

the beaver



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Newspaper of the
LSE Students' Union
FREE

Complaints filed over Muhammad cartoons

Sydney Saubestre

On 16th January the Students' Union received an official complaint from two students at the LSE that the LSE Students' Union Atheist, Secularist and Humanist Society (ASH Society) posted cartoons, depicting the Prophet Muhammad "having a pint," on their society's Facebook page. The Students' Union has since received "over 40 separate official complaints from the student body." Several students within the LSE community have publicly and privately denounced the perceived proliferation of Islamophobic sentiments on campus.

On 14th January, members of the LSE's Students' Union Atheist, Secularist and Humanist (ASH) Society began posting cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in a sign of solidarity with the Atheist Humanist Secularist group at the University College of London (UCL). The group at UCL was asked by the UCL Students' Union to remove said cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad, used to advertise one of their events, after a Muslim student at the university complained.

Facebook posts by the LSE Students' Union ASH Society included many cartoons of the Prophet, as well as other satirical religious comic strips, alongside pleas to sign the "Defend freedom of expression" petition that began at UCL. One member of the Facebook group urged other members to sign in order "to speak up against religious fascism." In a comment on an article posted on the wall entitled "Orthodox Judaism treats women like filthy little things" one group member wrote: "a reminder that most religions, not only Islam, are misogynistic." Members of the LSE's Islamic community were deeply offended by this targeted campaign against "religious fascism" and the perceived rise of Islamophobic views on campus.

Nabeel Moosa, President of the the LSE Students' Union Islamic Society asserted that "whilst we support and recognise the value of free speech, it is always absolutely necessary to distinguish between 'free speech' and hate speech. The actions of some members of the Atheist, Humanist and Secularist Society and others have sought to marginalise a large proportion of the LSE student body while also causing harm to the welfare of Muslim students who have been subject to a hateful campaign against their beliefs and liberties. We must also be aware that speech can very quickly turn into violence if not used responsibly."

On 20th January, members of ASH Society met with Stanley Ellerby-English, Students' Union Activities and Development Officer, to explain "the situation, the complaints that had

been made and how the action of posting these cartoons was in breach of the Students' Union policy on inclusion and the society's constitution." The society agreed to certain outcomes, though these have not been disclosed yet; however, the Students' Union will "now be telling the society that they cannot continue these actions under the brand of the SU."

Chriss Moos, President of the LSE's Students' Union ASH Society, responded to the formal complaints that had been filed against the society, stating that the issue should not be framed as one pertaining to Islamophobia.

"We firmly reject the allegation that actions of our members have 'sought to marginalise' anyone, have caused 'harm to the welfare of Muslim students' or constituted a 'targeted campaign,'" Moos said. "Although we reserve the right to criticise religious ideas, as humanists we will always oppose any targeted campaign against any community. We strongly oppose any form of anti-Muslim prejudice. The cartoons criticise religion in a satirical way. They do not target or call for the targeting of Muslims or any other religious group. Framing the criticism of religion as 'discrimination' or 'Islamophobic actions' is highly misguided and results in the stifling of valid debates. We do not discriminate amongst religions in our criticisms."

The Students' Union sabbatical officers addressed the issue at the UGM held on 19th January and investigating the claims. An Emergency General Meeting (EGM) is scheduled for Thursday 26 January at 1:00p with two separate motions, one on antisemitism and the other on Islamophobia, to be discussed.

"There will be two separate motions which will lay out what these types of discrimination incorporate and that the SU stands against them," said Sherelle Davis, Anti-Racism Officer. "The recent Anti-Semitic incident on the ski trip and the Islamophobic actions taken by certain campus groups have brought these issues to the forefront of race relations at the moment and it's important the SU take a stance on it."

The Students' Union issued the following statement to further reiterate their stance on religious discrimination on campus: "the LSE community's values of tolerance, diversity, and respect for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or religious affiliation are not in accordance with the offensive nature displayed in the recent cases of antisemitism and Islamophobia. We respect the need for freedom of expression and discussion, but believe there must be a balance between respecting freedom of speech and protecting the communities that make up the student body at the LSE."



Mario Monti, Italian Prime Minister, Speaking at the LSE. | Photo: Harry Burdon

Monti on money matters

Harry Burdon

Mario Monti, the Italian Prime Minister, gave a public lecture at the LSE on the 18th January after a meeting with the Prime Minister, David Cameron. Monti discussed the strengths and influence of the Eurozone, whilst emphasising some of the "poor governance" occurring within the zone. He also expressed his wishes for the future of the European Union (EU), and the position of Italy within it. Monti described the EU as having "the greatest potential it ever had to be beneficial to the world." He said the financial crisis had led to urgent demand for global governance, and

cited the G-20 as a demonstration of this demand. Monti claimed that the EU has the largest amount of expertise in this area, and has great potential to show the way for global governance. However, he also stated that the EU "risks being undermined in its effective ability to display this, to bring this to the rest of the world, because of internal inadequacies of governance," which he felt impeded the spread of European ideas to the rest of the world. Monti went on to criticise both the governance of the EU as a whole, and the governance within the Eurozone, which he said was the topic of much of his discussion with Cameron earlier that day. He went on to say how he hoped the "constitutionalisation of the so called fiscal compact," which would impact upon fiscal discipline, "will be

the object of political agreement on the 30th January in the European Council." Though it would not be formally signed until the 31st of March, Monti expressed that he hoped it would "allow all the concerned parties to be more relaxed." Monti also said that the EU is more appreciated since the financial crisis, due to "the attention paid in Europe...to the social aspects of the social market economy," and that countries such as America and China respect "the social aspects of the European economic models." The Italian Prime Minister brought up growth policy, saying the "UK and the Eurozone have hugely common interests."

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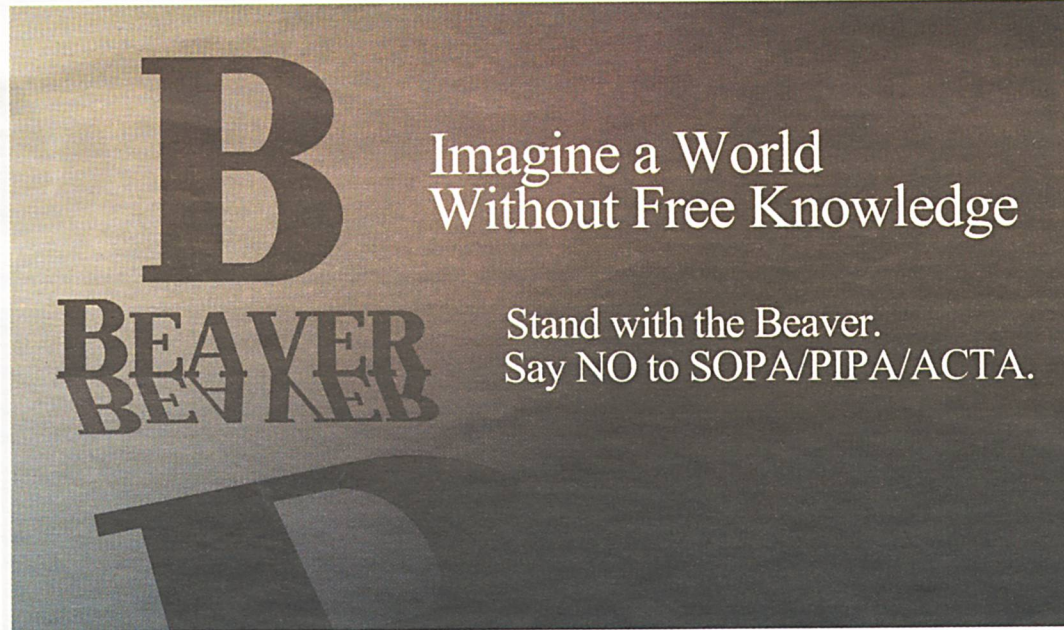
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Union Bashō Microwaves.

David Landon Cole.
Microwaves, microwaves, now!
No bigger concerns?

Bashō is the Beaver's elusive haiku poet. He loves microwave popcorn.



thebeaver

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SOPAthetic

This week saw a mass Internet protest in which 115,000 websites, including Wikipedia, Google and Flickr 'went dark,' fully or partially blocking their sites for 24 hours in opposition to the prospective PIPA (Protect IP Act) and SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) bills. The bills, proposed to the United States Congress, are designed to combat online piracy and protect copyrighted materials, such as television shows and films, from illegal copying and distribution. However, opponents to the bills purport that the powers imbued in these bills enable censorship of the Internet, as they would allow requests to remove content from the Internet to be carried out without due process. The bills would be unrestrained and would allow anything to theoretically be in violation of copyright, and placed the onus on the website itself to remove content. Not everyone on the Ed board has done LSE100, but we're united in decrying this bill as unacceptable, and an almost scurrilous move towards state sponsored censorship. In a month that has seen David Cameron attempt to mandate that Pinewood become more like Hollywood, it appears a worrying precedent is being set that must be fought every step of the way.

The fact that this bill even made its way beyond the committee system in Congress raises a menagerie of issues. Firstly the insidious power of

lobbyists, the fact that Congress can't sort out "moneygeddon" (obligatory tip of the cap to Charlton Brooker) - i.e. the US defaulting on its debt - but \$94 million can get a poorly written, dangerous piece of legislation. Furthermore the power that one misguided congressman wields, in ramming this bill through the House Judiciary committee, raises a valid issue of just what kind of power individual congressmen wield.

Regardless of all our misgivings on the subject, the Internet protest has shown that given the right pressure, anything could be eliminated. Eight million people in the US have since complained to their representatives about the bills from the Wikipedia protest alone. However, this is not just an American issue. The Internet is a truly global phenomenon; anything that reaches the web on one side of the world is instantaneously accessible across the planet, and as such, any attempt by the USA to censor whatever they so wish is wholly irresponsible and unreasonable as it compromises the rights, not just of US citizens, but of people the world over. The latest threat to the free and open Internet is the legislation titled ACTA, which, as Nate Anderson noted 'encourages service providers to collect and provide information about suspected infringers by giving them [the firms] "safe harbor from certain legal threats". In essence, legal

surveillance of anyone just because a private company or government demands it.

But it must be noted that not all that has come out of this issue is bad. Yes, SOPA is a terrible piece of legislation, but it also energised and enthused an entire generation of younger people. From the casual Facebook user to the highly engaged user of the political message board, finally people of the demographic 18-24 were fully engaged in public debate. It remains to be seen if this enthusiasm can be maintained, but maybe this seemingly apathetic generation has some life in it yet.

This is the delicate issue of balancing rights, and while protecting valuable intellectual property. If the current trend of free sharing continues then creative industries could be seriously threatened, as evidenced by the faltering music industry. However, that is no excuse for such a heavy handed and crass blow to internet freedom. This has been made all the clearer by the elimination of MegaUpload and its subsidiaries over the past week. If piracy is such a problem for the US government, they already have the tools to deal with the issue - they are simply not applied with enough vigour. SOPA was unnecessary, unwarranted and just goes to highlight the constant work needed to maintain robust a free internet.

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

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Halal and Kosher food now available

Hot meals are now available at:

**The Garrick Staff Dining Room
4th Floor Cafe**

(Wraps and snacks in all cafe/food locations)

EGM Motions

Two EGM Motions are to be debated and voted-on this week.
The EGM will take place on Thursday, January 26th at 1pm.

**-No to Racism -- No to Islamophobia
-Stop Anti-Semitism Now**

Questions on the motions can be sent to
Community and Welfare Officer Lukas Slothuus at:

su.communitywelfare@lse.ac.uk

Students discuss antisemitism, Islamophobia at UGM

Liam Brown

The second Union General Meeting (UGM) of term was a short affair, with Full and Part Time Sabbatical Officers' and Media Group reports being the only matters of business as no motions were to be debated.

General Secretary, Alex Peters-Day, condemned the antisemitic actions of those on the LSE Athletics Union Ski Trip, as well as the calls from the LSE Students' Union Athe-

ist, Secularist and Humanist Society (ASH Society) to publish cartoons of the prophet Muhammad as having "no place in the Students' Union." Peters-Day was asked by an audience member if those involved would face any sanction, saying that there would be repercussions for their actions from both the Students' Union and the LSE itself, but warned the LSE may take time investigating the matter.

Stanley Ellerby-English, Activities and Development Officer, reminded students that the Students' Union's 'Give It A Go' campaign was still offering free trials of various activities around campus, including bee keeping

and sitting volleyball.

Community and Welfare Officer, Lukas Slothuus, announced that LSE students now have access to Halal and Kosher foods on campus. Slothuus, who was away from the LSE last week, also condemned the antisemitic incident which occurred on the LSE Ski Trip as well as "Islamophobic" actions of the ASH Society in calling for a depiction of the Prophet Muhammad.

Slothuus also told the audience that the Students' Union was looking into switching its financial accounts from NatWest to the Co-operative Bank over what he said were "ethical issues" relating to "NatWest's owner's

[the Royal Bank of Scotland] alleged investment in land mines."

During Sabbatical Officer question time, David Landon-Cole raised the issue of the availability of microwaves to Alex Peters-Day, asking what progress had been made on the issue over the past few weeks. Peters-Day responded saying, "Post-Graduate Officer Robin Burrett and I have been working on this issue... an announcement is imminent" and that microwaves will soon be available to LSE students - as soon as the Students' Union's Resources Director, John Bloomfield, returns from paternity leave.

Jay Stoll, president of the LSE Students' Union's Jewish Society, asked Stanley Ellerby-English and Lukas Slothuus whether they believed there was division at the LSE and what should be done about the "antisemitism and Islamophobia on campus." Slothuus responded that, as an atheist, saying he does not "feel like the Atheist Society speaks for me" and that many on campus likely feel the same way.

Ellerby-English, himself a member of the ASH Society, said that he needs to sit down with the two groups involved, saying specifically he has requested a meeting with the ASH Society but as of then he had "not received a response from them."

Soon after Media Group reports from the Beaver and the Clare Market Review were complete, UGM Chair Jack Tindale pronounced the meeting finished.

LSE Director Judith Rees will visit the UGM on February 16th.



Photo: Matthew Worby

Youth unemployment statistics highest since 1996

Neha Jain

The negative outlook for the labour market continues as more than one million sixteen to 24 year-olds in the UK are now out of work. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) totalled the UK's unemployment at 2.62 million on Wednesday, with 1.02 million youths out of work in the three months up to September, up 67,000 since the second quarter.

The UK is now experiencing its highest level of unemployment since 1996, the ONS said, with 8.3 per cent of the economically active population jobless.

There is no doubt that young people seeking a footing in the labour market have been disproportionately hit, as economists say the aggregate unemployment figures are in fact better than expected given the severity of the financial crisis, similar to that of the 1930s.

Behind these figures lie deeper, worrying trends. Severely depressed demand and anaemic GDP figures have struck the economy with a double-edged sword; low business confidence and weak consumer spending. Amid political rows and finger pointing over welfare policies and employment regulations, mounting competition for a diminishing number of jobs will make it even harder for young people to enter the job market.

The London riots sparked public debate around unaffected youths, and fears are once again resurfacing around the cultivation of a "scarred generation" with young people alienated from the workforce and living with inadequate wages; their well-being and job security both affected. Ed Miliband has advocated inter-generational justice as politicians owe

a "massive obligation" to youths who will carry the burden of the UK's debt and its long term ramifications.

The University College Union (UCU) and National Union of Students (NUS) have staged demonstrations against Coalition austerity measures to education spending, while many others see David Cameron's cuts as the necessary remedy to offset the Labour government's massive public spending, including that on the New Deal and Future Jobs Fund schemes.

Breaking down the figures, it seems graduates are in no better position for employment. The ONS has also revealed that graduate unemployment has more than doubled since the 2008 recession, with more than 45

students applying for each graduate job in 2011. Whilst the LSE is known for heralding the UK's highest employment rate amongst its graduates, worries remain amongst students about their future prospects.

Bernadette Chan Roy, a second year BSc Maths and Economics student, expressed her concern about the impact that unemployment will have on giving the economy a much needed boost in growth, but believes the solution does not lie exclusively with Westminster. "Youth also need to focus on their work ethic and try to make themselves more employable. Both young people and the government need to work together and make more of an effort."

"It is not looking good. Friends at UCL, Cambridge and Oxford are equally struggling to find jobs. The state of the European economies is really beginning to bite," said Nicola Alexander, a third year BSc Government and Economics student.

James Buchanan, an MSc Comparative Politics graduate, was more confident in the power of the LSE's brand name: "While we can question the LSE's academic rigour and support for despotic regimes, the university's reputation with employers is indisputable. Of my firm's four most recent hires, three of us are LSE degree-holder. No, this school isn't perfect, but it's a leg up in a difficult job market."



Photo: Sachin Patel

News in brief

LSE LIBRARY USES EXIT CONTROLS TO MEASURE OCCUPANCY

The LSE Library is now requiring library users to swipe their cards in order to exit the library, as well as when entering. A spokesperson said that the reason behind this new initiative was "to measure Library occupancy levels." The library was already using entry controls to collect statistics on library users, and has added the exit control in order to collect data on library occupancy levels throughout the day, and across the week and academic year.

LSE PROFESSOR CHAIRMAN OF NEW HAGUE TRIBUNAL

On the 16th January, a tribunal dedicated to settling the most complex and contentious financial cases opened in the Hague. The P.R.I.M.E. Finance Dispute Centre, which was the brainchild of Jeffrey Golden, Professor in the LSE's Department of Law, will handle cases too specialised for most national or local courts. Golden will also act as chairman of the centre's management board. The tribunal will comprise of a group of judges and other international and market experts with more than 2,000 collective years of experience.

NEW LSE COMMISSION TO ADVISE GOVERNMENT ON GROWTH STRATEGY

The LSE Growth Commission, which was launched on Monday the 23rd January, will work with the Institute for Government to contribute to the formulation and implementation of a long-term growth strategy for the United Kingdom. "The LSE Growth Commission will use frontier research and ideas to provide a framework for policy and policy-making in the UK to support sustainable growth," said Tim Besley, co-chair of the commission.

SUCCESSFUL TRADERS GET IN TOUCH WITH THEIR EMOTIONS

New LSE research challenges the common belief that the financial sector is defined by macho-ism, claiming that the most successful traders are those most aware of their emotions and intuitions. The report found that the least successful traders were more upset by big losses, which clouded their ability to think rationally. The research was conducted by Paul Willman and Emma Soane of the LSE's, along with Nigel Nicholson of the London Business School and Mark Fenton-O'Creevy of the Open University Business School.

LSE GRADUATE UNSUCCESSFUL IN TAIWANESE ELECTION

Tsai Ing-wen, LSE alumna and leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was this week unsuccessful in her campaign to become Taiwan's first female President after a hard-fought race against Ma Ying-jeou of the Kuomintang party. The DPP favoured independence from China and campaigned against interference within the country. The election, which saw Tsai secure 45.63 per cent of the vote, was the closest presidential election in recent years and could reveal a changing tide in Taiwanese politics.

GOT A SCOOP?

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

Wong launches RON campaign in Bankside treasurer elections

Bethany Clarke

Residents of Bankside Hall will be voting on their Hall Committee members at elections on the 24th January, 2011.

The elections, which were initially scheduled for the 29th November last year, were postponed indefinitely amidst controversy over Jason Wong's campaign.

Though Wong has dropped out of the race for Treasurer, he launched a RON campaign against the incumbent, Glenn Marshall, who is running unopposed for reelection.

Wong told the Beaver: "residents are charged £30 to have mini fridges in their rooms, when in reality the average 106kWh mini fridge costs £10 to power per year. Glenn Marshall stands by and watches as we're overcharged." Wong also criticised Marshall for the fact that residents are charged twelve pounds for fifteen minutes worth of bathroom cleaning.

He added, "There's also zero transparency in how he's spending the £18,000 budget."

The complaints about fridges and bathroom cleaning are in line with the main tenets of Wong's campaign for Treasurer last term.

In a post on Bankside Hall's Facebook page, Wong wrote: "with Glenn Marshall running unopposed and the dangerous possibility that he will be Treasurer for another year, someone needs to speak up and expose his failed record."

Wong has challenged Marshall to a fifteen minute debate. At the time this paper went to print, he had still not had a response from Marshall.

Wong also posted a campaign video, entitled 'Not Glenn Again,' on the Facebook page criticising Marshall's "record of nothingness," claiming most Bankside residents "can't name one single thing he's done" in his year as Treasurer.

According to Wong, the number of likes on his Facebook campaign page has doubled to ninety people since he posted the video.

The Bankside Hall Committee elections were scheduled to take place at the end of Michaelmas term, but was postponed following widespread criticism of Jason Wong's campaign.

Wong was running on a plat-

form to ensure "fridge access for all, cut[ting] kitchen fees by 50 percent and cheaper toilet cleaning rates."

On the 1st December last year,

Wong formally apologised to Judith Rees, Interim Director of the LSE, as well as Lucy McFadzean, Students' Union Women's Officer, who described

his campaign as "blatantly sexist," "classist and insensitive."

GLENN MARSHALL'S
RECORD OF NOTHINGNESS

Photo: Screenshot of Jason Wong's RON campaign video.

Shlaim lectures on Israeli Foreign Policy at the LSE

Holly Brentnall

Speaking at the Department of International History annual lecture last Tuesday, Avi Shlaim, Professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford and a prominent historian of the Arab-Israeli conflict, gave an account of Israel's relations with Palestine since 1948.

Shlaim described the current government as "the most right wing, most chauvinistic, the most overtly racist in

Israel's entire history." His narrative was met with overriding enthusiasm from some audience members, though others left the Old Theatre feeling that their assurances had been stamped on.

Abiding by a self-appointed rule that "the job of the historian is to judge," he outlined a chronology of Israeli foreign policy. Shlaim began by discussing Jobatinsky's strategy of dealing with the Palestinians through an "iron wall" of unassailable military force.

He detailed a series of opportunities squandered, counter-productive and reactionary actions floundering

and political failures made left, right and centre. Following the Gaza and Lebanon wars, Shlaim depicted a trail of death, destruction and repeated dislocation. And this he paralleled to an increasing Israeli move out of paranoia towards right-wing nationalism, and a shift in public support for the underdog, the Palestinians.

His lecture was a loosely modelled on a text soon to be released in the winter issue of the Journal of Palestinian Studies and he also made reference to his earlier publication 'The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arabs.'

Shlaim recalled humorously how

when he was deciding on a title for his book, one fellow in his department at Oxford "had the temerity to suggest he called it 'fifty years of whinging about Israeli statehood,'" while his wife had summarised his work as "before 1967-good, after 1967-bad." Here she was referring to what Shlaim called "the great turning point" in Israeli history, when under the leadership of David Ben Gurion, the Labour Party waged war on Palestine and asserted its presence in the West Bank rather than to proceed with negotiations.

Two members of the Israeli society commented afterwards that the lecture

was "completely one-sided" and "lacking in context."

Shlaim concluded the lecture "so as not to end on a negative note," by surmising that "nations, like individuals, are capable of acting rationally but only after they have exhausted all other alternatives," the audience's agreement was expressed clearly enough in resounding laughter and applause.

In 1969, Shlaim came to the LSE for an MSc in International Relations. It was during this time, as he mentioned in his lecture, that he met his wife in the Robinson room.

LSE to front cost of Bankside vandalism

John Armstrong

The LSE has announced this week that it will pay for all of the damages caused to the basement of Bankside Hall, the largest of LSE's halls of residence.

In an email to all residents, Debra Ogden, hall Warden, said "the cost of repairs will be met by the School and will not be passed on to residents".

The damages in question were caused on New Year's Eve when a sink was ripped off the wall in the men's toilets causing a "major flood" throughout the basement area. Both

the bar and computer room were affected by the water damage which, according to Ogden, "was more substantial than first thought."

In her email to residents, Ogden suggests that "additional work is now being carried out" before going on to say that, "I assure you that work is being completed as quickly as possible

and we hope to have the facilities open from the middle of next week."

It is rumoured that the cost of the damages is around £10,000, though this figure still has not been confirmed by the Bankside management.

The news comes in light of last week's concern among students that the cost of the damages may be passed

on to residents of Bankside Hall. Under the Residents Code of Conduct section 11, an "unattributable damage fee" may be levied on students if the culprit is not identified.

Ogden further highlighted this issue in her email, saying "as outlined in the Code of Conduct, the cost of repairing unattributed damage to communal areas may be passed on to all residents."

Alistair Duncan, a first year Government and Economics student criticised the nature of the contract Bankside residents signed, saying "its an incredibly unfair contract since we need to sign it so we can go to university."

However, this week's news has been welcomed among many residents at Bankside. Alex Haigh, a second year Environment Policy and Economics student, said that "residents should not be forced to foot the bill for those irresponsible few who caused this damage." On the other hand, some students have raised concern about using LSE money to pay for these repairs.

Ogden ended her email stressing that the investigation into the basement damages has not yet been concluded saying, "despite our investigations, it has not yet been possible to identify those responsible, however the matter is not closed and I urge anyone with information to come forward."

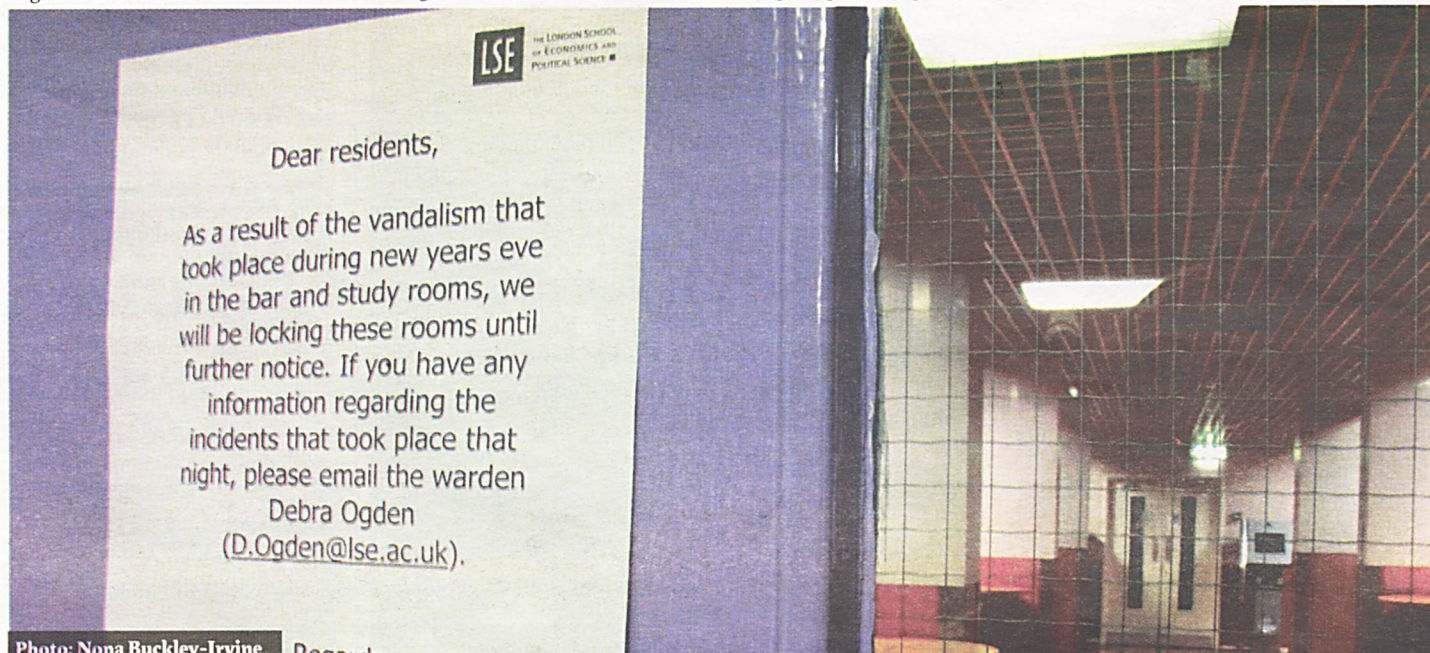


Photo: Nona Buckley-Irvine

Regards

Metropolitan Police Commissioner delivers divisive public lecture to LSE students

Jack Tindale

A lecture by Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, resulted in controversy, Monday 16th January, when the new head of the police service spoke at the LSE. Chaired by Professor Tim Newburn, head of the Department of Social Policy, the Sheffield-born Hogan-Howe opened with a brief biography of his career, which began in South Yorkshire Police prior to senior roles in Merseyside and Greater London.

Having been appointed Britain's highest-ranking police officer last September, prompted by the resignation of Sir Paul Stephenson over the phone-hacking scandal, Hogan-Howe's lecture aimed to set out his priorities for the year ahead as well as to take questions regarding his oft-repeated mantra of "Total Policing," in addition to acknowledging that the police "don't always get it right" with regards to community relations.

The Commissioner addressed a packed Old Theatre, with an audience clearly divided on the major law and order issues of the day.

Hogan-Howe outlined the challenges facing the Metropolitan Police in the context of government spending cuts. Stating that the fourteen per cent reduction in spending represented a smaller reduction than other forces, the Commissioner claimed that they represented an opportunity for the "Metropolitan Police to be the best in the country," and that "stability is not inertia" with regards to structural

reforms.

Listing the major policing challenges for 2012, Hogan-Howe placed an unsurprising focus on the forthcoming Summer Olympics and the queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Noting the recent devolution of policing responsibility from the Home Secretary to the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime, the Commissioner gave a cautious welcome to the Coalition government's proposed elected police commissioners, a suggestion he described as being "radical" and of "honourable intentions."

Hogan-Howe, who presided over a fall in crime of a third whilst head of police in Liverpool, continued by outlining his concept of "Total Policing." Defining it as being motivated by the "Three C's" of policing; "cutting crime, cutting cost and cultural development" he also stated his commitment to humanising the role of officers, stating that people "are not simply dots on a graph."

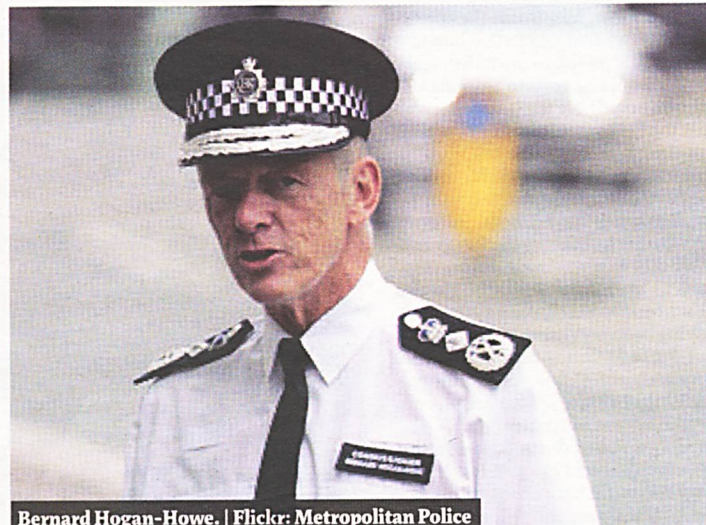
The Commissioner stated the importance of teamwork in forming a successful police force, while also accepting the need to allow operational autonomy for individual officers. Hogan-Howe also expressed a view that the Metropolitan Police should approach the "total war on criminals" in an ethical manner, referencing his previous work in Merseyside in making police presence more visible, but less divisive.

Referencing past successes in cutting drug-related crime by focusing on traffic offences and uninsured drivers, Hogan-Howe stated a belief in the Metropolitan Police using technology to adopt a new developmental

structure, ranging from better use of sight-recognition cameras, to a more active presence on the social media.

The Commissioner went on to clarify his position on civil liberties as trying to balance the "right to protest with the right to safety." The lecture, which occurred as the Parliament Square peace camp was part-removed, was also used by Hogan-Howe as a means to express his fundamental view that the police "should be totally professional in the way in which we fight crime." Despite saying that the police needs to engage in a better way with the issue of knife crime, the Commissioner still expressed that stop-and-search methods continue to represent a vital role in ensuring public safety.

An animated question and answer session followed the Commissioner's speech, largely focusing on the relationship between the Metropolitan Police and members of ethnic minorities. Responding to a question from David Lammy, in which the MP for Tottenham suggested that the limited number of black officers within the Metropolitan Police was "at the heart" of the issue of disproportionality in the number of black men being stopped and searched, Hogan-Howe was resolute. Claiming that rising housing costs had had an impact on the number of local people serving as Inner London police officers, the Commissioner did say that restoring the link between the police and the local community was a challenge for the Metropolitan Police. However, he noted that the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees of the Metropolitan Police



Bernard Hogan-Howe. | Flickr: Metropolitan Police

has more than doubled over the past two decades.

Responding to a question by Sherelle Davids, the Students' Union Anti-Racism Officer, on the issue stop-and-search, Hogan-Howe maintained that the only purpose of the policy was to prevent crime. Various members of the audience took issue with the Commissioner's use of statistics, with one UCL Criminology student asking if the policy was undermined by the fact that over ninety per cent of random searches resulted in no illegal or incriminating objects being found.

Hogan-Howe also disputed the facts regarding deaths in custody, at one point refusing to continue his

reply when members of the audience began crying out the names of alleged victims of police negligence. Once audience members had quietened, the Commissioner did state that whilst statistics could be debated, the fundamental issue of police engagement and success could "only be tested by future results."

Hogan-Howe left the stage to some considerable anger, with his departure prompting furious chanting from members of the audience.

The lecture formed part of a series of events run by the Government Department under the banner of "British Government@LSE" established last year as a means of promoting external public policy debates at the School.

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» continued
from page 1

Furthermore, he expressed the wish to see "the UK as deeply immersed in the inner core of decision making in Europe." He also conveyed regret over the UK's veto of the EU treaty on the 8th December. Monti said the spread between German and Italian bonds increased after the treaty failed, adding, "it would be great to have the UK fully on board." He felt it is important that the EU comes "to some concrete, operational, enforceable solution." Expanding on his worries, Monti said that without "much greater commitment to bring[ing] economic integration further in Europe, the forces are there that would bring us backwards," such as "nationalistic trends." He also described the EU banking system as having been previously integrated, but due to "different national supervisory authorities" following "national logic," the banking system is currently becoming less integrated. Monti expressed deep concern over the seven per cent interest rate on ten year bonds, for both economic and political reasons, and reiterated that better governance of the eurozone was required to resolve this. He stated that transfers are not wanted, but rather the lowering of the interest rate. He spoke very positively of Eurobonds, claiming that even Eurozone countries with the highest graded bonds would ultimately benefit. Monti's strong austerity has not been well received by all. Luca Neve, an



Protesters assemble outside Mario Monti public lecture | Photo: Harry Burdon

Italian photographer who attended the lecture, articulated grave concern for the measures, saying "everything is rising, and yet everything is being cut." He also said: "they are not going where the money is," as well as being deeply troubled by the state of pensions and

rising retirement age. Another audience member, an LSE PhD student, took a different stance. He was of the opinion that the Italian people are "out of touch with reality," and that "the pension scheme has been the most generous, alongside Greece,

in Europe." He also added that "some of his [Monti's] financial reforms are going to be more egalitarian than Berlusconi's." Monti also received attention from a group of protesters that formed outside the building, angry at Monti's un-

elected rise to power, as well as lack of belief in his level of cutting. 132 people joined a Facebook event page for the protest, though the actual number of protesters outside the Old Building did not reach that number.

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Open theme

Halal and Kosher now on the menu

Julia Wacket

The Passfield Hall Committee has reached a "ground-breaking milestone" after successfully securing the introduction of Halal and Kosher food in the LSE's catered halls of residence. From this Monday onwards, LSE Catering will provide Halal and Kosher food in all catered halls of residence and on the main campus.

The issue of Halal food was once again an important issue at this year's Passfield Hall Committee elections, after past attempts to introduce it had failed. At the time of the elections, students were told "quite bluntly that it had never been provided, and never would be," said Joel Rosen, President of the Passfield Hall Committee.

Since the beginning of the academic year, the Committee has campaigned in partnership with the Students' Union, the Jewish Society and the Israel Society for increased diversity in LSE catering.

Liz Thomas, Head of LSE Catering, said that "meals will now conform to the requirement of Halal, Kedassia and Kashrut licensing authorities. They will come sealed and double wrapped to avoid contamination."

In Passfield Hall alone, thirty Muslim students were affected by the limited catering offers.

Kosher and Halal food has to follow strict Jewish/Islamic dietary requirements. In the case of Kosher food, it is not allowed to include pork, rabbit, eagle, owl, and any shellfish, insect or reptile. Meat and dairy products should not be made or consumed together.

Rosen, was pleased by this milestone in the Committee's campaigning history. "Passfield is a vibrant and diverse community and we will continue to fight for the rights of minorities," he said.

Rosen added: "Our committee

will continue to fight for the rights of minorities in our community, and we will always stand fast in ensuring the welfare of all our colleagues."

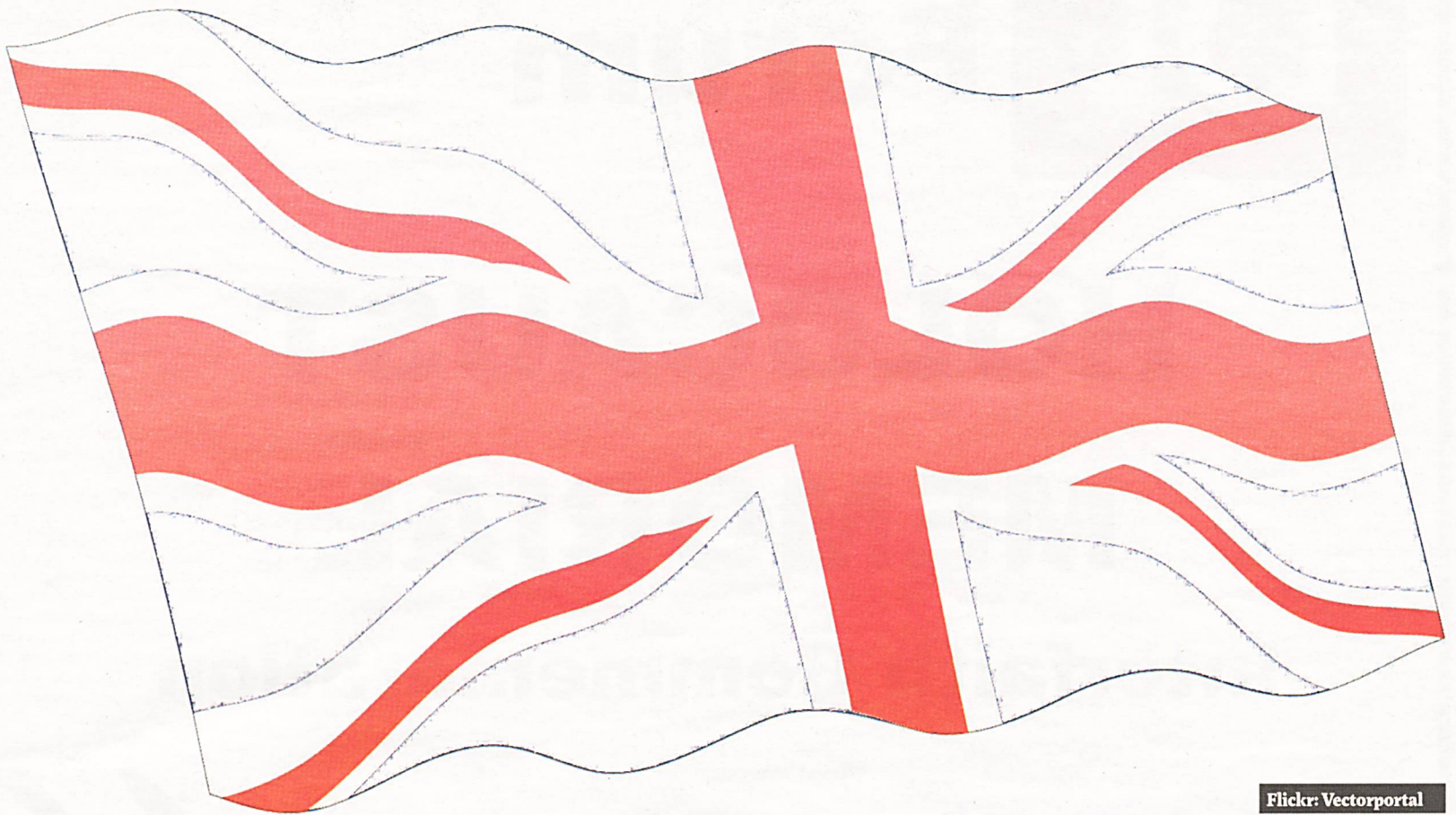
Lukas Slothuus, the Students' Union's Community and Environment Officer, said: "I'm extremely pleased to see that after years of efforts, LSE has acknowledged the importance of religious dietary rules for Muslim and Jewish students on campus and in catered halls. A huge thanks is due especially to Joel Rosen and everyone else involved, particularly those at Passfield Hall, for putting in so much work to make this happen."

"It is essential that minority groups on campus feel included and welcome at LSE. Providing Halal and Kosher food forms part of this. Equality and Diversity is a central part of what the Union does, and I hope this victory will be a stepping stone to more wins this term," Slothuus added.

"The LSESU Israel Society would like to thank Joel Rosen for his hard work on this issue. Many of our society members are very appreciative," said Aimee Riese, from the Students' Union's Israel Society.



Comment



Flickr: Vectorportal

Ye cannae do it, Scotland!

Why Scotland should vote against going it alone and choose to remain in the Union

Tom
Heyden



Following years of murmurings among nationalist Scots, the question of Scottish independence exploded into the public consciousness earlier this month. The Scots have always been a fiercely proud nation and, with a forthcoming referendum amidst a bluster of nationalist rhetoric, one could be forgiven for expecting it to be a foregone conclusion.

Yet what has surprised many commentators is that every recent poll indicates that the English would rather cut loose their northern neighbour. Whilst the Daily Mail snorts with gleeful derision that the Scots should hastily remove their subsidy-laden burden from the UK, I urge my fellow Brits to take a more considered approach to the referendum's potentially seismic ramifications. I'm English and I argue – with part considered analysis, part shameless plea – that Scotland must not go it alone.

If the Scottish National Party (SNP) leader, Alex Salmond, gets his wish, Scotland's future will be decided in 2014. The date, contested by Westminster, would coincide with the 700-year anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, an historic and now symbolic victory for Scottish independence against the English – yet, more pertinently, would also allow Salmond the extra time to convince a hesitant public of the benefits of independence and rouse support during a

patriotic period. The wily Salmond has already outmaneuvered his southern adversaries, who have been emotively likened to a "Thatcherite Westminster" interfering in Scottish affairs by insisting on a 2013 referendum.

Regardless of the date, the most significant debate currently raging is the nature of the independence question itself. The major Westminster parties insist that the question should be a straight "yes or no" to independence, while Salmond has suggested the inclusion of a third option known as "Devo Max," essentially complete regional autonomy except for defence and foreign policy. Whereas critics, not without reason, denounce this as a "fail-safe" for Salmond, or simply a prelude to full independence, the true significance lies in the fact that the Scottish public prefers this option, with polls suggesting it would succeed in a referendum carried out today.

So what would an independent or "Devo Max" Scotland look like? At the moment, the Scottish parliament's reliance on UK subsidies has been a double-edged sword. While creating an unwanted and emasculating sense of dependence upon the "auld enemy" within Scotland, it has also been the source of ire from UK residents who resent the fact that Scotland is able to lavishly provide public services unavailable in England – such as free universities, free prescriptions and free personal care for the elderly.

All this leads to the conclusion that Scotland ought to have more fiscal autonomy. With either independence or maximum devolution, Scotland would be responsible for its own economy and relations between the two nations would be more equal, at

least in theory. Nevertheless, the risks for a new nation in such an inhospitable global climate are worth approaching with trepidation. The outcome of the battle for North Sea Oil – paid for by UK taxpayers but in Scottish waters and under largely Scottish jurisdiction – may ease some financial concerns but the rest of the UK will not relinquish it lightly. Even if Scotland does receive the bulk of the oil, the new nation must also receive its share of the national debt burden, while the UK would surely insist upon giving up the Royal Bank of Scotland and Halifax!

"The UK must not dictate to the Scots, but equally the Scots cannot so fundamentally alter the politics of the UK, unilaterally turning it into a federation."

Moreover, throughout the last decade, Scotland has grown at a persistently lower rate than other areas of the Union, while a recent assessment of Scotland's economic prospects seemed to contradict Salmond's optimistic rhetoric, reporting a £14.9bn spending deficit for 2009-2010 – even including the oil revenues.

The currency question holds the

key to the referendum outcome. Were Scotland to break from the UK, or even gain maximum regional autonomy, would it maintain the pound? This is where a major flaw concerning the idea of independence creeps in. Keeping the pound would be akin to a mini-Euro zone, with tight control and regulations set from...where? ...oh, Westminster. After all, the remaining UK could not permit another Greece. So much for fiscal independence with the pound then. Never mind, Scotland could join the Euro, an idea that Salmond has advocated in the past before understandably retreating in recent years. That unpopular option would mean even less fiscal control than in any union with the UK.

In addition, former Chancellor Alistair Darling, currently an MP in Scotland, warned against the idea of creating a new currency at such an unstable economic time, especially without the UK's AAA rating and with everybody's life savings in sterling. He said, "You would be a very brave country indeed to say, 'Here is our new currency: we are not actually sure how much it is going to be worth after the first day's trading.'"

Thus with all the economic options hindered by huge risk or a limited independence (undermining the whole issue in the first place), it is unsurprising that "Devo Max" is the preferred option. It offers freedom from Westminster and more economic freedom than the Scots currently enjoy, albeit without Westminster's important subsidies.

The Scots should thus have their opportunity to vote for "Devo Max." However, we must not forget the rest of the UK, who currently support

Scottish independence more than the Scots. They may not be able to vote in the referendum itself (along with, controversially, 800,000 Scots living abroad) but, if "Devo Max" is the preferred option, then a subsequent referendum must immediately be called. The UK must not dictate to the Scots, but equally the Scots cannot so fundamentally alter the politics of the UK, unilaterally turning it into a federation. That would be a decision for the rest of the UK. Therefore, Scots voting for it should know that supporting "Devo Max" could also mean an unwanted full independence if the UK decides to cut them loose instead.

If these economic consequences do not convince Scots, then let me finally resort to a plaintive appeal. Please, for us UK residents, remain in the Union. We're not so bad are we? I mean, we've taken Andy Murray under our wing (or attempted to adopt him as our own depending on who you talk to). We fervently admire the culture you have brought us, from Robert Burns to Billy Connolly. Yet I do have an ulterior motive, and it regards electoral politics.

The biggest consequence for the UK would be that Conservatives would dominate the political landscape for the foreseeable future. They may lose their oh-so-lonely, single MP in Scotland, but the opposition would lose 52 seats, 41 of which would be Labour's. Now I am no Labour supporter – in fact, I could not be more unattached to a party at this moment – but without Scotland, Labour's stronghold, they would have won only 5 of the 29 elections in which they've competed. Accordingly, Scotland's departure would threaten the competition upon which democracy thrives. ☘



Interfaith Forum

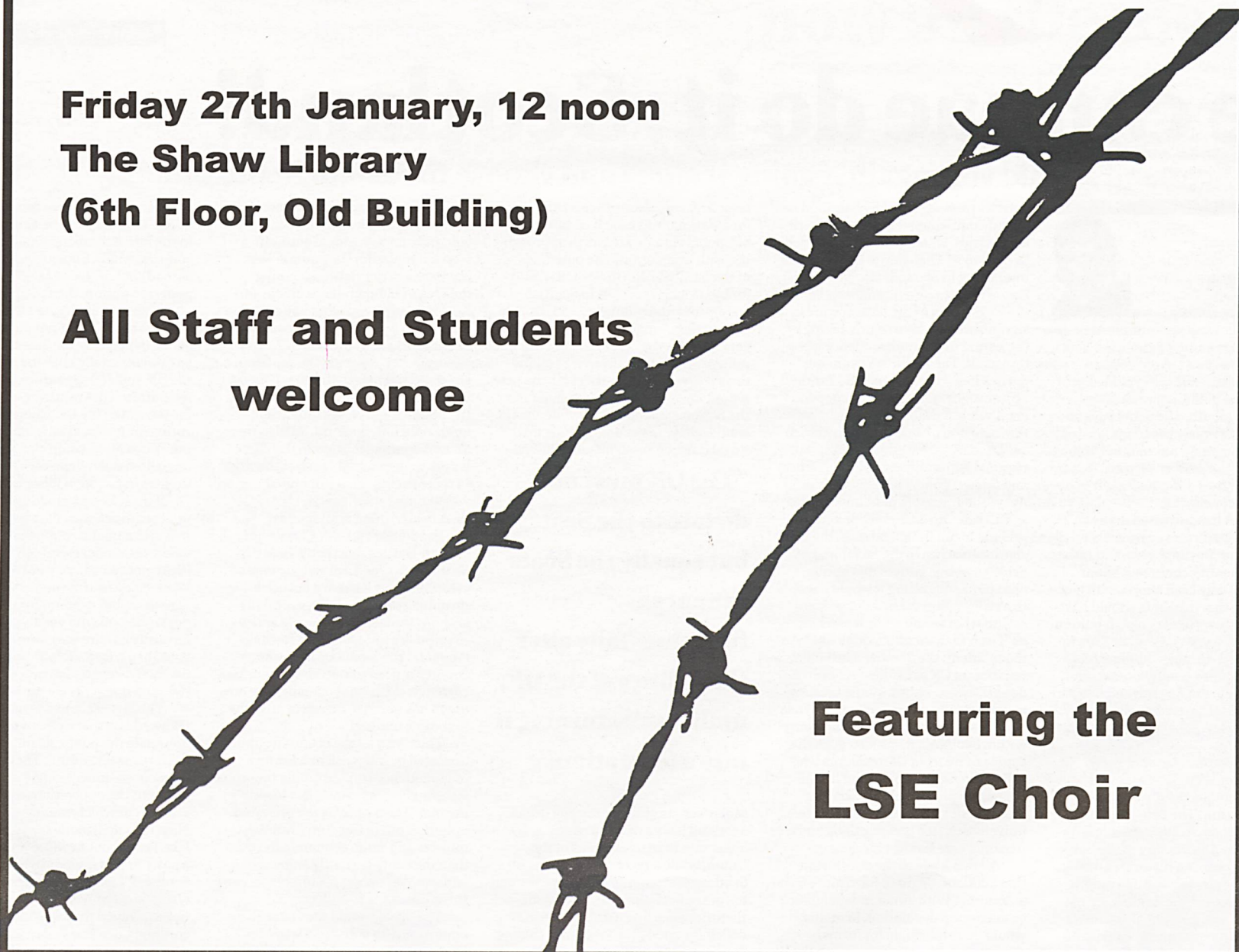
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LSE in the media

Why our university appears in the spotlight so often

Rachel Williams



LSE has appeared in the media several times recently in relation to controversial events. So how has the LSE cultivated this controversial reputation and why does the media pay so much attention to our university?

As Blue Monday passes by this week, the dismal pessimism of the modern condition drags itself across every news headline and pervades the public mind. Talk of the economic condition is (more than likely) a gloomy one; protests, strikes and riots are rolling out week by week. We're told authorities are lying to us, that crime is further pervading our communities, our environment is deteriorating rapidly; and stuck in the midst of this is the reputation of the LSE: another example used by the media to predict how far away the light at the end of the tunnel really is. So what will change if our institutes of higher education don't? How can we be hopeful of the future when even our leading universities have dirty hands?

I can only assume that what most people are searching for in the management of government bodies and large organisations is a better future, whether for themselves or for society as a whole. No generation is without its problems and we cannot fool ourselves into thinking that perfection is achievable. However, when looking for potential leaders and academic minds to control the country, it is inevitable that we will want to search for individuals with compassion and honesty, as well as intelligence.

The banking crisis of 2008 painted the leaders of banks and big business as selfish, egotistical and careless and many had little faith in government ministers to lend a helping hand,

especially in light of the issues over government expenses. And where, in the public's eyes, did the majority of the culprits of such controversy come from? The leading UK universities.

With many London School of Economics graduates going into high-flying careers and leadership positions across the world, the media can hardly be blamed to see the school as the potential source of future issues - and although the hyperbole of headlines may stretch contentious occurrences out of proportion, the media can be seen as nipping foul play in the bud.

But is this culture of finger-pointing, blame and revealing of secrets something more than just highlighting the imperfection of academics and professionals? Are we moving towards a self-assessment of society as a

"In light of the 'revolution of transparency', all the LSE can do is adapt to the culture of thorough accountability."

whole? The new weapon of the public, as I mentioned last week in my article about Tata Funding and the LSE, is the call for accountability and transparency at all levels of business, policy-making, correspondence - anything a potential lack of clarity can be buried in.

The immediacy of modern life, hitching a ride on the back of modern technology, is one cause of the steady dissolution of the notion of privacy. Whether this is a benefit or harm to society is debatable; but it is nevertheless an inevitable wave of progression that we all seem to be swept away by.

Whether it's the wrath of Wikile-

aks, spying on celebrity lives in "reality" TV shows or Twittering about your fascinating daily life (to the few others who actually care that you've just been to another soul-sucking franchised coffee shop for a soya double-shot caramel macchiato), the fascination we seem to have adopted for the in-and-outs of everyone else's business is beginning to attack every barrier, behind which a potential secret could be waiting.

It is in the context of this world that the LSE needs to see itself. The common portrayal of the school is, more often than not, as one at the forefront of innovation. In order to keep its reputation as a leading and admirable institution, the inner workings of its correspondence, funding sources and any potentially controversial action needs to be as transparent and honest as possible.

As for those individuals responsible for other controversial issues unconnected to the school's inner workings, we can only condemn their actions and see them as unfortunate anomalies amongst the admirable student body. The school has done fairly well in treating recent matters seriously, in acknowledgment that it is in the achievements and successes of students that the LSE's reputation should be founded. If we are to be consistent and confident of the school as an institution which provides students with the ability to achieve their highest academic potential, we have nothing to worry about.

However, even though the apparent lack of morality, conscientiousness and tactfulness of individuals connected with controversial current events of the past few years can hardly be seen as a cause of the influence of institutions of higher education, the media will not cease in its search for the source. In light of the "revolution of transparency," all the LSE can do is adapt to the culture of thorough accountability.

Ties with Technion

LSE's links with controversial institution

Lois Clifton



A part of my role as the LSE Students' Union Environment and Ethics Officer, one of my priorities this year is to try and make sure that the School operates in an ethically sound way. I am writing this article in order to highlight my concerns about the relationship the LSE maintains with Technion, the Israeli Institute of Technology.

Technion is a research university which collaborates with the Israeli government to develop technology at the heart of Israel's worst excesses. The Palestinian people are enduring the longest military occupation in modern history and this means that every aspect of a Palestinian's life is controlled, regulated and policed - using soldiers, teargas, tanks and the illegal wall separating people's land

Israeli research institutions - such as Technion - provide the technological foundation for Israel's military occupation. Technion is not just linked to the occupation but deeply complicit in it, working hand in hand with Israel's military. In order to illustrate this, I will outline some of the specific projects which Technion has assisted with.

Firstly, Technion has developed a remote-controlled "D9" bulldozer, which is used by the Israeli army in order to demolish Palestinian homes. Experts estimate that Israel has demolished 24,000 Palestinian homes since the occupation began in 1967. Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes breaches international law, which

allows destruction of property only where it is a military necessity.

Secondly, Technion develops techniques designed to detect the tunnels Palestinians have built to smuggle essential supplies into Gaza. The movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza is severely restricted by Israel.

Thirdly, Elbit Systems is an Israeli company that builds military, surveillance and security equipment. Technologies and projects that Elbit has created for specific use in the occupied Palestinian territories have been both directly and indirectly designed and developed by Technion.

Elbit is involved in the construction of Israel's illegal wall around occupied Palestinian territory. The wall is designed to pen Palestinians into an area dictated by the Israeli state. In 2004 the wall was deemed to violate international law by the International Court of Justice. Elbit has developed and supplied a surveillance system especially for use in the wall and is therefore complicit with this unlawful act.

The LSE is conducting joint research with a consortium of universities, including Technion. Technion is directly implicated in the violation of Palestinian rights and in the violation of international law.

Universities such as Technion directly contribute to such crimes by providing the knowledge, research and technology to facilitate the crime. I believe that the LSE should not be conducting research in this consortium while Technion are involved as they are complicit in such egregious violations. The student body should be active in discussing LSE's connections with Technion and take action if necessary.

Come along to the general meeting on THURSDAY 26th JANUARY in CLM7.02 at 4PM to discuss LSE's role in this collaborative project and whether action should be taken as a collective student body.

It's all Greek to them

The President of LSE's Hellenic Society discusses the Greek economy following the financial crisis

Georgios Barzoukas



Needless to say that being a second-year Greek student at the LSE amidst the current Eurozone crisis eventually makes you numb at the sound of greek-economy-taking-the-piss jokes. "Tzatziki and tarama: Double-dip recession," "At the current exchange rate, to how many drachmas do £3,290 translate?," "Did you get a student loan from the Bundesbank?"

Well, no hard feelings: smile politely, keep calm and carry on. Dr. Leape should know however, that when it comes to "rerum cognoscere causas" of the Greek crisis, the average LSE student is less industrious and diligent in commending solutions than they are in "Greek-crisis-banter." It appears that, for the future analysts and traders of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, the current crisis is "all Greek to them." As a Greek, I feel compelled to say a few things about the current situation. Unfortunately

I am not a columnist at the FT or The Economist, which would have rendered my opinions Gospel-like to any LSE student.

I believe that solutions exist as long as the handling of this crisis is not left to individuals who have the leadership charisma of a seven year old boy scout (#AngelaMerkel). Those who influence public opinion through columns, newspapers and magazine articles should stop propping up leaders like ex-Prime Minister Papandreou, whose notion of how the economy works was as bad as Herman Cain's notion of geopolitics. Nonetheless, an Austrian magazine named Mr. Papandreou 2011 Man of the Year, while the LSE boasts about Mr. Papandreou being a member of its alumni.

Similarly, publications such as The Economist should stop glorifying technocrats such as the current, unelected Prime Minister Loukas Papademos. Greece entered the Euro with flawed statistics having entrusted Goldman Sachs to make cross-currency-swaps. Government debt issued in yen and dollars was exchanged for euro debt for a certain, short-term period, to be exchanged back into the original currency later on, making Greek debt seem smaller. Well, Mr. Papadimos was Governor of the Bank of Greece at

that time, so just follow the late Steve Job's advice and "connect the dots" about this man's integrity and credibility.

How about propping up the Greek people? Have faith on the cohorts of the Greek population which do not strike for leisure and who've learned that only through hard work one is able to succeed in life. The current stereotype, however, is that we Greeks are inherently lazy. Some of you might have read The Guardian's online article, "Who works the longest hours in Europe?" Greeks are tied with the Austrians in first place.

Maybe the average Greek citizen does not sit in a cafe all day, his shirt unbuttoned, his dense chest hair blowing in the Sirocco under the sounds of "Zorba the Greek." Clearly not lazy, but one might guess that we are unproductive. Policy and measures endorsed by the EC should be geared towards creating a meritocratic society, where a nexus between productivity and remuneration defines employment.

A glimpse at the Greek diaspora's performance proves that in well functioning societies, Greeks and Cypriots alike are able to fully exploit their potential. Sir Basil Markezinis or Sir Stelios Hadjiioannou are two examples. Most of you here at the LSE

will have come across some Greek teacher or lecturer with a funny accent. Why abroad? Unfortunately, party affiliation is more important than an academic's quality of research in Greek Universities.

Selling Mykonos, the Acropolis or a few marble emasculated Adonises, is not an option. On the one hand, cultural heritage is not an exchangeable asset while the selling of land is against our Constitution. Although some austerity was necessary to convince markets in the short run, debts are repaid in the long run through surpluses. Without any prospects for growth, markets will remain unconvinced.

To put it mildly: unless growth

policies are implemented in Greece, we will most definitely default on our debt, creating a financial tsunami several times the magnitude of the Lehman Brothers demise.

If you'd like to help, make sure you book a "lads and ladettes" holiday to some Greek Island; Marbella and Salou are at best a poor man's Zoo Bar. Also, make sure you do not blindly annex the opinions of those whose judgement is both Standard and Poor; those who once upon a time gave triple-A ratings to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The Greek government is unfortunately close to bankruptcy, but we are not a bankrupt nation.



Flickr: apas

The ethics of free speech

Marshall Palmer discusses free speech and the issue of Islamophobia in student media

Marshall Palmer



Recently, at University College London, a controversy has arisen. In an advertisement for a weekly pub crawl, their Atheist, Humanist and Secularist society used a cartoon taken from the popular web comic entitled "Jesus and Mo."

The cartoon depicted the eponymous characters sharing a beer and engaging in pub banter. Unsurprisingly, the cartoon caused outrage at UCL, mostly emanating from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Students association of UCL and, a separate organisation, the Islamic Society, also of UCL.

After receiving a number of complaints the UCLU requested the society remove the image. As of yet, the image has not been removed as the ASH society professes they are merely exercising their freedom of expression. The society has also launched an e-petition asking the UCLU to withdraw their request which has received over 4,000 signatures.

As an atheist and student of political science, the incident interests me greatly. Reflective of the 2005 Danish Cartoon controversy, three questions are (re)raised, all of which I will try to address here. Firstly, should speech and expression ever be limited?

Secondly, if it cannot, is the UCL ASH society justified in publishing an image that will knowingly offend a community? Finally, should the Beaver stand in solidarity with one side or the other?

To the first, there is never a legitimate reason to forcibly preclude the expression of free speech. In extreme cases, say when one incites violence, denies what common consensus has called "the truth" or, in a famous example, shouts "Fire!" in a crowded, conflagration free, theatre, it is still, more I would posit, necessary to protect the freedom of expression.

There are three reasons for this. First, dissenting opinions, no matter how seemingly unjustified, always have the effect of sparking thought and debate which are unfailingly necessary prerequisites to discovering the truth.

Questioning taboos, putting forward controversial or even 'offensive' theories are the manifestation of this. The effect of honestly answering, and potentially disproving, such questions

and controversial or offensive theories will, each time, bring about another enlightened soul.

Second, the exposure of fabricated and extremists views to criticism does far more to eliminate extremism, as it publicly disproves it, rather than merely censoring it, where it can remain to be disseminated underground.

Thirdly, even if it was concluded that it is necessary to limit freedom of speech, to whom would the responsibility of censorship lay? Can you, dear reader, think of anybody you would feel comfortable with telling you what you can and cannot say? Who is an appropriate arbiter, a better judge than you, of your own thought and expression? Who should limit what you, as a thinking individual, are exposed to?

Thus, returning to the controversy at the UCL, I can find no appropriate reason for the UCLU to actually attempt to ban the expression of the ASHS. However, this brings me to my second point.

Even if the UCL ASH have a right to publish an image of Prophet Muhammad, is it a kind thing to do? It is my belief that accusations against the ASHS of hate speech must be immediately dismissed. The cartoon in question (which may be seen on

their Facebook page), neither calls for the incitement of violence against Muslims nor does it make any claim about the moral status of a Muslim nor does it attempt to act as a legitimate interpretation of the Islam.

It is a humorous depiction of Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad, people who supposedly lived centuries apart, sitting in a 21st century pub sharing a pint and engaging in pub conversation. However, as the publisher(s) must have known, the cartoon would cause controversy and upset - the depiction of the Prophet Muhammad is forbidden in Islam as is the consumption of alcohol.

While I am of the opinion that some ideas in Islam are so illogical you could make a cartoon about them, I am more ambivalent when it comes to the effect such a cartoon would have. While I cannot honestly empathise with any Muslim distraught by a cartoonish depiction of their Prophet, I do not wish to act insensitively to anyone who at least respects my right to say whatever I wish. That said, browsing the UCL Islamic Society's website, I came across a number of (real, not cartoonish) pictures that offended me. However, neither I nor the UCL ASH, call for the censorship of such expres-

sion. We do not hold a right to be free from offence.

This brings me to my final point. What stance ought the Beaver to take? My friends and colleagues at the LSE ASH society feel the cartoon should be republished. My first intuition was to agree with them. As previously established, the UCLU has no right to ban freedom of expression. Debating the issue with a (religious) friend I considered a different perspective. While the only intent of the UCL ASHS was to advertise an event in a humorous way, perhaps they should have shown some sensitivity - after all, there is more than one way to advertise a pub crawl.

However, if we are to restrict our action by what might offend others a dangerous precedent would be set. How can we be sure to take enough precautions? I quote the late Christopher Hitchens' response to the Danish Cartoon controversy: "we cannot possibly adjust enough to please the fanatics, and it is degrading to make the attempt." Thus, I can only conclude that the Beaver should, in an act of defiance to those who wish to control speech and as a celebration of free speech, republish the cartoons. ☛

We shall not be republishing the cartoons mentioned above as we feel this would be inflammatory and offensive.

However, we felt the author had a right to air his views.

Cartoons and civil responsibility

"Offensive" religious cartoons are disrespectful and unconstructive to intellectual discussion

Tasif Zaman



In the past week, the debate surrounding "offensive" cartoons and freedom of speech was reignited after the Atheist, Secularist and Humanist society at University College London rejected the Students' Union's request to remove a "Jesus and Mo" comic strip posted on their Facebook page, which attempted to represent Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad sharing a pint.

The ASH society launched a petition against the Students' Union, claiming to be defending "freedom of expression at University College London." The petition received over 4,000 signatures and several endorsements from leading Atheist and Humanist organisations. Despite several complaints from UCL students, the Students' Union backed down from their initial request and the ASHS claimed "victory".

This particular incident may have been resolved but the debate about "offensive" cartoons and freedom of speech endures. It is easy to polarise the discussion between two opposing, irreconcilable camps, whether between defenders of freedom of speech and irrational followers of faith or between advocates of anti-Muslim hate speech and a targeted religious

minority. The reality, I would argue, is far more nuanced. Simplifying the issue is an obstacle to resolution.

As a European Muslim, I find myself at the heart of the debate and the recent controversy has led me to reflect on how the solution to this tension will shape the future of our society.

It is argued that drawing cartoons in order to ridicule religion is a natural extension of freedom of speech and freedom to criticise religion. Therefore cartoons ridiculing religion should be published without restrictions. Any opposition to the cartoons is an attempt to silence criticism of religion, and, in particular, criticism of Islam.

When analysing the nature of the cartoons, however, one could conclude that defending the right to draw such cartoons is not related to promoting freedom of speech if the cartoons serve no purpose in actually criticising religion (or anything else). I will propose that the cartoons are designed to promote and reinforce a reductive and perverse view of religion often based on prejudice or ignorance. However, I will not argue that the cartoons should be censored or banned because they may cause offence.

I strongly believe that the question shouldn't be whether "offensive" cartoons should or shouldn't be published. Rather, we should question whether using freedom of speech to cause offense and provoke sections of society is compatible with civic responsibility within a pluralist, tolerant and diverse society.

So my argument can be summarised as follows: (1) the cartoons do not promote a critical discussion of religion and (2) just because you are allowed to do something, it doesn't mean you should do it.

Before I continue, it is important to introduce three points. Firstly, there is, and must be, a limit on what we can and can't say (and, therefore, draw).

"This particular incident may have been resolved but the debate about 'offensive' cartoons and freedom of speech endures."

Legislation against discrimination, antisemitism and incitement to violence are entrenched in most democracies to balance the liberty of the individual with the protection of wider society. Therefore, absolute "free speech" can't really exist. Secondly, violent responses to "offensive" cartoons are wrong, counter-productive and, frankly, illogical. They follow the same logic of violent and extremist "pro-life" campaigners that murder doctors who perform abortions. Thirdly, "offensive"

cartoons are a particularly sensitive issue for Muslims because the depiction of any prophet (including Jesus Christ) is strictly forbidden. Also, perceived attacks on Islam can easily escalate due to the contemporary geo-political situation. For example, extremists can easily manipulate the issue to reinforce their West versus Islam narrative.

The use of sarcasm, ridicule and irony to highlight vices and abuses of individuals with the primary objective of constructive criticism is at the essence of satire. Neither the Danish cartoons nor the "Jesus and Mo" comic strip can really be categorised as satire. What is the critical observation behind Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad sharing a pint or sleeping together? What's the intellectual and witty suggestion behind a picture of the Prophet with a bomb on his turban? The latter example is clearly Islamophobic and promotes the prejudice that all Muslims are terrorists. It is simply reducing a religion or people to a perverse perception and then broadcasting that as legitimate criticism.

If you were genuinely concerned about the violent message of Islam, is drawing a provocative cartoon which attacks all Muslims a reasonable way to begin an intellectual discussion? The "Jesus and Mo" strip is also useless in promoting critical dialogue. In reality, the comics are for entertainment purposes only and promote simplistic and dogmatic views of religion which may be humorous to atheists, but are of little value to the case for

scrutinising religious beliefs and practices. People should be allowed to be entertained by whatever they see fit in the private sphere but what purpose do these cartoons have in the public sphere?

In a diverse society people are bound to hold differing opinions on a range of issues. Managing our diversity so that we promote cohesion through mutual respect and avoid imposing our views on others is therefore essential. In order to maintain this harmony our responsibilities towards one another may sometimes be a priority over our personal freedom.

From my understanding, radical or militant atheists would like to eradicate religion from society. At least for now, religion and religious people will continue to exist, so I would like to ask them what should happen to people that disagree with the radical atheist worldview? Aren't your attitudes as dogmatic as the people you claim to be fighting?

In the name of maintaining tolerance and developing a strong, pluralist and cohesive society, we must reassess the role of offensive cartoons in the public sphere. I reject UCL ASH Society's claim of "victory" in defence of free speech and at the same time believe that it is unwise to take these cartoons seriously - I am convinced that Prophet Muhammad wouldn't be troubled by these pathetic drawings, but he would definitely be distressed by those who distort his message. ☛

Big government is good

Obama's decision to shrink the federal government is an irresponsible policy

Samira Lindner



Last week, President Obama made headlines when he asked Congress for the power to shrink the federal government. He announced that he is planning to merge six agencies and shut down the Department of Commerce. This surprising announcement came in the midst of the ongoing Republican primaries in which President Obama has been repeatedly accused of being a "big-government liberal" which, in US politics, is about the worst thing you can be called. Reading the news, I was frustrated that President Obama caved in to the growing right-wing libertarian mentality that is dominating popular politics. To be clear, I

understand why he is doing this – it is in the interest of eliminating bureaucratic redundancies. However, for a large part of the American public this announcement, taken out of context, may appear to legitimize the call for smaller government.

The whole big versus small government debate involves a great deal of political theory and is not something that can be fully addressed here. So I will try to keep it relatively straightforward. I think the debate has been manipulated in the interests of those who have most to gain from small government: businesses, wealthy elites, state-level politicians, etc. Having been raised in the "statist" social-welfare country that is Germany, I have witnessed that big governments can be both strong and dynamic as well as benevolent and useful. The clichéd argument made by US conservatives is that

the founding fathers wanted a limited government, but this is outdated in the 21st century. I know that in the US it is blasphemous to question the eternal wisdom of the founding fathers, but we have to realize that these individuals were writing over two centuries ago when the US was a newly-developed entity with a population of between two and three million. Nowadays, with over 300 million citizens and an intricate infrastructural and institutional system, the argument for small government is no longer tenable.

In fact, calling for a dismantling of the state and its services is a completely irresponsible policy, especially when it is affluent politicians who are making these arguments. After all, an extreme slashing of federal spending would hit the poorest and weakest members of society the hardest. It is easy to be a libertarian if you have a good income but, as a single mother working two jobs and living off of food stamps, it is a different case. Furthermore, and perhaps to sound less anti-elitist, even the "good life" as we know it in America would not exist without the assistance and protection we get from the extensive government network.

European big government regimes are based on the idea of a strong, proactive state. While much is required of the citizen – including moral, legal and fiscal responsibilities – he or she receives extensive social services and protections in return. So, high levels of taxation are balanced out with high levels of government spending, including healthcare, welfare and education. Also, there is a different relationship with the private sector. In social democratic states such as Germany and to,

an extent, Nordic countries, the state plays a strong role in the economy in trying to guarantee a level playing field but also doubts the capability of the private sector to successfully take over duties of the state.

Of course, even with a big government there is the danger of unrestrained excessive growth and spending. Since there is no competitive market-logic as in the private sector,

"At least with a big government you know that if it makes a mistake, you still have a social safety net to fall back on."

the oversight has to come from within. Efficiency and effectiveness has to be reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure that taxes are not being wasted and that citizens are still benefiting from the services. And this is where President Obama's recent announcement falls. Clearly, he was hoping to increase bureaucratic efficiency. However, changes and improvements have to come gradually and evolve naturally since they are, after all, dealing with the livelihoods of individuals. His plan may be too drastic and too rash.

What remains important is to understand that just because we might not agree with the policies of a particular administration, that doesn't mean that the whole system of govern-

ance is faulty and should be cut to its bare essentials. This is something that the Republican candidates seem to be forgetting. A small government also implies the emergence of a massive private sector – and I think putting your life into the hands of a business is a lot more precarious than into the hands of an elected government. There is less accountability, transparency and sense of responsibility in the private sector.

We can't forget that government spending must be properly financed and going into large deficit financing, as in the US, cannot be sustained long-term. Instead, there needs to be a reshifting of spending priorities (with military spending at the very bottom) as well as a reformed tax system, similar to the one in many social democratic European regimes. With a balanced economy, big government can also be financially justified.

At the end of the day, governments do make mistakes. Big governments can be wasteful with spending, some politicians can be corrupt and some regulations ridiculous. Furthermore, government is not always as democratic as we hope it to be – special interests and powerful lobbyists play an excessively powerful role in political decision-making. After all, governments, big or small, are not infallible. But at least with a big government you know that if it makes a mistake, you still have a social safety net to fall back on. ☘



Flickr: The White House

What is Christianity?

Chris Rogers ponders what it means to be a Christian in today's society

Chris Rogers



Right, that title has probably bored you to the extent that you are not going to continue reading. Here is some Bible basher, you're thinking. He's going blab on about Jesus and heaven and hell and try to bring up warm, cuddly feelings about love, hope and joy. He's some kind of weirdo who we would do best to avoid. Well, I'm going to try and not do that.

I do think there is a God and I believe that I am saved by Him. I've done sinful things in my life. If Karma is real and my final judge then I am positively screwed. To balance the great cosmic scales, I am going to have to suffer. And that I accept. But then I have this concept of Grace. I believe that God has saved me from that. God is good and loving, despite what others say. And He doesn't want evil. With me so far?

I bet you're thinking, that's easy for this guy, he's had an easy life, made it into the LSE, pretty much got his life sorted. What has he got to worry about? Believing in a fairy in the sky is easy for him. He's never had to put that to the test!

Well, perhaps that is true for some, but if you think that Christians have never had to face the problems of suffering in the world, that we just blot them out, because without them God

as a concept makes more sense, then you are deluded.

I lost my mum to brain cancer three years ago. I had to watch her grow worse daily. On her death bed she had decayed to the point where all she could do was cry. Suffering is real and it is a problem I deal with day after day. The fact that my mum was a student at the LSE means that every day when I walk down Houghton Street I am reminded that she is gone. To say that we ignore suffering is so arrogant and conceited that it fills me with such rage.

"Christ is a personal God. He promises that, if you seek Him, you will find Him. That is a promise which I have personally found true."

Perhaps, you retort, that God is just a psychological crutch. He's this absent father figure, designed to make you think the world will turn out alright, a childish delusion. And I can answer that by saying, to me personally, of course He is. So what? My life

was awful before Christ. Christ gave my life meaning. The suffering I went through helped me open my eyes, to rouse me from my sleep, to think: is there really a God?

I think there is a God. I see nothing to say there cannot be. Maybe you think that me, and other Christians, must be poor scientists or must live in a world of delusion. Besides, surely it is up to the theist to prove God rather than the doubter to disprove it.

I cannot win you over with logic. Though some of my friends do believe that is possible, I do not. Christ is a personal God. He promises that, if you seek Him, you will find Him. That is a promise which I have personally found true.

However, I have often felt that, if you turn to Christ, particularly when in desperation, He is not that easy to find. I am certainly not saying that reading the Bible will provide a sudden epiphany of, "Wow, I was wrong. There really is a God." My own experience has shown me that this is rubbish. Frequently I seek God and all I find is the silent echo of eternity.

Now, however, when I turn to him, I don't find the locked door anymore, though it seems to creak open and closed a little each day. If I might quote C.S. Lewis, "There was no sudden striking and emotional transition. Like the warming of a room of the coming of daylight. When you first notice them they have already been going for some time."

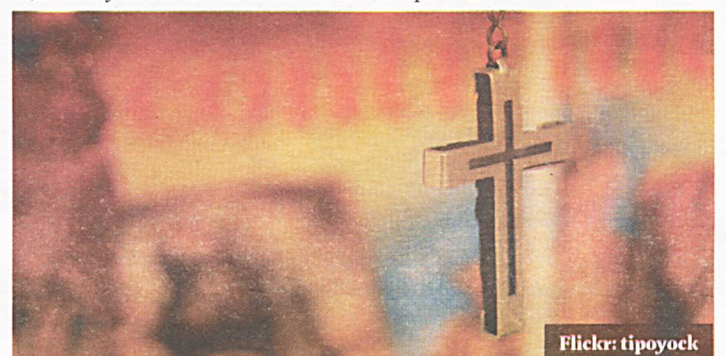
I cannot force you to read a Bible, and I agree that some of the things

it contains are capable of deterring people from religion. I don't think the book is contradictory but it can be hard to read, filled with verse after verse of things I struggle to accept. However, it is the best route to God that I have found, a book that grows in meaning to me the more I read it.

"Christ died for us" is the central tenant of our faith. God saw our sin, our rebellion, our evil. If you genuinely think that you have never done anything wrong then Christianity has nothing to offer you. But if you think you are not quite perfect, surely there are consequences. If God is just, he can't let sin go unpunished. But instead of us having to face the music, Jesus faced it for us. I think that Christians are just as bad, just as sinful as the next person. We do all manner of wrongs on a daily basis. It is not that we are perfect, though we strive to do good. It is that God showed his love to us, so we try for his sake to do better.

It is not that God said, "Well, I'll punish this guy, Jesus, instead of you," as though He has some bloodlust that must be sated. Jesus was God so it was not that God redirected his anger from us to someone else. Instead, God gave himself up for our sakes. That is what Christians believe. That is the fundamental tenant of our faith. That Christ, God, gave himself up for us and, as a result, we are saved. God died. That is our belief, as contradictory as it sounds. Not as an accident, but for our sake, He hung on a cross, and died the death that was ours. We are freed by Him. Is that not an attractive thought?

God has offered us a path to salvation. It is not that God picks those who have behaved the best. That is the opposite of Christian doctrine. Instead, God offers everyone forgiveness, rich or poor, saint or sinner. He stands with a free gift, with arms outstretched willing to embrace anyone who will accept it. ☘



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Commenting on your comment

Let's get behind Ed Miliband

Responding to Nona Buckley-Irvine's argument that choosing Ed was a "wasted vote"

Jon Allsop



It's fair to say that Ed Miliband has come in for a fair bit of stick recently. Buffeted by criticism from all sides, it's a wonder he hasn't physically toppled over. Lord Glasman, the "Blue Labour" ideas guru and one-time Miliband collaborator, has accused him of having "no strategy, no narrative and little energy," whilst Len McCluskey, head of the "Unite" union, condemned him for giving in to a "discredited Blairism" which has "disenfranchised" ordinary working people. Nona Buckley-Irvine, meanwhile, even went as far as to call him "a bit of an idiot" in last week's issue of the Beaver.

Like Nona, I too voted for Ed Miliband in the last Labour leadership election. Like Nona, I too was optimistic that he "conveyed a change from Blairite politics". And, like Nona, I too must admit that I have been left deeply frustrated by much of his recent performance. However, unlike Nona and so many other commentators up and down the country, I stand by my original vote.

The Ed Miliband for whom I

cast my ballot in the 2010 leadership contest was an engaging, principled and hugely intelligent young politician. Impressed by his extremely competent performance at the Department for Energy and Climate Change, I swung towards him when it became apparent that he was the only candidate offering a credible alternative to the bland centrism of the Blair years. Ed Miliband, it seemed, cared about social justice, equality and the most disadvantaged people in our society.

Although he has undoubtedly got a lot wrong since his election, I steadfastly believe that Ed Miliband the Labour leader is more or less the same person as Ed Miliband the Labour leadership candidate. It is this enduring faith in his world view that gives me hope that he can turn things around, both for Labour and for the country. He will never be able to do this, however, unless his party, and those in the ideological space surrounding it, throw their weight behind him. If we can bolster Ed's confidence, reinforce his message and contribute to his battle of ideas with the coalition, then maybe, just maybe, Labour can win again next time.

Although claims have been made that Ed has lurched to the right, I would argue that the true weaknesses in his performance can be narrowed down to one central problem: the fact that he has allowed the Tories to set the

agenda. This is partially the fault of the media for disseminating his message. For example, his recent (quite reasonable) assertion that Labour may not be able to reverse coalition cuts come 2015 was disgracefully misrepresented as an unconditional endorsement of coalition fiscal policy.

Most of the blame, however, must be attached to the Labour party, which has been inexplicably defensive about its own merits in recent months. The Tories have fought tooth and nail to promote the narrative that Labour are not economically credible and are the same old profligate party of tax and spend. So completely has Miliband bought into this narrative that he is now trying to establish himself as a proponent of the cuts himself, quietly disagreeing on the (not unimportant) minutiae but making sure he is seen to support the overall thrust of fiscal consolidation.

In convincing him that he cannot stand up for public services, the Tories have shoehorned him into the ridiculous position of trying to outflank them on their own turf, a position which is both an apparent endorsement of coalition policy, unappealing to his core vote and spectacularly unlikely to reap electoral benefit (as the public, after all, will vote for the Conservatives at the next election if they want more austerity). To my mind, then, Miliband's insipid performance so far

does not make him a weak leader. It is instead attributable to the fact that he has been encouraged to embrace a narrative he doesn't really believe.

There is, however, a way out of this electoral trap. Although it will undoubtedly involve a big gamble on Miliband's part, it is encouraging to remember that the big risks he has taken so far have provided the high points of his tenure. Against all conventional wisdom, he took on Murdoch and made Cameron look desperately behind the curve. He set the agenda on boardroom responsibility which ministers from across government are now desperately trying to claim. And his much-mocked targeting of the "squeezed middle" has, I believe, translated into a pervasive message at a time when swingeing cuts, high unemployment and stagnant growth are pinching previously comfortable socioeconomic groups. The big question, of course, is how does Miliband wrestle back the agenda on the economy?

To my mind, he has to do two things. Firstly, he needs to take a couple of the government's most regressive cuts and turn them into symbols of his opposition to the make-up of their deficit reduction programme. It is perfectly possible, for instance, that he could major on the government's borderline evil cuts to Disability Living Allowance without having to

claim that he wouldn't make any cuts whatsoever. Secondly, he needs to re-discover his commendable willingness to engage with new ideas from across the party. If he can reconcile himself with Glasman's communitarian ethos, for example, then he can begin to reconceive how the state should care for the vulnerable when money's tight, seizing back the Tories' badly-sold 'big society' agenda and using it to force the government squarely onto the back foot.

Whatever he does, he has got to allow his principles to come to the fore in articulating a proper opposition to this weak coalition. Both Milibands talked of "challenging old orthodoxies" in the leadership campaign, although it seems that it is a current orthodoxy, the new norm of fiscal conservatism, that Ed has got to combat today.

The Ed Miliband I believe in can do this, but only if the left gets behind him. The Fabian Society conference last weekend showed me that brilliant ideas still exist on the left. If we can use them to galvanise Ed's leadership then we can win again next time. Ed Miliband may not be perfect but he is still an exceptionally talented politician. By encouraging him to unleash his inner principles, we may just be his political salvation. ☘

For God's sake, stop bashing religion!

Objecting to Tom Maksymiw's comment about religious morality

Benjamin Rogers



I can only hope that, very much like myself, any atheist who read the article entitled, "True religious morality" in last week's Comment couldn't help but think that the worst atheism has to offer has once again reared its ugly head. If only such commentators could realise how deeply discrediting both their arrogance and ignorance is to the atheist and humanist movements with regards to the role of religion in society, then hopefully they would cease making such glib pronouncements about how awful and destructive systems of religious morality are to the world.

I think, like many, I would quite happily join Tom Maksymiw and other secularists in a movement against religious extremism, whether it be the disgusting theocracies of Iran and Saudi Arabia, the genital mutilation of millions of women in the Islamic world or the more local outrage of the bishop of Carlisle who publically pronounced that the 2007 floods in Cumbria were God's punishment against homosexuals. However, I have very little time for atheists who think that they are smarter and morally superior to religious people.

Not only do I think it is good manners to keep these kinds of thoughts to myself but I also cannot see any constructive use in doing so either. This is because, as easy as it is to thumb through the Old Testament and find both strange and horrific verses giving divine sanction to rape and genocide, it is disingenuous to then claim that

these are beliefs and morals upheld by anyone except Christian fringe groups. In reality the vast majority of Christians don't even know of the existence of such verses and, instead, believe in and practise a set of perfectly praiseworthy moral guidelines.

Admittedly this might sound to many like an absurd hypocrisy of cherry-picking from biblical verses but, if it makes people think about their actions and give generously to charity, then it seems like a hypocrisy worth having and certainly not worth disturbing. It is a hypocrisy which has inspired and empowered people to do great things, a favourite example of mine being Lech Walesa telling the Polish police that he did not fear them because the only person he feared was God.

History and contemporary experiences tells us that human beings are metaphysical animals in desperate need of a greater purpose and position in the universe. For many people it is understandably comforting to think that they are at the centre of a divine plan and it is a wonderful way to escape what can be the unnerving uncertainty of existence.

Even those who pertain to be non-believers reveal similar fears when they indulge in UFO stories, pay through the nose for homeopathy and spiritual medicine or align themselves with conspiracy groups such as the "9/11 truth movement." Mr. Maksymiw quite boldly tells us that it is questionable if Christianity's objective morality "is a basis on which a free society can function" but what he does not realise is that the society he wishes to create says and offers very little to human beings. Karl Marx once described religion as the flowers which mask and sit between the links in the chain of what is human misery and oppression and he subsequently called for man to remove the flowers in order to unmask

and then break the chain.

However, it seems more sensible to say that in a liberal society we should hold out to people the opportunity and freedom to remove the flowers and break the chain but crucially we should not force them to do so as some people behave better with the flowers in place and some will find more absurd and harmful chains to wrap themselves in. ☘

Want to send us a comment?

Are you outraged by something you've seen in this paper and interested in responding?

You can write about anything, from happenings at LSE, to events further afield.

Contact us by email: comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I write in order to highlight to your readers and my erstwhile friends at the Atheist and Humanist Society a few irregularities apparent in their letter to you on the 8th November regarding an article that appeared in the 25th October entitled 'Explaining Shariah'.

I draw the authors attention to the second sentence of the letter, which reads; "While every student at the LSE has the inherent right to practice and express any religion or belief of their choice, they have no right to push it on others as Morley so unsolicited did in the past issue". This sentence is internally contradictory. The author asserts, on the one hand, an inherent right to freely express one's religious beliefs and in the next breath denies that one has a right to express their opinions in a public newspaper. To argue that freedom of expression does not extend to Mr Morley a freedom to express his views, however unpopular, in a public forum and in a manner consistent with the law entails an assertion so obviously oxymoronic that the authors surely cannot have intended it.

The third through seventh sentences of the letter provides a further irregularity, this time stemming not from blaring inconsistency but instead from the oddity of an atheist group taking offence to the attribution of a particular belief to Islam. That the Atheist and Humanist Society should feel the need to publicly express their offence to the misattribution (as they consider it) of the Shari'ah to Islam demonstrates a dangerous paternalistic arrogance on their part. If Mr Morley had wrongly attributed certain practices or beliefs to Islam, it would appear prudent for the Atheist and Humanist Society to allow Muslims the opportunity to clarify the tenants of their faith, and not to purport to do so for them.

The fifth sentence contains an assertion of fact which is unsubstantiated and, I would be so bold as to say, patently false. An assertion that the vast majority of the world's 1.5 or so billion Muslims reject the Shari'ah, when one grasps exactly what the Shari'ah is, is astonishing.

Toward the end of the letter, the author's endorsement of 'the absolute freedom of speech' is contradicted by the subsequent demand for the then-editor of the paper to reconsider her position for failing 'to appropriately determine what constitutes bad taste'. Perhaps the author should consider amending their position on the absolute freedom of speech (perhaps by formulating it thus; "we believe in the freedom of speech, in so far as it conforms with good taste, which is to be determined with recourse to my personal opinions"), or amending their position on the Editor's decision to permit the article to be published.

Finally, the author's reference to 'Hadd offences' should read 'Hudood offences'; Hadd referring to the singular (Hadd offence/Hudood offences).

Yours sincerely,

Zachariah Sammour



Gesamtkunstwerk | **Travelling Light** | **Dock Kitchen** | **Like Crazy** |
World Food: Armenia | **Rain Wild Chronicles** | **LSEx: Porn** | **Private B**

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Vacancy

Fashion Editor

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Travelling Light, National Theatre: Lyttelton



Director: Nicholas Hytner
Playwright: Nicholas Wright
Key cast: Antony Sher, Damien Molony, Lauren O'Neil, Paul Jesson, Sue Kelvin, Abigail McKern, Colin Haigh, Darren Swift, Karl Theobald
At National Theatre: Lyttelton until 6 March 2012

Travelling Light is a new work by Nicholas Wright, premiering at the Lyttelton Theatre. The play is a nostalgic fictional bio-drama presenting the birth of cinema in a small Eastern European Jewish community, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The warm evocation of the Jewish community makes the production charming and funny; the use of silent movies ensures that it is visually interesting. Despite this, Wright seems to have focussed more on the development of techniques of filming than on that of the characters, and as such, the play is not as engaging as it could have been.

The play depicts Motl Mendl's (Damien Molony) journey to become a successful movie director. Returning to the house of his late father, in a small Jewish shelt, Motl inherits an 1896 Lumière Brothers cinematograph and begins documenting local life. Financed by local patriarch Jacob Bindel (Antony Sher), Motl develops his skills, inventing close-ups and editing, which lead him to realise the potential for fictional movies. Cinema is born.

Sher is excellent as the over-zealous producer. He commands the stage and conveys the excitement of realising this new innovative medium; the belief that film has the power to change everything,



Antony Sher (centre) as Jacob Bindel, with Damien Molony (left) as Motl Mendl and Abigail McKern (right) as Ida

"Me, I don't know words. Words, for me are like a stone wall around God's world ... Then I see your motion picture, and the door to paradise opens for me ... No words but all feelings! Love, happiness, sadness, tears, I see them all."

By setting the narrative in a small Jewish community, Wright is able to emphasise the anticipation surrounding film, the whole village crowded in one room, each eager to have their say and look through the camera lens (or be in front of it). Indeed, much of the comedy stems from everyone in the village fighting for camera time; the women all turning up in their best dresses and self-consciously pouting into the camera. The excitement in the village at Motl's discovery is beautifully

supported by simplistic vintage scenes of moving footage projected against the backdrop. Driscoll's use of film makes the production elegant and stylish, and subtlety allows the motion-pictures to speak for themselves.

The play is framed by interjectory narrations from Maurice Montgomery (Paul Jesson), an older Motl Mendl, dressed in an expensive American style suit. Providing a narration of the action seems unnecessary and robs the play of any element of surprise, by making the ending inevitable. On top of this, the character of Motl is perhaps underwritten and Molony fails to present any real depth of feeling or passion, despite being the innovator of it all. Although the ensemble create an atmosphere, the

audience need, and expect, more from Motl, as the central character. A tame romance develops between Motl and his assistant, Anna (Lauren O'Neil) but again, it seems largely unfeeling. His lack of any real tangible feelings, for film or for Anna, means that the play lacks dramatic depth.

Although it would benefit from a greater level of engagement, *Travelling Light* is an affectionate review of the invention of film. Eventually, compromised by his overbearing producer, Motl heads to America, where he hopes to make real films, free from commercial interference and financial constraints. The audience laugh.

↳ Jess Austin

Like Crazy



Director: Drake Doremus
Screenplay: Drake Doremus, Ben York Jones
Key cast: Felicity Jones, Anton Yelchin, Jennifer Lawrence
Year: 2012
Runtime: 90 minutes
In cinemas 27 January 2012

Like Crazy is an indie rom-com in the vein of something like *(500) Days of Summer*. A bittersweet story, it follows two young lovers – American Jacob (Anton Yelchin) and Briton Anna (Felicity Jones) – who fall for each other at a Los Angeles university but are forcibly separated by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The title seems apt. For the first hour or so of the film, Anna and Jacob run around like deranged toddlers, laughing and screaming and senselessly hurting those around them, being utterly self-involved. The initial cuteness of the film is almost too much to bear – she writes him poems, he carves her a chair, and, of all things, they even have a pillow-fight. Undeniably nauseating.

All their problems are caused by their own irresponsibility and childishness: she is denied return to the United States because she deliberately misses her flight home, so that she can be with her boyfriend. It is perhaps just my cynicism, but it is extremely difficult to sympathise with the plight of these infantile lovers when it is caused by their own pig-headed stupidity. The next part of the film sees the two separated, mooning ridiculously over their lost loves and staring into the distance with tortured expressions on their faces.

Then it all changes. Jacob comes to London to visit Anna and things, inevi-

tably, begin to fall apart. He does not fit into her new life and their relationship becomes strained. Although the film was quite obviously heading in this direction from the minute she decided to miss her flight, there is something surprising in the profundity and truth of their arguments; after all the poems and chairs and stuff.

The arguments are uncomfortably realistic – the improvised nature of the script makes the tension all the more convincing and unnerving. You eventually begin to feel sympathy for these characters as they mature and begin to have their idealistic adoration for each other tempered by time and circumstance. This is particularly true of the final scene, in which they are reunited, and the stark contrast between this meeting and their very first is fully felt.

It must be said that Jones and Yelchin are undeniably good. Both are very convincing in their roles, especially Jones, who manages to be surprisingly agreeable, which seems a miracle given the fact that her character has the potential to be hugely grating. The impromptu dialogue is also quite compelling, conveying the awkwardness of real conversation, and is particularly effective when the two are screaming at each other in Anna's kitchen in London.

There is a problem, however, with all this apparent sorrow for lost youth and love – you do not really feel sorry at all. Again, perhaps I am being cynical, but I did not mourn for their puerile pillow-fighting antics. It was actually more satisfying to see them move on, grow up, and get on with their lives, like responsible adults. Jacob's new girlfriend, played by the brilliant Jennifer Lawrence, is at times a lot more likable than Anna, and I found myself rooting for the two of them to stay together in-



Anton Yelchin as Jacob and Felicity Jones as Anna

stead. Equally, it seems a pity that Anna decides to go back to L.A. after building a life in London with a hot boyfriend and a dream job at a magazine. The tragedy is not the loss of their love, rather the loss of their independent lives.

Like Crazy, in some ways, is highly enjoyable. The natural dialogue and the skill of the actors is a pleasure to watch, and it is, in a sadistic way, satisfying to see these naïve fools have their juvenile

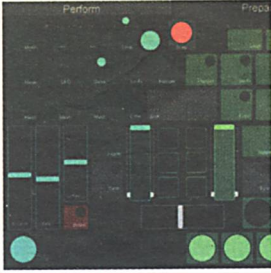
happiness snatched away. The problem is that the title is too perfect. All of their actions are explained as if they were, indeed, crazy: they fall in love in an evening, they get married within around six months of meeting, and they abandon perfectly nice jobs and kind lovers to be with each other. Overall, I did not like it. But then again, perhaps I am a little too sane. Although, honestly, I think not.

↳ Isabella Silver

See/read/hear/feel/smell/know things first by writing for us.

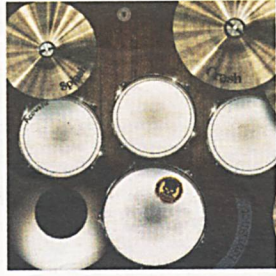
Email: partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

5 iOS apps to make a musician out of a monkey



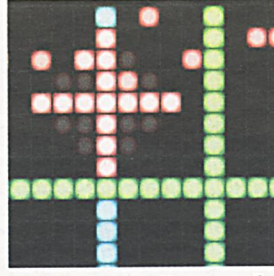
Touch OSC

Okay, so this one isn't exactly for beginners. In fact, you have to be a computer genius just to start the damn thing. But it's cheap, and once you get it working and start to master it, its potential is pretty much limitless. You can control any parameter, in almost any computer based audio software, and use your touch screen interface to have creative and efficient interactions.



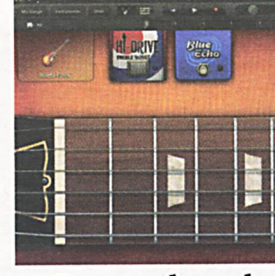
Drums!

It's used in Apple Stores over the world to demo both the iPhone and iPad, and for good reason. For mere pennies, Drums! allows you to have surprisingly versatile interactions with its virtual drum kits, and the sounds that are included aren't to be scoffed at either. True, it's never going to replace the more professional sounding virtual kits, but they'll also cost you an arm and a leg more, and this is decent for beginners.



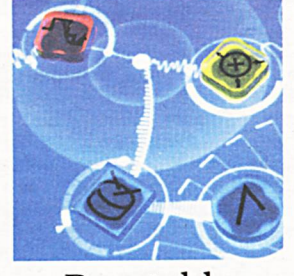
Aurora Sound

It's not cheap, so we wouldn't recommend it unless you're willing to put in a bit of effort. But the innovative interface, modelled on the Yamaha Tenori-On means that this all-in-one electronic studio separates itself from the pack, and becomes an exciting, truly inspiring production environment. It doesn't replace desktop audio suites, but it comes as close as most iOS apps currently can, and you could certainly record a decent demo on it.



Garageband

Virtual guitars, basses, drums, pianos, amps, keyboards, organs. Music lessons given by celebrities. An aesthetically pleasing and intuitive Apple interface. The ability to export and share projects with your desktop version of GarageBand. An eight-track sequencer. Enough options to please even the pros. What more could you possibly want? Well, MIDI editing would be nice. But my mum warned me never to be greedy.



Reactable

Used by avant-garde artists such as Björk, Reactable, like its tabletop equivalent, allows you to manipulate sound signals using "blocks," each of which has intuitive controls for varying anything from volume to filter cutoffs. Although it's not for the faint of heart, even beginners can get some mileage out of the app, creating original and exciting sounds without having the first clue of how they did so.

Review: Cloud Nothings – Attack on Memory



the Cloud Nothings side project Total Babes (which doesn't feature Baldi), calling them "far and away the better band" and praising their debut album *Swimming Through Sunlight*. I still love that record, but after listening to the new Cloud Nothings LP *Attack On Memory*, I'm starting to heavily regret making that declaration.

Where did *Attack on Memory* come from? What sort of creative revelation prompted such a radical change in style from Baldi's previous work? Where do I even begin in describing the creative leaps that Cloud Nothings must have made to produce this record?

Well, for one thing, this band is not doing the lo-fi thing anymore. That's nothing particularly special on its own, as a number of former lo-fi bands have made the transition to higher fidelity production over the courses of their careers. But unlike their formerly lo-fi peers Best Coast, Male Bonding, and Times New Viking, Cloud Nothings have made that transition seem genuinely inspired. Instead of just raising the production values on their sunny pop-punk gems, Cloud Nothings have updated their production aesthetic to suit their completely subverted new style of music. Enlisting legendary

producer/curmudgeon Steve Albini in the studio, Cloud Nothings' new LP has a clear and distinctly-analogue sound.

Working with Albini must have had some influence on the band's style, but I believe that Cloud Nothings themselves deserve most of the credit for their impressive new direction. The band has all but completely abandoned the uptempo, carefree pop songs that defined their earlier work and come out the other end of the creative tunnel with eight aggressive, emotive, and surprisingly heavy punk songs of staggering ambition.

With a sonic palette derived from '90s emo and an experimental bent all their own, *Attack on Memory* is true to its name. The record ruthlessly demolishes the lazy nostalgia of the reverb-laden beach pop acts that just a year ago, Cloud Nothings could have counted themselves amongst. Opening track "No Future/No Past" immediately heralds this stylistic sea change, settling into a layered instrumental groove reminiscent of Built To Spill with Baldi singing short, indistinguishable phrases over it. He repeats each four line verse with growing desperation in his voice, transforming the boredom that his voice conveys at the beginning into genuine anxiety and rage. By the climax of the

song, the guitars and percussion lurch forward in a cathartic rush, as a newly impassioned Baldi repeatedly screams the song's title. It's a stunning introduction to the record, but "No Future/No Past" alone can't fully prepare the listener for what comes ahead.

The second track, "Wasted Days", is easily the best song on a record loaded with great ones. At almost nine minutes in length, it's the kind of song that nobody every expected this band to make, much less make well. I'm still thinking in a 2011 mindset, but if this track had been released last year, it would have been in my top 10 songs list at least. As they do on a number of the album's tracks, Baldi's vocals echo a young Rivers Cuomo, delivering an earworm melodic phrase one moment and a passionately desperate teenaged scream the next. Hearing his voice move so harshly between styles creates a manic energy that is no doubt supported by the guitar-led instrumentation. Throughout its lengthy duration, "Wasted Days" never lets go of this energy, bringing it to a head towards the very end, when Baldi's double tracked vocals are simultaneously singing and screaming.

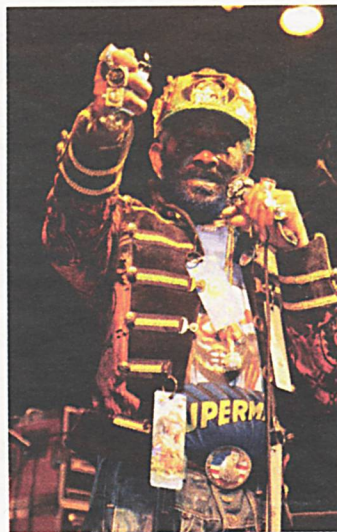
It's hard to gauge the direct musical influences on *Attack on Memory*, but cer-

tain moments on the record are pretty illuminative. The anthemic "Stay Useless" recalls Real Estate with its rough hewn guitar sound and self-deprecating lyrics. The lead guitar tone and general musical atmosphere of "No Sentiment" is practically a paean to Modest Mouse's *The Lonesome Crowded West*. But the most interesting moments on the record are those in which Baldi's old style seeps through the holes in *Attack on Memory*'s refined walls. The unpredictably catchy chorus of "Fall In" could have been adapted to fit in with tracks on Cloud Nothings like the repetitive "Heartbeat," but it easily outshines its predecessor in terms of maturity. Similarly, the verses of "Separation" are structured in the same rigidly stuttering way as many of Baldi's earlier songs, but its raw undercurrents can't be found anywhere else in his discography. Songs like these suggest that *Attack on Memory* is not just a radical anomaly in the Cloud Nothings oeuvre, but rather a huge first step in the evolution of a great band in the making. If this was the first album that 2012 graced my ears with, I can't wait to see what it throws at me next.

Chris Capello

This week's live highlights

- 25 Jan: **Bonnie 'Prince' Billy** – Hackney Empire
- 25 Jan: **Ron Sexsmith** – Union Chapel
- 27 Jan: **King Midas Sound** – Bishopsgate Institute
- 27 Jan: **Explosions in the Sky** – O2 Brixton
- 27/28 Jan: **Lee 'Scratch' Perry** – Jazz Cafe
- 28 Jan: **James Blake** – East London Warehouse



Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Live in LA

PartBeat

The office playlist this week...

- In Love With You
The Paradise: *The Upper Cuts* (2005)
- A Dream of Water
Colin Stetson: *New History Warfare Vol. 2: Judges* (2011)
- No Sentiment
Cloud Nothings: *Attack on Memory* (2012)
- Consequence
The Notwist: *Neon Golden* (2003)
- Unsatisfied
The Replacements: *Let It Be* (1984)



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Gesamtkunstwerk: New Art from Germany

Gesamtkunstwerk, loosely translated as "all-embracing art form," is a term that connotes the melding of art forms into a unified whole within a single piece. It rings of the aesthetic ideals of Wagner, who used the term in two essays to describe his efforts to fuse the forms of drama and opera. As a title for this exhibition, however, it is a misnomer, and the description "New German Art" is somewhat misleading.

Of the 24 artists on display, some were born in Germany and have since moved away, others are currently based there; a few have even more fleeting connections with the country. The consequence is an array of work that is characteristically unrepresentative of the present state of art in Germany.

Over the cold season, London as a whole has been a better representation of German culture: the Christkindlmarkt-inspired Winter Wonderland occupied Hyde Park over the Christmas period, while Anselm Kiefer and Gerhard Richter have been in exhibition at the White Cube Bermondsey and Tate Modern respectively.

Richter's vast retrospective displayed work from throughout his five-decade career to date. It may have been overwhelming, but it certainly made a strong impression of an old order of German art, typified by his intellectual, meditative and introspective approach. The work in this display at the Saatchi is its antithesis, and knowingly so.

Isa Genzken, the former spouse of Richter, appears to be the stylistic mother of many of the younger artists. Her sculptures are filled with totemic allusions to the discarded. The assemblages on show are frantically worked and absurdly overloaded, a suggestion of the impermanence and imperfection of human creation.

Genzken opts to work in styles and materials that elicit a dizzying unfamiliarity in the minds of her audience: she once remarked that "there is nothing worse in art than, 'you see it and you know it.'" The gallery, however, contradicts this very sentiment by choosing to hang Genzken's MLR painting series, which dates back to 1992.

In Ida Ekblad, Saatchi offers a natural heir to Genzken; she works with found materials, embedded in cement



André Butzer, Ahnenbild 2411, 2006

or clumsily constructed in an affront to refinement. On her sculpture entitled *Tennessee Hills* (2010), an old, dirty towel hangs from the tip of an angular composition of rusting welded steel. This apologetic flourish lampoons the early Modernists who expressed their faith that progress would bring a better world.

A more cutting attack on the art world hangs on the walls in the form of André Butzer's anarchic *Ahnenbild 2411*, which juxtaposes references to German Expressionism with American Pop Art to aggressively critique the consumerisation of art. The terse sentiment of

Butzer, Ekblad and Genzken is echoed in the work of many other artists on display in their heavy-handed use of scrap materials.

Georg Herod, like Genzken, is one of the older artists on show in the gallery. His brightly coloured sculptures, one scarlet and the other indigo, have shades of Matisse in their angularity. The visceral, fetishistic poses suggest a state of tension that is echoed by the materials used in the construction: lacquered canvas pulled taut over roof batten. The works appear to be simultaneously flat and three dimensional, drawn and carved. In this sense, they edge nearer

to being "gesamt," to totality.

It is the work of Markus Selg that draws closest to the oneness implied by the Wagnerian part of the exhibition's title; he refers to the sense of "almost spiritual, single wholeness" permeating his practice. The paintings, prints and sculpture on display are imbued with a pre-biblical mysticism. His sculpture *Abgrund* (2010) is hauntingly beautiful; the kneeling figure is foetal and rusticated, and seemingly alludes to the self-imposed isolation that he often works in.

Though notably not "gesamt," the works of Jeppe Hein and Gurt and Uwe

Tobias were a particular highlight to see. The Transylvanian Tobias twins' charming anthropomorphic woodcuts look as though they were collected from a Bauhaus designer's dream of a carnival, while Jeppe Hein's *Mirror Wall* (2010) begins to vibrate when a visitor walks past its motion sensors.

Whatever protests the title may arouse, there are some arresting pieces on display in the palatial rooms of the former barracks. As for the rest, one wonders if there is anything that, once placed in those rooms, would not seem valued in some way.

Shyam Desai



Gert & Uwe Tobias, Untitled, 2007

The Dock Kitchen



Location: Portobello Docks, 344/342 Ladbroke Grove, Kensal Road, London W10
Nearest station: Kensal Green
Average price: £26-£40
Opening times: 1200-1430 and 1900-2330 Mon-Sat, 1200-1530 Sun

Something happens during the winter. Christmas is over and now all we have left is the long slog until spring. Sensory perception becomes dull. Colours seem less vibrant. The city of London turns grey. Your palette grows weary of the familiar winter flavours and you start looking around for something new. I am pleased to report that I have found it in the Dock Kitchen.

The restaurant, located in Ladbroke Grove, is Stevie Parle's brainchild.

Rather than focussing on a fixed menu, the emphasis is on changing it to what is seasonally available on top of the extremely innovative à la carte menu. The result is an eclectic and wide range of dishes, each with a surprising range of flavours.

The restaurant itself is beautiful. The Dock Kitchen overlooks the Grand Union Canal in Ladbroke Grove, showing off the London skyline with floor to ceiling windows. Inside, the wooden beamed ceiling and brick walls give the look of a trendy loft. Hanging from the wall are beautifully strange bronze orange bulb lamps, illuminating the restaurant with warm light.

Beneath the restaurant is the cocktail bar, boasting furniture from Tom Dixon's collection of lighting and furniture. The bar is quirky to be sure. Located under

the restaurant, it feels more like a trendy furniture store than a bar, especially if you are seated next to the large illuminated "FUN" sign that looks out of the window. The place has a very intimate feel, enhanced by the low ceilings and small space. The bar is also part shop, showing off Tom Dixon's collection of lighting and furniture. While it is not the best bar in London, it is a lovely place to go for a pre-meal drink.

The wine list is very respectable, with bottles from around the world. If wine is not your thing, however, they serve pitchers of fresh squeezed lemonade, which perfectly balances the rich food in addition to being very refreshing.

Before you start your meal, you are presented with a delicious flat bread with drizzled oil and spices on top. It immediately introduces you to the unique fusion that you are about to be submerged in. Think of the most delicious naan you ever had with a spicy kick. I'm still trying to work out the combination that was used.

To start, I had the chicken livers cooked in seven spices and pomegranate molasses. For some, chicken livers may sound like a step too far, but I assure you that it is absolutely delicious. It has a very similar flavour to foie gras with a slightly firmer texture, which has led to it being dubbed the poor man's caviar. The combination of the livers with the creamy sauce and the molasses creates an extremely rich and unusual flavour that has to be tried to be believed.

However, it is the biryani of sea bass, Dorset crab and octopus that really steals the show. The dish has the mixed feel of a paella and a light fish

curry, combing the enormous flavour of a latter, with the subtle texture of the former.

In keeping with the slightly hipster theme, even the dessert menu is unusual. My personal favourite is the Stichelton, a type of unpasteurised blue cheese, whose mild flavour is a perfect finish to your meal. Think of it as a stilton for people who don't like stilton. This is definitely a cheese to look for at cheese markets.

The Dock Kitchen has few faults, but they are weighty. Its main problem is that it is so far away. The nearest station is Kensal Green, which is admittedly only a short Tube ride away. But I fear for many that is too far to travel for a meal in a city where amazing food is everywhere. The other problem is price. While it is not particularly expensive,

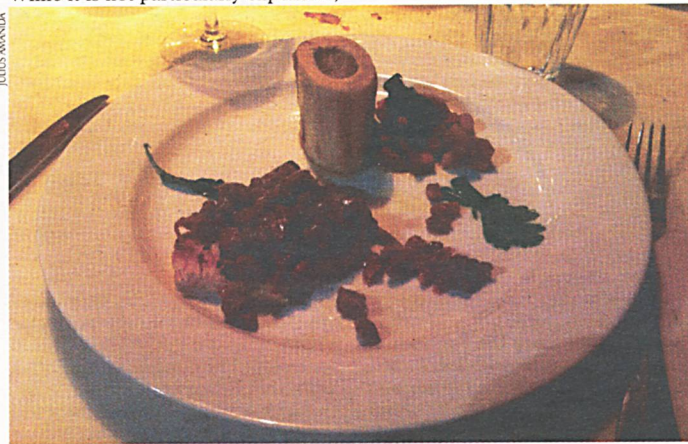
it is above what most students would be prepared to spend on a meal, so I suggest that you save this restaurant for a special occasion.

My favourite thing about the Dock Kitchen is the open kitchen. Rather than hiding it away at the back, like most restaurants, it is located at the centre of the restaurant for all to see. This means that you can watch your food move from preparation, to grill, to hot plate, to service, to right in front of you. You can hear the chef's battle cry of "service and order!" Being a foodie, I naturally find cooking at a professional kitchen immensely interesting, so being able to watch your food being prepared right in front of you is a dream come true.

Julius Amanida



The cocktail bar is quirky, in addition to the word in the photo



Bone marrow with steak tartare

World Food: Armenia



This week's recipes are from Armenia, via Alex Jungwirth. All three are healthy and quite light, but certainly not lacking in flavour.

Starter Tabouli

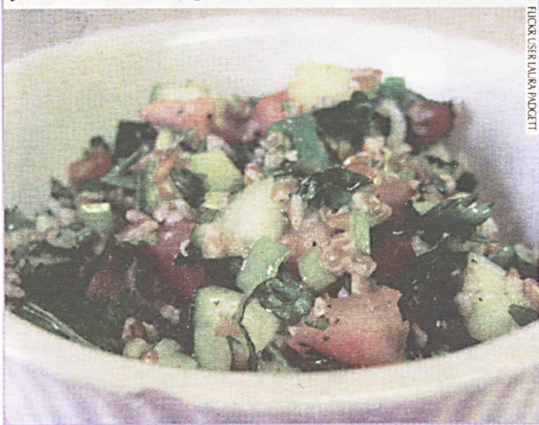
A delicate and delicious parsley salad. Serves 3.

Ingredients

- ½ cup fine grain bulgur
- 1 ½ cups water
- 2 bunches fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 1 sweet onion
- 1 tablespoon fresh mint, finely chopped (or 1 teaspoon fresh mint)
- 2 firm ripe tomatoes, diced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Method

1. Lightly stir bulgur into a bowl of cold water. Allow to soak for 30 minutes, then drain thoroughly and transfer to a serving bowl.
2. Add parsley, mint and onion. Toss together.
3. In a separate bowl, combine olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Pour over parsley, mint and onion mixture. Toss together.
4. Toss in tomatoes.
5. Serve with sliced pitta bread.



LEPORA/WIREIMAGE.COM

Main Lamb-Stuffed Artichokes

Artichokes are a wonderful ingredient. They contain cynarin, which enhances the flavour of other foods (mainly sweetness). Here, they combine beautifully with the lamb's juices, leaving them buttery and soft. Serves 4.

Ingredients

- 4 large artichokes (5 or 6 if they are medium sized)
- ¾ pound lamb, ground
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 1 large egg
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon toasted pine nuts, chopped (toast by placing on a baking sheet in an oven tray and cooking on gas mark 5 [375°F/190°C] for 5-10 minutes)
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 tomato, sliced into according to number of artichokes
- 2 cups water

Method

1. Cut off the tops of artichokes, leaving most of the hearts and the bottoms. Scoop out the insides. Immediately add lemon juice into the artichokes (this prevents discolouring - use around half of the lemon juice).
2. In a large frying pan, fry lamb with onions until onions are tender and meat is browned.
3. Stir in pine nuts, parsley, cumin, salt and pepper.
4. Transfer lamb mixture to a mixing bowl and stir in egg.
5. Stuff each artichoke with the lamb mixture and cover with a tomato slice.
6. Place in a deep casserole dish. Add remaining lemon juice and water. Cover and bake in a pre-heated oven for 90 minutes at gas mark 4 [350°F/176°C].
7. Serve with rice or a mild pilaf.



Dessert

Blueberry Compote

Like artichokes, blueberries have a high antioxidant capacity. This compote is quick and easy, but the flavour is as rich as any. Serves 3.

Ingredients

- 1 pound blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornflower
- ¾ cup water
- ½ teaspoon rose water

Method

1. Whisk sugar, cornflower and water in a saucepan until smooth.
2. Add blueberries and bring to boil over medium heat, stirring regularly. Boil for 2 minutes, stirring throughout.
3. Drain into a bowl and set berries aside in a separate bowl.
4. Return drained berry juices to saucepan and simmer until they thicken, stirring regularly.
5. Stir in rose water. Pour syrup over blueberries. Allow to cool before serving.



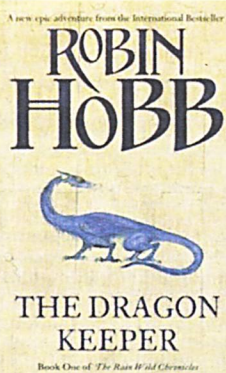
LEPORA/WIREIMAGE.COM

Imagination before escapism

By my sixteenth birthday I was somewhat of a connoisseur of medieval science fiction fantasy. I had read my way through major contemporary writers in the genre: Robert Jordan, Katherine Kerr, Ursula K. Le Guin, Alice Borchart (the sister of Anne Rice, for those of you that know), among others. New to the world of literature, fantasy fiction whet my appetite for "serious writers" later, and may even have permanently imprinted my intellect.

But I do not think I outgrew fantasy so much as got bored of it. The same rehearsed plots, later becoming consumer fodder (cough, *Harry Potter*, cough, *Twilight*), joyless writing, contrived world wars, frustrating endings after sagas and sagas of plot development, uninspiring wizardry and dragons. Unfortunately, science fiction fantasy seemed to degenerate into the same artless escapism as Gothic romance. Nonetheless, at the root of a geekiness GHDs cannot straighten out is a sincere love of the books my teenage sister kept hostage whenever she wanted something. Among the cherished novels that "opened my mind," sit proudly the works of Robin Hobb.

Four years since the conclusion of her previous saga, *The Soldier Son Trilogy*, Hobb has embarked on her next creation. Two novels in the *The Rain Wild Chronicles* are already complete and published: I am currently reading



The Dragon Keeper. If you are new to Hobb, it is an enjoyable and exciting read, full of characteristically imaginative inventions, a world that really is the stuff of dreams and real human problems. If you are so lucky as to be familiar with her previous works, *The Rain Wild Chronicles* is a continuation of the previous *Liveship Traders* and *Tawny Man* trilogies, exploring the return of dragons and existence of Elderling cities.

Beginning with her first publication, *The Farseer Trilogy*, Hobb brought us into a world of politics, magic and tragedy. Her knack for injecting catastrophe in poignant, unexpected doses gives her writing a depth and maturity lacking in other "and they lived happily ever after" fantasy stories. Her characters are concerned with saving the world, but also themselves. There is nothing cliché or transparent in her novels, and currently Hobb seems occupied in tying their ends to the synthesis of her latest saga, where plots from almost every distinct trilogy become informative in a world-changing voyage. Of course, Hobb is prone to the same escapism as everyone else writing fantasy, but at least hers is underpinned by a limitless imagination and sound literary talent.

Hobb's character development was excellent in *The Farseer* and *Liveship Traders* trilogies, it took a bit of a



Emma Napari's *Golden Forest* (2011) was inspired by the works of Robin Hobb

downturn during *The Solider Son* and *Tawny Man* trilogies, and while characters of *The Dragon Keeper* seem, so far, to depend a bit too much on sentimentalism, the novel nonetheless shows a promisingly measured pace. I would strongly urge anyone with

an imagination to read Hobb. If you do not possess an imagination, read her books and earn one. If I could, I would list more of her most enchanting ideas – sea serpents that cocoon to become dragons, grotesquely obese men and women who store magic in

their bodies, living ship figureheads – I have to stop here in case give too much away.

↳ Rachel Holmes

The Rain Wild Chronicles: Dragon Keeper (2010), Robin Hobb, Harper Voyager, Paperback, £5.15

Campus style

Name: Lottie Boumeester

Programme: Anthropology and Law, second year

What are you wearing right now?

Jacket from Absolute Vintage in Brick Lane. Playsuit is from Episode in Amsterdam. I really liked how it was high-waisted and its understated colour. The belt was my mother's. It matches the bag – the bag was my grandma's. I like it because it's leather and I think leather is really useful. It's multi-purpose. It's the perfect satchel size for bringing your laptop. It's just easy to use and goes with everything. It's a staple. I've used it since I started university, so over a year. The shoes are also from Holland, from Dune.

How is the shopping in Holland?

I'm from Holland, but I live here. They have really good stores and vintage shops.

Tell me about your necklace.

The necklace is from Covent Garden market. It's just a four-leaf clover. It was a gift. Just a little symbol to carry around. Adds a little meaning to an outfit.

What do you like about vintage clothing?

It provides a style that's not so apparent today, and often it's better quality, which is why it has lasted. It's not mass-produced to the same degree as high street styles and I feel more confident wearing it because it's not like everyone's going to be wearing the same jumper. There's something nice about putting some thought into what you wear rather than just turning up in what's

available. But I do like Topshop as well – I like to mix and match. I don't have a problem where my clothes are from as long as they look and feel good and last.

What do you like about shopping for vintage?

It's the whole day, not just that moment. Shopping for vintage is much more about going through the market, trawling through the rails. Shopping on Oxford Street is much more of a transaction. I go with friends; you chat while you do it. I don't mind leaving without buying anything, it's just a good day out with friends.

What are your favourite places to shop?

Rokit in Covent Garden, Camden Market, the general brands on Kensington High Street. I also shop online. I use ASOS quite a lot. Internet shopping is really easy to use. If I have something particular in mind, I go online. It's simple, quick, and easy.

Do you dress specifically for university?

I don't feel restricted just because I'm going to university. I'll wear what I feel like that day. And obviously, it's weather-dependant.

The LSESU Fashion Society is celebrating Green Week with a Little Black Dress challenge between February 6th and 8th. Find out more on Facebook or Twitter (@LSESUFashion). Want to nominate someone for Campus Style? Send details to Jennifer at j.fongl@lse.ac.uk



TV Picks of the Week

Room 101

BBC One, 20:30, Fridays

New series. Frank Skinner hosts a revamped version of the original show, each week welcoming three celebrities to compete for the chance of getting their pet hates banished to Room 101. In the first edition, TV presenter Fern Britton, comic actor Robert Webb and broadcaster Danny Baker discuss their annoyances.

The Ultimate Guide to Penny Pinching

BBC Three, 21:00, Wednesdays

Documentary following two teenagers as they embark on their first unsupervised holiday abroad, unaware their parents have also travelled to the destination and are covertly monitoring the youngsters's behaviour. A 19-year-old exhibitionist and the 18-year old daughter of strict Jehovah's Witnesses head to the Greek island of Kos, where their six-day trip involves skinny-dipping, experimenting with laughing gas and being thrown out of a nightclub.

Hannibal's Trail

BBC Two, 20:30, Fridays

New series. Brothers Sam, Ben and Danny Wood embark on a bicycle journey to follow in the footsteps of Carthaginian military commander Hannibal Barca, who marched from Spain to Rome at the head of an invading army that included war elephants. In this episode, they pass through the palms of Elche, the beaches of Benidorm and Valencia's zoo, meeting Australian cycling champion Matthew Lloyd along the way.

Skins

E4, 22:00, Mondays

New series. The gang find a stash of weed under the floorboards of a Moroccan holiday villa. However, after smoking the marijuana, the friends are visited by the owner of the drugs. Later, while everyone else parties on the beach, Matty and Franky are drawn into a situation beyond their control that will have repercussions for all of them.



Skins returns for a sixth series on E4



Porn: a taboo?

Why is it that pornography, which has existed throughout the ages, through erotic figures, paintings, books, photos and films, is today portrayed as something to be ashamed of?

Those who condemn porn do not seem to realise that, for most of us, it is an outlet and nothing more. Many of us need to release our sexual urges, and porn aids masturbation. Most men do not secretly wish that their girlfriends looked, or acted, like the mute, glazed-eyed and fake-breasted girls in porn videos. Some men might find it hot to watch a MILF get triple-teamed by guys with penises the size of baseball bats, but the majority of us do not want anything like that in our own bedrooms. Watching porn allows men and women to easily live out their sexual fantasies, without the difficulties of organising it in real life.

Unfortunately, there can be too much of a good thing. If you find yourself skipping going out in favour of cracking one off, you might have an issue that needs to be addressed. But for most of us, it is harmless fun. Let's face it: as much as people decry it, porn remains awfully popular.

Why is porn taboo?

Watching porn is a healthy and commonplace activity, so why does there appear to be a widespread feeling of shame when admitting to watching porn? Part of it stems from the lack of openness, and ignorance about the motivation and use of erotic images and videos. However, most feelings of anxiety are linked to the negative reputation porn has in society, caused by the small percentage of extreme material - namely the availability of eccentric sexual material (even though images of bestiality and necrophilia are illegal), violent material (which is illegal) and material involving children (also illegal). There also remains the fear of exploitation, as you can never be sure whether the material was entirely consensual.

There are groups who are strongly opposed to porn, as they feel that it is insulting and degrading to females. However, the vast majority of porn users make the distinction between their real relationships and sexual fantasies. Research shows that watching pornographic videos does not impact sexual habits or relationships - vodka adverts do not lead to alcoholism. An unexpected hurdle in the banning of

extreme pornography is that there is no evidence that those who watch such activities are more likely to take part in it.

Why do men tend to watch more porn than women?

In a sentence: men tend to be turned on by things they can see, while women seem to prefer the fantasies they have in their heads. For men, arousal is linked to images, and from their teens they are likely to masturbate while looking at pictures of female bodies. In contrast, more women read erotic novels than men. Women prefer to fantasise about overall sexual experiences and relationships, including emotions and the build-up, rather than the penetration itself. Why do you think *Twilight* is so popular among women?

Does porn harm relationships?

Porn can harm relationships, but this is primarily in cases of porn addiction. It is a very real problem, but addicts represent a tiny percentage of porn users. Porn can become a problem when men choose porn over their partner, withdraw from socialising, give up hobbies, and fail to get enough sleep. However, for addicts, the problem is not sex; a man does not need to look at

pornography for six or seven hours if he just wants sexual gratification. Like many addictions, porn is about escapism.

There is also the concern that porn can skew what people expect in their own relationships. Many women are anxious and upset about being asked to do things which they are uncomfortable with, but which they know are activities that their partners perceive as routine because of seeing them on the internet, such as anal sex and ejaculating on their face. However, most men realise that life is not like porn. In real life women don't get turned on without foreplay, men have pubic hair, and people cannot climax for hours on end.

Moreover, porn can help relationships. It can actually increase self-esteem, as many who appear in porn do not have perfect bodies. Much of the material involves men and women who do not meet society's ideal of attractiveness, which just goes to show the desirability of different shapes. Porn can act as an educational aid, as couples can watch videos and decide what turns them on, and whether they want to incorporate aspects into their sex lives. As well as supporting communication within a relationship, porn can help men and women with arousal difficulties and inability to climax.

Callie Nordenfelt



Left: Ron Jeremy's enduring popularity has been attributed to his everyman appearance



Right: "Girl next door" Sasha Grey recently made the crossover into mainstream cinema, with a leading part in Steven Soderbergh's *The Girlfriend Experience* (2009)

Porn statistics

- 25% of all search engine requests are pornography related - that is 68 million a day.
- 35% of all Internet downloads are pornographic.
- Every second \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography, and 28,258 internet users are viewing porn.
- 40 million Americans are regular visitors to porn sites.
- 12% of the websites on the Internet are pornographic (that is 24,644,172 sites).
- The worldwide industry is worth \$4.9 billion (the US alone pulls in \$2.84 billion per year).
- The least popular day of the year for viewing porn is American Thanksgiving.
- The most popular day of the week for viewing porn is Sunday.

Source: Online MBA Statistics on Internet Porn (June 2010)

Cut-out-and-keep guide to Gonorrhoea

What is it?

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection caused by bacteria called *Neisseria gonorrhoea* or gonococcus.

How do you catch it?

- Through unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- By sharing sex toys.

What are the symptoms?

In women, symptoms of gonorrhoea can include:

- Unusual discharge from the vagina, which may be thick, and green or yellow in colour.
 - Pain when passing urine.
 - Pain or tenderness in the lower abdominal area (this is less common).
 - Bleeding between periods or heavier periods (this is less common).
- Nine out of 10 men who contract gonorrhoea experience symptoms after they are infected, which can include:
- Unusual discharge from the tip of the penis, which may be white, yellow or green.
 - Pain or a burning sensation when urinating.
 - Inflammation of the foreskin.
- Both men and women can also catch

gonorrhoea at other sites of the body. These include:

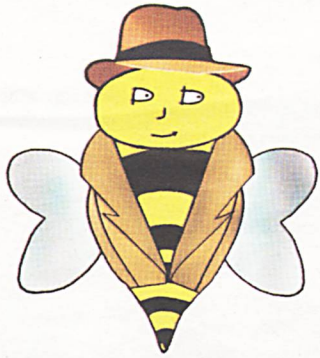
- Infection in the rectum, which may cause pain, discomfort or discharge.
- Infection in the throat, which does not usually have any symptoms.
- Infection in the eyes, which can cause pain, swelling, irritation and discharge (conjunctivitis).

Treatment

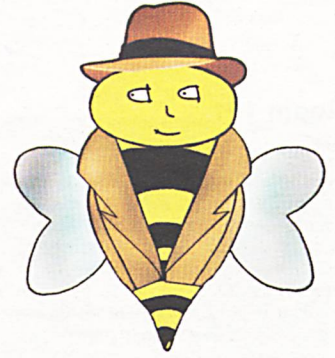
- A single dose of antibiotics.

Complications

- Without treatment, gonorrhoea can spread to other parts of your body and cause serious problems. The more times that you have gonorrhoea, the likelier you are to suffer complications.
- In women, gonorrhoea can spread to the reproductive organs and cause pelvic inflammatory disease, which can lead to long-term pelvic pain, ectopic pregnancy and infertility.
- In men, gonorrhoea can cause painful infection in the testicles and prostate gland, which can lead to reduced fertility.
- In rare cases, when gonorrhoea has been left untreated, it can spread through the bloodstream to cause infections in other parts of your body.



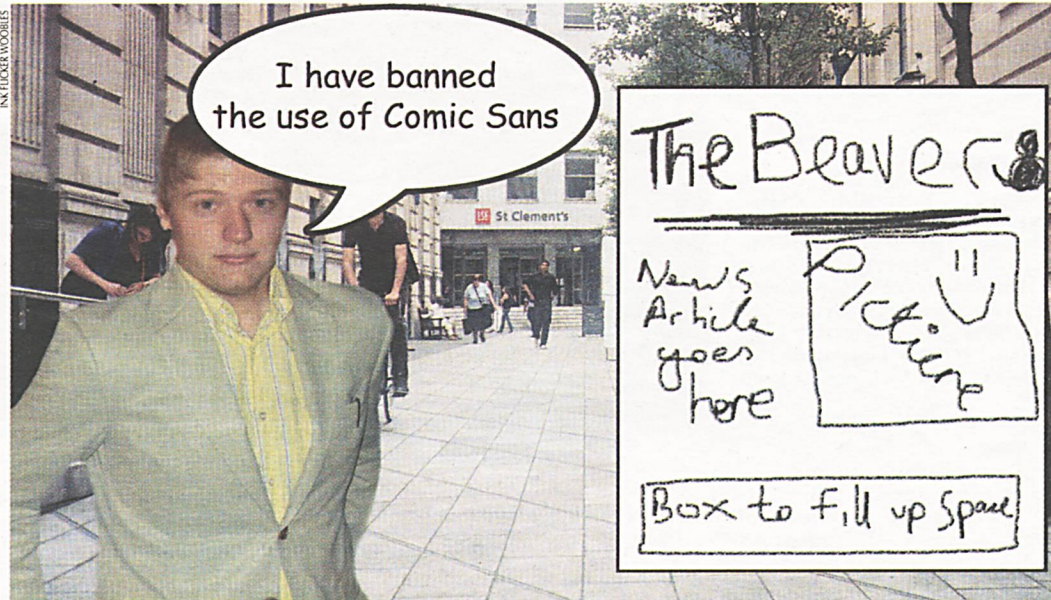
PRIVATE B



Font of knowledge introduces new front page design

Lecture by war criminal passes without incident

A lecture by Charles Taylor, ICC-indicted war criminal and the former President of Liberia, prompted no controversy whatsoever when hosted by the LSE last Tuesday. Mr Taylor, who is currently barred from entering the European Union, seemed surprised by the lack of any negative reception to his address to a half-full Old Theatre. Speaking on the subject of "Larceny and Liberia: Lessons for the European Union," the former president expressed disappointment following the conclusion of his lecture, in which he stated "Come and have a go if you think that you are hard enough." Mikhail Cocks, the head of the Department of International Relations, chaired the event, remarking in his introduction "Given the lack of placards outside, the LSE will be willing to reimburse Charles Taylor for the embarrassment." Representatives from the Students' Union unveiled a banner



as the former president arrived outside the Old Building. However, closer inspection by the B has since revealed that the poster largely consisted of the slogan "Better Liberia than Liebour," a

reference to the recent controversies surrounding former student Redwood Milibland. Following Mr Taylor's lecture, which he concluded by throwing blood dia-

monds into the audience, a brief question and answer question session took place. Despite attempting to provoke controversial statements from an audience consisting primarily of eager

second-year undergraduates and three members of the Syrian Cabinet, all were respectful and asked the former president about his views on the future economic development of West Africa. Mr Taylor left the Old Theatre to warm applause, an incident that has since prompted a full apology by LSE Events. Speaking to the B yesterday, part-way through photocopying an Interpol arrest warrant, a representative from the Press Office announced that the former president had expressed irritation at "bringing the London School of Economics into repute." Some congestion delayed audience members, who were unable to leave the campus owing to a sizable police presence outside the New Academic Theatre, resulting from a contentious round table on graphic novels hosted by the Anime and Manga Society. Sixteen people were held hostage by a delegation from the University of London Union owing to accusations of rampant sexism, misogyny and deviation from the traditional Franco-Belgian ligne claire style. Georges Remi is 105 years old. L Tanned Ale

LSESU Agnostic Society launches, perhaps...

Kant got your tongue?
Worried about your sense of Hume-our?
Want to hedge your bets before
Götterdämmerung?

LSESU Agnostic and
Deist Society
AGM

When: Thursday (is that okay with most religions?)
Where: New Agnostics Building

Guest Speaker: The Most. Revd. and Rt. Hon.
Rowan Williams FRSL FBA FLSW

For more details, email us:
vaguefeelingofhazyspirituality@g_dmail.com

Boutros-Ghali Escape Suit

You are a somewhat successful public figure, yet you may have the odd outstanding judicial summons from Egyptian authorities. Let's face it. You want to be seen, but you value your privacy from difficult questions.

With the new **Boutros-Ghali Escape Suit™** you can enjoy any LSE public lecture without having to deal with tedious Interpol arrest warrants or irritating questions about irrelevant torture accusations.

Contact us as soon as your visa is up for renewal and you will soon find the best way to get saiffly out of any sticky situation (with all your limbs and fingers intact).

Available colours: Red-handed (pictured), Cowardly Custard, Blacklisted



Tanned Ale Talks To... DAVID LANYARD COAL

Every edition your satirist-in-chief will interview a prominent member of the school community. This week, Tanned Ale has been talking to the Grand Old Man of the UGM, David Lanyard Coal.

Tanned Ale: Mr Lanyard-Coal, thank you for taking the time to be with us today.
Lanyard Coal: I am afraid I'll have to correct you on that, my name does not have a hyphen in it.
Tanned Ale: Apologies, I shall amend my speech accordingly.
Lanyard Coal: Please do so.
Tanned Ale: I suppose that I should start by asking you about...
Lanyard Coal: Do you have minutes of our previous meeting?
Tanned Ale: I have never met you before in my life.
Lanyard Coal: A great shame for you.
Tanned Ale: Let us begin with...
Lanyard Coal: May I request a quoracy call?
Tanned Ale: There are two of us.
Lanyard Coal: Sufficient.
Tanned Ale: I would first of all like to ask...
Lanyard Coal: Obviously that is a far lower number than we used to have when I was interviewing people.
Tanned Ale: I can only accept total responsibility for that. If I may begin my questions regarding your illustrious...
Lanyard Coal: As it happens I am unhappy about this entire thing, I would like to request that this paper abolishes itself.
Tanned Ale: I am unsure if that would be possible given the...
Lanyard Coal: Farewell.

NEXT WEEK: Tanned Ale talks to Rolex Young about the run up to Euro 2012

Features

The rise of Boko Haram

David Britain investigates the Islamist group posing a threat to Nigeria

After the Christmas day bombings of churches in Nigeria catapulted Boko Haram into the international news, the group again hit the headlines this weekend for a series of attacks directed at government buildings. The spate of violence over the last few months signifies the group's resurgence after they were thought to be defeated in 2009. Some see worrying signs of outside help in the increasing complexity and frequency of the bombings.

The group draws ideological inspiration from the wider extremist Islamist agenda, but is motivated by domestic grievances. Government corruption and socio-economic inequality fuel Boko Haram's violence, and serve to encourage their belief that an Islamic state is necessary for social justice.

Nigeria has a history of militant Islamist groups going back to British colonial rule. But with independence gained in 1960, social justice replaced opposition to foreign rule as the galvanising principle behind these groups. The Iranian revolution in 1979, in particular, saw growing calls for Sharia to be adopted in the country and by 2001 Saudi financed missionaries promoting their particularly strict Wahhabi Islamic doctrine, had helped establish Sharia in twelve North Nigerian states. Formed in 2002, Boko Haram itself

emerged from one of these groups; the Muhajirun, whose middle class leadership found fertile recruiting grounds amongst the unemployed and disaffected youth in the majority-Muslim

“The group draws ideological inspiration from the wider Islamist agenda, but is motivated by domestic grievances.”

north. Half of Nigeria's 160 million people are Muslim, and 40 per cent are Christian.

14,000 people have been killed in sectarian violence over the last decade, primarily in the central region of the country where the north meets the majority-Christian south. Some see the struggle between Christians and Muslims over political power as a significant contributing factor to the nation's instability. The presidency of Goodluck Jonathan lacks legitimacy for some in the north after he ignored an informal power-rotation agreement that would have seen a Muslim

in power this time around (Jonathan is a Christian).

Identity politics is certainly important; Boko Haram has said it will kill any Christians in the north of the country. However, like Sudan, a “Christian versus Muslim” narrative can be misleading. Boko Haram's ideology, ambitions and actions are polarising on a national level, not simply between north and south. Indeed, their violence has killed more Muslims than any other group. This points to the broader and more complex socio-economic inequalities that are the primary fuel of their insurgency.

Despite a per capita income of over \$2,700 and annual GDP growth of 7 per cent, 70 per cent of the country lives on less than \$1.25 per day. In the north 72 per cent live in poverty, compared to 27 per cent in the south. The country's oil revenue is largely distributed amongst the political elite. A former Nigerian minister, Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, has argued that, “most of the apparent ethnic and religious crises in the north, and the youth violence and criminality in the south, can be linked to increasing economic inequality.” These economic inequalities have fed the violent sectarianism.

The already grave sense of injustice in the economic realm has been exacerbated by police brutality in the security realm. Amnesty International has reported hundreds of extra-judi-

cial killings and disappearances. These include the founder of Boko Haram, Mohammad Yusuf, who was killed in a televised execution in 2009. His father in-law and other sect members were killed in what Amnesty has also branded extra-judicial killings. Despite recent moves from the government to try five police officers connected with the execution of Yusuf, there has been no conviction of any member of the security forces for unlawful executions of Boko Haram members as yet.

The most worrying recent development concerns possible links with outside terror organisations. Experts have argued the increased sophistication of recent Boko Haram attacks, including

“The most worrying recent development concerns possible links with outside terror organisations.”

the bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja and a prison break that freed over 700 inmates, may be a sign of outside help. US officials have already claimed that Boko Haram has ties to

al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Somalia's al-Shabaab, however no evidence has been provided to support the claims and some commentators dispute them.

Western security agencies will be concerned that outside interference from such groups may lead to the internationalisation of Boko Haram's activities. For the moment, however, the group remains motivated by domestic grievances. There is nothing in the events of the past two years that would challenge this point of view.

Nevertheless, if Boko Haram is deemed to be a threat on an international level the consequences could be disastrous for all involved. Britain and Israel have already offered anti-terror assistance, and there are unconfirmed rumours that 300 Nigerian soldiers recently received counter-insurgency training from the US. Any overt security aid from Western states would only confirm the illegitimacy and corruption of the government in the Islamist's eyes, and would be likely to add fuel to the fire domestically. It may also encourage Boko Haram to believe that their grievances lie outside the country, which could drive them both materially and ideologically toward transnational Islamist terrorist groups. ☘



Books, eBooks, and Public Space

Edward Larkin ponders the demise of the print industry

In the latest doom-and-gloom news for lovers of physical books and the publishing industry, Borders Books announced the closing and liquidation of the rest of its stores last July. The development was not surprising – this had been in the cards for a while. As Annie Lowery points out in *Slate*, eReaders and Amazon weren't the only reason for the demise of Borders – its strategic missteps were many.

Yet it's hard to avoid a sense that a new order is emerging, and Borders is but an early casualty. And despite the predictability of the eBook world that we've all more or less come to accept, Borders's final breath was still jarring.

I own a Barnes & Noble Nook and an iPad, and attempt to read books on both. My experience has led to the conclusion that the world of books is at a peculiar interregnum – teetering between the worlds of paper and processor, ink and electricity. Neither are currently satisfying. Anyone who likes to annotate their reading – as I do – finds that eReaders are woefully inadequate. Each highlight is at least a two-minute process on the Nook (if this doesn't sound like much, imagine trying to highlight five passages in a page). Annotation is easier on the iPad (the least book-centric device of the three), but the notes in the margins are still far from perfect. Flipping through the pages quickly and trying to find a previously jotted down pearl of wisdom is still difficult.

Also, as much as I try to read eBooks, they just feel a bit strange sometimes. I find myself wanting to enjoy the typeset and texture, to feel progress – pages accumulating in my left hand, the right side getting progressively lighter. eReaders don't allow indulgence in these finer pleasures. This nostalgia is probably because I grew up with a diet heavy in paper books – I doubt that this current generation of young readers will feel a similar longing. But there is a refreshing individuality about books that their electronic counterparts cannot yet imitate.

All this is not to say that paper books are much better. Indeed, the physics of reading tend to favor eBooks. For example, I recently bought David Foster Wallace's 1,079-page classic "Infinite Jest". At first, I marveled at the multitasking ability inherent in holding a book of this size: in addition to consuming great fiction, keeping it aloft was quite the forearm workout. This turned out to be fun for approximately ten minutes before annoyance and fatigue set in. eReaders also afford superior lighting. If you can find a light source for an eBook, chances are it illuminates the entire screen. With physical books, unless you have the absolutely perfect angle, most likely one page will be imperfectly lit. Just as Kobe Bryant most certainly has a preferred direction of attack to the hoop, I feel much more in the zone reading the right page of a book rather than the left. eReaders avoid this problem – the middle is always wide open.

Perhaps this last bit – about lighting and right/left preferences – makes me sound like an overentitled millennial who, as per usual for my generation, feels compelled to complain publicly about any reality that doesn't fit the expectation of instant gratification. But the larger issue is not to debate the mechanics and optics of reading books versus eBooks. Indeed, I see the eBook revolution as inevitable – they will soon give us what we desire better and faster.

The larger issue has to do with public space. Where do we go to be a part of a community anymore?

A question I get a lot of times is why I purchased the Nook instead of the Amazon Kindle. The devices are quite similar (even down to authors' faces as screensavers), and if anything the Kindle maintains a slight edge. In

reality, it was a Christmas present, so I didn't have much of a choice. But I would have chosen the Nook anyway. Why? The honest truth of the matter is that I want to keep Barnes & Noble's print stores in business, even if only for a brief moment longer.

Bookstores are my favorite type of public space. They possess that same atmosphere of subdued intellectualism and grand thinking as public libraries, but they also have a freshness, cleanliness and a penchant for including coffee shops that only the private sector can provide. Bookstores are somehow crisp.

But as Borders testifies, they are dying. Not immediately, but inevitably. Indeed, the experience of bookstores has been diminished just knowing this fact in and of itself. I feel a vague sense of dread looking at the armadas of shelves lined with thousands of unpurchased books, many of which might never even be looked at. How could this business model possibly survive in the age of on-demand downloads?

The same thing is happening with other public spaces of the 1990s. Take the case of malls, in which foot traffic and storefront occupancy are at a low-water mark. Physical shopping simply will never quite be the same with the advent of the Internet. And with the dawn of new technology that allows you to upload pictures of yourself and view simulations of garments on your body, I imagine that this trend will only accelerate.

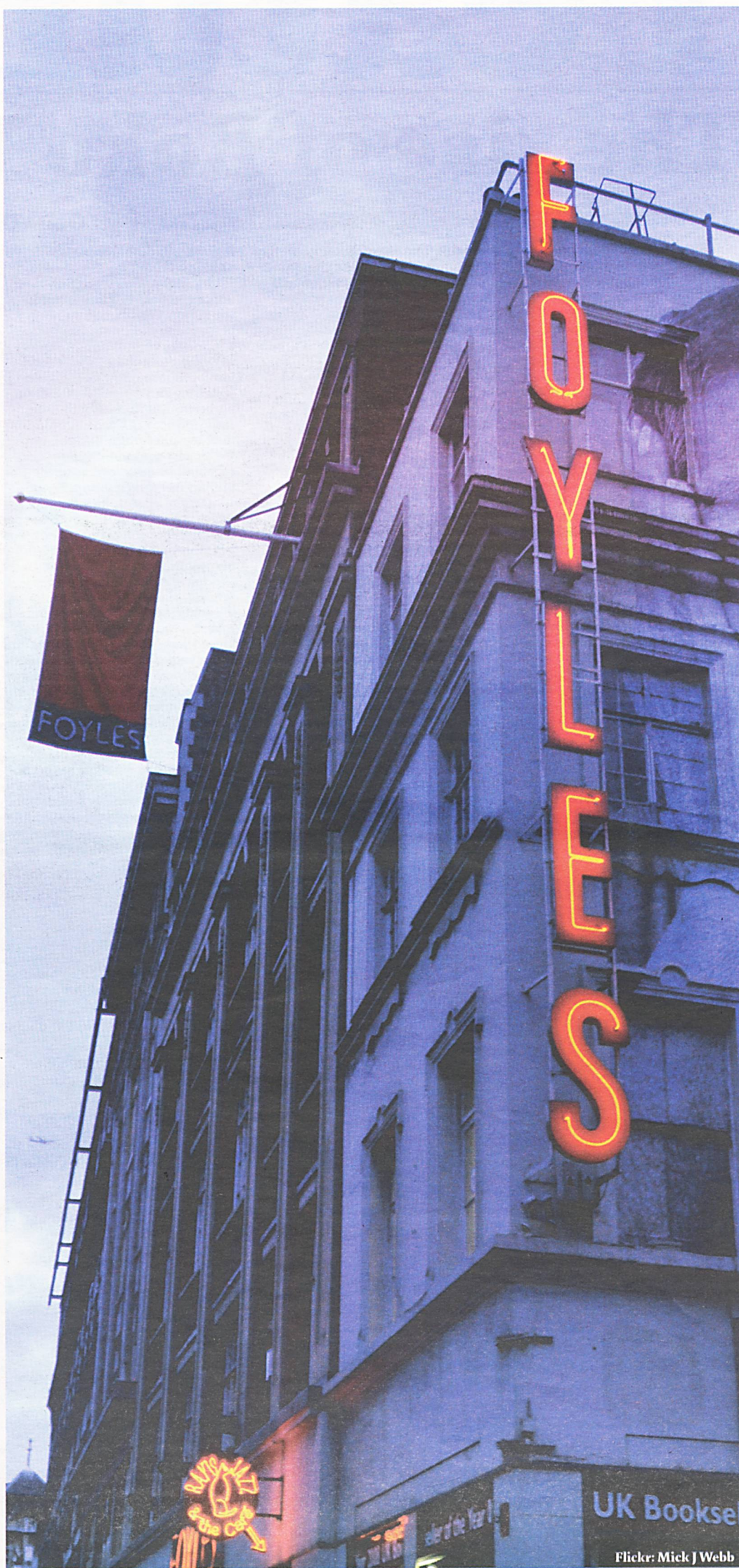
The same goes for movie theaters. What were once crowds sitting together in the darkness, cheering and gasping and holding their breath together to the latest "Star Wars" are now atomised individuals, watching movies on the family room TV, or the computer, or the iPad.

Innovations in medicine are moving the point of care away from hospitals and into the home. Developments in education are increasingly allowing students to obtain online degrees, a particularly egregious side effect of which is the endless slew of tacky commercials which feature scantily-clad girls advertising going to college in pajamas. A company recently announced the launch of a personal jet pack, which surely promises some sort of future minus that most impersonal but oddly enjoyable public space, airports.

The Internet is both the cause of the downfall and the eventual salvation of public space. As detailed, the Internet has made physically interacting with others less and less necessary. But what sorts of interactions replace them? Facebook. Gmail. Skype. Maybe soon the Internet will be able to bring public space to us, rather than vice versa. Virtual malls or movie theaters may be able to provide that lost feeling of togetherness. The new social network Google+ is already trying this with its "Hangouts" feature.

What will the effects of this sea change be on human society? I don't know. But I think that analogous to the situation with eReaders, we're at a bizarre intermediate point with public space as well. Traditional venues – malls, theaters, bookstores, colleges, hospitals – are dying. They're being replaced by an online community, but one that has not yet fully formed. Like eReaders, these online communities will certainly get better, much better. But will Facebook or SecondLife ever recapture that fascinating mixture of privacy yet solidarity that is such a staple of public space, that anxious reality of seeing and being seen? Maybe, but I'm a bit less sanguine.

In a way, trying to recreate this reality of public space could be a major reason why Facebook has had the tremendous success that it has. In what was beforehand a lonely, anonymous Internet, it's nice to know there's someone – a real human being, flesh, blood, and sinew – out there.



Wikipedia: the Modern Protest

Basak Arslan investigates Wikipedia's role in the protests against SOPA



Imagine a World Without Free Knowledge

For over a decade, we have spent millions of hours building the largest encyclopedia in human history. Right now, the U.S. Congress is considering legislation that could fatally damage the free and open Internet. For 24 hours, to raise awareness, we are blacking out Wikipedia. [Learn more.](#)

Make your voice heard



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Flickr: captsolo

It all started in 2000, with the idea of creating a publicly editable encyclopedia. That's right we're talking about Wikipedia. The idea of gathering all of the knowledge in the world together goes back to

“Wikipedia’s accuracy and reliability are also found to be controversial by scholars around

the formation of Library of Alexandria, yet the wiki-based online encyclopedia (wiki being the Hawaiian word meaning “quick”) is a type of website that allows its users to add, delete or modify content via a web browser. Created by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger, Wikipedia the closest we have got to achieving the ideal so far.

Wikipedia was formally launched on 15 January 2001 with the text “Hello, World!” written up by Wales himself. The oldest article that is still stored dates back to 16 January 2001 under the title “UuU”, which was part of the site’s original name space.

Wikipedia’s collaboration with Google, earned it many visitors and by the end of the year, 20,000 entries had been created. The rising fame of Wikipedia led the way to its first time major media coverage with an article in New

York Times 20th September 2001. As it developed, Wikipedia began to expand internationally, German Wikipedia being the first example of that expansion. Today, Wikipedia is available in 283 languages and consists of 20 million articles. It has become the most popular reference network on the Internet, having an estimated 365 million readers around the globe.

However, there are many criticisms surrounding the operation and content of the world’s largest online compendium of information. One of them is the problem of systemic bias in Wikipedia caused by the contributors’ demographic groups.

According to the “Wikipedia User Survey,” conducted in 2005, an average “Wikipedian” is “(1) male, (2) technically inclined, (3) formally educated, (4) an English speaker (native or non-native), (5) European descent or Pacific-Asian (6) aged 15–49, (7) from a majority-Christian country (8) from a developed nation, (9) from the northern hemisphere and (10) likely employed as a white collar worker or enrolled as a student rather than employed as a laborer.”

Wikipedia’s accuracy and reliability are also found to be controversial by scholars around the world. There have been many incidents that include defamatory or incorrect information being uploaded to the website.

French politician Segolene Royal, was the star of arguably the starkest Wikipedia incident so far. In May 2010, Royal publicly praised the memory of 18th century naturalist and humanist de l’Astran who had never existed

– except as the subject of an article in the French Wikipedia. It was later understood that this hoax had been on the wiki for over three years without being noticed. Despite these incidents, research done by Nature in 2005 revealed that the accuracy of the scientific entries in Wikipedia were close to that of Encyclopedia Britannica.

Wikipedia’s political stance, on the other hand, has always been neu-

“Overall, it is possible to say that spending a day without Wikipedia made us realise the importance of this massive online

tral and the members of the Wikipedia community have always praised its political neutrality. This political neutrality on the other hand has never been an obstacle for the founders of Wikipedia to express their views on political issues. The Wikipedia blackout of 18 January 2012 is an example of this.

The blackout protest was not a new idea. In fact, on 4 October 2011, the Italian Wikipedia was shut down for a day due to the parliamentary debates on a proposed legislation called “DDL intercettazioni” (Wiretapping Act), which was seen as an attempt by gov-

ernment to control the data on the Internet. However, the impact of the 18th January blackout was more global than the Italian one, with the English Wikipedia being the largest edition.

So what was the blackout about? The coordinated protest was about two pieces of proposed legislation in the United States – namely the SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and the PIPA (Protect IP Act). These two bills are extensions of the previous DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) that aim to remove content which infringes upon copyright, from the Internet. The aim of the bills was not very different from their mother act as they were designed to provide legal mechanisms for copyright owners to combat online piracy and infringement.

Yet, it is the potential operation of those legal mechanism which has proved controversial, as the laws could be used to authorise copyright owners to issue complaints to Internet Service Providers and major websites, requiring them to remove the infringing sites from their domain name server (DNS) and to delete listings of those websites in search engines. Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, was one of the first people to deliver his opinion on the issue by commenting that those acts were “much worse law” than the DDL intercettazioni.

Although the black-out frustrated millions of readers around the world, it achieved its main goals. First of all, it created a global awareness on the subject of the proposed legislations. Even this article is an example of the awareness that Wikipedia has raised with

its protest. Moreover, on the day of the protest, six senators who were the initial supporters of the bills, including

“Even this article is an example of the awareness that Wikipedia has raised with its protest.”

several co-sponsors, withdrew their support from the bill. On the following day, eighteen more senators withdrew their signature from the bills, which resulted in votes being postponed. The Democrat Senator Patrick Leahy, who is credited as being the main sponsor of PIPA promised compromise in order “to forge a balance between protecting Americans’ intellectual property, and maintaining openness and innovation on the Internet.”

Overall, it is possible to say that spending a day without Wikipedia made us realise the importance of this massive online encyclopedia in our daily lives.

Whether it is the biography of your favorite artist or a quantum physics theory, Wikipedia has all the information you need on the Internet. Although you probably are better off without citing Wikipedia on your term papers, the vitality of having such a source is undeniable in our society. ☺

Look to the skies

Nicholas Jaroszek looks at this year's prospects for amateur astronomy

The year ahead looks to be a promising one for amateur astronomy. While 2011's meteor showers were largely spoiled by an illuminated moon during all of the major showers, 2012 looks much more favourable, with glare-free skies ahead. Although this year is not a particularly good one for lunar and solar eclipses in the UK, in June a rare transit of Venus will take place which is something to watch out for.

Winter and autumn provide good opportunities for viewing the planets Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. Jupiter and Saturn, the two largest planets in our solar system, are worth seeing through the smallest telescopes or even a pair of binoculars with a steady hand, and along with lunar observing are a great introduction to astronomy. Indeed, Saturn is gradually tilting back towards Earth so its famous rings will be increasingly spectacular after being at unfavourable angles for some time. These bright objects provide particularly good targets for London skies due to light pollution from the city. While the bright skies of the capital wash out many deep sky objects (those beyond our solar system), this is not a problem for viewing the planets. The most prominent deep sky object is the Great Orion Nebula, a huge cloud of dust and gas where stars form, and this is visible from cities through modest telescopes,

appearing like a blue-ish crescent. With the naked eye the constellation of Orion is an impressive site, its brightest stars the red supergiant Betelgeuse and the bright Rigel framing the constellation's famous belt, where the nebula is situated. In dark skies, the nebula itself is actually visible without equipment, but sadly these locations are few and far between in the UK.

Early March provides an interesting opportunity to see the six brightest objects in the sky all at once. Just after sunset the Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, and the brightest star Sirius will all be visible.

In June we have the opportunity to observe a transit of Venus. The planet passes between the Sun and the Earth, allowing us to see the black silhouette of the planet's disc passing across the face of the Sun. The next one will be in 2117, so I can almost guarantee that the chance to see it won't come again. Of course, eye protection must be worn in order to look at the Sun, and even the most protective sunglasses are not enough. A pair of special, but inexpensive solar glasses, which cut out 99.999% of the Sun's intensity allow for safe viewing. The same material can be attached to the front of telescopes or binoculars for a close-up view.

August sees the second of the largest meteor showers of the year, the Perseids - the first being the

Quadrantids of early January. Meteor showers occur when the Earth moves through debris most often left behind by comets orbiting the Sun and as the particles burn up on entering our atmosphere, they leave trails across the sky. Occasionally fireballs can be seen when an unusually large piece burns up. The Perseids have their peak on the morning of the 12th August this year. This is the time when the most meteors are visible, and is the best time to see them. However, meteor showers are typically good for a few days either side of the peak and this provides more chances to see something - especially with our temperamental British weather.

Staying with meteors, November sees the arrival of the Leonid shower, associated with the comet Tempel-Tuttle. Sometimes a meteor storm can occur when we happen to encounter a particularly large amount of debris. While not normally as impressive as the Perseids, the Leonids are notable because when a Leonid storm occurs, they can be the most spectacular. Indeed in 1833 a storm over North America was said to light up the sky, with estimates of in excess of 100,000 meteors per hour visible. While storms of this magnitude are very rare, storms in the 2000's produced rates of about 3000 per hour, or approximately one every second.

While the Perseids may be the

most popular meteor shower due to the warm August nights, the Geminids

"However, London is the worst place in the UK in terms of light pollution, and to go beyond the brightest objects it is crucial to find somewhere with a dark sky."

of mid-December are probably the best. With a very broad peak and rates of upwards of 100 meteors per hour as standard, they are also one of the few showers to be caused by debris from an asteroid, not a comet. Of course, with all astronomical events a lot depends on the weather. I was in Aberystwyth at the time of last year's Geminids, and although the skies were dark to begin with they clouded over and the heavens opened as I climbed to a local vantage point.

There are innumerable things to see in the night sky, and here I have detailed only those events and objects which can be enjoyed with little or no equipment. Investing in a medium

sized telescope opens up practically endless opportunities for deep sky viewing. Most people are surprised by how much is visible even with a good pair of binoculars. Objects such as the Pleiades star cluster and the Perseus double globular cluster really come alive through binoculars. However, London is the worst place in the UK in terms of light pollution, and to go beyond the brightest objects it is crucial to find somewhere with a dark sky. Of course, even with a perfect sky the weather can ruin everything, and I shall be keeping my fingers crossed for a relatively cloudless 2012. ☾

If you're interested in writing for our science column please contact features@thebeaveronline.co.uk.



A very rare Earth?

Hannah Richmond considers the implications of China's mining policy

Over the past few years China has been gradually decreasing the number of rare earth elements it extracts and exports. We use these elements and minerals in our everyday life, even if we aren't aware that we are doing it. So what are the knock on effects of China's reduction? How are other countries reacting and is it likely that the reduction will have an impact on our everyday lives?

Rare earth elements, despite their name, are actually relatively plentiful in the earth's crust, the reason for their name is that they aren't often found in concentrated forms and are therefore likely to be uneconomical to exploit. Brazil, India, South Africa and USA were, until recently, the main exporters of rare earth minerals. However, after the entrance of China into the global trading markets the original exporters were quickly underpriced and put out of business. China exports over 97 per cent of the world's rare earth minerals, however as demand is rising there have been a number of concerns over whether the supply can keep up.

In 2009 China produced 129,000 tons of rare earth minerals. But in 2010 a number of new policies were introduced one of which capped total production to 93,000 tons. Resource ex-

ports would be restricted to at little over 14,000 tons for the first half of 2011, and would rise to just over 30,000 for the second half. These quotas were a 35 per cent decrease from the previous year. Also, in September 2011 China announced that 3 of its 8 major rare earth mineral mines would halt production, resulting in a 40 per cent decrease in output. While China has argued that the reasons behind these cuts and limits are to prevent exploitation of precious resources and to protect against environmental degradation, there are many who would argue otherwise.

The Economist has suggested that the reduction in rare mineral exports is more to do with economics than environmental concerns. For a number of years China has been increasing its manufacturing output, and slashing its primary good exports which can be seen as an attempt to increase its manufacturing sector further. By holding onto their primary resources China can sell valuable finished goods rather than cheap raw materials. Increasing domestic demand has been cited as a major reason for the reduction in exports. Evidence for this comes from the reduction in foreign companies allowed to operate in these industries. In 2006 there were 12 Sino-foreign rare earth producers allowed to operate,

which was reduced to 9 by 2011.

"The main theory is that China is reducing supply to push up the prices."

However, why should we be concerned about China's decision to reduce its exports? Firstly it is not entirely clear that we will be able to meet our demand for these rare earth minerals elsewhere. Other countries such as Australia and Canada are racing to try and meet the demand, especially when the global economy improves and prices of these rare minerals rise. However as they were undercut by China in the 1990s, the barriers to entry mean their output is likely to be insufficient in the near future. Another reason we should be concerned about the sudden decrease in exports is the motive behind it. Many have called into question China's environmental concerns, which are a little out of character for the country which has 20 out of the 30 most polluted cities in the world within its borders. The lack of plausibility of the environmental argument has led to the creation of many

other theories. The main theory is that China is reducing supply to push up the prices. This is fairly plausible as China is reducing its exports by more than it is reducing its overall mining output, therefore indicating that they are either stockpiling the minerals or plan to use them for their own industries.

What effects does this have on our everyday lives though and should we be concerned? The rare elements are used in many different everyday items. There is so much concern that the EU has said that it wants to get the World Trade Organisation involved to try and force China to resume its normal supply. It is unlikely that the EU will get support in this matter as China as cited environmental concerns for the closing of some of its mines and the overall reduction in exports, thereby justifying the reductions. In terms of the consequences Japan and Korea will be directly affected as major producers of electronic goods such as TVs, phone and cars. Sony has said that it will be affected in the long run by China's moves as shortages could lead to a fall in supply and rise in prices of the rare minerals.

It is important we take environmental implication into consideration. Rare earth elements are major components of more energy efficient

products. A rise in price of these products will have negative impacts on our attempts at climate change mitigation. For example the hybrid and electric car market. These cars use more rare earth

"A rise in price of these products will have negative impacts on our attempts at climate change mitigation."

elements than other types of cars. A price rise in this industry would potentially negatively impact attempts to reduce greenhouse gas levels as people may turn to cheaper, less fuel efficient types of cars. Rare earth elements are also used in fluorescent compact light bulbs, which have risen in price by 37 per cent over the last year and also in giant wind turbines. As the EU has mandated a switch from incandescent bulbs to more energy efficient alternatives, these price rises will affect us. ☘



Women in the Boardroom

Shrina Poojara interviews Mary Goudie about the 30% club

Baroness Mary Goudie was appointed a Life Peer in 1998, and has been a Labour Member of the House of Lords ever since. She has been a member of the British Irish Inter-Parliamentary Committee, and was Vice Chair of the Tax Law Rewrite

Committee. She is hugely concerned with women's rights, currently acting as Chair of the Women Leaders' Council to Fight Human Trafficking at the UN Gift. She launched the global initiative to fight human trafficking in March 2007 and continues to lead this campaign. Baroness Goudie is also

involved with G8 and G20, promoting the role of women and children in the global economy.

She is a founding member of the 30% Club, an organisation launched in November 2010, promoting the inclusion of more women on UK corporate boards. By encouraging diversity the group aims to have at least 30% senior female leaders in major UK companies, as a means of which to drive profitable growth through a rebalancing of firm culture and an adjustment in the decision-making processes of such leading institutions. The organisation boasts prominent Chairmen as their members, from UK companies such as Deloitte, Allen & Overy and Glaxo-SmithKline.

Congratulations on all of the philanthropic work you have done thus far. You were hugely active in pushing through The Equality Bill in 2010. Do you think if more women worked in parliaments around the world, there would be more equality legislation, and specifically gender equality legislation, introduced?

Considering the world is made up of 51% of women, and that 70% of all financial decisions globally are made by women, it is important that all parliaments should have much better representation of women of at least 40 to 50%. If women were part of the decision-making process, gender equality would become part of all legislation.

Why is it, to you, so important to promote the role of women in the global economy?

I think that if women were involved at all levels of the global economy, we would get much better decision-making because women would consider very carefully how the outcomes of their decisions on employment, education and health would have an impact on their community.

Furthermore, a large proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) around the world are started up and run by women, in the same way that microfinance loans are taken by women for setting up businesses and in 99% of the cases they pay back on time. My view on diversity is that at every table, women should be playing an active part. One of the most important roles for women is at peace tables. The Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) specifically addresses the impact of war on women and women's contributions to conflict and resolution and sustainable peace. It is most important that governments insist on women being there.

How did the 30% Club come about?

I was at a lunch at Goldman Sachs and my friend, Helena Morrissey (chief executive of Newton Investment Management and founder of the 30% Club), was there. A few months later, with colleagues and friends, we decided to set up the 30% Club to promote voluntarily to bring more women onto the UK boards. On average, among the FTSE100 companies, the boards are only 14.8% women.

What is your role within the organisation, and what specific actions have you taken within this role to help the organisation achieve its aims?

I have been working with my colleagues to further the aims of the 30% Club by speaking at meetings both in this country and abroad, raising the issue with the government and opposition, and in the private sector.

Some people could argue that a quota of 30% on the number of women occupying boardroom positions in Britain's biggest companies would be demeaning to women and counterproductive in terms of advocating gender equality. How are the 30% Club's actions different and more progressive?

The 30% club is promoting a voluntary commitment for boards instead of an imposed quota. I do not think that then having 30% of women on companies' boards would be demeaning. Women on boards add a different dimension to deliberations and importantly will act in the long-term as role models to many talented women who are in the pipeline.

Do you believe that the present level of 12.5% of boardroom positions in FTSE 100 companies being occupied by women is only due to gender equality in the workplace or do you think that there is also a large issue of female workers being discouraged from applying for such positions?

The present situation is that boards have increased only slightly to 14.8% women in the FTSE100 companies. It is partly the problem of inequality in the workplace but also because women do not push themselves for the positions. I think in this present economic situation women have to say we have the knowledge and the know-how to assist the world to overcome the present global problem. This cannot be managed by a few people in government and boardrooms.

Lastly, as the student body at the LSE tend to be very career minded, often aiming for workplaces that are currently very male-dominated, do you have any advice for our female students with regards to their future career paths?

There was a time when all major professions were more than male-dominated. Once you've decided what career path you wish to follow, it is important to arrange to meet a number of people from that profession to discuss the difficulties that they had in getting accepted and moving up the career ladder. Furthermore, it is important to be motivated in spite of setbacks.



Flickr: Machine Made

Measured musings | The Republican Primaries

The GOP nomination battle is usually fought between the conservative evangelical right and the more moderate, middle of the road candidates. This has been the case in the past. John McCain's moderate policies won through in 2008, most likely as a reaction to the much more conservative administration of George W Bush, a born-again Christian.

This year's political race witnessed a similar blend; moderates such as Mitt Romney and Jon Huntsman, contesting with the evangelical candidates such as Rick Perry and Michelle Bachmann. Of the two wings of the party only two serious contenders are left in the race: Romney for the moderates and Gingrich for the conservatives.

In order to pick a Republican candidate to run against Obama in the presidential election in November, potential candidates must be chosen by the states, through a complex process involving primaries and caucuses, which elect delegates who go off to a national convention, who in turn elect the party's presidential candidate.

Both candidates have received influential backing. Romney received the support of John McCain, securing the moderate vote, whilst Perry withdrew and put his support, and potentially that of the evangelical right, behind Gingrich.

Both presidential candidates have faced pressure under the intense scrutiny of the press, Romney - whose major problem is his perceived distance from the ordinary voter - crashed by offering a \$10,000 bet to Rick Perry

during a Republican debate. Gingrich's ex-wife asserted in an interview with ABC News that Gingrich had asked her for an 'open marriage'. However Gingrich was able to turn this seemingly disastrous event into political capital, attacking the American media in a debate and receiving a standing ovation from the audience.

Ron Paul and Rick Santorum are the other candidates still in the race, but they are trailing in the polls and look likely to pull out soon as campaign costs grow and victory seems further from their reach.

Last week Romney seemed a dead cert to gain the Republican nomination for President, and was in effect the presumptive nominee, with wins in Iowa and in New Hampshire.

However, Romney's apparently unassailable lead has faced set back after set back. With Rick Perry pulling out of the race and with an endorsement, the evangelical right has, to a certain extent, rallied around Gingrich. In contrast, Romney has faced criticism over his role as CEO of companies that laid off workers, and releasing his income tax forms.

Meanwhile the recount in Iowa, which Romney won by a whisker-thin margin, has found instead that, though no official winner could be declared as 8 precincts didn't turn in their votes, Santorum had won the most votes counted in Iowa. This dealt a sharp blow to Romney's image of the 'inevitable' candidate.

The biggest upset to Romney's image was Gingrich's resurgent victory in South Carolina on Saturday. Just

a week ago, polls were showing that Romney was leading by 10 points; Gingrich's result has almost been a reverse of this prediction. South Carolina is seen as particularly important in the Republican race, since the winner in this state has gone on to gain the Republican Presidential nomination in every race since 1980. Santorum, in failing to present himself as a rival conservative candidate to Romney, is likely to pull out soon, whilst Paul may remain in play for a few states yet.

The focus is now on Florida, where Romney currently holds an 18 point lead; however with his resurgent victory in South Carolina, Gingrich may have the funds and motivation to bring Florida back into play.

Does this shatter Romney's image of the presumptive nominee? Probably not. Romney maintains a better equipped organisation. If Gingrich wins here, he still has the difficult task of pulling off more wins in upcoming states to keep the race competitive.

Romney's more professional machine, and backing from party elders such as John McCain, make it an uphill struggle for Gingrich, who though not out for certain, will face an intense fight to make it to Super Tuesday, when large numbers of states will go the polls at once and the race is usually decided. Never the less, Gingrich's win here will ensure the contest continues for a while yet.

Chris Rogers
Features Editor



Flickr: DonkeyHotey

Social

Status Photo Place What's on your mind?

Matt Brown
August 29

Last Weekend / SF Moma (16 photos)



Recent Activity

- Matt likes Mountain Biking.
- Matt subscribed to Tom Watson's updates.

Matt Brown
August 21

2nd Anniversary Backpacking — Point Reyes (3 photos)



Like · Comment

Matt Brown became friends with **Nicholas Felton**.
August 11



Nicholas Felton
Co-workers at Facebook
See friendship

Like · Comment

Tom Watson
August 11

Fries well done. — with Matt Brown at In-N-Out Burger —

Facebook Promo

Timeline: a modern day dilemma

Rosie Hamer on facing her past self on Facebook

As Facebook moves into its 9th year and records 800 million active users, the social networking site launches 'timeline' - the new Facebook profile. "Tell your life through photos, friendships and personal milestones like graduating or travelling to new place". This is the website's new tag line - just slightly removed from its original declaration as a student directory.

We often see difficulties arise when Facebook makes changes to its layout. Granted, when an estimated 2.6 million minutes per day are spent on the website it is no wonder that its alterations make waves in the real world. In this instance however, will the adjustments be fatal?

With the start of a new year and the compulsion that comes with it to reassess our lives, the arrival of the timeline has led me to find myself in the midst of a 'personal crisis'. I stumbled upon a rather hideous array of

"Do I erase a period of my life just because I innocently denied myself hair serum and GHDs and it was appropriate to use nd, ting and wit?"

photos and statuses from 2007 as I set up my profile a couple of weeks ago. The prospect of my current friends and acquaintances having access to these sights at the easiest swipe of a laptop key is not one that fills me with joy.

Needless to say, between the ages of 16 and 21 we all change somewhat. Personally, I no longer find it acceptable to use text language in any communicative context, be it in texts themselves or online. I also appear to have made drastic improvements in styling since my middle teens. Although, I'm still sure that in 10 years from now I'll look back in horror at the 2012 version of myself.

It is also pretty amusing, if a little difficult, to read adolescent conversations between schoolmates and myself. These are now 5-year-old discussions, which mainly refer to the first stages of underage drinking and clubbing. "Scared about my maths GCSE today" - oh those were the days. It appears I was also known as 'Rosi

Hams'. Conveniently I seem to have forgotten that certain nickname.

Whatever emotions the timeline evokes, I'm not sure that it is the best way to "tell your life" or diarise the order of one's own events. I don't really want my personal milestones reduced to a chronology of Facebook statuses and photos. I'm well aware I sound like an anti-modernist grump. Indeed, I brought it all along myself when I registered with Facebook and then switched to the timeline.

However, despite the important duty that Facebook seems to have set unto itself, namely recording and preservation of individuals' lives, I can't say I'm at all thrilled about its transformation.

So I'm presented with a dilemma: to delete my account or not? Do I marginalize myself from mainstream youth and accept the alternative by removing a part of myself from the public sphere? A personal crisis for the modern day indeed.

A very helpful friend pointed out that a record of pretty much all of us exists in cyber space, whether we delete our accounts or not. On an even deeper level, do I want to erase a period of my life just because I innocently denied myself hair serum and GHDs and it was appropriate to use "nd", "ting" and "wit"?

It is true that nostalgia is a powerful thing, particularly when evoking memories of friends forgotten and times been and gone. When flicking through my posts from 2007, albeit with a grimace, I saw comments from people I had not thought of in years.

I think we can say that Facebook offers a service in personal fulfillment. Cheesy I know, but it certainly does when revision period is upon us. Yes, the dilemma is solved. Facebook will remain active, at least until after exam time.

Working nine to five

Laura Aumeer on the benefits of working during your studies

It's undeniable that LSE focuses our minds on that distant prospect of our careers: what are we going to do after our degrees are done and Moodle is a mere memory? But, it is hard not to focus on the short term as well. What is going on Friday night, what to wear today and more importantly how are we going to pay for it all, as the overdraft nears its limit only a few weeks into Lent term?

It is estimated around 50% of all students work during their degree. I have found myself working throughout the last three in various admin jobs, as a sales assistant, in jobs in LSE, in various schools and a summer school and even in a hospital. Although at times it seems like a necessary chore and some question potentially taking time away from studying, arguably working is highly beneficial and not just for the wallet.

It's not uncommon as a student to want some extra cash, though, to be honest most of us could probably survive without. But, factor in eating out, nights spent in the pub, maybe the occasional Topshop sale shopping spree and booking travel plans for summer into your weekly budget, and part-time work is a must.

Think of the amount of contact time we have – as little as six hours a week – not to mention the holidays when there are endless weeks to fill, and in theory it should be easy to organise work around studying. Maybe just cut down on TV watched or hours spent on facebook, study at a slightly different time and you could easily work without spending less time socialising or studying. Well, in theory, anyway.

The possibilities of jobs are almost endless. I know people who have

worked in burger vans, job centres, postal sorting offices and clothes shops. A part-time job could be good experience for your future career, or conveniently close to where you live or well-paid for simple work. Or even, ideally, a combination of the three.

I am aware the reality is often very different from the ideal. First you have to get a job; it's not always as easy as it sounds. There's the endless searching of websites, handing in of CV's and application forms and don't forget interviews where you have to respond to "Why do you want to stuff envelopes/make burgers/be abused by customers" and actually try and come up with a positive answer.

Praying you're doing something else next year, fingers crossed behind your back, you come up with a pretentious "Well, I really feel an affinity with the company and its values" to help you pass the all important interview – even if that company is just a set of burger van at festivals.

Arguably though, the best way to get work seems to be having connections. I'm in no way advocating nepotism, but having friends or family already working there is definitely a bonus. If contacts can't actually get you a job, they can at least guide you through the application process and let you know when workers are wanted. Unfortunately for me, whilst some people's families might have got them impressive internships, mine got me some work as a nurses' assistant. Cheers, Mum. Whilst I couldn't forgo the possibility of working well-paid, thirteen-hour shifts over the holidays in my first year, my training in control and restraint and life support – knowing how to perform CPR and use a defibrillator – doesn't seem, thankfully, to fit in that much with a Government

and History degree.

Moving away from shops and hospitals, it is a truth universally acknowledged that the top part-time jobs for LSE students to get are within LSE; gold prize going to the well-paid jobs working in the library. Firstly,

"Factor in eating out, nights spent in the pub, maybe the occasional shopping spree and booking travel plans and part time work is a must"

there is the money: the average library job earns you more per hour than most other part-time jobs you'll find. A benefit of LSE's left-wing past, perhaps? Your employers understand the commitments you have as a student, in other words the essay deadlines often ignored to the last minute. Not to mention, you don't have to travel and you will be working with and around other students.

After the hard task of getting the job is over, you do actually have to

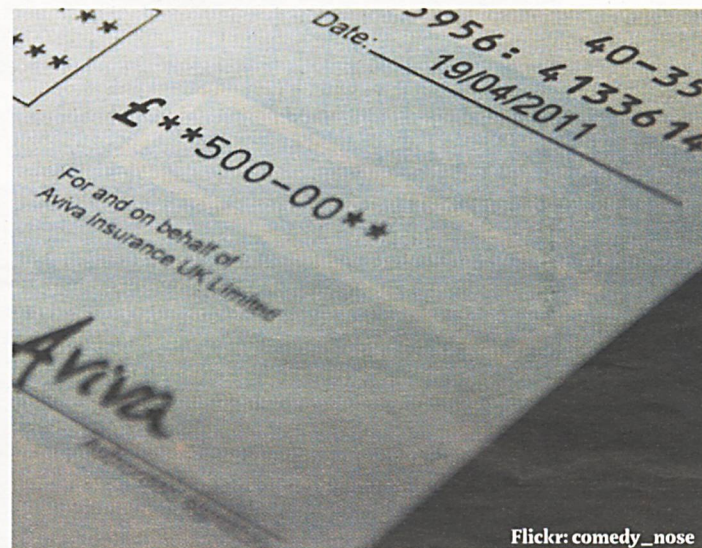
work. Here is where you learn the real meaning of your fancy job title. A sandwich "artist" works in Subway, a "model" spends half the time merely stacking and selling clothes and a "customer service assistant" works behind a till. The work can be tedious, even compared to your economics lectures and it is harder to fit in than you first thought.

The good moments make up for the bad. I won't forget the kid who told me they liked the look of university because they wanted "to play Fifa and COD all day long", when I was mentoring – though that wasn't really the attitude I was aiming for. When someone appreciates the work you have done that day, it's hard not to feel smug as you walk back to your flat and you feel a lot better with yourself, then if you stayed in and watched Jersey Shore all

day. Not to mention the people you work with can make the most tedious job enjoyable.

With many graduates struggling to find work, the thought of not having had any paid work experience before you graduate is a daunting prospect. The internships normally associated with LSE aren't for everyone, but nearly all of us will want some experience in the world of work, even if it isn't in a bank.

We all know, stacking shelves in a library or working in a bar, is not going to be in-depth preparation for your future career – or at least we hope so – but you do learn some useful skills, meet some great people and, well if that isn't enough, you've always got the monthly pay check to look forward to.



Flickr: comedy_nose

What's all the fuss about?

Kirsty Kenney on that South African chicken phenomenon

I highly doubt there is a person in Britain who has not heard of Nando's. When it comes to food it's all I seem hear about these days. But, just in case some of you aren't familiar with it, it's a South African chain restaurant that specialises in chicken, of different sorts, with a peri peri sauce, also of different sorts.

Talking to some of my friends you would think that it is the stuff that dreams are made of. It's as if they hold it as this wonderful cultural establishment. The Nandites let's call them, spend hours talking about how much they're craving their dish of choice. They go mental when they see that cockerel sign hanging outside their temple and boy they just can't wait until the day their loyalty card is all stamped up and they can claim that free chicken!

My friends have in fact been raving about it so much that I began to suspect the chefs were sprinkling a secret addictive powder onto their chicken. It's only chicken for goodness sake, how can it be that good? Well I thought that it was about time to see what the fuss was about.

And dear Nandites, I'm afraid to tell you that the experience was somewhat disappointing. The final verdict, "distinctly average." At this point I can imagine the cries of my friends, damning me a sacrilegious traitor. But before you stand up in defence, let me explain a little further.

So, we arrive at 6:30pm, which is apparently peak dining time. The queue, 3 people deep, extends way

beyond the entrance and we have to wait 15 minutes to get a seat. This is faff number 1 of the evening. You could probably have read every one of today's Social articles in the time it takes to get a seat. But of course this gives you time to do the standard Facebook 'tagged at Nandos' status.

Upon opening the menu for the first time, you will need to make sure that you take time to digest the complex steps of "How to Order Food the Nando's Way." There are probably more steps for you as the customer than there are for the chef doing the cooking. This is faff number 2. After mulling over the menu for a good 15 minutes I decided on a single chicken breast in pitta with halloumi, and chips and a corn on the cob as my two sides.

Nando's, is one of those restaurants where you go to the till to order. This is incredibly annoying: after you've queued to go in, you're made to queue again. All in all you probably spend as much time in a queue here as you do at Alton Towers. And all this just for chicken and chips. After what seems like forever, "So that will be £12, please". £12 for chicken and chips! And I have to queue up to get my £12 chicken and chips. Faff number 3.

Okay sure, it's kind of exotic chicken and chips, I'll give you that. And their trademark peri-peri sauce, is admittedly very good. The bottomless drink idea is genius too. But, the meal is not £12 good is it? Oh and do make sure you pick up your own cutlery... which is magnetic. What is that about, seriously? It's just like going to a posh KFC.

The food arrives fairly quickly, but because we paid and ordered separately it all comes at different times. Two of my friends are sat there with their food for about 7 minutes before mine arrives. This is not really a proper restaurant, now is it?

When my food did arrive, it was okay. The chicken was very good. Very succulent! No better than I would be fed at home mind, but still top marks. However, by the time I found my sauces, having asked several other diners to borrow theirs, everything was a bit cold.

The pitta could easily have been from a 20p Sainsbury's value six pack. The corn on the cob was hard and don't expect butter, you need to find that for yourself. The chips were awful, a real low point, even the peri-peri salt could not make up for their pallor and sog-giness. Now okay this may have been a bad batch, but quite frankly that's not acceptable, the side dish menu is hardly extensive.

We then decided to get an "endless frozen yogurt" pot, which required queuing up once more. And again, it disappointed. The frozen yoghurt was not so yoghurt like and tasted somewhat like ice cream mix to me.

So that was my first Nando's experience. I'm not saying no to another one although I won't be rushing back. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I just don't see what all the fuss is about?

Overhyped by you and overestimated by me.

Overrated, plain and simple – a bit like the food really.



Flickr: Stephen Dann

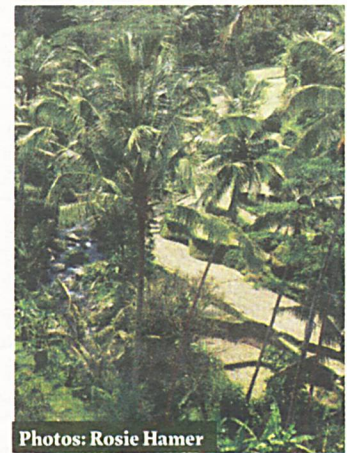
Travel Diary: An island of two tales

Rosie Hamer's two weeks of contradictory culture in Bali

Bali, an island of spiritual mystique and lush beauty? Or a place of cultural confusion maimed by a history of civil conflict and plagued with tourism?

I didn't know much about the famous island before my flatmate and I took a trip there last summer, other than the infamous 2002 bombings and religious strife that mark a long and tiresome story in Indonesian history. We landed in the early hours on Java, the neighbouring larger island to the west of Bali, in the industrial hub of Surabaya. It was Ramadan and the place was bizarrely alive. After a day travelling through the south east of the island on local buses, 'luxury' tourist carriages, man powered rickshaws and a large passenger ferry, Bali was finally in sight. I could practically taste the Indonesian curry as we approached the island across the water, after a journey of 72 hours with no shower, bed or edible food.

Kuta - the first stop on the trip, also known as the Australians' Magaluf. On



Photos: Rosie Hamer

first arrival it seemed to live up to its name: beer bellies, tattoos and Bintang vests galore. We headed to the streets; Poppies Gangway 1 & 2, for somewhere cheap to sleep. This was the first surprise of the trip; the cost of accommodation, food, drink and activities in the tourist capital were not that cheap. At least, day to day spending was more than in Thailand where we'd just come from. The market caters for 2-week package deals that are comparatively cheap for the Aussies. For a scrounger such as myself on a shoestring budget, things were a little steep.

No matter, for the average western holiday maker and particularly the Brit girl within me, Kuta possessed all: a fun nightlife and relaxing days on the beach, watching swarms of rad boarders head out to catch the waves.

Skygarden - the town's hotspot - is swarming with foreigners every night as they maximise the 'freeflow' bar (yes you heard me, a free bar) between 10-11pm. The drinks may contain enough of your sugar allowance to last a week and be the colour of toxic waste, but it's free alcohol nonetheless. After a hard day sweating on the surf or the sand they definitely quench your taste.

After Skygarden, Bounty has a lot to offer, I seem to remember... the details are hazy though.

After a few days of nursing hangers, I braved a surf lesson. My teacher, Wayan, a doped up Sumatran who seemed less bothered about surfing and more about sitting under a tree and strumming his guitar poorly to the sounds of 'Wonderwall', took on the challenge of getting me upright on a board.

The surf was huge and, for a beginner, just a bit too challenging. To my horror, after a couple of okay runs, Wayan left for the shore as I was

thrown about in the water. It felt at times like I was close to drowning, losing a sentimental ring and gaining half the seabed in my hair and ears in the process. In the name of Indonesian waves, which are some of the best in the world, I gave in.

"Kuta: beer bellies, tattoos and Bintang vests galore"

The next morning we had a scheduled bus for Ubud, a few hours north of Kuta in the centre of the island. The trip out of the fondly named 'chav central' seemed increasingly necessary and well timed as we left the bars, restaurants, hotels, shops and shouts of 'g'day', arriving in the more peaceful, green and frankly stunning landscape of Ubud.

The place was small, compact and full of art galleries, cultural shops, and multi ethnic food places. A wonderful market lay in the centre, with a palace to the north of the town and the jalan monkey forest at the other end. You can walk the whole area in an afternoon, but the views of the rice fields and terraces are endless, and don't get boring. We indulged in 'Gado Gado' - the Indonesian array of vegetables, meats, rice, tofu etc, and generally enjoyed the slower pace of life in the so-called 'heart' of Bali. After a few days of Kuta madness, this was the perfect haven for rest and relaxation. The novel 'Eat, Pray, Love' by Elizabeth Gilbert, which follows the life of a middle aged American woman on the journey to "find herself" is partly

set in Ubud. It seems many fans of the story have now found themselves in Ubud too.

The architecture of the Ubud buildings and the beautiful Indonesian Hindu designs that line the streets are almost too intricate to be practical. Religious offerings with burning incense can be seen in people's doorways every morning and are often accompanied by Balinese music. A morning trip to watch a traditional Balinese Dance show was a highlight - bizarre yet quite spellbinding. Don't be mistaken; Ubud is still very accommodating for tourists

and you wouldn't want to be indoctrinated by the false displays of culture for the large western travel groups. Still, a venture out of the town on a moped will allow you can see the real character of the old and very real Bali such as the rice paddies of Tegallalang and the volcano 'Batur'.

The contrast of Kuta's craziness and Ubud's unruffled style made for 14 memorable days in Bali. I'd like to know what the rest of the island offers. Shame, I might have to go back one day.



This lady's not for turnstiling

Cleo Pearsons on her persistent issues with the library entrance

Despite the fact that it inevitably happens every day, I always seem to experience the pre-turnstile panic at the entrance to LSE library. For it would be far too logical to keep my library card somewhere accessible about my person. Instead I prefer to do my signature limp/stagger towards the turnstiles having first frisked my pockets; I swing my rucksack round to my front like a pregnant belly and proceed to rummage through its innards looking for my card. Having by this time caused a sufficiently angry queue behind me, and scattered my belongings on the floor/spilt my coffee 'accidentally' on the irate person trying to push past me, I eventually scan the card and take a deep breath having negotiated my first obstacle before even considering stage 2; which floor to go to. I like to think that, of the 6,500 students that pass through those turnstiles daily, I am not the only one who struggles with such a simple process.

If like me, this is something of an ordeal for you, it may have come to your attention that recently it has become necessary to scan your card on leaving the library too. Having contemplated moving in to occupy the library to avoid this measure initially ('cos occupying is so 'now'), I soon realised that although books may feed my mind, they wouldn't satisfy my stomach and that this measure may be slightly extreme. Considering that LSE has received some bad press lately, I

understand the importance for them of trying to keep up their figures in league tables and statistics. However, for me, I don't think that I have any struggle in clocking up the average 67 hours that Britons spend queuing a year. Not one to be beaten however, the LSE's new scanning on exit system is ensuring that we spend at least just a minute more everyday queuing in order to beat this figure. Realising that this may be an unlikely cause for the new system, I sought to discover just why the turnstiles have really been introduced.

According to library staff the reason for the new system is in order to collect data on library usage figures according to periods of the day, days of the week and throughout the academic year. What remains unclear however is how the data collected may affect services in the library. I am all for some way of offering a larger number of facilities, in particular, computers or desks with a plug for laptop charging, however measuring usage doesn't seem to provide a solution to what is essentially an issue with space. I fear, that measuring usage, rather than offering more for library users may in fact be to consider cuts to the system, for example, potentially reducing opening hours. Arguably, the data may help the library be better staffed, so that in peak hours there are enough staff to assist students experiencing IT problems or otherwise.

The measures are not primarily a security feature, despite the recent rise in library crime levels, although

indirectly the barriers may deter thefts. Recently, students have started to raise concerns over non-students; in particular homeless people, using the library 'escape' area as a space to rest and keep warm. The LSE prides itself on being a public learning institution and the majority of campus remains accessible to all; however this usage doesn't seem to be offering the services I think this openness is designed to provide. Instead, it may be a nice cosy kip and somewhere to charge your phone.

Some students feel uncomfortable with the potential risks that outsiders may bring on their personal security and that of their belongings. For now a solution is yet to be found; or at least by the library staff.

However, have come up with a potential answer. In order to avoid intimidating outsiders and my turnstile traumas I may either gorge on food before entering the library or drink those diet milkshakes that pretend to be food/

liquidise my food and build myself a den out of books to live in, I hear that that's what people do during exam time anyway. As a result the library will have increased occupancy levels and remain open for 24 hours. Alternatively I could just attach my library card to my wrist, a bit like Spiderman's web-blaster and become a super-fast and efficient turnstile passer, I'm sure that we would get good statistics for that.

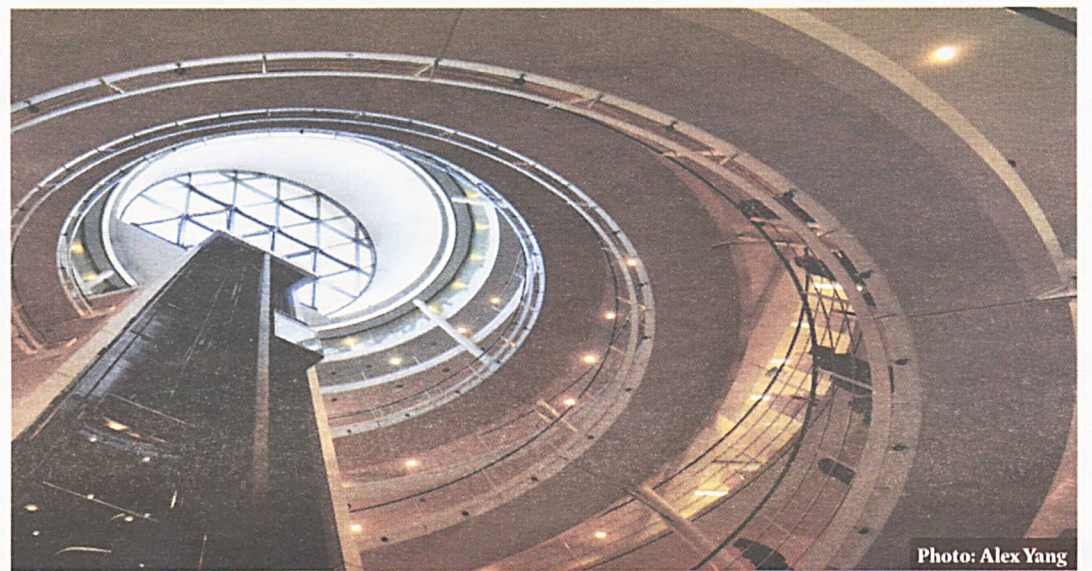


Photo: Alex Yang

Match Reports

The curse of the last minute

Jo Hirst and Michele Li

This holiday has taken a toll on us female basketballers. A combination of binge-drinking over the joy of the return of the NBA, holiday comfort eating and general lack of movement meant we've had a shaky start. Sunday's game against QMU was one we wish to store away in a little box marked "HAZARDOUS" in a dark, dark, room in an underground passage underneath an abandoned crackhouse (appropriate for the poly's Bethnal Green home courts). Yes we won, but literally by one basket, and in the last minute-and-a-half.

We were neck-and-neck with QMU for most of the game and had a horrendous first three quarters playing a zone defence. Then one of our captains, Jo, suggested we try a man-to-man defence—this would intensify the game and put the pressure on the opposition. With a bit of luck, our new defensive tactic paid off, and we ended up pulling through. QMU's defence wasn't anything to write home about either—at one point our resident mother-of-three, Jade, had FIVE girls defending (or should we say mauling) her. May we point out here, for those not so well informed, that basketball is a sport where each team has five players. Epic fail? We think so. The referees called it a 'jump ball', which was a shock to everyone, since she was being fouled left, right and centre. It was a nerve-racking game; at one point, Nabila nearly murdered Jo by squeezing the air out of her because she was so nervous we might lose. Yet with one well-groped girl, and a few tumbles and injuries, we left Bethnal Green victorious, and took pride in

the fact that we'd still only lost ONE game...until...

We saw our second loss of the season against UCL on Wednesday. We started off on a high—but to our surprise, four of their girls could shoot three pointers. Where did that leave us? Hanging outside of the key, trying to stop this one German machine with incredible 3-pointer accuracy that would even make a seasoned college baller blush. At one point, the said machine was doing what she does best, when one of our girls decided to foul her. A foul on a 3-pointer means three foul shots. Each successful shot gives you two points. Of course, she made all of them, meaning UCL had gained six points in the space of a minute, bringing their score up drastically. Luckily, our girl Kate's rebounding was so fantastic that we managed to get a lot of cheeky baskets—including one shot co-captain Michele took from behind the board. Michele herself was surprised it went in from such a strange angle and position. Ade also made some beautiful baskets, helping us bring up our score. Though, the last quarter saw us once again neck-and-neck with a lesser team; unfortunately, we lost in the last minute of the game, by one basket. The last minute of the game has been ambiguous for us, and as we take on another team notorious for their 3-pointer skills, Royal Holloway, at our beautiful home courts in Hackney on Wednesday, we'll need to be ready for it!

If you want to get in on the action, we're on the lookout for new players—if you're interested please email Jo at j.hirst@lse.ac.uk

Rugby 2's off to flying start

Richard Illingworth

It was a must win game if the 2's were to continue their run up the table towards the promotion spots. Having lost to Portsmouth 3's at Fortress Berlylands in the first game of the year, the smell of sweet revenge was in the air as we departed towards the Polytechnic on the south coast.

After conceding an early penalty, Alex Haigh barrelled over, picking up the ball from the back of the scrum, managing to perfectly execute what could only be described as the most elongated side step ever round the Portsmouth fly half. The game soon became tougher, and even though defence has been the side's strong point all season, long periods defending in their own 22 eventually resulted in an 11 point deficit heading into half time.

Tensions soon started to flair as the 2's became increasingly frustrated with the referee's decision that his basis for adjudicating rucks would have no relevance to the laws of rugby, with debutant Sean giving his best head to head Joey Barton impression, and what can only be assumed to be French expletives from Lux filling the air.

After the Portsmouth 9 managed to use his 17 word vocabulary to label LSE as sore losers, Captain Owl reigned in the troops at half time to great effect and the team never looked back.

Danielsen and Dodds seemingly took turns at making 30 metre downfield breaks and Portsmouth became increasingly frustrated facing LSE's disciplined play. LSE soon closed the gap to 18-14 when Lux ran through a few tackles, and from here on in, there was no looking back.

Sport In Brief

Ajmal Tears through England's Order

Saeed Ajmal starred as England began their Test series against Pakistan. The visiting England side were given virtually no hope by the prolific spinner, falling to a ten-wicket defeat.

Dutchman Kists the Trophy

Darts produced a new World Champion at the Lakeside as Christian Kist held his nerve to hold off a late resurgence from 8th seed, Tony O'Shea. The final finished 7-5 to the Dutchman, winning him a mighty cheque of £100,000.

Khan Camp Cancel Appeal

Amir Khan's representatives withdrew their appeal against Khan's recent loss to Lamont Peterson at the eleventh hour last week. The decision came after a rematch was all but secured, leaving many to question the legitimacy of the many 'grievances' initially outlined.



Following a spectacular start to the year and a week of scandalous behaviour, it seems many took the words of warning to heart last time, and were extra elusive in your attempts to avert prying eyes. But fear not – no matter how inebriated I may be, or how paralytic I may seem, my memory rarely fails, and more importantly, neither do my sources.

Seemingly loving her moments in the limelight, it seems your Netball fifth team's resident Mancunian, Denim, is determined to find herself splashed across the pages of this fine publication. And this week, your serial flirt decided to drag others down with her, as she once again ended the night with her on-again off-again Mr C Handsome. It would be inappropriate to tell exactly which bedroom antics were partaken in during the couple's night of romance, but the pair was spotted devouring a pizza the next day, satisfying their famished selves after a night of "exercise" no doubt. So though we can't officially say whether the crust was thoroughly stuffed, one response to the question was "trust me, it wasn't that thorough." I would never tell a lie.

As if this wasn't bad enough for the third party in the apparent love triangle, Grizzly Bear then had to endure a humiliation that is reserved for precious few individuals in the world. Whilst gathering in the fine establishment of Ronald McDonald himself amongst fel-

low Zoo-goers, YourCock found himself with a bit of a dilemma – a desperate need to relieve himself contrasted with the "out of order signs" on the toilets. Ever the polite individual, however, he proceeded to ask permission from others around him to relieve himself on the spot. With his question answered in the affirmative, YourCock proceeded to have a little tinkle down the leg of an unsuspecting Grizzly Bear. When hit with the realisation of the situation, the naive teddy simply asked "oi, who poured a drink down my leg?" Classy.

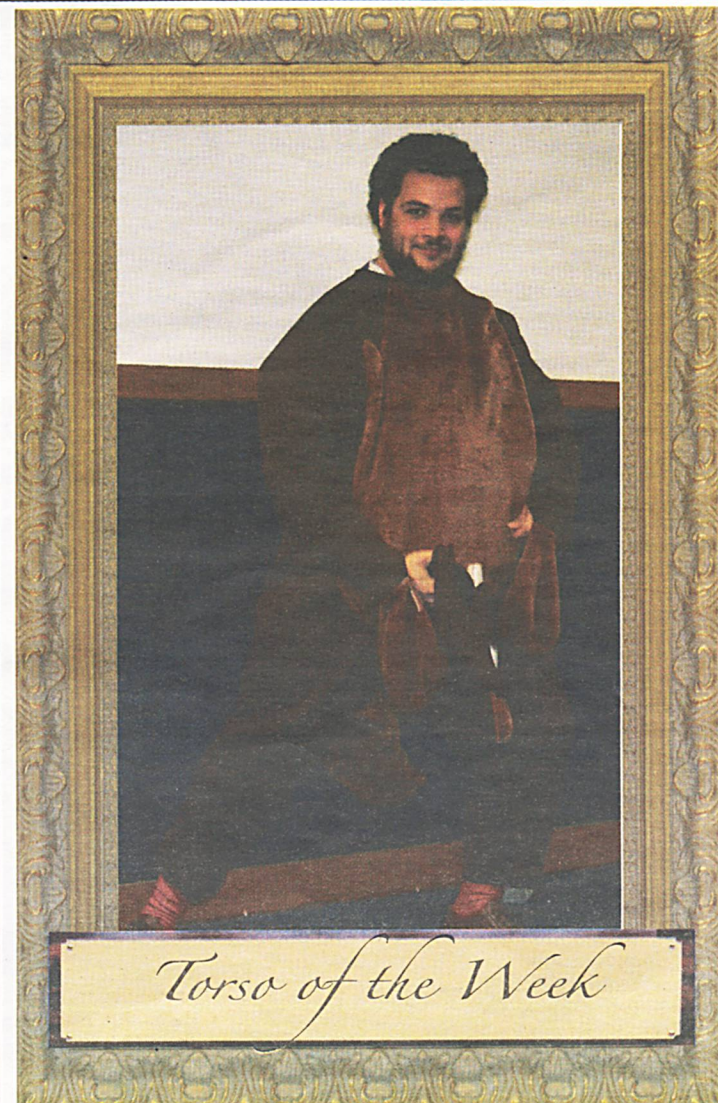
Such a situation, however, seems far more civilised than the antics of the FC that had many a reveller gasping in shock in Zoo Bar. Higs thought it might be amusing to offer a free cheeky slap to Prim Sandy, who unfortunately did not take the gesture in jest (no pun intended). In a retaliatory swing, there was nothing left to do in the situation other than for the AU's valiant superhero, Ginger Chris, to step up to the defence of his mate – subsequently taking the hit as Higs walks off, and the scene rapidly descending into chaos, though no sooner had it started than it ended. Handbags away ladies, we're all friends in Zoo Bar, especially in light of the creepy men that sneer perversely at the lovely ladies of the AU.

Thankfully though, where there's war there's love, and love was in the air for many a Zoo-bar attendee. Your favourite teenage witch from hockey was

rumoured to have headed home with a certain puppy-faced rugby player. The tropical flower, from the netball 4ths, was also spotted, her lips locking lovingly with Malibu but she ended the night in bed with another, a rugby player no less. Controversial. Rugby also appeared to be wooing many a netball girl, with two secret romances flourishing. Sadly, I fear for the life of my source were I to divulge these details, but ask around and keep your eyes peeled for two pairs acting shady this week.

And while a certain member from badminton was allegedly being teabagged whilst unconscious, it seems captain Mateer once again proceeded to lose her shoes. Here's hoping she begins to invest in a set of Primark's finest next week. Captain Leonidas was also spotted rekindling a flame with a Sunny blonde bombshell from Tennis, and your Ski-Rhod once again felt determined to be noticed. Engaging in what can only be called the "Hoover manoeuvre" on the lips of a certain Totem pole Winters, he made sure no one could miss the apparent lovin' between the two. I never knew Ski-Rhods and Totem poles could bend like that...

It's ReAUnion next week and this is most certainly not one to be missed. Promising more antics, stories, bitchiness and sexcapades, AU veterans will be back to show all you young'uns how it's done on a Wednesday. So go big or go home.



Dalglish deserves some blame

Amit Singh

Liverpool have scored just 24 league goals this season, barely more than a goal a game. This low goal scoring total means that Bolton, Norwich and an effectively striker-less Sunderland have all scored more than Liverpool, a side who spent almost £60 million since last January on forwards, Craig Bellamy, Andy Carroll and Luis Suarez.

Dalglish has pointed at bad luck being the main factor behind Liverpool's attacking impotence. Liverpool do have the fourth highest shots per game in the league, but out of their 18 chances a game they only manage 5.7 efforts on target. Liverpool's lack of attacking potency has led to them drawing eight games, with only Villa having drawn more this season.

In the context of their big spend on forwards as well as on midfielders, Charlie Adam, Stewart Downing and Jordan Henderson, there is surely no excuse for Liverpool's inability to convert chances into goals. It is surprising to read that, of their 24 goals, only 11 have been from open play, with eight being from free kicks, one a penalty and three own goals.

The 0-0 draw played out with Stoke was a clear example of the problems facing Liverpool right now. Suarez has been a dynamic presence and of course will be missed whilst suspended, but in reality he has been nowhere near as good as some would have you believe. Suarez, in 18 appearances in the league, has only scored

five goals - hardly prolific - and contributed a meager one assist. There are 31 players in the EPL who have scored more than him this season.

The main problem with Suarez's ban is that Carroll is not firing either. With him forming the base of the attacks, Carroll needs to find form. Funnily enough, Liverpool seems like the ideal place for Carroll to play as they adopt a direct approach, playing more crosses per game than any other side. Against Stoke, Kuyt was picked instead of Carroll to lead the line, which implies that Dalglish is losing patience with Carroll.

In essence, the signings made by Dalglish just haven't hit form. Stewart Downing, a £20 million winger, has yet to score a league goal; compare that with England rival, Adam Johnson, who has managed to score five goals whilst playing less frequently. Downing's record makes dismal reading; the winger is lauded by many, but he has scored zero goals and got zero assists from 21 league games this season.

Downing's form is indicative of a wider problem at Liverpool - a real lack of goal-scoring midfielders. Though, the return of Steven Gerrard has certainly been timely. Gerrard's return could have been seen as a tactical headache for Dalglish but the talisman's dynamism will be welcome for a side that lack any real flair at the moment.

Whilst it seems likely that Henderson was bought for the future, he has yet to hit the heights for the club and Dalglish seems unsure whether to play him as a winger or a central midfielder.

A box-to-box midfielder traditionally, Henderson has only one goal and one assist this season in 21 appearances.

One point of note is that, last season, a key performer was Raul Meireles, who scored five goals for the club and was voted player of the season by ESPN, above the likes of Rooney and Parker. Meireles was used in a box-to-box capacity that was key to Liverpool's performances last term. The spark he provided was most obviously displayed as the club beat Arsenal 2-0 earlier this season, with Meireles coming off the bench to be involved in both goals.

However, the strikers are not solely to blame for the club's inability to score goals. Manager, Kenny Dalglish, himself, must shoulder some of the blame, firstly for poor signings and secondly for tactical reasons. One factor is his inability to stick with a pairing up front. Many observers felt Suarez and Carroll were signed to complement each other, but the pair rarely play together from the start of games so have yet to form a partnership.

As well as this, tactics are, on the face of it, somewhat negative, despite the chances on goal, many of which are from outside of the area. Dalglish often looks to play a more defensive 4-5-1 even with the theoretically expansive Charlie Adam playing a slightly more subdued holding role. His form has also been below par since his move, with a pass completion rate of only just over 80%.

One reason for this is that the loss of Lucas Leiva prompted Adam to play a more responsible midfield role.

Perhaps if Lucas was still fit, Adam would be allowed more freedom to get forward and create chances as was his role at Blackpool. Of course, Dalglish could not predict the injury to Leiva, but he should have hedged his bets by signing another holding player. Dalglish signed three midfielders in the summer but did not sign one holding player which means that, in the absence of Lucas, Dalglish has to re-jig his side's formation.

For Liverpool, finishing in the top four will simply not happen unless they score more goals. Buying players seems unlikely, especially with the investment that has taken place under Dalglish. The answer could lie in increasing the playing time of Bellamy, who has four goals in his five starts for the club (15 apps including subs). Bellamy is not a natural winger, though he could play wide on the right or in support of Carroll.

The tactics employed by Dalglish against Stoke were typical of the side's failings thus far. A perplexing 3-6-1 formation with Kuyt, industrious but ineffective in front of goal, leading the line. With six in midfield, the side dominated possession, but only managed a dismal one shot on target. Even with Gerrard and Adam in the middle, Liverpool failed to create real chances. The 3-6-1 could also be accused of being negative as the two wing-backs changed it to a 5-4-1 at times. Changing his side's tactics to face Stoke at home has to be considered both strange and negative from Dalglish.

Playing a 4-4-2 would leave Liverpool a lot more open. So far, they have

defended well but, without Lucas, any midfield pairing would leave the club exposed and leave the defence without a midfield shield. One could arguably go as far as to say that the loss of Lucas, a defensive midfield destroyer, has had catastrophic effects on their attacking game due to the wider implications it has led to for the team tactically. Acting as a screen, in the same way Parker does for Spurs, Lucas allows other players to get forward more freely.

Liverpool are now six points behind fourth placed Chelsea and, although Chelsea themselves have had problems, this is a big gap. They do still have to host Chelsea and Arsenal, but by the time those fixtures come about, Liverpool could be well out of the race for the top four.

Dalglish was initially brought in during a wave of hysteria as the club were rock bottom under Roy Hodgson; the fans relished the return of 'King Kenny' but now the honeymoon period has worn off. Liverpool fans must seriously question whether he is the right man for the job. Especially in the context of the huge amounts of money he has spent, in honesty, to little effect. One could argue that this is a transitional season, but this is the case for both Chelsea and Arsenal, who sit above Liverpool in the Premier League. A change of manager is unlikely, but perhaps one should be considered if Liverpool do not start firing.

A guide to enjoying the NFL

Matthew Worby

As many are aware, the NFL is reaching its climax, the star spangled, ticker-taped, orgasm of American sport that is the Super Bowl. As someone who lived with a fanatical packers fan last year this article is intended to tentatively help confused British people deal with a game of football where you'll usually only see 4 (assuming no injuries / trick plays) people kick the ball. The Super Bowl goes down on the 5th of February, before that happens however, the divisional round must take place and, at the time of writing was yet to occur. Given the deadlines this article will contain thoughts and musings on all four teams, delete whichever lost accordingly.

When watching the NFL there are certain basic do's and don'ts, the first of which is bring beer, it's going to be a fairly protracted game, so you might as well imbibe. Given the duration of the entire experience will likely top two hours you might want to be cautious, otherwise it'll end messily. Last Super Bowl it got to the point where I thought the Black Eyed Peas were good at half time. Never again. If you're picking a team at this late stage you please don't pick the Patriots, for obvious reasons, it'd be like picking Man U on the eve of a Champions League Semi-final if their opponent wasn't Barcelona. You should also laugh every time someone mentions the words 'Skip Bayless', and 'useful analysis' in the same sentence, and automatically ignore a pundit with an English accent.

During the pre-game people are going to be talking about the game and what to expect, here's an eight part plan to sounding like an expert:

1. [Insert preferred team here] have to dominate the lines of scrimmage,

you win the game in the trenches. Dominate there and the skill positions out wide will sort themselves out.

2. a) Establish the run. b) Establish the run. c) Force them to crowd the box and let your quarterback beat them with his arm. This is of course done by, establishing the run.

3. Match up nightmares. These are players freakishly oversized and fast, eg. Gronkowski, Davis, Rice. They're players you know will do well and blow up the game.

4. Big play ability. This is for players who seemingly have no laudable characteristics other than their ability to do ridiculous things, i.e. Cruz and Hernandez. Usually they're versatile, or are yet to prove themselves, not players you would necessarily expect to reel of large amounts of yardage. It's a cop-out from analysts who are really just saying that sport is as unpredictable as a bag of cats, but perfect for us who don't quite understand the game yet.

5. This is the golden age of the tight-end. Revel in it.

6. It's January, you're not surprised how no dome teams have got this far.

7. Two quarterbacks beat Marino's all season passing yardage, how wack is that? But they should have asterisks by their name.

8. Special teams will be important. At some point, in one game, somewhere, they'll be important.

In addition, complain about the complete lack of referees calling offensive holding, bonus points if you mention flag football. Roughing the passer is a financial decision, end of. Unless it's that one time Suh tried to eat a quarterback, that was a tad excessive. You should also mention that two of the coaches are Harbaugh's, make a terrible joke about their 'Thanksgiving' dinner.

Furthermore, talk about players from yesteryear to impress, here's a very, very, short list of famous players on the 4 teams left. For those too lazy to google, or if the Internet actually has ended with the passage of SOPA/PIPA/ACTA:

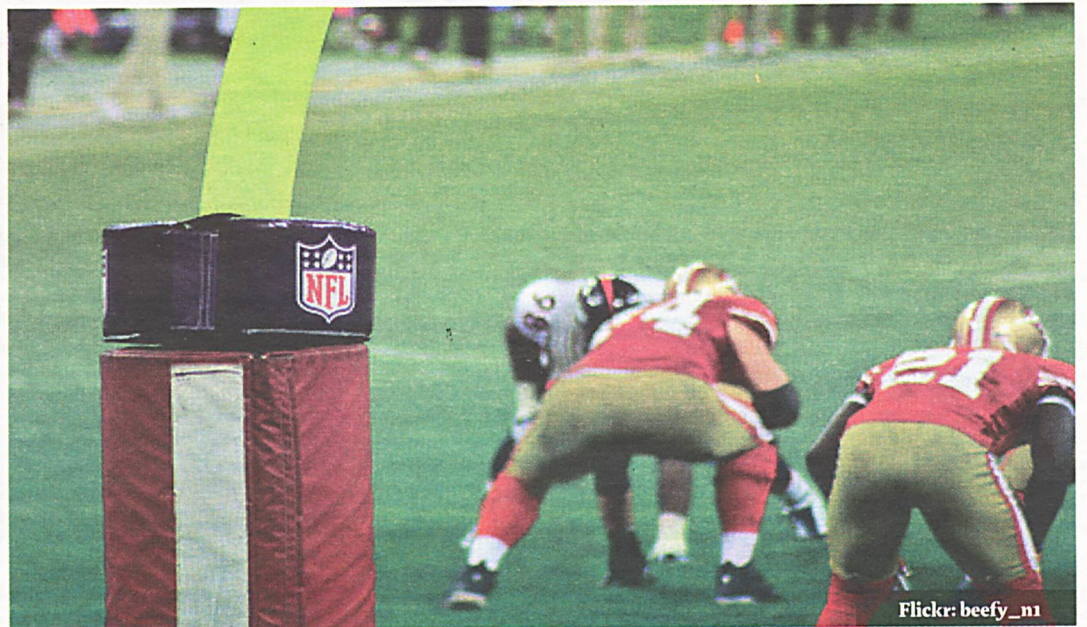
Patriots: Bledsoe, Tippet, Hannah
Giants: Taylor, Brown, Tummel

- twitter. Eli Manning - Peyton. Cam Newton - \$200,000. Ray Lewis - Double Team. Michael Vick - ... you get my point.

In terms of 'don'ts', don't joke about them wearing protection, given the size and speed of the players, helmets seem eminently sensible. It's played in a different style to rugby, so there's

break they take between plays when the players congratulate each other and talk about the universe, upcoming law-suits and stuff.

Above all enjoy the game(s) and the general spectacle and pageantry, if you don't like it, it's not like you can't just swap the channel to whichever sport tickles your fancy.



Flickr: beefy_n1

49ers: Montana, Young, Rice, Johnson

Ravens: Uh... Jim Brown?

During long breaks play mental games to stimulate your creative juices, such as creating your very own penitentiary all-star team, working out who that 'Discount Double Check' guy is, maybe a player-to-word association game. For example, Ochocinco

very little comparison. Or at least, not one that anyone will want you to bring back up. Also, don't mention Canadian football. I've heard they play it on ice, but regardless, let them stick to their ice hockey. Talking while the game is actually taking place is not something you should do, the average play seems to be done in less than 30 seconds, try and contain yourself until the minute

There are probably many more ideas and thoughts that have been moronically omitted in these 1000 words, if you'd like to have your say why not write a sports piece on your thoughts? Possibly for the Americans out there perhaps a piece on how perspectives from across the pond differ on your beloved sports teams, or how I've just butchered one of your sports.

Sport

Inside

- Dalglish deserves some blame
- I know who you did last Wednesday
- Rugby 2's off to flying start

Say no to skirts for female boxers

Elizabeth Plank

With the London 2012 Olympics rapidly approaching, I am eagerly awaiting the inauguration of female boxing as an official discipline. Despite this being a long overdue development, as a beginner to the sport, I am thrilled to see female boxers finally gracing the ring at the most important sporting event of the year.

In preparation, the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA) met yesterday to discuss the games and draw up recommendations, including suitable dress requirements. One of the items up for discussion was whether female boxers should have to wear skirts.

Last year, they suggested that wearing skirts would make female athletes look 'elegant' and help 'distinguish' them from their male counterparts. In other words, they are recommending that a female boxer's performance as an athlete should align with her performance as a feminine woman.

This emphasis placed on gendered norms highlighting delicateness and grace is certainly not aligned with

the way I understand boxing as a discipline, nor does it fit into the current social reality where women and men are given equal credence as athletes.

What does elegance have to do with boxing anyways? There is nothing pretty about it. Boxing is strenuous, fatiguing and comes with its share of aches, pains, hits and unanticipated smacks.

My body still refuses to forgive me for the aftermath of my first training. The pain in my joints was so visceral that even typing a four-letter word became a cringe inducing task. Any graduate student or self-proclaimed Twitter addict like myself can relate to the level of debilitation this can have on your life!

Nevertheless, there is a particular kind of beauty in roughness. Boxing invigorates and animates every muscle and fragment of flesh in my body. I still remember the astonishment of my coach in reaction to the amount of power I was able to harness in my first punch. What is it about the strength of women that still shocks us?

What is so intolerable about a woman in control of her abilities that makes an organisation like the AIBA want to confine her to a mini-skirt? If



Flickr: Steve Tolcher

there is something menacing about a woman in shorts it suggests that there is still something menacing about a woman in full ability to thrive. While men are taught to apologise for their weaknesses, women are still expected

to apologise for their strengths.

In a way, boxing encapsulates everything that is frequently socially discouraged of women.

However, in my opinion, there is nothing more satisfying than doing

something that isn't expected. When someone expects you to be weak, have the courage to be strong. When someone expects you to be compliant, demonstrate the bravery to resist. If women are told they must be seen not heard, then they must stand up and speak louder. Given that we are often instructed not to fight back, it's about time we enter the metaphorical ring and kick some serious figurative butt.

This petition is not about a piece of fabric, it's about athletes. It's not about their clothing, it's about their credibility. If there's one lesson I've learned through my experience as a boxer is that when someone throws a punch, curling up in the foetal position is not an option. You stand up and you fight. You don't ask for power, you just take it.

Sign the petition on Change.org now and show the AIBA we're not willing to throw in the towel before we've won the fight! The petition currently has over 50,000 signatures.

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LET'S TALK TACTICS



A crucial week for Liverpool

Timothy Poole

Seasons are defined by moments; a matter of seconds provides the thinnest of margins between success and failure. For Liverpool, that ever-present sleeping giant, success is but a few steps away; yet for every player, coach or fan, failure must, dauntingly, seem even closer.

In the week ahead, both Manchester City and Manchester United visit fortress Anfield for pivotal cup ties. Few games come bigger in world football and few games could hold more importance for a club aiming so desperately to re-live the heights of its glorious past. Alas, with these two ties comes a crucial week for the red half of Merseyside, a week that will make or break their season.

One will often argue that a top four finish and the Champions League football this brings as its reward is financially and statistically justified as a major club's top priority. Yet, success breeds success and, for a club without silverware since 2006, enough is enough - the chain must be broken. The basis of the argument: Liverpool must win a Cup trophy this year, even if it means concentrating less on a top four finish. The fact that Liverpool could potentially make their first ever

appearance at the New Wembley is one that would not have gone unnoticed on the Kop. With the club currently lingering well below fourth place in the league, the target of cup success must be emphasised profoundly.

Thus far, manager, Kenny Dalglish, has done so accordingly; the Scot got his tactics spot on in the first leg of the Carling Cup semi-final and coolly dispatched of Oldham Athletic in the FA Cup (a tie previous Liverpool sides may well have found tricky). Progressing to the final of the Carling Cup would invariably make the club favourites for the trophy against Championship opposition in the form of either Crystal Palace or Cardiff. Similarly, overcoming Manchester United four days later would provide a huge step towards potential FA Cup glory. These two ties may well be the difference between a successful season and another year thrown into the dustiest corner of the sporting history books.

The project at Liverpool, as is the case with the majority of clubs, is a long term one. Success won't come right away. League titles won't fall off trees and Premiership campaigns will contain misfortune, inconsistency and difficult challenges. An antidote for this comes in the shape of momentum, which is built up over time.

Two prime examples can be extracted from last season. Manchester



Flickr: pat_malkhoul

City, having gone 33 years without a trophy, faced Manchester United in an FA Cup semi-final. They won that semi-final. They then went on to win the tournament and are now challenging for the league title. A couple of months earlier, Arsenal had reached the Carling Cup final. They lost that final (to the now relegated Birmingham). Subsequently, their season fell to pieces, with their form failing to recover since. See the pattern? Single moments changed the long-term fortunes of each club. Yaya Toure's winner for City was in stark contrast to Arsenal's catastrophic defending

in the dying stages of that infamous Carling Cup defeat. Yes, there are Sheik Mansour's billions playing a big factor, but the case here is that winning builds momentum, whilst losing can have aftershocks that match those of the Great Depression.

If Liverpool were to push forward and break their trophy duck, their long-term credentials would vastly improve - be it in the league, the transfer market or Europe. Would it be better to be known as the fourth best team in the league or a team feared across Europe for winning two trophies in one season by overcom-

ing their fiercest rivals? The fact is that Liverpool are now back to a state where they can compete with the best teams in the country and attempt to win silverware. The club must take their chances and the excuse of 'prioritising a top four finish' (especially when Liverpool seem so incapable of doing so) must be banished.

Glory is close. Liverpool fans can see it, smell it, and almost hear it - how strong their desire is to sing 'you'll never walk alone' after a winning cup final once again. Yet, whether the club can take that massive leap in the right direction depends on how they fare in the crucial week ahead. It all comes down to those all important moments, a matter of seconds - the difference between winning and losing. After all, seasons are defined by moments and Liverpool's will be decided in the next five days.

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