

interact

Autumn Edition 2011



Editorial

It has been an unusually fractions and busy summer in the capital. It seemed there could not be a bigger frenzy than that whipped up as the hacking scandal reached high noon, but the rioting and looting which began in Tottenham and spread first across London, then to some other major cities, soon became the big story, leaving no space for silly season.

There was much commendable activity as well as criminal during those few days in August when society, it seemed, stood on its head. An undoubted hero was Tariq Jahan, whose son, Haroon, was one of the three men killed in Birmingham. At a time when the initial violence might have tipped into conflict between different racial and ethnic communities, his appeal for calm, and for the local community not to turn in on itself, was the most cogent voice of the many which surrounded the riots.

It was his plea for 'communities to stand united' which resonated in particular. In multicultural Britain, it is dialogue, respect and common understanding between communities which matter above all. This magazine hopes to play its small part in facilitating that process.

Now in its seventh issue, Interact brings together students from a variety of backgrounds with a range of skills - writing, photography and graphic design. This edition mixes an international focus - with articles on the current religious and political climate in Holland, and the plight of refugees in Tunisia - with issues closer to home: the implication of the last year's events on notions of privacy, how faith differs across generations, and the difficulty for people of faith to forge a career in football.

Alongside the more serious material is our take on Freshers Week, fashion advice on how to get the best from charity shops, and music and museum reviews. Whatever your interests, we hope the magazine has something for you, and you enjoy reading it.

Joshua Davis



The Team!

Contents *Design: Sadiyah Mir*

p.6: Religion and the Generation gap:

Rochelle Sampy examines the differences in religious faith across the generations

p.8: Celebration or calamity?:

Rochelle Sampy argues that Freshers Week hinders rather than helps interaction between different groups.

p.9: When private becomes public:

What does privacy really mean in the Twitter age? Grace Baxter investigates.

p.12: Is Holland losing its liberty?

A detailed look into the current political situation in Holland. Liv Carr finds that the world-famous coffee shops are facing new restrictions, and Josh Davis looks into the mooted ban on Halal and Kosher slaughter.

p.20: Extravagant dinners unthinkable for most refugees:

Nada Issa meets refugees in Tunisia and examines the plight they face this Ramadan

p.22: Charity Shops the new Topshop:

Disdainful of charity shops? Dan Mead argues they deserve a second look.

p.26: Potterlitical?

In need of a Potter fix? Nada Issa is on hand with her take on the books' political connotations.

p.28: Recipes:

Student cook in need of ideas? We do our bit with a multi-ethnic menu for you to try.

p.30: Reviews:

Our team bring you up to date on what's going on in the capital

p.32: Religion and Football:

Are football and faith compatible? Pete Campion looks at the difficulties facing religious players in British football.

p.34: Amy Winehouse, 1983-2011:

Dan Mead offers a retrospective on the late singer.



September 2011				
MON	TUES	WED	THU	
			1	
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

Photographer: Myra Khan
Project Managers: Lucy Campion, Stephanie Eldridge & David Miller
Editors: Joshua Davis & Nada Issa
Writers: Grace Baxter, Liv Carson, Peter Campion & Rochelle Sampy
Graphic Designers: Daniel Mead, Tanya Gander & Sadiyah Mir
Front Cover Image: Rachel Little

GET YOUR
VOICE
HEARD

BY JOINING
THE EDITORIAL
TEAM FOR
INTERACT



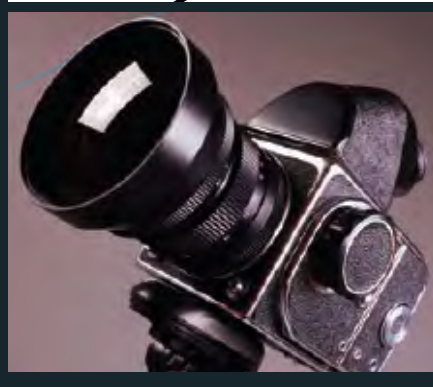
WRITE * DESIGN



PHOTOGRAPH



interact



About this project

Get your voice heard by joining the Editorial Team for Interact Magazine and work with a diverse group to create the only interfaith youth magazine in London. Learn from media mentors in the industry, develop your skills, express yourself and meet new people. We have opportunities for those interested in writing, photography, graphic design, blogging, editing and also the opportunity for you to learn new skills.

Interfaith Calendar 2011

Design: Sadiyah Mir

September 2011

MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

✝ Christianity

🦁 Rastafari

⚡ Paganism

ॐ Hinduism

☾ Islam

8th Sep: Nativity of the Theotokos, Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Feast of the Birth of Mary ✝

🦁 11th Sep: Ethiopian New Year ⚡

23rd Sep: Autumn Equinox

28th Sep: Navaratri ॐ

✝ 29th Sep: Michaelmas / St Michael, St Gabriel and St Raphael's Day, Rosh Hashanah (1st day) ⚡

October 2011

✝ 1st Oct: Fast of Gedalliah
2nd Oct: Feast of the Guardian Angels ✝
ॐ 6th Oct: Dussera
8th Oct: Yom Kippur ⚡
9th Oct: Birthday of Guru Ram Das ①
✝ 13th Oct: St Edward's Day, Sukkot ⚡
14th Oct: Hoshanah Rabbah ⚡
✝ 20th Oct: Shemini Atzeret Birth of Bab ⚡
✝ 21st Oct: Simchat Torah ①
✝ 26th Oct: Paryushana Diwali ①
✝ 31st Oct: Samhain, Hallowe'en (All Hallows Eve) ✝

Judaism ⚡

Sikhism ①

Baha'i ⚡

Jainism ①

Shinto ①

WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

November 2011

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

✝ 1st Nov: All Saints' Day (Hallowmas, All Hallows) ✝

✝ 2nd Nov: All Souls' Day, Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie 🦁

☾ 6th Nov: Eid-ul-Adha

✝ 10th Nov: Birthday of Guru Nanak (Lunar Calendar) ①

11th Nov: Armistice Day

✝ 12th Nov: Birth of Baha'u'llah ⚡

15th Nov: Shichigosan (7-5-3 festival) ①

✝ 23rd Nov: Niinamesei ①

✝ 24th Nov: Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Nanakshahi calendar) ①

✝ 26th Nov: Day of the Covenant, Al-Hijira ☾

✝ 27th Nov: Advent Sunday ✝

✝ 28th Nov: Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha ✝

✝ 30th Nov: St Andrew's Day ✝

FRESHER'S WEEK: CELEBRATION OR CALAMITY?

With a regional BBC website categorising Fresher's Week as "cheerleaders and free shots", it is no wonder that Donald McLeod, editor of EducationGuardian.co.uk, has said "It makes new students feel lost and bored, with a ghastly hangover and a crumbling bank balance into the bargain."

What does the week of alcoholic consumption leave for faith-based students? Limited in their options they join relevant faith based societies. Is this all London Universities can offer and if so what does this say about student culture and life? Do student unions consider the integration of faith-based students with generic student societies? And does an interfaith culture exist?

Fresher Gavin Britton was reported to have drunk himself to death due to participating in a golf society orientation during his fresher's week, in 2008. Initially this seven-day introduction to university life aimed to provide the opportunity for students to be introduced to one another in a safe environment.

But instead it has become an excuse to over indulge in alcoholic intake and encourage crazy antics to gain social popularity. The last Labour government spoke on tackling excessive drinking on campus. However, since the acknowledgment of this problem by Gordon Brown, the former the Prime Minister, in February 2008, no further action or policy has been implemented.

What of the voice of sober students that chose not to centre university life on alcohol? "The binge – drinking youth" has made storming media headlines. These stereotypes have made for interesting stories and sold newspapers, while heightening the general lack of respect for young people.

Yet there are students who enjoy regular partying without the use of alcohol and sit out when their peers play drinking games. In 2008, the Guardian Newspaper interviewed Josh Dunbar, then age 19, student at Bath University and member of the university football team. He claimed to have rejected alcohol on the basis of his religious beliefs and health issues. He admitted that had made it difficult for him to interact socially.

In a report by Lancaster University Management School, Dr Maria Piacentini confirmed the impact of alcohol on socialising abilities. She says that although it is gradually becoming more socially acceptable not to drink, a majority of students find it difficult to maintain their anti-alcohol stance and remain part of the student culture. Avoiding the drinking culture may mean that students will find themselves attending university purely for academic achievements and missing out on the social side, which is imperative to shaping their personalities after graduation.

Is there an alternative? University offers religious groups most commonly referred to as student societies. These bodies cater for specific interests, but this often results in segregation and isolation. Limited to socialising within a set group many students fail to become part of the wider student culture.

Universities need to make more effort in promoting Fresher's Week as an opportunity for students to meet and socialise with all their peers irrespective of their different faiths, beliefs, and interests.

Simisola Smith, Vice President of King's College University in London, has the right idea. This year she is to lead the KCL Nations United Group, bringing all cultures together, and aims to organise a 'One World Week', whereby all beliefs and interests will meet.

Student unions across the UK should be encouraged to undertake such initiatives or introduce similar methods that aim to bridge the gap between social groups within universities, creating dialogue and joint activities between different societies, finding common interests or facilitating dialogue with students who belong to different groups.

Fresher's week needs to pave the way for student interaction. If we continue to encourage undergraduates to stick to their separate groups during education, then we are creating a future society where people remain within their circles, alienating themselves from other communities – in other words we are carving a divide that is cut deep in our world.

It is time for Student Unions to provide an arena for all to mingle, one that is suitable to all beliefs, backgrounds, and interests – alcohol free.

Article: Rochelle Sampy

Design: Sadiyah Mir



Photograph by user traveleasta (flickr) under Creative Commons Attribution-Share license

RELIGION AND THE GENERATION GAP

Written By: Rochelle Sampy. Designed: by Daniel Mead.

Today's older generation has been accused of failing to pass on their religious beliefs and practices onto their children, a report by UK research found.

According to the survey by Christian research, attendance at Church of England Sunday Services has halved from 1.6 million in 1968 to 850,000 in 2006. In an article for think tank Open Democracy author Affab Malik writes that young Muslims in Britain today look beyond the mosque for their beliefs, which previously determined any ethical or moral practices.

In 2007, the Independent newspaper published a report, which indicated that the traditional secular Jewish community is no longer present in Britain. Instead, British Jews have begun to follow a more liberal school of thought that is willing to accept Britain's multicultural society. Religion is experiencing a generation gap between the younger and older

generation. But just what does the term 'generation gap' imply and how has it impacted on society?

One of the most vocal religious groups on this issue has been Christians. A recent BBC Radio 4 programme titled 'Beyond Belief: Religion and Generation Gap' has gained its credibility from a statistic that Christian couples in Britain only have 50 per cent chance of transferring their religious beliefs to their children. Statistics such as this have gained the backing of the British Christian society, which, like other religions, has been affected by the gradual yet effective changes in modern Britain. The Telegraph newspaper recalls a time when family pew in church was sacred and when church represented the hub of all social life. Local community and the church have become somewhat divorced as individuals grow more mobile and continue to discover new forms of social life.

I have witnessed a first hand account of how the social environment affects my Catholic religious beliefs. Born in India, I lived there for 11 years before moving to the UK. Both my grandparents were heavily involved in Church life. Thus from the outset I led a religious Christian life, made frequent social visits to priests with my grandfather, and attended regular Sunday school classes.

At home, I was taught not to question my beliefs and this was strengthened through attending a Catholic school, which had regular religious services every morning before the start of lessons. I made friends only with girls of my own faith, was prohibited from mixing around with boys and told when I marry he would have to be a Catholic, a rule that was not up for debate. I was only permitted to move around within close family circles, where I find these rules to be commonplace and so I never had reason to question them.

When I moved to England, I was to



experience a complete transformation. Religion was not strongly imposed on students at school, even at Catholic convent academies. Shockingly I found only I knew the religious prayers by heart and soon started to even feel embarrassed about it.

The worst was yet to come: my parents still wanted my brother and I to lead the same reserved religious life that we knew back in India. We were told to serve mass every Saturday, which gradually made me almost dislike my religion.

I started questioning and criticising Christianity while on a placement year in

"It is important to distinguish between a religious identity and a religious belief"

Belgium during my university days. It was then Catholic priests made the headlines for sexually abusing young boys. Non-religious colleagues asked me how a Christian could possibly liken a priest to God, when priests were performing such acts. "How can your beliefs stay strong when a person, meant to be created in the image of god, does something morally and ethically reprehensible?" Unable to find a logical defence case I resulted to questioning the teachings of Catholic priests who conduct such wrong doing.

Despite questioning my faith, I still call myself a Christian and would have it no other way. But is it feasible to adopt only the identity of Catholicism and not all its beliefs? Fair to our forefather's generation would have deemed this unthinkable. The general mantra was to believe and never question. Faith is all you need.

What may have formerly been classed as taboo and sinful seems to have become the norm. It is not only Christians such as myself who have strayed from traditional religious beliefs and way of life but this is extended to all three monotheistic religions. One of my Muslims friends eats pork, criticises the notion of 'Halal', and indulges in alcohol, all three matters that are considered wrong to partake in. Yet in spite of this he still considers himself to be a Muslim. It is important to distinguish between a religious identity and a religious belief. Young people today attend religious

"Celebrities come as 'real' people who make mistakes and so one should adopt only certain characteristics"

festivals and join in religious activities without learning anything new about the religion itself.

In 2006 I attended the Catholic World Youth Day held in Germany. It was the only permissible opportunity that would empower me to go abroad with my friends for the first time. Only several religious young people partaking intended to see the Pope, the remaining visitors arrived to solely interact with other like-minded individuals and enjoy

Europe. Many often fell asleep during religious services as opposed to seeking "religious enlightenment". Despite such endeavour, religious leaders are accelerating down the wrong road with ineffective tactics that fail to engage young people and in turn threaten to create an ever-expanding gulf between society and religion.

The BBC programme reveals the impact of celebrity culture in shaping bad societal connotations, which are replacing religion in an orthodox sense. But the show also reports that the cult of celebrity should not be dismissed altogether.

Although many chose to become celebrities for fame or other selfrighteous motives, many use their fame for altruistic reasons and prefer to help others before themselves. Most, if not all, religions believe in charity and the distribution of wealth and knowledge amongst those less fortunate and therefore approve of young people choosing certain celebrity ideals.

Miriam Berger, Rabbi from the Finchley Reform Synagogue in London, says that although it is more important in religion to be admired for your spirituality rather than your talent, the Jewish religion believes in choosing real role models. Celebrities come as 'real' people who make mistakes and so one should adopt only certain characteristics rather than emulating them in the entirety. It is not wrong to have wealth and success but then this prosperity must be shared with the less fortunate.

Nonetheless, it is easier to disapprove of reality TV shows such as Big Brother and the X Factor, which are set in surroundings that offer a false reflection of reality. Thus participating candidates are not contributing to share their talents but to achieve fame.

Vicki Mackenzie, journalist, Buddhist, and author of Cave in the Snow, claims that in cases such as these, a celebrity becomes a "quick -fix", unable to relate to religion or spirituality. This culture born by our society puts pressure on today's religious figures to make religion more exciting and appealing to young people. Thus capitalizing on other trends in society that were absent from the environment in which our fathers and grandfathers lived in.

A report published on the British Jewish population by the Institute of Jewish Policy Research revealed that although 72% of married Jews had a Jewish partner, 68% of those cohabiting did not have a Jewish partner. The more secular branch of Judaism has smaller families, whilst the main picture that emerges is one of a liberal community who are enthusiastic about interacting with others in Britain's multicultural society. Within the Jewish population, the domination of strict Orthodox seems to be gradually unclenching.

Traditionally, Jews have believed in remaining within their own circles, connecting only with those who understand their religious practices and

beliefs. The stereotypes of the Jewish housewife or the married Jewish couple are no longer the reality of Jews in Britain. The large Jewish community faces a religious split between the orthodox and those who marry into other religions, an act formerly seen as taboo. But is the intergenerational gap or the lack of interest in religious issues by young people really a big problem today?

Pre-war Afghanistan, the 'Burkha' was not a common sign of religious identity for women. Following the Taliban's hold over the region, it has become an item that is worn by most women in country. For some Muslim women living in the rest of the world, they perceive the Burkha as a religious identity that they wish to keep uphold, which allows them to publicly express their beliefs.

Western countries have struggled

"Western countries have struggled with this Islamic religious image and thus have resulted in ostracising women who wear a Burkha from society"

with this Islamic religious image and thus have resulted in ostracising women who wear a Burkha from society. This segregation can be mostly deeply felt in France and other countries that impose the Burkha ban.

The need to preserve Islamic beliefs has also been demonstrated in the continuing series of the BBC 4 radio Programme - 'Faith Schools'. Ibrahim Hewitt, head of an independent Muslim school in Leicester, argues that religious education no longer possesses much prominence in state schools. As consequence parents seeking to educate their children on their respective religion turn to independent academic faith establishments. Although Jewish, Christian, or Muslim private schools may offer thorough religious lessons, they may threaten to create segregation through lack of dialogue, interaction, and conversation between different groups or backgrounds.

There are those who oppose the existence of privately run religious academies as they feel they add to religious divides in society. To live side by side in peace and friendship are we not to strive to build an interfaith culture where each religious group learns to respect each other's beliefs?

Interact is an organisation that aims to achieve just that. As an interfaith charity it works to offer a platform that promotes understanding and respect of the beliefs of different faiths. The organisation aspires to build bridges between different groups in society allowing them walk into each other's worlds in attempt to comprehend one another and thus appreciate a diverse society, celebrate social harmony, and reduce and seal the intergenerational and social gap.

When Private becomes Public

Social Media is changing the way people act and communicate, leaving our attitudes towards privacy with some catching up to do

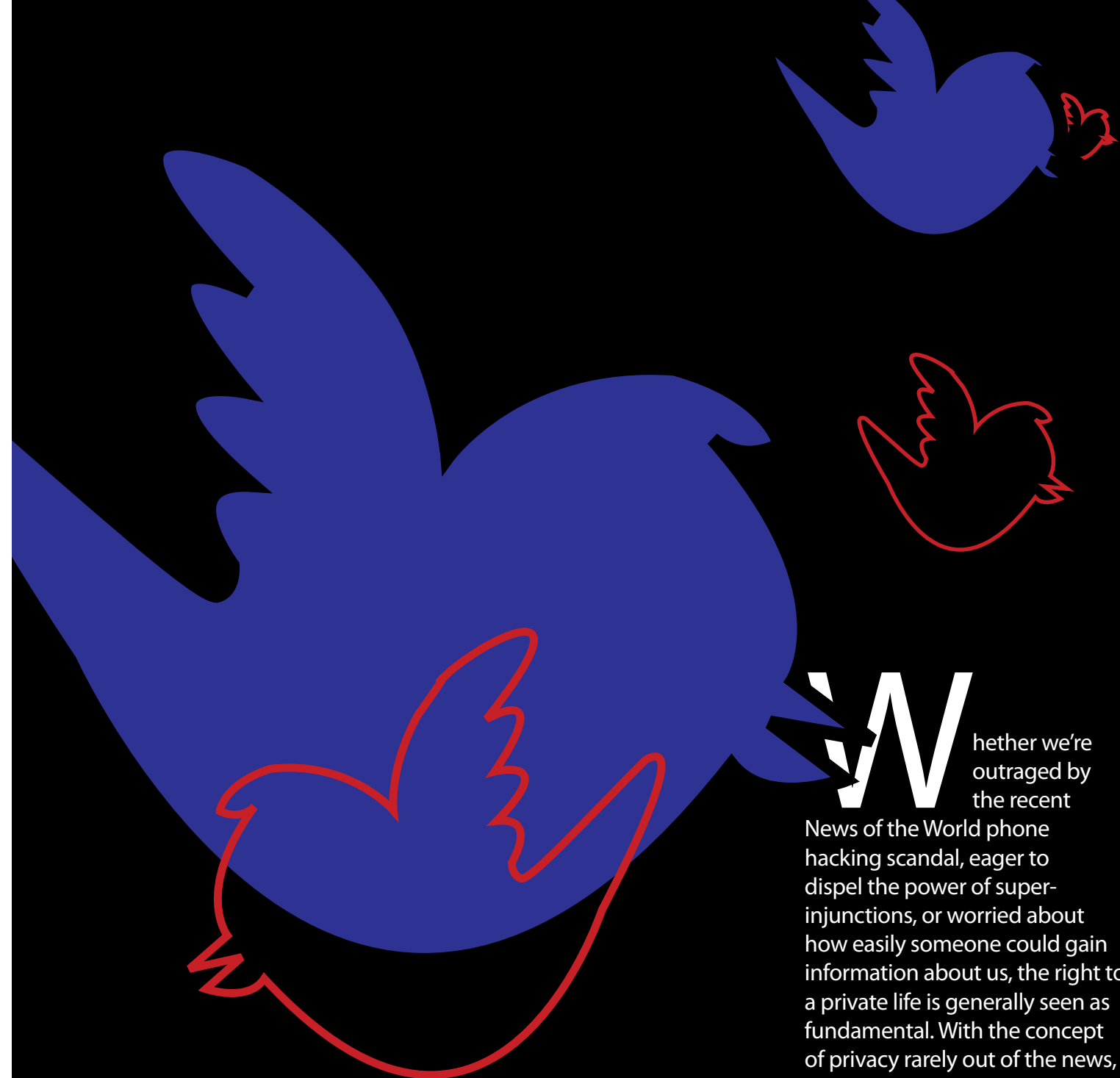
Article: Grace Baxter


Design: Tanya Gander

Whether we're outraged by the recent

News of the World phone hacking scandal, eager to dispel the power of super-injunctions, or worried about how easily someone could gain information about us, the right to a private life is generally seen as fundamental. With the concept of privacy rarely out of the news, it has become apparent that there is something of a double standard in society: we want to protect our own privacy, but don't always afford the same right to others, and in fact sometimes enjoy exposing it. Do we need, then, to examine our attitude towards privacy, and change our behaviour regarding others' rights to it?

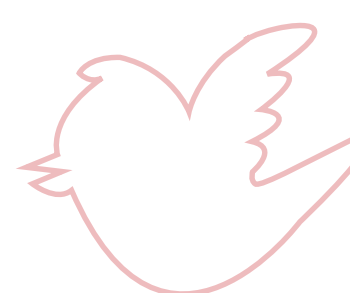
The victims of the phone hacking scandal are numerous, as many as 4,000. It was suspected for several years that phone hacking was going on, but was only admitted by News International in April of this year, eventually





‘As a society we still want the gossip, just not necessarily the methods.’

‘We are all too ready to get on the proverbial high horse; some of us were already saddled up.’



leading to the resignation of the the organisation’s chief executive, Rebekah Brooks. The News of the World was famous for its focus on celebrity gossip, and sold an average of 2.8 million copies each week. Social tolerance for the matter seemed to reach breaking point when it was revealed that the Sunday tabloid had hacked the phone of the murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler. No longer was this just an illegal means of obtaining celebrity gossip; the scandal had taken on an uglier dimension. Should this undercurrent of anger have translated into diminished sales?

Perhaps, yet sales were maintained, concluding with the 4.5 million who parted with their money for the final edition, albeit this was in part due to its souvenir status. Either way, it did not go unnoticed that as a society we still want the gossip, just not necessarily the methods.

Also hard to miss was the storm surrounding Imogen Thomas and super-injunctions, with social networking sites jumping

straight in to flout the legal restriction, under the freedom of speech banner. The super-injunction became a media storm because in seeking to protect one individual it also imposed severe restraints on other parties, Thomas included, and of course the gossip-hungry tabloids. Nebulous but much-claimed rights – respectively to privacy and free speech –

People feel more comfortable violating privacy online

seemed to collide; where should the law fall between one celebrity trying to cover his tracks and the media pursuing a juicy story and the sales that would follow? Part of the problem is that we are all too ready to get on the proverbial high horse; in fact some of us were already saddled up. Here was a man who had done something which most people believed to be wrong, and therefore he deserved a bit of good old fashioned social shaming.

Or did he? What about his wife? Was it really any of our business anyway? In this case, the privacy of the individual was much less sacred in the public eye than those who had their phones hacked by the tabloids, perhaps fairly, as the situations are very different. But if our motivation is to humiliate someone, and ‘make them pay’ for what they’ve done, even if it was wrong, is that a good enough reason to shine the media spotlight on this rather grey area? While an antiquated legal system grapples with the hoary chestnut of privacy versus freedom of speech, new media like Twitter exploit their fleet-footedness and the inability of the courts to regulate them by conventional means. Linked to this is the prevailing online mentality that seems more comfortable in violating privacy over the web, as if the anonymity provides a free pass. Twitter frequently broke the super-injunction imposed to protect the footballer’s identity, raising legal questions about

whether such forms of social media lay within the confines of the law. Aside from risking other people’s privacy, we seem much more open about our own lives on the internet. The amount of data we willingly post about ourselves over sites like Facebook and Twitter is phenomenal; it’s not something we would tell a stranger in day to day life, yet is there on the internet for anyone to see.

And I know what you’re thinking – ‘I have privacy settings, and choose my friends carefully’, which is important, don’t get me wrong. But given that these settings can, unfortunately, be bypassed by others, should we be a little more careful about what we put out there for others to access? I’ll readily put my hands up and admit that I enjoy the occasional Facebook ‘stalking’ session, (I know you do too, don’t try and deny it) trying to find out a bit more about a particular person, maybe a friend’s new boyfriend, and get annoyed when I come across a page where I can’t

view the person’s photos, or their wall, while in fact their security settings are the same as mine! It seems that too many of us are guilty of the hypocrisy of wanting to jealously guard own lives while taking a walking tour of everyone else’s.

Clearly the right to privacy manifests itself in many different ways, whether it has been illegally violated, questionably protected, or willingly disclosed. What does seem worth noting is the ‘someone else’ mentality we can sometimes adopt; would we be happy to see our privacy violated in the same way? Clearly not. Might we condone it if done to other people, producing an interesting scoop? Evidently so, especially if it involves a juicy sex scandal. Maybe we need to take a more universal approach to privacy, affording everyone the same access to their right, while balancing it with our right to free speech. Will this conflict? Definitely, but perhaps it is possible to find a balance if we question our motives when we do something that might affect another’s privacy.



Is Holland losing its liberalism?

FOR years Holland has been regarded as one of the most liberal countries in the world with its tolerance towards soft-drugs, the legalisation of prostitution and the fact that in 2001 it became the first country to allow same-sex marriage. However, the government now intends to put an end not only to any further toleration of multiculturalism in the Netherlands but also to the country's drug crime and tourism. Every year, hundreds of thousands of tourists travel to Holland (in particular, Amsterdam) for well-established festivals such as Gay Pride and to visit the famous coffee shops, where cannabis and hashish are sold, and can be used, legally. It would seem however that this famous Dutch tolerance is now under threat as Holland's newly-formed coalition

Now another Netherlands?

New restrictions on immigration and the world-famous coffee shops are casting doubt on Holland's liberal image

Article: Liv Carson

Design: Tanya Gander

negotiations, a coalition government, headed by Holland's new Prime Minister Mark Rutte was sworn in. This new government depends upon the support of the Dutch Freedom Party, whose founder and leader is the notoriously anti-immigration and anti-Islamic politician, Geert Wilders.

It is clear from the government's reform programme that they are grateful to Wilders for his support as their intended reforms include stricter laws on immigration (and in particular, the immigration of Muslims, in line with Wilders' aims to put an end to any further 'Islamification' of the Netherlands). The government's programme is seemingly illiberal and anti-multiculturalist, including measures to ban the burqa and the imposition of strict licenses on coffee shops, turning them into private members' clubs rather than tourist attractions.

It is proposed measures such as these that threaten Holland's reputation as a paragon of liberal values and social tolerance.

The Government's aim is to encourage immigrants in the Netherlands to integrate more fully into Dutch society. Their policy will place more demands on immigrants, for example requiring them to learn the country's language and to act in accordance with traditional Dutch values. Although these demands may seem understandable as no country wants to lose its national identity, it may be a step too far to impose a ban on the burqa (from 1st January 2013). Commenting on his integration bill, the Dutch Interior Minister, Piet-Hein Donner, stated that the proposal to ban the burqa was not for security reasons, but rather because he believes that "in our society you have to be able to see

each other." The ban is more specifically aimed at face-covering Islamic burqas. Marcel Van Dem, a former Labour Politician, has accused Donner of trying to "placate his support partner" Wilders, who has recently been acquitted in court after facing trial for "inciting hatred" against Muslims after he likened the Qur'an to 'Mein Kampf' and Muhammad to 'the Devil'.

The Dutch Immigration Minister, Gerd Leers, is behind a proposed movement to cut down on immigration. The government's apparent aim is to make not just the Netherlands, but the whole EU, stronger and more prosperous. Leers has many proposals towards this end, including reducing immigration by imposing stricter guidelines on family unification, whereby immigrants are joined by family members who had previously remained behind in their country of origin. This plan, like so

many others included in the government's programme, seems to have been influenced by Wilders. However, under current EU law, this particular proposal is inadmissible, according to Cecilia Malmström, the European Home Affairs Commissioner. Accordingly, Gerd Leers is currently trying to persuade the rest of the EU to adopt these new regulations; a law can only be passed if every country agrees to the proposal.

Leers believes that for years the Netherlands has been regarded as a 'model' country, setting an example by passing laws over controversial issues such as abortion. In this respect, Leers and the government seem to feel that their country will once again have to become a 'model' in encouraging its fellow EU countries to adopt their immigration proposals.

Although this new integration bill emphasises the fissures in Holland's social tolerance, it is the government's decision to impose a licensing ban on the Dutch coffee shops that really highlights the beginning of the destruction of the country's famously liberal attitude.

Coffee shops have existed in Holland

since the mid-1970s, when they were introduced in an attempt to create a safe and legal environment for cannabis users to use marijuana. The CCGuide, an online guide for cannabis campaigners, states that the introduction of coffee shops into society was an attempt to separate the supply of cannabis from that

Coffee shops will go from tourist attractions to private members' clubs

of hard drugs. The government treated cannabis users as patients rather than criminals and, despite not attempting to wean them off drugs, ensured that they were kept safe by making sure that any drugs supplied in coffee shops were free from impurities. By

removing the sale of cannabis and hashish from the hands of the dealers,

the risks of patients overdosing from consumption of drugs was reduced.

The CCGuide comments that although the number of cannabis users initially increased, it began to level off by the early 1980s. As a result of this liberal approach, the use of hard drugs did not increase as fast in Holland as in other European countries such as France and the UK. At the same time however, the coffee shops did cause an increase in Holland's drug tourism. Although over the last thirty years this has brought in a lot of revenue into the country, the increase and apparent nuisance of drug tourism is one reason behind the new coalition government's decision to privatise the coffee shops.

Despite Holland's seemingly liberal attitude towards soft drugs, there are still some grey areas in its drug laws. Drugs in Holland, including cannabis and hashish, are technically illegal. Instead, there is a tolerance policy, a set of guidelines published by the Ministry of Justice telling public prosecutors under which circumstances those caught in possession of soft drugs should not be prosecuted.

The grey areas in the Dutch drug laws exist because the use and sale of cannabis is illegal everywhere apart from coffee shops. This

indicates that Holland is perhaps not as liberal as people tend to think.

Instead, it cleverly controls the drug situation by ensuring that drug users are provided with a safe environment in which they can use soft drugs. DrugScope, the UK's leading independent centre of expertise on drugs and drug use,



highlights that because the cultivation and distribution of drugs is still illegal, those who supply the coffee shops could be arrested if caught.

Pressure has been put on the government for many years over the current status of coffee shops and already major changes have been made. The amount of cannabis a person can possess without being prosecuted has been drastically reduced from 30g to 5g. At the same time, some towns in the country have already either closed their coffee shops or barred tourists from them. This change in the country's attitude towards what was essentially a drugs experiment is indicative of the fact that the original purpose of coffee shops has long been left behind, turning them from safe places into tourist attractions.

Every year these coffee shops attract hundreds of thousands of tourists who want to enjoy a piece of this Dutch liberalism. Dutch coffee shops have been threatened with licensing laws since the 1990s and now it seems that finally, after years of inaction, the new coalition government is going to put them in place in an attempt to curb drug tourism, fight crime, and promote

a health agenda.

When the reforms go through, coffee shops will not be closed down but will essentially become private members' clubs. Each will be allowed to have between 1000 and 1500 members who must be adult Dutch residents and sign up for a year's membership. The Dutch Justice Minister Ivo Opstelten has said that the aim is not only to improve the quality of life for Dutch residents, but also to ensure that Holland returns to the meaning of the coffee shop scheme as it was intended in the 1970s, which is "local use for those that want it."

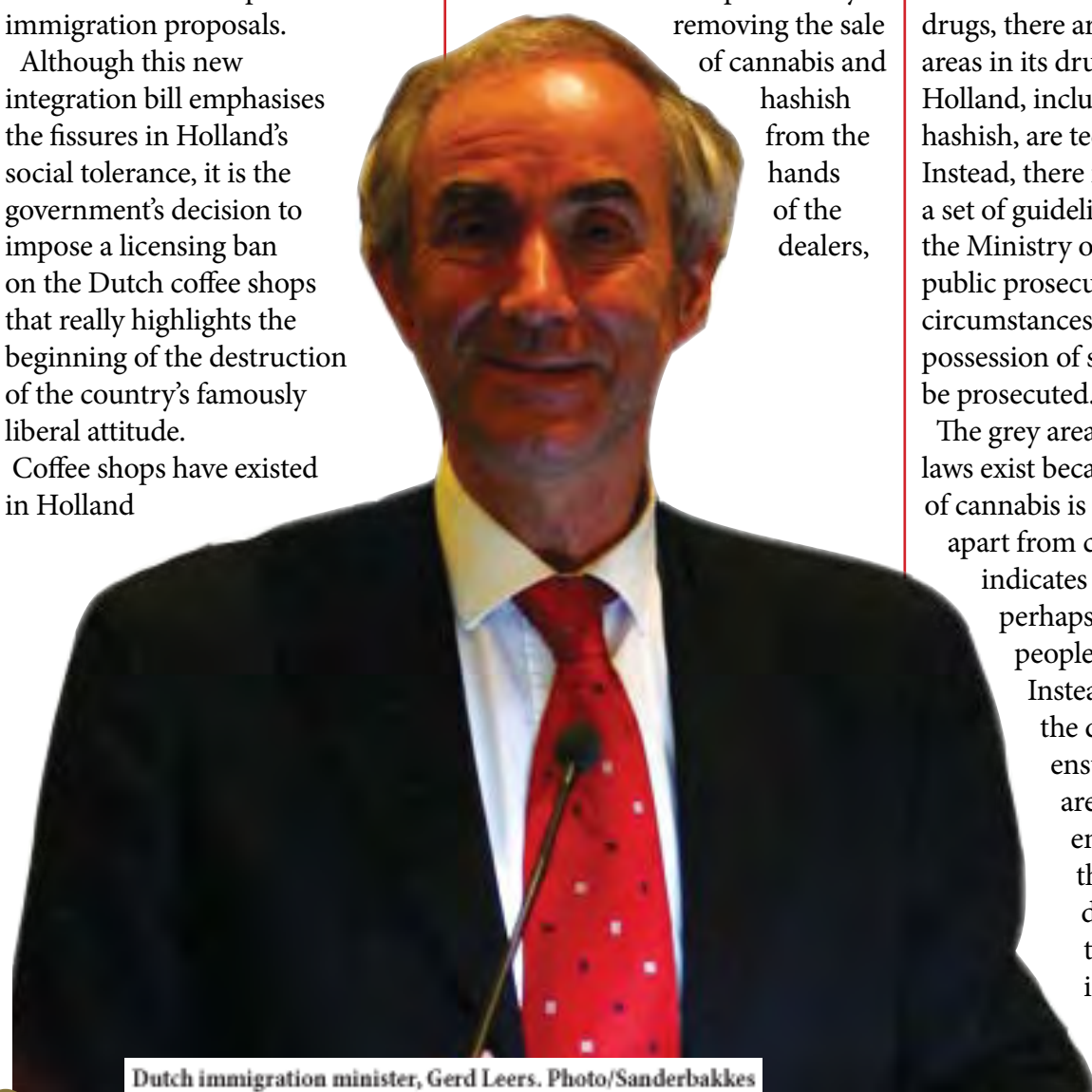
The crackdown on coffee shops may help boost the underground drug trade

Due to the restriction on the number of members allowed, there are fears that even some Dutch residents who are regular cannabis users will not be able to join a coffee shop. This has sparked concerns that the limits on coffee shops could lead to an increase in not only street dealings but also underground trade.

There is also the added worry

that by ending the "open-door policy of coffee shops" (as stated by the Dutch health and justice ministers), tourism in the Netherlands will decline. Stephanie, a resident in Amsterdam, talking to me at one of the country's famous coffee shop chains, The Bulldog Palace, emphasised this fear of a potential decrease in tourism. She added that the coffee shops alone bring in a lot of revenue for the country.

Having considered the situation, it seems to me that Holland may not be losing its liberalism per se, but that the extent of its liberalism has been misinterpreted in the past by foreign observers who have drawn incorrect comparisons with their own seemingly conservative societies. Indeed, it may be fair to say that the underlying social objectives of successive Dutch administrations have not been unusually liberal. Rather, they have sought to control and tackle particular social problems by adopting methods that seemed liberal but were fundamentally pragmatic. In my view, Holland is not actually becoming less liberal; it is merely adjusting its pre-existing position on certain controversial issues.



Dutch immigration minister, Gerd Leers. Photo/Sanderbakkes

Kosher and Halal face the chop

Proposed legislation in the Netherlands has put the Jewish and Muslim methods of animal slaughter under threat

Article: Josh Davis

Design: Tanya Gander

In Britain, there is a tendency to malign the small, special interest parties which inhabit the political fringe: earlier this year the crushing rejection of the AV referendum revealed the popular mood on a more proportional voting system. In last year's general election, the Green Party won its first parliamentary seat, but their leader and representative, Caroline Lucas, is doomed to remain a token presence.

In the Dutch House of Representatives, elected by proportional representation, the Party for the Animals has a similarly miniscule share of two seats. Yet in June, their leader, 39-year-old animal rights activist Marianne Thieme, introduced a bill which, having passed, threatens to exacerbate the already febrile religious politics of the Netherlands.

The legislation, which has yet to be approved by the Dutch Senate, would make the slaughter of animals without stunning illegal – a move which would criminalise the Kosher and Halal methods, which do not allow for the animal to be mechanically stunned prior to slaughter. Currently, under existing EU regulations, pre-stunning is a mandatory part of slaughter in the Netherlands, but an exemption exists which allows for legal practice of Shechitah and Dhabihah, with these methods of slaughter having been judged a religious right by the ECHR. It is this exemption which is now under



Photo/Mu

threat. Under any circumstances this would have created controversy. But the specifically Dutch context to the mooted ban means it cannot be seen merely as an issue of animal welfare.

The House of Representatives through which the legislation has passed comprises 150 seats; 24 of these are in the hands of the Party for Freedom, led by the controversial Geert Wilders, the third largest overall share. Wilders, who has called for the Koran to be banned, is a parliamentary kingmaker by dint of his party's sizeable representation, although he is not part of the governing coalition.

He was acquitted in June on several charges of inciting hatred and discrimination against Muslims, after a lengthy legal process involving two trials. He has spoken out on numerous occasions against Islam, describing it as 'not a

religion...[but] the ideology of a retarded culture'.

Campaigners against the proposed legislation are in little doubt of the motivations behind the bill: in the view of Massoud Shadjareh, chairman of the Islamic Human Rights Commission, "People are being persuaded to lend their support to this legislation not out of a genuine commitment to animal welfare, but rather out of their hatred of the Muslim community."

Mohammed Abdul Aziz advises the Muslim Council of Britain and is director of Faithwise, a consultancy group which has advised the Department for

Communities and Local Government. He too argues that the campaign is driven by factors beyond animal rights: "I'm sure there are some people who... genuinely dislike animals being killed, but I can't help feeling that in the current climate, at least some of it is very, very political." Aziz also suggests that there is a distinct prejudice behind the anti-immigration, mono-culturalist politics which has increasingly gained traction in the Netherlands under the Wilders banner: "a lot of these anti multiculturalism, anti-diversity campaigns are being driven by a focus on Muslims: Islamophobia, anti-muslim hatred and prejudice." The proposed ban on slaughter without pre-stunning which Massoud Shadjareh and Mohammed Aziz link to a rising tide of Islamophobia in the Netherlands is also set to impact on the much smaller Dutch Jewish community.

On the legislation which will come before the Dutch Senate this autumn, Aziz commented: 'if this gets much further down the road, others will suffer, and whether it's collateral suffering, as in this case, the target is banning Halal food, but you can't frame legislation in such a specific way, so it catches other people like Jewish people... it's exactly the same thing that happened in America after 9/11, with Sikh people being killed because they looked Muslim [four days after the September 11th attacks, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh petrol station owner in Arizona, was shot dead]; by association other religions are being affected. Shimon Cohen, campaign director for Shechitah UK, an umbrella campaign group which seeks to promote awareness and dispel misconceptions about Kosher slaughter, also argues that the local

Jewish community is in danger of becoming a victim of collateral damage: '[the legislation] began as an animal welfare thing promoted by the Party for the Animals. The VVD party of Geert Wilders, an extreme anti-Islamist party, jumped on this and moved what was going to be a two-vote squeak in parliament...into a significant body, and the Jewish community got caught up. It was reported to us that when people went to speak to Geert Wilders pointing out that he's had a huge amount of Jewish support and support from Israel, and some may feel uncomfortable about the fact that he's had this support, he apparently said that he hates the Muslims a lot more than he likes the Jews.' He was,

“

It's an indication that Jews are not welcome in the Netherlands

however, at pains to stress that the potential consequences of the Bill, should it pass, were distinct from its origins: "Did this originate through animal welfare? Yes it did. Will there be collateral damage to the Jewish community? Yes. And the consequences are troubling. But I don't believe for a second that the lady who promoted this bill did so for racist motives."

On the potential impact of the legislation, Cohen was unequivocal: "the consequences were it to be passed...would mean one of the fundamental tenets of a Jewish community will be denied to the Jewish community of Holland, and therefore, as the Chief Rabbi [Jonathan Sacks] I believe said, it's an indication that Jews are not

welcome in the Netherlands." The defenders of this religious freedom, he argues, must remain constantly on guard: 'it's been an ongoing battle, and each time have a success...the opponents come back, and what I think is very important for us to continue to do is to show right-minded people that the opponents are on a mission here; this is not based on animal welfare concerns, but it is based on something else, something darker'. Just as Shimon Cohen stresses the need to target 'right-minded people', Mohammed Aziz emphasises the importance of middle-ground opinion: "there are nutters on the right who you will never convince, but if we are going to tell a better story about diversity and multi-

culturalism, we need to target those people in the middle, who are far more willing to listen to alternative view-points" Highlighting a recently-concluded campaign against an EU regulation which would have labelled all Kosher and Halal meat as "meat from slaughter

without stunning", Cohen reflected on the way the Jewish and Muslim communities had joined together to oppose the move: "we have worked very closely with the Muslim community to oppose the European directive on labelling [which was removed from the EU legislation on food labelling in July]...it was a wonderful experience of where communities can come together for a common end." This is perhaps the happiest strand to emerge from what remains a serious threat to the religious communities of the Netherlands, and indeed Europe. It may be that campaigners against religious liberties have helped forge an alliance which they could neither have predicted nor desired. In that, at least, there is hope.



WHAT IS GOD?

"A spectator in the theatre
looking down on a stage"
Josh Strickson

"A man with a pale face, long straggly
golden hair and a beard wearing
a white robe!" Pauline Grivell

"Different things to different people,
but love is constant" Ricky Smith

"Nature, environment –
a footprint in the sand" Dan Hart

"Mans projection of his own fears,
limits, perfections and inadequacies"
Jade Cunningham

"Blind hope and trust for
the entire world"
Katie Brook

"Thierry Henry at Highbury"
Ed Marler

"Father Christmas sitting on
a cloud" Tarryn Collins

"An excuse, a reason or
someone/thing to blame"
Sophie Newall



EXTRAVAGANT DINNERS UNTHINKABLE THIS YEAR FOR MOST REFUGEES

Written By: Nada Issa. Designed By: Daniel Mead.

Muslim refugees, weakened by fleeing the conflict in Libya and battling months of drought in Somalia, began Islam's Ramadan fast amid the tents and shacks over some of the world's largest refugee camps.

Fleeing Gaddafi's men, and a country being torn apart, Libyan refugees amassed on the Tunisian side of the border. Away from their homes and with temperatures soaring, reaching 40 degrees centigrade, they braced themselves for the holy month of Ramadan.

Throughout this month, Muslims are forbidden from eating or drinking

from sunrise until the sun sinks below the horizon. This, they say, teaches them patience, spirituality, and humility.

Sick people do not have to keep the fast during the holy Muslim month of Ramadan. But most camp-dwellers appeared determined to keep to their traditions.

With basic necessities such as food, shelter and schooling being set-up, the next challenge for the UN refugee agency and its several partner organisations is to cater for the refugees during this month. They have begun distributing evening food supplies for more than 10,000 families

to be eaten during Iftar. Most of the Libyans are happy to receive the food. "This donation will be a great help in cutting down family expenses during Ramadan," said 72-year-old Ali as he queued for his food package in UNHCR's distribution centre.

Ali, who fled to Tunisia in April with a large group of relatives, said Ramadan was very important to him and his family. "Ramadan is an occasion for family reunions," he said. He later added sadly: "Although the Tunisians are being very generous, we are finding it difficult to feel at home because our

community network has been disrupted."

But the challenge remains in keeping the refugees, especially women, occupied. Normally, they would pass the day by cooking

"In parts of the drought prone region the rains have failed for four straight years"

and preparing Iftar. With the lack of cooking utensils and space, most meals are prepared by charitable agencies, leaving a long, hot, and empty day for the refugees to endure.

Fatima, a mother of four, told Interact that back home she would go out during the night to "socialise and shop", but now she finds herself confined to the walls of the refugee camps. With no income and across a state line from what she calls home, her previous world has become a faint, distant memory from a life she knew some time ago.

Her anguish is felt by many others in the camp. But these struggles are also being felt elsewhere in the world. Somalia's refugees in Kenya are suffering from a dire situation growing worse by the day. Struggling to find the mere necessities of life – food and water – their sole purpose.

Ramadan comes at a tough time for the Horn of Africa's Muslim population. In parts of the drought prone region the rains have failed for four straight years, pastoralists say.

Observance of Ramadan in these circumstances is unthinkable for the refugees who are suffering from one of the worst famines in a generation. While Muslims around the world mark sundown during Ramadan with extravagant dinners, that kind of nighttime celebration is an unattainable fantasy for them.

"It hard for me to fast, but I fast for fear of God"

Somali refugees say they have already been forced by the famine to fast for weeks, and in some cases for months, without an end-of-day meal to regain their strength. "I cannot fast because I cannot get food to break it and eat before the morning," said Nur Ahmed, a father of six whose wife died last year during childbirth.

Mohamed Siman, a fellow Somali refugee, agrees, "This is definitely going to be a different Ramadan for us, back home in Somalia we had shade, fruits and very good houses. Right now as you can see I'm seated

in front of a tent. Its too hot and having fasted during the day in this kind of environment, I don't think many of us will be able to sustain the fast."

However, and even though Islam allows the ailing to eat, for many Somalis it's a matter of faith to fast. "It's hard for me to fast but I fast for fear of God" said Aden, who is among thousands who have made the long journey, often on foot, to a refugee camp in neighboring Kenya.

Others, like Mohamed Abdulle, are ashamed they don't have food "to console the soul" at sundown at the end of a day of fasting. "How will I fast when I don't have something to break it?" asks Abdulle. "All my family are hungry and I have nothing

"Somallians face life not so much different from that of the refugee camps"

to feed them. I feel the hunger that forced me from my home has doubled here."

Sheik Ali Sheik Hussein, a mosque leader in Mogadishu, called it "worrying" that so many Somalis cannot fast because they are already weak from hunger and don't have food to

regain their strength after sundown.

Despite the overwhelming difficulties, the Somali refugees remain positive about the challenges ahead. Abdirahman Abdi, a Somali refugee, said, "We don't have all the milk, peace, and necessary conditions to sustain a fast. We are short of food as refugees and we are living in bad conditions, but with the help of God and well wishers we will succeed."

As evening brought another day of Ramadan to an end, Abdirahman and others, rushed to the nearest mosque to end their fast.

Islamic scholars prepare to scan the sky to determine the end of the moon cycle, which marks the end of the month-long fast. But as a new moon cycle begins, the struggles and ailments of the refugees remain the same – a battle for survival.

Libyans can return to their homeland but they will face a livelihood to rebuild, whilst Somalians face life not so much different from that of the refugee camps.



CHARITY SHOPS HAVE BECOME THE NEW TOPSHOP

Writing, photography and design by: Daniel Mead. Modelled: by Camilla Robinson.

When I was young, I used to stroll along the high street with my Grandmother, who cared for me while my mother was at work. She used to drag me in and out of every charity shop – and I hated it. To me, too young to understand that these shops existed to raise money for a good cause, they just

seemed like a lot of odd smelling garments and bits and bobs of old tat.” Who would want this?” I thought. How wrong I was.

To my initial horror, I found myself complimenting my girlfriend on the clothes that she wore, only to hear in response, “It’s from a charity shop”. Am I dating my Grandmother? Thankfully not, but it certainly has changed my opinion on charity shops. Admittedly, they are not all great. But this is the beauty of it. They are like an ‘Aladdin’s Cave’, you never know what you are going to get so they are always worth a look. What’s more, you’ve got a good chance of finding something unique; the clothes are often so old that the chance of seeing somebody else wearing the same thing is next to nothing, which everyone looks for when shopping for clothes. You can also be creative with the items; if something is too big or doesn’t quite fit how you like, use your imagination

and alter it! Take a look at the model’s denim shorts; these were a genuine pair of Levi 501 jeans, which cost £8 (originally anywhere up to £90). The model didn’t like the fit of the jeans so simply cut them with a pair of fabric scissors and now has a fantastic pair of denim

“That’s a £22 saving and an £8 donation to charity”

shorts! These pre-cut shorts retail at £30 from Urban Outfitters. That’s a £22 saving and an £8 donation to charity.

According to the Charity Retail Association: “Last year charity shops raised more than £170 million, funding medical research, overseas aid, environmental initiatives, supporting sick and deprived children, homeless people, mentally and physically disabled people, for animal welfare and for many other causes”. So not only are you getting extremely cheap items, the money raised from your purchases actually helps those in need.

You can find a host of wonderful items in charity shops from clothes, books, home ware and more and it’s great when you are at University living off a student loan; you can usually find those odd bits and pieces that will make your new room feel a bit more like home. I hope you agree that these casual outfits are remarkable considering that most of the items are from charity shops. Even if these styles aren’t to your taste, I hope you can at least appreciate them and be inspired you to have a go at it yourself.



Blouse: £4
Shorts: Models Own (American Apparel)
Headscarf: £0.50
Patterned Leather Jacket: £15
Shoes: Leather Patent Shoes £4



Portobello Market



Diagon Alley is the place to go where you can find anything. It is the most popular shopping place in the Potter world. Portebello Market in London is just as colourful and dynamic. It too oozes with strangeness and fun.



Diagon Alley

After ten years, seven books and eight films, the Harry Potter phenomenon has finally come to an end. Friendships have been tested to the limit, schools destroyed, loved ones lost and a new sport invented. The magical world that brought us Harry, Hermione and Ron has reached its awesome, apocalyptic finale, but its legacy is here to stay. Those who jumped on board of the Harry Potter ride from the outset of its journey were mere children. Today these young fans have become adults still recalling and enjoying a world of imagination and magic brought to us by J K Rowling. Last summer, millions of children the world over – and, let's be honest, just as many adults – clamoured to see the final installment of the final film. It seems only yesterday I recall, fascinated by the first book, waiting with bated breath for the release of the second Harry Potter book. But although the books have come to the end and the films have all been produced and released the Potter magic lives on. It has been with us when anticipating our GCSEs, A-levels, and university results. It has seen us on our journey from childhood to adulthood and every now and then we find ourselves reminiscing about our favourite Potter moments. Harry Potter will continue to be passed down to generations to come. But it is not the end for those who have witnessed its release first hand. The world conjured by Rowling is not only on our bookshelves and in our DVD players but it can be found in today's political and social world. Everywhere we turn we find her words in the pages of our books leaking into our world. So just what similarities can we discern?



Death Eaters

Is Peter Mandelson a Labour supporting Dementor? In Harry Potter, Dementors are creatures that suck the soul of their victims. During the 2010 general elections Peter Mandelson was said to have sucked the oxygen out of the room. Of course he is not the only spin-doctor to have stolen media attention – Andy Coulson did a good job at that too although for much different reasons.



Lord Mandleson



It is rumored that there exists a private train in Westminster underground station that takes parliamentarians into the House of Commons. The secret entrance to the platform reminds me of Platform 9 in the Potter world. Could there be a secret Ministry of Magic?

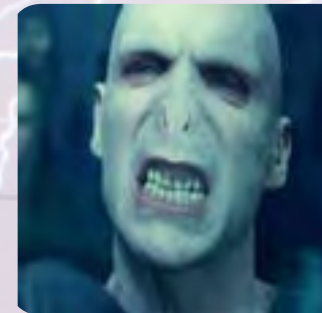


Harry Potter

and the uncanny similarities...

Article: Nada Issa Design: Tanya Gander

Nick Griffin



Voldemort is obsessed with trying to keep the wizard world for "pure bloods". Nick Griffin is set to ensure that Britain consists only of the "indigenous race". Despite the term "indigenous" being problematic in several ways, the BNP are adamant to exercise their fascist quest and destroy what other countries have envied us for – our diverse society.

Lord Voldemort



Dolores Umbridge



Dolores Umbridge resembles Hazel Blears not only in her looks but also in her mannerisms – You can't fool us, they are clearly the same person.



Hazel Blears



Bellatrix



Rita

Did she ever intercept Potter's owl? Hack into Dumbledore's memories? Am I alone in seeing similarities between Rita Skeeter and, dare I say, Rebekah Brooks? What's that – she's more of a Bellatrix Lestrange I hear you say. They come bad in all shades – the blonde, the red, and the brunette.



Rebekah



The Sorting Hat

And now the moment you've all been waiting for – the sorting hat! You've got Labour – brash, bold, prone to repeating their mistakes. Gryffindor! The Tories – nasty and proud of it, something people want a piece of without wanting to admit to it. Slytherin! And the Lib Dems – alledgely intelligent, worthy, ultimately insignificant. Hufflepuff!



So there you have it. A decade from when we entered into Rowling's magical world we've come to find that Potter's world is somewhat a mirror reflection of our muggle world. Behind the wands and the spells exists a real life story that will be read, watched, and lived by all of us.

MENU



Starter: Chicken Soup

Ingredients:
1 chicken carcass
1 boiling fowl (optional)
2/3 chicken breasts, cubed.
3 sticks celery
2 carrots
2 bay leaves
2/3 chicken stock cubes
50g noodles
Salt/pepper



Chicken Soup

Method:

1. Place the chicken carcass in a large pot, with the boiling fowl if you have it; cover with cold water.
2. Roughly chop the celery and carrots, and add to the pot along with the bay leaf and one crumbled stock cube. Add salt/pepper
3. Bring to the boil and then simmer on a low heat for three hours. The water should barely bubble. Skim any fat off the surface and remove from the heat.
4. Sieve away the vegetables, and when cooled, decant and place in the fridge overnight.
5. Skim the fat off the top and reheat, adding another chicken stock cube, and the chicken pieces.
6. Add salt/pepper to taste, and another stock cube if the flavour is insufficient.
7. Add the noodles. Ensure the chicken pieces are cooked through, and serve hot.

Main course: Biryani

Serves 6 - 8 People

Ingredients:
Basmati Rice-
3 cups washed and drained
Chicken/Beef/Mutton-
500 g small cubes with bones
Onions- 2-1/2 cups finely sliced
Oil- 1-1/2 cups
Tomatoes- 2-1/2 cups chopped
Ginger- 3 tablespoons, chopped
Garlic- 1 tablespoon, chopped
Yoghurt, Plain- 1 cup, whipped
Potatoes (optional)-
3 medium, peeled and halved
Biryani Masala*- 65 g



Biryani

*When looking for the Biryani Masala, it is best to go into Indian/Pakistani shop. The best brand is the Shan Brand. The masala is a mix of spices such as Cinnamon, Turmeric, Dill seeds, Clove and Cardamom as well as red chilli, garlic and fennel.

For best results use breast, ribs or shoulder cuts of meat.

Method:

1. As pre-preparation, wash meat and drain for few minutes in a colander. Then mix together yoghurt, salt (as per taste) and masala in a bowl. Add meat and mix so that marinade covers all the pieces. Keep marinated meat in refrigerator overnight.
2. On the day itself, fry onions in hot oil until golden. Add tomatoes and fry till oil separates.
3. Add the marinated meat and fry for 15 minutes. Add 1-2 cups water and cook on low heat until meat is tender. Then increase heat and stir fry until oil separates from the gravy.
4. Cook the rice as per instructions on a general packet of basmati.
5. Pour the hot meat and gravy in a casserole dish and then layer the hot rice on top. Cover the dish and let it rest for half an hour.
6. Garnish the rice with fresh chopped coriander and slices of hard boiled eggs.
7. Serve Biryani with fresh salad or Raita

Sauce: Raita

Ingredients
1 medium onion chopped finely 3
medium tomatoes chopped half a
cucumber chopped
1/2 teaspoon each cumin & coriander
powders
1/4 teaspoon sugar
1 cup plain yoghurt
1 green chilli, deseeded and cut
finely (optional)



Method:

1. Whip the yoghurt till smooth.
2. Add sugar, cumin & coriander powders and whip again till thoroughly mixed.
3. Before serving, mix chopped vegetables.
4. Garnish with fresh chopped coriander.

Dessert: Eton Mess

Serves 4

Ingredients:
350g icing sugar
250g strawberries
1 egg white
150ml double cream
Half a lemon
Butter for greasing



Method:

1. Lightly whisk the egg white, then stir in the icing sugar.
2. Separate mixture into four and roll into medium sized balls.
3. Grease a piece of greaseproof paper with the butter, place one ball on the paper, and then microwave on high for 45-60 seconds. Repeat for each ball.
4. Chop strawberries into small pieces.
5. Squeeze the juice from half of the lemon into the cream and whisk, then fold in chopped strawberries.
6. Break up one of the meringue pieces into a bowl, and serve with strawberry cream. Repeat for the other servings.



One of the perks of living in London is the abundance of raw and new art on tap. Gigs, showcases, galleries - you're surrounded by new artists of all varieties and with a bit of digging can unearth some real gems. My favourite discoveries are almost always music based. Unsigned EPs, though usually in need of some polish, often get me more excited than the latest offerings from more familiar faces...

One of these new discoveries is Always Scarlett who I count as one such 'gem'. This London-based band is generating a following on the usual social networking sites and is playing support for one of my favourite European bands, Absynthe Minded, in October.

A female-fronted five piece, the demo on the band's Facebook page comprises a total of five tracks and catchy they certainly are. Each track has a different feel; from the aggressive, pleading 'Blind Faith' through to the vulnerability of 'Rebel' you can hear references to a variety of artists: The Cranberries; White Lies and Alanis Morissette to name a few.

What's key is that although Always Scarlett clearly draw on diverse influences, they aren't simply repeating what's been before - dangerous ground for a new band, not to mention plenty of established ones! The energy, newness and urgency of these tracks are what propel them and you know Sarah feels every word she sings.

With lyrics based on simple flawed experience, it's less of the angry finger pointing of many a pop/rock band, seeking validation through the demonstration of aggression against the world. Instead they form a diary, searching and questioning through wants, desires and losses. A little bit exposed, but always in control.

The great thing about this E.P. is the clear passion behind it. You can feel the love (or whatever it is they're channelling) and hey, these guys know how to write a damn good hook. 'Make Me Human (Once Again)' brings together punchy guitars, driving drum beats and a cool, strong vocal to create a track which is powerful, vibrant and true. It's a return to the sort of songwriting you find with bands like The Cardigans - a return to melody that gives you butterflies - driving, catchy, and haunting.

A demo it may be, but if Always Scarlett sound this good now, without all of the production tweaks that so often disguise a multitude of sins, it's surely only a matter of time before more people know their name.

Always Scarlett are making their next appearance at

Punk, Soho in London,

October 14th. Check out their Facebook page for more information:

www.facebook.com/alwaysscarlettmusic



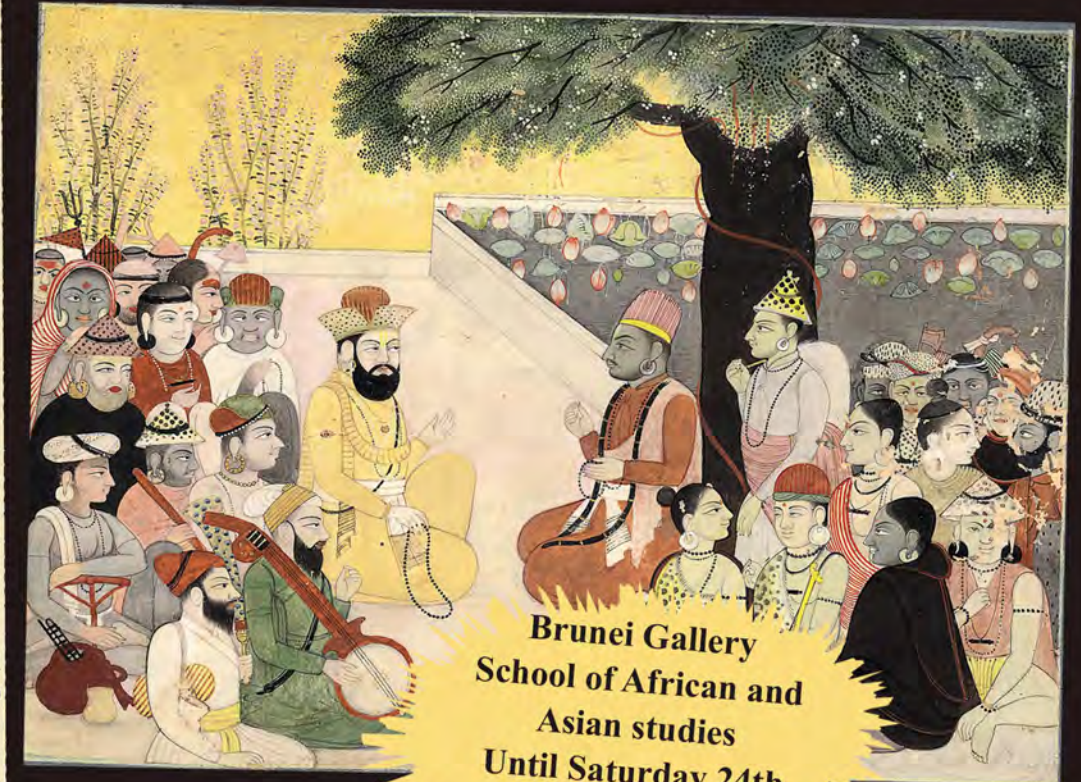
review: The Golden Temple

To showcase the wonder of the Golden Temple, it's shimmering beauty clear even in photographs, may not be the toughest task known to curators. Where this exhibition, which traces the history of the Golden Temple of Amrtitar, succeeds is in exhibiting not only the overt beauty of the *gurdwara*, but a genuine flavour of Sikh culture and history as well.

The Sikh warrior culture is one strand of this, and visitors are greeted by a magnificent mock-up of an eighteenth century warrior paying homage, complete with a golden robe, elegant armour and a double-plumed helmet. There is much weaponry, from the ornate to the practical, on display, with a vicious-looking curved blade alongside the slim sword of a child. Those seeking literary or artistic treasures will not be disappointed either, with a pleasing array of miniatures and texts, including an illustrated biography of Guru Nanak, the founding Sikh, from 1743.

There is also much of historical interest from a British perspective, with the original copy of a letter from Henry Hardinge, the 19th governor-general of India, written when defeat in the first Anglo-Sikh war seemed likely. The receipt for the Koh-i-noor diamond, presented to Queen Victoria in 1849 and still part of the Crown Jewels, is also on display.

In the downstairs gallery, the focus shifts to the Golden Temple itself, with an array of images - copies of photos and paintings - capturing its splendour from all angles.



Brunei Gallery
School of African and
Asian studies
Until Saturday 24th
September

One image in particular, from the late nineteenth century British photographer James Craddock, captures the Temple's magnificence, jutting out into The Pool of Immortality. Quotes from travel writers and famous visitors accompany the striking imagery, and the contemporary flavour is augmented by a montage of video footage, from as early as 1922 through to the mid-50's, showing people milling around the temple and its concourse.

Whether you have been to the Golden Temple or not, are a connoisseur of Sikh culture or someone who knows next to nothing, there will be much to enjoy in this gem of an exhibition. And if, like the reviewer, you fall into the category of those who have not had the chance to see it for real, you are likely to leave with Amrtistar high on your travel wish-list.

Design: Sadiyah Mir

Article: Joshua Davis

review: Treasures of Heaven

You'd be hard pressed to find a more fascinating array of objects and images under one roof than the Treasures of Heaven exhibition at the British Museum. And they quite literally are that - treasures. Walking into the dimly lit room, greeted by a soundtrack of soothing monastic chanting, you leave the chaos of central London behind you as you begin to explore images and icons of devotion throughout the past 1500 or so years. The collection has an almost reverent like quality to it, inviting you into the most private and special religious experiences of people at different times in history, which is nothing short of magical. This exhibition is one you can't afford to miss, and definitely worth the ticket price - if you're anything like me, you'll want to go again!



British Museum
Until 9th October
£12 standard admission
£10 for students
(2 for 1 tickets for students
5.30pm-7.30pm
on Fridays)
Free for members

Article: Grace Baxter

Religion and Football

Design: Sadiyah Mir

Article: Peter Campion

Image: Beefy_n1 (Flickr)

Football is seen as the universal game. It is undoubtedly the world's most played sport; over 200 national teams compete under the FIFA banner. On the surface it is a game that seems to embrace multiculturalism, with players of many different nationalities competing, but if this is the case, then why do so few of the best footballers playing in England have strong religious beliefs?

Religion is frequently in the headlines, but often with a negative slant: Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are still rife in tabloid culture, with the latter becoming more common with the rise in discussion of extremist Islamic terrorism following the events of 9/11 and 7/7. In a reaction to this the FA has set up the working group 'Faith in Football' to tackle anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. However, is the game as open to those from diverse faith backgrounds as it claims to strive to be?

The FA has worked in some ways to encourage a wider participation of religious people in football through its Faith in Football programme. From June of this year, they have organised tournaments which encourage interaction of different religious denominations, while working in association with 'Kick it out' (the FA's anti-racism campaign) by holding educational classes at Wembley. Furthermore, 'Kick it out' has been making a stand against anti-Semitic abuse through a film called 'The Y-word' (referring to the anti-Semitic term 'Yid' often aimed at Jewish players), where players including Kieran Gibbs, Frank Lampard and Ledley King talk of how anti-Semitism should not be a part of the game. The work of the programme is aiming to, in the words of Alex Goldberg, the chairman of Faith in Football, "bridge the gap between football and religious communities where football has not been played in a structured way".

However it would seem that, while the FA are making these steps to widen football participation to religious groups, they are not adjusting the structure of English football to fully accommodate those of a religious faith, and to discourage anti-religious behaviour in the same way it treats issues of racism and respect. Indeed, the FA has only been awarded intermediate status for Equality Standards in Sport. Is 'intermediate' level for the FA good enough? Should one of the leading organisations for the world's most played sport not be at the 'advanced' level?



Yossi Benayoun

As highlighted by the 'Kick it Out' campaign, it is illegal to abuse someone according to their religion, and in the view of the Tottenham Hotspur manager Harry Redknapp, those caught doing it in football, should be imprisoned, not just ejected from the stadium. Furthermore, there are still significant obstacles facing those of religious preference that wish to play professional football, that are perhaps not being considered by the FA.

Firstly, it should be considered that incidents of religious prejudice in football may put Muslims and Jews off pursuing the game as a career. For instance, the Chelsea player and Israel captain Yossi Benayoun received anti-Semitic abuse from crowds on a recent club tour in Malaysia.

"The Yids from White Hart Lane,

Spurs are on their way to Auschwitz,

Sieg Heil!

Hitler's gonna gas 'em again"

The incident only received a very weak apology from the Malaysian FA, and provides just a glimpse of the anti-Semitic abuse sometimes present in English football. Avram Grant, formerly manager of West Ham and Chelsea, has also been the target of such abuse from football fans in the past, when he missed important games in 2007 and 2010 because of Yom Kippur. Indeed, Danny Caro, the sports editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* and former player in the southern Jewish football league, reinforced the role anti-Semitism is playing in English football, telling me that, "anti-Semitism is still present... and although the issue has been highlighted, not enough is being done to eradicate it". A prime example of this is the anti-Semitic abuse often aimed at Tottenham Hotspur. For instance, a chant aimed at Tottenham is highlighted in 'The Y word', which includes the words:

"The Yids from White Hart Lane,

Spurs are on their way to Auschwitz,

Sieg Heil!

Hitler's gonna gas 'em again"

Such overt anti-Semitic abuse might make some Jews think twice about pursuing a career in football when the response from the authorities seems so lacking.

Although the use of anti-Semitic chants in PR campaigns such as 'The Y word' can help to discourage prejudice, it might be better for the media to publicise the arrests and punishments of those caught being anti-religious in football. The FA would therefore need to ensure these criminals are punished fully in relation to their racist crime, and made an example of.

Another barrier for religious participation in football could be the perceived lifestyle of professional footballers. Adultery, money and a strong drinking culture are all associated with the game, and this may be a deterrent to those with a religious background. However, although the typical footballer's lifestyle as portrayed in the tabloids may not lend itself to people of faith, there are those who play the game, but also live a religious life. Danny Caro cites Dean Furham of Oldham Athletic and Joe Jacobsen of Shrewsbury Town as Jews who act as "great role models" on and off the pitch. Nathan Ellington of Ipswich Town is a proud Muslim, proving that those of a religious belief can be successful in the footballing world. Furthermore, Danny Caro says that while in the past football was not seen as a 'proper living' for a Jewish man, "we are gradually seeing more players from the community on the books of professional clubs and academies".



 **Adel Taarabt**

Another potential barrier to further engagement with diverse faith communities in professional football is a lack of meaningful accommodation of religious needs. We are undoubtedly seeing some religious players, such as Adel Taraabt of Queen's Park Rangers, rise in the game. In an interview with *Emel*, a Muslim magazine, he states:

"Being a Muslim has had a big impact on my professional life. As Muslims, we don't drink alcohol, we don't smoke, so essentially we've become healthier, more professional footballers because of our lifestyle.

"Before every game, I perform salah. Without it, I just don't feel confident."

Without it, I just don't feel confident. I make sure I pray after a match, too – to give thanks and be grateful for the stamina and strength God graced me with."

Taraabt also observes Ramadan but makes up for fasts he misses during matches at other times, as does Abou Diaby of Arsenal. Although he plays for a smaller team, Taraabt is still a great example of a practising Muslim in the game, along with Diaby and Chelsea striker Nicolas Anelka. However even he has admitted that that he has to fight the misconceptions spread by the media surrounding his faith. This must be a contributing factor behind the lack of devout Muslims and Jews at the pinnacle of the sport in England.

The failure to understand religious laws and how they may affect a player's performance is a further issue. Nathan Ellington observed Ramadan following his club record transfer to Watford, with some fans speculating that his fasting for the Muslim festival led to a drop in fitness, causing him to feature less in the team.

However Ellington has pointed out that "after sunset you can eat and drink as much as you want. You have to get the nutrients back into you then".

Ellington has told of Muslim team-mates who have received Islamophobic abuse. It has also been reported that an un-named Muslim player was nicknamed "bomber" by his team-mates. This goes some way to suggesting why there are so few devout Muslim footballers at the highest level. Another example comes from 2005, where a Muslim youth team was expelled from the Lancashire league due to them refusing to play morning games during Ramadan. Indeed, there is an immediate barrier for Orthodox Jews to engage on a professional level, as they are not able to work on the Sabbath, therefore prohibiting them from playing during common Saturday fixtures. In these examples and many more like them, we can see English football has not got the structure to accommodate diverse religious needs.

The FA is moving in the right direction with their programmes to encourage religious involvement and combat bigotry. However, to truly eliminate religious prejudice and help raise Muslim and Jewish players to the top of the game, the structure of English football has to be changed to allow those of a religious belief to achieve in football, while also staying committed to their religion. One way to do this would be to adjust the playing calendar to allow religious players to participate in football. Furthermore, adjusting the wage structure as well as taking steps to encourage sportsmanship rather than money and alcohol, would help better the image of the perceived footballer's lifestyle. This would work to reflect the real multicultural England, and help set a good example to the millions of young people who watch the sport. As a realistic aim, however, it seems far off.



Photograph by user Bojars (Wikipedia) under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 France license

Amy Jade Winehouse 1983- 2011



Writing, photography and design by: Daniel Mead.

“The image we hoped we would never see”, reported one ITN reporter as Amy Winehouse’s body was carried from her Camden home. It really was an image we hoped we would never see and not one we thought we ever would so early in her life. Her death came as a great shock. Although following the release of her second album, ‘Back to Black’, her battle with drink and drugs had been very much evident and heavily documented by the media (who undeniably contributed to her downward spiral). In the past year Amy had looked healthier than she had in a long time. It seemed that she had conquered her drug addictions and she was looking much more full-faced and radiant than the emaciated figure so often seen on the tabloid pages.

It was this apparent recovery that made the singer’s untimely death so unexpected. I remember seeing a friend’s Facebook status, commenting that “Winehouse has joined the ominous 27 club” and frantically switching on the news in utter disbelief to see that, tragically, it was true. Over the next few hours the Internet was abuzz with a constant stream of news, comment and speculation.

Amy left Camden for the last time on 23rd July 2011 with hundreds of fans gathering outside her home to pay their respects. The nation’s media was also there, as they had been throughout her life, the private ambulance carrying her body away trailed by paparazzi in a macabre parody of former years.

I visited Amy’s road after her death where, even after almost a week, a large number of flowers, candles and tributes still lay to the late singer and her family. Road signs were also completely covered

in messages. There was a very strong atmosphere amongst those gathered, very quiet with the odd few people discussing her life. It felt quite unusual to be stood outside a “celebrity’s” house and it being acceptable; in normal circumstances the police would probably have been called.

Amy was a breath of fresh air for the British music industry. Storming onto the scene with her debut album ‘Frank’, she was a fresh-faced, curvaceous, Jewish girl from Southgate, North London. Blowing people away with her unique and powerful tones she became an instant favourite of Jools Holland, often duetting

*“Far darker than before
with an emotional
rawness to them”*

with him on his television show. However, it was when Amy’s second album, ‘Back to Black’, was released that the world really stood up and took notice. Both albums won Amy a string of awards including a BRIT, three Ivor Novellos and five Grammys.

The Amy who moved away from the classic jazzy sound of her debut album to a more commercial, catchier sound was a different woman altogether. Now, sporting what was to become her trademark beehive and tattoo covered arms, her attitude was more confident, rebellious yet at the same time mature. The lyrics she penned for ‘Back To Black’ reflected this; far darker than before with an emotional rawness to them that drew you in and allowed you to imagine what she was feeling at the time.

I think this was what made her such an interesting personality for the media. She

was the perfect package to fill column inches: stylish, talented, successful but “rebellious”. Although I am not one for believing everything you read in the press, I think it’s pretty safe to say that Amy Winehouse really did have some deep personal problems and, unfortunately, they seem to have beaten her in the end.

A lot of criticism has been levelled at Amy due to the fact that, with the kind of wealth and fame that she possessed, she still refused, or shied away from, all treatment and help. I feel that such disparagement is unfair. There are a huge number of people in every city that party hard on the weekend and I am sure that if these people had Amy’s wealth a lot of their weekend partying would spiral out of control just like hers did.

Away from the well-worn legacy of Amy’s problems, she undoubtedly paved the way for female artists in the UK, allowing the likes of Lily Allen, Adele and Jessie J to enjoy chart success. Amy was a tremendous talent and I am sure it will be a very long time until someone with a voice half as powerful and distinctive as hers comes along.

Reports suggest that Amy’s father, Mitch, will be releasing material that she had recorded for her much awaited third album with the proceeds going towards the ‘Amy Winehouse Foundation’ to help youngsters in the UK who are battling addiction to drink and drugs. Although it will be great to hear her new material, I think it’s a shame that it will never be the truly finished product that Amy intended.

The world will never fully know or understand the extent of Amy’s problems or the cause of her death, but what we can do is listen to and appreciate the musical and lyrical genius that she left behind.



