. This will have even wider reaching effects, seeping through to other areas like the NHS, where people who need these services will find fewer nurses, longer waiting lists, and a worse standard of care. All sectors of the economy are under attack, not just the public sector. These cuts resemble those imposed under Thatcher that only stopped thanks to the poll tax riots. When the population is angry, direct action must be taken to stop the attack on them by the government. People who work cannot always protest due to other commitments but we, the students, are in a unique position where we can express and detonate the anger of the population. We have only until the 9th of December, to convince 7 more MPs to vote against the proposed increases.

Occupations are not a radical form of action; they have been used for many years most famously in 1968 when Malcolm X gave support to our occupation. Many have argued that occupations never achieve their goals, yet they forget the numerous examples such as the civil rights movement where they worked. When over 30 universities are now in occupation how can the Con-Dem government ignore our cries to vote against the increase in fees? Occupation is not an end in itself but is vital in its ability to raise awareness amongst the population. The occupation in 2008 won almost all of its demands, showing its strength.

We must all work together to stop the assault on our education by the government. The clock is ticking, join the occupation! 🗣️



### Their systematic attacks on education are tantamount to social cleansing of the university system

### It is self-evident that not every LSE student agrees with you, and yet you forced an unnecessary vote

### I'm ashamed of the Students' Union, and wish to have no association with it

### Teddy Nicholson



**D**ear occupiers, Let me start this by saying I am against the education cuts being voted on this week by parliament. Let me also say that I am not now, nor have I ever been a member of the Conservative Party - I voted Labour at the last election and I've always supported the party. In those two points, I guess that I agree with most of you.

I regret having to start with those disclaimers, but unfortunately I feel that I have to, and that is the crux of what I want to say to you. I have become convinced over the past few weeks that the campaign against the cuts and fee rises has become permeated with a degree of partisan aggression towards those who do not agree with you that is deeply unpleasant.

This has become abundantly clear from the day of the first major protest when, looking out over a sea of student protesters leaving Houghton Street, the number one message a bystander would get was "Tory Scum". If it wasn't clear then that anger would drive the campaign, it was when the protest got to Milbank, and even more so when the SU executive were so reluctant to condemn the violence.

I have a few problems with this. Firstly, I value civility. In my opinion the most valuable thing we have in a democracy is the ability to disagree calmly. This is not just abstract; it's prudential as well. As soon as a political opinion becomes defined by anger and aggression (along the lines of - "you say cut back, we say fight back"), it radicalises the debate.

I should say here that I know that many of you are calm, rational and intelligent people, but collectively the campaign has irrefutably had an incredibly strong degree of anger running through it, that is now manifested in the occupation of the Vera Anstey Suite (which wins the award for new least often correctly spelled word in print at LSE).

Radicalising the debate is not just a

problem for those of us who think that calm debate is nicer than shouting; it's a problem for those of you who want to run a successful campaign. Once you this happens, you do two things - you force everyone who's on the fence to pick a side, and you can bet that they won't all fall into your camp.

Secondly, you change the debate from one about policy to one about politics. I'm not the only one saying that the occupation won't work - it's a political stunt rather than part of a policy debate, and the primary motivation is clearly, as one student at the EGM put it, "to go down fighting".

Now, I know I am in a dilemma here, because I think that in many ways direct action is noble and right and at times effective. I applaud you for your motivation, and for your principles, and I think that aspect of it is entirely right. Furthermore, I am angry as well, and I think anger is right and proper in this instance. Also, I know perfectly well that I'm not offering much of an alternative.

However, when moderates start to perceive the occupation as all about a political battle in which you are fighting to the death, you have a problem. It is self-evident that not every LSE student agrees with you, and yet you forced an unnecessary vote that means the occupation is now done in the name of the entire student body. You said yourselves the occupation would go ahead anyway, but you wanted the political victory. Lastly, you did it by passing an utterly disingenuous motion that professed to be about supporting all possible tactics while at the same time putting fliers up everywhere saying that it in fact was about the occupation.

All I want to say is that you should remember not everyone is an activist, and you don't make it easy for people to support you.

Good luck anyway. 🗣️

### Ahmed Alani



**Y**ou might be forgiven for hating my writing this piece. After all, opinions on the Students' Union and their activities are so polarised that they're dividing friendships up based on allegiance to the "cause". Now, not that this "cause" isn't a worthy one, and understandably, the issue with fees has never been more relevant, but I'm sick to death of how it has bulldozed it's way to becoming the core part of my LSE life. You can't utter the letters "SU" without hearing something about fees in the same breath. And, to be honest, I've had enough.

In the time I've been at LSE I don't think I can honestly say I've felt sick of being part of such an institution - but that all changed this term. I'm as concerned about fees as, well, maybe not as the next person at the LSE, but I certainly don't agree with a £9,000 rate. I'm equally concerned,

though, about the volcano of activism that the SU has now become. I appreciate that the SU is meant to be campaigning for what Students want, but I don't feel that's necessarily what it's doing, or at least, it's not campaigning for enough of the things we want.

When we elected the current Sabbatical Officers, it was upon certain campaign promises that voters pledged their allegiances. These matters included promises to improve teaching quality, reducing class sizes, as well as the usual array of pledges to "harmonise" the LSE as a whole. But I don't see any visible sort of campaigns for these equally important issues, that are for the benefit of the students who are responsible for the Sabbs holding the positions that they currently do. I understand freezing fees to make LSE more accessible is important, but so is improving teaching quality, and boosting student satisfaction. After all, we don't elect Sabbs in anticipation of that they might achieve for students several years away, we elect them because we want them to achieve something for us now.

On this note, from my observations, there appear to have been some alterations made with our current Education

Officer's manifesto, at least on his election Facebook page. Earlier on last week, I went to go and cross-references the main goals cited as part of his candidacy with what he as actually fulfilled. The astute among you may have noticed that "freezing fees" was nowhere in this section, but rather, fees were only addressed as part of his minor other issues. Now, however, upon revisiting this page, it appears that fighting a doubling or trebling of fees was a clear goal of his legacy as sabbatical officer. Clearly, we had no idea that clairvoyance was an additional talent that our Education Officer possess.

I shudder to think of the results of a student satisfaction survey, were it to be held right now, be it one to do with the LSE as a whole, or with the SU specifically. Personally, I've never been less satisfied with the LSE, with the SU spearheading a campaign I don't fully support, class sizes at an unbearably high level, and shoddy teaching in certain topics. But to whom, then, do I turn to get these matters dealt with? I walked past the Kingsley rooms on more than one occasion this week, and yet again I saw those who I'd describe as the "core group" behind this occupation, and indeed this movement, huddled around

one of the Sabb's desk. You're more than welcome to hazard a guess as to what they were up to, but something tells me that it wasn't to do with sorting out teaching quality.

I'm not attacking all of the Sabbs by any means here. It would be ignorant and bigoted of me to state that they've not done anything to justify their positions, but I am not the first to have questioned as to whether some of them have justified their salaries. We need more transparency, and a lot more feedback as to what they're actually achieving.

So what exactly happens if you try to oppose the force that is the SU? Well, Mariya Osadchaya found out the consequences of voicing your opinion against the campaign, at last week's "Emergency" General Meeting. In the dramatic and clearly passionate "not my LSE" speech, Mariya's voice faltered as she tried to make herself heard over the deafening laughter. I have never felt so disgusted by LSE students before. So that's how free speech and democracy works then? Oppose the motion, and you're ridiculed and heckled, even by some members of this alleged "Democracy" Committee. Democracy? What a farce.

I'm ashamed. I'm ashamed of the SU, and wish to have no association with it. It seems that at the heart of it, you have a hardcore group of campaigners, willing and determined to bulldoze down any contrary opinions, who use their collective force to effectively bully opposition. I stress though, that I don't think it is the Sabbs who are spearheading this bullying, but instead the dedicated supporters of the motion. Admirable though this loyalty may be to some, this inevitable outcome has indeed been the alienation of part of the student body, myself included. Why on earth would anyone in their right mind fathom opposing the motion anymore, if you witnessed the butchering that Mariya and others received last Thursday? At this point, I praise Scott Macdonald's efforts, but I'm not one to take part anymore.

I abstain from the SU, and from opposing or supporting their campaigns. Frankly, I'm fed up of the whole system, and I will become one of those apathetic people that the LSE student body likes to tut at. I'm going to knuckle down, enjoy my time, and get my degree, because clearly, voicing my opinion will receive little acknowledgement. Thank you SU, for making me feel so included. 🗣️



A North Korean military parade  
Photo: flickr user Rhuugakusei

# Korean tension: Unrest in the region

## Why North Korea needs to discipline itself in the diplomatic arena

**Thomas  
Beviss**



**T**o the north and south of the Korean Demilitarised Zone lie two countries that are technically at war, and last week we were given a reason to believe it. Last Tuesday's artillery strike on Yeonpyeong, a disputed island off the east coast of the Korean peninsula, resulted in the deaths of four South Koreans and caused widespread damage. The attack comes six months after the sinking of a South Korean warship, something that is widely acknowledged to have resulted from North Korean military action. This new wave of conflict should be something that is deeply unsettling for the region and the world.

North Korea is a nation shrouded by mystery and with the exception of an

awkward and symbolic relationship with China exists entirely in isolation. The 'supreme leader' is the ailing Kim Jong-il who has held the dictatorial top-spot since the death of his father, and founder of the North, 'Great leader' Kim Il-sung. It is difficult to ascertain exactly the motives behind the attack from the rare glimpses the foreign media are granted by the secretive regime. However, it seems apparent that it should be attributed to the deteriorating health of the current premier and desperate efforts to perpetuate the Kim political dynasty by keeping power within the family. The confirmed successor to Kim Jong-il is the youngest of his three sons Kim Jong-un, who, until his recent appointment to the senior post of Vice-Chairman of the Central Military Commission, was almost entirely unknown to the outside world.

On the surface, the bizarre and unprovoked attack seems an impulsive and arbitrary flexing of North Korean military muscle. A more accurate description would be to label it a calculated and measured political move. Adding to the

propaganda that spews from the totalitarian monolith that is Pyongyang, this attack will no doubt be properly exploited, promoting an image of the future leader as a masterful military tactician. This was an act to substantiate the leadership potential in the young general with limited political experience in the eyes of the long suffering North Korean people. Global foreign policy is currently no more than one of containment and patience for fear that any provocation could quickly escalate. There is virtually no trade between North Korea and the rest of the world with the exception of the Chinese aid that a staggering proportion of the population are wholly reliant on. The general consensus, or hope, is that the fragile regime will crumble after the passing of Kim Jong-il and the party that is responsible for the increasingly distinctive divide between North and South will no longer be able to cling to power.

The rouge nuclear state is now in fear of losing its only friend. The controversial website Wikileaks has exacerbated the tensions with released cables suggesting

that the relationship with the North's lone ally and political protector, China, may not be as assured as the Korean Workers' Party may have hoped. Leaked documents reveal communication between Chinese officials and the US Foreign Office that indicate that China may be growing tired of repeatedly defending the actions of its unruly neighbour, with some members even going as far as claiming the reunification of the peninsula with Seoul at the helm could be accepted.

Now equipped with its recently showcased shiny new uranium enrichment plant, the country, as it has done numerous times before, is once again demonstrating that it has control over the strategic agenda in the region. It tests the resolve of the South while painting itself as untouchable and a triumphant force over evil to its people. There is no more room for further trade restrictions that have been ineffective until now; it is only the famished legions, hidden behind closed doors that will suffer the consequences. Action needs to be taken to prove to the WPK that it cannot continue to take

the lives of innocent South Koreans as fuel for the fantasy that the state-controlled media feeds to its public.

The criticism South Korea has received for its delayed and light-handed response following the Yeonpyeong shelling is understandable. When questioned, the justification the South Korean defence minister, Kim Tae-young, presented was "This is not StarCraft." Allowing North Korea yet another victory is a mistake. Granted, this is a reality with much at stake, but allowing Pyongyang to do what it likes in securing support for the third Kim is not the right move.

China needs to officially sever the ties that are now no more than relics from a bygone era. A unified international message needs to be sent to Kim Jong-il: these unprovoked acts of aggression are unacceptable and if these continue North Korea will have to feel much harsher repercussions alone. ☘

**The Comment Editor is now Rimmel Mohydin**

**Nathan Briant would like to thank everyone for helping during his time as Comment Editor. He'll still be contributing to the Beaver now and again, so you won't miss him...**

**The Comment and Features Editors will be on Houghton Street between 12 and 2 on Tuesday. If you have any questions, please drop by.**

**Please send in content during the Christmas break to:**

**comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk**



# Social

## Confessions of a Crush virgin

**Nathan Briant** has a distasteful experience at his first Crush



the cheapest exercise video brought out by an ex-Eastenders cast member who weighed a hefty 20 stone 10 years ago, but now are borderline anorexic. I could be wrong though. I clearly know very little dancing technique - what I saw could conceivably have been worthy of awards.

That said, it was also a learning experience. I realised that all my lack of success with the opposite sex wasn't about me being boring, having the fashion sense and the interests of a 45-year-old divorcee from Cleethorpes, or wearing these cheap glasses and a disastrous haircut from London's cheapest hairdresser - exclusively, anyway. It's because I try to talk to women when they're sober and able to be rational. Silly me. I now realise that if you get (someone) drunk enough to not know what is going on, they might undo their blouse in front of hundreds of people and let someone grab a handful - as a speechless friend and I realised as just that happened mere metres in front of us. She wasn't shy. I didn't look after a certain point, I don't leer. It's not British politics some attractive young women at the LSE want to hear about, it's what drink's got the highest alcohol content and knowing how to get Jimmy and/or Jeremy to fiddle about for a bit down on the dance floor.

There was a little bit of light relief though. That I was able to pose for a camera for pictures that probably won't accompany this article but were taken nevertheless, and pull faces like a person like Charlie Brooker surely would have done, took some of the pain away for missing Peep Show, which a million or so were enjoying as I suffered Crush.

As I've already written about in the Beaver and you've no doubt not read, there were some rather depressing times in my first year when people would go out to Crush and I would stay in my box-room thinking what it would be like to go, but I was so highly-strung and serious that I never went. Over two years later, even if I went to this in a bit of an ironic sense, and knowing that I would eventually write about it, I realised on the way home that my 18-year-old self must have been so much more sensible than me now.

A bloody nightmare.

I went to Crush for the first time ever on Friday. Although I doubt I saw the real carnage and banter that surely took place in the early morning, since I had to get the last Overground home, I saw more than enough to realise that I never want to experience anything like it ever again.

Admittedly, I probably went on the wrong day. The AU's Carol meant that some, if not most, of the people there were completely intoxicated before the start of it, but I imagine that that's the case for most weeks anyway.

I stood there in completely unsuitable dress - in what I call my 'Wilfred

Owen coat', a trench coat from Marks and Spencer that my parents force me from afar to wear - Adidas trainers, grey jeans from Marks and Spencer, a scarf and an old dirty blue sweater for Burton Menswear in about 2004. My glasses - Specsavers - wouldn't have helped either I guess. The only person I saw wearing glasses seemed to be wearing them ironically, as part of their fancy dress. She was dressed, as far as I could tell, as a 'Slutty Schoolgirl'. Add to that there were about ten bananas walking freely around, a particularly inventive Crayola crayon, and several Satans, all of whom seemed to be young women who had blonde or peroxide

blonde hair.

When I went to buy a drink - there was no way I could experience this sober - I had to fight to the front of the bar, wait an inordinately long time to be served, only to find that when I did manage to push my way back out, that I was wearing about a quarter of my drink. That doesn't even happen at Wetherspoons.

Now I come onto the music: who's idea of fun is listening to that dirge? The only plausible answer can surely be the hearing-impaired, who are so happy to be able to listen to anything at all that they hop around the dance floor with joy. I'm guessing most of the people who attend

Crush on a regular basis can't be deaf, although they might be in their latter days. The influence of alcohol and drugs or a mixture of the two can be the only possible reason, surely.

I have no idea of the technique of how people danced when they went to the 'bop' or the 'jive' before the invention of TV but it must have been more artistic, more cultured than today. The dancing witnessed on Friday night seemed to resemble little more than pumping an arm up and down for a bit, then stepping or jumping about for a bit, before returning to the punching thing. I'd compare most of the dancing I witnessed to something you might see on

## Facing Facebook

**Fahd Humayun** and the social network

It was back in May that Facebook made the cover of TIME magazine with Dan Fletcher delving into the privacy considerations of everyone's favourite social network. The front page of the issue bore a rather clever mosaic of almost thirteen hundred Facebook profile photos, a creative gimmick to get people's attention. Practically speaking, privacy isn't the only thing Facebook, the glorious thing that it is, seems to have redefined over the years. Our own definitions of 'friend' and 'friendship' have undergone significant changes too. In the pre-Facebook age, for instance, we probably wouldn't have dreamed of calling someone a friend unless we actually liked the person. Now everyone from Machiavellian enemies, to exes, to the kid who used to noisily chew gum at the back of the class but we never really knew his name, have all become integral parts of our various 'Friends' lists.

On numerous occasions though, the privacy argument does go overboard: it really isn't the epic conspiracy that it's made out to be. We don't share what we don't want others to see, and in that respect Facebook does place a lot of control in the hands of each individual user. Photo albums, videos you've been tagged in, even wall-to-walls are all subject to censorship so that you can sleep easily at night knowing that your Facebook page is secure from intrusion. That is until one friend decides to have a sleepover and somebody decides to stalk the good-looking people they know, and that's when the Kate Middletons get separated from the sorority girls creating what some might call the evil side of Facebook.

500 million users can't be wrong. Or can they? Is it really an example of twenty first century technological genius? Or is it just another instance of the general wtf-ery of modern communication?

At university, Facebook does manage to take it up a notch. It has its highs: remember Fitfinder? The widely circulated mock penguin vigil? And we've all come to love and hate the pseudo-intellectual Facebook statuses and the effervescent wall-to-walls that play out like a live sports commentary, demanding a 'like' here and a 'comment' there, therein fulfilling the required social protocol for the day (it's basically the equivalent of the 60s tradition of taking a pie to welcome your new neighbour to the neighbourhood). Crusaders of the blue and white Facebook logo do have a strong argument. Its great to be able to reconnect with old friends; it's a great way to stay in touch; it lets us know more about the people we want to know more about. And to be fair, if you're on Facebook then you really shouldn't gag at the idea of people spilling their milk and cereal over their laptop as they scroll up and down your Facebook page, because once you're on Facebook, you're part of that very blue and white world where people's lives are an online version of the yellow pages. You're a click away from knowing what somebody dressed up as on Halloween, and liking someone's holiday album with pictures of snorkelling in the Red Sea ... And of course it lets you stay up to date with what's going on around you without you having to wait for the weekly LSE student newsletter to be circulated to your inbox. The 'occupation' of LSE is one such recent example of an

issue that has been brought to everyone's attention courtesy of Facebook newsfeeds.

Now with it being only a keypunch away, available on everything from mobile phones to Blackberries, a lot of us have unwittingly pencilled in Facebook among the other necessary must-haves of everyday life after oxygen and clean laundry. In many respects it's a dependency tool which makes one-hour lectures in the Old Building a more bearable experience, since we can now comfortably update our Facebook statuses with the appropriate 'Yawn', 'is in lecture' and 'Mother Tucker who made Economic History this boring', warranting half a dozen or so likes at the very least. And yes, we have now standardised a dizzying waterfall of emoticons, exclamation marks and abbreviations as a legitimate means of communication. Boohoo.

After reading all of this you're probably asking - your point is? My point is just that. The biggest social experiment since the advent of the Internet has successfully managed to divide opinions. And polarising as it is, everyone uses it - whether they do so happily or not is another issue. Having a Facebook page means you're okay with setting yourself up for that much scrutiny. It also means that when the fire alarm goes off in your building, you should be prepared for a barrage of anti-fire alarm related statuses during the next thirty minutes. Above all, and perhaps most importantly, it also means you'll need to open multiple windows when you're in the LSE library so that you don't feel guilty about booking your face off when other people are looking for computers come Summer Term.

## BEYOND THERAPY

The path of true love never doth run smoothly



06/12/2010 - 7.30pm  
08/12/2010 - 8.00pm

The Old Theatre

£2 Members  
£3 Non-Members

# LSE Diary

## Sadir Zayadine's summer in Peru

Summer's just come and I'm glad I didn't get an internship. Not trying hard enough or being just too damn stupid has finally paid off. As I grappled with the emotions of the crushing disappointment my parents felt, I couldn't help but feel unrepenting; I had just been green-lighted to do what I really wanted to do.

"Going to Perah on your gap, yah?" remarked my friends, quite originally. Yes I am and not just for travelling but to muck in at an orphanage.

"Are you sure you still can't get a job?" my mother asked one last time on the way to the airport.

"Yes" I replied.

As the plane touched down in Cusco after a mammoth 20 hour flight it was not long before I was being shown around the beautiful town of Cusco; capital of the old Inca civilization and a world heritage site. Upon arrival at the orphanage I was greeted by a swarm of smiling children who hugged and kissed me till my cheeks were sore. "How cheesy is this?" I thought to myself – it was like something out of a film. I couldn't believe it was like that in real life, but I loved it and was overwhelmed by their enthusiasm.

Next, it was time to hand over my childhood games and clothes to the children. Well-received was Crazy Golf Machine, which was soon torn to shreds by competing kids. There's nothing quite like the feeling of witnessing your childhood board game's being ripped apart before your very eyes... Nevertheless, the children enjoyed it and that's what matters; playing with them, organizing trips and just generally caring for the kids. But there's a darker side. Some of the boys would periodically escape and we would have to search for them. I never

understood this but the kids would say things like "It's too boring to stay here... I can make money begging on the streets." Repeat offenders were threatened by the police and, in some extreme cases, banned from returning.

On a lighter side, going out to a club and drinking with other volunteers was always a winning combination. Gringos like ourselves were hoarded as soon as we exited the taxi. You don't need to spend a single penny if you're a foreigner; free drink vouchers are readily bestowed upon you. Sadly, the same cannot be said for the locals who must pay to enter and are treated poorly.

Let's talk about Peruvian prostitutes for a second. Most clubs are teaming with them, yet, interestingly, the process of sleeping with one is quite different to what you might imagine. And no, I am not speaking from experience. They'll slowly dance up and lure you into their grasp. Some will have 'plausible' back stories and proceed to arrange a meet up the next day for lunch. And then bam; you find yourself in an hourly rate hostel after having fed and watered her. In essence, you are paying for a night of Latina passion with food stamps. As strange (or admirable) as that may sound, two of my volunteer friends were duped by the same girl nearly a month apart.

Moving on, I was fortunate enough to meet someone who was willing to travel with me. We took 10 hour bus journeys at night, in the freezing cold, which periodically stopped, letting on local people who would sell snacks. Perfect opportunity, we were warned, for hijackings, but luckily we were spared. Crossing the border into Bolivia was an unnerving experience. In the dead of the night our bus stopped on the side of a mountain where police with huge

rifles boarded and questioned anyone 'native looking' – us gringos weren't even looked at. It's against the law to hassle tourists. Still, we were praying that no one had hidden cocaine in our luggage stored below...

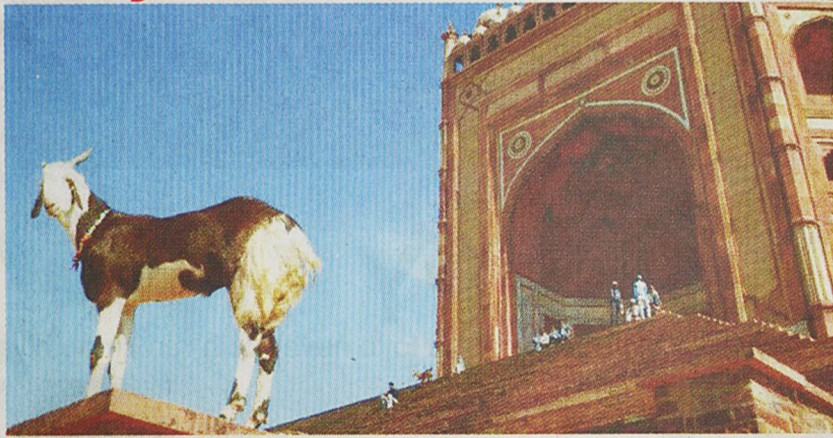
After crossing back into Peru via the northern Chilean town of Arica, which my friend quite accurately described as a 'shit version of Miami', we parted ways in Peru's second largest city, Arequipa. I returned to Cusco to see out my last few weeks with the children. I had grown much closer to them especially after the fancy dress party held where we were staying. And so when it was time to say goodbye I was completely unprepared.

The love and appreciation I received caught me off guard as they lavished me with parting gifts, most of which they had made themselves. I had never been in such a situation before and though I didn't cry, my heart sank and my voice croaked. "Please come back over Christmas!" they urged. "I will try" I replied, knowing full well it couldn't happen. As I left, clutching a thank you letter one of the girls had written, I felt an enormous sense of helplessness in the pit of my stomach. My five week stint was not nearly enough and yet I'll probably be praised for 'making a difference'. I barely scratched the surface.



# A snapshot of India

## Emily Murrell on volunteering in Mumbai



As my friends and I left the comfortable air-conditioned airport at 1am in the morning (fully equipped with an overpriced Costa and nearly completed book from WHSmith - globalisation at work) and we observed that the 'Hotel Deluxe' was in fact a shack with no windows, I very quickly realised that India was going to be the culture shock of a life time!

I can picture my first taxi journey from Delhi airport to the hotel. I was horrified by the non-existence of seat-belts, the often half missing vehicle parts (door handles, bits of seats and mirrors) and general disregard for road regulations. Now I understand that seat-belts in India are in fact a disadvantage; they prevent a quick exit from a vehicle in the frequent collisions on the roads. When 2 friends and I were crammed in the back of an auto rickshaw, my rear poking out of the side of the vehicle because we were too cheap to pay another 10p for a second vehicle, the driver decided (as is often the case here) to accelerate and cross over the road into the path of oncoming traffic. There were screams, a lot of swearing (in Hindi and English) as the lorry hurtling towards us slammed on its brakes. The lorry stopped literally millimeters from my arse; al-

lowing me to live and tell the tale. That teaches me for being such a cheapskate.

Walking through an Indian city on foot is an experience like no other; the wonderful smell of incense and Indian foods melt into a mist which strangely makes the stench of pollution that little bit more bearable. You find that all your senses have a mind of their own in the city; your eyes dash around trying to take in the vibrant colours and bizarre building structures, the monkeys hanging from electric wires above you, as well as the constant hoarding of people everywhere you go.

The markets are amazing and the barter for souvenirs is sure to leave both you and the stall holder in fits of laughter. As I wandered around the beautiful sights, I high-fived more school children than I can count and was groped so often that clubbing in the UK, I now feel like I'm spoiled for space. But the experience was so much fun and I wouldn't change a thing! As I crossed the roads in fear of being injured by a rickshaw, an autorickshaw, a taxi, an already battered old car, a motorbike or perhaps the worst possible pedestrian injury...being rammed by an oversized cow; you soon learn to relax and adjust. Dodging vehicles becomes amusing, outrunning stray dogs becomes a game and you learn to follow the locals

and smile as you all dash across the road together; surprised every time you made it to the other side in one piece!

Some of the most memorable experiences I had in India this summer were on the local trains. On one a businessman bought me the best Chai Tea I have ever tasted and I loved the 24 hour availability of samosas at every stop. The women's carriage was like a moving mosh pit, except the people you were fighting with for air were all dressed in saris not band t-shirts. On one particular occasion I sat in a 4 seat booth with 8 women and proceeded to be part of what can only be described as an impromptu focus group. We spent hours discussing politics, The Beatles, the Queen, the weather and much to my surprise, wind turbines; it was amazing!

My time in India was better than I could have ever imagined, I have made friends for life, seen the most beautiful sights, tasted foods that put my local Indian to shame and been amazed by the generosity and hospitality of Indian people.

As an emerging economy and a melting pot of culture, India is somewhere everyone should be given the opportunity to visit. This coming Easter, Mumbai School of Business (MSB) is offering 15 lucky LSE students the chance to take part in an exciting new 2-week 'Discover India Programme' on their campus.

Mornings involve lectures on campus, on topics as diverse as Gandhian economics, Indian culture, law, the role of NGOs and business practices. Afternoons and weekend activities are tailored to the successful LSE students' career motivations and interests, with organised trips to meet government officials, business representatives and visits to local schools, as well as the usual touristy/fun stuff! All accommodation, food, internal travel, activities and so forth are paid for by MSB; all you have to fund are your return flights and a visa.

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and fitting in paintballing and skydiving too!  
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ITCHY FEET  
WERE GOING PLACES

LSE STUDENTS'  
UNION  
[www.lsesu.com](http://www.lsesu.com)

Opportunities like this don't come around often! It is an amazing opportunity to visit a fantastic country, add an international dimension to your CV, meet amazing people and learn first-hand about the challenges and opportunities currently facing India. Hopefully see you in Mumbai soon!

For more information on the programme or to express your interest in participating email the UK on campus programme coordinator Emily on [e.murrell@lse.ac.uk](mailto:e.murrell@lse.ac.uk).

# THE DEPENDENT

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## NEARING EXTINCTION

### Correction

The Beaver has recently noticed that there was a small factual inaccuracy in the piece, "Fuckerson appears on campus: shock!" published in last week's News in Briefs (23rd November). As well as the piece's misleading title, it states that "Forth Fuckerson is receiving a salary of £500,000". It has since come to our attention that we completely made this bit up. What we actually meant to put was "Forth Fuckerson does not receive a salary of £500,000". We apologise for any confusion caused. We would also like to clarify that we respect Forth Fuckerson as an iconic historian, a best-selling author, and an all-round nice bloke, really! Oh yes. He is a wonderful man – nay, a legend. Nay, a god among men. All will tremble before his iron might, his near-Herculean brilliance, and also his ability to make insightful Channel 4 documentaries. Oh please don't hurt us Mr Fuckerson, we're sorry we're sorry we're really sorry please don't sue a poor student paper.....!!!!!! Again we apologise for any confusion caused. But just imagine the kudos you've attracted as a result of this screw-up – you could dine out on this story for a lifetime!

### By Synthesizer Patel

Heart-rendingly beautiful creatures. Sole producers of a vital natural resource mined by politicians and lay people alike. Descendants of an historic movement so crushingly important, and responsible for victories of liberty so innumerate, that we cannot name them.

These are the pictures exclusively obtained by the Dependent of the last remaining examples of *Protesteres Occupes*, an endangered species driven to near-extinction, and forced to take refuge in their last known sanctuary.

Seen seeking safe haven in the verdant plains of the Constance Iri-Tation suite, these tender, sentient beings are known for their musk, "Essence of Activism", which is prized for its ability to bestow upon the user uncharac-

teristic and irrational feelings of anger towards capitalist society, free-market economic theory, and the strictures of university timetabling.

For years, farming of the essence has been exploited by an elusive cartel of omniscient leaders known only as the "Saba Thick Commanders". Now, the last tribe of the exploited species, also known as Occupiers, have divined from ancient rituals prescribed by their ancestor, Trotter, that the time has come to flee their imperialist overlords and search out a place of shelter from which to mastermind a last-ditch revolution.

One of the Occupiers' elders, Dr. I. Scare Lemmings, said of their journey, "We are scared stiff by rumours that our kind are to be wiped out in order to make way for a new generation of cash-crops." She added, "Fine-ass? Divestment spanking? Engine-earing?

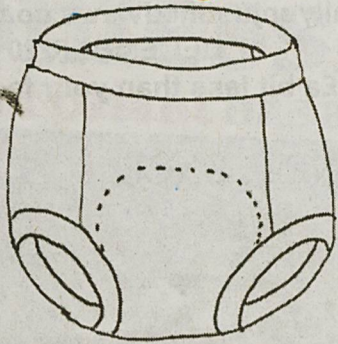
These lucrative crops disgust my kind. But our former feudal owners have tired of our semi-productive whining."

Another elder, Ashoknawe Kermit, said: "The media is perpetuating the false narrative that the world must function on Tory scum ideals." When asked of his opinion on the Occupiers' forced migration to the Constance Iri-Tation suite, Kermit stated: "Me and my buddies are just trying to ignite a new wave of activism, uniting workers and apprentices in an uprising against the fatuous and frankly disingenuous smear campaign being levelled at us."

A translator was not available at the time.

Full story: pages 10, 10 and 10.

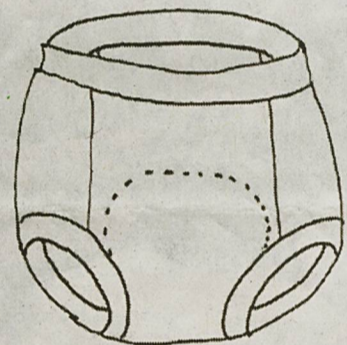
# News in briefs



## Kebab shop university

The LSE has lost its 'trusted status' in relation to the government's proposed cap on immigration. A clause in the recently passed Immigration Act stipulates that universities in close proximity to reasonably priced eateries will be shut down. A Conservative spokesman said: "Enough of educational institutions above kebab shops. How can students be expected to learn with the scent of processed meat wafting under their noses. This country's not what it used to be blah di blah white working class blah di blah."

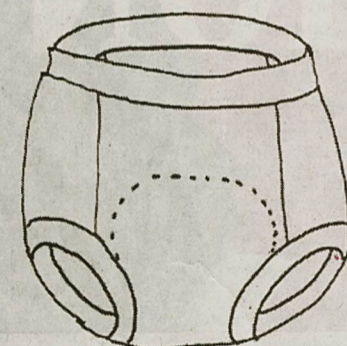
With Wrongs Bar just a few yards away, the future of the LSE on Houghton Street looks uncertain. Wrongs' Bar owner, Giuseppe Gianlucca Gabanna disputed comparisons between his restaurant and a kebab shop: "Ayya runna ristorante classico. Issa autentico cuisino classscio, innit." The dispute between Wrongs' and the School continues.



## Kermit: "Bunch of Kants"

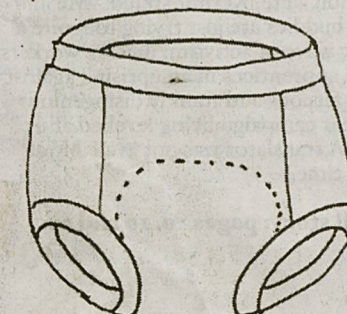
Tensions on campus heightened last week as LSE Students' Union Escalation Officer, Ashoknawe Kermit labelled the Dependent's Editorial Board a "bunch of Kants". Kermit, alluding to the paper's recent critique of pure reason, said: "These guys perpetuate the narrative of the frankly flawed notion of the categorical imperative. Their idea of moral restrictiveness is disgusting."

Kermit added for good measure that "their refutation of basic socialist norms and failure to contextualise flagrantly abhorrent acts leaves me speechless".



## Tindale

Look up, look down, look all around, Jack Tindale! Old Theatre - Jack Tindale. University Challenge - Jack Tindale. Tuns - Jack Tindale. Beaver Office - Jack Tindale. Jack Tindale!



# 'Tory' editor struck with gout at Beaver party

By Kooblakhan

Sucha Petal, Editor of the Beaver has been struck with a severe case of gout in the aftermath of the festivities held in honour of his editorial team Monday night.

The lavish event was hosted by managing editor and socialite extraordinaire Sir Oliver Henri Herbert Wisemood at Chesterfield house, his 350-acre estate in the centre of Chelsea. The property, which includes squash, tennis, rugby, cricket, and football playing fields, a deer park, and a vast spa has been open to visitors since 2008. The Wisemood family has long prided itself of living a street down from the Thatcher themed club, Maggie's.

Facing accusations that the celebrations had been too extravagant for the student paper's envergue Wisemood responded, "Balderdash! Sucha Petal is a LAD, woosh!"

The evening, themed the 'good old days', began with the arrival of guests in pony-drawn phaetons to Wagner's (no, the other Wagner dummy) fifth

symphony. They were welcomed by a luxuriant red velvet carpet drawn to the steps of the house, lined by rows of white-gloved, tail-suited waiters of the best of the LSE Sabbatical team. Charlie Garibaldi gallantly took in the editors' furs, bowing her head repeatedly to each arrival with a characteristically ecstatic grin.

The parlour and ballroom were garnished with ice sculptures of iconic figures Neville Chamberlain, T.E. Lawrence, Winston Churchill, Ian Duncan-Smith, and Sam Cam.

"The level of detail of Chamberlain's moustache is absolutely extraordinary" yawned news editor Nicole Scherzingya?, adding, "Spiffing!"

Guests glided between these two rooms and the dining hall which featured a rich dinner buffet, source of Petal's current ailment. Indeed, the editor-in-command was spotted sipping at several occasions glasses of 'Daddy's finest' whilst nibbling amuse-bouches of ortolan.

As a gesture of magnanimity to his host, Vodka Kick had a crystal fountain delivered to the hall, prior to his fashionably late arrival. The assembly

emitted a wide gasp of awed adoration as the contraction revealed to gurgle organic, free-range swan blood. Editors rushed to the basin with goblets stamped with the Wisemood family crest to taste the precious mixture.

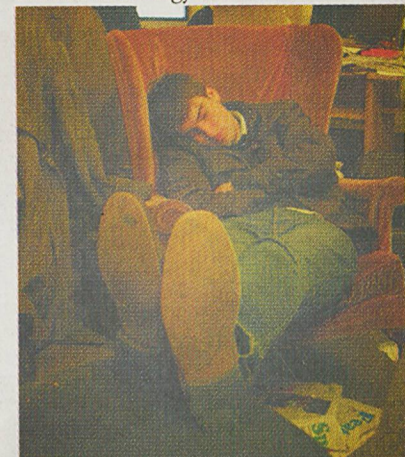
Many among them, however, including Mehack Zephyr preferred to stick to the canapes of molten caviar, which were provided in ample profusion to guests. As an exceptional token of kindness, Wisemood later allowed their distribution in limited supply to his guest's Sabb manservants, made to wait in the stables.

Other hors-d'oeuvres included a pheasant stuffed into a duck stuffed into a cow; a culinary exploit not attempted since the ancien regime yet revived on the express instigation Saddamed 'swapped my gold-plated machine gun for a gaggle of hotties' Salami.

The undeniable climax of the evening, however, was the joint entrance of Tyler Crème Brûlée, guest of honour and well-known curator of good taste astride a bejeweled unicorn sporting champagne, dragged by the naked torso-of-the-week contestants

of this term. Editors banged on the table with enthusiasm, throwing themselves into a spontaneous chant of "Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles" and "Tory till I die".

Senior conservative party members expressed regret at their inability to attend the event, Viscount Nextofkind's bacchanalian orgy beckoned.



One editor suffering the consequences of unbridled hedonism

## Biggles the Beaver in fat cat scandal

By Vodka Kick

The Dependent has recently learnt that one of the LSE Students' Union's most notable members is on campus for less than one hour a week despite earning a salary of over £100,000 a month.

Biggles the Beaver, the official mascot of the LSE, who also holds the prestigious wooden chair at the UGM, is rarely seen on campus, according to Students' Union officials. This is despite receiving a remuneration package significantly higher than any other animal on campus, including the bogeyman, Pie Sunderland, who Howie Duvets uses to prevent members of the LSE Council from mentioning any of his cunning plans.

The salary of £100,000 per month (with a margin of error of £200,000) was obtained by the Dependent from a reliable source, Aserene' Kermit, using top quality investigative journalism as you would expect from a newspaper such as the Dependent. 'Say any BIG number', the Dependent asked the Kermit, during one of his 'relaxed inhaling' moments, to which the ever serene Kermit replied, '£100,000 .... freeze the fees, tory scum!'

This figure was corroborated by one of the LSE's many illegal cleaners (Impressively Linguistic legal cleaners) who added: 'Senor B gets £100,000 a month! Ay yeii yeii!'

Born in 1900, Biggles the Beaver, hails from a small, cold and insignificant part of the world called Canada. Biggles started off in life as a unintentional comedian/fiction writer but after little success he had his lucky break in 1922 when George 'Been 'eard rolling in his grave in disgust' Shaw, one of the founders of LSE, asked him

to become the mascot of LSE after turning down a request to have the 'Invisible Hand' as a mascot saying at the time: "No, no, no: we at the LSE still care about being socially progressive, its only in 88 years time that we will drop those principles and become Europe's leading nursery for investment wankers".

Biggles, said at the time (1922): "I am greatly excited at the prospect of joining this small, insignificant, new university on the Strand", adding, "I am so proud of this honour and will tell everyone I know." As of now LSE is not mentioned on any of Biggles' websites or biographies.

Biggles, as well as adorning many of LSE's exorbitantly priced souvenirs, is also paid to act as a mascot to LSE's many successful sports teams, of which the LSE is particularly strong in the maths olympiad and the 'How Long Can I Stay a Virgin' league. However as one member of the AU said: "I've yet to see biggles attend any of our matches, errrrm... lash, lash, shag, zoo bar".

His other duties include attending UGMs but for even this one hour a week Biggles has not been able to attend. So disgusted was Aserene' Kermit and Chan's stop-smiling Girl that they replaced Biggles with a penguin as mascot for the Students' Union in October of this year.

Reasons for ejecting Biggles included his lack of appearances at the UGM given that he has spent most of his time flying round the world and living off the handsome royalties from the rights LSE has to pay him to be their mascot.

Biggles responded to the Students' Union's criticisms by saying: "Like I actually cared about this university anyway. But I am still very angry and true to my cold, remote hometown's roots I will now act unreasonably and threaten to sue the SU for the most insignificant of things", adding, "boy it is cold today, my skin is awfully thin."

Yet despite all this Biggles is still being paid a whopping salary for his patronage of the LSE.

Dear Peasants,

This is a reminder of the upcoming Collective meeting. Please find below the manifestos that I have received for the vacant positions, which I have not tampered with. Repeat, the following manifestos absolutely do not contain no amendments.

### NEWS

Laura Fedora

I truly enjoyed contributing to The Beaver this term, and would be thrilled to further my commitment as news editor. I possess the analytical and organizational skills needed to be a productive, positive presence in any newsroom, and my varied journalism experience - academic, extracurricular and professional - makes me the ideal candidate to join Nicola on the news team. At my home institution, Brown University, I completed a full year of academic journalism, where I wrote extensively for student publications, where I also worked as copy editor. In recent summers, I have held professional newspaper internships, most recently at The Wall Street Journal in New York. As a result, I know how to generate story ideas, and understand what is required to craft compelling news articles. As news editor, my top priority would be to increase interactions between editors and reporters by providing consistent feedback and guidance to all writers.

Benjamin Butterscotch

делало безупречную работу как редактор новостей, и суть моего манифеста может только быть подражать его успеху. Ключ к возбуждающему разделу новостей ряд. Обеспечивать его как раз не "Hot Boyz" будет направляющим выступлом к UGM последней недели, а вместо покрывает goings-on случаев кампуса широких и неподдельными вопросами который влияют на студентов LSE на еженедельное снование.

### VOTE PHALLUS LU

I, Phallus Lu, was News Editor last year. As I, Phallus Lu, lost last year's Executive Editor elections, I threw my toys out of the pram and left in a huff. The paper has done OK so far, but News section has yet to reach its full potential. That can only happen under me, Jesus. I mean Phallus Lu.

Come along, it will be fun, if you like listening to Sachin's voice. If that didn't tickle you, where do really smart electricians do their shopping? Sparks and Mensa.

Benedict Kardashian

Collective Chair  
Scunthorpe comedy award runner-up

The Beaver

The inbred clique of the LSE Students' Union

Leaked: The Beaver Collective cables

## The Dependent guide to paying your LSE tuition fees next year

(the Lib Dem way)

1. Sign a cheque saying, "I pledge to pay LSE Incorporated @ Ltd a grand total of £68,967.00"
2. Take a photograph of you signing the pledge
3. Never pay the money back

# Despise man: "Go home!"

By Nicole Scherzingya?

Oliver Archibald-Herbert Despise man II, a white middle-class male studying Economics and Mathematics, last week launched a campaign to "give a voice to a minority that has far too long been silenced on campus." Reports from fellow white males taking Economics, Statistics or Mathematics have suggested that this is a far more prevalent problem than was initially thought.

According to Despise man II, white males throughout the LSE face discrimination and oppression. The campaign, entitled 'The Caucasian Cause', aims to focus on tackling issues such as language barriers and cultural taboo currently affecting these white students. The major cause for concern

is the fact that the Caucasian males, who almost exclusively speak British English, have been unable to converse with fellow students or lecturers. "Frankly sometimes I think that my lecture should be in Hong Kong, not just in the Hong Kong theatre." Said Despise man, with a forlorn sniff.

A fellow white male studying Mathematics and Statistics, who refused to be named for fear of persecution, added: "I wish that they had taught me Hindi or Mandarin at Eton." The Language Centre have stated that they have seen a 273% increase in applications from white males who have applied to study Gujarati as part of their degree.

Despise man II has committed himself wholly to the cause: "The campaign is going to be big. I mean we're going to be making hats, some people

are even making posters. We're baking not-so-brownies. There's a planned golf day to raise awareness. Think 'Freeze the Fees' on steroids." A UGM motion entitled: 'English gentleman don't eat dim sum' has already been added to the agenda for this week's UGM. Tindale has said: "I'm taking this very seriously, it is an issue close to my own heart."

'The Caucasian Cause' has found surprising backing on and off campus; LSE membership is at 14, and still growing. At the bi-weekly meetings, that have been set up to offer support for students who need to know that they are not alone, issues such as increasing marginalisation of pipe-users, a properly tailored suit and all-round good banter are discussed. "Last week was really special, we actually engaged on a deep level - sharing the emotion-

al, spiritual experiences of our Gap-yahs." The cause has also been picked up by national publications, including 'Horse and Hound' and 'Sporting Gun' Magazine.

In a remarkable display of tolerance, minority group 'The Namibian Freedom Fighters Society' have pledged their support to the cause. In a statement released earlier this week, 'The Namibian Freedom Fighters Society' stated: "We know what it's like to feel underrepresented. We know what it's like to have to fight for your rights, mon. We will offer 'The Caucasian Cause' the benefits of our knowledge - lessons we've learnt from King, Mandela and Malcolm X can equally be applied to the cause of the white male."

# Fuckerson fucked by fucking student rag

By Duke Smellyundkinky

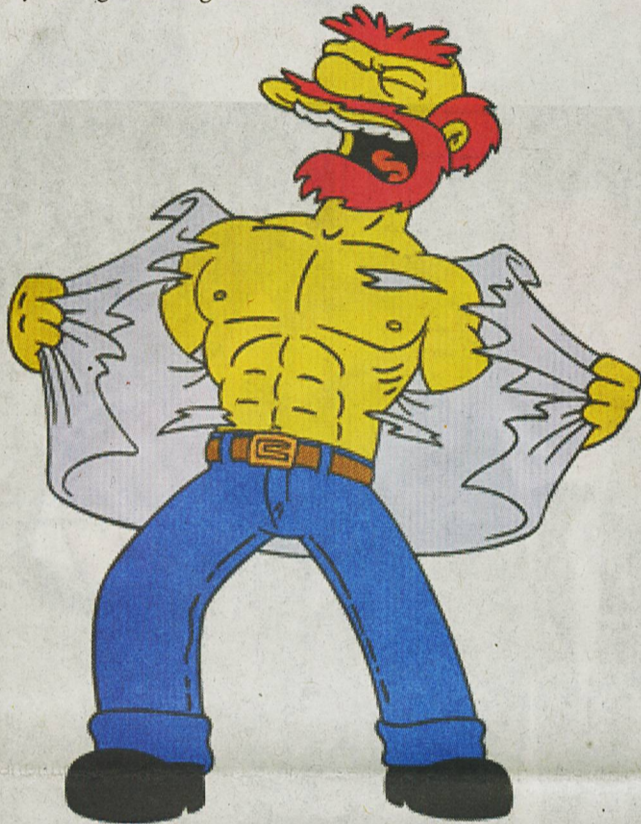
The world rejoiced as celebrated historian Forth Fuckerson slammed critics in the Beaver last week. Man, myth and/or legend [delete as appropriate] Fuckerson, writer of acclaimed history books such as *The Scent of Money* and *Empire: How I Made the Modern World*, attracted much criticism that he had a habit of never being on campus and was paid too much for this habit.

Yesterday he silenced critics, saying, "Phoey! The idea that I am never on pissing campus is ludicrous! First, I was here last week for one of my three public lectures this term! And second, I am here now to yell at the Beaver! How many more gobshitting times do

you want me here?!!?

"Furthermore, I have ten twazzocking lectures next year! Yes, I'm not doing seminars! Yes, they're nigh-on identical to the ones I teach at a liberal arts college in Massachusetts, but these lectures will be taught at LSE! And if they won't, I'll twatting video myself giving them, and send you the titwanking tapes!"

To allegations that he was being paid £500,000, he replied, "Absolute shitting hogmanay! The figure is utterly butterly baloney! Out by a factor of fucking five! To think that I earn less than £2 million is motherwanking ridiculous!"



# History professor levitation confirms deification

By Colm Old

Suspicion is rife that Professor Alec Campbell, the current holder of the Charles Greco Chair at LSE, has divine properties. Reports circulated following an Economic History Lecture in which, mid-way through an explanation of Kondratiev cycles, levitation was practiced. According to senior sources, the Professor twice circled the lectern whilst hovering between two and three feet from the ground, adding "I float like a butterfly, but sting like a bee."

When asked to comment earlier in the week, Professor Campbell said of his capacity to fly: "I just wanted to show the folks at the LSE what I am capable of. Orlando Figes might write beautifully, Simon Schama might use primary sources in his work and Tim Blanning might have time for ordinary students - but can they levitate? Let nobody doubt my worth as a Historian. KUDOS!"

Campbell's levitation is the latest act in what is fast becoming an arms race amongst leading Historians in a bid to show who is best. Sparks flew earlier in the year when Quentin Skinner, a previous holder of the Regius Chair in Modern History at Cambridge, began a lecture on the 'Genealogy of Liberty' with a five minute rap which covered both the nuances of Intellectual History and his distaste for 'all those haters' in the profession. But the precedent for outlandish displays of ability within the academic fraternity began when AJP Taylor offered to bench-press a greased doctoral student, while an audience of baying undergraduates screamed encouragement from the floor.

This is not the first time Campbell has been accused of transcending reality. Students across campus have noted his omnipresent nature since being granted tenure in September. Jenna

Henley, a first year Philosophy student said, "I see him everywhere; he's present in all my classes, all my lectures and even my thoughts. Talk about value for money, Professor Campbell is a one man teaching machine".

The physical make-up of Professor Campbell was first questioned when in a recorded talk to the LSE's Hedge Fund Society he admitted to working a 12 day week. Fellow academics are at a loss to explain Campbell's conspicuous presence on campus, his prodigious scholarly output and his experimental sex life, using conventional logic alone.

The faculty have also begun to question whether Campbell is bound by ordinary spatial laws. Timetables show him lecturing on The Scramble for Africa in the Old Theatre at 3pm on a Thursday afternoon whilst being simultaneously scheduled to teach on the economics of the Cold War. Could it be that he is in two places at once?

Nor is it just History students who have experienced Campbell's omnipresence. German Philosophy, Hellenic literature and Advanced Calculus are just a few of the subjects on the Professor's timetable. "I equate it with Spinoza's pantheism, he thought God was everywhere, and I think Alec Campbell is everywhere," said Anunciata Davies, a second year anthropol-

ogy student.

The genial Scot was originally thought to hail from Glasgow, but sources close to Campbell suggest his inception may not have been earthly. The Professor's rugged good-looks and mystical accent have also been cited as grounds for a supernatural providence. "There's no way a 46 year old History Professor could be that attractive without some celestial help," said a moist Felicity Hewitt, a third-year Economics student.

Alongside his omnipresence, Campbell is also rumoured to be omniscient. Having lectured on everything from the causes of the First World War, to a potential future conflict between China and America, common wisdom has it Campbell's capacity for knowledge is infinite. Plaudits for his work come from all corners. When appearing in a public lecture in September at the LSE, the world renown Historian Simon Schama labelled Campbell a 'friend', the profession's highest accolade.

Questions have also been asked of the amber glow which constantly hovers above the Professor. "Originally I just thought the sun shone out of his arse" said Campbell's departmental secretary, "but I now see it's nothing so mundane, he is an angel sent down to make facts fun and drill right-wing narrative into our children." The Government has also been quick to spot Campbell's unique abilities. In 2010 he was appointed by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, to produce a joined-up syllabus for British school children.

Fellow teachers who are bound by the laws of physics, haven't taken these developments well. "I hate his intelligence, I hate his industry, and I hate how good-looking he is. Now we uncover Campbell has links with God - what next from Alec?" groaned a member of the History department. "KUDOS!" he added.

*This is not the first time Campbell has been accused of transcending reality*

## Ashoknawe Kermit "nutjob" says study

By Duke Smellyundkinky

An exclusive survey conducted by the Beaver - and answered by the Beaver - can exclusively reveal that Education Officer Ashoknawe Kermit is a left-wing deluded Red-blooded nutjob.

He really is. If you don't believe us, here's a list of those revolutionary firebrand antics in full:

1. He told people to chuck snowballs at politicians
2. He was next to a guy who was next to a bloke who broke a window
3. He is SITTING in a ROOM as you READ THIS!
4. He had a conversation with Adrian Chiles
5. Er...
6. That's it.

See? Y'see how nuts and dangerous this man is?!!? THIS MAN MUST BE STOPPED [continued p2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9-94]



## That hard-hitting interview with Ashoknawe Kermit and Chiles

**Chiles:** Welcome to Daybroke, the show that used to be The One Show but is now The Number Two Show. Joining us now to discuss the student protests is Ashok Kermit, proven nutjob at LSE. Hello Kermit.

**Kermit:** Hiya.

**Chiles:** Kermit, there was student anger at that protest last week...

**Kermit:** Hi. Before you begin, I'd like to stop you there. First of all, I want to say you have been deceived yet again by the media. When you say "student anger", you are again perpetuating the narrative that the media perpetually perpetuates that "students" somehow are "angry", as if "anger" is the only emotion we are physically capable of having, as if "students are somehow irrational and driven by animal instincts". It is an easy mistake to make.

**Chiles:** No, Kermit, what I wanted to ask was...

**Kermit:** You see, the media perpetuates these narratives all the time; it is their job; it is what they do. And it is easy to fall into their trap. D'you see? D'you understand now Adrian?

**Christine Bleakley:** What colour is that shirt you're wearing? That's a nice shirt.

**Kermit:** It's green, thanks.

**Chiles:** Er, no, no, Kermit, what I want to say is that these violent protests...

**Kermit:** Let me stop you again, Adrian. Everyone says how these protests were "violent", as we committed a crime. As if we committed "criminal damage" on "private property". Well I want to redefine violence. Forget the apparent definition that defines it as so-called harm to the so-called individual. Where did they get this definition from? The so-called "Oxford English Dictionary"? I want to define it as governments balancing their budgets and getting us out of a fiscal crisis.

**Chiles:** Er, OK, right, er, thanks for that Kermit.

**Christine Bleakley:** One last hard-hitting question, Kermit. Where'd you get that scarf?

**Kermit:** George at Asda.

**Chiles:** Right. Coming up next, a gerbil who can water-ski.

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# Curl-o-matic SHAMPOO

From this... ..to this

**"Because your education's worth nothing to the government!"**

# Sport

## LSE's Russian and Middle-Eastern students give a helping hand to World Cup bids

By M'Acho 'Outside The' Box

The Dependent can report that students from the London School of Economics and Financial Sciences may have been instrumental in securing success for the Russian and Qatari bids for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

In a piss-poor investigation that revealed little, if any, real evidence, the Dependent can report that while some politically-minded students of the School were mobilised and protesting at the UK government's planned rise in tuition fees, their capitalist counterparts were putting to good use their spare Eid and Christmas money.

The Dependent has heard from the most disreputable of sources that the students in question each sacrificed one night out in Mahiki and agreed to set aside the funds for a communal pot that would be used to grease the palms of Fifa executives.

Another equally dubious source was able to attest that the total sum raised would have been enough to bail out the entire Iberian Peninsula (but would not have extended to Ireland) and was channeled to Zurich in utmost secrecy, because no one thinks that Russia and Qatar are corrupt.

The Dependent has learned that the money was wired from a central London Natwest cashpoint to the 6,020 different bank accounts in the Cayman Islands, where it was then withdrawn and transported via speed-boat to Zurich. Upon arrival on the Swiss coast, 48 donkeys were used to ensure safe delivery to the Fifa headquarters and the individual executive members.

The Dependent is unable to confirm allegations that 48 women accompanied the cash and the donkeys,

but has heard from one source, an employee at the website [www.strongrussianbridezillas.com](http://www.strongrussianbridezillas.com) that 48 of their top-earning women have disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

Lario Mefkaritis, the Ivo-Guatemalo-Cyprio-South Korean representative on the Fifa committee has denied that he received money from any donkeys, but has been seen with a woman called Anastasia on his arm. He also denied that he ever promised to back the England bid, because "there is no 'known' corruption in England."

Critics have suggested that the Russian students' motives may have been to create a Customs Union between Russia and Scotland, and the Dependent has learned that negotiations have been taking place regularly on Wednesday evenings at the London Zoo between one specific Russian Prince and the McReith-Grandehair aristocracy. The two-faced source also revealed a condition of the Customs Union demanded by the Scottish diplomats was that each Russian World Cup stadium would be dedicated to the McReith-Grandehair Princess, and that after the 2022 World Cup the Qatari stadiums would be donated to poorer countries, such as Scotland.

It was later revealed, following the scandal, that these LSE students had not campaigned in the 'Mild Refrigeration of the Potential Future Costs to Students of Education,' and had instead used their time and resources to secure the locations of the 2018 and 2022 World Cup at two very lucrative emerging markets. The LSESU expressed its severe condemnation of their actions by withdrawing the offer of 6,020 '50% Off For One Night' vouchers for the Holborn Travelodge during the London 2012 Olympics.



## Carol and the cuts...

Our photographers braved the bitter Arctic winds to document proceedings at both the recent Carol and also student demonstrations protesting against government cuts to higher education funding.



Drunk on the high spirits of rebellion, a protester from the Highlands passes out on the steps of the House of Commons

One rather mordantly dressed protester fails to see the light-hearted side of student activism



A group of sixth-formers from Hants. are kettled in while attempting to gain an audience with a government minister



Two representatives from the LSE Archery Club, giddy with excitement at events unfolding at the Den



Over-enthusiastic police officers patrol Houghton Street in advance of this year's AU Carol



Later on, at Crush, a minor disagreement ensues between members of the Dance Club and the Tennis Club



Jonathan Storey age 20 and two-fifths



Ahmed Peerbux, age 20 and a quarter

Merry Christmas  
from

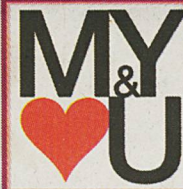
PARTB

# On the twelfth day of Christmas

Alice Leah Fyfe sent to me..



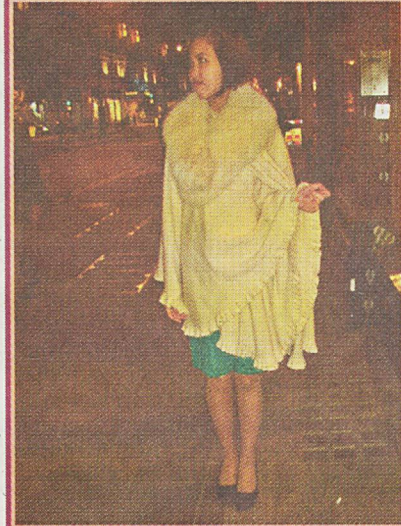
1) Topman Drummer Boy Blazer: £84 2) Topshop Black Cossack Ht: £26 3) Silence and Noise Riding Jacket at UO: £68 4) Office Velvet Shoes: £68 5) Chilli Pepper Cape: £48 6) Reiss Skater Dress £195: 7) Mango Swing Dress: £49.90 8) UO Chain Rings: £8, ASOS Pilgrim Pearl Ring: £3, Topshop Caged Pearl Ring: £10 9) ASOS Velvet Blazer: £80 10) Topshop Blouse: £34 11) Ted Baker Boots: £80, ASOS Suede Wedges: £60 12) Camilla Norrback: £51.



Maaike Mossel & Yan Giet  
scout Houghton Street's best dressed

**Stephanie**  
Imagine: an outfit with a palette of fur striking enough to instil envy among even the Prada Devils of the world... I present to you Stephanie - a New York girl after our London hearts. With fashion icons that transcends history and time; from Audrey Hepburn to Jackie Kennedy - it is only fitting that Stephanie has managed to pull off this timeless fashion ensemble that empowers as much as it allures. Adding to our ongoing debate regarding New York versus London's fashion scene, she champions London for its 'cutting edge and avant-garde style' but misses the 'irreverence of New York's charm.' Her philosophical advice on fashion is to 'dress like you are starring in the movie of your life!' If you would like to see her in action, Stephanie will be chairing LSE's Fashion Show on 4th Feb 2011 with the theme "LDN by LSE" which promises to portray a sartorial map of London onto the runway. For the full interview and a more intriguing insight into Stephanie's fashion outlook - please check out the LSE Lookbook blog!

**Sophie: First year Philosophy & Politics undergraduate**  
The first thing you wonder about when you see this outfit: WHERE DID SHE GET THE HAT? Sorry people, she found this super cosy rabbit fur hat from a vintage shop in Le Marais in Paris, the area where fur appears in abundance around this time of year in every little shop. If you're looking for anything fur, you could definitely get some nice bargains there. Back in London, Sophie can often be seen in black in wintertime; classic outfits with some alternative touches "like a shirt and pencil skirt with some really different boots" are what she usually goes for. According to her, the quintessential winter look this year should certainly include a cape or knee-high leather boots. She must be happy with this season having more than a couple of very classic key items, as she adores the styles in movies from anywhere between the 20s and 60s, and tries to find similar pieces in the fashion jungle that is high street. Though at this stage in her life she mostly acquires these styles at Zara, she dreams of bigger things: "If I could afford it, I would love to own a couple of YSL pieces someday." Wouldn't we all...



## Magical Markets

The time has come! The much dreaded or treasured time of Christmas shopping. Stress levels hang in the premeditation and location of your shopping missions. For those of you who can handle the dazzling lights of the West End, of course there are countless guaranteed one-stop destinations. But for me, the charm of Christmas is to go wading through twinkling markets and boutiques. In particular, my favourite is **Columbia Road Market E2**, predominantly a flower market lined either side with beautiful independent shops selling everything from vintage jewellery, clothes, textiles, furniture and ceramics, delicious traditional sweets, books, hats; the list is endless, each shop a little jewel in the tiara which Columbia Road has become. The exquisite perfumer, **Angela Flanders** has

its flagship store there too. Perfect for your ma, selling candles, creams and perfumes. And for each Wednesday in December, the shops, which are usually only open on Sundays, are also open for late night shopping 5pm-9pm. There will be mulled wine, mistletoe and chestnuts, so take a trip east one Wednesday before Christmas to treat yourself and your loved ones to some very unique presses. Other excellent markets around town this time of year include the **Cologne Christmas Market** which runs until 23rd Dec. outside the Royal Festival Hall on Southbank, quaint little chalets selling handmade toys and traditional festive foods. It can be a tourist trap though, so be careful about prices. Clerkenwell's **Exmouth Market** also has some interesting shops which are open late night every Friday 'til the big day. Merry Christmas!

## Eastenders - Why watch it?

Brett Lewis asks: "Eastenders, why do we do it?"

When trying to explain **Eastenders** to those who have never seen it, I've only ever been able to come up with one fitting analogy. Watching it is like wetting the bed. It's something everyone has done in their life, but you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone willing to admit to this embarrassing act.

But why? Eastenders is easily one of the most successful shows in British television history, with each episode gaining around 35-45 per cent of the audience share. In fact, the live episode of February 2010 amassed a stunning 15.6 million viewers (when you consider the population of the United Kingdom is 62 million, having 25 per cent of those people watch the same programme at the same time is impressive).

Despite its critical acclaim and consistent success since its inception, I often find myself questioning whether the show is actually good. Would I, as a consenting adult, begin to watch it now if it wasn't engrained into my television-watching ritual as a youngster? The answer to both is probably no, so the third and most pivotal question is why do I, and so many other people, continue to watch a show that could be generously described as "lacking quality"?

The first reason is the distinction between "good" and "enjoyable". Eastenders may not be good, but that doesn't mean that you can't enjoy the ridiculous events of the show. In fact, the similarity of Walford to a crass pantomime may mean that perversely, Eastenders could be one of the few times a family participate in an activity together (if that's not an indicator of 'Broken Britain', then I have no idea what is).

after being apparently assassinated 14 years earlier) there are surprising peaks where somehow, good writing and acting come to the fore, (such as the Mitchell brothers in their heyday). Eastenders has indeed delivered recently with its brilliant storyline about Syed, a confused young Muslim man who was engaged to the lovely Amira but embarked on an

### Watching Eastenders is like wetting the bed: everyone has done it, but you'd be hard-pressed finding anyone willing to admit it

illicit affair with Christian. For months, Syed struggled to balance his religion, his homosexuality and his impending marriage. The subject matter was dealt with sensitively, the story was tense and for once there was no clear villain in the love triangle; the audience felt empathy for all three parties. The aftermath of this allowed for around six weeks' smug justification from Eastenders fans, before the show inevitably descended into farce again.

The third and final reason is because of the British public. If you compare

Eastenders to any of its American counterparts, you'll notice a massive contrast. American soap operas tend to be about the glamorous lives of glamorous people; not about depressing people whose only solace is a depressing pub. This is because we are a nation full of schadenfreude. A show like Eastenders, where characters bathe in misery on a weekly basis, is actually a pleasant distraction from the burden of real life. It is a national pastime to build someone up, and when they finally arrive at the top, to drag them back down again (see Rooney, Wayne) and Eastenders is a masterful exponent of this. Characters always seem to enter the show on a high and full of optimism, and if they are lucky enough to leave E20 alive, there's a good chance that any soul they may have previously had has been crushed into oblivion.

Eastenders legend Barbara Windsor (a.k.a. Peggy Mitchell) was rewarded for all her years loyal service by being allowed to escape the show with her life, but only after her prized possession, the Queen Victoria pub, was incinerated by her crack-addled son Phil - who, incidentally, turned to drug abuse after losing both his children, one to her mother and the other to juvenile detention because he bashed a boy's head in with a wrench (which probably wasn't a good idea as the boy's father was the resident serial killer of the show at the time). I think you get where I'm going with this.

So the next time you're sat on your sofa facepalming at how bad Eastenders is, you should really be asking yourself "why do I love it so much?"

Eastenders is broadcast on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. For the true masochist, the two-hour, uninterrupted omnibus of the week's episodes is shown on a Sunday afternoon.

## Watch This Space

Simon Chaudhuri's festive TV tips

**One Born at Christmas**  
Channel 4, 25th December, at 15:00

Channel 4 airs a Christmas special of One Born Every Minute, its back-to-basics reality show filmed by unmanned cameras in the maternity ward of Southampton Hospital. Praised for its emotion and reality, Benji Wilson of The Telegraph called the original series "raw, unadorned humanity".

...And his gift ideas for the whole family

**Mum - Brothers & Sisters**  
(Season 1 on DVD, £15 online)

Let Mother feel better about the arguments over Christmas with this Emmy award-winning drama about the ultra-dysfunctional Walker family. With sun-drenched California as the backdrop, this US drama has everything you might expect of the stereotypical American soap opera - sex and scandal abound.

**Dad - The West Wing**  
(Seasons 1-7 on DVD, £40 online)

Whether Dad is a politics buff or not, he'll be sure to find something to enjoy in The West Wing. This classic series may have been on the shelves for a while, but that's all the more reason to pick up a bargain. Plus it might keep him occupied while the rest of the family hijacks the television for the holidays.

**Toast**  
BBC1, 30th December, at 21:00

Based on the autobiography of esteemed food writer and chef, Nigel Slater (Toast: The Story of a Boy's Hunger). This film explores Slater's life with a heavy emphasis on the food itself. Slater himself has a brief cameo and Helena Bonham-Carter plays his stepmother. Perfect for a culinary exploration of the swinging sixties.

**Sister - True Blood**  
(Seasons 1 and 2 on DVD, £25 online)

Widely regarded as 'Twilight for grown-ups,' if sister has avoided an unhealthy obsession with bites and sparkly vampires then this will certainly be the nail in the coffin. Stephen Moyer has a perfect Southern drawl and is excellent as the 170-year old vampire Bill Compton who falls in love with clairvoyant Sookie Stackhouse (Anna Paquin).

**Brother - The Wire**  
(Seasons 1-5 on DVD, £50 online)

Give brother a schooling on the mean streets of Baltimore, where the cops are only slightly better than the crooks. The true star of the series is the city itself, which seems to decay more and more with each season. The show was created, written and produced by former police reporter David Simon. One of the jewels in HBO's crown.



# Notes Music & Coffee

Has Edwin Loo found London's best café?

St. Martin's Lane is not exactly the natural location for a boutique, specialty coffee shop and café. For starters, it's smack-bang on the doorstep of London's natural tourist gateways, not in the East End and not shrouded by anonymous buildings. It's also surrounded by the 'usual suspects' - lines of faceless chain shops, the occasional red-neon-tourist-trap steakhouse and a few theatres of some prominence. Like many other places worth a trip to in London, you really do have to look beyond (and between) the lines in order to find something special. Past the bustling crowds of day-trippers and tourists on Shaftsbury Avenue and just slightly before the open space of Trafalgar Square is a fantastic new café - **Notes Music & Coffee** - that will, by any sane estimation, be hauling in the trophies and accolades in due course.

**The relentless attention to detail helps to breed loyalty amongst customers, with Notes attracting a clientele of people who cherish good coffee**

Notes is the brainchild of two ambitious men - Fabio Ferrera, the 2007 Brazilian Barista Champion and Rob Robinson, an ex-LSE student with a love for coffee. It is not your typical Central or East London coffee hideout. In place of the hard concrete and minimalism that is all the rage, is a lovely natural finish, with tasteful wood furnishings and a beautiful combination of old Victorian glory and modern design. Nor is it your typical café in terms of the retail concept - it pairs up a classical and jazz music shop with exceptionally good coffee in a remarkably unique take on the idea of a 'seamless experience'. More importantly, it comes

with what some coffee insiders say is perhaps the 'most bling' fit-out in terms of equipment and technology. Notes boasts a fully equipped bar for brewed coffee (and, I would even dare to say, perhaps the best in the UK open to paying customers), paired with an excellent selection of beans from some of the best roasters in the UK. To top it all off, sitting snugly on the counter is a brand-new cutting-edge La Marzocco Strada that pulls exceptional shots of espresso through the use of a new technology called pressure profiling (changing the pressure of the extraction to push out that little extra in flavour and quality). This investment in the best also means the best staff, with some very, very good baristas on duty behind the counter both day and night.

Taking a seat at the brightly lit brew-bar as lulling notes of Astrud Gilberto play in the background, I'm immediately struck by the fantastic communal vibe. Friendly, passionate and knowledgeable baristas provide world-class service (and world-class banter) as they brew up your coffee to order is something truly special in this city. The flawless service is matched with utterly exceptional coffee quality: a beautifully balanced cup of El Salvador Natural brewed through a cloth filter served up at the end, with clear, vibrant notes of strawberries, cherries and chocolate coming through. It's certainly a good place to start if you want to learn more about coffee: with the staff more than happy to explain anything you might be curious about, and how they work. It's also one of the most upbeat and friendly additions to the scene in London this year. For both Fabio and Rob, this enterprise comprises the fruits of a long journey into the world of coffee. Fabio's victory as Barista Champion for Brazil in 2007 and a spot in the World Barista Championship highlighted a distinguished career in coffee and a phenomenal talent in nearly all aspects of making the perfect cup. Rob's journey is slightly different: a PPE graduate from Oxford, he caught the coffee bug in Paris, before returning to London, meeting Fabio and running a coffee cart while working towards his Master's in Public Administration at the LSE.

"This is a venue inspired by wonderful coffee, and bringing music and coffee together", Fabio tells me during a brief lull in service. And indeed, everything here seems distinctly different. The emphasis on quality is clear - with the kitchen serving up well-prepared food to go with coffee of an equally high quality. "We get the best ingredients - seasonal and local, artisanal breads - put together of course by a great chef," Fabio adds. This relentless attention to detail also helps to breed

loyalty amongst customers, with Notes attracting a strong clientele of people who enjoy and cherish good coffee and good food. I raise the issue of the 'big chains', and where both Fabio and Rob see the key differences.

"Most coffee, either from chains or from some of the less reputable independents, is terrible. It's really bitter - you'll have to add a lot of sugar. And that's why everyone thinks coffee is bitter. With specialty coffee, brewed the right way, you realise exactly how many flavours coffee actually has. It's like wine - if you compare a really good bottle with a really cheap one, the difference is huge and you can taste it," Fabio observes. But this isn't the only difference between the high-end of places like Notes and the low-down of the chains. "Chains tend to abuse the milk that goes with cappuccinos and lattes: reheating it, for example, which destroys the proteins. It's disgusting, almost like re-frying an egg. And you'll never get a coffee with good temperature or good, silky texture." Rob adds. This emphasis on quality is not expensive at the point of sale either - with Notes charging £2.50 for an expertly crafted espresso-based drink in contrast to the usual £2.70-£3 demanded from

the big chains on the high street. With the new machine able to brew espresso with variable pressure to maximise flavour, this makes it even more worthwhile. Espressos and Flat Whites came out beautifully - with the marriage of both highly experienced staff and a brilliant machine - the only one in London- bringing flavours and textures out of the Square Mile Autumn Espresso Blend that I didn't know were possible. For those who really love their espresso, Notes boasts two blends available at all times: the house blend roasted by Square Mile, and a guest blend from another roaster.

For Fabio and Rob, together with the exceptional coffee, their goal is also about a wider movement towards quality and giving customers the best product possible. "What is really different about the UK - when compared to other countries- is the sheer number of chains. It's absolutely insane. And this means people are always looking for a cheaper coffee, rather than a better one. We want to help change that attitude, and bring the best coffee and the best café experience to as many people as possible," Fabio adds. This is something reflected in what Notes is as a holistic entity: a pleasantly different retail experience for music, coupled with

world-class coffee and well-executed café food. As I leave the warmth and buzz of Notes for the cold drizzle of London in the winter, I can't help but feel mildly sorry for the people in the small queue for a nearby chain coffee shop: they're so close to a far superior experience, yet still so far away.

## Notes Music & Coffee

31 St. Martin's Lane,  
WC2N 4ER London

Nearest Tube:  
Charing Cross or Leicester Square

[www.notesmusiccoffee.com](http://www.notesmusiccoffee.com)

Open Monday-Saturday 8am-10pm

Sunday Hours may vary.



Photos courtesy of Adam Rhoades Photography

# Tell me sweet little lies

Alexander Young debates **Machiavellian sexual politics**



Not to scale: Alex Young

It seems that Christine McVie and Stevie Nicks were bigger influences on my expectations of how women wanted to be treated than my strictly Kantian mother. If the will to admit this to myself makes me a reprehensible example of everything wrong with the androcentric model of subconscious social ideology into which we are all brainwashed, so be it: it won't stop me from trying to justify myself by attempts to tar everyone, male and female, with the same brush. In spite of how awful I must already sound here, it's a pretty inescapable fact: people lie to their partners - the only differences between relationships are the motivations behind it.

I'm not just talking about the realms of the big lies: not just the 'I didn't feed your dog laxatives because I was bored' excuses; not just the 'I cannot wait to see you' ones borne of a sense of boredom rather than genuine desire for companionship; and most certainly not the 'no, I don't only like having sex with you with you on all fours because it means that I don't have to think about your face' lies. While these lies are important, and may well go on at a grand scale such as that with which I am concerned here, the far more insidious and far more morally and practically dubious lies are the little throwaway ones. The ones you don't think about twice: the ones that you forget about telling. Remember when you told your partner that their twitch doesn't bother you? The time that you told them that the way that they breathe when they're trying to concentrate on something isn't completely infuriating? No, you probably don't - but they will. This is, of course, all innocent and harmless: the traditional 'white lie' but with a payoff. You won't have to put up with their insecurity for a little while, but they're going to practically canonise you to their friends

for being so understanding: 'oh my god, he is so lovely! He takes me just as I am, even though I'm just awful.' The little lie will multiply: they will internalise it and their belief in it will only become stronger and stronger. Of course, what happens when that twitch combined with the nasal whine of intense concentration finally gets to you and you snap is inevitable: you'll be exposed, painted as a bastard and probably reaffirm that insecurity for yourself to lie about (albeit more convincingly) at another time.

**It's a pretty inescapable fact: people lie to their partners: the only differences involve the motivations behind the lies**

The question remains, having shown that this is a destructive habit, as to why we do it. I turn, for an inspiration in answering this, to my casual acquaintance with Niccolò Machiavelli. Ignoring any potential for interpretation of The Prince as elaborate satirical banter, Machiavellian public principles give us a perfect answer to all of this. Just as a prince would lie to secure his power, a romantic

partner would lie for the same reason. I'm not positing an argument for male-dominated relationship (I see this as a gender-neutral mutual relation that I have seen on both sides of all relationships I've been involved with and party to), but rather arguing that this is how partners get their teeth into one another, irrespective of gender or orientation. The entire flirting ritual is a series of lies: the premise of 'you're the most attractive/appealing/positive adjective person in the room, so I'll give you my attention' with invariably transient subjects is tautologically a lie. At its most veracious, this statement is going to read along the lines of 'you'll do, for now.' Following this are the allusions to exclusivity in relationships: lies of omission, if nothing else, of whatever else you have 'on the side.' These lies build trust, and so build power over the other: if this mutual power relation grows strong enough (if enough binding lies are told), a relationship is formed and ensues in its normal way. Each partner's power over the other is consolidated, and any more white lies told will be of a personal nature and more damaging if the truth is revealed. That nervous tick, when its annoying nature is revealed, will only serve to further power of one lover over the other: that lowering of self-esteem may well make them scared to leave for sake of finding someone else even as prima facie accepting.

Yes, this is an incredibly bleak assessment of love and relationships; and yes, I do personally prescribe to it. That, however, does not mean that I don't intend to have a little bit of fun with my lies: it's not a breakup if someone isn't ruined afterwards. I know that this is a little heavy for a sex and gender article, but I promise I'll return to graphic descriptions of my penis in week one of Lent Term.

# "There is a real collective discussion about the direction the play should go in"

Christopher Finnigan chats to actor **Richard Katz** about his forthcoming role in *Romeo & Juliet*, learning lines and life as an actor with the RSC.

## The RSC's Roundhouse Season at a Glance...

- Romeo and Juliet**  
30 November - 1 January 2011
  - Anthony and Cleopatra**  
8 December - 30 December 2010
  - The Winter's Tale**  
14 December - January 2011
  - Hamlet**  
(Young Persons Shakespeare)  
18 December - 26 January 2011
  - The Comedy of Errors**  
(Young Persons Shakespeare)  
21 December - 1 February 2011
  - Julius Caesar**  
6 January - 5 February 2011
  - As You Like It**  
13 January - 5 February 2011
  - King Lear**  
21 January - 4 February 2011
- All at the Roundhouse in Camden.  
10 £5 day tickets for 16 - 25s for every performance



Richard Katz in *Romeo & Juliet*

When interviewing actors you never quite know which type are going to arrive. Often the divas with large egos appear, who, having been unwillingly dragged away from rehearsals, huff and puff their way to the meeting only to be unresponsive, rude and hostile. Fortunately, I encountered the other kind in Richard Katz. Charming, relaxed and honest, Katz was grabbing some lunch in-between rehearsals at Camden's Roundhouse where he will be playing Lord Capulet in the Royal Shakespeare Company's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Winter is a very busy period in the RSC's calendar; this season will see productions of eight Shakespeare plays, including *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, and *King Lear*.

The RSC is regarded as one of the world's leading theatre companies and has gained a reputation of bringing Shakespeare to life in a very grand and unique fashion. It is with this in mind that I ask Katz what its like for an actor to work with the RSC. "There is a real collective discussion about the direction the play should go in. We have eight to

ten weeks of rehearsals, which started with the director, Rupert Goold, getting all the actors together and asking for their thoughts and contributions". Katz went on to praise the camaraderie that exists in a theatre production which television, film and radio sadly lack. "Most of the time with TV you don't rehearse, you just turn up and do your bit. But, with theatre, you explore your character, which becomes a very personal experience. You expose yourself as an individual as you really feel and think how to play the character." Combine this with spending everyday for eight weeks with you fellow actors; you develop a very strong connection. "Don't get me wrong, TV, film and radio are great, you can turn up to a radio production with a beard and no one cares, although you do have to become very good at turning pages silently! TV and film are sexy and exciting but much briefer than working in the theatre."

From an outsider's perspective, Shakespeare seems a very daunting task for an actor, to which Katz sets me straight. "I'm sure I'm not the first to say this, but, Shakespeare works on so many levels - you can just say the words, as

there's such rich poetry in the language, but also in the way you say them. So, it has a lot of jumping-off points for an actor; if they want to make a visual or linguistic contribution, there's room for both." Katz reveals he has become somewhat of an admirer of Shakespeare as he now finds himself reading sonnets

## With theatre you explore your character, which becomes a very personal experience

at home with his eldest daughter, when he's not keeping an eye on his team Arsenal. "The language of Shakespeare is great. Not only does he make up a word,

if he feels others are insufficient, but it's all incredibly detailed. Take *The Comedy of Errors*: it's a play where we're all falling into things, but its written in a such a detailed way its much more than just collapsing on stage."

I suggest that starring in three plays in one season appears pretty demanding, quite like an exam periods for students. What advice would Katz give to students attempting to memorise passages of books and quotes from different authors? "I don't really have a problem memorising. I think it's because lines are associated with moves. So, for example, when I walk over to the kettle I know my line is 'who would like a cup of tea.'" Thus, no need to panic if you see and students acting in their exams - you now know why. "But, I do sometimes forget my lines on stage, but the reason you work so hard on rehearsals is so people can rescue you if you do". Working as an actor on stage Katz remarks is like a journey you travel everyday. "The first few times its new, yet after, say your fourth trip you know the way, and if there are roadblocks you know how to overcome them".

Katz's humble nature shines through

when he pays tribute to the "huge machine of people off set; there's at least twenty people off stage who are making the front look smooth." At one point in *Romeo and Juliet*, Katz walks on with a flame; however, due to health and safety restrictions he can't light it himself, so he finds it consistently appear in his hand with impeccable timing. Katz estimates that there are about one hundred people in all that make the show real, and who are heading next year to New York. He jokingly compares them to an army who move in to take over a certain location.

He confesses this is the first time he's tackled *Romeo and Juliet*, which he sees as an advantage. "I didn't have any pre-conceived ideas about it, which means I have been able to explore it more." He compares this feeling to all RSC plays due to their inclusive production process, "every play feels like your first". Katz paints the world of theatre with a positive brush. He speaks eloquently about the process of acting and comes across as a reflective, open and honest person. He ends our interview with a bit of reflection: "You know its just pretending - it's a fun occupation".

# Romeo and Juliet, The Roundhouse

Christopher Finnigan



Deeply evocative: *Romeo & Juliet*

On a treacherous snowy London night, there was an audience who arrived at Camden's Roundhouse cold and glum, but left three hours later warm and satisfied. As the snow turned to ice outside, inside the audience's frowns transformed into smiles as they found their hearts undergo a work out equal to any long run.

A dark passionate mix of love, surrealism and poetry has seen director Rupert Goold adapt a play of outstanding quality. Dreamlike at times, Goold effectively brings the dead back to life and lets them haunt or advise the living. This eerie atmosphere is present throughout; it's established almost immediately with an explosive fight scene between the Montagues and Capulets and an intensely enchanting dance scene where *Romeo and Juliet* meet - setting up this faultless play perfectly. Loud, ominous eastern music is played while fire bellows up through the ground in this darkly lit world. Goold's focus on emphasising the sinister battle between the two families provides an engrossing backdrop for the illegitimacy of this newfound love.

I hadn't read the play since school so, before arriving at the Roundhouse, I briefly looked over certain passages. After ten minutes of reading, I realised not only the quality of the RSC but the inadequacy of merely reading Shakespeare. His tragic plot and beautiful lines are brought out in full force in this adaptation, with so much more being added in the performance than merely reciting the words in one's own head.

*Romeo and Juliet* is a tour de force exploration into love that could never be allowed to live. It shows love's life-enhancing, purpose-giving ability, its unforgiving hold on its victims, the hate

it spurns and the jealousy its evokes. It becomes the lovers' every reason and intuition, and the families source for great hurt of their pride and honour.

The stage production is pierced with sublime language. It can at one instant be brutally harsh and then devastatingly romantic. By creating strongly ominous scenes, the delicate sonnets between the two lovers are heightened and given more room to sparkle as they flicker in the spotlight in a pitch-black theatre. There

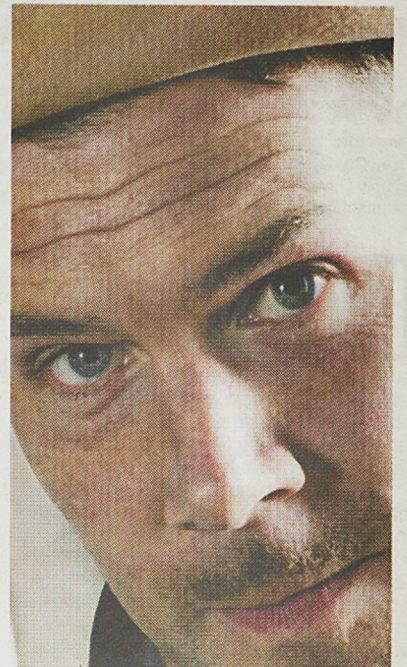
## A tour de force exploration into unrequited love

were a few modern references added into the play, one that will leave the audience pondering at the end and another in the form of a Hoodie. The Hoodie worn only be either of the two estranged lovers came to represent rebellion, he or she who were rebelling was ordained with the Hoodie.

One character who stood out for me was Mercutio played by Jonjo O'Neil. His deep Glaswegian accent made his lines sound even more sinister than they are on the page. A tortuous character, O'Neil at one point begins to surreally swim around the insides of someone during a mocked sexual encounter, (gaining him a spontaneous round of applause from the audience). Knowledge of the ending, where death is more comforting than love that cannot be realised, took nothing away from anticipating its coming, which was a mark of this play's excellence. This dark and intense adaptation is both deeply evocative and widely entertaining.

# A Tale of Two Brothers and their Love for Ska

Masaya Tanikawa talks with **Tyber Cranstoun**, frontman of old-school ska-reggae group **The Dualers**



“Not one person I’ve met has said they didn’t like our music,” beams **Tyber Cranstoun**, frontman of nine-piece reggae-ska group **The Dualers**. Formerly fronted together with brother Si Cranstoun, he left the group in early November and moved on with his solo music career. The duo was most famous for their busking performances around South-East London over the past decade, where the brothers honed their skills as performers.

Since December 2009, the Southie favourites have sold over 15,000 tickets including three sell-out shows at IndigO2, an appearance at Twinwood Festival 2010 and a monthly residency at New Cross venue The Amersham Arms. Again, all without proper PR. They have touched bases with other ska acts as well, supporting the likes of Jimmy Cliff, UB40 and Madness. The future certainly looks bright for The Dualers.

Despite their impressive accomplishments so far, Tyber believes they can do better. “On a scale of one to ten, I’d say we’re at about a four. We aren’t nearly as good as we’d like to be because we’ve always done things D.I.Y.,” he says.

“We’ve had fans do our website and arranged releases and gig bookings on our own, so I knew for a fact we could bring the whole roof down if we did things professionally.”

Having hired manager Allen Jacobs since last year, the group is aiming to raise the stakes: “If we wanted to rub shoulders with the likes of Beyoncé and Metallica, then we need the sort of support they have. We’re giving ourselves opportunities that the big record labels would give to their artists,” says Tyber.

The Dualers have a 7,000-strong London following, but they have more

ambitious dreams. “We don’t want to be known just locally. It’s every band’s dream to be known all around the world. It would also give us the chance to spread ska and reggae, which I believe is a genre that hasn’t been exploited that much.”

He has a point - pick any genre of music and fans will be quick to list off tons of bands, while the same can’t be said for ska and reggae. “It tells me this music hasn’t been given its time, which is something my dad would always say to me and my brother.”

Tyber’s father was an important influence on the Cranstoun brothers, exposing them to a hand-picked canon of ‘proper’ Jamaican reggae and ska during their childhood. “Dad was a pioneering ska promoter back in the day. When he was in the Navy, he stopped over in Jamaica right when ska was starting,” he says. “He loved what he heard and brought some records back home to London, where his brothers shared his love of the music.”

During the 60s, ska was largely seen as political ‘black’ music. “He was attracting black people into these white areas, which was naturally troublesome. The police really didn’t like that,” says Tyber.

“He likes to say he’s the first white man to have ska here. He did a lot of firsts, really. I mean: my mother’s black, and when he first tried to bring her into his parents’ home she wasn’t allowed in for almost a year.”

In a similar fashion, Tyber hopes the sudden departure of brother Si will find acceptance amongst the fanbase. “It was quite sudden, but it was for the best. He’s quite busy with his solo career doing classic doo-wop rock, and it just got to the point where he couldn’t be in two places at once. The times we had together were

great and he’ll certainly be missed by all of us.”

What made The Dualers’ music interesting was the brothers and their different perspectives on life. “He was always the musician and I was the actor. He was busking long before I started. I actually went to the Guildhall School of Drama several years ago, but I dropped out after doing a year of agency work to pursue my music career.”

His acting experience greatly influences his work on-stage. “If you go way back, singing used to be a way to tell a story. Whenever I’m on stage I completely relieve the story of the plot.” At their last IndigO2 show in August, Tyber called on a girl to come on-stage and dance: an act that was completely unrehearsed and truly improvised.

Tyber hopes The Dualers’ brand of happy-go-lucky music will also find its place amongst the wider music-loving audience. “A lot of the acts we’re seeing these days just aren’t very friendly, especially towards their audience and that’s a shame. We’re very approachable, bubbly people and we sing happy lyrics. We aren’t deep and arrogant, we just sing what we feel.”

A lot of our fans tell us our music is like medicine. We create these ‘don’t worry about life’ vibes, a kind of natural high that anyone can enjoy,” says Tyber. “We don’t choose to do this music because it makes us money, but because I think we’re one of the chosen bands that will eventually bring ska and reggae back into the world.”

Perhaps the diverse fanbase - grandparents, children, skinheads, goths - are the essence of ska and reggae itself.



## Gig review: The National Brixton O2 30.11.2010

Sachin Patel waxes lyrical about **The National**

I’ve traditionally found it extremely difficult to describe **The National** - so it should suffice for me to say that they have made my favourite album of 2010, *High Violet*.

At a stretch, I could say they write literary rock music which combines Carver-esque suburban narratives with painterly washes of guitar, stirring orchestral arrangements and the most intricate rhythm section to have emerged from the Midwest.

Since I last saw them play, the live band has expanded to an eight-piece, including two players on brass and the perennially gifted Padma Newsome contributing keyboards.

Coupled with the Dessners on guitars, the Devendorf on bass and drums, and Matt Berninger telling tales of middle-class woe, the octet launch straight into taut and nervy Boxer single ‘Mistaken For Strangers’.

From there on in, the band delivers a set that spans their last three albums. Inevitably, highlights abound from their most recent LP which showcases a new level of sophistication in their songcraft. ‘Anyone’s Ghost’ is introduced by the band as “the most concise song we’ve ever written”, and is impressively dreamy and evocative given its brevity.

In spite of the apparently miserable quality many of The National’s songs are imbued with, the band continually engage in witty, anecdotal “banter”. Describing the context for ‘Apartment Story’, Berninger explains how guitarist Bryce is also his landlord, before asking him to “turn up the heating” in his flat; similar levity is apparent throughout the show as Berninger chugs down seemingly lethal quantities of wine.

The gig threatens to never end, but The National ensure that the curfew is adhered to in suitable style, finishing their

encore with a stunning acoustic rendition of *High Violet* closer ‘Vanderlyle Crybaby Geeks’. With their microphones switched off - all eight musicians’ eyes lasered in on the crowd - the performance is magical, inspiring an almost churchly sing-along from members of the audience.

If you can’t catch them live any time soon, all three of their most recent albums reward extended listening.

## NON-REQUIRED READING

**PartB** takes a peek at what members of the LSE community are reading in their off hours.

**CAROLINE CRAIG**  
MSc Political Sociology '10  
Alumna

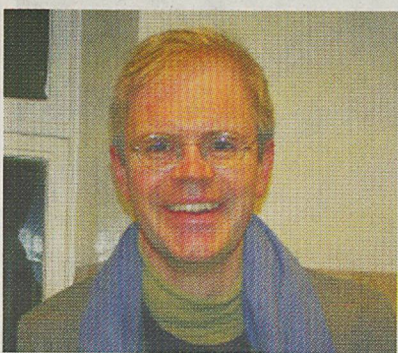


**Favourite Non-Required Books:**  
Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*; James Baldwin’s *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

**Currently Reading:**  
*The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai

**Favourite Fictional Character:**  
Professor McGonagall from the *Harry Potter* series

**Dr. ANGUS WRENN**  
Coordinator, Literature and Society  
Faculty

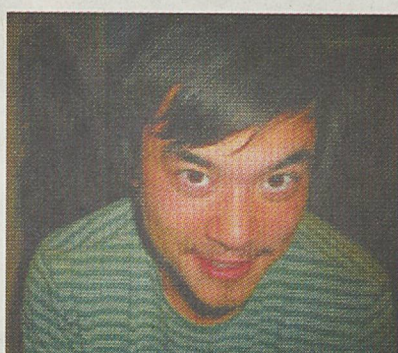


**Favourite Non-Required Books:**  
Andrei Makine’s *A Life’s Music*-- a true successor in modern times to Nabokov. Bruce Chatwin’s *Utz*-- a study of porcelain collecting behind the Iron Curtain worthy of Kafka. John Le Carré’s *A Perfect Spy*-- not only the greatest British novel of the Cold War but, purely as a piece of fiction, a rival to *Great Expectations*. Sandor Marai’s *Embers*-- perhaps the most sustained stylistic tour-de-force since Ford Madox Ford’s *The Good Soldier*.

**Favourite Fictional Character:**  
Bazarov in Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons*. If I’m limited to English literature, then Jeeves in P.G. Wodehouse

**Currently Reading:**  
*The Devil’s Own Work*, a marvellous Faustian novel by the contemporary British novelist Alan Judd.

**JESSE OVERALL**  
BSc International History '11  
Undergraduate



**Favourite Non-Required Books:**  
*Humboldt’s Gift* by Saul Bellow is my favourite book of all time. *Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak - I like it because of the historical backdrop of the Russian civil war. *For Whom The Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway. Robert Caro’s *The Power Broker*, which is about Robert Moses, who was responsible for building most of the highways, bridges, and public housing in New York between the 1930s and the 1970s. The book presents a time when people were hatching grand schemes and building all kinds of things in my country. I contrast it sadly with what I consider to be a sclerotic and aimless present.

**Favourite Fictional Character:**  
Von Humboldt Fleischer (from *Humboldt’s Gift*) - he’s wild, brilliant, paranoid, delusional, extremely eccentric, always making long speeches.

## Spotify Spotting

What Nathan Briant, former Comment Editor, is listening to this week:

Dusty Springfield  
*The Colour of Your Eyes - Remix*

The Dukes of Stratosphear  
*You’re My Drug*

The Kinks  
*Big Sky*

Peter Grimes, Benjamin Britten  
*Sunday Morning*

William Orbit  
*Water From A Vine Leaf*

Find the playlist here:  
spotify:user:beelay:playlist:0ebl  
dy3MeWJnQbK4JjCCn

# Conviction

Ramya Muthukumaran



**Director:** Tony Goldwyn **Screenplay:** Pamela Gray **Cast:** Hilary Swank, Sam Rockwell, Minnie Driver, Melissa Leo **Runtime:** 107 minutes **Cert:** 15 **Year:** 2011

**D**irected by one of the stars of *Ghost* and *The Last Samurai*, **Conviction** is a heart-rending true story about a sister's struggle to reclaim her brother's life. Kenneth Waters (Sam Rockwell) is charged with murder and serves life imprisonment. His sister, Betty Anne Waters (Hilary Swank), puts herself through law school to get him out.

Set in Massachusetts, the story shifts between three time periods: the mid 60s when they were children, the early 80s when the murder happened, and the mid 90s when Betty Anne went to law school and Kenny's sentence is reversed. Altering between different times creates an interesting frame of reference, almost like flipping through the pages of a book to understand the context of the story.

True stories are difficult to conceptualise because expectations are increased. What makes *Conviction* work is the fact that it doesn't stifle the viewer with over dramatic sequences or build up the central character to be a supernatural being without flaws. The characters are realistic, each of them with their own imperfec-

tions, but come together to rise above the system.

Betty Anne and Kenneth Waters emerged from a struggling childhood, with an alcoholic father and a mother who juggled multiple jobs, neither of whom seemed to provide any emotional support.

Both had a knack of getting into trouble and were partners in crime. After being separated and sent to different foster homes, they stick together through thick and thin. While Kenny is initially accused he gets away due to insufficient evidence, but is convicted two years later when his blood matches the murderer's. Betty Anne, who is married and has two children, dedicates her life to freeing her brother. The relationship with her children goes through a rough patch and they decide to live with their father instead. After researching an escape route for her brother, in the form of DNA profiling, she hits roadblocks and finally works with an agency called The Innocent Project. Peter Gallagher plays Barry Schleck, its enigmatic founder. Through their combined efforts, Kenny is released.

The highlight of the movie is the stellar performances. Sam Rockwell shows true versatility in his edgy portrayal of a violent and aggressive yet witty and charming miscreant who keeps you guessing about his integrity. The conflict in his character, between a law breaking renegade and a doting father who lightens the mood in



Hilary Swank and Sam Rockwell are convicting as brother and sister in *Conviction*

any situation is played to perfection.

Particularly a scene where the whole family goes to a bar and Kenny is on the dance floor with his daughter and accidentally spills beer, instigating a fight. After shocking all present, he strip dances to a lighten up the atmosphere.

His attitude radically changes when he is in jail, where he becomes a lonely cynic who has lost the will to live. Hilary Swank as Betty Anne Waters makes it easy to imagine the plight of a devoted sister, who is persistent and optimistic, to a point where is unrealistically hopeful. She is very believable.

She is flanked by Minnie Driver, who plays Abra Rice, the supportive best friend, whom she meets in law school. With her sassy sense of humour and a smart mouth, Rice is an extremely en-

dearing character. She undoubtedly has the best lines in the movie. "The other old lady in my class", she says while talking about Betty Anne Waters.

My takeaway from the movie was the wonderful relationship shared between the siblings. Not even for an instant does Betty Anne doubt her brother's integrity. Neither does she consider her devotion to his emancipation a waste of her life. The movie makes you believe in the power of real people, like you and me.

Released in cinemas on January 14.

You will enjoy this if...

You liked *Catch Me If You Can* or *Erin Brokovich*

# The Girl Who Played With Fire

Thomas Drake



**Director:** Daniel Alfredson **Screenplay:** Jonas Frykberg **Cast:** Noomi Rapace, Michael Nyqvist, Lena Endre **Runtime:** 129 mins **Cert:** 15 **Year:** 2009

**L**isbeth Salander is back and she's kicking ass and taking names in Daniel Alfredson's follow-up to last year's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. This is the second film instalment of Swedish novelist Stieg Larsson's hit *Millennium* trilogy.

This episode once again follows the exploits of the quirky and misunderstood Lisbeth (a role reprised by the amazing Noomi Rapace), newly rich and rested from her exploits in the first film. Her tranquillity does not last long, however, as she quickly becomes entangled in a complicated multiple murder case linked to the Eastern European sex trade, and all of Sweden is convinced she is the murderer.

Lisbeth and her star journalist friend of *Millennium* magazine, Mikael Blomkvist (played with a tepid mediocrity by Swedish actor Michael Nyqvist), go on the hunt for the mysterious and dangerous character known only as 'Zala'. Only by finding him can they hope to clear Lisbeth's name.

The film disappoints more than it pleases, perhaps because the first instalment set such a high benchmark. Too many characters are introduced but never fleshed out. Many of these play pivotal roles in the book but become marginalised when condensed in the space of a two hour film. Important plot points explaining characters' motives are not presented well, if at all, so it's best not to think too hard why certain characters act the way they do, or you will be left disappointed.

The cinematography (not to mention the fashion - I'm looking at you, Erika Berger, editor of *Millennium*) gives the effect that we are looking at Stockholm in the early nineties, as it might be seen in a made-for-TV movie. Sadly, that is the highest level of sophistication the film reaches. While *Dragon Tattoo* was a genuine thriller, full of intrigue, incest, S&M, and a surprise ending, this film is a run-of-the-mill action piece, with few unexpected turns.

The screen version of Lisbeth Salander is a one-dimensional fan-boy dream-come-true. She's a bad-ass chick à la Sydney Bristow of *Alias*, but with more nudity. This isn't fair to her character. In the books, she is a reluctant fighter, albeit with a temper. At heart she is a self-conscious computer hacker and out and out nerd who just wants to be left alone. That is lost in this film, and that is a shame.

Despite these restraints, Rapace does an excellent job in becoming Lisbeth, and Rooney Mara, who will play the titular character in the upcoming American remake of the series, has much to live up to.

Suffice it to say, Salander catches up with Zala in the end, and what ensues is quite an intense showdown. Whether these five minutes make up for the other two hours is another matter.

Released on DVD on January 10.

# Gainsbourg

Rhiannon Parkinson



**Director:** Joann Sfar **Screenplay:** Joann Sfar **Cast:** Eric Elmosnino, Lucy Gordon, Laetitia Casta **Runtime:** 130 mins **Cert:** 15 **Year:** 2010

**B**iopics are always going to be tricky, and when covering a life as full as Serge Gainsbourg's the balance between breadth of events and depth of detail will always be hard to get just right. Joann Sfar's haunting and creative biopic of the musician Serge Gainsbourg doesn't quite manage to get this balance completely right, but is still, on the whole, very entertaining.

Opening with Gainsbourg's childhood, Sfar immediately sets the scene of **Gainsbourg** as the romantic, the womaniser, and the insecure artist. While the first part of the film details his childhood experiences, growing up as a French Jew during the Second World War, there is also a focus on the bizarre. The young Gainsbourg is shown to be plagued by his 'Jewishness', physicalised by a huge, grotesque puppet of his 'mug', mixing the absurd and the poignant in the face of Nazi persecution.

The ideas and experiences explored during the first part of the film, however, become taken over with narrative, and by the second half, the film becomes a series of events rather than a tangible and thoughtfully constructed narrative.

The loss of the abstract element and clear focus on the imaginative spirit, in favour of a far more traditional biopic detailing as many events of his life as is possible, brings the allure whole film down. The sole focus becomes the string of glamorous, high profile women in Gainsbourg's life (the alluring Juliette Gréco, the innocent France Gall, his muse Brigitte Bardot, and Jane Birkin in the shortest dress imaginable), and the absence of substantial plot starts to become apparent as the storyline slides from girl to girl.

Towards the end it begins to feel like the producers realised too late that

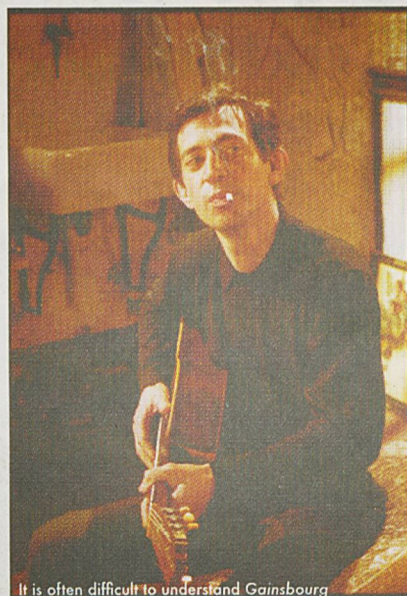
Gainsbourg's full and unconventional life would be too much to fit into just over two hours, and roughly attempt to cram the last few decades of his life into the end of the film. The key events of Gainsbourg's life are skipped over one after another and each time it seems that the audience is coming close to a moment of sincerity and understanding with the character, that moment is snatched away.

Ultimately, the audience loses any real connection and empathy with Gainsbourg, limiting his appeal to that of the obvious persona. The film remains entertaining and enjoyable, but is hampered by the disjointed approach and the loss of a sense of purpose and focus in the second half.

Released on DVD on January 10.

You will enjoy this if...

You liked *I'm Not There* or *L'illusioniste*.



It is often difficult to understand Gainsbourg

# A Serbian Film

Aameer Patel



**Director:** Srdjan Spasojevic **Screenplay:** Aleksandar Radivojevic **Cast:** Srdjan Todorovic, Sergej Trifunovic **Runtime:** 104 mins **Cert:** 18 **Year:** 2010

**I**t is the most heavily censored film in almost two decades and has been banned from several countries already. But **A Serbian Film** is not just snuff or a pointless gore-fest. It is far above the entirely less controversial yet pointlessly bloody *Saw* films or the altogether worse August Underground films. It is shocking, disturbing, at times ridiculous, but always calculated and intelligent. It never aims just to scare.

Milos (Srdjan Todorovic) is a retired porn legend leading a happy but financially insecure life with his family. For his ability to turn on-screen sex into art, he is approached to take part in a mysterious, secret film. The money on offer is too good to turn down. After signing the contract, he cannot back out, and the film is made to the director's unique taste.

None of the characters are based on real-life figures, but they aren't very far off, as Milos's wife points out. The flamboyant film director, Vukmir (Sergej Trifunovic), has a name resembling the Serbian leaders on trial in The Hague. Of all of the dangerous porn industry figures Milos has worked with, he is the most educated and respectable - a child psychologist

working for the government. All that transpires in the film is the product of his imagination.

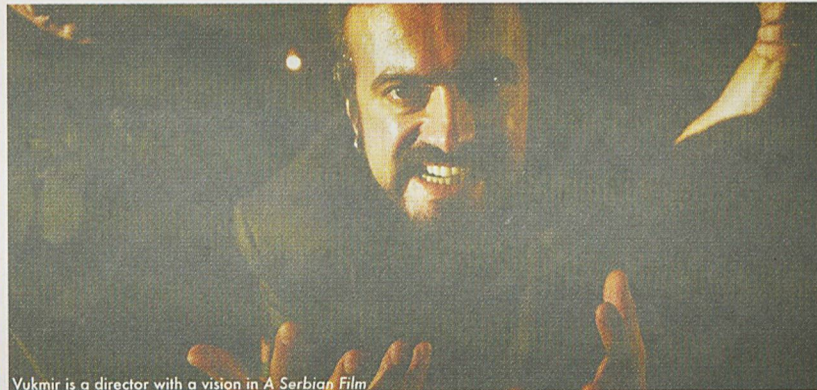
The film contains abhorrent scenes but does not carry an abhorrent message. It is supposed to be uncomfortable viewing.

Despite the rape, incest, murder and necrophilia, there were a lot of laughs at the screening I went to. The film does not take itself hugely seriously and there is a sense of ridicule and dark humour throughout which, in addition to providing much-needed relief, complements the underlying message. A single hilarious murder scene alone makes the film worth watching (I don't think it's suitable for YouTube).

The film was surprisingly easy to watch for the most part. Acting and production are consistently solid. Many expected it to be comparable to the equally misunderstood and controversial *Salò and Irreversible*, and the fact that it is, to the symbolism of the former and the brutality of the latter, counts in its favour.

The director calls the film a "political allegory" and at a basic level it clearly is. It is deliberately shocking and disgusting, and as a consequence, provoking. It was borne out of frustration at abuse, betrayal and unavoidable exploitation - exploitation that does not stop, even when only corpses are left. Yes, that's a pun.

Released in cinemas on December 10.



Vukmir is a director with a vision in *A Serbian Film*

# Year's End: What we liked and what we're looking forward to

## What we've really enjoyed in 2010:

### Kick-Ass

Greatest superhero film ever. Violent, witty, original.

### Restrepo

An apolitical diary demonstrating the futility of war. Soldiers fight but do not wage war.

### Inception

Innovation and creativity at this level is rare.

### Agora

Rachel Weisz is superb in this timely biopic of mathematician and philosopher Hypatia.

### The Social Network

Very, very good. And you use Facebook. Just watch it.

### Toy Story 3

It moves grown men to tears and is the final chapter of your nineties childhood.

## What we're looking forward to in 2011:

### The Tree of Life

Let "Terrence Malick, director of *Days of Heaven* and *The Thin Red Line*" suffice.

### True Grit

A western from the Coen Brothers with an awesome cast led by the incomparable Jeff Bridges.

### Cowboys and Aliens

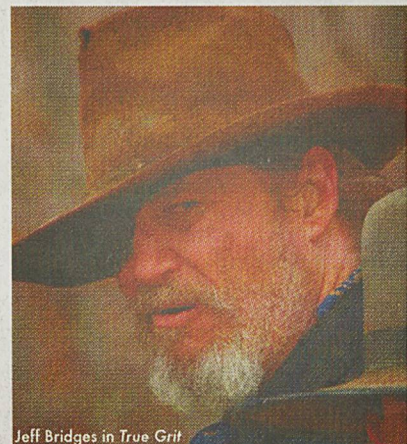
Fighting fun with men who've played James Bond, Hans Solo and Indiana Jones.

### Shame

Another artist first, filmmaker second, Steve McQueen's second film after the powerful *Hunger* sees him reunited with Michael Fassbender and joined by Carey Mulligan.

### The Beaver

Mel Gibson's comeback, alongside a puppet. Nothing to do with the name...



Jeff Bridges in *True Grit*

# Features

I arrive outside Portcullis House in good time for my 2.30 interview with Tom Harris at 2.15. I quickly find that this is actually too late: Bash Street School have come to meet their MP, and since one scanning machine is broken, they file in one-by-one to be checked for explosives and whatnot, leaving me and others standing in the freezing cold for a good 20 minutes. MPs can seemingly go in without a check - the former Lib Dem leader Sir Ming Campbell goes through another entrance after a cab drops him off. When I do eventually meet Tom Harris - the awarding-winning blogger, Labour MP for Glasgow South since 2001 and self-proclaimed TV fan - I'm thawing quickly, and feel so flustered and guilty for being made late I forget I've placed my belongings in a box which have gone through the scanning machine, shake hands with Harris, before embarrassingly being called back by a Portcullis House guard to collect my things. Not the best start.

Harris leads me over to a table with only a salt and a pepper pot on it, we sit down, and he faces the front of Portcullis House, to look out for the next person he has to meet half an hour later. I notice that I'm sat a couple of metres away from Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat and coalition rent-a-quote, and keep looking round to see if there's anyone I recognise. Our eyes, for the first half of the interview, rarely meet. I start by asking him about his blog, which I often read. He stopped writing about a month ago, citing that keeping it had 'a negative effect' on his 'personal, family and political life for reasons too many and complicated to recount', to much dismay from readers and political figures alike. Jonathan Isaby of Conservative Home said that he was 'in mourning' after Harris decided to stop publishing online.

He says that he started the blog two and a half years ago as 'a morale boost - for some politicians and some voters who thought that New Labour was a good thing. I was conscious that there were a lot of people who were happy to see what I was writing', and to counteract the dominance of conservative blogs, like those written by Iain Dale, Paul Staines, aka Guido Fawkes, and Conservative Home which are still arguably the leading political blogs in the country. He's now friends with Dale - they both went to Cliff Richard's 70th birthday concert at the Royal Albert Hall together.

Initially, Harris meant the blog to be more about his own life than just politics. He says, 'My instinct is that the public like it when a politician is a bit self-effacing and admits to liking Dr Who and singing karaoke [as he did] as well as being interested in policy areas. There are so many MPs, especially in this intake [from the 2010 general election], who are professional politicians and whose idea of relaxing would probably reading through the footnotes of the latest biography of John Maynard Keynes, and that's how fast and loose they play'. Is there a reason for that, though? 'Oh yeah, the press make it almost impossible for MPs to say anything that's remotely interesting, because journalists will notice you, and that might not be in a good way.'

Harris himself has been stung a number of times by the press, thanks to his forthrightness. He shows no regret

**“When I tweet I am brought into these surreal, utterly bizarre arguments with very strange people”**

in saying that, in 2008, 'our citizens have never been so wealthy', a statement criticised by the Conservatives as insensitive to the effects of the credit crunch - something somewhat ironic after the media flurries of Lord Young and Howard Flight a few weeks ago.

I ask him whether he'd recommend any other Labour blogs. He mentions Kerry McCarthy's but she doesn't update it that much - none are as good as his blog, he says, I sense only half-jokingly.

He

mentions in passing the recently-founded Labour Uncut blog, and I forget all political sensitivity and sense. I ask him about Sion Simon, the founder of the site, the former Labour MP for Birmingham Erdington until May this year. Out of pure self-interest, since I will be back up there post-graduation next year, I ask him if he knows whether Simon lives in Birmingham, and whether the site is based there. I sense that his tone drops; a coolness comes over him. I've forgotten Simon's position in an attempted coup against Tony Blair in 2006, something that Harris seems not to: 'I don't know, I haven't seen Sion in a long time'. I sense that there's many on the right of the Parliamentary Labour Party who would give a similar answer. Many, like Harris, clearly haven't forgiven being lumbered with Gordon Brown, something pushed by Simon and Chris Bryant's and others' attempted removal of Tony Blair in 2006; and seemingly feel the same way towards another Brown acolyte, Ed Miliband now leading the party. For the record, Harris says he still has the emails and texts of the attempted coup. It, he says, and other attempts to remove Blair, were 'crazy'.

As regards

Brown, Harris' brittle support started to disappear after he chose not to call a general election in late 2008. The first major criticism of indecisiveness from the public was picked up by backbenchers like Harris. Although he did have reservations whether Gordon would have the public relations skills to do it, I wasn't really that worried till September 2009 - then I was very much so. All the things that I had been told about Gordon, I realised they were true.'

I get the sense that to simply stay out of trouble, Harris thinks it'd be best to stop blogging. He was a supporter of David Miliband's leadership campaign, and although he might want to challenge the policy decisions of Ed Miliband, he doesn't want to play a part in destroying him personally, as some MPs might have done before May. First and foremost, he says, he wants Labour to win at the next election: 'I do have a difference in opinion - and I don't want to be continually sniping, because I wouldn't be able to resist [writing a blog post]. By now I would have written one on the 50 per cent tax rate and how stupid it is, and I would have written one on tuition fees, saying Ed is in the wrong position - I don't want to be that person. I want to make a contribution to Labour winning, and I'm not going

to do that by constantly sniping at Ed. But I know that means I'm effectively gagging myself.'

I mention that, although I can see where he's coming from, Alan Johnson, as Shadow Chancellor, has criticised Ed Miliband's leadership quite openly over the past few weeks. 'A great guy, Alan!' Harris says rather out of the blue, but he justifies his position by saying that Johnson has 'got more authority than me, and it's more important that he says it rather than an anonymous backbencher'. From this, it seems there will surely be a lot of pressure on Alan Johnson to lead the (ex?) Blairite New Labour charge in tandem, or possibly against, Miliband's leadership over the next few years.

One thing that Harris has continued to use is Twitter - he 'loves it', but he doesn't hold back and airs his forthright opinions. 'I was going to reduce the number of times I tweet, but I do have strong views on things, and when I tweet I am brought into these surreal, utterly bizarre arguments with very strange people. I mean, I said something like this, and I meant it as a general idea, not as a line in a piece of legislation. I said that you shouldn't have kids if you can't afford to bring them up, and to me that's self-evident. Very few people say that's terrible. But some people on Twitter find great offence in it. I end up being called a racist and a misogynist, someone who forcing women to have abortions. You think people aren't right, I know that, a lot of them have issues of their own, and probably are genuinely mental patients, because you have to be to make some of their conclusions.' Indeed, there are also some right ones on Twitter, that's for sure.

Though Harris doesn't mention it, and clearly relishes debate of any sort, there have been times when the tweeting thing would surely have gone too far for some people's sensitivities. The Daily Herald, only in September, reported that Harris had been sent tweets from a 'Tory bigot', who sent Harris messages including 'I hope you die soon'. It's a testament to Harris' want to interact that he's still using the website. Even as I write this article, Harris is arguing online with Independent journalist Johann Hari over the UK Uncut protests which protested outside Topshop stores against the store's owner, Sir Philip Green, his firm, Arcadia, and their respective tax arrangements.

Half an hour in, I glance at my dictaphone. I have a supermarket's own brand batteries in it and worry that if it doesn't end soon the interview might not be recorded as they die a very fast death. Half an hour's gone quickly, but I don't want to exploit the time I've been given. I ask him how long I've got left with him, but he's looking at the entrance again, something he hadn't done for a while. He's got another meeting now, he says, so I stop the recording, thank him for his time - though my handshake with two hands was a little over-elaborate - and he lets me out of the secure area. As he probably goes to speak to someone eminently more qualified than this writer about the end of his blogging career, Brown, Johnson and Milibands and others, I'm plunged back into the freezing cold. Bash Street School are nowhere to be seen, but the queue's still long outside.

**“And another thing...”**

**Nathan Briant** meets retired blogger and Labour backbencher, **Tom Harris MP**

# Leaking the truth



The founder of Wikileaks, Julian Assange, described his recent publication of hundreds of thousands of secret diplomatic cables as exposing "the contradictions between the United States' public persona and what it says behind closed doors - and shows that if citizens in a democracy want their governments to reflect their wishes, they should ask to see what's going on behind the scenes." If Assange is right that these contradictions exist, this goal seems noble. Most of the criticism of Wikileaks has either denied that the cables reveal such hypocrisy, argued that the Wikileaks's method is likely to cause increased government secrecy, or that Wikileaks is harmful for reasons unrelated

**Public pronouncements cannot reflect everything government agents actually do or believe if they are to succeed at some centrally important tasks in international politics**

to the quest to bring government hypocrisy to light. These critics tend to accept that if, for example, Wikileaks had found evidence of American two-facedness as clear as the 1973 Pentagon Papers (which revealed that American internal assessments of the Vietnam War were radically at odds with its public, optimistic spin), then it would be right to bring this hypocrisy to light. Surely, however, most cases in which

a government says one thing publicly and another privately are not nearly as extreme. In these more mundane cases, the reason for government two-facedness may not be nearly as nefarious as Assange suggests. Rather, in many cases, public pronouncements cannot reflect everything government agents actually do or believe if we wish our governments to succeed at some centrally important tasks in international politics.

Take the Wikileaks revelations about U.S. views of Russia. One leaked cable described Dmitry Medvedev, nominally Russia's President and chief executive, as the diminutive Robin to former President Vladimir Putin's Batman. Another called Russia as a "virtual mafia state," and quoted a Spanish prosecutor as saying "one cannot differentiate between the activities of the Government and organised crime groups" in Russia. Finally, and perhaps most embarrassingly, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates took particularly dim view of the current Russian government in one cable: "Russian democracy has disappeared, and the government [is] an oligarchy run by the security services."

Harsh and, worse, largely true words. However, such assessments have been conspicuously absent from official U.S. public statements about relations with Russia. "Concern" may be expressed about the protection of human rights and the rule of law in Russia, but no U.S. diplomat would publicly call Russia a gangster state.

The reasoning behind this reticence is relatively straightforward: relations with Russia are important for the good of not only the United States and Russia, but also the world as a whole. Russia is an enormously large and powerful country, and has the potential to be either a significant help or hindrance in solving a number of centrally important global problems. Further, Russia and the U.S. are the world's two largest nuclear powers, giving conflict between the two a unique capacity to engender the destruction of the world. A degree of cooperation between Moscow and Washington is necessary to mitigate and, hopefully, eventually eliminate the risk posed by their stockpiles to continued human survival.

Insulting the Russian President and government is, to say the least, not conducive to encouraging cooperation.

Publicly slighting Russia and its government generally does not sit well with Russia's leaders or its population, creating a political climate generally less conducive to cooperation with U.S. policymakers. However, formulating a proper policy towards Russia requires honest assessments of Russia's leadership, its bureaucracy, and state institutions. These two imperatives create a difficult situation wherein U.S. leaders need to have an honest and accurate picture of Russia privately to craft the best available policy, and yet cannot acknowledge this view publicly without jeopardizing its ability to implement the policy proposals, like nuclear negotiation, that follow from it. Separating public pronouncements from private views resolves the problem.

Russia and the U.S. are hardly the only example. Other leaked cables detailed secret communication between Arab leaders and Israel. Given deep hostility towards Israel on the Arab street, many such negotiations are hard to get started in public. As a concession to this widespread public sentiment, most Arab states do not publicly recognize Israel, and hence cannot officially negotiate. Indeed, Egypt and Jordan, the two Arab states with peace and full diplomatic recognition of Israel, both started negotiating with Israel through secret back channels before public diplomatic negotiations produced a peace treaty and attendant change in diplomatic status. Israeli-Palestinian negotiations also commenced in secret before they were publicly announced. While the parties discussed Iran rather than peace in the Wikileaks cables, it seems quite clear that important progress on peace-related issues would be

easier to resolve secretly, due to issues like non-recognition, before more public steps can be taken.

In short, it appears that, in diplomacy, states sometimes need to say one thing publicly, while thinking and doing another privately, to make progress on difficult issues. Hypocrisy, then, might not always be such a bad thing.

But what of Assange's concern for democracy? On its face, it does feel like there's something undemocratic about political leaders telling the public something about an issue at odds with what they actually think or do. But the principle of absolute transparency, taken to its logical extreme, seems absurd. Must the head of an intelligence agency, asked about the location of a terrorism

suspect they plan to apprehend, tell the

press about the forth-

coming operation? Is it wrong for police officers to withhold information about serial killers from the press in order to weed out the false tips from the genuine? In both of those cases, law enforcement officers are deliberately taking distinct public and private stances. Is this contrast an unacceptable subversion of democracy? Unlikely.

The question, then, isn't whether the government can legitimately hide information from its public, but rather the circumstances under which it can. Assange's

choice to leak the State Department documents suggests that he believes, almost categorically, that diplomacy is an area in which democracy cannot tolerate daylight between the government's public statements and private beliefs of its leaders and agents. Certainly, there are cases in which such a separation can be corrosive. However, it is important to recognize, in making determinations about the proper scope of transparency, that diplomacy relies on a bit of duplicity.

Secrecy, sometimes, can be a population's best friend.

**The principle of absolute transparency taken to its logical extreme seems absurd**



Flickr user: alexkovic

# A conservative estimate

Teddy Groves explains how the IFS made a mistake on student fees

Nick Clegg has lately been criticised for claiming that students don't understand the government's proposals for higher education. The truth is that no one can predict with any confidence what will happen if the government chooses to spin the higher education roulette wheel on Thursday. This situation is frustrating for those who want to reach informed opinions, but it has thrown up at least one intriguing story.

Under the government's proposals, graduates of the future will pay around 9 per cent of their income over £21,000 towards their education costs. The current system has the same repayment rate, with a £15,000 threshold. This is a favourable element from students' point of view, as those who never earn over £21,000 will never have to reimburse their debt, while richer people will be paying 9 per cent of a smaller proportion of their income. On the other hand, the new system includes an interest rate and a 30 as opposed to 25-year write-off point. In addition, fees would be much higher. Compared to the current system, the new arrangement would clearly benefit some students while harming others. It is difficult to be more precise than this, as the proposed system has so many moving parts: how much a graduate would pay back depends on how much they earn over their lifetime and when, as well as on how much their university charges in fees, none of which are easy to predict.

Nonetheless, the daunting complexity of the task did not stop the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a courageous think tank, from making a guess at the potential impact of the government's plans about a week after they were announced. Among other things, their analysis suggested that the proposed changes would tend to benefit graduates in the bottom 30 per cent of post-university earners. The claim was quickly registered and repeated by the policy's advocates as evidence that their

policy was socially responsible, and seems to have affected the course of the debate. This influence has been unfortunate as there is less to the IFS's assertion than meets the eye.

There are good reasons to doubt the assumptions about the level and timing of future graduate earnings and university fees which underlie the IFS analysis. It follows the government in predicting that average fees will be around £7000 per year, though this is disputed. The Higher Education Policy Institute, for example, argues that "the great majority of students will be charged the maximum fee within a few years". Higher fees would then leave many in the bottom 30 per cent paying more. Predicting future graduate earnings is even harder than forecasting fees: no one really knows what the labour market will look like in 10 years, let alone 30. On top of this there are many important complications - for example, female graduates tend to earn less over their life and often take years out of work - which the analysis does not even consider. So it is safe to say that several of the IFS's explicit assumptions are questionable.

Several of the IFS's other assumptions have conclusively been shown to be wrong. It underestimates the interest rate on student loans at 2.2 per cent, when it will actually be 3 per cent. A higher interest rate obviously means a worse deal for students generally, and particularly for poorer ones who take longer to pay off their debt. It also assumes that the new higher repayment threshold will be increased annually to take account of inflation, but this will only happen every five years, according to the government's proposal. Again, this error means that reality is likely to be worse for students than the IFS predict. Finally and most seriously, the report assumes that the government's repayment threshold was £21,000 in 2012 prices, but it is actually £21,000 in 2016 prices. Since there will no doubt be substantial inflation between

2012 and 2016, the real income threshold will effectively be far lower than the IFS analysis assumed: £21,000 in 2016 is equivalent to roughly £17,500 today. Many more poor graduates will therefore have to pay, and those who pay will pay more. Together, these errors cast such serious doubt on the IFS's report that it has been withdrawn and is now pending revision. Unfortunately this happened too late and too quietly to stop the spread of the now-highly-suspect claim that the new regime will leave the bottom 30 per cent of graduates better off.

An especially damaging consequence of the excessive attention given to the IFS's 30 per cent claim has been to narrow the

debate. Even though the claim is false, it remains true that some poorer graduates will be better off with the new higher education system than they would have been without it. This consideration is important to take into account, but it should not dominate thinking. The crucial thing is not the new system's financial effect on the poorest graduates, but its overall effect on our whole society. Even a system that left more than the bottom 30 per cent of graduates better off would be undesirable if it deterred people from applying to university, increased the government's debt and created a distorted and unstable market based on prestige, as the proposed system may well do.

The story of the IFS's incorrect claim is instructive in several ways. It shows how even the most eminent and well-meaning experts can make highly dangerous errors when they rush their opinions. It says a lot about the attitude of the policy's proponents, who picked up on the claim before it had been properly scrutinised, and continued to plug it after it had been refuted. The most important lesson to be drawn from this mistake is how little anyone knows about the consequences of the imminent changes, and how big a gamble they represent.



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

# KNOWKOUT

## Is suicide morally wrong?

Is it wrong to commit suicide just because you feel unhappy? The answer is yes.

As traditional wisdom has it, suicide is a permanent solution to temporary problems. Whilst any one individual might feel paralysed by grief, by the same token they cannot with any degree of certainty be sure whether it will continue. How often do unhappy people ultimately find stable secure existences? More often than you might think. All those challenged by depression can still experiment with new ways of living. If you hate your job, change it. If you hate your country leave it. If you dislike your wife,

divorce her.

Those who commit suicide are making a grave semantic error. They maintain that their current life is not worth continuing therefore existence itself should come to an end. I don't dispute that some humans are deeply troubled and find it difficult to achieve terrestrial happiness but that means only that new avenues through this mortal coil need to be explored. The individual who acts to end their life, does so out of a dull insouciance - they refuse to change, they refuse to make things better.

Consider also the family of those concerned. When an individual acts to end their own life, they don't just terminate one existence but also their friends, family and lovers. One life is snatched away prematurely, but dozens more endure emotional hardship on an unprecedented scale.

Following the battle of Minorca in 1757 in which the British territory fell to

the French following a naval battle, the British Admiral responsible, John Byng, was executed. Voltaire quipped afterwards that killing failed military commanders periodically was no bad thing, it encouraged the others. Today when an individual commits suicide it acts to discourage others to strive for happiness.

There are also genealogical reasons for maintaining existence even in the face of mental duress. Human life carries with it certain unchosen obligations to the past and to the future. In his landmark work of 1790, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke noted 'the social contract exists between those dead, those presently alive and those still to be born'. The individual is beholden to future generations to produce children, maintain the species and ensure economic prosperity. The dead man is neither fertile nor prosperous, in this sense suicide becomes illegitimate.

There is also a stark utilitarian case

to be made for life as a virtue in itself. Consider the individual who is certain of his own depression in the present, and maintains that their suffering will always outweigh their happiness in any future existence. This strikes me as a cognitive error because time normalises everything. The tycoon humbled by the credit crunch might contemplate ending it all because he knows his material comfort will never be what it was. Yet in time, standards readjust, new norms are adopted and what in the past yielded no joy may in the future be a source of happiness. The broke broker, might have previously considered a good cup of coffee mere ephemera in the day. But in his newly impoverished state, it will take on a pseudo divine quality.

Everything is relative. Both happiness and unhappiness - hence we can never stay either particularly unhappy or happy for a long period of time. The new level of emotional buoyancy simply creates a new norm, eradicating any call to suicide.

Calum Young is...

GOD



Allie Fonarev is...

NIETZSCHE



Most peculiar thing happened yesterday. As I was preparing my dinner last night - I felt like making myself some oven-baked trout drizzled in chilli garlic sauce, a change from the usual routine of beans and sausage - I suddenly began to feel a most uncomfortable burning sensation... on my fingers. I had been cutting some chilli peppers, you see, and did not foresee the consequences of those cursed seeds that would keep me up in agony all night clutching my throbbing... fingers... and cursing Strauss' name. Why didn't I wear

gloves?! Hindsight is 20-20.

Well anyway, as I lay there sure I would die from the pain and reflecting on my life, I began to consider just killing myself in that moment. This led me down a new thought train and a proposition I was later able to develop in greater detail - that is after the throbbing subdued. Coming this close to death, I had pondered suicide and its merits. Of course the fear of God's wrath on the man who does the deed was no longer in the picture - as I've said elsewhere, God is dead. Thaaat's right, I said it. Whatcha Christians gonna do now? So there is nothing more to

say on That subject. I affirmed again in those moments, that suicide is certainly a legitimate course of action when one is trying to determine his next move. Who is anyone to tell anyone else what to do anyways? What are morals but the enslavement of man under the church's judgmental rule? If one wants to commit suicide, they sure as Being should.

Well the caveat I add is this. Man lives for one purpose; that is to procure power. And so the Greek army general, or the accomplished leader: they have achieved great power in life and thus should feel no bad recourse for deciding to take their

lives - whether by charging into a futile battle or before a double-decker bus after a particularly bad date in banglatown. But as I reflected on my life, I suddenly and with great dismay admitted to myself that I have not procured the power I want yet. My work isn't done. And so I didn't kill myself that faithful night. For there is so much more I must say and do. Society is decaying, and I have to stop it. Also not to mention, I have to perfect my trout recipe in advance of the next departmental pot luck.

# Courting legitimacy

Leonora Rumsey takes stock of the ICC's achievements throughout the world

The International Criminal Court is a busy place. Last week, the trial of Congolese warlord Jean-Pierre Bemba began. Alongside this, the prosecution of Radovan Karadzic, Bosnian Serb leader, is still underway, as well as investigations into Charles Taylor's doings in Sierra Leone (of which, sadly, the biggest press coverage seems to have been Naomi Campbell's appearance as a witness earlier this year). Additionally, the ICC is currently taking steps towards the arrest of Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir. It's mandate is enormous. Given that it undertakes such mammoth tasks, it is unsurprising that the ICC has fallen short of people's expectations regarding what it can achieve.

The ICC was established after International Criminal Tribunals set up by the United Nations worked to establish justice in the aftermaths of the Rwandan Genocide and the Yugoslavian conflict in the 1990s. Regarding the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 29 people have been convicted, including the former prime minister, Jean Kambanda, accused of committing genocide and crimes against humanity. Admittedly, 29 convictions sounds incredibly paltry in the face of the some 800,000 slaughtered Tutsi victims, but those convicted were high-level members of the government and armed forces over which the Rwandan Gacaca courts held no hope of jurisdiction. The Rwandan Tribunal is also notable for its recognition of rape as a war crime, an important moral precedent that signified greater appreciation for the consequential damage inflicted by rape.

It's easy to undermine the work of the UN in Rwanda and the failure of ICC in

its attempts to establish justice in places ravaged to the core by human conflict. But where would we be without it? Some crimes cannot be allowed to go unheard and unpunished. Too many instances of terrible injustice escape the ICC anyway, so the work that it does do must be all the more valued. The ICC describes itself as the last resort for countries in need, and more often than not, it is the only option possible towards reconciliation.

Given that Africa has dominated much of its proceedings, it is perhaps natural that it feels somewhat targeted by the ICC. It is interesting to note that the West has largely escaped the wrath of the international dock. Recently, Robert Mugabe commented on this seemingly imbalanced state of affairs, remarked that the ICC had double standards for seeking to prosecute the Sudanese president while feigning ignorance of the 'war crimes' committed in Iraq under George Bush and Tony Blair's authority. If we exclude the source of this remark and examine the content, it certainly does seem dubious that while murky details of the Iraq conflict come to light, those responsible have remained above the ICC's jurisdiction. We face a bleak world if a merciless dictator such as Mugabe may reasonably point fingers at the West...

Another problem with the ICC is its extravagant budget, which annually reaches nearly \$150 million. Has there been value for all the money thrown at it? So far only a dozen arrest warrants and indictments have been secured. The Rwandan and Yugoslavian tribunals and the arrests they secured are not included here, however in those prosecutions the budgets were an astounding \$1.4 billion and \$2 billion respectively. In fact

at their peak in 2004 the two tribunals spent 15 per cent of the UN's entire annual budget. But you cannot put a price on justice, and so arguably these costs were worth it if they secured even the tiniest piece of retribution. There is something ironic about the fact that the UN was so reluctant to intervene in both Rwanda and Yugoslavia when the troubles there were actually occurring. Prevention is always better than cure: UN involvement in these genocides may have meant that some of these investigations may never have had to take place.

## Another problem with the ICC is its extravagant budget

On another note, the extent to which the ICC can provide international justice is severely restricted by the carefully limited circumstances in which it can pursue investigations. It may only prosecute upon invitation from a member country or if instructed by the UN Security Council. Since certain members of the Council, namely Russia and China, oppose undermining national sovereignty: as such, many crimes which take place in countries that are not member states are out of reach of the ICC. For this reason it looks unlikely that the indiscretions that have taken place in Sri Lanka during its civil war will ever be brought to international attention.

Even where it has been able to pass judgment, the effectiveness of the ICC is as prone to being undermined by legal technicalities as any other justice court. In

2007 it was for instance ruled that Serbia had failed to stop genocide occurring at Srebrenica in July 1995, but that there was insufficient evidence to confirm that Serbia had committed and assisted acts of genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s conflict. This led to an alarming assessment of events by a Bosnian politician that everyone now knew that genocide had occurred, but not who had committed it. In an equally uncomfortable turn of events, Ratko Mladic, chief of staff of the Bosnian Serb Army and the commander responsible for the notorious siege of Sarajevo and Srebrenica massacre was never brought to justice. In fact, since Mladic has evaded international justice for seven years now, his wife has been able to submit a request for certification of his death, meaning he will forever be immune from prosecutions.

Nevertheless, the ICC, and the principle of worldwide all encompassing justice that it contends, is a noble establishment for what it aims to achieve for the sake of humanity. It ought not to be devalued by its struggle to achieve everything that it has set out to do. Perhaps the greatest flaw of the ICC is that it attempts to find justice in places where there so blatantly never will be any. Crimes against humanity cannot be undone, nor given a human face. The crimes that the ICC prosecutes are mostly obscenely horrific. While many of us would like to turn the other cheek and dismiss such events as belonging to another world to ours, it is very important that they do not go ignored. Just because some things occur that we might not want to hear about does not mean that they mustn't be spoken of, and for this the ICC exists. ☛

## WHAT IF...

the Occupation Was Successful? (with a pinch of salt)

Jack Tindale

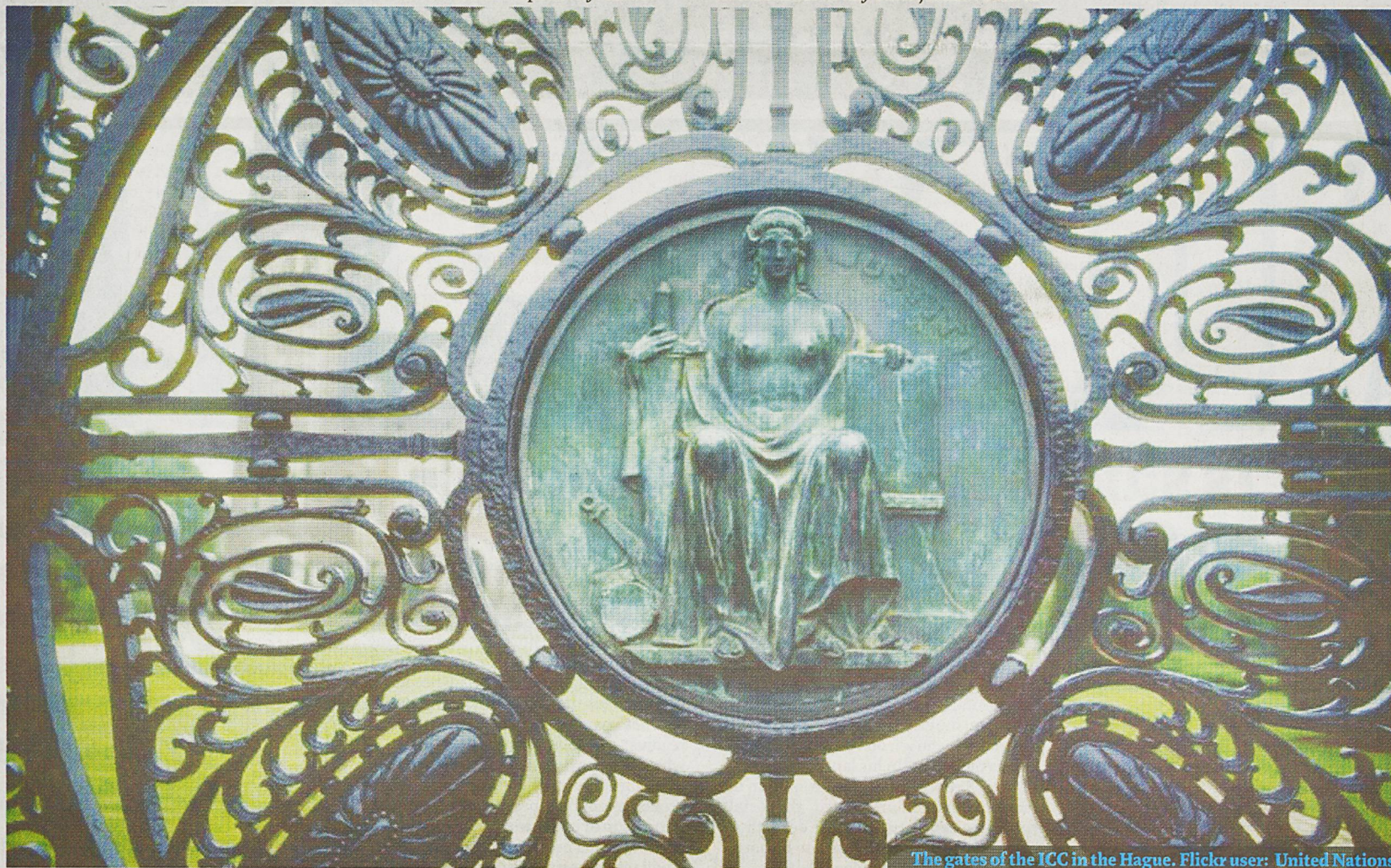
A major lasting initiative of the early hours of the Progressive Coalition, aside the Prevention of Neo-Liberalism Act which would later become a founding article of the new constitution, was the establishment of a High Commission to decide upon a future for the newly established Anglo-Celtic Internationalist Democratic Republic of Associated Independent Nations (ACIDRAIN). The storming of Parliament on the morning of the vote on raising tuition fees resulted in the collapse of the already shaky 'ConDem' administration, to be replaced with a 'Rainbow Alliance' comprised of the opposition parties and the surviving Liberal Democrats (read Simon Hughes). Ed Miliband became Prime Minister untested and with limited support from his new ministers. He was only able to survive for three weeks before being ousted by a left-wing junta in favour of John McDonnell. The new Prime Minister immediately introduced legislation to abolish the monarchy, re-nationalise strategic assets and to exhumate Milton Friedman in order to place him on posthumous trial, bringing to mind a similar incident surrounding Pope Formosus in the 9th Century.

Such radical actions obviously brought the (still) United Kingdom to the attention of Washington. Numerous attempts to mediate by President Obama were vetoed by the new Republican leadership in the House of Representatives, eventually prompting Speaker Boehner to announce plans for military action against London. However, after the sixteenth successive invasion plan was preemptively posted online by wikileaks, the idea was abandoned. Flush with the proclaimed victory over the United States, the Prime Minister called a General Election for that year, resulting in a decisive victory for the Labour-Hughes electoral pact.

The three year McDonnell Premiership was one of most controversial in British history. Even in this era of enlightened social collectivism, traitors still speak out against the ACIDRAIN government in a way that more than justifies the penal colony on the Shetland Islands. Yet their allegations of authoritarianism in the administration's economic reforms remain rife. Whilst it is true that a small IMF bailout was negotiated in 2012 with the backing of the Thune White House, little else of note was needed beyond the temporary \$1.5 trillion loan that was granted in the March of that year. The mass execution of the Shadow Cabinet soon afterwards provided a unique and much-loved Olympic Opening Ceremony that has been emulated by every most nation since.

The former Commissar for Ideological Development, a young but talentless opportunist (known colloquially as "the Blond Brat"), who defected to the European Confederation last year, described the mood of the country on the eve of Premier Corbyn's appointment by Federal President Kinnock. This followed the unfortunate and accidental fifteen stab wounds inflicted on John McDonnell on a visit to Grantham.

"Having left university only that year, it was a delight to see such enthusiasm for the future of the country. Serving as Junior Deputy Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Stationary, it was clear that the sixteen million refugees that attempted to swim to France that year were simply testing the effectiveness of our new anti-emigration laws!" ☛



The gates of the ICC in the Hague. Flickr user: United Nations

## Measured musings

On the eve of a new year, whilst ebbing away at a long forsaken essay, I have been considering a new and daring proposition. What would happen if one were to combine, two of the world's greatest and best alarmist movements-global warming and public deficit?

After all, much of policy planning has to do with anticipating future problems; nuclear might, for instance, unused but still key to foreign policy. Yet, climate

change, for all the years of its presence in mainstream media, has been unable to carry through a similar impact. Even Al Gore's cinematographic efforts were insufficient to stir the world from its universal apathy. Many, despaired by the collective indifference have sketched explanations of this phenomenon, ranging from the intricacies of collective action to a features of human psychology which leads us to ignore problems which are simply too big to deal with.

Budgetary austerity is so popular amongst dinner party guest nowadays that it needs little introduction. Financial markets doubt government's abilities to

pay back their debts. In addition, members of the Euro zone, it is no longer possible to print one's way out of untenable commitments, increasing the likelihood of default. In this case, however, the warnings of future financial catastrophe are heeded. The simple, spartan solution: trim, reduce and slim government spending.

What is interesting, however, is when these two projections of the future are overlapped. If global economic development is maintained at this pace and in this manner, the rising of temperatures will undoubtedly lead to catastrophic consequences. Read submerged land-mass, untenable temperatures, harsher

climates. A glance at pictures showing melting icecaps is enough to generate an insurmountable sentiment of angst. The unravelling of our comforts could happen as soon as forty, fifty years from now. Rather directly, what is the point of worrying about providing for our pension payments, if the world is to come at an end? Why not simply spend ourselves away into oblivion? If we are to follow one unsustainable policy through, it seems a supplementary irrationality to not complement it with the other.

Unfortunately, financial markets can't be made to agree. FM212 will teach you that all information publicly available

feeds into prices of financial assets. If my theory was to convince, no sensible investor would want to lend to any government, defeating the objective of increased, limitless expenditure.

Thus, global warming is reduced a belittled probability, whilst the liquidity of capital markets will happily zip onwards. If the benefits of reducing budget deficits are ever to come to fruition, we must pay heed to climate change's looming threat. ☛

Marion Koob  
Features Editor



# All GG wants for Christmas is... Alka Seltzer



### HIGH-VIS

The real action this week took place on Friday, where the AU's finest celebrated the end of a term where they learnt more about dealing with Thursday morning hangovers than microeconomics. The outfits ranged from deja-vu inducing football 4s, who looked suspiciously similar to their Pink Panthers last year with a grey tinge, to the awe-inspiring Mario Kartars from Men's Hockey. The Tuns was a fairly sophisticated affair, with no major controversy recorded. (Although GG suspects that some politically-mobilised virgin will have something to complain about, sooner or later - kill yourself). GG hears that Harriette and Jarlath deserve credit for this, as without their high-vis jackets GG doesn't know how the AU would have managed.

### MISSION

The arduous seven mile trek to the Den



saw a total of 7422 hoots at Women's Football in their head turning air hostess outfits, rumour has it the oompa-loompas came a close second though. Food was consumed at a number of Kingsway's finest establishments as people began carb-loading for the marathon event that

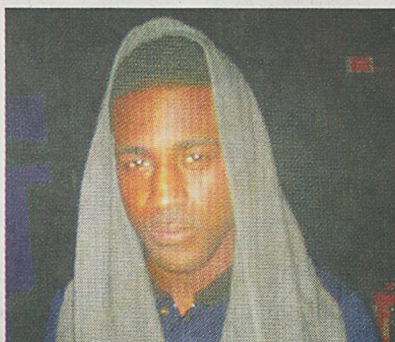
was the Den. However it seems that some didn't take heed of this warning as things got out of hand rather swiftly; namely Willy Wilson and Nikhil Griffin, who were both thrown out before 4pm for stealing a bottle of vodka and racially abusing a bouncer respectively.

### GOLDEN GIRL

Another special mention goes out to Wing-a-Ling Chon (who at any given time has a 30% blood alcohol level). After being rejected repeatedly for an hour and a half, she decided to sort things out on a one-to-one level and grabbed a quick coffee with the bouncers. However it seems that this didn't really agree with her; 20 mins after being permitted entry she spectacularly made her mark upon the Den, repeatedly projectile vomiting. In true AU style she managed to recover from this and made it to the end of Crush.

### TEATOWEL?

The hottest act in the music industry right now, the 'Hot Boyz' performance was well

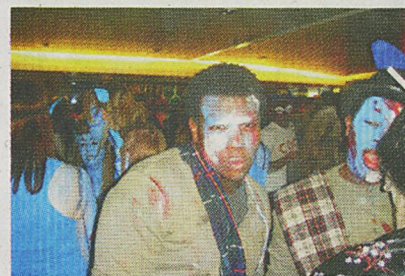


worth the £2 million fee that the AU exec are rumoured to have paid them, perhaps it was their saucy lyrics got people in the mood for romance. Mona The Vampire

was seen 'sucking' the neck of the current FC club captain, in a manner which would have made Edward Cullen blush, whether or not a BJ occurred GG cannot comment. GG was so inebriated by this point that a Chicken Cottage was more than necessary.

### NICHOLAS!!

Sayo, The Last King of Scotland, took a rest from his chicken to entertain a dalmatian in an alley adjacent to the poor man's KFC, and this apparently helped him regain his appetite as he came back in and finished his meal. A Forest Whittaker inspired chat-up line apparently did the trick, and GG overheard him telling the dalmatian, "What you need, is to have



some fun." Whether she did or not remains unknown.

### VIOLATION

GG followed revellers to the Tuns at 7.30 (as Crush technically doesn't start 'til 9pm). GG spied many people utilising the luxurious leather sofas for a crafty kip. This seemed to do the trick as certain members were revitalised to cause more mayhem. AU tag-along Paniel Darnaby was possibly seen pulling out his winning combo of rohypnol and sleaze on his cur-

rent victim, 5th team netball captain. GG suspects that full consent was not gained.

### NO 'KNOWN' CORRUPTION

Comrade Lexie Teplukhigrad and Jock Reith announced their engagement, after Lexie promised her the World Cup as a wedding gift and a honeymoon to Qatar, which seemed to seal the deal. GG 'aint sayin' she's a gold digger, but she aint messin' with no broke...SOVIET??

### CRIPPLE

As with every year, GG observed the Event-Formerly-Known-As-The-Carol's magical match-making qualities. One such match made in heaven was everyone's favourite AU survivor (not the one who got run over) and Smidgey. When asked about the incident the following comment was given, "L.Jones is unavailable for comment at this time. He will be able to clarify all speculation once the Beaver has been edited and sent to press. That is all, thank you." GG has taken this to be an admission of guilt, especially since hearing rumours of Smidgey pinning the physically impaired boy to a wall whilst thrusting towards him. Then he took her home and shagged her.

### TOUR!!!

GG has probably had one of his finest tours of the year and would like to give a big shout out to the brave men and women who made it possible (the Tuns bar-staff). Next week will hopefully give them a chance to let off steam, as the fine members of the AU enjoy a cheap meal and a lot of alcohol before they ascend on Zoo Bar for the final time this term. Have a sober Christmas and a sleazy New Year!

Don't see your results here?  
That's because no one played any matches.  
Because everything was frozen.

# All I Want For Christmas is AU



# Sport



## Its time for... Russia?

Stuart Smedley

As expected, the reaction from the English media and general public to FIFA's decision to grant Russia hosting rights for the 2018 World Cup was measured and dignified.

The red tops, never ones for conjuring up a conspiracy theory, led the way, with The Sun screaming 'Fixed'. The Daily Mirror went with 'Sold', arguing that it was Russia's lucrative oil wealth which bought the

Times crying that it was 'The End of the World for England'. It was all a bit pathetic. And it still is.

**"The fact is, World Cups can have a transcending impact on their hosts, and the past two competitions demonstrate this."**

Phone-in shows, internet forums, Facebook, Twitter, you name it - all were, and continue to be, inundated with people crying foul, folks lamenting that a World Cup will not be held on these shores during their lifetime, fans demanding the FA withdraw from FIFA immediately.

No wonder Iain Duncan Smith wants to force those out of work to sweep the streets in order to keep their benefits: the number of dummies that have been spat out and toys thrown out of prams in the past couple of days necessitates such a clean-up.

But one question everybody seems to be forgetting to ask is this: why not Russia?

Their footballing heritage may not equate to that of England, but the game is still the number one sport in the former centre of the Communist world. And they have produced some of the world's greatest players - such as 'keeper Lev Yashin, forward Igor Belanov and Arsenal's cur-

rent midfield maestro Andrei Arshavin - although their ideologically imposed isolation means names from the Cold War-era don't exactly roll of the tongue of western fans.

Others argue the latent racism that supposedly persists throughout Russian society should prevent them from hosting, using the treatment of players such as Peter Odemwingie during his time with Lokomotiv Moscow as evidence.

While racism can never be condoned, surely using it as an excuse to forbid Russia from hosting the World Cup would

only serve to increase their intolerance by fomenting a mentality that the world dislikes them?

The fact is, World Cups can have a transcending impact on their hosts, and the past two competitions demonstrate this. In Germany, the locals rediscovered patriotism, which had long been considered a taboo, and realised that it wasn't actually a bad thing. For South Africa, a nation not yet healed from the Apartheid years continued its recovery.

For Russia then 2018 will be a chance for its people to demonstrate and develop its

tolerance.

In England meanwhile, the bitching needs to stop and a negative be turned into a positive. The focus now needs to be on building a team capable of winning the competition. After all - what better revenge could there be?

*The Beaver Sports Editors would like to say a big thank you to Stuart Smedley for his continued contributions to the section this term.*

**"Their footballing heritage may not equate to that of England, but the game is still the number one sport in the former centre of the Communist world."**

largest country on earth the competition. Conveniently they seem to have forgotten that it was Roman Abramovich's oil money that bought current Premier League champions Chelsea. But let's not allow those facts to get in the way shall we?

This country's more 'up-market' newspapers all allowed themselves to get in on the act too, the Daily Mail asking whether Russia's selection was a 'stitch up' and The



## Netball 4s Teammates

<b>Most Tanorexic - Ainsworth:</b> More worried about looking pale than failing her degree, its lucky our star shooter has already secured herself about 3 jobs upon finishing uni	<b>Most likely to get a 1st - Katie Campbell:</b> Despite her legendary performances on Wednesday nights, Katie manages to be in uni every day for 8am and commences her revision notes in week 2 of michaelmas.	<b>First Lady Award - Westy:</b> After a year-long engagement to our AU president, rumours are that there may be wedding bells this summer.	<b>Most likely to die on tour - California:</b> Recruited to the 4th team (despite having never heard of netball) for her drunken antics. Her wednesday night performances are legendary, who knows what tour will bring?	<b>Most allergic to vodka - Deeves:</b> Has been known to get a worse flush than Jae Park after several shots of Glens, and that is without the red lobster face paint.	<b>Most incestuous housemates - Swirski:</b> here are some rooms going up for rent at 53 Gray's Inn Road as the 4 current tenants only use 2 rooms. Rumour has it that this magical abode can make people fall in love after 2 weeks.
<b>Best stamina - Dawson:</b> Despite being diagnosed with Tonsillitis days before the Carol, she managed to be the last 4th teamer standing. She made it to an impressive 8 o'clock!	<b>Longest legs - Jess Shannon:</b> Our very own Michael Jordan of netball is taller than the netball post, when she is in the D, it's a guaranteed win!	<b>Best ball skills - Livesey:</b> Not to be deceived by her appearance at trials (playing in pumps and sunglasses), she moves faster than Usain Bolt when in the goal third.	<b>Worst fancydress effort - Connington:</b> Not only did she turn up in a blue stripey top for Where's Wally, but she also skipped the Carol after refusing to miss a seminar.	<b>Rec Bull Award - Knott:</b> She can block a pass from any height, some say it's because she can fly. No wonder she gets Man of the Match every game.	<b>Biggest Flirt - Birt:</b> Her fresher's ball performance says it all...
					<b>Fittest lobster - Jas Norris:</b> Our freshly single fresher is now back on the playing field and ready to mingle. Word on the street is that she made quite a few heads turn in her carol outfit.