



# The Journal

EDINBURGH'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER

ISSUE III

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MONDAY 3 DECEMBER 2007

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Edinburgh University  
suffer cruel defeat ▶24

## Iain Banks

The acclaimed author on being  
Brown's neighbour ▶17



# City landlord keeps dozens of immigrants in squalor

50 Eastern European migrants housed in slum-like conditions

Eight adults and three children sleeping in single bedroom

**Miles Johnson**

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AN EDINBURGH LANDLORD has been profiting from housing over 50 Romanian migrants in squalid conditions, an exclusive investigation by *The Journal* can reveal.

Dalear Singh, aged 30, has been charging migrant families from £300 to £400 per month in cash for rooms in a flat near Leith Walk where at least 50 migrants are being housed. Eleven people were occupying one of the most cramped rooms including two children aged eight and four, and a baby.

*The Journal* also discovered that Mr Singh—who purchased the Leith flat in 2005 for £250,000—owns another property in Edinburgh's Portobello area where more Romanian migrant workers are believed to be living.

The migrants were moved from the flat into temporary accommodation last Friday after the council intervened as a result of *The Journal's* investigation.

A total of three city properties are owned by Mr Singh—one of which he lives in with his wife—with the total value of his portfolio estimated at over a half a million pounds. The monthly income from the Leith Walk property is estimated to be close to £4000, a figure

far above the average rent for a flat of its type in the Leith Walk area.

The occupants, mainly of Roma origin, speak little English and have been offered no written tenancy contract by Mr Singh, a violation of housing law that allows the landlord to ignore basic rights given to legal tenants. One of the occupants described the conditions as "misery" while others made allegations of mistreatment at the hands of Mr Singh and his associates.

It has been discovered that several of the occupants have been evicted from the property in the last week despite having paid their rent. As no written contract exists between the Romanians and Mr Singh, he was free to evict occupants without warning.

After obtaining access to the flat,

*The Journal* was informed by the occupant that they had been brought to Edinburgh having been promised work in the capital. One of the migrants told

*The Journal* that a man in Romania had purchased their flight to Edinburgh and that they could not return until they could pay back the money,

an amount thought to be around £300. Another said that they had sold all of their possessions in order to afford the journey to Scotland.

*Continued on page 2*



People spotted entering flat shared by over fifty Devon Walshe

Also in The Journal this week...

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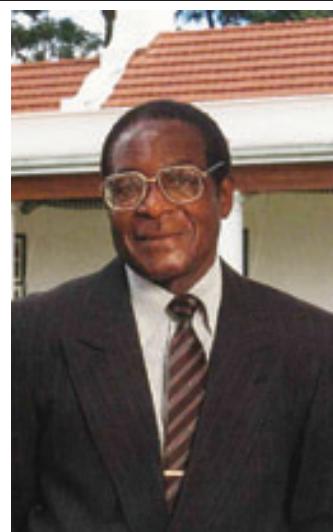


What do student politicians want for Christmas?

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Heriot-Watt leads the campaign by Edinburgh students' associations to combat student poverty.

COMMENT page 14



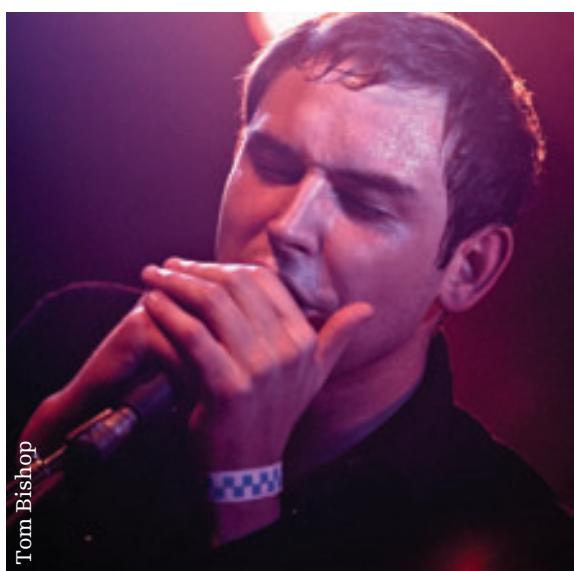
The corrupt revolutionary

Zimbabwean journalist Conrad Nyamutata analyses Mugabe's metamorphosis from freedom fighter to violent oppressor

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Tom Bishop

## The Twilight Sad

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## Fine drinking

**Nana Wereko-Brobby** enjoys a fine festive tipple at one of Edinburgh's classier drinking establishments

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## A night at the opera?

The Scottish Opera opens the 2007–08 season with stirring adaptations of classic operatic comedy, says **Evan Beswick**

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## City landlord keeps dozens of immigrants in squalor



Continued from page 1

Unable to find legal employment due to British labour restrictions on migrant workers coming from Romania and Bulgaria, the women in the group have been begging and selling *The Big Issue* across the city centre.

The men are thought to be finding temporary employment with gangmasters. One male member of the group said that he had been employed to pick fruit and that he and others had been transported to Glasgow to work. On one occasion migrants were observed getting into the back of a white Mercedes Sprint van outside the flat in the early evening. They then drove to a Leith industrial car park where they waited inside the vehicle for over an hour before another van containing men and women of Eastern European appearance arrived and both vans departed.

There have been several police

raids on similar properties in the last year in efforts to clamp down on criminal gangs trafficking immigrants into Edinburgh. It has been discovered that in some cases women have been trafficked from Eastern Europe and forced into prostitution.

Edinburgh City Council were informed of *The Journal's* investigation on Wednesday 28 November. Cllr Paul Edie, Housing Convener, informed *The Journal* that "overcrowding, particularly of this type, is unacceptable to the Council and we will not hesitate to pursue landlords who either endorse this behaviour, or indeed, allow it to happen in their property."

He continued: "We would appeal to anyone who suspects overcrowding is occurring in a property to get in touch with our enforcement services."

*The Journal* attempted to contact Mr Singh, but he was unavailable for comment.

# The Journal

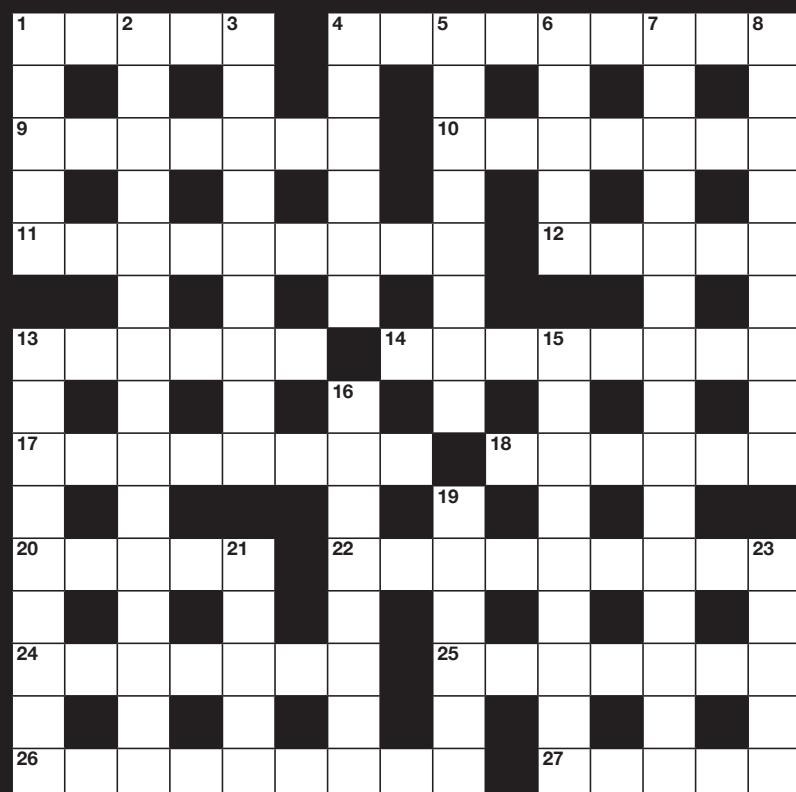
EDINBURGH'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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## Cryptic Crossword

Win a bottle of wine and a tin of top-quality haggis by sending in your correctly-completed crossword! Winners will be drawn from a hat. Send entries to The Journal, 52 Clerk Street, Edinburgh EH8 9JB



### Across

- 1 Dash back east for exchange (5)
- 4 A cobra moving with a twitch is agile (9)
- 9 Judge beginning to lecture mirror (7)
- 10 Shape built around dead tree forming German city (7)
- 11 Composer from Sussex town bashed around, we're told, perhaps (9)
- 12 Yes - Italian sailor's stringed instrument (5)
- 13 Birds follow at Greek city (6)
- 14 Mediterranean liquid in vile loo I used (5,3)
- 17 New ten duets are unproven (8)
- 18 Flowing influenza and enteritis beginning (6)
- 20 'sblood! One chorus is cut short (5)
- 22 A draw is boring, pal (9)
- 24 Stark comic character and triathlete? (4,3)
- 25 Bedding for virgin alien (7)
- 26 Create work hours for temp? (9)
- 27 Baseless fear is a mistake (5)

### Down

- 1 Pulse concealed within bathrobe (5)
- 2 Director's resort chic folk charted (6,9)
- 3 Manoeuvre the planes for big beasts (9)
- 4 Working contract I've held (6)
- 5 Trust about change lately (8)
- 6 Christmas whisky? (5)
- 7 Lofty performer is mean, twisted pale worker (9,6)
- 8 Car hidden in the clover (9)
- 13 You can call this Al (9)
- 15 About turn with feet, vocal shift (5-4)
- 16 Liken his novel to Finnish city (8)
- 19 Talk with an animal? (6)
- 21 Twin is in care: must be adopted? (5)
- 23 Submit for tormenter's ends (5)

## Issue II solution



Congratulations to last week's winner Laura A McGarvey, the winner of a bottle of wine and a tin of quality St. Andrew's Day haggis!

# No drugs amnesty for capital after all...

Evening News article took comments "wildly out of context"

Police keen to redress public misconception over briefing



Hopes that drug posession would not result in arrest have been quashed by police clarification

**Graham Mackay**

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LOTHIAN AND BORDERS Police were left slightly bemused last week to find a local newspaper carrying reports of an impending "drugs amnesty" despite no such plans existing.

The article, published in the *Edinburgh Evening News* on Monday 26 November, claimed that "People carrying 'small' quantities of cocaine, heroin, ecstasy and other illegal substances would simply have them confiscated" under a new proposal by the police force aiming to free up police resources.

However, Lothian and Borders Police has clarified that the allegedly proposed amnesty is "a comment taken severely out of context."

As it transpires, a mere suggestion made at a conference was overheard by a mystery police officer, who leaked the information to the *Evening*

*News*, resulting in a dubious front page story the following morning.

Unsurprisingly, the *Evening News* and its fellow Johnston Press-owned publication *The Scotsman* were the only two papers to cover the story.

Speaking to *The Journal*, a senior official at the police press office said: "This all began at a formal police briefing in the city centre, where the attendants were discussing how to get more bobbies on the beat."

He continued: "An unidentified officer overheard a suggestion made by a colleague concerning the possibility of increasing the number of on-duty police on the street by lessening the punishment for those caught in minor possession of drugs.

"The officer concerned ripped the comment wildly out of context and sold the false information to the *Edinburgh Evening News* that night. Despite our best efforts, the story was published the following day."

The article, which went into con-

**"The officer concerned ripped the comment wildly out of context and sold the false information to the Edinburgh Evening News that night"**

siderably intricate detail for a journalistic 'cock-and-bull story', also claimed: "Door staff at pubs and clubs would also be told not to call police when they catch someone carrying drugs for personal use. Instead, staff will be asked to store them in sealed containers until they can be collected at a later date by officers."

The article's credibility seemed questionable in more ways than one. Ending with the statement: "A Scottish Government spokesman maintained that cracking down on drug possession remained official policy," the validity of the proposed amnesty appeared uncertain as the police would require the government's overwhelming support if such a move were to be implemented.

Furthermore, the story featured a quote from Councillor Iain Whyte, convenor of the police board, who claimed, with regard to the proposition of placing door staff in charge of the handling of confiscated drugs:

"This is not something that I have been made aware of. I would be concerned to think that we encourage door staff to confiscate drugs when we can't be sure where they would end up."

Clarifying the stance of Lothian and Borders police following the *Evening News*'s article, a spokesman for the force said: "Drug possession is an issue that we take seriously as a force, and there are no official plans to introduce an amnesty for minor drug possession in the city centre."

"We are mindful that officers can be taken away from the street at critical times to deal with cases of minor possession, but we are equally mindful that the possession of drugs is unlawful."

"If we wanted to take this forward there would have to be approval from the Chief Constable, as well as discussions with our partners in Edinburgh City Council and the Crown Office."

"At this moment we have no plans to take this suggestion further."



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# 4 News

## Solving hunger one grain at a time



### Junta Sekimori

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A VIGOROUS TORRENT of online dawdlers have contributed more than 5 billion grains of rice towards the world hunger relief over the past eight weeks through an enterprising website that has teamed innovation with procrastination.

FreeRice.com, a browser-based vocabulary game, promises to award 20 grains of rice to the World Food Programme (WFP) for each correct definition of English words. Whilst on its inception date of 7 October the site managed to raise only 830 grains, it has since exploded in popularity, and currently raises an average of 350 million grains every day.

The game comprises a database of several thousand words ranging from the commonplace to the staggeringly obscure. The words are categorised into 50 levels of varying difficulty determined by a system that takes into account what people are commonly getting right or wrong. For every three words that the player identifies cor-

rectly, the difficulty notches up a level and every wrong answer incurs a demotion. All the while, an onscreen bowl fills up with rice, feeding the hungry whilst nourishing the intellect.

According to the site, "there are words appropriate for people just learning English and words that will challenge the most scholarly professors." It claims that it is rare for people to reach a level of 48 or above.

Professor Randall Stevenson, head of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh and who reached level 46, worth 500 grains of rice, on his first attempt, said: "It gets difficult even after 200 grains or so. I confess I had to phone a friend along the way, or, more accurately, happened to have a conveniently learned friend on the phone at the right moment to help work out what a 'scap' might be."

FreeRice pays for the rice from the income it generates from companies that advertise on the website through a cost per action (CPA) system. Toshiba, Fujitsu and American Express are among the assorted organisations that support the site and indirectly

fight global hunger. In a recent radio interview the site's creator John Breen stated that over \$100,000 (£49,000) has been cultivated so far for the WFP in this way.

Breen is no newcomer to internet innovation. In 1999 he established The Hunger Site, a similarly charitable venture which invited visitors to click on a button once per day to donate just over a cup's worth of food to those in need. Over 200 million visitors have

given upwards of 300 million cups of staple food on this site to date.

Speaking of FreeRice, Breen stated: "The ethos of this project is to help people do what they all seem to want to do, which is to end hunger. If we all want to do it, let's do it!"

Some have shown to have more zeal on this matter than others. Among the hundred plus Facebook groups that have rallied to Breen's cause is one called Free Rice Helpers which pro-

vides a download link for a computer programme that unleashes a 'ricebot' upon the site designed to philanthropically plough the site of its virtual rice by automatically and tirelessly clicking on answers for as long as the computer remains switched on. The group's administrator Ran Amitay ex-

plains, "just run it and watch your pile of rice growing. It even 'presses' the ads links once in a while so everyone will be happy."

## More city centre night attacks lead to Christmas restrictions

### Hamish Fergusson

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A LARGE-SCALE CRACKDOWN on anti-social behaviour in the city centre has been launched by police, following a spate of violent assaults outside Edinburgh nightclubs.

The initiative, which began on Friday 30 November, will see city council wardens assist officers on the ground and create a high-visibility police presence throughout December in a bid to make the city's nightlife safer for festive revellers.

In addition, for the second year running, transport marshals will monitor taxi ranks and bus stops to ensure that clubbers get home safely. Chief Superintendent George Simpson, police commander for Edinburgh, said: "We want everyone to be able to enjoy themselves but to do it safely. We would remind people of the dangers of drinking too much or taking drugs, and leaving themselves vulnerable."

The drive was announced following reports of three violent attacks within ten days in and outside popular city nightspots.

In the early hours of Sunday 18 November, a 27-year-old woman suffered a serious sexual assault behind the Playhouse Theatre. The victim is thought to have left a nightclub at the top of Leith Walk, before talking to a lead suspect at the Omni Centre taxi rank.

On the Cowgate, a 21-year-old man was left with a fractured skull after being attacked inside The Base nightclub, formerly known as Subway. The victim was approached by the suspect on the dancefloor shortly before 3am. He was punched in the head before being pushed down a flight of stairs. And in another incident on Wednesday 28 November, a man was seriously assaulted on Blair Street, Cowgate while returning home at 12.40am.

Police are appealing for witnesses to each of the crimes, which have come within a month of the launch of Unight, a joint scheme targeting threatening behaviour in 21 nightclubs across the city. By trading CCTV footage of persistent troublemakers, the partnership

imposes blanket bans on violent patrons, preventing them from entering any of the member venues for a set period of time.

But the initiative makes no provision for clubbers' behaviour outside its establishments. The police crackdown this December aims to rid Edinburgh's streets of the threat of violence at a time of year when alcohol related disorder can reach its annual peak.

Alcohol and knives will be seized from potential offenders on bus routes

into the city centre, while officers target known troublespots, and underage drinking hangouts, including the Winter Wonderland in Princes Street Gardens.

City community safety leader Councillor Paul Edie said: "Christmas is a great time to go out. We want to make sure this happens in a safe environment, and that people are protected in the city."

The clampdown will run until the new year.



City council promises more police in the streets over Christmas Tom Bishop

## Romanov dazzles with Highland routine

### Graham Mackay

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MID-WAY THOUGH A disappointing SPL season, Hearts fans may finally have something to cheer about; owner Vladimir Romanov has danced his way into the semi-finals of the Lithuanian version of Strictly Come Dancing.

Dressed in a trendy fashion-kilt, as worn in the past by the likes Robbie Williams and Vin Diesel, Romanov took to the stage alongside partner Sandra Kniazeviciute, impressing judges and onlookers with a Highland dance inspired by the battle of Culloden.

Scores of seven, nine and nine saw the duo through to the semi-finals of Dancing with the Stars, the top-rated program viewed by some 800,000 Lithuanians every week.

The Hearts owner, who has recently unveiled plans to build a luxury hotel in Edinburgh's St Andrew's Square, was tasked with performing a national dance for the most recent episode of the hit show and felt that a Scottish country dance would be particularly appropriate.

"I really wanted to have a go at a Scottish dance" said Mr Romanov, "even if it wasn't the easiest option."

Romanov and Kniazeviciute were

trained by former British Highland Dance champion Phil MacHugh, who flew to Lithuania to train the pair, bringing a modern element to their classic Highland dance routine.

Impressed with Mr Romanov in both rehearsal and performance, Mr MacHugh stated: "Vladimir did something which a lot of people don't do back home: Scottish dancing. He brought it into the homes of many thousands of Lithuanian people. Vladimir was eager to learn. It was slow to start with, but it does take time."

"We had rehearsals each day for two to three hours. But then he went away and practised more at home and he'd come back next morning and everything was spot on, though his wife must be fed up with Highland dancing by now."

60-year-old Romanov, who has suffered injuries to his back, knee and arm since the beginning of the competition in August, was surrounded by a Scottish entourage during his performance. He was piped onto the stage by Pipe Major Gordon Ross of Dumblane and Yvonne MacHugh, a nursing student from Glasgow.

Mr Ross said: "I take my hat off to him - it was all on live TV. I've seen in the last few days how passionately he feels about Scotland; you can't take it away from him."



Hearts owner through to semi-finals of dance competition



Devon Walshe

## Planning debate threatens zoo's future

**Paris Gourtsoyannis**

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PARTISAN POLITICAL BATTLES within Edinburgh City Council over land use and planning permission could see the Edinburgh Zoo move to Glasgow.

Following a decision by the council not to allow the zoo's operators, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, to sell off a portion of land to developers, the Edinburgh Zoo's proposed £72 million refurbishment has been put on hold.

Zoo bosses are now considering sites in Glasgow and across the west coast for new investment.

The debate springs from a planning dispute over the use of land owned by the Royal Zoological Society on Costorphine Hill, next to the current site of the Edinburgh Zoo. As part of the attraction's multi-million pound refit, the land was intended to be sold as a site on which 100 homes could be built, generating some £15-20 million.

However, in November, planning permission for the housing development was denied, decimating the value of the zoo's land and casting its future into doubt.

Without the funding from the land sale, the redevelopment plans are on

hold. Gary Wilson, head of property and estates, told *The Scotsman*: "There are things we can't fundraise for. Who wants to give money for drainage? It's not sexy."

Concerns were raised regarding the development by local residents and environmental campaigners, who objected to the congestion the new homes would cause in the area.

Eddie Price, speaking for activist group Friends of Costorphine Hill, said: "There's no way we can take any more traffic. Instead of building houses they need to be building a car park. I've been down in the summer months and you can't move for parked cars. Emergency services can't get along Costorphine Road."

While the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland denies there are any firm plans to move to Glasgow, David Windmill, its chief executive, has admitted that plans have been put together for every eventuality.

He said: "We have been investigating having an animal visitor attraction on the west coast and are currently undertaking a feasibility study with South Lanarkshire Council."

Glasgow's only zoo, at Granton Park, closed in 2004.



Edinburgh zoo may move to Glasgow after disagreement over redevelopment

## More capital needed for Edinburgh, says council

**Rob Church-Taylor**

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MSPS AND EDINBURGH City Councillors have called on the Scottish Government to increase funding for Edinburgh.

City councillors have long argued that the city is not adequately compensated for the costs associated with being both the capital of Scotland and the home of the parliament.

They want Edinburgh to benefit from the wealth that it generates; the city has contributed over £900 million in business rates to the rest of the country over the past decade.

A report from Jenny Dawe, leader of the council, says that over £112 million pounds of business revenue generated in Edinburgh has been redistributed around Scotland in the past year.

Her report states: "If Edinburgh is to continue to compete successfully with other European cities for tourism, business and general development it has to provide the facilities and services expected of a major capital city."

"The investment in the city's infrastructure and marketing which could have been undertaken with these monies, generated in Edinburgh, would have significantly increased its ability to compete with the best in Europe."

"By doing so, not only would Edinburgh benefit, so too would the whole of Scotland."

The extra policing costs associated with being a capital city are also not covered by present funding.

Lothian and borders police board convener Councillor Ian Whyte told MSPs that the force needed an extra £1.4 million to meet the costs of policing the growing number of VIP and Royal visits.

The independent Lothians MSP Margo MacDonald said: "Capital city funding is essential if Edinburgh is going to remain the sort of city which has seen it top the polls of the best city to work in, live in and visit."

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# Worries for tourism over slow Hogmanay ticket sales

## Paris Gourtsoyannis

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EDINBURGH MAY NO longer be able to call its Hogmanay festivities "the world's best New Year's celebrations", as thousands of tickets to this year's street party remain unsold.

Whereas in previous years passes to the Princes Street party have sold out by the end of October, this year organisers are faced with the prospect of entering December with many tickets still to sell.

Demand is also down on previous years for the Concert in the Gardens, this year headlined by Kasabian and featuring Calvin Harris and local act Idlewild; tickets have previously been sold out by mid-November, but this year they were still available from Tickets Scotland on Rose Street and on the of-

ficial Edinburgh Hogmanay website as The Journal went to press.

According to the website, the only licensed online retailer of Hogmanay tickets, availability of street party passes is still "good".

Tourist industry representatives have said that following last year's cancellations due to dangerously bad weather on New Years Eve, coupled with complaints that prices for food, drink and amenities are artificially inflated within the 'perimeter' of the street party, revellers are staying away.

"It's a bit of a nightmare. We're normally booked out by May, but I'd say we're about half-full at the moment," said David Hinrichs, head of the Edinburgh Hotel and Guest House Association, speaking to *The Scotsman*.

The glut of passes has encouraged touts to buy up large numbers of tickets in anticipation of a final rush once the

events do sell out; some are already on sale online, with tickets worth £37.50 being offered on eBay for £120.

Some touts have attempted to mislead customers for an extra profit, with £5 passes which don't give entry to the Princes Street Gardens concert being advertised as "Edinburgh Hogmanay 2 street party passes Kasabian live," according to the *Edinburgh Evening News*.

Edinburgh City Councillor Steven Cardonnie said: "It's not easy to regulate the unofficial sale of passes and tickets for something as popular as Edinburgh's Hogmanay but I would encourage people to secure their passes or tickets through official channels as, most importantly, you will pay the actual cost; not the inflated prices listed on some of these sites."

However, when confronted on the issue of the event's popularity, the

councillor said: "I think we have a good format for the Hogmanay celebrations and we were right not to scale things back this year. I'm confident there will be plenty of demand come Hogmanay."

Edinburgh has hosted its official Hogmanay celebrations on Princes Street and in Princes Street Gardens since 1993, when safety concerns saw festivities moved from around Hunter Square at the bottom of the Royal Mile.

Access to the event was restricted exclusively to ticket holders after a crush at the 1997 event left several hundred people in need of medical attention, as over 400,000 people descended on central Edinburgh.

Capacity was initially set at 180,000, but was capped at 100,000 in 1999 due to funding problems.

Since then, poor weather has forced two eleventh hour cancellations, in 2003 and last year.



Tom Bishop

## Violence on the rise in Edinburgh schools

### Kasmira Jefford

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THERE HAS BEEN a considerable increase this year in the number of incidents involving air-guns, knives and other weapons amongst children in Edinburgh schools, according to official police figures.

According to Lothian and Borders police, in 2006-7, 149 incidents involving school-children using weapons in instances of violent and offensive behaviour. Thirteen of these incidents involved the use of knives, whilst in other cases missiles included stones and eggs.

*The Herald and Post* reported last week that since 2002, police have had to intervene on 47 occasions when air rifles or ball-bearing guns were used. One particular incident in Dalkeith June, where children as young as six reportedly shot a 15-year-old schoolboy in the eye.

On another occasion in February, an eleven-year-old held a knife to a primary school girl's throat after the confiscated

blade had been handed back to the child. The head teacher of Mayfield primary school refused to comment upon this for confidentiality reasons.

In a statement on tackling violence in schools, Lothian and Borders Police said that their officers regularly interact with schools, and that two officers are currently based at Tynecastle High and Boroughmuir High for the purpose of regulating the behaviour of pupils.

A report released last week by the Scottish Children's Reporter - the child protection and youth justice system for children in Scotland - showed that in 2006-7 there have been 56,199 children referred to behavioural panels with 4,765 in the City of Edinburgh. Whilst these figures show a significant rise, the number of referrals made on grounds of violent behaviour, the total number of referrals have decreased by 7 per cent.

Lothian and Borders Police continue to work alongside the SCRA, the Midlothian council and other organisations to reduce youth offending in and around Edinburgh.



## Development project sponsors Meadows Marathon

### Kasmira Jefford

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THE QUARTERMILE, EDINBURGH'S largest forthcoming urban development, will sponsor the annual Meadows Marathon charity event that will take place in March 2008.

The sponsorship by Quartermile will provide substantial support in helping Meadows Marathon to raise an estimated £100,000 in aid of Sport Relief and other represented charities, a tenfold increase on the £10,000 raised at the first event last year.

Joe Pike, head of press for the Meadows Marathon and a second-year student at the University of Edinburgh told *The Journal*: "It's ambitious but achievable. To succeed we need students to get involved, register on our website and start training."

The half-marathon is one of the numerous projects run by the Edinburgh Students Charities Appeal (ESCA), which aims to raise funds for local and national charities and provide means for students to volunteer and help the community. Mr Pike said: "What's great about the Meadows Marathon is that we're showing the local community that students are willing to improve their image and contribute to society by raising loads of money

for great organisations."

The Meadows Marathon will have 1,000 competitors with 600 places reserved for those wanting to represent and fundraise for local charities. With a charge of £15, the organisation hopes to give ninety per cent of the funds back to charity, using the rest to cover costs. The event, which will include entertainment and music, will take place around the Meadows and the neighbouring Quarter-mile, bringing together students and local volunteers. Additionally, *The Journal* has been named as the media partner of the 2008 event.

Speaking of the Quartermile's sponsorship, Mr Pike said: "The Quartermile is a £450m development and the company behind it have a portfolio of around £750m. They naturally have a wealth of resources, many of which they've put at our disposal, from their PR company to their brand managers. Their vast experience in so many areas means their advice and encouragement is invaluable."

In 2012 Quartermile will be home to almost 2,000 residents with 3,000 people employed in its shops, restaurants, offices and hotel. The architectural firm Fosters and Partners are responsible for re-mastering the nineteen acres of space into a new residential and business neighbourhood that incorporates new architecture with renovated period buildings.



QUARTERMILE PROJECT: funding the Meadows Marathon charity initiative James Waddington

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# Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt honour former supermarket chief

**Neil Bennet**

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LORD SAINSBURY, THE controversial businessman and politician, is amongst those receiving honorary doctoral degrees from both the University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University.

The former Science Minister and Labour Party peer received an Honorary Degree of Doctor honoris causa from the University of Edinburgh on Tuesday 27 November, having been awarded a Doctor of Engineering degree from Heriot-Watt the previous week. Both were awarded in recognition of Lord Sainsbury's role in founding the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, an organisation that awards grants to charitable causes, in 1967.

Heriot-Watt in particular pointed to Lord Sainsbury's and the foundation's "championing of science, technology and innovation."

Multi-millionaire Lord Sainsbury, most of whose personal fortune is derived from his family's supermarket chain, resigned as Science Minister in November last year, following the cash-for-honours investigation, during which he was questioned over an undisclosed £2 million loan to the Labour Party. He had previously been cleared of breaching ministerial code by not declaring the loan, claiming he had confused it with a £2 million donation he had also made to the party.

Lord Sainsbury has previously been accused of conflicts of interest in his role as Science Minister, particularly with respect to GM crops, having a large investment in biotechnology company Diatech Ltd, held in a supposedly "blind" trust during his time in government.

Adam Ramsay, campaigner and University of Edinburgh student, said: "Lord Sainsbury has long used his position in government to promote his own commercial interest. He has made millions from the government's failure to regulate supermarket monopolisation, while hundreds of jobs are lost and communities are destroyed."

"As science minister he gave the go ahead for GM crops—an industry he had millions of pounds invested in. Lord Sainsbury is symbolic of New Labour corruption. Why is our university symbolically honouring him?"

Others receiving University of Edinburgh honorary doctorates included George Reid, former Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, and Sir Keith O' Nions, Director General of the Research Council.

Heriot-Watt honours also went to Stuart Rose, Chief Executive of Marks and Spencer, and Lord Wallace of Tankerness, former leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the first Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Executive.



Universities award honorary doctoral degrees to Lord Sainsbury Eddie Fisher

## ECA Principal appointed secretary of Royal Scottish Academy

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EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF Art (ECA) Principal Ian Howard has been elected treasurer of the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA), the prestigious visual arts institution based on the Mound in Edinburgh.

Other appointments included Professor Bill Scott as president, and Arthur Watson as Secretary. The appointments are the first of their kind in eight years, as the preceding office-bearers were re-elected and have held the posts continuously throughout that time.

The RSA holds a unique position in Scotland as an independent organisation led by eminent artists and architects, promoting contemporary Scottish art.

Incoming president Professor Bill Scott, a graduate of the ECA, is a renowned sculptor who previously held the position of Head of Sculpture at the College. He comes to the position of president having previously served as secretary of the RSA, from 1998 to present. His work includes a number of public sculptures in Edinburgh, Glasgow and other towns and cities across Scotland.

New secretary Arthur Watson is Director of the Master of Fine Art programme and head of Graduate Studies at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design – part of the University of Dundee. His own work includes printmaking, painting and sculpture, often in combination.

The appointments come at a busy time for Professor Howard, who was recently awarded an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Edinburgh.

The ECA is celebrating its centenary this year, with a major exhibition continuing at the City Art Centre until January 20, after which it will move to the Fleming Collection gallery in London.

A centenary charity auction was also held on 22 November at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. The auction included works by ECA alumni John Bellany, Dame Elizabeth Blackadder and by Professor Howard himself. More than £150,000 was raised, with proceeds being used to restore the College's Grade-I listed drawing and painting studios.



From left: Ian Howard, Prof Bill Scott, Arthur Watson Eddie Fisher

## Uni leads climate-resistant crop research

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CROPS RESISTANT TO the effects of impending climatic change could be developed following research led by the University of Edinburgh's School of Biological Sciences.

The £6 million five-year project funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council will examine the potential impact milder winters, warmer summers, and changing lengths of seasons will have upon crop yields.

The project will also investigate the ways in which climate change will impact on forests, woodlands, heaths and moors.

Carried out in conjunction with teams at York, Liverpool, and Warwick Universities, the project is part of a £30 million UK-wide investment into biological science research.

Dr Karen Halliday of the School of Biological Sciences said: "[The team] will draw on expertise in genetics, biochemistry, climate change, mathematics and informatics to widen our

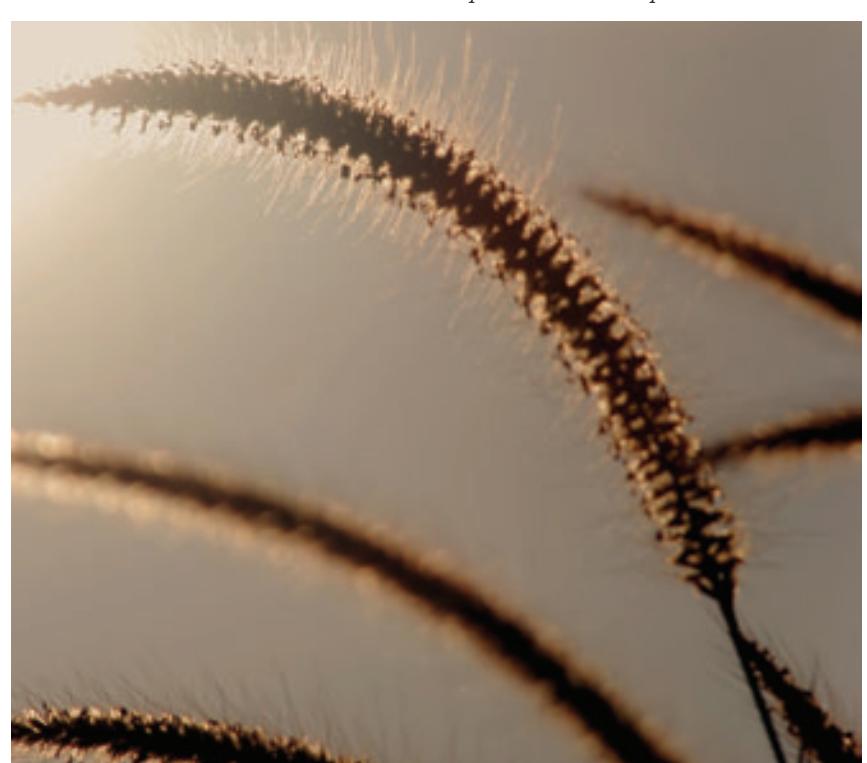
understanding of how temperature change affects plant growth and stability."

Of particular interest to the group is the effect of temperature change on specific proteins involved in plant growth and development. Research such as this, combined with computer modelling and related experiments, give the scientists hope of useful discoveries in the near future.

Dr Halliday stressed how even small changes in temperature can have dramatic effects on plant development, and subsequently crop yields.

Britain's average temperature has risen by approximately one degree Celsius in the last 100 years and climate scientists expect a tighter rate of temperature increase in the next few decades. This rise in temperature could have a negative impact upon the country's ability to produce rich crop yields. Consequently research into producing climate change-resistant varieties is considered an important aim of the project.

Dr Halliday said that she and her team "hope to be able to influence the survival of crops, as well as their quality and biodiversity."



Scientists lead project to develop "climate change-resistant" crops

# Heriot-Watt's Christmas wish: a better deal for students

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EDINBURGH'S STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS are running campaigns in conjunction with NUS-Scotland to put pressure on the government to improve student funding.

On Thursday 22 and Friday 23 November, Heriot-Watt Union Student Association (HWUSA) were the first to launch their Christmas-themed final demand campaign.

Liam Burns, President of HWUSA said: "Santa has chosen the right time to visit Heriot-Watt students. The reality is that many are increasingly becoming part-time students and full-time workers, even if they signed up to a full time course!"

After housing costs, students have just £8.05 a week of state student support to live on, falling £2,500 below the poverty line. Consequently many students have to find employment in order to remain in higher education.

James Hodgson, a second year studying Microbiology at Heriot-Watt, told *The Journal*: "We have to make our voice heard because many students are already working 15 hours a week on top of a degree just so that we can afford to educate ourselves."

"Many students only voted SNP because of their pledge to scrap student debt."

The campaign involved a Santa's grotto where goody bags containing soup and information about Final Demand were given out to students whose financial anxieties were increased after the government's retraction of their

manifesto promise to "dump the debt."

400 students were surveyed on the levels of student debt and the hardship they endure.

Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA) will hold their Final Demand campaign on Thursday 6 November outside the main Library.

This data will be collated by NUS-Scotland and presented to the Scottish government. At the same time campaign postcards are being sent to MSPs to highlight the financial difficulties students are in.

James Alexander, President of NUS-Scotland told *The Journal*: "Final Demand is NUS Scotland's student funding campaign for this year."

Mr Alexander said the Santa's grotto theme is designed to: "demonstrate that while everywhere else, people are thinking about Christmas, Scotland's students are worried about where their next meal is going to come from."

The campaign is intended to pressure the Government into addressing four key areas: to improve access for all; drop the debt; cut the costs of education; and provide better bursaries.

The importance of the Final Demand Campaign in compelling the government to deal with issues of student hardship was highlighted after the SNP triggered further confusion over the Graduate Endowment fee.

It is feared that the Bill for the abolition of the Graduate Endowment Fee will not be passed by the Scottish Parliament in time to take effect for 2007 graduates.

On Friday 23 November the Student Award Agency of Scotland (SASS) sent letters to graduates demanding that

they inform them within seven days as to how they intend to repay their £2000 Graduate Endowment fee.

Fiona Hyslop, Scottish Education Secretary stated after the election that the graduate endowment fee would be scrapped with immediate effect. However the SAAS letters indicate that graduates could still be liable for repayment.

However, a government spokesperson said: "The letter is clear - it says the Bill to abolish the fee is currently going through Parliament and that no money should be sent now. It advises graduates that SAAS will write to them again to advise of the outcome."

"Obviously abolishing the fee will depend on support of other parties in Parliament. SAAS felt it best to wait until the Bill was introduced to write to graduates so they could give a realistic assessment of the timing of the Bill process."

"It is absolutely right that we avoid unnecessary confusion by letting our graduates know exactly what the position is."

The controversy comes at a time when universities and the government are discussing future funding options.

Students across Scotland are invited on Wednesday 5 December to a EUSA organised event at the Scottish Parliament buildings to discuss their financial concerns with MSPs.

Alex Salmond will speak at the Playfair Library, Old College, University of Edinburgh on Wednesday 12 December 2007. The event—already sold out—will discuss Scotland in relation to the European Union.



LIAM BURNS: leading the campaign for more student funding Eddie Fisher

## EUSA dismisses allegations against student officer

**Ben Judge**

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SERIOUS MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS against a student leader were dismissed by the Edinburgh University Students' Association as unfounded last week.

Tom French, the Vice-President (Services), was accused of inappropriate sexual behaviour in the Teviot Row House union building by a junior member of the Library Bar staff. In the same complaint made to the students' association, Mr French was also accused of using union money to purchase a chocolate fountain for his personal use.

In a letter to Mr French seen by *The Journal*, students' association president, Josh MacAlister wrote: "After having the incident report investigated by [returning officer] Graham Boyack... there appears to be no evidence to support the allegations."

Mr French told *The Journal*: "I am glad the investigation is now over and has ended as I always expected it would. The allegations have been proven to have no substance, and I will continue to get on with the job I was elected to do."

In addition, Mr French has lodged a counter-complaint against the mis-handling of the investigation by EUSA, including leaking of the allegations to the press and the "general procedure" followed.

The conduct of EUSA president Josh MacAlister and the lack of support given to Mr French were criticised in the counter-complaint. Mr French has asked that Mr MacAlister's communications with the EUSA-funded newspaper, *Student*, be investigated for suspected breach of data protection laws and association policies.



Tom French has filed a counter-complaint against "unfounded allegations"

## Education Minister undermines NUS

**Sarah Clark**

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SCOTLAND'S HIGHER EDUCATION Minister, Bill Rammell, stressed the importance of confronting extremism through open debate in a lecture delivered on Tuesday 27 November.

Mr Rammell addressed the Fabian Society in London, criticising the National Union of Students' (NUS) No-Platform policy that many student unions across the UK have adopted.

Mr Rammell said: "Let's give people the chance to challenge their views through free debate. Not the criminals, but those whose words remain within the law, whether they come from extreme religious groups, the BNP, the Animal Liberation Front or elsewhere."

"By not allowing them to be heard we undermine the unsaid."

At the NUS Annual Conference a decree was passed that refuses to invite racists and fascists to NUS events. The policy dictates that the Elected Committee will not share a platform with these people

NUS responded to Mr Rammell's speech, stating the importance of protecting students' from racists and fascists.

Gemma Tumelty, President of NUS, said: "Bill Rammell's comments about No-Platform policies amount to a red herring. Believing that everybody has the right to express an opinion is very different from proactively providing a high profile platform to racists and fascists at an esteemed institution."

However, Mr Rammell claimed that if universities do not confront the dangers of extremism, they jeopardise the safety of their students that they are legally bound to protect.

He emphasised the importance of students debating controversial issues in

order to prevent extremist groups going subversive.

"Universities must be open to the light of free debate and free inquiry. Because if they are not, they will become places of darkness, obscurantism and fear."

A spokesman for Universities-Scotland told *The Journal*: "It is very important for universities to keep this matter in perspective

"However it is essential Higher Education creates space for free debate and discussion."

Conversely, Josh MacAlister, President of Edinburgh University Students Association, believes that a student's right to feel secure in their environment is paramount.

Mr MacAlister told *The Journal*: "Bill Rammell is wrong on this. I personally think that the right of individuals or groups of people to be free from intimidation and feel confident in education is more important than the privilege of others to propagate racist and intolerant views which often incite hatred and violence."

Students at the University of East Anglia (UEA) rejected the NUS 'No Platform' policy for fascists after the Oxford Union invited controversial figures, Nick Griffin and David Irving to speak to a freedom of speech debate.

75 per cent of students at UEA voted against the NUS policy. Dennis Hayes, founder of Academics for Academic Freedom, said the result was a defining moment in student politics:

"It shows that ordinary students don't need to be told by the NUS, or anyone else, who they should listen to and what they should think. With similar movements in favour of free speech happening in other universities this is an important step forward."

Mr Hayes continued: "This is the sort of 'student voice' academics should listen to."

# Anonymous blog alleges impropriety at students' association

**Mystery figure attacks high-ranking EUSA officials**

**Paris Gourtsoyannis**

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AN ANONYMOUS BLOG heavily critical of the Edinburgh University Student Association (EUSA) has accused individual members of the student government of intimidation and mismanagement.

Drawing widespread support in the short time it has been online, EUSA-less has printed documents in support of its claim that Vice-President of Services Tom French threatened to ban the Edinburgh University *Student* from distributing on EUSA property if a retraction was not made in relation to prices at EUSA outlets printed in the newspaper.

A post made on Thursday 29 November reproduces an email sent from Mr French to the editors of *Student* in which he states: "We might well hold off on letting you distribute in student association facilities".

Alternating between light satire and genuine intrigue, the blog—which has been updated at a rate of several posts a day since its launch on 21 November—includes accusations of impropriety and abuse of office by elected officials and employees at the highest levels of EUSA; in some cases, documentary evidence is provided or referenced.

In a message sent to *The Journal* through a proxy, the authors state: "Our goals are to begin the groundwork for a new EUSA."

The blog addresses several perceived abuses of power and office within EUSA, including financial mismanagement, censorship and intimidation of dissenters, and the advancement of personal political agendas.

In the post for 22 November, the authors allege that a senior EUSA employee is receiving a salary of £80,000 pounds a year, a sum they claim is not in keeping with the organisation's charitable status.

In their comments to *The Journal*, EUSA-less state: "We will reveal [the individual] as soon as we can be sure of our sources. We are actually not very concerned with exactly who it is; it is the fact that a senior, unaccountable member of staff is getting paid too much."

Another post suggests that Communications Advisor Tony Foster is being paid "absurdly generously."

EUSA-less also alleges that Mr Foster, in his role as moderator of the public forum on the EUSA webpage, has systematically deleted any posts by the blog's authors, in an effort to prevent their questioning of the EUSA budget being read.

When contacted, Mr Foster said he had no comment to make on either EUSA-less, or any of its specific allegations.

The perceived politicisation of EUSA—ostensibly a non-partisan body—is an additional theme of EUSA-less' posts.

They reveal that on 25 November that "reading through some of the minutes from EUSA meetings" they "discovered" that last year's EUSA President Tim Goodwin attended the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Scottish National Party conferences at a combined cost to EUSA of £330, but not the Conservative Party conference.

Another post, entitled "EUSA – By students, for Labour", quotes comments allegedly made by EUSA President Josh McAlister to *The Independent*, in which he states, "Overall, Gordon Brown's record over the past ten years has been pretty good. Britain is a much better place now."

EUSA-less concedes that its information comes from "publicly available resources," without offering any

The screenshot shows the homepage of the EUSA-less blogspot.com. The header features a photo of Edinburgh cityscape. Below the header, there are several posts:

- Readers of this blog have set up this group to support us!**: Includes a small image of a chocolate bar and a link to a Facebook group.
- EUSA-less**: A post where EUSA-less claims that EUSA is a potential power for good, but they are angered by the power within EUSA being systematically handed down to an anointed clique of Labour, Green and People & Planet puppets. It includes a link to a document titled "Apologies if our initial source quoted us wrong, but there you have it. Absolute proof that Tom French threatened Student newspaper with a ban from EUSA property."
- Vice President of EUSA threatened Student newspaper & slagged off President**: A post with a thumbnail of the Student newspaper and a link to a document titled "Apologies to return to a bit of mudslinging but this one really can't be helped, especially as it is from impeccable sources and backed up by written evidence."
- Industrial Polish Workers**: A post about job vacancies in Poland.
- Kirsty & Bermonday**: A post about news from Kirsty McNeill, Labour Spokesperson in Bermonsey.
- A Bible in every language**: A post about the distribution of Bibles.
- THE FIGHT BACK BEGINS...**: A post by forgotten said... about Tom French's behavior.
- Why opt-in would work...**: A post by josh.mcalister@student.eusa.org.uk.

further referencing of those sources in making its accusations.

When questioned, Mr French said that criticism of EUSA was "a good thing in general, although there are more constructive ways of getting your point across.

"At EUSA, we're taking the blog in good humour."

In relation to the censorship of messages on the EUSA forum, Mr French said that there was a blanket policy prohibiting anonymous posts, although he did concede that EUSA-less presented the student association with an "image problem".

He added: "While I genuinely welcome criticism, you have to be conscious of the type of forum you want. You don't want people to view these horrible postings...forming a bad opinion of EUSA in general."

"It's a shame that rather than popping in and speaking to us, [EUSA-less] resort to a blog with a tabloid style – they're not getting their point across."

Senior sources at EUSA have suggested that—given the blog's criticism of the Labour affiliations of several past and present EUSA sabbaticals—"How many of our so called 'student leaders' are in fact Labour party stooges?"

It has been noted that it may constitute the launch of a platform to gain grassroots support for a bid for the EUSA presidency by a student with conservative sympathies.

The proxy through which EUSA-less contacted *The Journal*, Sarah Arbroath, is a member of two Conservative Party youth association Facebook groups, and has promoted the blog through these groups. However, Ms Arbroath is not currently a student at the University of Edinburgh.

Richard Mabey, Chairman of the Edinburgh University Conservative & Unionist Association, had no knowledge of Ms Arbroath, and was unaware of anyone within his organisation being involved in EUSA-less.

"We don't endorse that sort of criticism, but some criticism is necessary," he said of the blog's attacks on EUSA; he did suggest, however, that if the blog did have at its core an attempt to install a right-leaning EUSA President, it would have his support.

The initial post on the site, adopted as a mission statement, reads: "For years EUSA has acted without restraint. It has bullied the societies it is meant to protect, it has submitted itself to control from left-wing political parties, it has failed in its mandate to deal with students' day to day problems, it has run its finances into the ground and it has developed a terrifying press machine, run by highly paid mercenaries, which has prevented criticism from any source being aired."

"This blog is here to counter-act the EUSA press machine, to subvert it, and to allow the real truth to out."

Readers of the blog, whose numbers the authors have put at over 350, have followed its lead, with one post on the site's forum from user 'Former EUSA monkey' calling on Tom French to "RESIGN! RESIGN! RESIGN!"

University of Edinburgh students have further expressed their support through a Facebook group of the same name; three days after its establishment, its membership totals almost 100, with most messages on the group's wall offering encouragement to EUSA-less' anonymous authors.

Speaking to *The Journal*, group founder and second-year student Scott George McCombe said: "I would be willing—and hope others feel the same—to do much more to support EUSA-less. They are doing students a service which we should be grateful for."

"The way I see it, EUSA-less has finally taken upon itself the role of exposing the emperor's shame."

EUSA-less relies heavily on Facebook, exploiting lax privacy settings for their 'investigations'; personal information taken from Mr Foster's and Mr French's Facebook profiles suggest that the authors are acquainted with them.

# Alexander apologises for illegal funding

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THE SCOTTISH LABOUR Party has been dragged into the funding row engulfing the Labour party in England.

Wendy Alexander was named by the Electoral Commission last Wednesday as they investigated a donation to her leadership campaign fund.

The disputed donation has come from Paul Green, a Labour supporter from the Channel Islands.

Her campaign received £950 from the businessman, who is not eligible to donate to party campaigns because he is not registered to vote in the UK.

It has been alleged that Ms Alexander's fundraising team contacted Mr Green to ask him about a possible donation.

But as a Jersey resident, he is banned by election laws from funding politicians in Scotland.

Labour Party officials said they were operating under the belief that the donation was allowed under UK election law, but referred the matter to the Electoral Commission when newspapers began suggesting that the £950 donation was illegal.

Tom McCabe, the campaign manager for Ms Alexander's leadership bid commented: "Paul Green was invited by one of the campaign team to make a donation as a long standing Labour supporter."

"As required by the rules, we made inquiries about permissibility and indicated to him that only a UK resident or UK-registered company could donate. The registered donation was a UK corporate one. We acted in good faith at every stage."

On Thursday, the Electoral Commission stated that the cheque donated by Mr Green was clearly illegal.

The SNP has also made allegations that "dirty and laundered" money received from David Abrahams—the figure at the centre of the donations row which has unsettled the Labour leadership in the past week—was used by



**Wendy Alexander Eddie Fisher**

the Scottish Labour Party in the 2007 Holyrood election campaign.

Mr Abrahams used proxies to channel £660,000 of illegal donations to the Labour party.

Charlie Gordon, the MSP who sought out the donation has resigned his post as transport spokesman for Labour.

Des Browne, the Scotland Secretary, denied that any of the money raised illegally from Mr Abrahams had been used in the Scottish election campaign. He said: "I can give you a categorical assurance, in terms of my state of knowledge, that none of those donations to the Labour Party, that have been figuring in the media over the last couple of days, went to fund any part of the Scottish elections, any part of the Scottish election campaign, to my knowledge."

Ms Alexander is 44 and has been an MSP since 1999. She was elected as Scottish Labour leader in August after Jack McConnell resigned from the post following his party's defeat at the hands of the SNP in May's general elections.

A spokesman for Wendy Alexander said that the war chest for the campaign had been £17,000. A source close to the party leader said that if the donation was found to be in breach of the rules, she would return it.

An SNP spokesman said: "The row over Labour's funding sleaze has now moved across the border, right into the heart of the Labour leadership in Scotland. It is essential that Wendy Alexander discloses all the relevant facts about this matter."

The donor behind the scandal, Paul Green, is a tax exile and multi-millionaire. He recently opened a £350m shopping complex in Pollok, Glasgow.

The mall won Pock Mark prize from *Prospect Magazine* for the worst planning decision in Scotland this year.

Mr Green has focused much of his energies over the past twenty years on retail in and around Glasgow. Born in Northampton and brought up in Buckinghamshire, the 65-year old has no obvious link with Glasgow. In a rare interview, he said: "I happen to like the people there."

The row surrounding Gordon Brown and his Labour Party began when it was revealed that a businessman had given £650,000 to the party through intermediaries.

David Abrahams channelled the money into Labour Party coffers over four years under other people's names.

One of the intermediaries used was unaware of Abrahams using her name for the transactions and was a lifelong Tory voter.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has described the situation as unlawful and "completely unacceptable" and Ms Alexander apologised for the illegal donations in a statement after a lecture given at the University of Edinburgh Law School.

# Opposition parties join forces to increase university funding

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THE OPPOSITION PARTIES in the Scottish Parliament are attempting to form a coalition to block the new SNP budget.

Labour, the Lib Dems and the Conservatives have talked of the possibility of uniting against the SNP's minority government to ensure an increase in the amount of funding allocated to Scottish universities.

Earlier this month, the SNP budget announced a far lower increase in funding for universities than the institutions had asked for and has therefore come under severe criticism from the other major political parties.

The budget has factored in an extra £30 million funding for universities, but this figure falls far short of the £168 million requested by the country's higher education institutions.

With university principals claiming a need for £40 million in order to merely maintain the *status quo*, Labour, Lib Dem and Conservative MSPs have voiced their concerns for the future of Scottish higher education.

Among the major worries is that the best staff will be wooed south of the border by richer English universities.

A Liberal Democrat spokesperson said: "Universities are vital to our economy and we are deeply disturbed at the inadequate settlement." This sentiment has been echoed by university principals throughout Scotland.

Dr Brian Lang, Principal and vice-chancellor of St Andrews University, in an interview with *The Scotsman*, expressed his concerns that the level of funding on offer to Scottish higher education institutions would "have serious repercussions for the stability of the sector north of the Border."

Furthermore, he stated: "We recognise that the Scottish Government has limited resources and many competing priorities, but we had hoped ministers might recognise that high-

er education is one of the few means by which Scotland can generate new wealth and remain internationally competitive."

Rhona Brankin, the Labour Party education spokesperson, said: "We're throwing down the gauntlet to the SNP. We have been talking to the other parties about this and we believe there is widespread dismay about the level of funding for universities."

A Labour spokesperson told *The Journal* that "informal discussions" had already taken place between the parties.

The Liberal Democrats have seemed the most willing to form an alliance. While the Conservatives also want additional funding for universities and expressed interest in the proposals, they have not committed themselves to an alliance.

Murdo Fraser, the Conservative party education spokesman, said: "We have to think about our own priorities in relation to the budget. Whilst universities are important to us, the key issues are police and law and order."

Any increase in funding for universities would have to come from other areas of the budget.

Nicol Stephen, Scottish Liberal Democrat leader, has suggested using money from mutualising Scottish Water to fund an increased budget for Scottish universities but Labour's Ms Brankin told *The Scotsman*: "We need to study the budget in detail and talk to other political parties, but it is too early to say where that money will come from."

If the Scottish Labour MSPs join forces with Liberal Democrat and Conservative MSPs they will form a majority coalition. This potentially means that they could block the SNP budget altogether.

Failure to pass a budget is a massive failure for any executive and would be disastrous for the SNPs minority government.

However, the Scottish government is expected to make concessions in order to ensure the budget is passed.

## Call to end renewable energy barriers

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THE PRIME MINISTER has been urged to review the "insane pricing policy" which currently limits the uptake of renewable energy in Scotland.

Gordon Brown has promised to make Britain a world leader in the battle for climate change, aiming to extend the reduction in greenhouse gases from the current target of 60 per cent, to 80 per cent by 2050.

The SNP has called on him to back these green ideas with action.

Mike Weir, the SNP's environment spokesman at Westminster, said: "Gordon Brown talks grandly about leading the world in tackling climate change yet his government allows Ofgem to pursue an ideological and insane pricing regime that acts against renewable generation in the north of Scotland.

"Scotland has huge potential in wind, wave and tidal technologies and could be the green powerhouse of Europe but all of that is being put at risk because of the double whammy of Ofgem's charging regime for connection to the national grid and transmission of electricity over the grid."

Scottish government ministers have shown their commitment to the green cause by giving the go-ahead to the world's largest wave energy project.

The £4 million project will provide power for 4000 homes, and goes some way to achieving a Europe-wide goal of producing 20 per cent of power from renewable sources by 2020.

Environmentalists have supported Mr Brown's stance on a number of en-



vironmental issues, such as the elimination of plastic bags from shops and his commitment to binding emissions caps by 2012.

Mike Weir said: "Actions speak louder than words. Gordon Brown must back up his fine words by taking real action on these issues."

"Scotland has huge potential in renewables, indeed it has been described as the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy, but much of this is being put at risk by the insane system that Ofgem insist on pursuing."

**Alastair Sloan**

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A LEADING ACADEMIC has called for a rethink on how graduates contribute to the cost of university education.

Dr Andrew Cubie, who was involved in the 1999 investigation which led to the abolition of tuition fees in Scotland, asked whether it was "socially just" for those who gain the most from a university education to receive it free.

The Scottish Government responded by saying that access to education in Scotland would be on an "ability to learn not ability to pay" basis.

Fiona Hyslop, Scotland's Education Secretary, said: "That's why we are scrapping the unfair and inefficient graduate endowment fee and putting more money into student support."

The SNP announced plans in June to scrap the graduate endowment fee. This £2,000 fee was paid by Scottish students after graduation.

Dr Cubie told BBC Scotland that he was not calling for a graduate tax. He said: "In a society which is still not able to allow those who are in primary and secondary education to reach their full potential, is it socially acceptable that those who have the advantage of getting tertiary education, with all

the ensuing benefits, for free?

"I think if you look around the world there are many countries which seek a contribution from graduates in one way or another."

"After all, the graduate endowment anticipated, and did indeed, bring about a contribution from graduates for a particular purpose - to assist later students."

"The principle, if you like, was accepted at that stage of a graduate contribution. I think we have to look again at the ways in which that contribution might be made."

During the first Scottish Executive, Dr Cubie's report into education was a key part of higher education policy.

It recommended that students pay £3000 of their loan back after graduation but only when they began to earn more than £25,000 a year.

The SNP budget recently slashed university spending by only allocating £263m to higher education institutions in Scotland, far short of the £526 million university leaders claimed to need.

Mrs Hyslop has defended the cuts, highlighting a pledge of £5.24bn to further and higher education over the next three years.

Despite this, Sir Muir Russell, the convener of Universities Scotland, commented: "The spending review

announcement is a disappointing response to the strong case for investment in higher education made by universities.

"We are concerned that it may weaken our competitive position relative to universities in England."

Scottish higher education institutions had a total revenue of £1.9bn

**Andrew Cubie:**

called for a fresh look at the contribution graduates make towards the cost of higher education



in 2004/5. They receive 51 per cent of their funding from public sources and 14 per cent from research contracts, consultancy, and other services.

Josh MacAlister, President of Edinburgh University Students Association, told *The Journal*: "While we may disagree with some of the content of his suggestions, the Students' Association totally backs a full and frank review which would also look at student support."

"Given the cuts that the SNP have put in place and the fact that student support levels in Scotland are so low, it's really important that resolving these funding problems is a priority."

# Secret restorers of the Panthéon clock cleared of lawbreaking

**Joanna Hosa**

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FOUR MEMBERS OF a secret organisation, known as the Undergunther, were released by the Paris Court of Justice on Friday 23 December.

From September 2005 to September 2006 they occupied the Panthéon, the famous burial place in the Latin Quarter in Paris. Unbeknownst to the building's administration they set up a secret workshop to repair the clock dating from 1850 under the supervision of a professional clockmaker, Jean-Bap-

tiste Viot.

Lazar Kunstmann, a spokesperson for the Undergunther, told *Le Monde*: "The clock stopped working in 1965 and everyone ignored it. We repaired it before it was too late. In any other country, a monument such as the Panthéon would be maintained in a perfect state. But not in France. Here, if we hadn't restored the clock, no one else would have bothered."

The group revealed themselves only when they completed the revamp, deciding then to tell the Panthéon administration about their success. According to Mr Kunstmann, when the

administrator saw the clock he had to take a deep breath and sit down. The Gente of National Monuments was shocked by how the Undergunther managed to sneak into the Panthéon, fired the administrator and sued the restorers. They were facing a maximum sentence of one year in prison and a €15,000 fine.

Mr Kunstmann said that getting into the building was easy, as opening a lock is not a problem for a clockmaker. The team found a side entrance leading to the future hiding place at the top of the monument. Over the year they managed to furnish the place with chairs

and connect it to the electricity grid.

The Undergunther is part of a bigger clandestine organisation, les UX. With about 150 members, it was unknown to the authorities until 2004, when an underground cinema under the Seine was discovered. Les UX is divided into teams, the Undergunther is responsible for doing restorations.

Its members include architects and historians who in the 80s and 90s were students in the Latin Quarter. As students they had secret parties in the tunnels of Paris. Now they want to use their knowledge to "restore invisible parts of national heritage."

# THE SKINNY ON:07

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW REALITY

2007 HAS BEEN A BIG YEAR FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY. AS THE PRICE OF RECORDED MUSIC ZOOMS TOWARDS ZERO, ARTISTS, MANAGERS AND RECORD COMPANIES ALIKE ARE BEING FORCED TO QUESTION THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HOW THEY DO BUSINESS.

AS A MAGAZINE COMMITTED TO EXPLORING CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY HAPPEN, THE SKINNY HAS ORGANISED A CONFERENCE WITH A NUMBER OF THE TOP THINKERS IN THE FIELD. THEY WILL BE ASKING:

- IS THE MUSIC INDUSTRY DOOMED? WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SAVE IT?
- IS MUSIC ITSELF GOING TO BE AFFECTED, AND FOR THE BETTER OR WORSE?
- HOW DOES THE WAY WE CONSUME THINGS AFFECT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THEM?

### THE WORLD-CLASS PANEL CONSISTS OF:

**PETER JENNER** – KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
SECRETARY GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MANAGERS' FORUM

**SIMON FRITH**  
TOVEY CHAIR OF MUSIC, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH; CHAIR OF JUDGES, MERCURY MUSIC PRIZE

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# Protests held as 'fascists' speak at Oxford

**Nick Eardley**

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PROTESTS WERE HELD on Monday 26 November at the Oxford Union's freedom of speech forum in opposition to the decision to let Nick Griffin and David Irving speak at the event. Around 1,000 anti-racism campaigners gathered outside the union's St Michael Street entrance, whilst 30 protestors gained access to the chamber and delayed the start of the event by over an hour.

*The Journal* reported on 5 November that a campaign was to be launched in opposition to the decision of the union to invite the pair. However, members of the university's debating society voted by a margin of 2-1 to uphold the invitation.

Aidan Simpson, who attended the protest told *The Journal*: "The mood of the protests was angry and passionate, but peaceful. Most protestors did not want the debate to go ahead."

"The BNP are desperate to look like a legitimate political party and the fact that they were speaking at the Oxford Union might hold some sway amongst the aspiring middle classes that they are currently targeting."

"It was predicted that the BNP and Irving would use the event to gain a lot of publicity in the national media, and this proved to be correct."

The event was split into two separate rooms for security purposes. Mr Irving shared a room with local MP Dr Evan Harris and journalist Anne Atkins, whilst Mr Griffin debated Mr Dray and another Oxford postgraduate student.

Mr Griffin, chairman of the far-right British National Party was found not guilty of incitement to commit racial hatred in 2004 after a BBC documentary showed him describing Islam as a "wicked and vicious faith". Mr Irving was jailed for 13 months in 2006 in Austria for glorifying and associating with the Nazi party.

However, protestors have been criticised for using intimidating tactics to stop ticket holders gaining access to the event. One of the speakers at the event, postgraduate student James Dray said: "The action of protestors against ordinary students was disgusting."

He added: "I know that most of the people who attended were not part of these activities, but the fact that they happened is a sad indictment on the organisers of the protest."

Mr Simpson defended the protestors, saying: "There was plenty of warning that protestors were going to be rallying on St Michaels' street, yet the Union chose to make this the only entrance open to ticket holders."

"It would be wrong to label the protest as a 'riot' when the vast majority had no intention of resorting to violence."

Earlier in the week, shadow defence minister and Conservative Party MP Julian Lewis had resigned his life membership to the Union in objection to the decision to proceed with the event. Dr Lewis said he was "ashamed" that the union was giving the two men—who he described as "a couple of scoundrels"—a platform. Other events due to feature speakers including Defence Secretary Des Browne and television presenter June Sarpong have been cancelled after they withdrew in protest at the invitation.

However, the union's president, Luke Tryl defended the decision to go ahead with the event. He told the BBC: "The way to defeat fascism is through debate and that is how we are going to defeat them."

He added: "David Irving came across looking pathetic. He looked weak. The flaws in his argument about free speech were exposed and I'm pleased that happened."

A statement from the BNP claimed that universities too often reversed decisions to let the party speak, adding: "Oxford University have broken the mould and the door is now open for other universities to follow Oxford's lead."

# Driven underground: a migrant's tale

Prevented from working by discriminatory UK law and forced onto the black labour market, Britain's Romanian immigrants are among the most vulnerable people in society, discovers Miles Johnson

**S**ONYA CAME TO Britain from Romania with the promise of work and a place to live. Told by a man in her home country that he would find her and her family jobs where they could earn £400 a week, the prospect of life in Edinburgh seemed all too tempting. Little did she know that two months later she would be illegally living nine to a room in a squalid Leith flat with no job, no money and an exorbitant monthly rent to pay to a landlord who could evict her and her family at any time.

With their flights bought for them back in Romania and the flat in Edinburgh prearranged by a middleman, the migrants now owe a significant amount of money at interest that they cannot hope to pay back. Sonya is typical in that she speaks no English and has little knowledge of her legal rights. Having no tenant's contract and £400 rent to pay every month for the single room in which her whole family sleeps – including two young children and a baby – she and the other fifty or so occupants who sleep in the property live in constant fear of being either sent back to Romania or thrown out onto the streets.

Her plight is a troubling example of a new form of economic exploitation occurring across Britain. Though citizens of the European Union, British law dictates that Romanians and Bulgarians are prohibited from employment in the United Kingdom unless they are "highly skilled" and go through a workers registration scheme. With the average wage in Romania being little more than £53 a week, some analysts claim that up to 50,000 have travelled to Britain since the country joined the EU on the 1 January 2007.

But many migrants such as Sonya are not eligible to work in the UK and, having been promised jobs by unscrupulous middlemen, find themselves effectively helpless in Britain. Trapped by debt, the Romanians' only option is to beg on the streets of Edinburgh and sell the *Big Issue*, the flat having a handful of official sellers' badges that they rotate amongst themselves. The Romanian migrants, like many others, are too scared to go to the authorities about their living conditions, having been told by the middlemen that they will be arrested and sent back to Romania to face possible violence due to debts.

Unregistered with the local authorities, they are effectively driven underground where they can fall victim to unscrupulous landlords, gang-masters and middlemen, all too aware of the lucrative potential of desperate people unaware of their rights. Referred to as an economic "grey market" by the acting Romanian ambassador, this is the stark human cost of the government's decision to allow migrants from Romania and Bulgaria to travel to the UK without allowing them to work legally – an unravelling crisis that much of the British media has so far chosen to disregard in favour of alarmist headlines.

The flat where Sonya lives is a small property located off Edinburgh's Leith Walk that overflows with people. Taken into the room inhabited by Sonya and her family, they spoke to me of their problems first in Spanish and later through a translator. "Look at this," she says, pointing around the small white room containing only a light and two beds, "this is misery. It is just mis-

ery. There are around fifty people living here, it is too crowded. We cannot live like this. We were told there would be work, that there would be jobs for all of us. But there is no work for us here so we can only beg and sell magazines. From that there is no way we can make enough money to live."

Sitting on one of the beds was another woman, holding a baby little more than six months old. "My baby is teething, it is crying all the time and we don't know how to get care for it. We go to the doctors but if you don't have the right card they don't see you. We want to find another place to live, it is just too expensive here. But where else can we live? How can we find another place?" As she speaks the children are running around the room playing with each other. The adults' faces are understandably grave.

Both of the women are worried because on the coming Friday they have to pay the rent for the room. Each month, they say, the landlord or a Romanian man comes to collect the money in cash from the entire flat. If they fail to pay the rent the landlord will move the family onto the streets.

Others in the flat tell different stories and have different worries. One man, Daniel, says that he sold all of his possessions to afford to come to the UK having been promised work. He had found some unofficial employment as a fruit picker near Glasgow but he soon lost the work when it was discovered that he couldn't speak English. "Try to work as I need to feed my children and wife but without English there is no work", he says. "I want to try to learn English so I can get work but it is hard."

It appeared that many of the men had been employed in semi-legal conditions under gang-masters who only gave them occasional work. Conditions for these workers across Scotland have been thought to be worsening despite the efforts of local authorities to tackle the problem. Last year the Citizens Advice Bureau Scotland reported that they were hearing of an increasing number of instances of migrant workers from Eastern Europe falling victim to exploitative employers and employment agencies who paid below the minimum wage and made illegal deductions from earnings. There were also many reports of migrants living in overcrowded conditions and facing extortionate charges for rent and utility costs. With accommodation often being arranged by the same people who organise work for the migrants, the Romanians are often afraid that any complaint or report made to the authorities would lead to dismissal and homelessness.

At the root of the problem is the combination of British policy on Romanian and Bulgarian migrants – one that leaves many vulnerable to exploitation – and the migrants' own ignorance of their legal rights. Speaking to *The Journal*, Romania's acting ambassador to the United Kingdom Raduta Matache, though not aware of the specific situation in this particular Edinburgh flat, argued that despite educational drives having been launched by the Romanian and British governments, more action needed to be taken. "We are very concerned about allegations of Romanian citizens being exploited in the UK. Migrants sometimes



"This is misery. There are around 50 people living here. We cannot live like this. There is no way we can make enough money to live"

Mrs Matache was also critical of the government's decision to continue its policy of restricting Romanian access to the labour pool despite her country's EU membership. "Currently Romanians account for only one per cent of migrant workers in Britain," she said. "I feel this decision is symbolic rather than practical. It can put Romanian migrants at risk as they can fall into a grey [labour] market where they are vulnerable to exploitation."

What is clear is that the current policy of prohibiting migrants from Romania and Bulgaria from gaining legal employment in the British labour market is not working. Educational drives put in place by the British and Romanian authorities are going some way to discourage migrants from travelling to the UK under false information, but many like Sonya are still slipping through the net. In the current toxic atmosphere of exaggerated headlines and insensitivity, there is a danger that migrants will become dehumanised – seen only as statistics to be used for political gains. It is crucial in light of cases such as this that better provisions are put in place before more people suffer.

All names have been changed to protect the subjects' identities



Restrictions on Bulgarians and Romanians are "wrong" and "counter-productive"

Matthew Barnes

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ON 1 JANUARY 2007, two and a half years after the unprecedented enlargement of 2004, Bulgaria and Romania became the newest members of the EU. However, unlike the other eight former Communist states which joined in 2004, Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers have not granted open access to the United Kingdom's labour market, contrary to the spirit of the EU's free market principles.

The United Kingdom was one of three countries, including Sweden and Ireland, not to place restrictions on the EU's 2004 entrants. Expecting 15,000 migrant workers a year to walk through its open doors, the UK received a shock when over 600,000 migrant workers arrived in two years. This massive influx of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe prompted the Government to place restrictions on Bulgarian and Romanian nationals seeking work.

In October 2006, before Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU, the British Government announced that immigrants from these countries would be afforded gradual access to the labour market and there was to be a quota for low-skilled migrant workers and an application process for highly skilled tradesmen and women.

The Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) was set in place in 2004 in order to allow workers from the A8 Countries to work in Britain. After registering with the WRS and within a month of finding employment, migrant workers from these countries are able to claim benefits such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Tax Credits. However, Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants are not entitled to register with the WRS, they still need work permits in order to work legally in Britain.

These restrictions were put in place to limit Romanian and Bulgarian immigration to students, the self-employed and the highly skilled, such as doctors, teachers or those with a skilled trade. Access for skilled workers is based on the requirements of permit arrangements and more importantly, the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP).

The quota, which allows 20,000 low-skilled migrant workers into the food and agricultural professions under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), is another attempt to limit immigration from these eastern European countries. In May 2007, the Home Office re-

vealed that more than 120 Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants were arriving in Britain every day and more recently, Home Office Minister Liam Byrne said that the decision, made in October 2007, to keep the restrictions in place was intended to keep a "prudent balance" between the needs of the economy and the impact on public services.

It is possible that the restrictions will remain in place until 2014 as the European Union's regulations stipulate that the curbing of migrant workers can be maintained for up to seven years after a country joins the EU.

The Home Office has stated that the restrictions, although reviewed annually, will remain firmly in place until at least the end of 2008.

Yet, there is some disagreement in the Government over the decision to place restrictions on migrant workers from Bulgaria and Romania. Greg Hands, MP for Hammersmith and Fulham, called for the limits to be abandoned.

His position is that the regulations, which affect a relatively small number of people, are easy to bypass. This results, he maintains, in unfair discrimination, treating the migrants as "second class citizens" and encouraging people to work illegally.

He said: "I strongly favour there being equal access to all citizens of European Union countries to the UK labour market."

"I am not approaching this debate with a general belief that the UK should loosen its immigration controls - but I strongly believe the restrictions on Bulgarians and Romanians are wrong, counter-productive, expensive and chaotic administered."

However, in fearing a repeat of the influx after 2004, the British Government chose to be cautious and for the foreseeable future immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria who wish to work in Britain will have to meet a tough set of restrictions.

A young Bulgarian immigrant Svetana Jovtcheva, was one of the many Bulgarians and Romanians who camped out in London's Hyde Park in April 2007.

She said: "I do not want to go home yet. I can earn good money in this country – much better than at home. But it is much more difficult than I thought it would be. My government should warn us how difficult it is to come here and find work."

Svetana's opinions are not unique and although Romanians and Bulgarians can travel freely to UK after joining the European Union in January, finding work is a different matter.

In May 2007, the Home Office re-

## Fact box

16,000

Number of migrants expected by UK after 2004 EU enlargement annually

20,000

Total quota of low-skilled Bulgarian and Romanian workers allowed into UK each year

600,000

Number of migrants expected by UK after 2004 EU enlargement annually

120

Daily number of immigrants arriving from Romania and Bulgaria in 2007

# A revolution eating its own children



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IAN DOUGLAS SMITH, the former Rhodesian leader who died recently, will be infamously remembered for his statement that black people in the Southern African state—now Zimbabwe—would never be allowed to rule themselves in a thousand years.

Smith's resistance to black rule led to a unilateral declaration of independence from Britain in 1965 and, later, severe repression and a seven-year guerrilla war, costing about 30,000 lives, most of them black fighters and civilians. Independence came to Zimbabwe in 1980 with President Robert Mugabe, now president of the former British colony, playing a key role as liberation war leader.

But twenty-seven years later, Zimbabweans are now seeing erstwhile unimaginable similarities between Mugabe—a darling of the international community at independence—and Smith, the white supremacist. Some of Zimbabwe's older generation, who suffered at the hands of the Rhodesian leader's brutal regime, are looking back at Smith's era with a sense of admiration for the state of the economy at the time.

Such sentiment has a plausible basis. President Mugabe's repression and poor governance has left Zimbabwe hurtling down the tubes, plunging what was once the bread basket of Africa into a crisis of unprecedented proportions.

Zimbabwe's economic woes result from a series of disastrous political decisions by President Mugabe and his ruling Zanu PF party. As greed set in, Zanu PF parcellled out millions of dollars to its members under a war victims compensation fund. Ridiculously, some

government ministers were awarded thousands of dollars, claiming disability resulting from the war while performing their duties without hindrance.

But serious economic meltdown sped up after Zimbabwe sent 11,000 troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998, to prop up the government of President Joseph Kabila against rebel forces. Zimbabweans remain puzzled about the decision to engage in this war. It has, however, emerged that the ill-advised military adventure was motivated more by self-interest than the philanthropic desire to save Kabila from rebel onslaught. Investigations suggested Zanu PF officials eyed diamonds in the DRC.

However, the more recent cause of the current problems is Zimbabwe's land reform programme. Most of the country's most productive farmland remained in white hands after independence in 1980, and through the 1990s the government of President Mugabe worked to shift ownership. By 1999, however, with little movement, the government unveiled plans to seize land without compensation—a process which started in earnest the following year.

As hundreds of farms were taken over—sometimes by local people, often by senior government officials—production, and export, of grain and tobacco collapsed. The result was a food crisis, and a battering for the economy as foreign exchange earnings slumped—both from farming and from tourism, amid violence surrounding the land reform programme.

Today, Zimbabwe has the fastest shrinking economy in the world. The economic decline has been coupled with horrendous human rights abuses. President Mugabe's determination to suppress political challenge is almost akin to Smith's ill-famed "not in a thousand years" pronouncement, but this time against the opposition in independent Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwean leader has even

inherited some of the repressive legislation from Smith's toolkit and added his own. The Law and Order Maintenance Act used by Smith's regime has now been refined into the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). The latter—which requires the opposition and civic groups to seek police permission before holding meetings—has proved a handy tool to crush any form of popular protest. Opposition and leaders of civic society have been battered with impunity.

*The Daily News*, for which I worked, was bombed twice before it was eventually shut down in 2003, thanks to another piece of draconian media legislation. While the world pre-occupies itself with Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, North Korea and Sudan, Zimbabwe is suffering a silent crisis. Over the years, Zimbabwe has merely flashed intermittently on the international radar. This has resulted from President Mugabe's harsh media laws, referred to earlier, which have also barred the international media in addition to emasculating the local independent press in Zimbabwe. Writing in the *Press Gazette* eight months ago, I stated that the sad story of Zimbabwe had been reduced to a spasmodic narrative.

So the focus on Zimbabwe has not been sustained. Some have claimed Zimbabwe does not enjoy internal focus because it does not have oil. I am not sure about this school of thought. My view is that Zimbabwe has lacked any sustained dramatic activity or war. On the one hand, Zimbabwe is fortunate in that it has not suffered any full-fledged civil war to draw continuous focus. On the other, that lack of civil war has meant that Zimbabwe has attracted minimal attention.

Britain, for example, has washed its hands of the Zimbabwean case for fear of having the dispute labelled a bilateral one between the former coloniser and former colonial state—a message that President Mugabe has trotted out and that has found resonance in Southern Africa in particular.

And yet the Zimbabwean situation and statistics rival those of war-torn countries. Inflation is at well over 7,000 per cent, life expectancy reduced to 34 years for women and 37 for men. The country is experiencing a chronic shortage of food, fuel, electricity, and drugs, among other basic essentials.

The tragedy of the Zimbabwean situation is that the state of the political economy has alienated the majority of Zimbabweans from the political processes in the country. In essence, Zimbabweans have relinquished the determination of their destiny to politicians while they concentrate on what some describe as "the politics of the stomach." Most people wake up each morning concerned about feeding themselves and their families. This has entailed standing for long hours in the queues for expensive goods in short supply.

Fathers and mothers are looking for ways of fending for their families. As a result, politics and political agitation has become secondary. It is understandable: for most of us, self-preservation would be the primary concern. In any case, political agitation comes with its own risks. Politicians and civic leaders have been beaten up with impunity.

As someone once remarked, politics is not for the hungry. So Zimbabweans at this point in time are primarily concerned about bringing food to their tables rather than the long-term concerns about political transformation. Zimbabweans now look to the politicians negotiating under a Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiative—led by South African President Thabo Mbeki—to bring them salvation. Sadly, Zimbabwe is a story about a revolution eating its own children.

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## Why Philosophy?



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I'M A PHILOSOPHY lecturer, and whatever justification there might be for such a job, it isn't immediately obvious. After all, we don't generally build bridges, cook omelettes or cure headaches with philosophy. With so many demands on our time and resources, why do philosophy? Come to that, what is philosophy?

Taking "What is philosophy?" first: philosophy investigates, through disciplined argument, questions about the nature of existence. Philosophical topics can include the purpose of existence (if any), the nature of morality and moral obligation, the uses of logic, the nature of knowledge and the structure of the world. Philosophy is primarily a discursive and conceptual subject, not a directly observational or experimental one, but any serious philosophy has got to be informed by developments in other disciplines, (whether sciences or humanities). If philosophy was ever an exclusively armchair pursuit, those days are gone. These days, philosophy has got to keep itself and its students informed about practical issues.

As to "Why do philosophy?", I favour two answers: a) philosophy can help provide the most generally applicable training a mind can get, and b) philosophy can illuminate an astonishing range of topics. Further to a): in an age not short of dangers, no one can afford to fall for sloppy, biased or authoritarian thinking. Learning to think critically and independently isn't a parlour-game or a jolly alternative to work but a potential life-saver. Further to b): every area of enquiry offers fascinating philosophical issues. We all have to ponder the rightness of our actions, the source of our obligations, the organisation of society, the claims of science, the existence (or otherwise) of God or gods, the nature of our selves and the world we live in. I don't claim philosophy can solve all such problems. Still less do I want everybody thinking like me, heaven forbid. However, I think anyone who cares about such subjects ought to see what philosophers have said about them. Even if you don't specialise in philosophy for your degree or career, philosophy can change how you behave and what you think. At very least, even if it doesn't change your beliefs, philosophy can still help deepen your sense of why you believe what you believe.

Learning that there are such things as right and wrong ways to reason, and

that not every conclusion can be supported convincingly, can help reinforce one of the deepest philosophical lessons of all: namely, that other people are valuable and worthwhile in their own right. Learning to think critically is a vital aid to thinking tolerantly. A good way to wind-up a philosophy lecturer is asserting confidently "Of course, there are no wrong answers in philosophy." Well, maybe there are. There are views advocating slavery, genocide and rape, to name but three. No one's offered convincing arguments for any of these and I bet no one ever will.

Where do I stand philosophically? I don't advertise my religious beliefs, or the lack thereof, but I find philosophy of religion fascinating. Issues of faith and belief seem as relevant as ever, as does the interplay between religion and science. In philosophy of science, I'm what philosophers call a "scientific realist": I believe that our most successful scientific theories are (probably) approximately true. Still, I believe in a distinction between epistemic and moral justifications of science. I'm pro-science epistemically (i.e. as a way of investigating the world), but fully accept that science poses moral hazards. However, I believe the answer to the moral challenges science presents is (at least partly) better understanding of scientific concepts. The best antidotes to racist and misogynist pseudo-science are proper science and a bracing dose of realism. To take one example, so-called "Social Darwinism" was both a scientific crime and the father of still worse crimes. But part of the reason why it was a crime is that it was scientifically bankrupt—Darwinism, properly understood, sets no special value on any race, gender or species.

The realist idea that there is a world outside and independent of our constructions is a very humbling and corrective one. If realism is correct then we can all be wrong pretty much all of the time. But if realism is false, then why do our best-confirmed theories manage to work at all? I look to Karl Popper as

a good exemplar for how philosophy of science can work. I respect Popper, not because I have any enthusiasm for his politics or his history of science, but because his methodology for science was friendly to intuition and metaphysical speculation, but deeply hostile to authoritarianism. Not who invented a belief or where it comes from, but how that belief can be tested, is Popper's hallmark for the scientific.

I'm also increasingly an objectivist about ethics: for example, I think the wrongness of racism, sexism, murder and rape are demonstrable facts. I see moral beliefs as significantly different from social constructs or matters of personal taste. I love Ben and Jerry's "Cherry Garcia" frozen yoghurt, but I wouldn't dream of treating this preference like a moral principle and prescribing for others accordingly. There's nothing prescriptive in how "Cherry Garcia" strikes me. However, there's something inherently prescriptive in how murder or rape strike us. Our access to moral facts may be difficult to describe, but then so is our access to perceptual facts like the greenness of grass or the hotness of fire. Some people seemingly lack moral concepts but then some people lack concepts like pain or colour. Difficulty of access or disagreement about facts doesn't mean there's nothing out there to get to grips with. People's moral beliefs are often strikingly convergent across cultures and times.

Finally, I call myself a philosophy lecturer, not a philosopher. Why? I think "philosopher" is a success-word, like "inventor." You don't have to have founded a school (like Plato or Aristotle) to be a philosopher but being a philosopher requires a lot of originality and constructive insight. Put it this way: David Hume and Mary Wollstonecraft were philosophers; I give philosophy lectures. I don't feel entitled to call myself a philosopher yet and I may never do. Still, you never know.

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**Time please, gentlemen**



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"WE HAVE NO wine here," wrote William Shakespeare in *Coriolanus*.

Well we have plenty in Edinburgh. At the last count the city had 731 public house licenses. The vast majority of these establishments are well run, and provide a real service to residents, whether they be folk out for a quiet drink, folk out celebrating, students out having a good time or tourists visiting our beautiful city.

The licensed trade is big business, and it is the job of the Licensing Board to ensure that a good balance is struck between the needs of the trade and the needs of the individual to enjoy the privacy of their own home and indeed their own garden. The new City of Edinburgh Statement of Licensing Policy which was approved at this week's board meeting is a requirement under the new Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. The Act states that each Licensing Authority in Scotland must produce its own policy, so creating a number of differing policies throughout Scotland peculiar to individual areas and to a certain extent traditions.

Among controls on loud music and cash machine locations, new regulations in Edinburgh state that landlords are now responsible for the behaviour of their customers outside of the establishment. What remains are the five licensing objectives: preventing crime and disorder, securing public safety, preventing public nuisance, protecting and improving public health and protecting children from harm.

From a student's point of view, perhaps, the new innovation of licensing an external area as well as requiring a permit for tables and chairs may be one which causes some concern. This was introduced to ensure that, particularly in residential areas, peoples lives are not blighted by some of the problems which arise directly from the abuse of alcohol. This is an attempt to encourage the so called "café culture" but not at the expense of citizens rights.

Responsible drinking means exactly that. It means remembering that others have rights as well. With the advent of cheap flights we have all enjoyed sitting watching the world go by while enjoying a drink in some café in one of the great foreign capitals in Europe. How often have we seen locals falling about out of their minds with drink? Not too often I would wager.

Contrast that with the behaviour of some of our own citizens who seem unable to drink in a civilised manner, and who cause police, taxi drivers, bus drivers, cleansing officials and even hospital staff all kinds of bother in the wee small hours. That is the down side of binge drinking. So we have to try and change the culture, and encourage people to drink sensibly.

Another area causing concern is the ignorance of safe daily amounts of alcohol, and indeed the strength of many of the drinks available. My own worry is the large measures of wine being consumed, particularly by young women. So we want to see better signage of quantities and strengths of alcohol in licensed premises.

The new policy sets out with the five objectives laid down in the Act, and they are linked to every aspect of what we are trying to achieve. We are not trying to create a nanny state. If you are old enough to drink you are old enough to take responsibility for your own affairs.

Student days are some of the best days of your life. We want you to enjoy them, to enjoy our pubs, to enjoy our night life. Edinburgh has so much to offer, and so many memories for you to take home with you, let's just make sure they are happy memories.

*Marjorie Thomas is a Liberal Democrat member of the City of Edinburgh Council and a member of the Culture and Leisure committee*



In an attempt to prevent him derailing the upcoming EU summit, Portuguese officials have allowed Robert Mugabe to attend the summit under very specific conditions.

## The tabloid agenda

**Ian Traynor**

[ian.traynor@guardian.co.uk](mailto:ian.traynor@guardian.co.uk)

GORDON BROWN IS coming to town. Finally. Well, perhaps. A fortnight before Christmas, the prime minister is due in Brussels for the first time since he came to power in the summer. But don't expect ho-ho-hos and a sack full of prezzyes. Oh no, because the Yuletide Eurostar visitor is a grumpy and reluctant participant in Brussels politicking.

As British chancellor for a decade, Brown acquired some notoriety among EU elites for his regular absenteeism from the sessions of EU finance and economics ministers and he has inaugurated his premiership in a similar vein: his policies on Europe are more notable for boycotts, snubs, and criticism than any enthusiastic embrace. The result, in Brussels, is the return of that hoary old chestnut – what to do about Britain. One official, from a northern country usually sympathetic to the British view on Europe, has told his government that Brown is probably the most eurosceptic British leader since Mrs Thatcher was in her prime.

And it's easy to see why. When Nicolas Sarkozy became president of France in May, he was in Brussels within days, a whirlwind of energy, statements, and bonhomie designed to wake up the rest of Europe and declare "France is back." Ditto for the German leaders when they came into office. British officials are keen to point out that when Brown became prime minister in July, his first trips abroad were to Berlin and Paris, not Washington, as evidence of his Europhile tendency. But he has still not been to Brussels, and his new European policy adviser, John Cunliffe, is also keeping an extremely low profile in the European capital while combining the Europe brief with other functions. Not a lot of enthusiasm there.

The big European set piece of the Brown era has been Tony Blair's final EU

summit in June which agreed to draft the new European reform treaty replacing or replicating the defunct European constitution. From the sidelines in London, Brown railed against elements of the treaty and ordered Blair to confront Sarkozy. At least that's what the Brown spin doctors said. The Brown premiership started with attacks on Europe and the rightwing papers applauded.

Then Brown went to Lisbon in October to another EU summit to sign up to the treaty. He waxed Churchillian in his assertion of "Britishness" with nary a good word to say about the treaty he was endorsing. All the emphasis was on Britain's "red lines," defending the "national interest." If you are defending Britishness, it is presumably under attack from someone, somewhere. In Brown's eyes, Europe.

*The Sun*, however, was not fooled. It delivered a broadside, a declaration of war on Brown's Europe policies: "The PM transformed the lavish banquet [in Lisbon] into a sordid Last Supper for Britain as an independent sovereign state. It was an act of betrayal which will haunt the Prime Minister for the rest of his political days."

Strong words, and a strong indication of Rupert Murdoch's expectations of the prime minister. The warning came despite Brown's best efforts to appease the red tops. We British reporters covering the Lisbon summit ran a sweepstake betting on how many times Brown would defend Britain. This reporter wagered on seven – and lost pathetically. At his post-summit press conference, the prime minister invoked the defense of British interests 20 times. You would have thought the Wehrmacht was at Dunkirk and closing in on Dover. But if the jingoism was meant to keep *The Sun* and *The Mail* happy, it clearly failed: "He will live to regret breaking his promise," *The Sun* threatened.

The serial exemptions and exclusions Britain has obtained in the new treaty make the country more detached from a Europe of 27 member states

than, arguably, it has ever been. Yet the tabloid-fuelled vitriol of the British Eurosophes is unabating, generating a growing sense that eventually the UK will have to put up or shut up and decide properly whether it wants to be part of the EU or not; that a referendum, not on the merits or otherwise of the new treaty, but on Europe in-or-out, might be the best medicine for the UK's Europe-anitis.

Downing Street's latest attempt to burnish Brown's eurosceptic credentials with the tabloids came a few weeks ago when David Miliband went to Belgium to deliver the first big speech on European policy since becoming foreign secretary. The young cabinet minister is a bit of a closet euro-enthusiast, although his speech was measured and mildly critical of the EU. The Miliband machine leaked bits of the speech to *The Guardian* in advance.

The Brown machine responded the next day by bragging to *The Sun* and *The Times*, both Murdoch papers, how the prime minister had tamed the foreign secretary's euro-zeal and toned down the speech. Indeed, bits of the Miliband speech were rewritten after Brown intervened. That is fair enough. The prime minister is quite entitled to review the first big exposition of his government's policy on Europe. But the briefing and the counter-briefing to selected journalists appeared unnecessary and was clearly intended by the Brown entourage to keep the eurosceptic papers on side.

Next week, Brown will again be isolated in Europe. While the heads of state and government from some 80 countries convene again in Lisbon for the first EU-Africa summit in seven years, Brown will stay at home because the summit is sullied by the presence of Robert Mugabe, the ageing Zimbabwe dictator.

The red tops will applaud. And Britain will have missed another chance in Europe.

*Ian Traynor is Europe Editor of The Guardian and is based in Brussels*

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DEBATE  
WITH THE  
EXPERTS  
ON THE  
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## Second-class citizens



**Evan Beswick**

Deputy editor

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AS PART OF a series on shift workers, the BBC recently produced an interesting set of photos of a Polish bakery and its team of hardworking migrant workers – interesting not just in its depiction of the finishing touches to savoury cheese twists, but interesting specifically because it's Polish workers who have been empowered to work towards a praiseworthy contribution to British society. It's unsurprising that no such coverage, from any of the major news organisations, has touched upon contributions from Romanian workers. Because under UK legislation, large numbers of Romanian immigrants are prevented from working nights. Or days, for that matter.

While Romanians and Bulgarians have been free to enter the UK since January 2007, they do so without the right to work which has enabled our Polish bakers to get cheese twists onto supermarket shelves every morning. Worse still, the legislation appears to have done little to control immigration from Romania and Bulgaria. Despite setting limits of 20,000 permits, statistics published in May this year already estimated the total influx of Romanians and Bulgarians at around the 50,000 mark – already nearing the 56,000 figure predicted by the Institute for Public Policy Research for 2007. While this is less than Migration Watch's obscenely hyped figures, a stab at even the simplest mental maths suggests that more Romanian citizens in Britain are stuck outside of legitimate employment than there are card-carrying workers.

It's when individuals are excluded from the world of employment that one finds higher levels of begging and people being housed in appalling accommodation. It's a situation Michael Luby, national sales manager at the *Big Issue*, is familiar with. "It's unbelievable," he said: "we're seeing Romanian people come over here expecting work, only to find that they don't get access to the housing, benefits and services any other people get. I'm just proud the *Big Issue* is there to pick up the pieces."

But for problems being felt mainly at a local level, these are ones Edinburgh City Council seem ill positioned to address. Responding to questions about Romanian immigration post-accession, Councillor for Leith Walk, Louise Lang was evasive: "I don't pay attention to the nationality of anyone begging on the streets. Quite simply, one person on the streets is too many." Closer to an admission of the problem—if not a solution—came from head of corporate services, Nick Croft, who acknowledged, "it is an issue the council and the police are aware of and are looking into."

Given that it is under UK law that these restrictions are imposed, members of the European Parliament are similarly powerless to deal with the situation. As Elspeth Atwooll, MEP for Scotland laments: "The EU wishes to move towards a common immigration and asylum policy, but the extent to which the UK is part of this depends on the use they make of opt-outs to the Lisbon Treaty."

And so it seems that both Romanians and Bulgarians alike—European citizens—are caught in a legislative limbo. Rather than being forced out of legitimate employment into exploitative work or criminal activity, it's better for individuals to be co-opted into a system which gives migrant workers employment rights, and authorities accurate employment statistics.

Aside from giving the Home Office a chance to improve their strike rate on their immigration figures, it places local councils in a much better position to be clear about the levels of service and care they can reasonably provide and to whom they are being expected to provide for. Armed with this information, the UK can begin to do a better job of catering for its citizens – old and new.

# The Journal

EDINBURGH'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER | ISSUE III

## EU Enlargement

## The human cost of our paranoia

WHILST THERE ARE millions of people in this country who would disagree, Britain is far from being the fair and free country of our collective self-perception – the liberal democratic beacon shining on the rest of the world. In accepting the official arguments surrounding increasingly draconian anti-terror legislation and in ignoring the Labour government's neglect of progressive values, our treatment of immigrants – both asylum seekers and non-Western economic migrants alike – has been little short of barbaric.

This national disgrace, far from being condemned as an outrage, has been actively encouraged by our national press. Perhaps with the limited exception of *The Independent* and *The Guardian* – two of the few UK-wide daily newspapers – the general cultural mentality of “all foreigners are bad” has been perniciously forged.

Not content with proactively encouraging racism, which is dangerous enough in itself, the supposed guardians-of-democracy, the hallowed Fourth Estate, have pressurised successive governments into passing legislation that is damaging to the lives of countless thousands of the most vulnerable people in our society. Those desperately trying to escape genocide, famine and war are locked up for months, even years, on end while others are dragged out of their beds in the dead of night for the crime of coming to the UK without a visa. These blatant human rights abuses are overlooked in favour of spuriously

researched and outrageously inaccurate articles on “how they come over here and steal our jobs.”

This ingrained, xenophobic distrust of non-white, non-British members of society extends to our attitude towards EU enlargement.

Since 2004, the EU has swelled enormously: not only has the total number of member-states jumped from 15 to 27 but the total population of the Union has ballooned from approximately 383 million to over 495 million. The rationale behind EU membership has been the same since its ideological inception in 1953: to act as a democratising force that facilitates economic and political cooperation in Europe. In this it has been enormously successful, and one of, if not the most important factors in “Westernising” former Soviet bloc and formerly totalitarian nations such as Portugal, Greece and Spain – not to mention bringing huge economic benefits and growth to all its member-states.

Tellingly though, British attitudes to expansion have largely been negative. The traditional arguments about national sovereignty have been augmented by fears of a “Polish invasion” which, when coupled with the widespread anti-constitutional sentiment, can be seen as a motivating factor for the government to push for “red lines” in the accession of Romania and Bulgaria. Citizens of either country, thanks to the famously foreigner-intolerant John Reid, are unable to work in this country on pain of a £1000 fine. *The Guardian* accused the

government at the time of “bowing to tabloid xenophobia” and Geoff Hoon, the Europe Minister, denounced his own party as acting contrary to the free market principles of the EU and ignoring the needs of the UK labour market. He warned that the legislation would potentially leave tens of thousands working in Britain's black labour market.

As has been illustrated in this edition of *The Journal*, Mr Hoon was right. Discriminatory legislation does not prevent people from coming to the country, but forces them underground. They cannot get the jobs that businesses need doing, because the government has pandered to the illogical prejudices created by a few newspaper proprietors and Britain's ultra-conservative right. Their quality of life is, in their own words, miserable, with up to twelve people – including young babies – forced to live in a single room in a flat shared by fifty people while being at the mercy of criminals and gang-masters. To put this in perspective, the moral outcry at such squalid conditions was greater in the 19th century than it is today.

These economic and political decisions, while seeming tediously academic, have real-world effects on real-life people. Our ingrained, irrational distrust of Johnny Foreigner is not harmless, indeed, it causes untold damage to the potentially hardworking families whose contribution to society is worth billions of pounds each year – the type of families that both David Cameron and Gordon Brown claim to champion.

Adam Ramsay  
4th year philosophy & politics  
Edinburgh University

Sarah Arbroath  
1st Year

## The Labour Crisis

## An unlikely coalition

GORDON BROWN MUST be wondering where it all went wrong: in September, he led David Cameron by 11 points in the polls. He could rely on the Conservatives to serve up grammar school rows, ill-timed photo opportunity trips to the Third World and by-election losses. But now, it's all gone topsy turvy. Last week's polls show the Conservatives leading by 11 points, a situation which we haven't seen since Thatcher was in power. Brown is beleaguered. Northern Rock is being spoon-fed taxpayers' money; junior officials are losing our personal data; the Labour party is accepting illegal donations both north and south of the border and the Armed Forces are shrieking for attention.

Poor guy, he's been scheming for ten years to get the top job, and it's taken him just six months to bring the whole thing crashing down. And you can see it in his appearance. Remember the effort Labour officials went to as they

tried to spruce up the living incarnation of a stereotypical grumpy old Scot? His hair was lovingly retouched, his visage freshened up. After the string of recent debacles, he's washed up, run down and narrowly hanging on.

*The Daily Telegraph* summed up the gulf between Labour and Conservative fortunes when they noted that last Thursday, Cameron was having tea at The White House, while Brown was waiting for the police to drop by.

But Brown's incompetence isn't enough for the Conservatives. While they now have a substantial lead in the polls, it doesn't compare to Labour's popularity in 1997 as John Major's government collapsed around him. Some of the problem lies in party definition – most people don't know what the Conservatives stand for. Ironically, their attempts to rectify this recently (like a trip to Washington and proposals on education) have been drowned

out by the Government's increasingly sensational cock-ups.

Somebody's taking them seriously though: Alex Salmond has been giving some tips to George Osborne on how to win votes in Scotland while a meeting between Cameron and the First Minister is planned in order to discuss how they might work together if the Conservatives come to power. The SNP represents a key pivot in how the UK political scene is gearing up for a Conservative government. They're now prepared to ditch their long-standing aversion to a coalition with the Scottish Conservatives under Annabel Goldie (although whether she'll revert on her no-coalition promise remains to be seen) and co-operate to boot out Labour. With the donations row now in both England and Scotland, the SNP and Tory camps seem positioned to consolidate their resources and send New Labour packing.

## The Monday poem

## The Cistern Chapel

In fourth floor library toilets  
The light is rather lower  
And the walls are rather dour,  
Where the floor is thick  
With the odorous slick  
Produced by those  
You would rather not know.  
With my slips around my ankles  
I look down on upper thighs.  
I ask the glinting God of neon light  
To ease my worried brow.  
A calm is found in cubicles,  
With feet placed square and fair below.  
Those firm feet and funny naked legs  
That dangled in the toddler time,  
Full sandaled and pink soocked,  
As mum slid red leather into bright buckles  
Pulling tights up to the armpit,  
She held me dangling by my hosiery.  
Now, far too fully-grown  
I hide behind my hands.  
From the laughing labyrinth

Of swift hellos and goodbyes  
From those that hold your history  
And now mark the lame stains of mediocrity.  
My stinking generation that reeks indifference  
Can be escaped between thick Formica walls.  
Here I am sanitarily sanctioned to cry, a little.  
Or scream a bit,  
“Silence please!”  
I know.  
To escape the pure-bred madness of smiling  
At those who've watched you orgasm,  
At faces you have scrutinized for signs of love.  
To play placate to those you hate  
To run in fear  
From rings of gold and scruffy hair  
Of skiing trips to val-d'Isere,  
I am hiding here till five.  
At least.  
Feet placed square and fair  
Here I shall feel –  
What the bloody hell I like.

Ella Hickson

## Letters

letters@journal-online.co.uk

Dear Editors,

Your editorial on Total displays naivety and ignorance. It argues that Total withdrawing from Burma would have either no effect, or a negative effect. Total, you say is “based in a country with a strong commitment to human rights”, as if this means it is more likely to behave well overseas. How naive. French law does not hold Total responsible for crimes it commits abroad – for the documented use of child slave labour in Burma. Total is free to do what maximises profit best in Burma – in fact, French law obliges it to do so.

You go on to argue that Total withdrawing from Burma would only lead to Chinese state owned companies taking over. Here you demonstrate an ignorance of markets, and of the politics of dictatorships. The Burmese dictatorship affords to survive by selling natural resources – in particular gas. The smaller this income stream, the more vulnerable the government. If Total withdraws, Chinese state owned companies will have a monopoly of demand over the Burmese Government. As the only buyers, they can afford to pay less for oil, thus cutting the main income stream of a repressive regime.

In the late 1990's, People & Planet used university investments and public campaigns to force a number of western companies, including Pepsi to withdraw from Burma. Total is one of few remaining Western backers. Its withdrawal could well lead to the financial ruin and downfall of the junta, and the 300+ students who voted for this motion should be proud to have contributed to this campaign.

Especially don't think that it is right for EUSA to publicly admit to “ridiculing” a society. EUSA is there to protect societies, not poke fun at them. I enjoy Diagnostics Society and see it as one of the few places at Edinburgh where both high-level reasoned intellectualism and a sense of fun go hand-in-hand. HO

Sarah Arbroath  
1st Year

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

Dear Editors,

The recent actions of some of the EUSA delegates to NUS Scotland council have re-opened the debate on funding university education. The ideology gaining dominance seems to be that it is the individual student who benefits from a university education, and therefore the individual must pay for it.

This is what the right-wing certainly want students to believe, and the moment the student movement swallows it as truth it is sunk. It is in fact a spurious argument; all of society benefits from having a university-educated population, both directly through the provision of skilled workers (doctors, teachers etc) and indirectly through the cultural benefits of higher learning. In fact, capital in particular benefits from a skilled workforce; individual students should not bear the financial burden of what is essentially a process of skilling themselves to fit the needs of modern-day capitalism.

Education is a social good, so it is right that society should pay for it, through progressive taxation. This is hardly a revolutionary stance and it should be ABC for the student movement; it's very unfortunate, therefore, that a majority of EUSA delegates to NUS Scotland council, including the EUSA President, voted for scrapping NUS's anti-fees stance. We in Edinburgh University Socialist Society stand full-square for free education for all and the re-introduction of student grants; if it was good enough for Blair and Brown in their student days, why is it not good enough for us?

Andrew Weir  
Secretary, Edinburgh University Socialist Society

## Corrections and clarifications

In the issue dated 19 November 2007, the picture accompanying with the front page article “SNP breaks student debt promise” bore an incorrect caption.

On page 21, the picture accompanying the article “Morning Tippling” was incorrect and not related to any of the venues mentioned in the article. Additionally, the picture credit was omitted; the picture should have been credited to Sarah Saleh.

Profile Editor: Alison Lutton  
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# Write for your rights

Chris McCall discovers that author Iain Banks hasn't let living next door to a Prime Minister overshadow his commitment to political writing

which Banks regularly delves in his books.

He first came to attention in 1984 upon the publication of his debut novel *The Wasp Factory*, which caused much consternation at the time due to its graphic depiction of violence. It is widely acclaimed today: *The Independent* listed it as one of Best 100 novels of the 20th century.

Since his debut, Banks has produced over twenty works, at a rate of almost one per year, alternating between mainstream fiction and science fiction novels. His productivity, compared with some other authors, is positively heroic. Before I meet him, Banks had been adding the finishing touches to the first draft of his forthcoming science fiction novel, provisionally titled *Matter*, due out in February next year. This is at a time when his latest mainstream novel, *The Steep Approach to Garbadale*, has only been on the bookshop shelves a matter of weeks. He laughs off his tag as the hardest working man in literature.

While the villagers themselves carried on as if having a Prime Minister living nearby was perfectly normal, some of the more hysterical aspects of the London press began to question whether living in such a small coastal community was a potential security issue. Surely it could be only a matter of time before Al-Qaeda launched an attack on Fife.

Iain Banks, another notable North Queensferry resident, was seemingly unfazed by this prospect when I met him at his home a few weeks after Mr Brown's promotion, despite living only a few hundred yards down the road from the new Prime Minister. There were no guard dogs patrolling the grounds, not even a solitary heavy standing by the front door. It seems acclaimed novelists are just that: bit more relaxed when it comes to these sort of things.

Well known for his socialist beliefs, you can be sure that Banks won't be inviting his neighbour round for dinner any time soon. “I think he is slightly more left-wing at heart, and although he did vote for the Iraq war, he didn't have the direct responsibility for it that Blair did. But I could never vote for him,” he states.

Like many Scots, Banks was once a proud Labour supporter, but found himself disillusioned with Tony Blair and his new ideals. “Before it became ‘new’ Labour, they were the only party I ever voted for at any election,” he observes. Banks's political affiliations have since altered: he reveals that he voted SSP and SNP in the Scottish elections. “I've voted SNP in the past,” he says, “not because of the nationalist thing, but because they have the more left-wing policies. I wish them well.” Banks does draw the line somewhere, however, noting that “it's almost dangerous when one party has been in power for too long, but then that doesn't mean I'd be happy for them to be kicked out and replaced with the Tories! I would far rather see Labour remain in power than Cameron get in, unless of course it happens that the Tories actually shift to the left of Labour!”

With his strong convictions, you might be forgiven for wondering why Banks hasn't been dominating the airwaves in recent years, protesting against Blair's “Brown.” “I've already got an opportunity, or a soapbox, to speak to the public with my novels,” he explains. “I think it might take something away from the books if I started to express my opinions in public all the time.” He did however cut his passport up and post it to 10 Downing Street, in protest at the invasion of Iraq.

Politics may be close to his heart, but writing is Banks's true passion. Born Iain Menzies Banks in 1954, the son of an Admiralty officer and a professional ice skater, he was raised in North Queensferry and Greenock. He studied English, Philosophy and Psychology at Stirling University, subjects he chose principally to help his career as a writer. Indeed, the human psyche, especially its darker elements, is something into

the past thirty years. But yeah, it hurt. I mean, I love driving!”

This commendable action was deplorable by Jeremy Clarkson, who complained that it was a shame that Banks had “succumbed to the propaganda of the hippies and the communists.” Banks, however, is unconcerned. “I quite like Clarkson as a presenter, but then he is to the right of Attila the Hun politically. I mean the thing is, it's not propaganda, it's something that over 90 per cent of the world's scientists accept is happening. The numbers of scientists on the other side, that aren't in the pay of major oil companies, is very small. I mean I would love nothing more than

to be proved wrong, I mean I would go straight out and buy a new Porsche 911!”

With that said, I bid him goodbye, and begin my journey home – by train, naturally. I am left with an impression that, not only is Iain Banks one of the country's most consistent and compelling authors of the past few decades, but he is a man who is never afraid to stand up for what he believes in. A few doors up the road, Mr Brown is probably asking himself why he can't do the same.

The *Steep Approach to Garbadale* will be published in paperback by Little, Brown Book Group next March



# Write for your rights

Chris McCall discovers that author Iain Banks hasn't let living next door to a Prime Minister overshadow his commitment to political writing

## Chris McCall

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THE SMALL VILLAGE of North Queensferry is not used to being thrust into the spotlight. Once the first port of call for those travelling across the Firth of Forth from Edinburgh to Fife, the village was best known for the spectacular views it offers of the Forth Bridges which dominate its horizon. In June this year, all that changed. People began to talk about North Queensferry not because of where it was, but rather who lived there.

One of its residents had landed a plum promotion at work. "A nice enough chap, that Mr Brown," the locals said. Kept himself to himself. Always attended the Kirk on Sundays. He deserved his new job. After all, he'd been waiting long enough to get it.

While the villagers themselves carried on as if having a Prime Minister living nearby was perfectly normal, some of the more hysterical aspects of the London press began to question whether living in such a small coastal community was a potential security issue. Surely it could be only a matter of time before Al-Qaeda launched an attack on Fife.

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This process of alternating genres and adopting the *nom de plume* "Iain M Banks"—the world's most transparent pseudonym—has resulted in him being seen as two completely separate authors by fans and critics alike. Banks himself makes no distinction between his genres: "I see them both as novels; I mean they all have plots, characters, ideas etc. It's the same process that creates both of them. It's a bit like being a carpenter, in that one day you make a table, and the next day you make a chair. You use the same tools to make them, and there's no real distinction."

Having covered so many bases over the course of his writing career, from religious cults to the grip of alcohol on society, are there any burning issues he has yet to cover? "The way that torture has become almost accepted by these neo-con nutters, and the general loosening of morality, that does worry me. I have had one idea, that might see the light of day, about tackling that, but whether that gets into the next novel or not I don't know, as it's so far away. I suppose as well the illegality of the Iraq

war, extraordinary rendition, and our governments slowly sliding to becoming more authoritarian. But that's less a burning issue, it's more why isn't anything being done about it?"

One issue that Banks most definitely feels strongly about is that of global warming. So much so that in February this year Banks sold his entire collection of cars—which included a Mark II Jaguar, a Porsche 911, and a BMW M5 series—and settled for a diesel Toyota Yaris. For a committed petrol head, this was a bold step. Banks insists this move was down to genuine eco concerns, and not just the rising price of petrol. "It was more down to reading *New Scientist* for

the past thirty years. But yeah, it hurt. I mean, I love driving!"

This commendable action was deplored by Jeremy Clarkson, who moaned that it was a shame that Banks had "succumbed to the propaganda of the hippies and the communists." Banks, however, is unconcerned. "I quite like Clarkson as a presenter, but then he is to the right of Attila the Hun politically. I mean the thing is, it's not propaganda, it's something that over 90 per cent of the world's scientists accept is happening. The numbers of scientists on the other side, that aren't in the pay of major oil companies, is very small. I mean I would love nothing more than

to be proved wrong. I mean I would go straight out and buy a new Porsche 911!"

With that said, I bid him goodbye, and begin my journey home – by train, naturally. I am left with an impression that, not only is Iain Banks one of the country's most consistent and compelling authors of the past few decades, but he is a man who is never afraid to stand up for what he believes in. A few doors up the road, Mr Brown is probably asking himself why he can't do the same.

*The Steep Approach to Garbadale* will be published in paperback by Little, Brown Book Group next March



# Property



## It's all about the living

TEAMING UP WITH the nice people at CityLets, *The Journal* is—just in time for the New Year—pleased to introduce its property page, which offers the most comprehensive flat listings tailored towards the needs of students in the city.

CityLets is Scotland's premier flat-listings websites, with links to accommodation options from most major property management agencies and independent landlords. They have compiled one of the largest and most detailed property databases in the country, to which we have kindly been allowed access in order to give our readers the best and most useful flat listings.

While it may be another month before you start seriously considering your options, housing is one of the key concerns for students in the city, and if you are looking, or going to be looking in near future, for a flat in the city, then there are far worse

places to begin than *The Journal*.

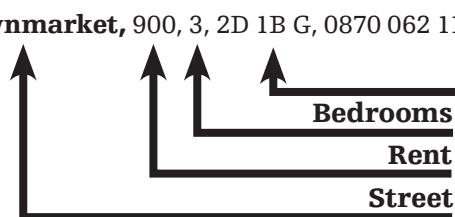
One of the most important things to consider when letting a flat is the reputation and history of your prospective landlord. Always be sure to do your research on a property by referring to the council's Edinburgh Landlord Accreditation scheme, which offers information and recommendations on the city's property providers. This is a valuable tool that can save you the hassle of having to deal with rogue landlords.

Over the coming editions, we shall be running, alongside our listings, a number of small features and tips on the Edinburgh student property market. For the latest news on the key events affecting you, your accommodation options and the areas you live in make sure that *The Journal* is your first port of call.



### How to use the listings

#### Old Town



← Area

← Agent phone number

Bedrooms: **S** Single **D** Double **T** Twin **B** Box  
Heating: **G** Gas Central **W** White Meter **E** Electric  
Garden: **P** Private **C** Communal  
Parking: **Z** Zone **O** On-Street **P** Private

#### Abbeyhill

**Maryfield**, 675, 2, 2D G, 0870 062 9332

**Waverley Park**, 610, 2, 1S 1D G CG O, 0870 062 9334

**Salmon Place**, 475, 1, 1D, 0870 062 4820

#### Ardmillan

**Ardmillan Terrace**, 475, 1, 1D E Z, 0870 062 3768

#### Barnton

**Whitehouse Road**, 495, 1, E PG P, 0870 062 9382

#### Bellevue

**Bellevue Street**, 1350, 4, 1S 3D G CG Z, 0870 062 3704

**Bellevue Crescent**, 900, 3, 3D G, 0870 062 9332

**East Claremont Street**, 895, 2, 2D G, 0870 062 9332

#### Bonnington

**Trafalgar Lane**, 750, 3, 3D G P, 0870 062 9456

#### Broughton

**Broughton Street**, 900, 3, 3D G, 0870 062 9326

**Bangholm Terrace**, 900, 3, 3D G PG O, 0870 062 9464

**Pilrig Heights**, 700, 2, 2D G P, 0870 062 3768

**Pilrig Heights**, 650, 2, 2D G P, 0870 062 3768

**Broughton Road**, 540, 2, 1S 1D G, 0870 062 9332

**Bellevue Crescent**, 500, 1, 1D G, 0870 062 9332

**Broughton Road**, 450, 1, 1D, 0870 062 9332

#### Bruntsfield

**Gillespie Crescent**, 1815, 5, 5D, 0870 062 3700

**Merchiston Avenue**, 1750, 5, 5D, 0870 062 3700

**Bruntsfield Place**, 1700, 5, 5D, 0870 062 3700

**Gillespie Crescent**, 1350, 4, 4D G CG O, 0870 062 9486

**Gillespie Crescent**, 925, 3, 3D G CG O, 0870 062 9468

**Leamington Terrace**, 750, 2, 2D G Z, 0870 062 9446

#### Canonmills

**Rodney Place**, 650, 2, 2D, 0870 062 3700

**Heriott Hill Terrace**, 540, 1, 0870 062 9510

**Broughton Road**, 475, 1, 1D, 0870 062 3700

#### Carrick Knowe

**Broomhall Crescent**, 625, 2, 2D G PG P, 0870 062 9302

#### Central

**Coinyie House Close**, 1600, 5, 5D G, 0870 062 9332

**Brunswick Street**, 1050, 4, 4D, 0870 062 3700

**Montgomery Street**, 1000, 5, 5D, 0870 062 3700

**East Pilton Farm Crescent**, 950, 2, 2D G CG P, 0870 062 062

**Blacket Place**, 775, 2, 2D, 0870 062 3700

**Montgomery Street**, 600, 2, 2D G, 0870 062 9332

**Newington**, 1020, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**High Street**, 950, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**Edinburgh**, 1020, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**Montgomery Street**, 1020, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**East Claremont Street**, 1050, 5, 5D, 0870 062 3700

**Montgomery Street**, 1375, 5, 5D, 0870 062 3700

**West Maitland Street**, 475, 1, 1D G Z, 0870 062 9558

**Easter Road**, 1150, 4, 4D, 0870 062 3700

**Bruntside**, 1050, 4, 4D, 0870 062 3700

**Montgomery Street**, 600, 2, 2D G, 0870 062 9332

**Bruntson Terrace**, 500, 1, 1D G, 0870 062 9324

**Warriston Drive**, 750, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**Edinburgh**, 1020, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**Montgomery Street**, 600, 2, 2D G, 0870 062 9332

**Bruntson Terrace**, 500, 1, 1D G, 0870 062 9324

**Warriston Drive**, 750, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**Edinburgh**, 1020, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**Bruntson Terrace**, 500, 1, 1D G, 0870 062 9324

**Warriston Drive**, 750, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

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**Edinburgh**, 1020, 3, 3D, 0870 062 3700

**Bruntson Terrace**, 500, 1, 1D G, 0870 062 9324

Entertainment editors: Chris McCall & Lucy Jackson  
[chris.mccall@journal-online.co.uk](mailto:chris.mccall@journal-online.co.uk)

# Music What a difference a year makes

## The Twilight Sad @ Cab Vol

★★★★★

**Chris McCall**

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SCOTTISH MUSIC HAS enjoyed an incredibly fruitful year. Every few weeks it seems, another great debut album from yet another ambitious Scots band is released. We've had The Aliens offering us techno-tinged melodies and tales of redemption. The 1990s have served up some of the best guitar pop songs you could hope to hear. Then there's The Twilight Sad, four young lads from Kilsyth, and perhaps the most intriguing band of the bunch. Their debut LP has been attracting rave reviews since its release, and a sense of expectation hangs heavy amongst those assembled to see them this evening.

Tonight's support band are themselves no strangers to hype. Broken Records are a local six piece group who have been gaining more and more fans with each gig they play. On this showing, it's not hard to understand why. With abundant facial hair, an excitable fiddle player and even at times an accordionist, they are not unlike a ceilidh band who have grown tired

of the Dashing White Sergeant, and decided to focus instead on their own brilliant brand of folk-pop. Catch them performing at an Edinburgh pub while you still can. They should be playing arenas to by next year.

The Twilight Sad have a lot to live up to as they take stage. From the moment they launch into 'Walking For Two Hours', it's clear being labeled as the next big thing is something they can handle. If Arab Strap had ever ventured down the route of Spiritualized-like soundscapes, you might imagine the results to have sounded something like this. A soaring wall of sound is The Twilight Sad's trademark. Frontman James Graham pours his heart and soul into his performance, creating an intensely compelling spectacle. Their set is nothing short of a triumph.

Those in attendance are sent into delirium. It's not often you witness two astounding performances on the same evening, but Broken Records and The Twilight Sad are just that wee bit special. A helluva year for Scottish music folks, a helluva year.

*The Twilight Sad & Broken Records, live at Cabaret Voltaire, 29 November*



Tom Bishop

# Music Messiaen on a Sunday afternoon

## Messiaen 'Quartet for the End of Time'

★★★★★

**Sarah Mitchell**

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"EMOTIONALLY, IT'S RIGHT off the top of the thermometer," is how Peter Hill, this afternoon's pianist, describes the music of Olivier Messiaen in his pre-concert talk. Even to the untrained ear, it is obvious that emotion is something that players from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra have in abundance this afternoon, as they present *Quartet for the End of Time* in the city's elegant Queen's Hall.

From the opening, all four players project their great passion through what can easily be described as quintessentially French music. Whilst displaying great unity as an ensemble, solo passages allow great enthusiasm to shine through from violinist Christopher George, clarinettist Maximiliano Martin, and cellist David Watkin. Take the third movement – the unaccompanied tones of the clarinet fill the hall with ease. Despite some minor exceptions, Martin is capable of matching the quietest imaginable resonances with ringing crescendos and racing scale passages.

The lengthy lyrical phrases of the fifth movement demand much expression from the cello, a challenge to which Watkin rises effortlessly, portraying his energy visually as well as audibly. Last but not least, the violin has a chance to sing, which contrasts well with the cello solo in its more subdued, relaxing manner. Messiaen's abstract melodies ring throughout the entire hall, whilst towards the end the music descends from its intense peak as singing high notes grow gradually quieter. The soft and ardently delivered piano accompaniment adds to this descent. It is no exaggeration to say that as the final harmonic dies away peacefully, a pin could be heard dropping anywhere in the sizeable hall.

Say what you like about contemporary music, there are few better ways to spend a Sunday afternoon.

*Scottish Chamber Orchestra  
 Messiaen - Quartet for the End of Time  
 25th November 2007*



# Dance Still one of the best

## Rambert Dance Company

★★★★★

**Sarah Mitchell**

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Rambert have the reputation of being one of the best dance companies in Britain, and their World View Tour 2007 is everything contemporary dance ought to be: emotional, theatrical, and accessible to a lay audience. The evening's programme consists of four pieces. First is Melanie Teall's 'Leveil,' performed by six female dancers accompanied by singer Melanie Marshall. Taking femininity as its theme and taking its inspiration from historical and artistic sources, 'Leveil' puts forth a strong visual message about the nature of the female body on display. Next is 'Gran Partita,' choreographed by Karole Armitage, which successfully evokes the courtly wit and manners of Mozart's music despite the modernity of the movements and costumes.

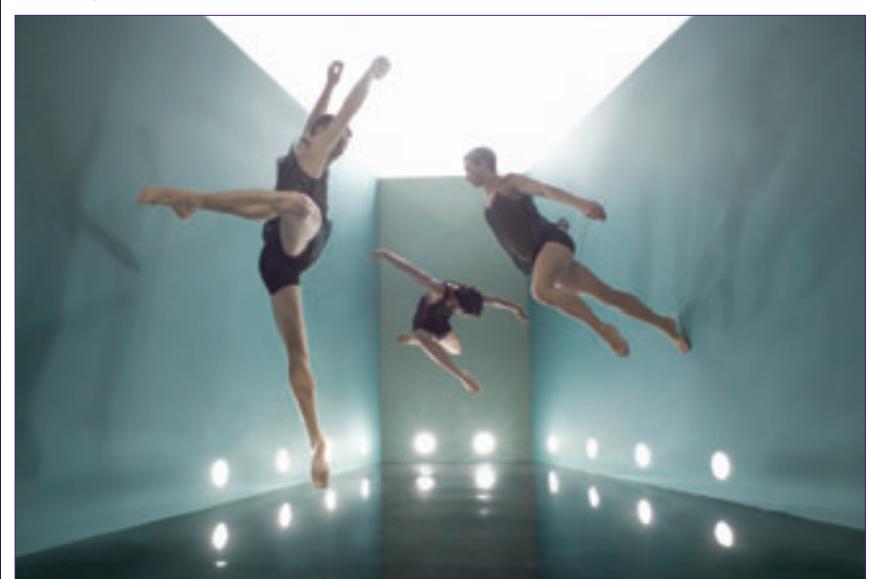
The real triumph was the latter part of the show, beginning with Christopher Bruce's 'Swansong.' The piece with the clearest narrative, Swansong unfurls a darkly sinister scene of interrogation and torture set to breathy, synthesized music. Bruce's brilliant choreography manages to turn a large stage into a tiny prison cell and the guards' mincing soft-shoe movements are much

more powerful and frightening than an overt display of violence. Although first performed 20 years ago, 'Swansong' remains relevant and poignant today.

'Infinity,' a much more conceptual work, is the most technically and visually impressive. The dancers' movements are at times animalistic, at times gracefully acrobatic, but always beautifully coordinated. Choreographer Gary Stewart worked with advanced yoga and gymnastics during this piece and it shows – the dancers contort their bodies into seemingly impossible positions. With an evocative orchestral soundtrack and gorgeous staging, 'Infinity' was a dramatic and appropriate finish to the evening.

With Rambert's World View Tour we are reminded at every turn that we are watching some of the most talented dancers in the world. The company manage to make every step look simultaneously controlled and effortless, never faltering individually or as a team. The Tour is long, so don't take anyone who's likely to fall asleep during nearly two hours of dance, plus two 20-minute intervals. However, it's well worth your time to see this exemplary production.

*Festival Theatre, 7 November  
 Run Ended*



# Fine drinking: 99 Hanover Street

Nana Wereko-Brobby checks out and sums up 99 Hanover Street

**Nana Wereko-Brobby**

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THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT George Street that turns me off. When bar group Montpelier set out for world domination, New Town seemed like the obvious target. With the opening of Tigerlily and Lulu in 2006, the team who brought us Candy Bar, Indigo Yard, Assembly, Ricks and Opal seemed to have cornered the market.

Appealing to a crowd who apparently see beyond Why Not? Garibaldis and the newly jazzed up MadDogs for their nights out, the corporate and industry masses of Edinburgh flock to these hotspots for their Whiskey Sours and White Wine Spritzers. Certainly, there is a certain charm to the Asian Fusion meets City Slicker meets dimly lit Neon Emporium. There's reassurance in the polished veneers, the staple suits and the uniform drinks menu. There's a buzz attached to the cliché of catching the generically good looking yet slightly allusive bartender's eye and—à la Sarah Jessica Parker—ordering a cosmopolitan that the student loan may or may not cover. Far be it for me to criticise a group that has an annual turnover of over £5 million from Opal Lounge alone and which furnishes the Edinburgh festival with the heavenly Spiegel Garden. Furthermore, with a few cheaper student nights under their belt, we can't really say its all about the bling.

There is however something missing from these bars that several groups of rising thirty-something Edinburgh entrepreneurs have capitalised on. With an ethos that treats alcohol "like food in a fine-dining restaurant," Blue Steel Limited have successfully filled a conceptual and gastronomic gap with Dragonfly Bar—which won "most stylish bar" at the Scottish style awards in 2006—the Villager and its recent addition, the Voodoo Rooms. Putting Stolen Model agency on its CV as well, the trendy and innovative owners of the company certainly manage to fuse obvious aesthetic appreciation with a creative, playful and edgy take on urban Edinburgh. Just when I thought my quest for the Holy Watering Hole was finally up, bar owner Barrie Brown sprung 99 Hanover Street on the city and I embraced it with open arms.

99 is a bit of a tease. When it opened last summer it offered a spacious, high ceiling Georgian room, lit partly by candles, partly by retro light fittings and exhibiting a mish-mash of antique-style furniture and drapings that created an exciting atmosphere of faded glamour and debauchery. A joint venture between Stade de France rugby player Simon Taylor and bar magnate Brown, the aim was to create a rustic alternative to the New Town bars, chilled but indulgent. Its upbeat barstaff really knew, and demonstrably loved, their cocktails, and were at hand to offer a suggestion, a cigarette, a shot. However, after a short reign the bar closed its doors and our livers all took a perhaps needed rest.

Thankfully, last Thursday 99 came back to us with a facelift, a new menu and a fresh determination to corner the trendy student market. With around 150 people at the launch night, made up of "industry" types, friends and family and distinguished blaggers, ambassadors for Miller's Gin, Grand Marnier and Dragonfly pandered to our thirst, while live singers and established DJs catalysed the dancing when conversation ceased to make sense. Keen to make a point early on that this bar is not about exclusivity and VIP focus, the team even organised an online competition for the general public to win tickets to the launch by providing a convincing reason for their presence.

Among the effective was one determined application: "I am Asian and gay. So if I don't get an invite I will accuse whoevers in charge of being racist and homophobic. Besides that,

I am sure you need some color in your launch party – think about it." The PC appeal worked. Simpler tactics from the ladies just relied on an insistence on alcoholism and a damn sexy profile picture. In any case, a varied bunch contributed to the unpretentious atmosphere 99 is intent on creating.

Described by Brown as "second living room," the interiors of the bar have been revamped but the cosy atmosphere remains. Everything in the bar is pre-1979: the vintage *Bunty* comic book that encloses the food menu and the old school milk cartons that display the cocktail list show a commitment to playfulness in conjunction with style. The sumptuous fabrics, antique furniture and brilliant mood lighting create a fin-de-siecle atmosphere. Add to that the shallow champagne glasses, a style that was modelled on Marie Antoinette's breasts and enjoyed a revival in the 1920s days of decadence, and one starts to understand what Brown means when he describes the décor as "a touch of everything."

Shunning self-aggrandisement, the 99 sense of humour pervades even the menu. Not just any old cheeseburger, their offering is a "half foot high tower of scrumptiousness." Opting for the club sandwich also appeals when the tagline teases you with "ooh get in." One of its main changes, the menu offers food from 10 am to 10 pm at prices that, considering its gastro-pub strains, are very reasonable and slightly more affordable than the George Street bunch. In addition to breakfast (Full Scottish, American pancakes, breakfast rolls at £1.95), lunch and dinner dishes, there is an appealing tapas menu that works well with early evening drinks.

Paying around £7.50 for cocktails in Edinburgh's other bars, 99 gets you rolling for £5.50. The playful names like "Miss Vivian" mask what are, in fact, potent drinks. Of course, the old favourites can be ordered, but the mixologists provide a kooky and original list: the white chocolate, red grapefruit and passionfruit martini instantly appeals and the "Chai Sour," combining chai tea with honey, vodka, lemon juice and gomme, is a soothing indulgence. Other peculiar ones contain lavender flowers and dashes of espresso but vying for my attention is "Handbags and Gladraggs." Zubrówka vodka with spearmint, milk thistle and nettle tea, finished with a strawberry and champagne preserve is the daring equivalent to my Everest.

It all sounds fabulous but where is the impulse for the average student to up and leave their established digs and check this place out? Barrie and his team are not only keen to get students through the door but they are intent on encouraging them to while away the hours in the chilled setting. With free wi-fi and 25 per cent discount cards for the regulars, the option of passing the time with comfort food and Facebook is tempting. Having run a successful pre-drinking Wednesday night ("Chicks Dig It") before the revamp, Brown is keen to put together a team of student ambassadors who bring groups of friends in and reap the benefits of free booze.

With a creative spin on the pub quiz, the 99 version, set to feature on Sunday or Monday nights, will offer £200 in prize money with benefits such as rollover weeks, *Deal Or No Deal* type additions and questions that range from sports to retro porn.

There is certainly a sense that 99 is intent on blurring the boundaries between adult sophistication and childish naughtiness. Pleased with Brown's focus on "not just style but personality," the 99 team are preparing to enjoy their new look for a while. However, in the not so distant future there are plans to move the 99 name further South, to party centres like Newcastle, Manchester and Leeds. Becoming a devotee now means that in ten years time, when 99 becomes a national brand, we can smugly comment over the dinner table, "yah, I drank there before it went commercial."



Sarah Saleh

## Music Verdi 'Requiem'

Music Society wows audience in McEwan Hall

★★★

**Sarah Mitchell**

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IT'S SAFE TO say that Verdi's epic *Requiem* is no easy feat for the most experienced group of musicians. But in the dramatic setting of the University of Edinburgh's McEwan Hall, there is a detectable note of excitement in the air as the University Music Society Symphony Orchestra and Chorus prepare to give it their best shot.

Indeed, as conductor Russell Cowles draws in the 700 strong crowd from the beginning with beautifully lyrical passages from the string section, and with an equally expressive entrance from the chorus, audience members soon realise that the next 90

minutes is well set to capture their full attention.

The chorus successfully displays the full range of its talent in recounting the tender opening of the first movement, the 'Requiem and Kyrie', later matching whirlwind orchestral phrases from the vigorous brass section during the dramatic entrance to the 'Dies Irae' with equal eloquence. Despite the lack of tenors, balance between the choral sections is good, and the singers are able to maintain stability with the occasionally overpowering orchestra.

The Symphony Orchestra distinguish beautifully between movements, with accurate contrast between the gripping orchestral film score passages, and the more reserved solo phrases, which resound brilliantly around the

substantial performance space. Technical scale passages are handled with ease by a competent violin section, while the woodwind refuse to be intimidated by the strong brass section which surround them with its vivid tones.

The choral soloists bring together the performance while working with the rest of the singers to truly capture the mood of the work: Tenor Jung Soo Yun never ceases to impress as his strong tones and well controlled trills fill the hall. As the performance concludes, there is little doubt that the audience is in the presence of not only a substantial achievement, but of definite talent.

Festival Theatre, 7 November  
Run Ended



# Opera The Barber of Seville & Seralio

Scottish Opera open 2007–08 season with Rossini & Mozart

★★★★

Evan Beswick

[evan.beswick@journal-online.co.uk](mailto:evan.beswick@journal-online.co.uk)

LET'S FACE IT – Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Mozart's *Seralio* aren't a million miles apart. In the former, beautiful Rosina is rescued by dashing young Count Almaviva from the old, lecherous Don Bartolo, all comically masterminded by the titular barber. In the latter, the equally beautiful Konstanze is rescued from the Turkish Pasha's harem by the similarly dashing Belmonte, an escape comically hindered by brothel henchman, Osmín. So, it might seem a bit dull for Scottish Opera to open their 2007/08 season with a pair of comedies, each singing similar songs of intrigue, disguise and hypocrisy. In fact, these two brilliantly different operatic stagings are anything but.

Resisting the temptation to stuff old favourites into modern costumes, Scottish Opera's new production of *The Barber of Seville* is lavish in its recreation of a 17th century Sevillian town house. Rosina's bedroom is particularly well conceived, the wrought ironwork forming a cage from which the soprano (Karen Cargill) physically and vocally bursts out in her opening aria. Sergio La Stella's conducting is wonderfully restrained, allowing the music to show up its own delightful

campness rather than forcing slapstick humour. It works – the production is extremely funny.

An untimely illness and lack of an understudy tonight means that the part of Count Almaviva is sung instead by *Seralio* lead Eric Laporte from the wings while the assistant director, Dafydd Burne-Jones walks the part on stage. After a bit of getting used to it's not actually that bizarre and Laporte shows superb control over the fiendishly difficult coloratura runs. But the duets involving off-stage Almaviva just aren't as spectacular as those between Figaro (Thomas Oliemans) and Rosina. It's a shame, because Oliemans is on magnificent form tonight, commanding the stage precisely as Rossini's factotum should, aided by a magnificently spivvy moustache and some brilliant vocal acting.

While the dramatic carry-on might not be groundbreaking, it's the truly inventive staging which transforms *Seralio* into a striking production. The square of white sand which dominates an otherwise sparse set serves visually as a blank canvas upon which the action takes place. It's just a pain that sand is acoustically deadening. But in its evocation of the exoticism of foreign shores, and the fantastical moral and musical possibilities this alienation allows, the sandy stage is

well worth a bit of ear straining.

It's easy to see why *Seralio* isn't performed quite as often as *The Barber of Seville*. A 'singspiel,' or 'song-play' rather than a bona fide opera, the aria are connected by spoken exchanges rather than the more openly operatic *recitativo*. The result is a slightly clunky hybrid between song and drama – the spoken dialogue nudges at the frankly odd operatic convention that characters sing at each other. Tonight's translation does little to help here, offering an awkward mix of formal English with a smattering of colloquialisms: "bitch" and "mate" are particularly poorly weighted.

Musically, however, the production is superb: conductor Jeremy Carnall's handling of the changes between Mozart's fast, fluid lines and the military music of the Turks is invariably sensitive. Special mention goes to bass Dmitry Ivashchenko (Osmín) who plunges down to some of the lowest notes in the operatic repertoire with utmost confidence and without any daft warbling. Clearly, it's nothing in half measures for the opening of Scottish Opera's 2007/08 season. Except for the cut price under-26 tickets.

*The Barber of Seville & Seralio: Scottish Opera at the Festival Theatre, 23, 28 November & 1 December/24, 27, 29 November.*



Tas Kyprianou

Heriot-Watt University Students Association

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# Edinburgh boxing team enjoys knockout success

*Continued from page 24*

that made for exciting viewing in the third round, but Shotter took control and went on to claim victory with a unanimous decision from the judges.

Crowd-pleaser Dave Warren had strong support from a large faction of the spectators, and continuous chants of 'Warren! Warren!' accompanied his exhibition against Edinburgh team mate Robin Duncan.

Despite the ten kilo weight and significant height difference between the two boxers, the bout was relatively even. Though neither fighter landed a devastating punch, Warren attacked with some strong body shots and succeeded in avoiding his taller opponent's dangerous jabs.

Though most of the boxers survived the night with their noses in tact, Edinburgh's Ian Mack wasn't so lucky in his exhibition against Derek Adams of Madison ABC. After receiving a fierce punch to the nose in round two, Adams's face was soon streaked in blood and the fight had to be temporarily paused.

Attempts to stem the flow of blood from Mack's nose were scuppered by series of punches from Adams directed at the same area.

Despite the bloodshed Mack performed well, landing the best punches of the bout and dominating the first two rounds.

Toted to be the main event of the night, the final bout between Bathgate ABC's Andrew McFarlane and Ali Hardie of St Andrews kept the enthusiastic crowd entertained to the last. In the welterweight tussle McFarlane controlled the contest immediately with some effective head punches that forced his opponent to defend. Repeated jabs to the head of Hardie ensured the Bathgate star's continued dominance into the second round.

With a combination of well-executed jabs and hooks, McFarlane commanded the final round of the night and denied his opponent the chance to attack, going on to win the bout with an impressive display of stamina and skill.



Edinburgh deal body blows to others amateur boxing clubs Eddie Fisher



St Andrews knock weak Edinburgh down to Division 2 Eddie Fisher

## Sport Round-up

### FOOTBALL

#### BUSA Scottish Conference League 1

	P	W	D	L	G	Pts
<b>Stirling</b>	10	5	2	3	8	17
<b>Heriot-Watt</b>	8	5	1	2	14	16
<b>Edinburgh</b>	8	5	0	3	10	15
<b>Glasgow</b>	7	3	1	3	-8	10
<b>Strathclyde</b>	8	1	3	4	-8	6
<b>Dundee</b>	7	1	1	5	-16	4

#### RESULTS

<b>21/11/07</b>	Edinburgh	3 - 2	Strathclyde
	Stirling	1 - 2	Heriot Watt
<b>28/11/07</b>	Strathclyde	1 - 5	Heriot Watt
	Edinburgh	7 - 2	Dundee
	Glasgow	3 - 2	Stirling

#### FIXTURES

<b>5/12/07</b>	Strathclyde	vs	Glasgow
<b>23/1/08</b>	Dundee	vs	Strathclyde
<b>30/1/08</b>	Dundee	vs	Edinburgh
<b>TBC</b>	Heriot-Watt	vs	Edinburgh
	Dundee	vs	Edinburgh
	Glasgow	vs	Heriot-Watt

#### BUSA Scottish Conference League 3

	P	W	D	L	G	Pts
<b>Abertay</b>	8	5	2	1	15	17
<b>Napier</b>	8	5	1	2	7	16
<b>Glasgow</b>	3	8	4	3	1	2
<b>Edinburgh</b>	4	8	4	1	3	4
<b>Glasgow</b>	2	8	2	1	5	-8
<b>Aberdeen</b>	2	8	0	0	8	-20

#### RESULTS

<b>28/11/07</b>	Abertay	4 - 0	Aberdeen
	Napier	2 - 0	Glasgow
	Glasgow	3 - 2	Edinburgh

#### FIXTURES

<b>5/12/07</b>	Napier	vs	Glasgow
<b>TBC</b>	Abertay	vs	Napier

#### BUSA Scottish Conference League 4B

	P	W	D	L	G	Pts
<b>Glasgow Cal.</b>	7	7	0	0	23	21
<b>Strathclyde</b>	3	8	4	1	3	7
<b>Strathclyde</b>	3	7	4	0	3	-1
<b>Glasgow Cal</b>	2	8	2	0	6	-13
<b>QMU</b>	6	1	0	5	-15	3

#### RESULTS

<b>28/11/07</b>	Heriot-Watt	3 - 13	Aberdeen
	St Andrews	2 - 17	Strathclyde

#### BUSA Scottish Conference League 1

	P	W	D	L	PD	Pts
<b>Dundee</b>	6	5	0	1	69	15
<b>Stirling</b>	6	3	0	3	-35	9
<b>St Andrews</b>	6	2	0	4	-8	6
<b>Edinburgh</b>	6	2	0	4	-26	6

#### RESULTS

<b>21/11/07</b>	Edinburgh	0 - 13	Dundee
	Stirling	20 - 5	St Andrews

#### FIXTURES

<b>12/12/07</b>	Glasgow Cal	vs	Napier
	TBC	vs	Napier
	Dundee	vs	Napier

#### BUSA Scottish Conference League 2

	P	W	D	L	PD	Pts
<b>Aberdeen</b>	6	5	0	1	201	15
<b>Heriot-Watt</b>	5	4	0	1	73	9
<b>St Andrews</b>	2	5	1	0	4	-127
<b>Strathclyde</b>	6	1	0	5	-147	3

#### RESULTS

<b>21/11/07</b>	Heriot-Watt	3 - 13	Aberdeen
	St Andrews	2 - 17	Strathclyde

#### FIXTURES

<b>3/12/07</b>	QMU	vs	Glasgow Cal
	5/11/07	vs	Robert Gordon

#### WOMEN'S HOCKEY

	P	W	D	L	G

# Rout fails to dispel Cup woe

## Football

U of Edinburgh 7  
Dundee 2

**Dominic Moger**

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MUCH LIKE ENGLAND under Steve McClaren, the University of Edinburgh managed to excel in a match which offered little in terms of pressure, reward or meaning. Having been cruelly dispatched by Cove Rangers the previous Saturday, with an attendant fine of up to £1200 for indiscipline, Edinburgh responded with a fine display of fluent attacking football against a Dundee side devoid of defensive organisation and tactical coherence. The scoreline may have been conclusive- and deservedly so- but this win will have only underlined what the University will be missing from their exit from the Cup, namely a sense of occasion and a raison d'être for a season that now promises merely the routine.

The match itself was over as a contest by the 5th minute. Edinburgh's high tempo start, a stark contrast to the dogged defensive tactics adopted in Aberdeen, proved too much for a Dundee defence unsure how to cope with the strength of Beck-Friis, the pace of Hazeldine and the probing runs down the right from Beesley. By the end of the first minute the University was ahead, a corner from Beesley emphatically headed home by the unmarked Munro. This lead was extended three minutes later as Fusco stepped up 25 yards out and struck an unstoppable free kick into the top left corner of the Dundee goal. The subdued celebrations, however, betrayed a due sense of anticlimax, an atmosphere compounded by the lack of a substantial challenge from Dundee.

Throughout the first half Edinburgh attacked at will. With a lack of protection from their midfield counterparts, the Dundee full backs were repeatedly exposed to the marauding runs of Beesley and Maxwell, often supplemented by the indefatigable Cook and Munro. From such space on the right came Ed-

inburgh's sublime third. Fusco's free kick from the halfway line was delivered straight to the feet of Munro whose first time volley was smashed home on the full by Beesley from near the penalty spot. By this stage Dundee's fragile tactical cohesion was already disintegrating and although they offered occasional reminders of their attacking threat, they were simply outclassed.

The main thrust of Dundee's attacks came down the right-hand channel through the skillful Jamie Riley. His superb individual goal just before halftime - skipping inside Cook before curling an exquisite left foot shot past Carro in the Edinburgh goal - was one such highlight. However his endeavour was not matched by his team mates. Within a minute Edinburgh had scored a fourth after Maxwell combined with Hazeldine for the latter to finish with the outside of his foot.

The second half followed a similar pattern, Edinburgh's clinical offensive play registering a further three goals whilst Dundee toiled to create half chances with an increasing reliance on the inspiration of Riley on the right side of midfield. Dundee's defending of set pieces once again unraveled as Redman headed home another free kick delivered from the accurate right foot of Fusco. Then, with Hughes and Woods having replaced Hazeldine and Beck-Friis, the former combined with the help of Redman to release the other substitute, Jamie Hair, on the right. His low cross was turned in at the near post by Woods to heap misery on a rain soaked, goal drenched Dundee side.

Dundee continued to take shots from distance but failed to unlock the tight defensive shackles of Fusco and Thompson. By the time Riley struck again in the 90th minute, Edinburgh were seven goals to the good, Hughes capitalising on the inability of Dundee's rearguard to kick the ball clear to slide his finish under the advancing keeper.

A rout it was, but this victory was akin to losing your wallet only to go home and win monopoly. The real prize was lost last Saturday and, unfortunately, Wednesday's win failed to fully banish the memories of what might have been for this unequivocally talented University side.



Easy victory leaves the University thinking what might have been Tom Bishop

## Women's Lacrosse

St. Andrew's 12 – 1 U of Edinburgh 1



Embarrassing defensive display to blame for heavy defeat in St Andrews  
Ken Wallace

# Heriot-Watt beaten by late fightback

## Football

U of Edinburgh 2 2  
Heriot-Watt 1

**Becky Owen**

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HERIOT-WATT SUFFERED A narrow 2-1 defeat at the hands of Edinburgh University 2nds in their final League 1 match of the year.

After a subdued beginning Heriot-Watt's Emma Walker scored in the sixteenth minute to give Heriot-Watt the lead which they managed to maintain

until the last 15 minutes. They could not hold off Edinburgh to secure a win however as Abby Short chipped the ball into the goal to bring the score to an equal 1 all.

Though a draw would have been sufficient for Edinburgh to win the League, the team picked up their game after the equaliser. With renewed urgency, Anna Livingston took Edinburgh into the lead just seven minutes from time, demonstrating her skill with a brilliant goal.

Possession of the ball was largely equal in this balanced match. A win for Edinburgh seemed unlikely until Short took advantage of goalmouth confusion in the aftermath of a late short corner. Heriot-Watt's opening goal ap-

peared to give them confidence and inspiration, and a second goal seemed imminent as Watt's attacking strength increased dramatically. Despite constant pressure from Heriot-Watt attackers for the following 50 minutes, Edinburgh's defence remained strong and the team managed to avoid conceding another goal.

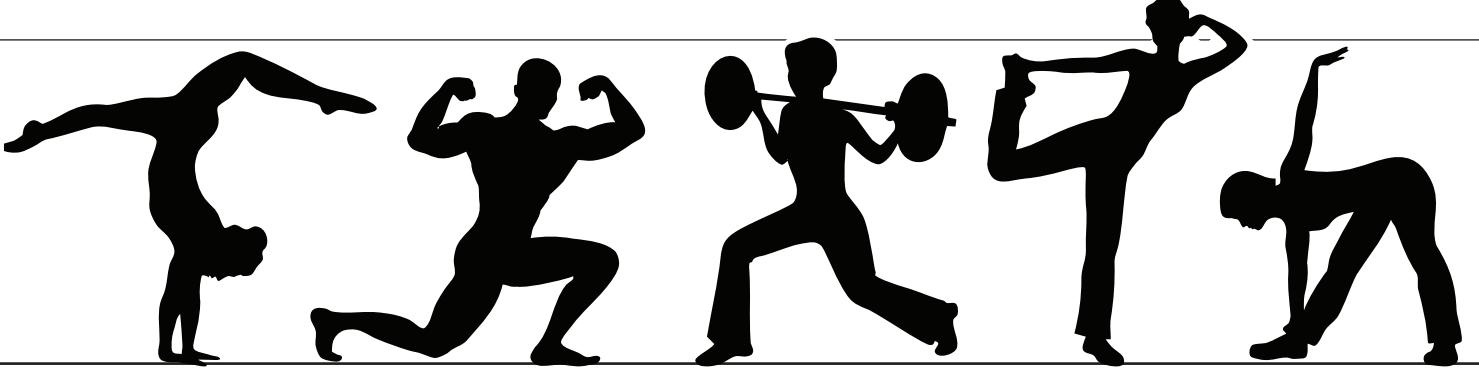
The game's turning point came through Livingston's enterprising run, which resulted in a spectacular goal for Edinburgh.

The determination of the Heriot-Watt team was evident throughout, yet when Edinburgh picked up the pace of play in the last quarter, the Watt seemed unable to respond.



Two late goals undermine Heriot-Watt's dominance and leave the team in despair Ken Wallace

# Sport



## Heartbreak for Edinburgh as Cove grab last-minute winner

### Scottish Cup Football

Cove Rangers 1  
U of Edinburgh 0

**Tom Crookston**

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IT WAS A crushing end to Edinburgh University's first appearance in the 3rd Round of the Scottish Cup since 1890. In the dying seconds, young Cove Rangers defender Phil McKibben was quickest to react to Barrie Stephen's low cross, and poked the ball home at a crowded near post just seconds from the final whistle. Edinburgh, reduced to ten men minutes earlier when Scott Fusco received his second yellow card, will consider themselves very unlucky not to have earned at least a replay after a hugely open, entertaining and controversial game.

Numerous chances went begging at both ends, but Edinburgh will rue two key incidents that seemed to turn the game in Cove's favour. The first was a serious injury to experienced midfielder Neil "Zorro" Irvine, who went down clutching his shoulder after an innocuous-looking challenge in the centre circle. Irvine was stretchered off the pitch and rushed to hospital with less than 20 minutes played, forcing Dougie Samuel to bring on Peder Beck-Friis and revert from his preferred 3-5-2 formation to a more conventional 4-4-2.

Beck-Friis launched straight into the action, and in the 25th minute he earned a free-kick just outside the Cove penalty box. The referee seemed to show Eric Watson a yellow card for obstruction, but when Watson was booked again, for a reckless challenge on Michael Hazeldine with just over an hour played, no red card appeared. Edinburgh may feel hard done by, but with better finishing

either team might already have sealed qualification to the fourth round by that point.

Both teams took a while to settle into the game but Cove had the better of the early chances, burly winger Stephen in particular looking dangerous on the right. Irvine's injury, however, seemed to galvanise the Uni team and they looked to be gaining the upper hand, Andrew Cook firing just past the left-hand post a minute before half-time. Cove's best chance of the half came in the 40th minute when Fusco inadvertently connected with Stephen's menacing low cross and missed his own goal by just inches.

Edinburgh twice went close after the break, Alisdair McKinnon clipping the bar from 25 yards and Steven Maxwell turning Beck-Friis' cross just over after a fast break from Jamie Redman. Their manager's decision to rest the effervescent Jack Beesley in midweek appeared to have paid dividends as he was at the heart of most of the team's best movement. But it was another otherwise outstanding player, Scott Fusco, who may have changed the game when he was booked twice in the space of ten minutes, for an untidy foul and an unnecessary hand-ball on the edge of the box.

Samuel responded to the sending-off by replacing striker Hazeldine with defender Fraser Munro for the last five minutes. The aim, clearly, was to hang on to their clean sheet and hope to earn a replay in a week's time. The home team, however, were unrelenting and McKibben pounced on a rare piece of sloppy defending to put Cove ahead in the ninetieth minute. Edinburgh's stunned players had no time left to find an equaliser before the prompt final whistle. Their disappointment was plain to see, but this young side can take heart from a tireless performance in a tie they were unlucky to come away from empty-handed.



University of Edinburgh boxers beat off the competition in annual Fight Night event Eddie Fisher

## Edinburgh boxing team enjoys knockout success

**Hannah Thomas**

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BOXERS FROM THE University of Edinburgh fought their way to victory in an eleven-bout extravaganza held at Teviot Row House last Thursday.

Hordes of ringside spectators crammed into the union's Debating Hall witnessed a night of contests between students from Edinburgh, St. Andrews and Strathclyde, and fighters from three local boxing clubs.

Tournament hosts Edinburgh won every one of their fights.

The annual Fight Night, promoted by the University of Edinburgh Amateur Boxing Club (ABC), was a sell-out for the second year running. The event saw the University of Edinburgh's prestigious Debating Hall transformed into a boxing stadium, complete with pumping music, bikini-clad ring-girls, and hip-swinging interval entertainment from the Modern Dance Society.

A middleweight contest between Edinburgh's Lauri Lutsar and the University of Strathclyde's Steve Buchanan

kicked off the action. Two early right hooks from Buchanan were answered by Lutsar, who took advantage of his superior stature and fought back with some strong body shots, bringing him into the lead at the end of the first round.

Despite a shaky start to the second round, in which Buchanan's blows drew some blood, a spectacular punch from Lutsar stunned his opponent and resulted in a standing eight count.

With some strong body shots in the third round, the University of Edinburgh student dominated the remainder of the fight, leading four out of the five judges to rule the bout in Lutsar's favour.

The most technically impressive display came from Edinburgh captain Alex Hope, whose agility and strength enabled him to win comfortably against Madison ABC's Gareth Matterson. Hope dominated the bout from the outset with some early punches that forced Matterson back onto the ropes. This early advantage enabled the Edinburgh captain to land a series of devastating body shots.

Though Matterson showed promise

with some well-executed punches at the beginning of the second round, Hope was unfazed, and drove the Madison boxer into the corner with some forceful jabs to the head.

With a successful combination of body and head punches, Hope controlled the final round to secure an easy win, deftly evading the majority of Matterson's blows.

A bout between Edinburgh's Mark Shotter and St. Andrews captain Feezer Kassam was easily the night's most exhilarating fight. Wily Kassam gained an early advantage with a series of rapid-fire body shots that caught Shotter off guard and forced him into the corner.

But with admirable determination Shotter fought back, driving his opponent onto the defensive in the second round. In an exciting turn of events, Kassam swiftly recovered from the Edinburgh student's well-executed punch to the head, and pushed Shotter in to the corner once more.

Both fighters excelled in stamina-testing volleys of spectacular punches

*Continued on page 22*

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