

London Student of the Year

This year's London Student of the Year award, sponsored by Waterstone's, has been won by LSE student Elizabeth (Lizzie) Fison.

The award, which is the most prestigious of the laurel awards given by the University of London Student Union, is given for excellence, achievement and dedication. It carries a prize of £500 plus £250 in book tokens and tickets to all Waterstone's Gower Street events for a year.

Lizzie won the award because of her commendable ability to keep up with her studies and remain an active participant in classes, despite living with ME. Because of ME, she needs to use a wheelchair. She is limited to a maximum of four hours of studying per day and her immune system is also impaired. Despite these challenges, this year Lizzie has served as the Students with Disabilities officer for the Students' Union, helping to improve the lives of her fellow students. She stayed in touch with a blog, revived the SU's Disability and Wellbeing Society and rewrote a handbook containing invaluable advice. She was also responsible for the introduction of a voluntary early entrance scheme for Freshers' Fayre which made the event much more accessible for a wide range of students.

Lizzie has been a constant advocate, voicing the needs of disabled students at LSE's termly Disability and Diversity Consultative Forum, working with peers to improve the Disability Equality Scheme and alerting people to access problems.

Lizzie said: 'For me, it was a huge achievement getting to university having had ME since the age of 13. It had been a real battle to complete secondary education but thankfully, I had a

strong and supportive mother.

Coming to LSE has offered me an opportunity to give back to other people some of the support I have had. I guess I just feel very strongly that, where I see areas that need improving, then somebody should draw attention to that.

'I feel honoured and touched to have received this award as it shows that people recognise the efforts I have made, working with friends and colleagues at the School. I hope that receiving this award will encourage others to contribute positively in any way they can to improving the world around them. Even small gestures can have a profound effect.

'I'm looking forward to using the prize money to fund courses in British Sign Language as I hope to become an interpreter, and of course, to treating myself to a massage session. The book tokens are ideal for a bookworm like me, but mum jokes I'll need to get another bookcase.'



Academics abroad

As president of the International Communication Association (ICA), Sonia Livingstone, Department of Media and Communication, will chair the ICA Board of Directors and deliver her presidential address to the annual conference of nearly 2,000 communication scholars meeting in Montreal on 24 May.

Her lecture, entitled *On the Mediation of Everything?*, will subsequently be published in ICA's premier journal, the Journal of Communication.



Media bites

'We underestimated the risks... we underestimated the damage associated with the temperature increases... and we underestimated the probabilities of temperature increases.'

Professor Lord Stern, *FT*, 17/4/08

'Religious-like phenomena in general are an inseparable part of a key adaptation unique to modern humans, and this is the capacity to imagine other worlds, an adaptation that I argue is the very foundation of the sociality of modern human society. Once we realise this omnipresence of the imaginary in the everyday, nothing special is left to explain concerning religion.'

Maurice Bloch, *New Scientist*, 28/4/08



Bernard Levin Award

Julia Belluz, MSc student in social anthropology, is the second winner of the Bernard Levin Award, with her essay *London as a Moveable Feast*.

The Award, set up in 2007 to celebrate the life of outstanding journalist and LSE alumnus Bernard Levin, invites LSE students to enter a competition by submitting a 1,000 word article on the life around the School campus in central London. The prize is an internship with a media organisation plus £500 and a night at the theatre or opera.



Julia (pictured left with last year's winner Justin Gest) wrote an original essay split into four vignettes: a conversation about gender-based cultural practices; a student's pursuit of the Italian ice-cream gelato; an LSE performance at the Old Vic Theatre; and ideas sprung from a trip to Madrid.

The judges said they: 'especially liked the structure, as well as the way the essay holds the readers interest and the writing quality.'

Julia said: 'Receiving this award is a great honour. Now living up to the Levin legacy is the great challenge. I think any young journalist would be pleased with a career that is a fraction as rich and colourful as Levin's.'

There were three runners up this year, Lindsey Hall (MSc Media and

Communications) with *Let's all go Down to the Strand*, Elisa Prosperetti (third year, BSc History and International Relations) with *The Opiate of the Achiever*, and Alex Teytelboym (third year, BSc Economics) with *An Unusual Reunion*. All three were 'considered of excellent character and interest, for both content and style.'

To read the winning essay, go to: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/PDF/LondonasaMoveableFeast.pdf

Bernard Levin (BSc Government 1949) started his journalism career whilst at LSE – contributing to the School's Clare Market Review magazine and Beaver newspaper. He went on to become the top columnist at The Times after writing for The Guardian, The Observer, The Spectator and contributing to many other journals and books on subjects ranging from travel to opera.

The deadline for the 2009 award is Saturday 28 February 2009. For details and an application form, see: www.lsesu.com/pages/your_union/awards/bernard_levin.html or email su.treasurer@lse.ac.uk Entries must be submitted to: The Annual Bernard Levin Award, c/o The Treasurer, LSE Students' Union, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.



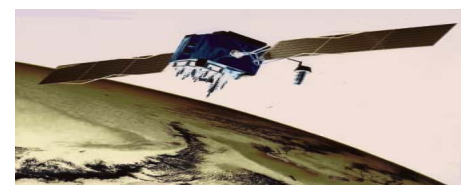
L-r: Elisa Prosperetti, Julia Belluz, Alex Teytelboym, Lindsey Hall

Anniversary conference

LSE's Media and Communications Department is celebrating its fifth anniversary with an international conference, *Media, Communication and Humanity* at the School, 21-23 September.

Some 250 media and communications scholars from around the world are expected to attend. Over 120 papers have been accepted from academics offering critical theories and new empirical analyses on how the media shapes our perceptions of the human condition and how it influences human values, actions and social relations.

Leading scholars will debate issues in plenary sessions on *Global Media and Culture*, *Media, Morality and Humanitarian Communication*, and *Media Power and Strategic Action*. The conference will address issues of communication and difference, democracy, politics and journalism ethics, globalisation, innovation, governance and policy.



Speakers include: Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Annenberg School for Communication; Lilie Chouliarakis, LSE; Peter Dahlgren, Lund University; Daniel Dayan, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; John Downing, Southern Illinois University; Anthony Giddens, former director, LSE; Carolyn Marvin, Annenberg School for Communication; Mark Poster; University of California, Irvine.

If you would like to attend, please register at: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/media@lse/conference

Public Lectures

free and unticketed unless otherwise stated

British EU Commissioner in association with FT Business

LORD PATTEN

Is there a European Foreign Policy?

Wednesday 21 May, 6.30-8pm, Old Theatre

Lord Patten served as a minister in the governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major from 1983 to 1992, holding the position of chairman of the Conservative party from 1990 to 1992. From 1992 to 1997 he was governor of Hong Kong and from 1998 to 1999 he was chairman of the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland. He became a European commissioner in 1999, responsible for external affairs until 2004.

Sir Patrick Gillam public lecture

PROFESSOR ANDREW SHENG

Finance in East Asia: from crisis to integration – challenges of second generation reforms

Wednesday 21 May, 6.30-8pm, New Theatre

The lecture will look at structural changes in the financial landscape in East Asia, and issues being faced by reformers and regulators, including in China, on raising the game of globalising Asia.

Andrew Sheng is chief adviser to the China Banking Regulatory Commission.

Centre for Civil Society (Social Policy) and DESTIN

PROFESSOR JAMES SCOTT

Why Civilisations Can't Climb Hills: a political history of statelessness in Southeast Asia

Thursday 22 May, 6.30-7.45pm, New Theatre

Professor Scott argues that the hill peoples of mainland Southeast Asia are fugitive, runaway populations, practising 'escape agriculture, structure' and 'culture'.

Jim Scott is Sterling Professor of Political Science and Anthropology at Yale University.

Crisis States Research Centre

DR ASHRAF GHANI, AND CLARE LOCKHART

Fixing Failed States

Thursday 22 May, 6.30-8pm, Old Theatre

Authors Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart challenge existing concepts of state systems and offer new ways of fostering bonds between states, civil societies and markets. This event marks the launch of Fixing Failed States – A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World (OUP, May 2008).

Ashraf Ghani is chancellor of Kabul University and former finance minister of Afghanistan. Clare Lockhart is a specialist in law and public administration and has worked as a government adviser in Afghanistan.

Colloquium

LSE Mathematics Department

PETRA BERENBRINK, REINHARD DIESTEL, DERYK OSTHUS, OLIVER

RIORDAN, JOHN TALBOT, AND DAVID WAGNER

One-Day Colloquium in Combinatorics

Thursday 22 May, 10am-5pm, New Theatre

Six invited speakers will give talks on different aspects of combinatorics and related disciplines.

Free and unticketed. For more information, please email: s.jolly@lse.ac.uk

noticeboard

Celebrating the curve

The SU shop is selling special T-shirts to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Phillips Curve. The shirts cost £12.50 each and were the idea of SU general manager Gethin Roberts.

The Phillips Curve is the work of Bill Phillips who was made Tooke Professor at LSE in 1958. The curve explored the connection between the UK unemployment rate and wage inflation over the business cycle.



Joint seminar

LSE Methodology Institute and National Centre for Social Research are hosting joint seminar on Tuesday 1 July, 5pm, National Centre for Social Research, Meeting Room A, 35 Northampton Square. Alison Park and Sir Roger Jowell: Conducting Cross-National Research, With a Particular Focus on ESS and ISSP.

House hunting?

Professional property hunters Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer are taking on the challenge of finding dream homes for people throughout the UK for the popular Channel 4 show, Relocation Relocation. The programme is looking for house hunters who are actively searching for two properties or alternatively a business property with an attached residence.

If you are interested in taking part in the show, contact Bernie Kelly on 0141 353 8424 or at bernadette.kelly@iwcmedia.co.uk or Craig Duncan on 0141 353 8438 or at craig.duncan@iwcmedia.co.uk. Alternatively, you can apply on the Channel 4 website at www.meontv.co.uk/relocationrelocationrelocation.

Quiz challenge

Exceptional quiz contestants are now being sought for a new BBC series, The Battle of the Brains quiz.

If you are a superior quizzier, and think you have what it takes to beat some of the best in the country, Shine want to hear from you.

Shine are looking for teams of seven people whose combined general knowledge and specialist expertise could make them the ultimate quiz champions.

So, if you, your friends and colleagues, think you can combine forces to battle your way towards national glory, then contact Shine now for more information and to receive an application form.

Email: battleofthebrains@shinelimited.com

Small ads

To let: three-bed garden flat near Arsenal, North London. Large living space and conservatory study. Perfect for academic with children. £1,600 per month. 12 months minimum. Available from mid-August. Contact: m.glasius@lse.ac.uk

To rent: delightful self-contained, fully equipped one bedroom flat in Georgian Square, adjacent to the Imperial War Museum. Just over one mile from LSE. Suitable for couple or single person. £260 p/w plus utilities. Tel: 020 7735 3116, email: jbourlet@hotmail.co.uk

To rent: attractive Chalk Farm flat, close to tube and direct buses to LSE. Living/bedroom, sunny kitchen/diner, shower/separate WC. Fully furnished, well decorated, c/h. Rental: £240 p/w includes all bills except phone. Suit couple or single. N/S only. Contact: 020 7482 0158, email: r.fitzgerald@alumni.lse.ac.uk

Confused/unsure about which career path to take? Life coaching can help clarify options, focus your life and career objectives and help you better understand your motivations. Through clear and practical steps, you can work towards your goals within a safe and confidential environment, call 07729 163347.

Need help with your essay writing or with your English? Finding it hard to structure your essays and convey your points? Professional, experienced and qualified one-to-one tutoring offered, individually tailored to meet your specific requirements, call 07729 163347.

Training opportunities at LSE

Academic, personal and professional development courses are available for all LSE staff and students. Courses on offer this month include:			For further details and a full listing of what is available, including booking information, please see: www.lse.ac.uk/training For training in:		
Monday 19 May			European information , please email Maria Bell at: m.bell@lse.ac.uk		
<i>Excel 2003: advanced functions</i>		2pm	Business Information , please email Barbara Humphries at: b.humphries@lse.ac.uk		
<i>Staff IT Training Workshop</i>		4pm	US Government publications , please email Clive Wilson at: clive.wilson@lse.ac.uk		
Tuesday 20 May			UK Government publications , please email Ken Gibbons at: k.gibbons@lse.ac.uk		
<i>FrontPage 2003: managing your website</i>		1.30pm			
<i>FrontPage: managing your website</i>		2pm			
Wednesday 21 May					
<i>Excel: macros</i>		2pm			
Thursday 22 May					
<i>Powerpoint: templates and animation</i>		2pm			
Friday 23 May					
<i>HTML: simple HTML</i>		2pm			

Benefits encourage inequality

The Impact of Benefit and Tax Uprating on Incomes and Poverty by John Hills, professor of social policy and director of CASE, LSE; Professor Holly Sutherland (report leader), Institute of Social and Economic Research, Essex University, and research associate, CASE; Martin Evans, senior research fellow, Social Policy and Social Work, Oxford University; Ruth Hancock, professor of economics of health and welfare, Health Economics Group, East Anglia University; and Francesca Zantomio, senior research officer, Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), Essex University.



According to this report, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the ways in which benefits, tax credits and allowances are adjusted from year to year exacerbate rather than reduce income inequality unless governments take additional action every year. Most benefits and tax credits only rise, or uprate, in line with inflation and therefore fall behind increases in average incomes.

Thus, the benefits of the lowest earners rise more slowly than the earnings of the average person, widening the gap between the overall income of the two groups. This could result in child poverty rising to unprecedented levels within 20 years.

The report's main findings include:

- people on both higher and lower incomes lose out from the slow uprating of taxes and benefits, but those on the lowest incomes bear the greatest burden

• if nothing else changes in the next 20 years:

- the worst-off fifth of the population could lose about 17 per cent of their income compared to only five per cent lost by the wealthiest fifth
- there would be considerable reduction in the proportion of national income spent on benefits, despite an increase in the proportion raised in tax
- resources available for public spending would rise but the cost would fall disproportionately on people on low incomes
- relative poverty would rise as the income of the poorer non-pensioner population would fall behind the population as a whole
- for children, the poverty rate would rise from 18 per cent to 33 per cent in two decades, assuming nothing else changed

Professor Hills said: 'The amounts by which benefit rates and tax thresholds are adjusted each year is one of the largest decisions in British politics, and yet the basis of most of those adjustments is seldom debated. 'This report highlights the long-term consequences of leaving the adjustments – or in some cases lack of adjustment – on 'auto-pilot'. In particular, it shows how this would push against the government's ambition of reducing child poverty.'

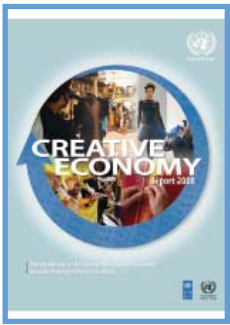
The report concluded that although extra measures such as those announced in this year's Budget can help counteract the effects of the system on child poverty, such ad hoc rises are not a substitute for a fair system that routinely ensures that the incomes of the least well-off people keep up with those on an average income.

To download a copy of the report, see: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/PDF/BenefitsTaxationPoverty.pdf

Creativity creating wealth

The Creative Economy Report 2008, by Dr Andy Pratt, Department of Geography and Environment, et al

This report finds that human creativity has the potential to generate income, jobs and export earnings and that a 'creative economy' has already begun to do this in the advanced economies of the world. However, it also seems to be a feasible option for developing countries.



The report, a joint initiative by five United Nations organisations, is the first comprehensive study to present the United Nations' perspective on this emerging topic.

The report claims that if effective public policies are put in place, the creative economy could generate development dimensions, offering new opportunities for developing countries to leapfrog into high-growth areas of the world economy.

According to the report, it is clear that developed countries still dominate the global market for creative products. Nonetheless,

many developing country products are already benefiting from the creative industry boom, particularly in Asia. Unfortunately, however, despite the richness of their cultural diversity and the abundance of creative talent, the large majority of developing countries are not yet fully benefiting from the enormous potential of their creative economies to improve development gains.

The report uses a series of case studies to illustrate how the potential of developing countries is being overlooked. For example, in Nigeria, music plays an important part in daily life but evidence of formal production and circulation of recorded music products is extremely limited.

Dr Pratt said: 'This report will act as a wake up call for many nations who have dismissed the creative economy as insignificant: here we can gauge the true scale of the creative economy. 'It highlights how on the one hand the developing world has considerable strengths in the creative economy, and on the other how there are significant imbalances in power over the control of systems of creative product distribution and copyright payments that are holding back further development.'

To download a copy of the report, go to: www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditc20082cer_en.pdf

Library news

BUDDY SERVICE FOR USERS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to a whole range of Library services for users with disabilities, a buddy service is available.

Particularly useful at exam time, this service provides a contact member of staff who will advise and assist with Library usage and also fast track requests for further and more individualised assistance where necessary.

If you are interested please email: library.disability.assistance@lse.ac.uk or visit the Library website.

A booklet called *Information for Library Users with Disabilities* is also available in the Library.



Latest ID costings increase risk

The latest government cost report for setting up ID cards reveals it will no longer include iris biometrics, in order to keep the price below £30. Instead, the scheme will rely solely on fingerprint and face biometrics – collected on the 'open market'.

This method is cheaper but less secure as Dr Edgar A Whitley of the LSE Identity Project explains: 'It is worrying that the only way that the government can still keep to its initial promise that an identity card will only cost £30 is by effectively excluding the biometric enrolment element from the Scheme.

'At a time when we are told we should feel confident that our identity data will be kept securely, because it will be linked to our biometrics, the government is proposing that the collection of this biometric data should be left to the open market. Presumably this means that grocery stores and post offices will be encouraged to set up biometric enrolment kiosks, with little financial gain to them unless the citizen is charged. Ensuring adequate security in such environments will be challenging.

'Thus, while the headline costs of the scheme to the government go down, the costs and risks to the citizen rise. This is not what parliament was led to expect and causes us to question how this version of the Scheme will offer greater benefits than existing identity assurance measures.'

A detailed analysis of the implications of the government's latest statement about the costs of the Scheme will be published at: <http://identityproject.lse.ac.uk>

Diary

Open to all unless otherwise stated

Wednesday 21 May

4.30-6pm. R505. Social Exclusion seminar. Mel Bartley: *Would Increasing Social Mobility be Effective in Reducing Health Inequality?*

5pm. R405. FMG Capital Markets workshop. Efraim Benmelech: *Vintage Capital and Creditor Protection.*

6-7.30pm. J116. Cañada Blanch seminar. Alfonso Casas y Pedro López: *La Batalla de Teruel.*

Thursday 22 May

4-6pm. Graham Wallace Room. *Foreign Aid, Civil Society and Human Welfare in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan* CCS seminar. Charles Buxton: *Trends in NGO-Donor Relations in Kyrgyzstan*; Babken Babajanian: *Foreign Aid and Local Development in Rural Kyrgyzstan*; Medet Tiulegenov: *Social Service NGOs and the Government of Kyrgyzstan: an attempt to forge partnership through social contracting*; Mathijs Pelkmans: *The Spirit of Aid and the Politics of Faith: secular and Christian missions to Muslim Kyrgyzstan.*

6.30pm. B212. IDEAS seminar. David Painter: *Oil and the American Century.*

Friday 23 May

10.30am-12.30pm. A607. Anthropological Theory research seminar. Narmala Halstead: *Victims and Agents Un-made in Guyana.*