

The Beaver

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New Tequila Measures

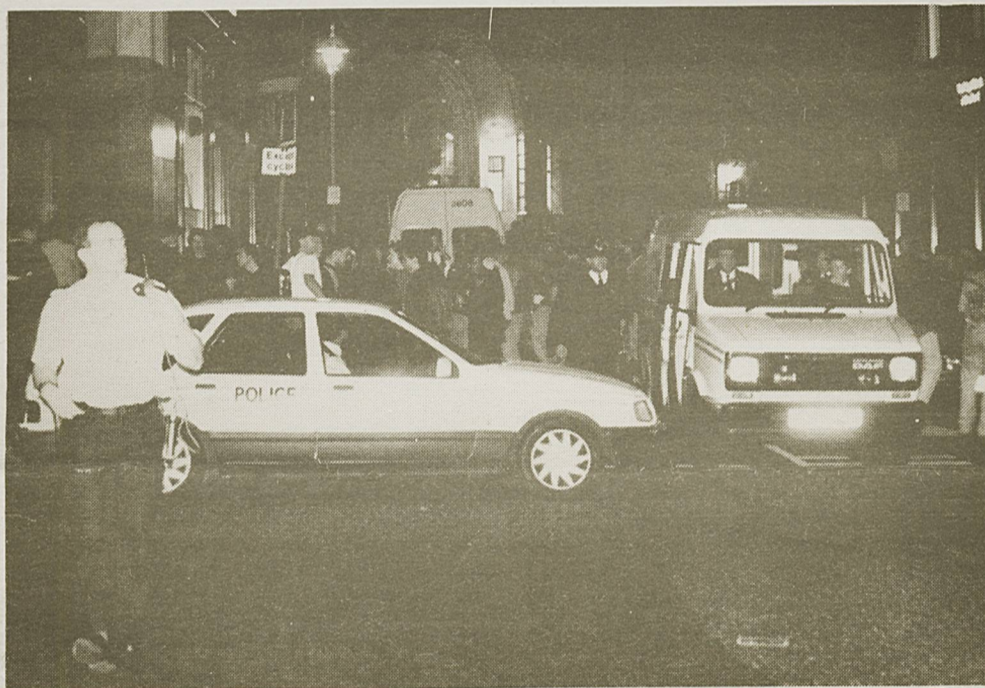
By Quinn Morgan

Wide-ranging changes have been made to the way Tequila Parties are run following events at the previous party which ended in the arrest of three people. In a letter to members of the Tequila Executive, General Secretary Michiel van Hulst has outlined a ten-point package passed by the SU Exec last Tuesday.

The Tequila society has been in existence at the LSE but over the last years the parties and events surrounding the parties have become more and more violent, reaching a climax 18 months ago when a partygoer was raped. In this light the fighting which marred the last party has been described as relatively inconsequential, and indeed no moves were made to ban the society. However, the Students' Union Executive, fearing that police intervention could threaten the licence of the Three Tuns bar, passed a series of measures which may have a significant impact on the future of the Tequila society.

Henceforth, the supervision of the parties will be the responsibility of three Students' Union executive officers, with the Tequila executives still acting as stewards but losing overall control.

The actual admission to the party will be made by two of three, thus establish-



The scene after the last party

Photo: Steve East

ing immediately the presence of the Students' Union officers; the third member will be in the bar at all times.

The price of Tequila will be increased from £1 to £1.70 per double shot. This means that the double shot costs the normal bar price at functions of the Tequila society.

This measure has been met with little understanding from the spokesmen for the Tequila society. Joss Fisher, a member of the Tequila executive commented on this: "A higher price will reduce the consumption of Tequila, that is simple economics. But I

think what is more important is that it then no longer is a Tequila party." His colleague on the Tequila Executive Kyri Loupis agrees with this: "Why not go to another place if it is so expensive? But I do not think that that is any obstacle to getting pissed."

Jim Fagan, the Three Tuns manager, also suspects that the consumption of Tequila will be lower as a result of this increase in price. "This will certainly shift the emphasis of the party. Now the party itself will be the focus instead of the determination of getting drunk."

The second measure is that instead of 800 only 700 people will be admitted to the party.

According to Fisher the Tequila society suggested to reduce the number of people to 600 at a party but the Students' Union then set the number up again. "This is odd. We suggested 600 people and they set it up to 700 again. 100 people won't make such a big difference."

Loupis is of the same opinion and states: "100 people aren't going to make much of a difference. The problem this time was with security."

According to Michiel van Hulst, the General Secre-

tary of the Students' Union, the issue of the lack of adequate security at the last party was discussed with the security firm, Top Guard. For future events the firm promised to send more qualified staff supervised by the person who normally is responsible for functions at the LSE.

Jim Fagan also says that he was very disappointed by the quality of the guards. "This is the first bad experience we have had with Top Guard. The guards were obviously not very well qualified" he stated.

The issue of security was also brought up by Fiona MacDonald, the Students' Union Social Secretary, with a different emphasis, however. When talking to the people from Top Guard Security she specifically instructed them to hand her any drugs or disallowed objects, such as knives or bottles. "I told them to give me all objects taken off people during the search. I said that I would come round at intervals and collect them. I was, though, only given one knife."

When asked what had happened to the drugs which the security guards had collected and which after the party could not be found and handed over to the police as requested, she said: "Up to today, I do not know where the drugs are. Ian, the head of security, told me that all drugs which the guards had collected were handed over

to a member of the Tequila executive." This however, is denied by the Tequila executives. MacDonald concludes: "Look at it this way. The security people will lose their job if they keep the drugs and therefore have an incentive not to keep the drugs. If the security guards don't have them then a member of the Tequila executive must have them."

Other measures passed by the Students' Union executive include the fact that only LSE students with appropriate identity will be allowed to by tickets and that only a maximum of one guest per LSE student will be admitted, who must be signed in by his host. The tickets for the party will have printed on them whether they are guest, student or courtesy tickets. This and the fact that LSE students will only be allowed to by a maximum of two tickets, is intended to ensure that ticket holders will not sell their tickets for more than face value.

The cooperation of the School Security staff has also been requested, after claims that at the last party they acted unilaterally in evacuating the building, in effect causing more problems than solving. To this Ian Crawford, press officer of the LSE, replied: "The School Security Staff did not act 'unilaterally' in evacuating the building but was asked to do so by the police."

Security Worries Resurface

by Beaver Staff

Students Union General Secretary Michiel Van Hulst has made a formal proposal that the school increase current levels of security, in light of the recent spate of harassment and thefts and break-ins which last week included the office of The Beaver.

"There have been a number of incidents over the years, but recently there has been an esca-

tion," said Van Hulst.

"We can't wait any longer, especially with the number of women and ethnic minorities at the school who are at increasing risk. We need people around to deter attacks & harassment."

Van Hulst has called for resources to be made available for 24-hour security patrols, but according to Iain Crawford, LSE Press & Public Relations Manager, these already exist.

"Teams of guards go round the campus at timed intervals throughout the night," Crawford said.

"We are worried about security," he added, "but students and staff must co-operate in keeping fire doors closed after 6.30 pm and at weekends. We can't lock them because of the fire risk, so there will always be a trade off between safety and security."

In his proposal Van Hul-

st claims that more incidents could put the centenary and County Hall plans "in danger of losing support." Van Hulst claims that security to cope with the threat of "harassment, racial tensions, and theft" is "virtually non-existent." Both Van Hulst and Crawford are in agreement that the layout of the school buildings are possibly the biggest cause of the problem.

Asked about the spe-

cific issue of more guards, Crawford commented, "5000 people have a right to be in the LSE, and so it doesn't matter how many guards you have because there will always be risks. However the General Purposes Committee will always consider any proposal from the Students Union. The SU however has a role to play in encouraging vigilance amongst students."

INSIDE

Election Results
2

Going Underground
4

Limit Immigration?
5

Year of Indigenous
People
6

The Great Responders
10

Commentary

Union Jack

For a school of social sciences, the LSE certainly produces a fair amount of highly qualified aerospace engineers; witness the boys (and girls) in the balcony at Thursday's UGM.

It would seem that these ingenious folk have been spending more time practicing their art than even Michiel spends at his.

The meeting got off to a flying start, quite literally, as masterfully folded A4s (and even a well recognised and applauded A3 later on) accompanied Simon Reid to the podium. Ever the jovial chap, Simon attempted to rate a few throws, but Jack believes both quality and quantity were yet to come.

As usual, Simon's departure was accompanied by multitudinous cheers, and Michiel's arrival by even more jeers. Alas, for Michiel the meeting went downhill from there. In fact, the General Secretary earned the distinction of being the sole speaker whose report remained unratified, and the Right requested the regent's resignation (okay, so Michiel isn't exactly a regent; Jack apologises for being carried away in the alliteration).

And yet, as the meeting appeared to hit rock bottom on the maturity scale, it seems all Razia could consider was lunch. Granted, by that time it was half one, and Jack would assume Razia could wait another 30 minutes before calling for orders, but next time she feels peckish, some chips and maybe a Pizzaburger special should do nicely. Ah yes, Jack's error again; that was order, not orders. Either way, she was ignored. Nothing new.

And the planes descended. Again, nothing new.

A few more reports later Razia was at it again, this time playing priest and asking for a moment of silence. Jack should hope you are beginning to see the pattern in this, but if not, yes, Razia was again ignored.

But by some miracle, once an emergency motion was passed (yes, something other than paper airplane tossing was accomplished at the beginning of the meeting), the Balcony Boys remembered their manners and were silent while a first-time speaker was on stage. And David even received a round of applause, miracle of miracles (well, he is the president of the Jewish Society...).

In support of the same motion, to request that the Union support dialogue between the J-Soc and the Friends of Palestine, a member of the latter also spoke and, to the consternation of the ultra-Left, was even more eloquent than David. The motion carried, opposed by Reds, the planes descended on their heads. (Jack's even a poet, will wonders never cease).

Also passed was a motion to support Croatia's fight for independence, in an attempt to stop Croatian students from endangering their lives by embarking upon a hunger strike. An anonymous amendment was briefly considered that would have had the Sabbaticals fasting as well, but whomever through Michiel, Toby and Fiona in need of a strict, calorie-controlled diet was apparently too embarrassed to fess up. (Obviously, the Sabbaticals didn't bother about it, since Jack saw each of them in the Hacker's Bar following the meeting).

With less than 10 minutes left to the meeting (and considering the UGM began 10 minutes late it's amazing anything got accomplished), a motion to consider a business motion to "give the environment officer something to do" was brought up for discussion, but when its author recommended that the LSE needed a recycling policy, and that - brilliant plan, here - the Union should "get it down on paper," well, Jack should hope you see as much the humour in the statement as the Balcony Boys did. If not, that would explain why you don't attend the UGMs.

Needless to say, paper wars broke out, from the balcony to the floor and back again: planes plummeted, paper balls bombarded, and general anarchy and riots resulted. If the environment officer was smart, he would go to the UGMs and start his own recycling campaign. And Jack is sure the students in the 2 p.m. lecture would certainly second that motion.

Oh, and there was a party at Rosebery on Friday night.

Rushdie Debated

By Julian Sykes

In the run-up to the election for Honorary President Dr Pasha the Secretary of the Union of Muslim Organisation and Lord Desai from the L.S.E. debated "Salman Rushdie Victim or Villain?" in the Old Theatre last Tuesday. The debate took place as a result of Salman Rushdie being nominated as a candidate for the Honorary president of the Students Union.

Speaking first Dr Pasha asserted that The Satanic Verses is overtly offensive to Muslims and has led to violence both by and against Muslims as well as straining relations between Britain and Iran.

The Union of Muslim Organisations has called for restraint and has restrained its own members in the face of what he called extreme provocation. The burning of

the Satanic Verses in Bradford at the height of the controversy should not be compared to Hitler and the book burning by the nazis but rather it was a symbolic gesture which led to the media heaping more insults onto the Muslim community.

As for arguments about free speech Dr Pasha cited the case of "Upwardly Mobile" the autobiography of Norman Tebbit where the pages concerning Sara Keays were taken out after publication to support his case for the withdrawal of The Satanic Verses.

Lord Desai supporting the case for Rushdie to be Honorary President Desai argued that it is an authors duty to corrupt and deprave people as this is an essential part of progress especially "cocking a snoot a religion" and "the defiance of religion is the duty of the intellec-



Dr Pasha makes his point

tual, so what if people are offended?"

Nothing that Salman Rushdie has written has not been written before or discussed in Islamic theology and as a fatwa or death sentence was not issued against these people Desai asserted it is the very fact that the book is a best seller that accounts for the occasioning of so much anger.

If we accept the censorship of the withdrawing of the Satanic Verses it would Desai argued be a move back into the dark ages which took five hundred years to overcome and establish modern western society established as it is on rationality secularism and scepticism. "Whatever else Salman Rushdie is he is an exponent of modernity."

Elections hit by Apathy

By James Brown

There were few surprise results from the Student Union elections last Thursday. The DSG, as would be expected, got every single one of their candidates elected. The Liberal Democrats, making a re-appearance in S.U. politics, also succeeded in getting 100% of their candidate, John Pannu, elected onto the Court of Governors.

John Pannu greeted the result by warning the DSG that the Lib-Dems were going to be the major force in LSE politics. "If we can win one seat after being around 4 weeks, think what we can do after 4 months."

Michiel Van Hulsten seemed unconcerned with this threat as he contemplated Salman Rushdie's defeat in the race for Honorary President. In the end, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on a freedom for Burma ticket, won, beating off Boris Yeltsin at the second count.

The NUS conference will be mad by the presence of LSE delegate Ron Voce, representing the 'Monstrously Raving Do It Yourself Independent'. Suke Walton, a 'Revolutionary Communist Student', the only left-wing

candidate in the election, will attend as an observer.

Demonic Bourke, Chair of the Conservative Association, was delighted that Zunaid Juma, a first-year, was elected onto the Court of Governors. He also pointed out that the Conservatives have overall control of the important Catering and Student Health Services Committees.

He also criticized the Labour group for not managing to field any candidates. He said that their presence would have taken votes from the DSG, enhancing the Torie's chances of winning a few more seats.

Simon Reid, the Returning Officer stated that the candidates had conducted themselves in a "reasonable manner". He alluded to one "regrettable incident", when Michiel Van Hulsten sent literature for Salman Rushdie's campaign to the print room without having first consulted the Returning Officer. This resulted in his paper allocation being withdrawn.

The attendance was up slightly on the previous year, with 663 ballot papers returned. This is a slight increase over the previous year, but is still only 13% of the total of LSE students.

Election Results in Full

Honorary President	Aung San Suu Kyi	Freedom for Burma
Honorary Vice-President	Sara Thornton	DSC Nominee
NUS/External Officer	Shabir Jogee	DSC
Constitution Committee	Jaap Breugem	DSG
Court of Governors	Fiona Macdonald	Independent
	Toby Johnson	DSC
	Zunaid Juma	Conservative
	John Pannu	Liberal Dem
	Antonia Mochan	DSC
General Purposes Committee	Gabi Marston	Conservative
	Ron Voce	MRDIYI
	Ludwig Kanzler	DSC
	Peter Harrad	DSC
Student Health Committee	Peter Harrad	DSC
	Mark Phillips	Conservative
Safety Committee	Antonia Mochan	DSC
	J. K. Plahe	Conservative
Rules and Regulations	Afonzo e Souza	DSC
	William Derbyshire	DCMRL
Publications Committee	Peter Harris	DSC
Student Support Committee	Bob Cross	DSC
	Rahul Baig	Conservative
Building Committee	Peter Harris	DSC
	Ian Prince	Conservative
Careers Advisory Service	Bjornar Jensen	DCMRL
	Erik Mielke	Conservative
	James Houghton	Conservative
	Rahul Baig	Conservative
Library Committee	Jurgen Overhoff	DSC
Catering Committee	Peter Mackey	Conservative
Overseas Student Welfare	Erik Mielke	Conservative
	Afonzo e Souza	DSG
	Ludwig Kanzler	DSG
Accommodation Committee	Peter Harrad	DSG
	J. K. Plahe	Conservative
NUS National Conference	David Mason	AATU(H)
	Ron Voce	MRDIYI
	M van Hulsten	DSC
	Toby Johnson	DSC
	Shabir Jogee	DSC
	Suke Walton	RCS
UIU General Council	M. van Hulsten	DSC
	Gavin Blackburn	DSC
	James Houghton	Conservative
	Mark Phillips	Conservative
	Peter Harris	DSC

M. East motion in UGM

The LSE Jewish Society and Friends of Palestine have cooperated in jointly calling for peace in the Middle East. In a jointly proposed UGM motion, the societies expressed a hope that the current Madrid conference would find support from the LSESU.

Afterwards, David Rein, former political officer of the J-Soc explained that the motion came about as a result of phone calls made the

night before, ending with F.O.P. deciding in their Thursday meeting to send a speaker to the UGM to support the motion. Explaining the move, he said "As the leaders of the world were talking, we felt we should be talking too." He pointed out that is the first such jointly proposed motion ever debated in a UGM.

Alexia Vassilou, the speaker from F.O.P. hoped that the motion would result

in more LSE students becoming informed on the issue commenting that "people should get to know what's involved." She stressed that "Whether the talks fail or not, we have to continue to talk, not in an adversarial manner...but establishing a broader base of understanding." It was important that the School note how these two traditional enemies had worked together. She finished by stating that just as

the LSE was a microcosm of the world, the nationalities were a microcosm of the United Nations, and it was important for them to take an interest in the situation as their countries had done.

The Union of Jewish Students welcomed the move, but noted that any dialogue was only the first stage. However, they expressed their delight "that the two sides have come together in LSE".

diary

Bonjour. Cette 7 jours ist Multi-Cultural Week und di Beaver celebrato this avec un column multi-lingual. So, let us procedo head-longo into lundi toute suite or schnell, schnell (depending on your preference).

Shalom and welcome to **Monday 4th** where the Israel Society will be holding a picture display in the Quad and Ehud Olmert (Israeli cabinet minister) will be giving a talk in the New Theatre at 1pm. Plus tard that evening der Campus Challenge di Strongbow est 'appening dans les drei Tuns (translation: pub quiz in the Three Tuns as usual at 8pm) avec muchas prizes et denarii.

In the interests of sanity (and due to a very limited foreign vocabulary) the rest of the column will be in English.....

Tuesday 5th is of course a famous day for British culture, where we celebrate someone having the idea to blow up the Houses of Parliament. So, here goes...

Remember, remember the fifth of November, Gunpowder, treason and bop - Dance Wicked are holding their "Get Yourself Together" do down at the Milkbar (near Tottenham Court Rd Tube), £3 members, £5 non-members.

That afternoon, rocket yourself down to S75 at 1pm where the Socialist Worker Student Society is holding a sparkling talk on the politics of Malcolm X. Alternatively, the LSE Conservative Association has Rt.Hon.Tom King MP speaking in the Old Theatre at 1pm. To prevent any unwanted fireworks during the talk, security precautions will include all students having to show their registration cards and no bags or coats will be permitted. The European Society is holding a talk at KCL on "Yugoslavia - the scattered Republic". Also happening is the LSE Homelessness Group Meeting at 4pm in A19; all are welcome.

A fire-cracker of an evening includes that explosive film from Spike Lee "Do the Right Thing" at 7pm in the New Theatre. Fittingly enough, the

inventors of fireworks themselves, the Chinese Society (yes, I know it's contrived!) are having a freshers' disco at L'Equipe Anglais by Bond St. Tube, £5 members, £6 non-members, from 9pm onwards.

Swiftly, sexily, and with no underwear we lambda into **Wednesday 6th** where the Latin American Society will be holding dance lessons in the Quad at 6pm. Equally as exciting, but probably with underwear, the LSE Debating Society is debating a debate "T.H.B. that Aid Breeds Dependency" in the Vera Antsey room from 1 to 2 pm. That evening the Workers Power Student Society is holding a talk in S401 at 7.30 pm entitled "Fascism: what is it and how to crush it?".

In fitting with the week's theme, on **Thursday 7th**, Pica Pica - a Spanish guitar and flute duo - will be playing in the Three Tuns from 9pm. Let's face it, that's about as cultural as the LSE gets so don't miss it. The LSESU Ski Soc. is holding its inaugural meeting in A144 at 5.30pm to discuss plans for its Easter'92 trip. At 5pm the SU is holding a series of talks on "What are the obstacles on the way to the transition of a post-apartheid South Africa?". The panel will include academic staff, a representative from the South African Embassy, and the LSE's South African scholar. Venue to be announced. The Cinematic Society will be getting together in C018 from 5 to 7 pm for all involved in "A Perfect Cut".

At 7pm in ULU, Living Marxism series of "Red Lectures" is holding a talk entitled, "Is freedom just another word?". If current news is anything to go by, this is one not to be missed as, due to lack of

circulation, the magazine might not be so "living" next year.

There will be meetings of the Entertainment Committee at 3pm in E206 and the Rag Committee at 5pm in E206. For those who don't know, Rag Week is when the student population act even sillier than usual under the excuse that they are raising money for charity - so get involved.

Friday 8th - the European Society couldn't resist having another meeting. This time it is entitled "The Battle to rebuild the East" and it is being held somewhere in the LSE (don't ask me where).

The week nears its climax with the Multi-Cultural Extravaganza at 7.30pm in the Quad. This is where your tastebuds will be excited and delighted by food from many different countries cooked up by the various national societies. There will also be a wine bar and live music from the "J.Z.Band", who are a group of South African political exiles performing African dance music - now you don't get to see that everyday of the week.

Saturday 9th sees the Pakistani Society holding its intro party and dinner in A85/6.

From 7.30pm in the Quad/Tuns/Underground/Cafe is the absolutely massive benefit for the International United Charities Trust. I am assured there will be lots of DJ's and bands including "Utah Saints". So if you want to rave on Saturday night the LSE is the place to be. Best of all, there's a bar extension until 12.

Anybody wanting free transport to "Enterprise '91" (a graduate recruitment fair in Oxford on Tuesday 12th) should contact the SU Admin Office (E294, ext. 2884) by Friday 8th.

Treasury announcement: All society packs should be handed into E78 ASAP.

So remember, be multi, be cultural, but most of all don't play with fireworks unless there's an adult present.

Au revoir amigos!

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Going Underground

Ed Jauregui looks at the many delights of travelling on the Tube

The London Underground System. We love it, we hate it, we can't live without it.

At times, it can be a place of almost mystical charm, where otherworldly voices from within dark holes moan their perpetual warning: "MIND THE GAP." Your mind warped by the day's onslaught of statistical formulae and economic principles, you are devoured by the gaping jaws of Holborn Underground Station and somehow stumble down stairs and through a labyrinth of echoey corridors into a half-empty platform.

Anticipation crackles in the air as the countdown continues on the computerized screen: "Cockfosters 2 mins". Time seems to slow down and wait...and wait. Then a sudden gust of wind blows a lone newspaper page over the tracks. A bedraggled vagrant lying across a row of shiny blue plastic seats raises his tired head and mutters: "It comes...!"

Two mad yellow eyes glow in a tunnel that vibrates with a deafening roar. Finally, the enraged cybernetic worm charges into the station screaming with the pain of clutching to the rails in another insane effort to stop. A long row of magical doors open in unison. You topple into your dusty blue-green seat and vegetate, for what seems an eternity, as the machine plunges through the innards of the city.



The Tower by Tube

After a few minutes, your gaze becomes fixed on the hypnotic swaying of those obscene dangling knobs that hang from the ceiling, and all else is forgotten.

Unfortunately, if your classes finish after 3pm, the scenario becomes quite another. Now the underground traveller must fight for survival within a stifling mass of humanity that surges this way and that, with mindless persistence. During the rush hour nightmare of body odor and crushed lungs, reaching the door before the train pulls out of the station is a privilege (whether you're trying to get on it or off it!).

Whatever the level of

crowding, riding the tube is, with rare exceptions, a lonely experience. Any conversation begun at the station is doomed to meet its untimely demise with the first two-minute ear-shattering explosion of howls and clatters. Screams of "WHAT?", "EXCUSE ME?", and "COULD YOU REPEAT THAT LAST BIT?" are forever lost in the odious din.

Hilarious bouts of amateur lip-reading or sign-language can often be witnessed on an underground train, but the embarrassed interlocutors rarely last more than one stop. Soon it is realised that attempting to re-initiate the conversation at each station,

(for a maximum of forty seconds) just isn't worth the bother. Even the sounds of the loudest walkman, at maximum volume, are drowned in the roar.

As a result, Boredom turns out to be the most assiduous passenger on our Underground system. Once we have read and memorized every single poem and witty advertisement on offer this month, there remains little else to do but fall asleep or count the screws that hold the rickety compartment together. Occasionally some considerate yobbo will have left his copy of 'The Sun' lying about, and perhaps then we may be able to

chuckle over a few headlines, but unless we have remembered to bring our own reading material (a rare event indeed), even this will only serve as a momentary diversion.

Inhabitants of the Underground can be divided into two general groups: 'moles' and 'corpse'. Moles, literally and figuratively, are well known for their ability to travel quickly and efficiently underground. Corpses, in the same environment, are not known to get very far.

Moles make best use of the system, having achieved an astounding level of expertise and skill in 'tubing it'. They always leave home with exactly the minimum amount of time required by them to arrive on time. They can easily be spotted bounding up the left side of every escalator, taking 'wrong way' short-cuts, and negotiating the pole position with each other at the arrival of each train (i.e., trying to stand at the spot lined up exactly with the center of the train door which will, in turn, be directly opposite the 'Way Out' tunnel at the destination station).

Moles always remember to take their ticket out a few seconds before reaching the turnstile (through which they can zoom in less than a single second), and never forget to take off their coat upon entering a station, before reaching the furnace

below. Only they seem to comprehend the coded meaning of the garbled messages occasionally blurbled through the loudspeakers.

Corpses are the clueless louts who stop at every turn in a station to consult their maps and examine the diagrams on the wall with such interest. They tend to cluster in groups that, hopelessly lost, follow each other around, up and down the escalators for hours, preventing moles from dashing up or down these mechanical stairs. Their favourite pastime, however, must be blocking the only 'Exit' turnstile in a station for 10 minutes, baffled by the complicated functioning of this machine.

Corpses love the simplicity of the Circle Line. Unfortunately, they tend to realise they have arrived at their station only when the train is already pulling out, so decide to avoid complications and go all the way around again. Corpses have been known to spend days spinning around the Circle Line in this fashion. Poor sods.

After only a month of burrowing my way from Wood Green Station to LSE and back, I can hardly consider myself a full-fledged Mole. However, I am beginning to feel like a citizen of the Piccadilly Line. Perhaps not really very impressive on my CV, but still, a source of considerable pride.

Obituary: Death of a Campus Editor

Scott Kelly bids farewell to seriousness and The Beaver

Alas all good things must come to an end, however, despite this so must my time as Campus editor. Yes folks its time to throw in the towel, call it a day and move on to pastures new, I've had a good innings but now I must turn over a new leaf. Besides everyone's fed up with an editor who keeps mixing his metaphors. During my time as editor, which must have lasted literally months, I've created a monster in my own image but the troops are massing at the gates and I know that its time to make a quick get away.

However, the fact that retiring from my only concrete achievement of the last two years has made me feel very nostalgic about the past. I remember the days when I was just another humble fresher hoping to make my mark at the LSE. Things were different back then. We had things that people can only dream about nowadays: interesting societies, interesting union meetings, a Labour club; oh how long ago it all seems! Now all I can do is dream about the wonders of the past.

The last paragraph was, of course, complete rubbish.

Do not under any circumstances ever believe anyone who tells how much better things were in the past. It's very easy to look back to a golden age of student life but even the cynical 'men of the people' attitude of DSG domination is better than things were two years ago.

I remember my first year very vividly and the thing that strikes me most is how seriously a large proportion of the student population took everything. It wasn't unusual to see tears flowing in the UGM and I recall that one week a war almost broke out with threats of a lynching outside the Old Theatre.

If there's one thing that can be said, without fear of contradiction, about post-war British history it is this: it has seen the slow death of seriousness. The angry young men of the fifties: such permanently-furious characters as John Osborne and Dennis Potter have claimed that this is due to the rise of materialist apathy among the young. Well, that's one way of looking at it, however, I think that's a rather dated view. It might be true that in the 80's the young did become obsessed with

money, such films as 'Wall Street' and 'The Secret of My Success' played on the get rich quick mentality. However, since then we have had a recession and the lessons of that have now taken effect so that we can no longer even take money, red braces or even Ford Escorts seriously.

If you don't believe my admittedly sweeping hypotheses look at the evidence. Politics are no longer taken seriously otherwise the ultimate 'good-bloke' of all time, John Major, wouldn't be Prime Minister. Sport is no longer taken seriously this is partly due to England doing so well in Cricket and Rugby, there's nothing to complain about. Music is no longer taken seriously, you only have to look at the charts to realise that. And, most importantly of all, television is no longer taken seriously, once, in the 1970's, an entire nation remained glued to the screen every night, now nobody bothers to watch at all, I can see why, how can you take it seriously if 'Rumpole of the Bailey' is sponsored by a brand of Port.

This article might appear rather rambling but I do have a point to make. I believe

that the death of seriousness has, on the whole, been a good thing. At the LSE, for example, nobody cries in a UGM anymore and even a Tory like me is safe to walk the streets.

I feel we have all learnt that most things are not worth losing any sleep over. If there is a problem with the present situation it's that it's left us with very little to aim for. Socialists seem no longer to yearn for the perfect state, Conservatives can no longer follow the relatively coherent creed of Thatcherism. If money isn't everything what else is there? After all it appears that no one, not even the Bishops and A.N. Wilson continue to believe in God. Well, what about Love? I'm afraid that particular idea died out a long long time ago.

I don't want to suggest any possible solutions to this dilemma, I'll leave that to you, I would only suggest this: if you do find something to believe in, don't take it too seriously. After all, that kind of thing can lead to war.

FOR:

There are very few people who disagree totally with any form of immigration control. Immigration control is a necessity, not on the racial grounds that members of extreme "left" wing groups such as the National Front or the British National Party might put forward, but on purely economic grounds. Any nation which rid itself totally of any type of control on the influx of people into its country would be committing economic suicide.

It is not surprising that people wish to move to countries that may be able to offer them a better standard of living, whether that means increased financial security and a more prosperous future, or basic human rights which they were not previously permitted. But if everyone were allowed to migrate as they wished, it is obvious that countries with strong economies, with good human rights records, would be placed under an unbearable strain. People would go to these countries to find work, compete in a labour market which is already full and the outcome would be higher unemployment, increased public spending on such things as benefits, and all the associated problems.

Having made the point that immigration controls are necessary, we need to consider what are fair and equitable controls. The deci-

sion on whether to allow a person citizenship of a country must surely be made by that country not on the grounds of race, creed or gender, but rather on the grounds of whether that person can be of any benefit to the country to which they intend to immigrate. When a country allows a person

Immigration Control in Europe?

citizenship, it is giving that person a number of rights. The right to be protected under the law of that country, the right to any social security, education, healthcare benefits which may exist etc. It is only fair that a country should have the choice of which people to bestow these rights upon, namely the people that have the skills necessary to make them beneficial members of society.

This is not racist as some people claim, nor is it elitist as others would argue, it is merely fair.

Dominic Bourke
Chairman, LSE Conservative Association.

AGAINST:

There is no such thing as an immigration problem; in recent years, immigration into Britain and France amounts to 0.1% of their population. The much feared tidal wave of Eastern European immigrants has failed to materialise, and yet all over Europe, immigration is the number one political issue. In France, Jacques Chirac's comment about "smelly immigrants" has been picked up by all sides in a similar vein. This has enabled the government to use immigration to create an atmosphere of panic. Jean-Marie LePen's ideas have now gained an aura of respectability. Similarly, the German establishment wants to place the blame for the lack of political stability and inability to develop the East German economy onto foreign workers. Meanwhile in the UK, British decline is explained by the presence of "non-British" elements in society, in particular the Moslem community.

The immigration debate has in reality served to promote racism and to consolidate conservatism and reaction. The collapse of Cold War ideology has increased the West's need to divert attention from its own problems of recession and decline, which are especially advanced in the USA and the UK. The Gulf War provided the basis for Western au-

thorities to launch an offensive against the Third World and to create a new consensus on imperialism. This has enabled the butchers of Baghdad to promote themselves as a civilising influence in racist terminology of the 19th century, with the re-emergence of concepts such as the "white man's burden" and racial superiority. Reactionary politicians and journalists now feel free to express what would have been perceived as racist ideology even a few years ago, and can make it seem "natural" and common sense. This climate has made the debate around immigration overtly racist all across Europe. The West is using immigration as a scapegoat for the failure of capitalism.

In Britain, the debate has taken a more covert, "silent" form. The right has been able to use the same method of scapegoating to make an apology for the system's inadequacy. Thus, what is actually the increased immiseration of the working class is being portrayed as the consequence of the lack of morality. The assumptions about racial inferiority have not been challenged. We need to oppose this culture of chauvinism and regimentation of society by explaining capitalism's inherent backwardness and inability to develop society. This demands that we oppose all forms of racism, from criminalisation of the minorities to immigration controls, and thus build a new anti-racist challenge in the 1990s.

Sinisa Vacic

Post Haste

Letters due to E197, by hand or internal mail, by 4 p.m. Thursday

For The Record

Dear Beaver,

I enjoyed reading your editorial last week - outspoken as usual. May I just pick up on a few of the points you raise in it?

First of all, the DSG and the Greens never had an "electoral pact" at the last SU elections. The Chair of the Greens, Tim Rayner, wrote to the Beaver announcing his group's retirement from active politics. He implied support for the DSG, but this was an unilateral move, not the result of discussion or negotiation.

Second, the DSG never said it wants to focus only on student issues. Some of our members have been actively involved in outside campaigns, and the DSG has worked closely with Charter 88 in the last year to highlight constitutional issues. As far as the honorary presidency is concerned - this year we nominated John McCarthy (we withdrew the nomination only when we discovered the Tories had already done so), and two years ago I went in TV in a panel

discussion to defend the election of Winston Silcott.

Finally, you state that the DSG "benefited more from the general disillusionment with Labour than any profile they themselves displayed". If this is to be true, disillusionment must have been very great indeed. We achieved a lot over the last year - improved supervision for research students, centralised hall admissions, exchanges to Eastern Europe, the studentship fund - and will continue to deliver.

Yours sincerely,
Michiel van Hulst
General Secretary

Let's Be Serious

Dear Beaver

I am worried about the journalistic decline your paper has been suffering since the beginning of term. We are now in the fourth term and there should be no excuse for filling twelve pages with a sometimes hair-raisingly crap style of writing. I think it is better to cut down the number of pages to ten or even eight, instead of lowering the standard to a level which is unworthy of paper published at LSE.

More specifically, Joe Lavin's article about ways of saving money in London was probably intended to be funny. In fact, it was not. Maybe I am not familiar enough with American humour, and so, I missed

the jokes. But even if so, he definitely went too far joking about killing oneself.

Suicide is one of the sad chapters of humankind in "modern society". Having worked on a emergency ambulance for one year, I know that suicide accounts for one of the main causes of death of young people. Unfortunately, the issue receives little attention in public. On the other hand, mentioning specific cases in the media would directly interfere with the right of privacy of people involved. Therefore, I understand that the Beaver did not explicitly write about an LSE student who took his life in summer.

Having this suicide in mind, however, I believe it is extremely macabre to give advice on how to commit suicide. I expect the Beaver to apologize publicly for such a disgusting piece of writing.

Ludwig Kanzler

Dear Ludwig,

With reference to Joe Lavin's article in last week's Beaver, it was merely the view of one American student on his impressions of London. The lack of humour to which you relate cannot be apologised for; one person's sense of humour may not appeal to another.

In addition, I am concerned at your criticisms concerning the general decline in standards of the Beaver. Contrary to your beliefs that the standard of writing has

declined since the beginning of term, I should like to point out that there are some writers on the Beaver Collective that have been successful freelancers. Therefore, although spelling can never be made fool-proof and other such errors of this kind will creep in (as they do in any publication), we do try to maintain reasonable standards of journalism. If you believe that this is not satisfactory then we would be more than happy to receive contributory articles from you in an attempt to improve the quality of our paper.

Fashion Outrage

Dear Beaver,

I am outraged by your recent article sniping at people who dress in an "unbeaverly" fashion. I found your comments about Americans particularly offensive. Canadians make up a large percentage of LSE's overseas population. We dress in lots of clinging white polonecks and garish university sweatshirts (not like those subtle trousers with LSE slathered down one thigh) and, as usual, we were entirely ignored by the Beaver. I am sick and tired of this galling inequality and hope that you will endeavour to redress it.

Arthur Combs,
Canadian

The Beaver

One thing rather hard to ignore is the lack of Labour party students taking an active part in the UGM's. This is probably the first time in the last 30 years that there has not been a substantial body of vociferous Labour students willing to make their point of view heard regularly.

Both Labour and Conservative parties have, in the past, been able to rely on a steady stream of budding politicians eager to enter Parliament from the infamous LSE UGM's. It seems that the Conservatives will continue their momentum of their regular trickle of politicians into Westminster. What of Labour, though?

In its time, the LSE has produced some valuable Labour politicians. Tony Banks, Barry Shearman and Robert Kilroy Silk (formerly with Labour before defecting to BBC1). How will the shadow party continue to recruit new blood if there is no new blood that is interested? I do not say this with the arrogant assumption that LSE is the only recruiting ground in higher education available to them. Rather, if Labour is so lacking in existence at this university then there are likely to be similar problems at other universities throughout the country. Although, at a student level, many find the politics rather trivial, if they affect the future of national politics then the matter immediately becomes more serious.

Another issue to be raised concerning the UGMs is the behaviour of the audience last week. The odd paper aeroplane has always been thrown in moments of boredom. However, to have at least half of those present ignoring the matters being debated in order improve their origami skills is rude to say the least. This reflects badly on both those concerned as they lack the manners to listen to the debates and also upon those who speak.

The UGM has always been an hour of theatre in which serious topics have been debated in an atmosphere which induces interest. Perhaps interest is waning because those who speak do not possess the necessary charisma to maintain the attention of their audience. Maybe it is time for both sides to be aware of the other's needs within the forum of the UGM.

- | | |
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Forgotten Peoples

The U.N. attempts to revive native cultures with Year for Indigenous Peoples. Cressida Miller reports.

1993 is The Year for Indigenous Peoples, and it is hoped that this will raise public awareness.

Before visiting Geneva in the summer vacation I had no idea of these facts, and was unaware of the complexities of international law, human rights and self-determination. I was invited to join up with a group of anthropology students from Zurich University in their final week of a course covering the area of human rights and anthropology. I was one of two L.S.E. students to attend.

I have always felt sorry, as most of us have, about the plight of various groups of people all over the globe. Many magazine articles and television documentaries I have encountered portray indigenous people under threat as noble savages who are victims with no hope. Many governments have stated their awareness of the serious problems faced by indigenous peoples living in their territories. Through visiting Geneva I have found that all over the world people are fighting for greater understanding and that there is hope for these people.

The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established in 1982. The protection of the rights of these people is recognised as an essential part of human rights by the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation.

The Working Group on Indigenous Populations is the centre of indigenous rights at the U.N. A universal declaration of indigenous peoples rights is soon to be adopted by the U.N. General Assembly. This will mean that all the member states will adopt the declaration's content in their internal affairs - or should do.

I visited the Working Group during its first week of meetings held in the Assembly hall. The building is imposing and enormous, with people from every part of the World working there. I sat in the rounded line of desks and listened in on a translating earphone. I attended the

draft proposals. The Chairman/Rapporteur Mrs Erica-Irene A Daes visited Brazil to speak to the Government on the behalf of the Yanomami peoples. She talked to the Governor of Koheado, academics and politicians about the Annui peoples. Her work is to be incorporated in a report to the Secretary General.

The Working Group is the first opportunity for such people to obtain specific access to the U.N. The openness of the group

sessions to all interested parties (including L.S.E. students) and the constructive dialogue developed between all concerned has strengthened its position as a focal point of international action.

Unfortunately, politics within the U.N. have indirectly damaged the global character of representation at the Working

category "indigenous" applied to groups within their borders. States rarely raise human rights issues relating to Africa other than South Africa. Some African representatives were there and consider that these issues have relevance for Africans. But African nations maintain that there are no minority groups in Africa and political aversion

declaration also proposes mutually acceptable and fair procedures to resolve conflicts or disputes between indigenous peoples and states. Mediation, arbitration, national courts, international and regional human rights review and complaints mechanisms are enumerated as means to a desirable end.

example of such threats. The Penans possess an abiding belief that their way of life is precious. During the last few years they have mounted a non-violent campaign to defend their forests in Borneo. The forest is their life: "We cannot be separated from the land where our ancestors have lived", says Asik Nyelik, the leader of Sungai Uborg who has twice been arrested for joining barricades to halt the loggers. Hopefully they can be helped. I hope that the declaration will have a positive effect.



Who will absorb this culture next?

Photo: Beaver Library

Group-national interests thus still influence the process of the conference. Not all parties are ready to cooperate. Some Asian communities have denied the concept "indigenous" and refused to participate in the Working Group. The heterogeneity of Asia in geographic, religious, ethnic, political and economic terms is an obstacle to smooth

towards tribal issues is a major factor in the under representation of African groups.

Indigenous peoples inhabit large areas of the world. Spread across the globe from the Arctic to the Pacific, they number approximately 300 million. Indigenous or aboriginal peoples are defined as such because they were living on their lands before settlers came from elsewhere. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means.

The Indians of the Americas, the Inuit and the Alutians of the circumpolar region, the Sami of northern Europe, the Aborigines and the Torres Strait Islanders of Australia, and the Maori of New Zealand are regarded as indigenous peoples. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics which are clearly distinct from those of the other segments of the national populations.

Throughout human history, dominant neighbouring peoples who have expanded their territories have acquired new lands by force, endangering the cultures and livelihood of established peoples. The threats to indigenous peoples' status and legal rights as distinct groups and as citizens are today often of a different nature. Most are today actively seeking recognition of their identities and ways of life.

The draft declaration guarantees the rights and freedoms related to the preservation and development of ethnic and cultural characteristics and distinct identities. The draft

The World Community has long acknowledged that the distinct cultures and languages of indigenous peoples form part of the cultural heritage of mankind and deserve protection. Much more important than a means of every day communication, language is the vehicle of culture and identity. Yet organisations defending indigenous peoples rights cite cases where educational systems are being used to forge nations with a single language and culture.

An article by Eugene Linden in Time Magazine, September 23, 1991, titled "Lost Tribes, Lost Knowledge" describes how indigenous peoples are left without their own culture, as people "who are shadows of what they once were, and shadows of what we in the developed world are." Over the ages, indigenous peoples have developed innumerable technologies and arts. Much of this expertise and wisdom has already disappeared and, if further neglected, most of the remainder could be gone within the next generation.

People have been responding to numerous threats in different manners. National economic development, which generates pressure on territory still in the lands of indigenous peoples, is an

The European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) met in Portugal in the summer. The panel agreed to set up a Network on Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights within the EASA. No Anthropology Department anywhere has ever offered a course with a similar form, content and aim.

The question of anthropological advocacy, the place of action in anthropology is one of contention because the concept of advocacy immediately acknowledges the position of the anthropologist as intermediary (Hastrup Elsass 1991). The depth of knowledge that anthropologists have about a certain issue seems at first to be an obvious and wonderful way of educating, communicating to officials and the public. But some anthropologists are ethnically against intervention. A revealing article on this is in the June edition of "Current Anthropology".

The "noble savage" will have power that is legal internally and internationally. A number of

tribes are actively involved in the preservation of knowledge at the UN. I found out that there are pleas for a university in the Amazon Jungle dedicated to indigenous culture. At present, there are hospitals which incorporate

indigenous cures with more Western Techniques.

I valued every moment I spent in Geneva in July. I met two of the most fascinating people I am ever likely to meet. They were two representatives of the Shawarti people. The old man is a Shaman who foretells the future through dreams.

If you would like a chance to visit the UN Centre for Human Rights contact Lars Stofestad, Assistant Professor, Zurich University.

Many people in England are actively worried. If you would like to help indigenous people the most sensible start would be to contact Survival International, 310 Edgware Road, W2 1DY. Tel: 071-723 5535, Monday to Friday 10-6pm.

Throughout human history, dominant neighbouring peoples who have expanded their territories have acquired new lands by force, endangering the cultures and livelihood of established peoples.

cooperation within the U.N. The indigenous population in the Americas, a counter example, varies greatly but their situation is better understood. Asia, on the other hand, is a region of competition between powers who seek to expand their influence- human rights records are only prudently criticised.

Africa was conspicuous for its lack of representation. The African nations that responded to the questionnaire denied the

The "noble savage" will have power that is legal internally and internationally.

Monument to a Madman

Bettina Wassener visits Ceausescu's Palace of the Republic

"Paris of the Balkans" might, in the face of never ending stories about orphanages, destroyed villages, queues, Securitate (and vampires), be an inappropriate name to give to Romania's capital, Bucharest. Surprisingly, there is something about Bucharest that deserves the epithet. There are long, wide boulevards, generous open squares, large parks with artificial ponds, the city residences of the long gone upper classes and the quiet residential areas of the bourgeoisie. There is even an "Arc de Triomphe". The basic parisian infrastructure does exist. Photographs in the National Museum bear witness to the former attractiveness of the city, its street cafes and shops. Nowadays the city is above all dusty and dilapidated, though not beyond repair. However, it is shaking off its many layers of communist dust to show off its daffodils, fancy tights and a handful of billboard.

It is not here that the parallel with France's capital is rendered a mockery but in the numerous attempts by Ceausescu to outdo the ostentatiousness of Paris - or any other city in the world. His pride and joy, Bucharest's "Palace of the Republic", has simply gone beyond the bounds of rationality and usefulness. Unfinished, it sits upon an artificial hill, a bizarre blend of classicism, Stalinist Socialist Realism and fascist futurism.

Innumerable anecdotes and rumours of corruption and waste are bred by the absurd scale of the whole project and are, in the face of things, mostly believable. For example, there is the story about a staircase and marble-covered wall which, not being to



Romania's Palace of the Republic

Photo: Bettina Wassener

the "Conductor's" liking, had to be torn down and rebuilt dozens of times. There is also the rumour of marble tombstones being confiscated and recycled to contribute to the greater glory of the people in the shape of building material. There is an anecdote about the Conductor's German Shepherd which tore itself loose to chase a cat during an official visit to a hospital which was to make way for the monumental "Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism" which leads up to the palace. In the pandemonium which ensued, the Leader of the nation was left standing alone - as a result, the hospital was demolished the very next day amidst accusations of conspiracies to embarrass and undermine.

What facts there are about the palace are as incredible as these

stories are believable. The Uranus quarter, which used to comprise one sixth of the old city of Bucharest and was the only part of the city to survive the earthquake of 1977 undamaged, was razed to the ground. This included several churches and synagogues and housing for more than 400,000 people. It took 400 architects and 100,000 workers (the best the country had to offer) to build a monstrosity 120 metres high which covers 350,000 square metres and is three times as large as its Parisian prototype: Versailles. The estimated costs for this range from an official figure of half a billion pounds to five times as much.

One can but wonder what all of this was to achieve. A national monument to Romanian communism, an enduring legacy to Ceausescu - that it certainly is -

for better or for worse. The general consensus among the people of Bucharest is that it is definitely for worse. However, after December 1989, the discussion as to whether to continue the almost completed construction yielded a clear answer: one could not let it go to waste. Yet, while the names have changed pointedly to "Palace of the People" and a symbolic "East West Boulevard", a new use for the site is not easy to devise.

Deprived as it is now of Warsaw Pact conferences and Ceausescu's "gigantomania", its proportions are too great to fulfill any of its original purposes.

Suggestions as to what to do with it range from that of housing the government plus several ministries to that of selling it to western businessmen for conversion into a giant shopping centre. For the moment, the building is empty, open only to workers, foreign politicians and bribe-bearing tourists.

Inside, one gets to realise the true extent of the absurdity. For \$10 (via the smug gendarme at the front entrance) or \$1 and cigarettes (via the grinning workers at the side door) we got a tour of the site. While the gendarme literally ran us across the gigantic entrance hall shouting, "the largest carpet in Romania!" and the notorious stairway to the biggest chandelier in the world, the workers were prepared to give us a more thorough tour of this shrine of superlatives.

The inside is a Kafkaesque maze of corridors, winding staircases and reception halls. The jewel in the crown is the huge "Hall of Romanians", under whose glass ceiling were to be displayed the products representative of each of the country's 40 regions. Most of the halls boast three rows of chandeliers, flanked by only slightly more modest crystal lamps along the wood-panelled, gold-plated walls. Apart from that the halls are

The inside (of the Palace) is a Kafkaesque maze of corridors, winding staircases and reception halls.

empty, vast and echoing. Large tracts of the Palace are in the process of being finished, slowly and expensively. Wire grids show through bare walls. Ladders, hosepipes and half-empty buckets of plaster block doorways leading to golden rooms. And one wonders if perhaps it would be cheaper to simply freeze the scene in an attempt to go for an innovative East European version of the Centre Pompidou rather than a bloated Versailles. The stairway that so irked Ceausescu, meanwhile, has still not received its final shape. Then again, the irony would be complete if it were to be replaced by a vast battery of escalators.

Laughing in the Face of Fatalism

Tim Rayner travels to Bucharest, in an attempt to unravel some of the puzzles of post-Communist Romania

Dinu, my faultlessly polite Romanian host, lives in a partially bulldozed apartment block in the centre of Bucharest. A few carefully trodden steps away, past unguarded gaping holes, tangled metal wires, dead dogs and other assorted hazards, lies the infamous Boulevard to the Victory of Socialism, in all its semi-constructed glory. It is, my host tells me, "a victory for socialism over the Romanian people". Wonderful, I thought. What better place to start my quest to unravel the enigma of post-communist Romania.

I had come to Romania with some sense of foreboding: my head full of nightmare stories of past repression and western press reports of current turmoil and future uncertainty. Would the miners, so brutal in their repression of the opposition demonstrations of June 1990, return to the streets of Bucharest? Might there be

further violence between Romanians and ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania? I could only guess.

The contradictions of present day Romania were well illustrated by the time I spent talking with a class of sixteen and seventeen year olds at the highly regarded Nicolae Balcescu College in Craiova, one of Romania's largest towns, which still retains its beautiful Orthodox Cathedral. Having never met an Englishman before, the students were naturally excited and anxious to express their true feelings, regardless of the presence of their world-weary, chain smoking teacher, who occasionally interrupted the discussion to add his own words of wisdom. Asked whether they felt optimistic about the future of their country, they grinned and laughed loudly together, as only newly liberated people can ... then answered "no".

Making sense of this reaction

is rather like trying to understand the oldest poem in the Romanian language "Mioritza", which concerns a plot to murder a young Moldavian shepherd. The shepherd learns of his impending death when, miraculously, one of his sheep is able to speak to him. The young shepherd's response is widely interpreted to be fatalistic and characteristic of Romanians in general. "They (the murderers) should bury me near here", he declares. Furthermore:

"Of the murder itself, tell them no word

Just tell them outright that I married tonight

A king's daughter, the bride of the world and its pride."

This may well be fatalistic, but does it not also suggest a strain of defiance in the Romanina national character, that emerged so dramatically as the events of

December 1989 unfolded?

The classroom scene was for me a microcosm of the country at large. Here, in one room, it was possible to observe the high expectations of youth clashing with the quiet resignation that comes from forty years of life under a Stalinist dictatorship. I sympathised with my fellow students, but I also found myself in sympathy with the realism of the teacher - a philosopher - who could see no viable alternative to President Iliescu's National Salvation Front government, and repeatedly emphasised that any problems were normal for a country undergoing such a major transition.

It is worth elaborating on the teacher's view, in the light of the heavy criticism that Romania is often subjected to. It is no doubt true that the NSF government does contain many former communists, and that its overwhelming margin of victory

at the elections was an unfortunate introduction for Romanians to the world of liberal democracy. Nonetheless, it has to be recognised that the opposition parties did not provide a credible alternative. One or two presidential candidates seemed more concerned to see their pre-communist property returned to them than to expound their version for a new Romania, and consequently suffered electorally.

I think I left Romania, after ten days, with more questions in my head than I had answers. However, in this land of uncertainty, underlying tension and confusion, some things remain constant: the unmistakable hospitality of the Romanian people and beauty of much of the scenery and architecture which will ensure that I return one day soon.

Anarchy of the Monarchy

Royalty as you have never seen it before



Shampoo and conditioner? I just wash and go. (Birgitta Altermann)
Photo: Friedemann Simon

Theatre 'Wilde Mischung Berlin' presents Maria Stuart - Schriller than Schiller. Musical theatre with two courageous pianists and one shameless actress. German Cabaret Award 1989". This is what it says on the programme. Ostensibly, this would be play is about a girl's imagined meeting between Mary, Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I (the two courageous pianists), in which the girl is their dinner host. In this alternative to reality, all blame for the conflict that existed between these two characters is attributed elsewhere, i.e. to men, and the two become friends (in reality, they never met). "Our theme for this evening, ladies and gentlemen, is foul play in the 16th century" says Gerda, the central character, at the end of the introduction.

However, I don't believe her. The dialogue here doesn't seem to be of the utmost importance. Occasionally the actresses seem to have come out of character and are giving us footnotes on the ways of the theatre or some other aspect of life. Lilly Walden, the writer and 'shameless actress' of the show, sometimes fluffs her own lines, though this may also be a part of the script too. The action is at such a disorientating pace that it doesn't really matter.

I believe the ambition of 'Maria Stuart' is, above all else, to be a comedy. The costumes, which were a highlight of the night, included a wig for Elizabeth that looked like a large brick engulfing her head. Hence we had the line "You'll have to speak up my dear, there's something wrong with my ears" repeated on occasion. Is this

German humour or is this a universal theatrical brand of humour? Either way, it's potential for humour was minimal.

What this show is really about is theatre itself. Dorothea Gehr and Birgitta Alderman, Mary and Elizabeth respectively, are old fashioned cabaret stars, i.e. silly dances, silly faces, and a penchant for silly music. Lilly Walden is certainly shameless. In one scene she imitates male masturbation and she never stops. With the seating and the stage almost being one and the same, there is a very personal atmosphere in the theatre. You won't be falling asleep during the performance, if only because the performers never stop trying.

Maria Stuart is causing alarm at the Drill Hall Arts Center

At a
Glance

Exhibition

Toulouse Lautrec
at the Hayward Gallery
through 19 January

Theatre

Maria Stuart
at the Drill Hall Arts
Centre
until 9 November

Film

Boyz N The Hood
general release

Monster In a Box
at ICA Cinema
through 6 November

Ama
at the Renoir Cinema
from 22 November

**Over Our Dead
Bodies**
at ICA Cinema

From Montmartre to the Moulin Rouge

Lautrec exhibition opens at the Hayward Gallery

The exhibition of Lautrec's work endeavours to provide a comprehensive view of his career. The lithographic prints, for which he is most renowned, form only a small part of a wider showing which includes thinned oil paint sketches on cardboard, more dense paintings on canvas, portraits, charcoal drawings and experimental impressions of movement using gold powder.

The exhibition is divided into nine sections based on chronological order and subject matter. The life of a celebrated artist hangs precariously between the myth and the reality. Lautrec, in exploring the seemingly decadent environment in which he lived, is therefore no exception to the rule.

His legend, is one of the aristocratic gentleman dragged down into the debauchery and vice of the nightclubs and brothels of a late nineteenth century Paris: a coarser, less beautiful Dorian Grey. Organisers at the Hayward, however, are keen to restore Lautrec's persona to the more believable, if somewhat less exciting truth of a man who was highly motivated and less epicurean.

The emphasis then, is on the art and not the man. This being true, the very name Lautrec, is enough to draw hungry crowds to the South Bank, who jostle forcefully, but ever so politely around paintings of prostitutes, acquaintances and

entertainers.

The strength of this exhibition is that it enables the development of Lautrec's thought, regarding a number of themes, to be clearly understood.

To illustrate; Lautrec studied women despite the fact that at first glance, his experience of them seems to have been quite limited. The initial sketches of famous cabaret acts such as Yvette Guilbert, present a rather shallow appraisal of womanhood. The chanteuse is depicted in the heat of performance when her features can be caricatured to maximum effect. She is a paid servant possessing no value outside the sphere of entertainment. The study of brothels, however, is aiming to provide a wider view of his subjects (albeit restricted by an aristocratic male perspective).

The non-professional life of the women - medical inspections, private washing, dressing and a lesbian sexuality, is explored. By the time the late work is reached, Lautrec has progressed to a point where he appears to be questioning the role of men as voyeurs and patrons. Works such as, "In a Private Room", and, "At the New Circus Female Clown with Five Stuffed Shirts", represent an indictment of the sordid relationships forged between the gentlemen of the bourgeoisie, and working class girls at the various



Toulouse Lautrec exhibition

brothels and nightclubs of Montmartre. In addition they accuse the onlooker of an equally ghastly voyeurism.

Lautrec's real ability, though, lies not in analysis or in social statement, but in an exceptional aptitude for capturing a situation, a person's movement and features exactly.

At times this can be seen in the oil paintings which are bathed in a green light.

Of course, the ability to sketch is there for all to appreciate, in charcoal and lends itself naturally to the production of bold and simple prints.

Jonathan Asante and Helen Michael

The Toulouse Exhibition makes its way home at the Hayward Gallery until 19 January, 1992.

Boyz don't cry

Hard-hitting story of life in the shadow of gang warfare

Made on a budget of only \$6 million in just over 8 weeks, 'Boyz N The Hood' (named after a song by Ice Cube) marks the feature film directing debut of John Singleton. Singleton, who incidentally makes a cameo appearance in the film as a postman, is already regarded as something of a prodigy in the film world.

At 23, he was the unprecedented winner of two consecutive Jack Nicholson writing awards, and signed to the Creative Artists Agency while still attending college.

This acclaim is however justified; shunning the glossy and fairly commercial approach of Mario van Peebles' 'New Jack City' for a more down to earth dissection of the ways in which people's lives are affected by the gang problem in L.A.'s South Central district, Singleton gives an insiders view on growing up in the shadow of continuous and pointless violence.

To a certain extent the film could be seen as an autobiography; the central character Tre Styles (Cuba Gooding Jr.) tries his hardest with the guidance of his father to get away from South Central to attend college, just as Singleton did himself several years ago.

The film examines the development of Tre and two of his friends, brothers Doug-boy (Ice Cube) and Ricky (Morris Chestnut) as they pass out of their teens each with different ambitions and attitudes to life.

As such *Boyz N The Hood* is essentially a "coming of age" film, but it has a much

harder edge to it than any of the numerous films by John Hughes (*The Breakfast Club*, *Pretty in Pink* etc.) It is effective in its portrayal of the problems faced by Tre and his friends in that it examines every facet of their lives but the extraneous plot serves a purpose: with our familiarity comes not contempt but a real affinity and feeling for the characters and an understanding, however limited, of the problems they face.

Singleton does not however force his morals upon us - apart from the "Increase The Peace" slogan on the advertising posters there is not a single overt message in the film.

Instead we are left to draw our own conclusions, and as such those that we eventually come up with have a much greater impact. The film is saddening though not depressing, (there is always an undercurrent of hope present) and is interspersed with everyday humour from the three main characters, and everyday comment and philosophy from Tre's father 'Furious' - "Any fool with a dick can make babies, but only a real man can raise his children right..." - as he tries his hardest to keep his son from becoming another victim of gang life.

Thought provoking and entertaining 'Boyz N The Hood' is a remarkable first work. Watch it and wait for Singleton's next feature which he feels will be even better.

"Boyz in the Hood" is on general release.

Pandora's Box of Chaos

Pre-packaged Monstrosities in Gray's film

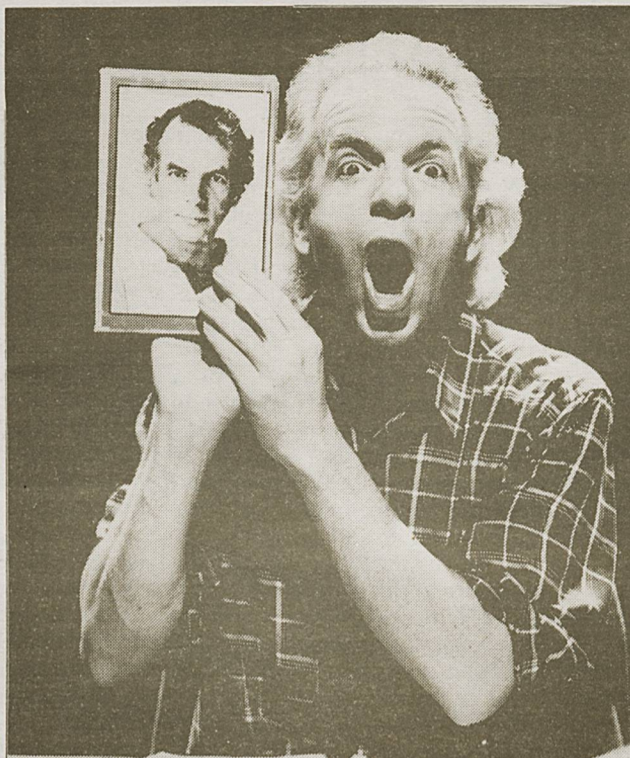
Spalding Gray's latest film *Monster in a Box* is both an amazing and hilarious film. In a way, this seems a bit surprising, for this was not the type of film one expects to be amazing. There are no romantic love scenes, no exciting car chases, and in fact no action whatsoever. The film is simply one of Spalding Gray telling a story while seated at a desk with no props except a glass of water, a notebook, and an 1800 page manuscript.

Still, Gray's energy and excitement in his own story are enough to keep the audience captivated and always waiting for his next words. The story he tells is an often hilarious one, but this is no stand-up act. The story is real, funny one moment and serious the next, giving it a permanence often lacking in other monologues. Laurie Anderson's music

and Nick Broomfield's direction further help to sustain the chaotic pace so that the film never once becomes dull.

The title *Monster in a Box* refers to Gray's 1800 page manuscript of a novel "due to be published several years ago." In fact, it is entitled *Impossible Vacation* and will finally be released in 1992. The film, though, is not about Gray's novel but about the immense number of interruptions that occur as Gray tries desperately to finish it. They range from a trip with Hollywood stars to a Soviet film festival to a residency in Los Angeles in which he attempted to find people to interview who were not actually in the film industry and finally to a stint on Broadway as the stage manager in Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* much to the displeasure of the New York critics.

The film is largely about the chaos that seems to con-



Here's one I prepared earlier (Gray's *Monster in a Box*)

rol Gray's life, but in a strange way it is almost a celebration of this chaos. At one point, Gray discusses his experience with psychoanalysis and how he was afraid of being "cured." It seemed to him that this meant being transformed from "inspired misery to common unhappiness." The film is almost a salute to this inspired misery that is so

prevalent in both Spalding Gray's life and our own, and it should not be missed. Besides, it might serve as a good interruption to any essays you must write for school.

Joe Lavin

Monster in a Box will be shown at the ICA Cinema from the first to the sixth of November and later at other venues.

London Film Festival: 35 Years On

The 35th London Film Festival consists of 220 films this year and is one of the largest non-competitive events of its kind. It begins on the 6th and continues until the 21st of November. Although it is theoretically open to everyone, the whole thing is over in less than three weeks and most films are shown only on one day so it's easy to exclude yourself from the entire milieu.

Fortunately, you can crack the system with a bit of organisation. Pick up a program telling you about all that's on from the NFT, The Beaver will also be reviewing a selection of the films and here's how to get tickets.

All seats are bookable in advance. Either go to the booking office at the National Film Theatre on the South Bank or you can make telephone bookings on 071-928-3232.

Films are shown not only at the NFT and MOMI venues on the South Bank (Embankment, Charing Cross tubes) but also at ICA

(The Mall) and the Curzon, Odeon and Lumiere in the West End.

The Festival will open with the World Premiere of "Enchanted April" at the Odeon Leicester Square. A British production starring Miranda Richardson and Joan Plowright. It is set in early twenties London and Italy. The event is black tie but if you can find your glad rags in time they may still be selling tickets in Leicester Square.

On Thursday 7th November the program really begins. During weekdays there are usually two screenings of the day's films - an afternoon matinee and an evening showing. Films to look out for this week include "Ama" on Thursday (see Ben's review) and "March Comes in Like a Lion" on Friday - a Japanese film. Also on Friday "Deadly" an Australian thriller about aboriginal deaths in police custody.

Watch this space next week for previews of films to be shown during the rest of the festival.

Right to Life

"Over Our Dead Bodies" documents struggles of people with AIDS

It cannot be easy to treat a topic such as Aids and the frustrations of the gay and lesbian community without lapsing into didactic lecturing and sentimentalism. Yet Stuart Marshall, firmly established as a film maker who documents lesbian and gay struggles manages to do so.

In "Over Our Dead Bodies," about the origins and goals of ACT UP New York, Marshall takes a back seat, allowing the people involved in the struggle to do the talking. The entire narration is done by chosen subjects. What comes across is the eloquence of the community as they articulate their world to another which is so homophobic as to deny them their rights to treatment.

ACT UP is a group of political activists based in the United States, pressing the establishment to consider the voice of the gay and lesbian community. Their anger is not against the inertia of the political and medical centres for manifestly, money is being poured into HIV research, but rather the lack of consideration of the issues that really affect those who suffer.

Marshall moves from one activist to another, all articulating the same anger and rebellion. From the experiences of the activists,

the world today seems more like the Victorian where all things unacceptable are swept under the carpet. Marshall is courageously realistic in his choice of pictures. We watch kiss-ins and men burning their skin as a form of alternative treatment for AIDS.

Marshall does not overtly preach a sermon on human rights yet he presses the viewer to conclude that these are intensely human people with their grief, their happiness and their hope. He does so with a masterful subtlety that can only come from a person who truly empathises. Images of Christmas celebrations under the fairy lights of the city contrast with the violence when the activists are hauled away by the police for civil disobedience.

This is a group of political activists with a difference. They fight for their friends, loved-ones and for themselves. Personal grief is mingled with their political voice, grief that in Marshall's view, lends power to their struggle.

Marshall does not intend for us to identify but to understand and sympathize. In a poignant moment, a man who has lost his lover shows a T-shirt with his lover's face on it and visibly choking back his grief, he shares "This is

my lover. He died in March 1987." There was absolute silence at this point. Marshall draws attention to the feelings behind this simple statement which taken on its own is a beautifully innocent declaration of having loved and lost.

No excuse is given for the different sexual orientation; Marshall is confident and comfortable with their "queerness", as is another group based in London which calls itself "Queer Nation". In fact, there is a sense of pride that the community is able to stand together as one to fight for their rights, transcending the barriers of race and sex.

In the last moments, the whole movement is compared to a war in which there will inevitably be dead bodies, as implied by the title. Yet there is a quiet assurance that some day this war will end and then the community can grieve without having to translate that grief into anger.

The film moves beyond the bare facts to give us a sense of the ethos of the gay and lesbian community. There is anger, there is grief but there is also pride, jubilation and compassion. Any one who watches this cannot again ignore G&L. Watch, and whatever your views, be educated.

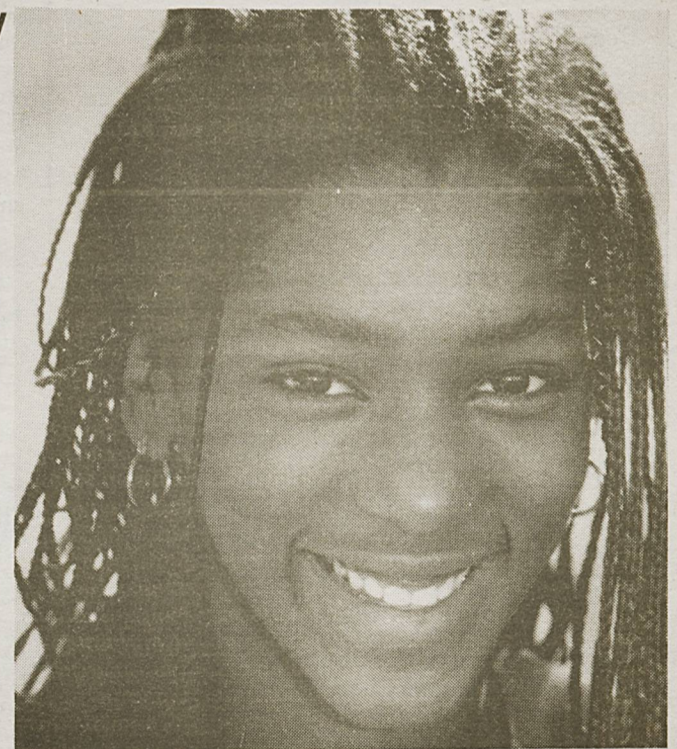
Ancestral Visitations

High Density Guidance in "Ama"

Ama is an African voyage of rediscovery. It is the first full length feature of two Ghanaian directors, Kwate Nee Owu and Kwesi Owusu which explores drama through the use of Akan story-telling techniques.

Set mainly in London it tells the story of a fascinating 12-year old girl, Ama (Georgina Ackerman) and her family's struggles to acknowledge and come to terms with ancestral visitation and spiritual prophecy. She becomes the medium for ancestral prophecy in a rather strange way, by finding a floppy disc near a lake in the countryside and manages to use the disc in an office which her mother, Corni

(Anima Misa) cleans in the mornings. The information on the disc reveals that she is required by her ancestors to prevent her father Babs (Thomas Baptiste) and brother Joe (Roger Griffiths) from death. The only way she can save her father is by convincing him to go back to Ghana before winter, however he has lived in England for 25 years as a legal consultant and thus has really mixed feelings about doing this. She also has to convince her brother to give up his boxing career, which is very difficult since he is obsessed with it and is train-



Hurry up and take the photo (Georgina Ackerman in Ama)

ing for the British Middle-weight Title. There are a couple of other colourful characters like UK (Evans Nii Oma Hunter), Bab's brother a resident of Ghana who is attending an environmental conference here, and Araba (Joy Elias-Rilwan), Ama's sister, a media consultant and self styled campaigner on Green issues; she has "micro-biotic" lunches.

It would appear that an important issue the film is concerned with is the tragedy of Joe, the boxer and the dilemma of the sport within Black communities. The dilemma being, some claim,

that it provides one of the few options for young males who fail to take their education seriously and on the other hand the fatal consequences of potential brain damage, if not death. However despite the cultural insight and a good soundtrack one feels short-changed, because the film attempts to touch upon quite a number of issues and in the process loses track of the central theme.

Benjamin Accam

Ama will be showing at the forthcoming London Film Festival and is scheduled for general release at the Renoir

Hate Mail



Your Host
This Week:
Neil
Andrews

Dear Beaver,

In response to last week's article on Jimi Hendrix there's no morbidity surrounding the fascination people have.

The mass following he had then (which disproves the argument that his fame is a product of his death) and which still exists today is a clear reflection of the unique, unrivalled talent Hendrix had - the best rock/blues guitarist we have ever seen (with Jimmy Page closely behind).

I suggest that your two writers bin their Sonia albums and buy a copy of 'Electric Ladyland' (*Isn't that the one with the naughty cover?* - NA) and freak out to Jimi's fine and sympathetic guitar work, his use of distortion and his haunting lyrics.

As for Hendrix not writing his own lyrics - get real (*I think you've lost the plot, Simon* - NA). People like Redding (the bassist), Mitchell (drummer) and Eric Burden (close friend and lead singer with the Animals) knew him - they were there when the inspiration came down from the Gods (*Eh?* - NA) and breathed life into his stratocaster. Hendrix was no fake, simply the most gifted and consummate guitarist yet. (*And Viz's latest cartoon creation* - NA)

By the way, your article about U2 was dead right. I heard that Prof. A.C. Atkinson did all the bass lines for 'The Joshua Tree' (Have you ever been to an E.S.T lecture?)

Simon Hawkins

Actually no, Simon, I've never been to an E. S. T. lecture but it sounds like fun - NA

Dear Editor,

Perhaps you can tell me the point of the overrated listings. If it was just to wind people up then I suppose that's ok (sic) if a little cheap but why should anyone care what these people think of U2 or Prince or whoever. It might be a useful exercise to analyse why these people you mention have been so influential. I wonder if that is something any writer there could do. If you want to challenge existing notions of appreciation of pop music icons, better read the NME (*Hey, I do. Small world innit?* - NA) for scathing criticism of this phenomena. It's all meaningless of course but it's so much harder to be positive isn't it? Takes longer as well! (*No it doesn't* - NA)

Oh and er**OVERRATED** has 2 R's in it (*Well spotted* - NA) and fat plumbers and bricklayers are **OVERATED!**(sic)

Derek Harper

Derek you are a sad man. The reason behind the overrated feature was to highlight the number of bands whose fanatical followings leave a lot to be desired. We never said that the artists featured were complete crap, we said they were overrated. There's a difference. Prince, for example, has produced some decent material in his time but he has also produced a lot of garbage. What we were trying to point out was that his fans would have you believe that everything he does is a masterpiece. The intention of the article was to highlight these failings and to basically wind-up the followings of the featured artists. We were expressing an opinion not trying to slander them. They may be influential but then so were the Bay City Rollers - NA

Quibbles and inquiries should be sent to:
The Music Editor, The Beaver E197

Stourbridge United

Neds play Villa and the Stuffies play Camden

Down here at the LSE you have to be very careful what you say about Neds Atomic Dustbin, it's bad enough liking them in Birmingham but as an under-graduate in London it's very tricky; nevertheless as a born and bred Brummie I will stick to my guns and say that they are excellent. However, after making the trip back home to the Aston Villa Leisure Centre, I have to cast some doubts over their talent and I now may be inclined to believe that some of the icy critics down here are right when they say the Neds are merely jumping on the Stourbridge bandwagon.

Don't get me wrong their music is excellent, the album 'God Fodder' is one of the biggest selling indie records this year and how many times have you heard 'Kill Your Television' in the clubs? Their recent single 'Trust' reached a respectable 23 in the UK charts and success seems assured. Therefore I was looking forward to a great night out especially as the Neds were returning to homeground. Having missed their support, 'Power Of Dreams', catching up on cheap Tetley Bitter from the bar, I stumbled down and grabbed my space on the floor not too near the front for fear of imminent death. I needn't have worried, an enthusiastic but incredibly young (obviously on parole during half-term) audience burned up all their energy after the opening ditty 'Less Than Useful' and it was left to us old codgers to encourage some atmosphere at least. Unfortunately, the AVLC

has all the charm of a shed (next week's big highlight is the Birmingham Bullets Basketball Challenge) and with a band obviously knackered on the last leg of their tour, the Neds were going through the motions. Songs came and went, naturally 'Happy', 'Kill...' and 'Grey Cell Green' had some reaction but when a couple of new songs (they do actually have some) were played the music fell flat and very repetitive.

Even Jon, the lead singer was not his usual self, there was no slugging us off or serious stagediving and his only contributions were thanking everyone for coming. (Well cheers Jon, you really know how to whip up a crowd). So the evening trundled on, and as they finished their last song 'Throwing Things', the Neds informed us they are now going to write some more tunes for the New Year (it's about time too), it is obvious that 'God Fodder' has dried up, we are all tired of listening to it (there are plenty of other bands who sound exactly the same we could listen to) and it seems they are tired of playing it; after 16 months straight who blames them. The Neds have lived on the recommendation of the Wonderstuff for too long and it is now time to find the roots of their music again which made 'God Fodder' so successful. I wait with my doubts.

With all that done and forgotten, I was one of the hundreds queuing in the rain last Tuesday at Camden for Feet Firsts Fifth Birthday

Bash and hoping to see the Neds again for a considerable saving in cash this time. All the clues pointed to them, the same support as in Birmingham (Power Of Dreams) and judging by the T-shirts outside it seemed a formality. I just hoped they had a bad night at Birmingham and would turn in a remarkable performance (even if it was just to prove a point to a few critics with me). However, dear old Jon ('the entertainer') collapsed during his gig at Kilburn the previous night and the Neds were unable to perform much to all the groupies disgust; this resulted in a load of wild rumours and confusion until gorgeous old Zaf spotted Miles Hunt in the toilet (and I still don't know whether to believe him). This was the stuff music fans dream of, a secret gig by the Wonderstuff. The support Power of Dreams were ushered on and ushered off again quickly, barely having time to play their recent number 'I Loved You'; however no one was there to see them, so they were soon forgotten.

Having replaced the Neds at such short notice, the Stuffies were without much of their equipment so necessary for their high-tech shows yet they played a gig that nobody will forget in a hurry. Five years ago, the Stuffies couldn't play Camden they were so unknown but they treated us to a show they would have played had Camden let them; and they showed how much Camden missed out. The classic tracks from Eight Legged Groove Machine

were played with an enthusiasm I have never seen from the Stuffies before (stadiums and Stuffies do not work), Miles was in true spirited form, 'How the f*** are you??' his opening line, it was just like the old days. 'Red Berry Joy Town', 'It's Your Money I'm After Baby' and 'A Wish Away' were literally screamed from the stage, the band forcing their now unconventional set-up to new (old) heights. Their short set drew to a close with their best track 'Don't Let Me Down, Gently' and even without their technical wizardry, it was magnificent. Forget Morrissey or Rob Smith as your God, Miles Hunt is the greatest vocalist I have ever seen; he screams, he yells, he shouts his guts out. The Neds could easily take a leaf out of his songbook. It isn't hard to see why the Wonderstuff are huge, nobody hates them, even if they won't admit to liking them, and the old stuff sounds just as good now as it did in '86.

The Birmingham music revolution is a little way off yet, no doubt when it comes the Stuffies will still be leading the field, with the Neds lagging some way behind. Mind you it was comforting to see a good lack of Wonderstuff T-shirts there, if the Neds can't make good music any more I hope they will stop selling bloody shirts as I can't help but think they are the only thing keeping the Neds bandwagon rolling on.

Nick Fletcher.

James Lose Control

Brixton Academy, 24th October

I was approaching this gig cautiously, to say the least. This could be the culmination of getting on for four years of being a James fan down the drain. And I loved this band at one time, I really did. They were everything I thought I'd ever need. I happened to bump into Tim Booth and Jim Glennie once in this record shop in New York. It was almost like meeting God, I was totally awe-struck. You may laugh, but at that point in my life I couldn't think of anyone else I'd prefer to meet.

But we've fallen out since then, me and James. They've done a few things I've not been at all happy with. First off, they signed to Fontana and released a couple of average singles and a poor dance version of 'Come Home'. Then they really annoyed me with the Gold Mother album, a mostly uninspired collection of weak songs that went on far too long. We made up a bit after their storming set at the Brits, that showed me how

good they could still be live, but the final tiff came with that awful, watered down piece of radio friendly pap that was the 'Sit Down' re-release. That would have been the end between us, with me left only with fond memories of our past together - our first gig at Trent Poly, 'Island Swing' at full belt in the car, stage invasion at the Hummingbird....

But I decided to give them one last chance (besides, the tickets were free) and so along I trooped, full of repudiation and expecting the worst. First impressions were not good: the good old James top is now suddenly £12 a knock, compared to £8 last year. Now I know inflation is bad, but this just smacks of profiteering.

I forgave them a little right at the start, as they came on to an acoustic 'Lose Control', a brave move. It set the scene for the rest of the set. The bits we knew were at times classic James - blasts of energy and excitement. But the unknown pieces (includ-

ing next single 'Sound') did absolutely nowt to me. They just passed me by, waving forlornly to try and catch my attention. You can see why they're getting comparisons to Simple Minds (unfair, admittedly), when they insist on filling their set with these complacent slow ballads. Christ, they even have one with a 'La, la-la-la-laa' chorus. It's sad to see and hear.

The two best tracks were their first single 'What's The World?' (8 years old and never sounded better) and their traditionally - but not this time - last track, 'Stutter', both of which were fast, vibrant, and reminded you that James can be different and very wonderful when they want. It's symptomatic of their current output that both these songs have been around quite a while.

Final point: Tim Booth has repeatedly stressed that he doesn't want the audience singalong of 'Sit Down' to become a cliché. The first few times it occurred, it was

genuinely special. Now it is expected and embarrassing. Why then, do they leave the song till the very last, till their third (count 'em) encore, when he knows full well that whenever they go off without playing it the crowd are going to start up the refrain immediately? A friend who saw them at Leicester reports they played halfway through the set, a much better position (on Friday they played 'Sit Down' first, an even better position - Ed.). It gets it out of the way and means we can concentrate on the rest of the set. It's never good just to be known for one song.

So.....although the love between us wasn't quite rekindled - the current James is too bland to be attractive, they're again friends of mine, and we can all live happily. At least till the new single, anyway....

Zonker Harris.

I Can See Clearly Now...

Blur play the National Ballroom, Kilburn

One of the great things about going to see a band like Blur is that you can stand at the back of the auditorium and still be able to see the band on stage, simply because the audience are so small. Having bought my customary pint, I could therefore stand at the back of the Ballroom and watch the hotly-tipped Spitfire perform. Why they are hotly-tipped I could not work out. Sounding like a Ride EP played at the wrong speed, their finale managed to induce the drummer into an epileptic fit and he refused to stop bashing his kit, even after the rest of the band had left the stage, until someone found the off-switch to the strobe light, which was strategically placed centre stage so no-one could miss it. Once he had departed the stage was set for Wir.

Wir, or Wire if you want to be pedantic, are totally bonkers. Strolling onto the stage, they proceeded to suspend two tin buckets from the lighting rig and began dancing to their own backing track. After poncing about for five minutes they launched into their set and I suddenly remembered how loud the National's PA actually was. Having been rendered deaf, I began to wonder whether this lark was really worth it. Of course it was, after all, where else

could you see a bunch of wankers take offence to Wir and begin to hassle them by throwing coins and flicking the V-sign at the end of each song. Being able to take a hint, Newman, Gilbert and Lewis departed after only five songs which was a shame because I was hoping to hear 'Eardrum Buzz'.

Blur are part of the scene that celebrates itself, apparently. After tonight's performance I can understand why. As their debut album 'Leisure' proved, there's more to Blur than meets the eye. If they killed baggy, then tonight they were dancing upon its grave.

With a backdrop of computer fireworks, Blur performed, visually as well as musically. Lead singer Damon jumped around like a Kangaroo on acid while the group floated through 'Fool', 'High Cool' and 'Come Together', all of which come from the band's album, and during 'Bad Day', Damon leaped upon the PA stack and began to abuse the audience with a bubble machine, which was conveniently perched on top. The band were well into their set before the first of their three singles was played. Subsequently each one, 'She's So High', 'There's No Other Way' and 'Bang', became an audience participation sing-along.

The greatest amusement was generated during the encores. The first, a fine rendition of 'Sing', involved the releasing of millions of little gold pieces of foil which stuck to your face and clothing. It prompted one punter to remark "Any minute now we're all going to look like the fucking Glitter Band" and he immediately gave away his real age. During the second encore, Damon proceeded to rugby tackle both the guitarist, Graham, and the bassist, Alex "Son of Sid" James before completely destroying the drummer's kit. He then departed with a simple "Thank You. Goodnight."

One of the major ironies of tonight is that by killing baggy, Blur have become one of its greatest exponents, overtaking their Madchester predecessors: the Inspiral proved too boring, the Charlatans only knew one song, the Happy Mondays lost the plot and the Stone Roses failed to read the small print of their contracts. Subsequently Blur have become the greatest thing on the indie-crossover dance floor since sliced bread. Only that difficult second album complex stands between them and world domination.

Neil Andrews.

Beethoven's Crowning Glory

Without ever having heard the piece, anyone could assume that Beethoven's fifth piano concerto, "The Emperor" was a grand work. Firstly, it's by the greatest large orchestral composer ever, and secondly, its title creates an impression of grandeur the piece certainly deserves.

Beethoven, even at his best, however, lacks the harmonic fluency of Tchaikovsky, or the poetry of Chopin's two concerto works. But then he more than makes up for these with contrast - his greatest talent.

It's partly due to this contrast that the fifth is so difficult for the pianist. Naturally, you would expect the likes of Alfred Brendal to handle it with aplomb. This he did in a concert last Friday at the Barbican, which was the last in a series of

three concerts with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, covering all five of Beethoven's piano concertos.

It is possible that Brendal is the greatest Beethoven pianist alive. It is difficult to tell whether he prefers Beethoven's more silent moments or the furious tempo of the gigantic runs. Perhaps he relishes the changes more; the unexpected forte just around the corner, or the pianissimo hidden underneath an orchestral blanket.

Whichever it is, he succeeded in conveying his love for the piece to the audience. Along with the orchestra, he always assumed the correct mood; at the start, where the orchestra kicks the piano into those furious runs, and in the second movement, that most beautiful interlude and build-up for the finale.

After all this, the finale is a bit of a disappointment, for the pianist at least. After a quiet chat with the timpani, the piano breaks into yet another one of those runs, ending in a crashing chord that brings the orchestra in. Then the pianist sits back, not contributing to the closing chords. No chance here to throw the head back as a cue for the audience to applaud. Not that we needed prompting. The Barbican erupted to its feet (almost before the last chord had been played out), saluting the combined talents of conductor Simon Rattle and maestro Alfred Brendal. This was a world-class concert, a coronation of one of the finest of Beethoven's works.

James Brown

Blow Job at the Jazz Cafe

Louisiana and the sound of New Orleans



The Dirty Dozen are not half the band they used to be.

Photo: Jon Fenton-Fischer

On November 16th, the people of Louisiana will vote for a new Governor. The choice is between ex-Governor Edwin Edwards, a man who has been indicted for racketeering, and David Duke, a neo-Nazi and former leader of the Ku Klux Klan.

Add to this the fact that the state has the widest gap between rich and poor of any U.S. state, ranking 49th in the U.S. in annual per capita income, and it is easy to conclude that many people in Louisiana can't be too cheerful about life at the moment.

Nevertheless, even in the worst of times, they still somehow find things to celebrate (including funerals - anyone who's seen the opening scenes of 'Live and Let Die' will know what I'm talking about).

Its French roots that make Louisiana unique amongst U.S. states - even the Napoleonic Code prevails above the Anglo-Saxon law of other states. The Cajun people of the Southeast have a culture all of their own, from food such as jambalaya and crawfish to a unique upbeat musical style which includes fiddles and accordions and is often sung in French (for typical examples, check out recordings by Beausoleil or the Balfa Brothers).

For most pop fans, though, a more accessible form of Cajun music is Zydeco, which has its roots

based in the blues; many, therefore would be better buying albums by Clifton Chenier or Buckwheat Zydeco as an introduction to the sound of southwest Louisiana.

Although Baton Rouge is the state capital, New Orleans is undoubtedly the chief town, particularly when it comes to music. Arguably, New Orleans ranks above such great towns as Chicago, Nashville, New York or Memphis in terms of its contribution to the American musical heritage. Of Louis Armstrong, the King of Jazz, Dizzy Gillespie once said - "No him, no me"; and, of course, without New Orleans, there would have been no Louis Armstrong.

The annual Mardi Gras festival remains as popular as ever, and probably unique compared to anything else in the world. Brass bands are a mainstay of Mardi Gras, as they are to New Orleans culture in general; the most famous band, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, played the Jazz Cafe last Monday and undoubtedly brought more fun and energy to the place than it has yet witnessed in its short life (see photo).

As well as being the home of jazz, New Orleans is also (arguably) the home of rhythm and blues, with too many great musicians to be able to go into any detail here. Suffice to say, it is impossible to go wrong in buying any album by Fats Domino, Professor Longhair,

Snooks Eaglin, Little Richard, Dr. John, the Meters or the Neville Brothers.

Of course, such artists themselves have consequently influenced other groups. If Mick Jagger (yes, I know, he went to L.S.E.) were capable of coming up with a good quote like Dizzy Gillespie, he might say: "No New Orleans, no Rolling Stones" - and without the Rolling Stones...well, the list can go on and on.

Fortunately, the past few years have seen a resurgence in the New Orleans sound, particularly thanks to Aaron Neville and his brothers. The new album from Robbie Robertson (ex-member of The Band) includes contributions from Ivan and Aaron Neville, the ReBirth Brass Band, and the New Orleans funky drummer, Joseph 'Zigaboo' Modeliste.

For a jazz introduction to New Orleans, try Jelly-Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, King Oliver, the aforementioned brass bands, or the more modern sounds of Branford and Wynton Marsalis (it was Branford who provided the excellent sax break on Public Enemy's 'Fight The Power'). For the Cajun/Zydeco and R'n'B side of Louisiana, a great introduction is the movie soundtrack from 'The Big Easy'. One thing is for sure - you'll soon be hooked.

Jon Fenton-Fischer

Houghton Street Harry

I can, this week, reveal exclusively in this column details of a major sporting event taking place at LSE in the very near future.

Twelve, three minute rounds of the Queensbury rules featuring: The peoples champion, your's truly, against the despicable vagabond responsible for last weeks blasphemous piece sinning against 'The Smiths', featured on the proceeding page.

Morrissey himself has told me (in the strictest confidence, you understand) that he was deeply upset by the article. Upset and startled by the way in which the cutting and astute critique didn't mirror, in any way, the inane platitudes constantly expressed in the tabloid press. You really do have to take your hat off to such originality, do you not?

Tickets for this potentially explosive bout are available through HSH promotions Ltd. (all cheques made payable to H.S. Harry esq.) What this space for further details.

Morrissey, as all disciples will know, is a keen Manchester Utd. supporter, or at least was as a small boy until he was left emotionally scarred by an incident on the Stretford end at Old Trafford. Folklore has it that on one sunny winter afternoon watching his heroes, Mozzer's treasured woolly hat was snatched from that immaculately quiffed head resulting in such distress that the poor flower could never again bring himself to return to his beloved United (violins please!)

But the candle still, likely, burns and so 'Heaven knows' Mozzer will be 'miserable now' during the forthcoming week, as will the many United fans across the world, as 'the mighty reds' crash out of the European Cup winners cup, despite (I predict) a valiant effort against Atletico Madrid at Old Trafford. No such problems for your favourites and mine from N4. Benfica should, given Arsenal's home advantage, be overcome, leaving the English Champions to progress to the mini-league stages of the European Cup and six lucrative matches for ITV to drool over.

Such a turn of events may have serious ramifications for the league title race in a season where Arsenal, at least, could face up to eighty matches if their assaults on domestic and European fronts are successful. The benefits for United may be felt in April and May when the effects of fixture congestion become apparent when the championship is still going to be on the line.

Tottenham and Liverpool both face difficult matches although I'd be surprised if both didn't progress. Liverpool may need extra time against strong French opponents, 2-0 up and eager to gain revenge (in some small measure) for the recent Rugby quarter final but as John Motson would tell you "Liverpool are never more dangerous than when they're behind" and I still expect a narrow scouse victory.

Anyway, next week I've got a week off and my sports page co-star will be making his HSH debut. Expect, as I do, a riveting column, full of gossip about steaming gypsies and Peterboro Utd. You lucky lucky people!!

LSE gives its bench a break

Stomps Cambridge anyway

Basketball

LSE Mens' 1st	107
Cambridge	49

"I can't remember our suffering a worse defeat," said Gin Obhi, a long-serving member of the Cambridge team. In fact, the defeat was so demoralising that Cambridge broke with tradition by declining our invitation for to enjoy a post-game pint.

Despite the weakness of the Cambridge side, the LSE players have much to be proud of, Saturday's performance would have had similar effects on much stonger opposition. Our defensive ef-

orts were unrelenting - every player working hard, and knowing what to do - and the result was more frustrating for Cambridge.

Offensively, LSE continued to develop its fast-break game - Cambridge just could not match the speed of Bobby Zirkin or Gareth Pope up the court. And when the fast-break wasn't on, or broke down, LSE was able to successfully execute a few experimental offenses against their man-on-man defense.

The starting five rested 10 or 12 minutes in each half, leaving the rest of the game to the "benchers". The LSE bench is stong this year, providing great depth to the team, and they continued to increase the points margin.

All this, as well as good free-throw shooting (15 of 23), and a minimum of fouls (the lowest I can remember), combined to produce the best all-round match performance by an LSE Basketball team since perhaps the 1988 European University Championship team.

Expect great things to come after this, only our second match!

Robert Dickinson

Hockey Unlucky Seven

LSE Women's Hockey	2
QMC II	3

Due to a lack of team commitment from certain players, LSE were only able to field 8 people to QMC's 11. The situation worsened after only five minutes when Sam went off injured. QMC scored first, but LSE came back with a superb goal by Jackie "hot shots" Everatt. QMC scored a timely second, just before the half-time whistle blew.

LSE started well in the second half, Jackie (again) setting up Bella Sleeman, after a scorching run down the flank. Unfortunately the lack of numbers finally took their toll and the opposition netted a winner. However, considering the circumstances, LSE played superbly with maximum effort from all concerned, who knows what might happen with a regular squad?!

Thanks and well played to: Angie, Nicola, Teresa, Jackie, Beth, Rosie and Bella.

Bella Sleeman

Football

LSE V	2
Charing X	0

The two goal scoreline does not do the boys justice in this game. The defence was solid, whilst the forwards and midfield linked together with superb passing along the ground.

However, the game was marred when midfield general Ormiston, whilst maintaining his combative edge to the last minute, was horrificly maimed by one of the sad losers. The sickening crack of breaking a leg could be heard for miles around. Our prayers go out to him.

Thomas Jepsen

Strand-ed!

Football

Kings 3RDS	1
LSE 2NDS	1

It was Waterloo station, 1.15 pm and still no sign of the captain. Could Adam 'one punch and it was all over' Ryder be deserting his troops so early in the season. Nay!

The skipper, along with co-star Andrew 'Goal-Machine' Pettitt, turned up dutifully, albeit looking somewhat bedraggled, to arrest any early fears in the LSE camp.

The question does beg however, with regards to his tardiness, as to whether certain disreputable establishments in Soho are in receipt of local authority funds via the student grant! No postcards please.

Moving swiftly on to the match report, it was never going to be a classic affair against our closest rivals from Strand poly and this is how it turned out. The game was followed by the traditional cliché-style aftermatch overviews: "We had all the possession, created all the chances, and still couldn't win."

In fact it is fair to say that the better side drew on this

occasion - if you know what I mean! Both goals came in the first half with LSE taking the lead after 20 minutes; in the words of the lad Pettitt himself after the match, "It was a charming little kick from 40 yards". Nice one Andy (Cyril surely?-ed).

Numerous attempts on goal went begging before Kings got their equalizer after a stray pass of distinct Mancunian origin left the otherwise faultless defence stranded.

"We had all the possession, created all the chances, and still couldn't win."

Questionable fitness took its toll in the second half. However with continued commitment the seconds will be up there at the end of the season. Finally the truth on the goal - it was a tap in, sorry Andy! (No it wasn't! Sorry Dave! - Ed).

David Cleveland.



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