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Editor's letter



Dear readers,

The team is proud and happy to present a very colourful and dynamic Spring Issue of Interact magazine!

Deeply rooted in the past months news, lead by a critical view of the facts and all the awareness of young writers, designers, illustrators and photographers, this magazine is definitely young, fresh and committed to the aim of Interact.

As you may have guessed, the Olympics are an important subject in this edition. London will be transformed into a real hell for anyone who has to travel by bus and the streets will disappear under the tourist's feet... But Londoners are looking forward to this event: they do not have tickets, most of them do not like sport but they are highly proud to make the front page headline for a few weeks. Thanks to Sergiu and Olga for your pictures and experience on the site!

However, many of us consider the Olympic as a smokescreen: new graduates and job seekers will keep looking for a job all summer long and remain in a precarious situation. Work and Society is another focus of this spring issue.

Politics will also feature as will a return to the London Riots, a few months later: Iram considers how to understand the riots, analyse them and finally, try to show what we can learn from it. With Tim, we will come back on the various events that have punctuated 2011 and the beginning of 2012, from the Arab Spring to the London Riots, via the Occupy Wall Street Movement.

As usual, we will raise the issue of multiculturalism and interfaith relations in Britain, with Asia and Jo talking about their experience of living in London.

Interact is more than ever assuming the role of helping mutual understanding, cross-cultural and interfaith sharing, and is very much a space for reflexion and exchange among the pages of this new edition.

We would like to thank our mentors, Zarina Holmes and Richard Jinman from for their amazing support and help along the way.

We hope that you enjoy reading the Spring Edition as much as we enjoyed producing it!

Livia Bouvier
Editor and magazine coordinator

THE TEAM



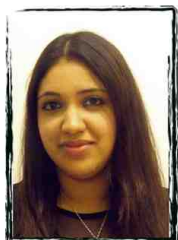
TATENDA LAWRENCE RUSIKE
- DESIGNER

"If two wrongs don't make a right, try three"



CATHERINE VAN-DE STOUWE
CVANDESTOUWE.CO.UK
- WRITER

"I counted them all out and counted them all back again"



IRAM RAFIQ
-WRITER

"Do what you love, love what you do"



SERGUI TRIPON
- WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER

"You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take" - Wayne Gretzky



OLGA SOCHA
- PHOTOGRAPHER

"Some hate broccoli, some hate bacon, I hate having my picture taken"



TIMOTHY STRICKLAND
-WRITER, DESIGNER

"Grow old, not up"



ASIA LA CHAPELLE WILLIAMS
- WRITER

"Happiness is key to life, be the change you wish to see in the world" - Lennon/Ghandi



SARRAOUNIA CHRISTIANSON
OUNIEREADS.TUMBLR.COM
- PROJECT OFFICER, WRITER

"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength" - Maya Angelou



SAM HILTON
- WRITER

"How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment; we can start now, start slowly changing the world!" - Anne Frank



ALANA MAYTUM
- WRITER

"The unexamined life is not worth living" - Socrates



JAMES THURMAN
SNARESANDSYMBOLS.TUMBLR.COM
- DESIGNER, ILLUSTRATOR

"And God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light, but the Electricity Board said he would have to wait until Thursday to be connected" - Spike Milligan



JOSEPHINE CHEROOMI
- WRITER

"If you can't handle me at my worst, then you certainly don't deserve me at my best" - Marilyn Monroe



NEELAM SHAH
- WRITER

"The greater our knowledge increases the more our ignorance unfolds" - John F. Kennedy



ROMAN KOBLOV
-WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER

CONTENTS

6	HOW SAFE IS NUCLEAR POWER?	
7	TRAID CHARITY SHOPS - A TEXTILE REVOLUTION	
8 - 9	CROSS CULTURE - THE HYBRID GENERATION	
10 - 11	KONY 2012	
12 - 13	GETTING TO GRIPS WITH POLITICS	
14	RIOT OR WRONG? - THE LONDON RIOTS	
15	LONDON 2012	
16 - 17	THE OLYMPIC PARK - PHOTO STORY	
18 - 19	MULTICULTURALISM IN BRITAIN: THE BENEFITS AND THE BRIGHT SIDE	
20 - 21	WHAT IS HAPPINESS?	
22 - 23	RELIGION IN THE WORKPLACE	
24	ETHICAL CAREERS	
25	UNIVERSITY FEES	
26	WALK THE WALK - MEN'S FASHION WEEK	
27	THE CARTOON MUSEUM - REVIEW	
28	RELIGION IN EXILE - BOOK REVIEWS	
29	JAINISM IN THE 21 ST CENTURY	
30 - 31	THE NEW GLOBAL REVOLUTIONS - BOOK REVIEW	
33	CULTURE POEM	
34 - 35	INTERFAITH RECIPES	
36 - 37	SHARED ROOTS IN FAITH EXHIBITION	
38	CALENDAR	

Cover image: Collaboration - Olga Socha and James Thurman
Back cover image: James Thurman



HOW SAFE IS NUCLEAR POWER

BY SAMUEL HILTON

I used to think my school was quite unsafe. The problem was the fire alarms. They would go off far too often and were ignored by students and teachers alike. But at least we had fire alarms; that is more than can be said for the reactor cores of the Windscale nuclear power plant. In October 1957 a fire raged on for a day whilst oblivious plant workers continued to raise the temperature.

They only noticed that something had gone wrong when leaking radioactive particles were detected in the chimneys. Supposedly nuclear power has become much safer over the last half a century but as the recent nuclear accident in Fukushima in Japan shows, things can still go wrong. Following Fukushima Germany decided to shut down all of its nuclear reactors. Meanwhile the UK government approved 8 sites for the building of new nuclear power stations.

No form of Energy is completely safe. Hundreds die each year in the process of installing rooftop solar panels.

The argument for nuclear power is that it is a low carbon source of power and can help us reduce CO₂ emissions. Fossil fuels lead to climate change and nuclear is an alternative.

Climate change kills over 150,000 people annually, and this number is rising rapidly. The potential for future disaster, both humanitarian and ecological, is enormous. Furthermore air pollution primarily from burning fossil fuels pollutes our environment and causes over 1 million deaths a year.

But how does nuclear compare. Nuclear power is a hugely political issue and statistics on the topic vary wildly. The death tolls from the recent Fukushima disaster will almost certainly be far less than the 10,000 people that died as a result of the much worse Chernobyl accident and will probably be below 1000. Statistics for the amount of people who die each year as a direct result of nuclear power stations are even harder to come by, yet it is not a large number. The European Commission funded ExternE study suggests that nuclear power is less dangerous than any fossil fuel even ignoring the effects of climate change. In fact the coal power stations release more radioactive substances into the atmosphere per unit of energy created than

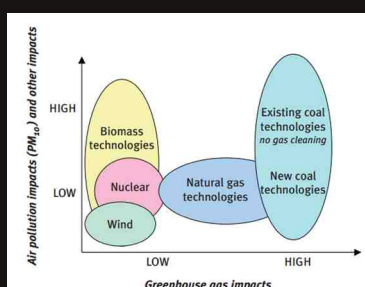
nuclear power station. This study included the death toll due to long lasting nuclear waste, which is buried deep underground where it can have almost no effect.

All in all the scientific evidence is conclusive. Per unit energy created fossil fuels are orders of magnitude worse for our health and for the environment.



The green lobby argues that we do not need nuclear, we need renewable energy. Renewables are better for the environment but having nuclear does not need to stop development in renewable energy sources and the complete transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy would take a minimum 20-40 years. Of course there are so many other factors to consider. From the proliferation of weapon-grade nuclear material to what happens if we run out of uranium for fuel.

"Sources: Death rates have been taken from the World Health Organisation website. A longer better referenced version of this article will be available on the Interact website"





ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE

By Alana Maytum

Ever heard the expression *one man's trash is another man's treasure*? Well this certainly springs to mind when it come to Britain's Charity Shops. For the open-minded, charity shops are fast becoming a fashionable and eco-friendly way to accentuate a winter wardrobe, fund a book habit and even upgrade your furniture.

Charity shops all over the UK are quietly leading a textile revolution, changing the industry by recycling unwanted clothes and making an impact on the fashion world with their very own re-cycled clothing lines.

It comes as no surprise that in hard times cash-strapped consumers are looking for quality clothes at cheaper prices. The current financial climate has encouraged Brits to rummage through charity and second hand shops for vintage-style bargains, and in the process making a big impact on the environment.

So how are these bargain hunters helping the environment? Well, to put it into perspective. Charity shops divert 1 million tonnes of unwanted textiles each year away from our landfills, that's enough to fill Old Trafford football stadium. Annually, textile waste accounts

for 12% of our landfills, with more than half being made of synthetic fabrics which don't decompose.

Woollen garments do, but they produce Methane in the process that contributes to global warming and climate change by trapping heat in the atmosphere. It's no surprise that charity shops in the UK raise approximately £200 million a year through re-using textiles, and spend it funding a variety of UK based and global projects.

Second-hand shops like Oxfam and TRAIID have taken this to the next level and introduced their very own clothing line, all made from pre-loved garments and materials. Britain's charity shops have become genuine competitors of our high street stores in recent years, with many of our trendy fashionistas trawling through second-hand shops to find a unique vintage piece, or a pre-loved retro bargain. Until recently, Charity shops were scarce in Continental Europe, but lately there has been second-hand stores popping up across the continent. Although in Britain shopping at charity shops

is seen as cool and trendy, in many European countries thrift stores are used only by the poor and homeless, not the young and fashionable.

Despite the financial downturn the tills are ringing at charity shops and profits are soaring, however the economic downturn has caused a decrease in donations. There are 6000 donation banks in the UK, unfortunately, they are only using 25% of their capacity. Holding on to last years clothes instead of buying new ones at high street prices is understandable, but charity shops make it possible for you to treat yourself at a knock-down price.

It can be hard to find exactly what your looking for in charity shops, but its not impossible.

Shoppers must be open minded, willing to try new styles and be experimental, sometimes you just need to add a belt to make an old coat trendy. Perseverance is key, try shopping around, there are plenty to chose from, each full of unique pieces.

THE HYBRID GENERATION

BY JOSEPHINE CHEROONI



“As Churchill said very memorably: The English are ‘the mongrel nation’ so I’d like to think that makes me rather perfectly representative.”

These are the words of forty-nine year old Steven Barfield, a senior lecturer from Westminster University. He is also the son of an Indo-Trinidadian mother and an English father, and is just one of hundreds of thousands of mixed race people living in the UK.

I often find that through the media we listen over and over again to the issue of immigration, and people’s views of mixed race marriages and relationships. But very rarely do we hear the voices of the children of those relationships. In fact, the only thing I have seen that even vaguely portrays the reality of being a mixed race child was the Film4 movie ‘East is East’ where we see a hilarious and at times tragic portrayal of a mixed marriage and the offspring of that union. But what’s the reality? How do these children feel about their background?

I want to find out how mixed raced children view their place in society, and how growing up with two or



more racially and culturally different backgrounds affects those individuals.

According to an article written for the Office of National Statistics in 2006 entitled ‘Who are the ‘Mixed’ ethnic group’,

the 2001 census said that nearly 700,000 of us living in the UK were the children of racially different parents,

and ten years later, that number will have risen significantly. But statistics are not the issue here. I want to know how being of mixed race affects those children, both positively and negatively. Let me firstly outline that I am the product of a mixed parentage. My father is Iranian and my mother is English. When I was young I used to believe that this made me special. People were always asking me where my surname and my dark complexion came from when my mother was English with blond hair and green eyes. Someone even told my mum that she thought it was “fantastic” that she adopted all four of us girls (referring to my sisters and I). None of this ever bothered me, I just boasted about it, calling myself ‘half Persian’ and watching people’s



faces look rather impressed at the exoticism of the word and the images that it conjured. I didn’t really give my national identity much thought, I just liked having something that made me unique.

It was only when the Iraq war broke out that I started to struggle with my identity. I was in my early teens at this point, and everyone knows how difficult being that age can be without the harsh judgement of your peers constantly tapping you on the shoulder. People would say ‘Isn’t Iran right next to Iraq?’ with an accusatory tone, at which point I would change the subject. I started to wonder whether people thought of me as a different class because of my cultural links with the east, and later on when I got older, whether my very east-end English boyfriend might be ashamed to take me home to his parents because I wasn’t ‘white’.

I even started to refer to myself differently. When people asked me where I was from, I’d tell them that mum was English and that my dad was Iranian. I did this as a cowardly way to distance myself from anything foreign, and essentially mean ‘It’s my dad that’s foreign, not me!’

These teenage revelations were very much a shock to me, as I had always assumed myself to be English but with a rather interesting twist. My sisters and I were all given English names, which my mother insisted on when we were born. We weren’t brought up in a faith so we were neither Muslim nor Christian, and we lead a typical British family life. I have never suffered at the hands of bullies, nor was I ever picked on for being a slightly different colour. The conclusion I eventually came to was that the issues I was facing were coming from within me. I wanted to find out whether or not I was the only person who had these experiences, and went looking for others that had been born into a similar mixed background. Steven Barfield explained to me that he in fact felt enriched by his unusual background, and that as a result he felt himself to be better rounded as a person: “There was a feeling amongst myself and my brother and sisters that we had several viewpoints available on life, while others had only one. That led to a sense of both a developing individuality and a certain sense of sophistication – we weren’t simply Indians or from the Caribbean, or from England, but much greater than any one part of ourselves.”

Of course you can’t delve into a topic like this without discussing the possibility of racism.

We all know that even in this day and age racism and racist behaviour is still an on-going battle.

However, Steve explained how his upbringing gave him a distinct attitude towards this issue: “As it was we lived in a middle class area and all 4 of us went to very academic schools, so our experience of racism was relatively minimal and to some extent my father always taught us to look down on such attitudes – coming as he did from a British army family” Not everyone was so lucky however. Twenty-one year old Olivia Amoroso, a student at Kings College

Hospital, told me how her father (being of mixed Irish and Trinidadian parents himself) suffered horrendous persecution at the hands of bullies: “He used get beaten up a lot for being a different colour when he was growing up, so knowing that upsets me. But my heritage has only affected my adult life in a positive way, as I have always felt more exotic than other people and felt that I have more to offer as a result of how open minded I’ve had to be about different cultures and ways of life. As a child I’d go from my Irish dance classes, then to my grandparent’s house and eat rice with peas and lamb stew and a ginger beer to wash it down. The whole family on my dad’s side were Roman Catholic, so my mum (who’s English) had to convert when they got married, and we grew up going to Mass every Sunday.”

Steve also explained how his heritage has led to an open mindedness that only comes when you grow up around cultural difference: “If anything I’ve tended to value the complexity and sophistication of my background even more as I have got older. I am much better at mixing with a variety of peoples from around the country – despite my upbringing and schooling being typically middle class. It also helps with work as a lecturer who partly specialises in teaching and researching post-colonial literature in English, as it gives me instant connections to varying degrees to Caribbean, Indian and English cultures which not that many people have.”

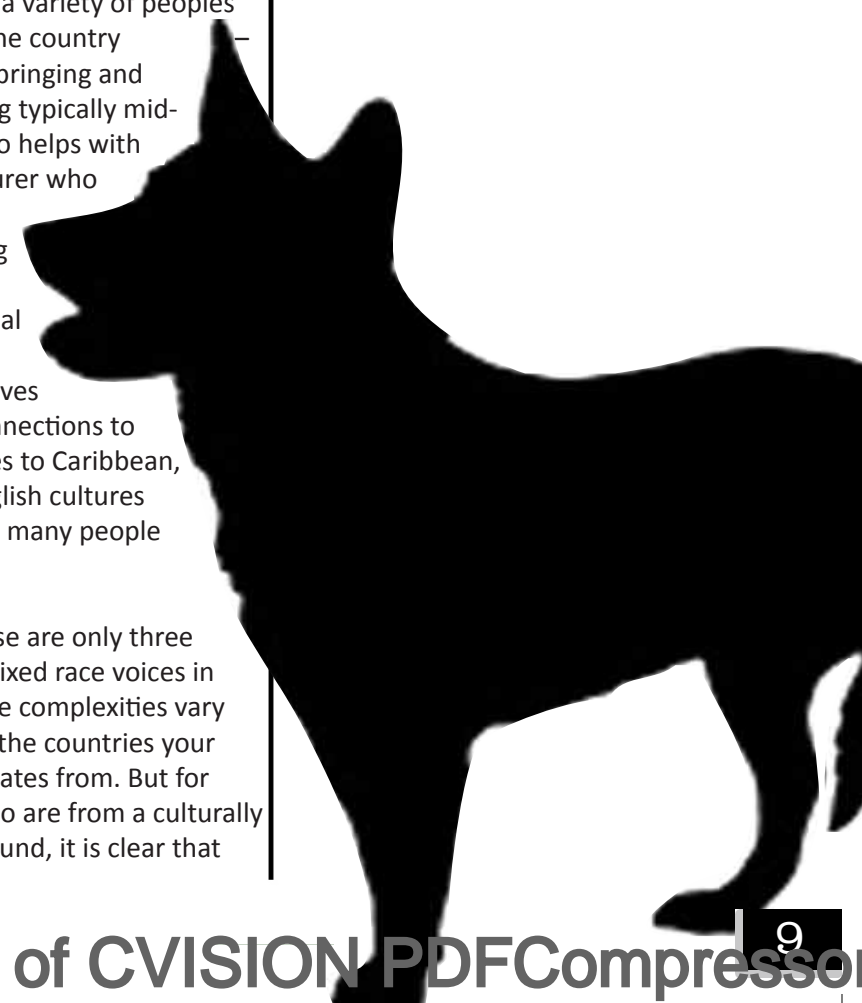
Of course, these are only three of the many mixed race voices in the UK, and the complexities vary depending on the countries your heritage originates from. But for those of us who are from a culturally mixed background, it is clear that

one thing that we all have in common is choice. We have the choice to embrace all parts of our heritage if we chose.

And anyway, since when has anyone been born purely of one nationality or culture?

There are always anomalies in the family tree somewhere down the line. It seems that being mixed race enables us to be a more socially adaptable and open minded when it comes to culture and traditions. We are able to identify with multiple ethnicities whilst still maintaining our ‘Britishness’.

As for me, I soon realised on the journey into adulthood that I have the best of both worlds. I can still be a flag flying Brit and enjoy nothing more than afternoon tea, whilst still treasuring my exotic Iranian side. It makes me who I am, and most of all has taught me how to be tolerant and understanding towards people whose cultures seem sometimes strange and incomprehensible to others. I am finally comfortable in my own, slightly darker skin.





THE KONY EXPERIMENT

Words: Roman Koblov

Design/Illustrations: James Thurman

"THE NEXT 27 MINUTES ARE AN EXPERIMENT, BUT IN ORDER FOR IT TO WORK YOU HAVE TO PAY ATTENTION"

Pay attention is what we've done. If you have any social media presence you would have heard of 'Kony 2012' by now, a half hour video by the charity 'Invisible Children Inc' that has gone viral, reaching over 70m hits in one week on Youtube. The video states that its aim is to make Joseph Kony, a Ugandan rebel leader famous and raise support for his arrest. The film is undoubtedly a great piece of narrative with

slick production values and excellent marketing. The campaign has also helped the organization raise \$5 million within 48 hours and has raised awareness on a troublesome issue on the African Continent.

However the campaign has also drawn criticism from a number of commentators who have questioned the charity's practices, its misinformation about the situation in Uganda, and its proposed solutions. The backlash has been from many Ugandans who say that the video is an inaccurate portrayal of the current situation and belittles and commercializes the suffering of those who fell victim to Kony and his rebel militia, the Lord Resistance Army (LRA).

The founders of Invisible Children have responded to some of these criticisms. In just a week since the video was released the CEO of the organization, Ben Keesey issued a video response addressing some of the complaints directed at Invisible Children, in particular about the charity's finances. In the video Keesey states that the organization has been transparent from day one and that from the years 2007-11 the group spent from 80-85% of its donations on 'program expenses'.

However Invisible Children has so far refused to cooperate with the Better Business Bureau (BBB), an organization whose aims are to 'advance marketplace trust'. The BBB states that the Charity has either not responded or 'declined to be evaluated in relation to the Alliance's Standards for Charity Accountability. Although participation is voluntary...the Alliance believes that failure to participate may demonstrate a lack of commitment to transparency'. Furthermore the usage of the term 'program expenses' is rather vague. According to the Breakdown of expenses on the Invisible Children website for the fiscal year of 2011, the organization spent 37% on its Central African Programs and 43% on awareness and media initiatives such as touring, filmmaking, merchandise, screenings and so forth. This is hardly an assuring figure and gives the impression that the charity is more interested in awareness and heavy marketing tactics than making an impact in the areas they operate.

Moreover the Kony 2012 video has been criticized for its misrepresentation and oversimplification of the situation in Uganda. The video paints a rather graphic and violent picture that many have argued is contradictory to the reality in contemporary Uganda. While the video does say, (if you pay close attention) that the LRA used to be in Northern Uganda, its main focus throughout is still solely on Uganda. The Ugandan Journalist Angelo Opi-Aiya Izama has written that to 'Call the campaign a misrepresentation is an understatement. While it draws attention to the fact that Kony, indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2005, is still on the loose, it's portrayal of his alleged crimes in Northern Uganda are from a bygone era'.

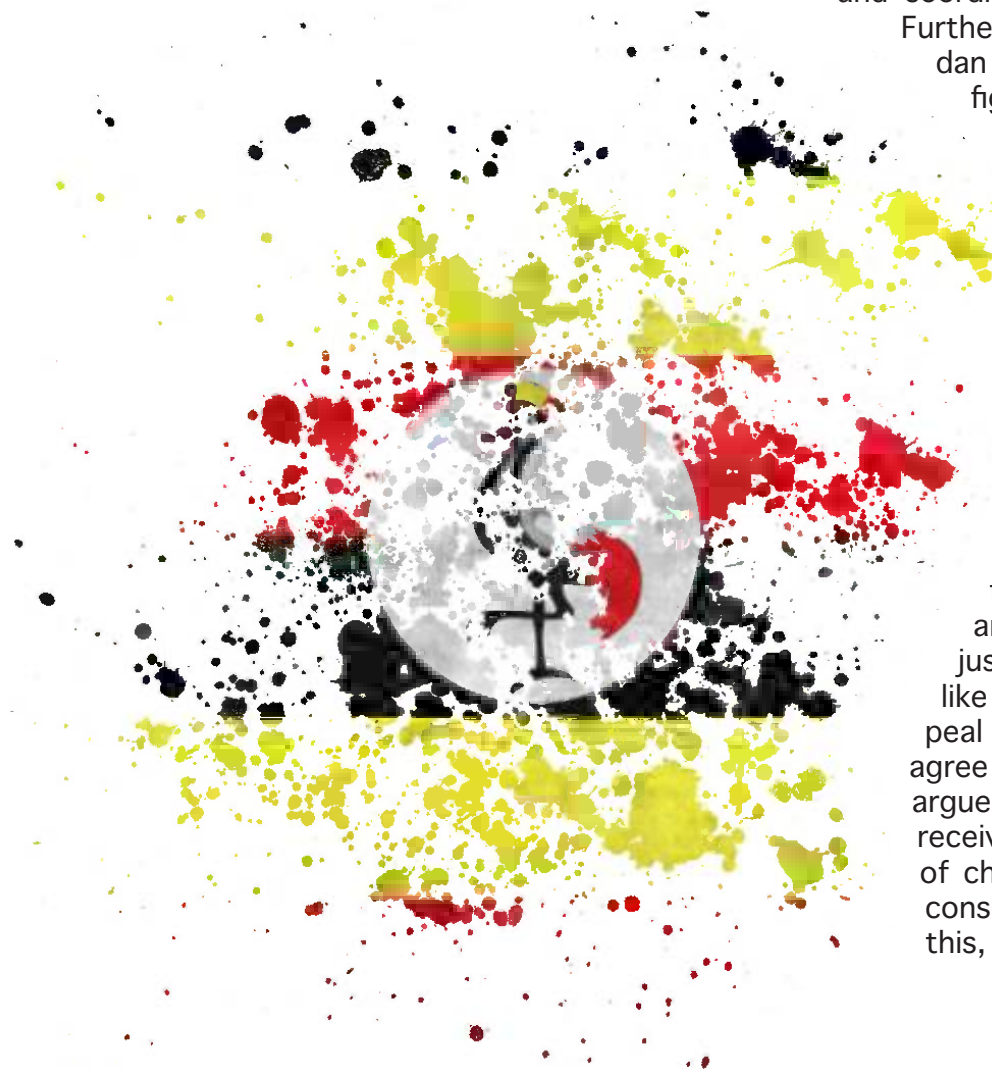
Human Rights Watch have said that Kony has not been operating in Uganda since 2005/06 and that his militia group, the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) is now thought to number just a few hundred fighters. This does not subtract from the brutality of the group, who according to Human Rights Watch, have been reported to be responsible for the 'Christmas Massacres' in early 2009 where over 865 civilians were slaughtered in the Northern Congo.

When the African Youth Initiative Network organized a public screening of Kony 2012 in Lira, Northern Uganda one of the communities worst affected by the LRA, it was met with overwhelming criticism and even anger. Some spectators were puzzled by the narrative being led by an American man and his son and were equally appalled by the selling of Kony fundraising merchandise.

Perhaps more worryingly is that the Kony 2012 video advocates the requirement for public support for US military intervention. It is fair to argue that any foreign military intervention is naturally unpopular. One would be hard pressed to find many young Americans (to whom the video is directed) to support US military involvement in Africa prior to the Kony 2012 video. The campaign puts pressure on Americans – its government, its celebrities and its public and not African leaders who are probably best equipped to deal with the situation on the ground.

The US has been increasingly involved in the African continent with the formation of AFRICOM in 2007, a section of the US military that oversees and coordinates U.S military activities in Africa. Furthermore it is reported that the Ugandan President Museveni, a controversial figure that has been in power for 26 years receives around \$45 million in US military aid. The Kony 2012 initiative states that the only way to capture Kony is to work with the Ugandan Military, who themselves have a poor human rights record with reports of torture, killings and arbitrary arrests.

Kony 2012 has become the most viral video of all time. The video is constructed to play a familiar narrative known in cinema. It's villainous mystification of Joseph Kony as the nemesis and the U.S as the bringer of peace and justice is hard for many to swallow; yet like a good film, the videomanages to appeal on a very emotional level. Whether you agree with the campaign or not, you cannot argue against the attention the video has received and how it has brought the issue of child soldiers back into the mainstream conscious. What will materialize from all of this, we will have to wait and see...





RIOT OR WRONG

By Iram Rafiq

'The riots happened because everyone is sick of the government; black people were rebelling because black people constantly feel targeted, they were angry. I was in my house and I was so scared.' female, Brixton
Now there's no denying it, ruining people's businesses and looting shops is wrong.

Labeling all the rioters 'greedy' and 'bad' however, is also wrong. What's interesting is that for those who have been working with young people the riots didn't come as a surprise. One teacher who works around the London borough says 'I'm just surprised that people are surprised that it happened'. Camilia Batmanghelidj, founder of the Kids Company, said that the riots 'were not a surprise' and that they had infact 'been warning the government for a while'. She had heard enough times young people coming to her and saying 'the government hates us' to anticipate that it was only a matter of time that something happened.

Let's not forget that not too long ago there were no tuition fees for university, it's understandably shocking that the fee's this year are going to be up to nine thousand pounds per

year. What the riots showed was the different ways young people communicated these frustrations. Although these frustrations weren't purely for the university fee's, the looting indicated that there was an outrage with the financial situation young people are in. A clip on you tube shows a young black male confronting London Mayor Boris Johnson outside. Telling him, 'you've cut off EMA, you've cut off so much stuff, there's a knock on effect. I've got so many friends who actually want to go to university but are stopped.' The riots show that many people are feeling exactly the same way about the current situation we're in, in some ways they're doing what they can to get their voice heard.

The riots also showed that although it was mostly the 'youth' who were involved in the riots, many young people disagreed with it.

One young Hackney resident called it a 'copy cat effect' that riots were happening in Hackney. He also stated that 'They've seen it's easy how the police aren't able to control them.' Due to technology and websites such as youtube, it's harder to generalize the 'youth' or that because people are from a certain area that they were involved, or weren't involved. The videos taken during the riots gave people who usually wouldn't

get an opportunity to speak up, a chance to not only give their opinions, but for them to be broadcasted in front of millions. One man in Clampham junction one day after the riots said 'People say they're just criminals, well they're hungry people too, because last year they were able to buy a pair of trainers, this year, they can't'. What's interesting is that some of those who were around while the rioting happened appear to show understanding to why the youth acted the way they did. In a clip on the BBC news writer and broadcaster Darcus Howe said that 'if you looked at young blacks and young whites with a discerning eye and careful hearing, they have been telling us, and we would not listen about what is happening in this country, to them.'

Reading the riots is a project based on interviewing those who were involved in the riots, while the research is still ongoing, a spokesperson for the project said there was a shared frustration about the amount of 'stop and searching' that is done.

The riots also showed how people come together and are willing to protect the area they live in. In

Southall West London, Muslims and Sikhs came together to protect the Southall area and it's religious places of worship. One man told a reporter 'If every community comes together, regardless of what race you are, what religion you are... show people what you can do if you unite.'

During a speech given at a conference regarding the London Riots, Camilia Batmanghelidj spoke about the two types of people involved with the riots. The 'initiators' and the 'opportunists'. The initiators were those individuals 'to have enough hatred to physically kick down shop windows'. The opportunists saw a window on opportunity and took what they could. No matter what role the rioters played, there was enough desperation in both groups.

The Kids company was founded in 1996 to support young people.

Camilia pointed out that in the last twenty years, eight-five percent of the children that reach the Kids Company are homeless. She argues that there aren't taught the 'value of human life' when they get rejected by those who's responsibility it is to care for them. She fairly pointed out that 'people who destroy a neighborhood, feel like they don't belong to it'.

On politics.co.uk it was shown that research done by the Youth Citizenship commission (YCC), found that eighty two percent of young people in Britain thought that politicians didn't represent them properly, and 76 per cent felt that they couldn't influence government decisions.

Whil its fair to say in haste bad decisions are made, there is no doubt a

link between the choices that have been made towards young people recently and the riots. While the looting and damaging property was wrong, is it fair to fully place responsibility on teenagers?

Did technology help or make it worse?

Unlike previous riots, technology played an active part in the recent riots. On one hand there were messages being sent through blackberry's BBM, saying when and where to meet for the riots. On the other hand there was a twitter revolution that summoned communities up to clean up the mess that rioters created. The reason behind people being able to send messages freely through BBM is that they wouldn't be able to be tracked down.

KIDS COMPANY

Kids Company offers a holistic and a child-centered approach which builds multi-disciplinary services around young people. It offers creative and rational approaches through a wide variety of different services in schools and street level Centre's. Kids company believes that every child does matter and is committed to providing the young person with the necessary support to overcome life's challenges, develop resilience and fulfill potential. www.kidsco.org.uk

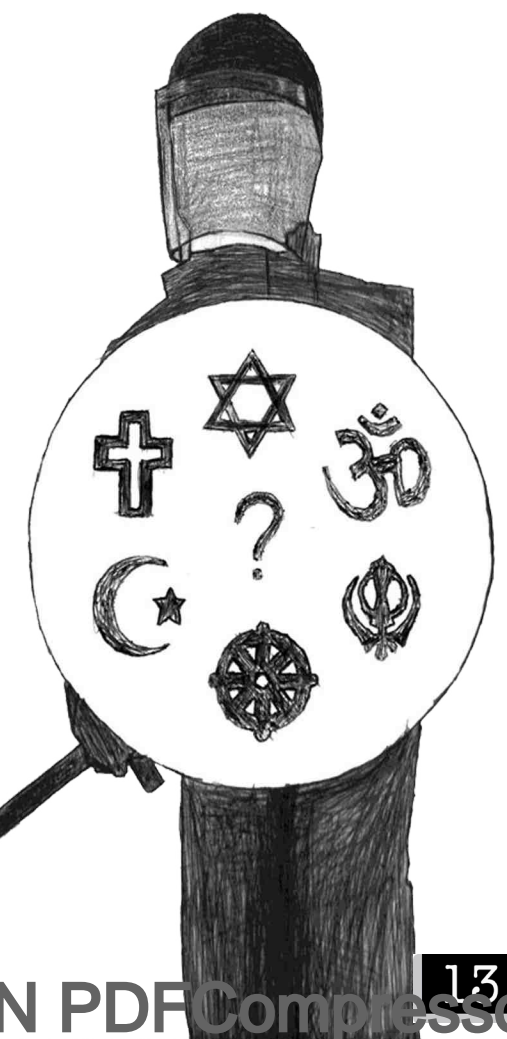
The UK Youth Parliament ' gives the young people of the UK a powerful voice which is heard and listened to by local and national government, providers of services for young people and other agencies who have an interest in the views and needs of young people'. It is also run by the youth. The UK Youth Parliament also provides information on events, elections, meetings and campaigns.' The purpose of the Youth Parliament

is to 'provide a unique platform that enables young people to use their energy and passion to change the world for the better.'

If you have something to say and want to be heard, visit: www.ukyp.org.uk

Reading the riots investigates the riots and has answers from the rioters. The rioters said the the riots 'where a sort of revenge' against the police. The research done covers the morality of the rioters and women who rioted. Some opinions from the rioters were 'I felt like I was coming off a leash', 'I saw an opportunity to take stuff' and 'I hate the police. They victimize us. For more research about the project visit

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/series/reading-the-riots>





Getting to Grips With Politics

By Iram Rafiq

There are many opinions on politics, but one fact about it is that things constantly change, all the time.

Take the change of travel expenses in the last few years. A few years back the bus fee was 40p for children and 90p for adults. Now it's free for those under the age of 16. For those who want to continue with education it's free until the age of 18. Bus rates are now £2.30 for adults. However, if you top up money on an Oyster card, the same bus journey will cost £1.35. When public decisions are made through politics, it effects each individual on a personal level.

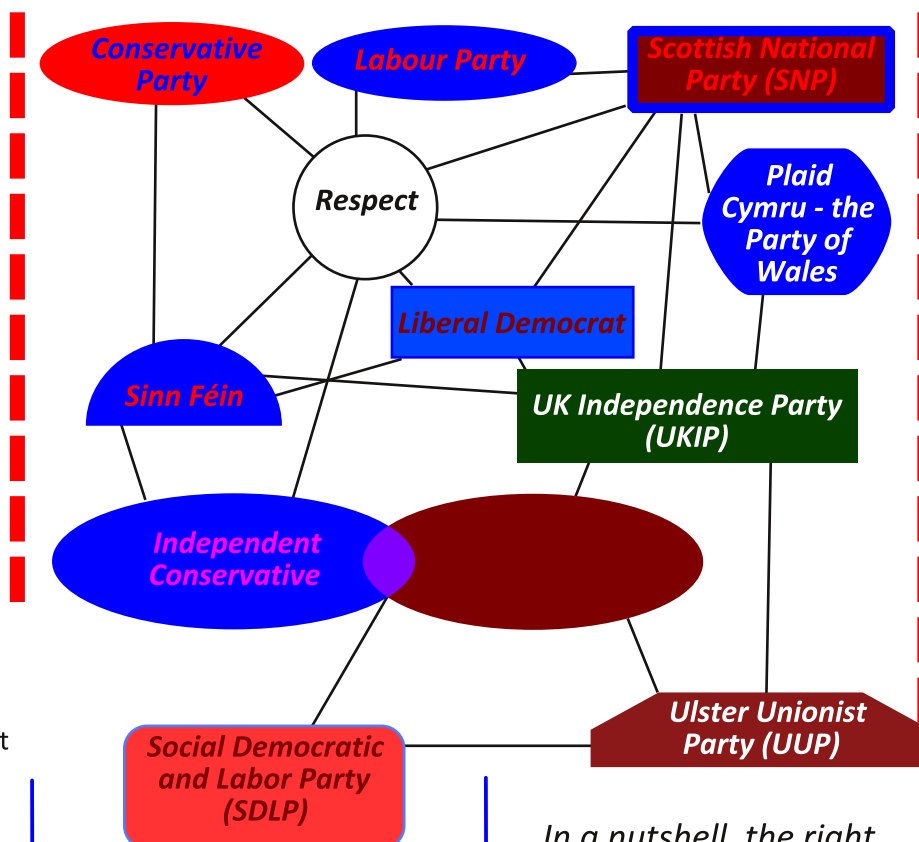
What are the basics of politics?

Many people go on about the 'right wing' and the 'left wing' when talking about politics, but what do these mean?

In a nutshell, the right wing is known as being 'conservative' and the left wing are known as being 'liberal'. In the book 'An Introduction to Political Ideologies' conservatism is described as 'an ideology that is skeptical about reason: because human beings have limited rational capacities they must rely on tradition to guide them'. Liberalism in a way is the opposite of conservatism as it 'takes freedom to be a fundamental value; it also regards individuals as naturally equal'. However, most parties are in the middle, or 'more liberal' or 'more conservative' as opposed to being completely on one side.

In 'politics: a very short introduction' it is said that it's more likely that right wing conservatives are those who are rich. It also points out that politics is like a 'theatre of illusion'. Meaning that it is like a stage performance that takes place in 'local and regional offices'. If you ever watch politics all together in one room, this analogy comes to life.

Political parties represented in Parliament



As we're in the UK, it's important to recognize that it's a 'welfare state'. Information drawn from an online article by Paul Spicker says that Asa Briggs, in a classic essay on the welfare state, made three points about the welfare state in the UK. These are 'a guarantee of minimum standards, including a minimum income', 'social protection in the event of insecurity' and 'the provision of services at the best level possible'.

In politics there are also political parties, information on the website www.direct.gov.uk states that 'a political party is an organized group of people who have similar ideas about how the country should be run. After a general election, the party with the most MP's usually forms the new government. The second largest party becomes the official

In a nutshell, the right wing is known as being 'conservative' and the left wing are known as being 'liberal'.

opposition, with its own leader and 'shadow cabinet'. If an MP doesn't have a political party, they are known as 'Independent'.

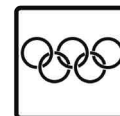
So, that was the basics of politics in a nutshell, now what can you do to become more involved in politics and get your voice heard?

The research done by the (YCC) done in 2009 showed that young people thought 'the government should appoint panels of young people to assist them on issues of interest to young people such as job prospects and justice'. Also 'parliament should pay for and promote the UK Youth Parliament.'

Agonizing silence followed the wait. Conversations of hopes and dreams, all stood still, silent in the expectation of one line.

The city of London

By Sergiu Tripon



And in the following seconds of the 6th of July 2005, the tense crowd gathered at Trafalgar square erupted into cheer.

They were ours: The 2012 Olympics were ours!

A multicultural event



By the 27th of July 2012, an astonishing 10,500 athletes will participate in the biggest sporting event on earth. Athletes from 5 continents will be competing for the podium, in 26 different sports. The

variety of countries present in London next summer will be unbelievable. The Olympics is the only event able to gather such a wide scope of nations. London is already a benchmark for multiculturalism, the number of cultures present in the city leaves one feeling as if a tour of the capital would be nothing short of a trip around the world. As the Olympics approach, London will officially become the most multicultural city in the world, for a month at least. To reflect that, Amir Khan, the boxer born in Birmingham to a British Pakistani family, was chosen as ambassador. A chance for all of Britain to come together in cheering for the games.

Polemics with every game

With limited parking on and around the Stratford Olympic site, the London Olympics are said to be the "public transport games". In a normal year, without

any major events scheduled The London Underground guides 1,107,000 passengers every year to their destinations. But during the games capacity will be the network's biggest issue.

In response, to decrease the number of commuters by 30%, TFL is running a campaign advising them to work from home or use different routes. When asked about plans during the Olympics, a common answer for many people is travelling to another country just to avoid the chaos.

The economics of the games

By July 2012, 30,000 people will have worked in the Stratford Olympic site.



50,000 more permanent jobs will follow as a result of the facilities the site will make available in the future. There is no doubt, that the Olympics are nothing but a breath of fresh air for the jobless.

During the Olympics, landlords in East London will be able to charge sky-high rents. Figures like £8000 weekly for a four-bedroom house will be making them more money during the Olympic weeks than in normal months. An injection of money is certainly a good thing for

the local economy, but rising costs have priced out many first time buyers from the area.

Greatest Show on Earth or Tax Drain?

The moment the decision was announced, we all dreamed of the events to unfold 7 years later, unconcerned about the cost. But 4 years on in 2009, economic tragedy hit in the form of the recession. Since then the government has had to balance the pride of the nation versus its needs. The Government has admitted the cost of the Olympic Park has jumped from its previous estimate of £2.4bn to £9.3bn. Will it all have been worth it? I think so.

The Olympics are a chance to bring London back into the eyes of the world. To show people that despite tough times, we are still able to deliver! What we remember as Britain's finest hour, was a time of great hardship for the whole nation. We stand at the same place we were and like we triumphed then, we will do so again. Let's put on the best show the world has to give, in a way only London can offer.





The Olympic Park

Olympic photo story:
our "sneak preview" of the Olympic Games.
(as experienced on one February weekend)

Words/Photos: Olga Socha
Design: James Thurman



2. Strolling through Westfield we got the feel of the consumer experience together with rainy and windy weather.



3. Wet and cold we learnt from another staff member that we need to buy tickets to enter the Olympic Park... Luckily, we were also advised to visit the free viewing point in John Lewis.



4. The viewing point proved to be a popular family attraction. The Olympic spirit was everywhere!

1. We've started our visit to Olympic Site with a helping hand from the staff.



5. Especially in a hundred and one things to buy.

6. Including reasonably priced souvenirs...



9. Overall, we experienced the Olympics as a well-marketed enterprise...



10. Trying to get back home, we got lost in the Westfield and Stratford station maze... We didn't have the feel of the Olympics, **now we do!**

Hopefully, visitors in summer wouldn't mind getting lost in Westfield and the weather will be sunny. Otherwise, they need to open more umbrella shops!



7. ...and an army of Wenlocks ready to rule the world!



8. Among all, we could also have a peek at the Stadium.





MULTICULTURALISM IN BRITAIN: THE BENEFITS AND THE BRIGHT SIDE

David Cameron's statement that 'multiculturalism has failed' in the context of BNP rioting in the UK and two unpleasant discriminatory events I had witnessed in one day inspired me to write this article as a challenge to both, with the main aim of showing that in everyday life, multiculturalism has triumphed. Parekh (2002) states that 'a multicultural society is one that includes two or more cultural communities. It may respond to its cultural diversity in two ways. It might welcome and cherish it, make it central to its self-understanding and respect the cultural demands of its constituent communities or it might seek to assimilate these communities into its mainstream

We are said to be heading towards a double dip recession, but to what extent are such offensive claims true?

culture either wholly or substantially.' A healthy model of multiculturalism is one we choose to construct as British citizens, acknowledging the multiple ways that multiculturalism has beneficial aspects for the British society and economy.

We are said to be heading towards a double dip recession, we're on the brink of stagnation and for extreme right conservatives and some Sun readers 'immigrants are stealing our jobs'... but to what extent are such offensive claims true?

Throughout history, Britain has been characterized by migration from the Romans, Saxons, Jutes, Vikings, French, Irish and Jews signaling that a diversity of cultures is nothing new to the British society.

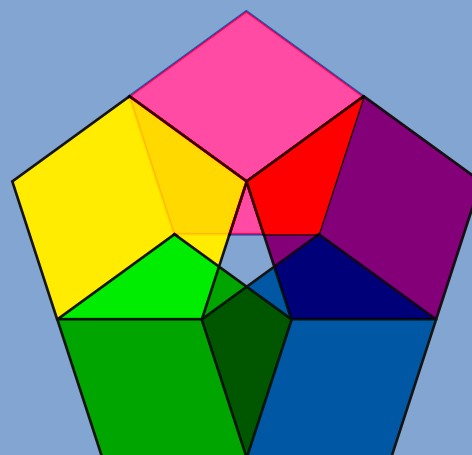
A quick search on Google scholar for anyone interested in the topic of 'the economic benefits of migrants in Britain' will throw up hundreds of responses! In fact, among academics, there is a well-known positive association of economic growth and migration. Thus, the rhetoric is no more than ignorance where in fact migrants boost the economy and create jobs rather than prevent them. Take for example; our beloved 'British' Marks and Spencers; the company was initially set up by a Jewish migrant 125 years prior to date and has provided us with some of our most beloved quality food and clothing items, as well as several employment opportunities having over 703 stores in the UK.

Alternatively, walking down the high street your local Deli, Kebab shop and international food store, all represent the fruits of multiculturalism. My teacher told our class, that when he was younger



his Mother had to search far and wide to find ingredients like garlic. Nowadays it can be found in any supermarket. As visible from the many British cooking programs it is an ingredient now ingrained in our cooking techniques. The fact that we can now learn Mandarin and Spanish in some schools is of vital importance to young children; they are able to gain a highly valuable skill in an increasingly competitive world. Ameny-Dixon (1989) highlights that 'the global perspective of multicultural education recognizes cultural pluralism as an ideal and healthy state in any productive society and promotes equity and respect among the existing cultural groups.'

In London we also have Notting Hill Carnival and Columbian festivals in summer, which bring joy to our variable seasons. The benefits of multiculturalism are embedded in London's fabric; by accepting people and difference we have become a more open minded and better society in many ways attracting tourists from all over the world to enjoy the peaceful, cohesive





society we share. Luckily, a few weekends ago I was able to travel up to Trafalgar Square to celebrate Chinese New Year and experience the wonders of Chinese singing, dancing and costume design. We must acknowledge that we are fortunate to have a budding China town in the centre of West End, providing significant economic profits and employment for the Soho community; from those working in the shops, to those that clean the streets and drive the buses and taxis!

Consider tonight, maybe you're too tired to cook, there are a variety of take-aways that you could call up; Thai, Indian, Moroccan, Caribbean or Italian to have a delicious taste of international cuisine delivered directly to your door.

Unfortunately being recently ill myself, I visited the hospital. The doctor who aided me was an Australian doctor; who very thoroughly investigated my case. The Indian cab driver cheered me up as we discussed Kolkata, what a good time I had when I was there in his home town, how friendly and welcoming everyone was towards me although intrigued by my obviously different look and the powers of spicy food when you've got the flu. Mercer (2000) illuminates the fact that the UK receives more from Nigeria in the training of nurses in comparison to aid given in exchange.

We are not just a British society, we are an international community and it should be a duty to treat others with the same equality we consider as due for ourselves, our friends and families.

I discussed some issues related to multiculturalism with a few people from different backgrounds. Of the

We need to look at wider structures and how we can provide opportunities and training for all.

many wonderful things said, my favourite was by my friend Minara who said "living in a multicultural city like London makes me feel comfortable and not singled out because of the colour of my skin, which indicates an ethnic minority in this society, but because of diversity, I see different people every day. This makes me feel happy and not isolated by a vast majority, especially because I can learn about many cultures, religions, languages and rituals" (Minara Begum, aged 20). David Cameron failed to acknowledge that the places with racial rioting and the highest BNP votes are often those with the highest unemployment figures and lowest education statistics with the Institute for Public policy research stating that "socioeconomic and political exclusion are the major factors at work. In particular, areas with low average levels of qualifications, low levels of social cohesion, and low levels of voter turnout are the ones that show more BNP support." Also, an analysis of BNP leaked voters list highlighted that "22% were Business owners, professionals and managers" (Banerjee, 2011) many of whom lived in monolithic, detached communities without interaction with the

diversity of British people.

Therefore these factors increase the manipulative ability of the multicultural discourse. For those who have a certain level of instability in everyday life it is vital we improve these specificities and aid people into participation with British society and its diverse nature.

We need to look at wider structures and how we can provide opportunities and training for all of those who feel marginalised in society and may misinterpret their position in the wider community. Society needs to aim at being more inclusive, integrative and understanding regardless of the economic position, colour, culture, ability or religion of those in our society. Tolerance is no good because this suggests we are putting up with a problem. There may be some problems, but they are minute in comparison to the many rewards we reap. By becoming more accepting we can alleviate a problem we may unintentionally create.

This takes me finally to a discussion I had with my Grandma; she and my grandfather were studying together in London many years ago when they fell in love. But, my grandfather being of Indo-Trinidadian descent received a lot of discrimination and when they decided to get married they had to search forever to find a place that would take an interracial couple. The detailing of the posters and experience is quite horrific considering this was only some forty years ago. But that is in the past now, we have radically evolved from that image and become increasingly progressive since. Nick Griffin said that "BNP polling station tellers were shocked and horrified on polling day to witness the enormous queues of foreign faces"; this is sheer stupidity. If we want to remain in harmony without such racism, the key is participation in British society; the right to vote is part of this. The benefit of migration after the war in redeveloping Britain is evident during a time when human resources was depleted and has helped create the Britain we now see. It has allowed us to position ourselves as the 3rd largest economy globally. What we have is special, without it I would not be here.

Written by Asia La Chapelle Williams

Designed by Tim Strickland



VOX POP WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

By Roman Koblov

Are you happy? Can a subjective feeling like happiness be measured? Well the government seems to think so. Last year the Office for National Statistics (ONS) was commissioned to conduct a study to measure the nation's wellbeing. The cost of the project has been said to reach around £8 million and has so far gathered its first set of data from a pool of 200,000 people. With such questions like 'on a scale of 0-10, how happy did you feel yesterday?' The statistics generally show that we as a nation are content with our lives. Well we decided to hit the streets and ask YOU the public, just what makes you happy and what is happiness to YOU?

'All you can eat Chinese'
Chris, Suffolk

'Beer is Happiness'
Jay, Golders Green

'Being on the beach'
Chloe, Balham

'Happiness to me is live music'
Janka, New Cross

'Happiness is Benson the Dog when I get home from work'
Steve, St Andrews

'Sharing moments with my family'
Lucy, Islington

'When Arsenal used to actually win something'
Ed, Finchley

'Happiness is a lazy Sunday morning'
Herpal, Camden

'Happiness is that satisfaction when you've finally finished something you've worked so hard on'
Tahir, Wembley

'Being with the people you love and I'm pretty sure there isn't an index that can measure that...'
Camille, Hertfordshire

'Happiness lives at the bottom of a bottle'
Louis, Highbury

'Happiness comes on a Friday afternoon'
Ollie, Kensal Rise

'Living life with no regrets'
Idris, Stockwell

'Happiness is a state of mind'
Chantelle, Mile End

'Happiness is freedom'
Patrick, Kent

'Travelling with mates'
Sunny, N.Finchley



SHOULD WE FOLLOW THE DESK-IPLES?

Words: Catherine Van De Stouwe
Design/Illustrations: James Thurman

The workplace. A place where women fight to be better than their male counterparts? A place where you pretend to like your co-workers whilst sabotaging their rubber plants? A place where you can happily put your work to one side and pray?

In the majority of careers one is told to leave any personal issues outside the door, ready to be collected upon leaving. The idea of this is to create a robotic environment in which there can be no non-work related issues hindering the progress of the day's tasks. But with all things personal out the door, should we include our religious beliefs? After all, many of us exercise beliefs as part of our daily routines so it is a part of our personalities.

As the results of the 2011 Census are beginning to trickle through, it is believed that 55% of the UK population is in fact Christian with only 5% being of other faiths. The final 40% have no religion and thus have no worries about when they can or cannot have belief at work.

In previous decades, if one had a religion it would have been near on impossible to find work that accepted and accommodated for those beliefs. It was in 2003 that the government passed The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations Act. This meant that discrimination within the workplace on the basis of a person's faith was outlawed and that those with religious beliefs had rights; rights to leave early on those darker days; rights to not work Sundays or their relevant Sabbath days. Heck, if wearing a cross around my neck gave me Sundays off then I'm game.

But with these beliefs allowing a person to take extra time off work for holidays and let them pick and choose the days they work, where is the equality for those who have no religion? If a non-religious person walked into their boss' office and said they couldn't work this weekend, for their favourite football team were playing, they'd be snorted at and told to get back to work. Is that fair and equal?

Whilst most Holy Days are given to those who believe, it becomes rather difficult for the employer, if the religious person was the only employee to know how to use a certain piece of machinery, let's say, on the days – or even weeks – they needed off, production would seemingly grind to a halt.

Joan* works at a health clinic in Richmond. Her bosses are heavily Christian and attend Church on a regular basis. It was at their local Church where they found their newest worker. Joan says "my bosses hired a girl about seven months ago to work on our reception. [She is] completely computer illiterate and more of a talker than a worker. But, they gave her a chance and extended her 3 month probation to six.

"...IF WEARING A CROSS AROUND MY NECK GAVE ME SUNDAYS OFF THEN I'M GAME."

"In all that time they never said how bad she was at her job, in the end giving us the tasks she wouldn't or failed to complete. They hired her after the six months and now they turn round to me and tell me they don't like her.

Of course, they won't fire her. No. They say they'd be frowned upon in church for that."

However, just because having a religion can sometimes hinder a situation, it does, for most people, act as a relief. Work of any sorts can be notoriously stressful and whilst some people prefer nipping out the back for a cigarette, it can be just as satisfying for a person to take five minutes quiet and pray to their God(s) for strength they need to carry on with the day.

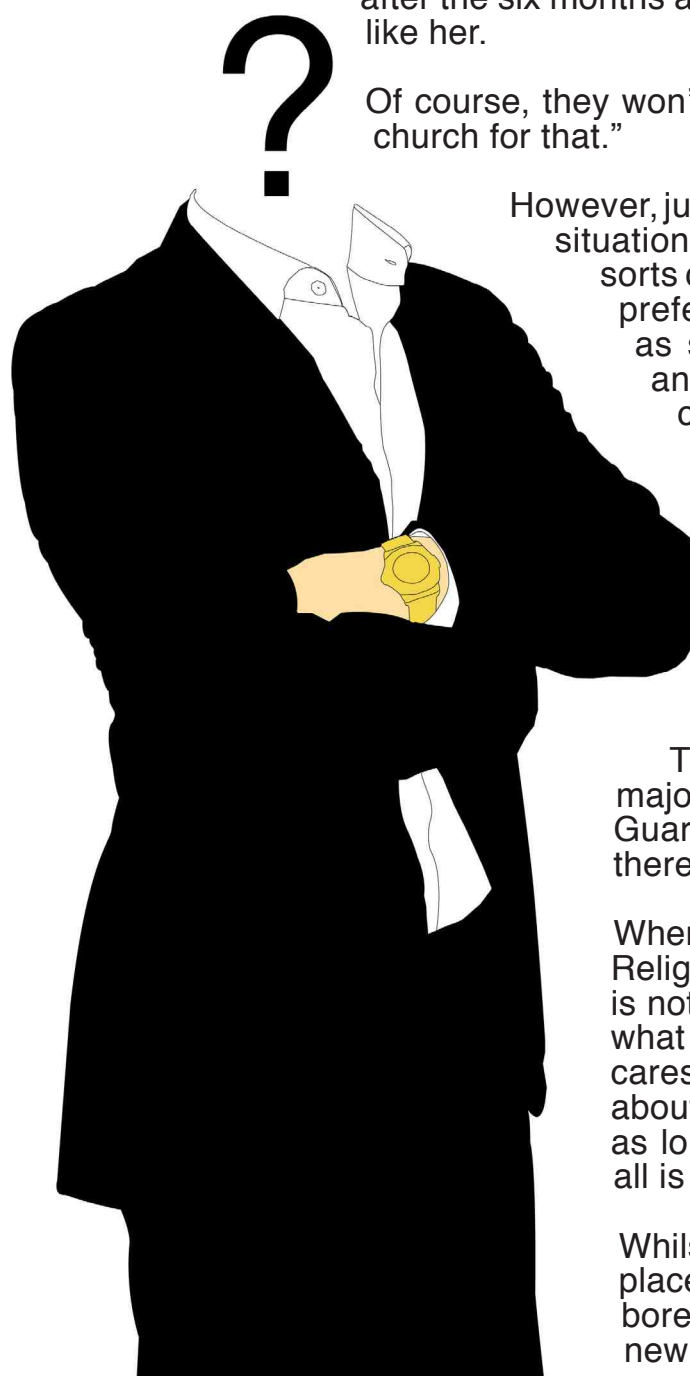
At the Redbridge Council, Devon, Council-lors had taken to praying to God before meetings to give them the guidance and wisdom to make the right choices for their area. But in February this year, they were banned by the court because of a complaint by one Atheist member.

The minority is once more ruining it for the majority and in the words of Cllr Prince to The Guardian: "they can wait outside, they don't have to be there." Hear, hear Cllr Prince!

When it comes to the age old battle of Atheist vs. Religion it becomes apparent that, providing the religion is not shoved in the atheist's face, they don't really care what a religious person does. But when at work, who cares what average Joe does outside of the building? It's about what goes on inside the building that matters and as long as work is done and completed without a fuss, all is well and good.

Whilst some will feel that religion shouldn't be in the work place, it can come in handy for moments of stress or boredom. And hey, maybe if you keep your mind open to new things that plant of yours will miraculously recover.

*names have been changed





Ethical Careers

By Sam Hilton

As one of Britain's 1 million strong force of unemployed young people, I have had plenty of time to think about what career I would go into to make the biggest positive impact on the world, (as if I had a choice). So, without further ado, my top 5 high impact careers:

1.) Banker

Not normally considered the carer of choice for those who want to help others, in a world where money brings power, taking a high earning job, such as banker, lawyer or entrepreneur, is a sure-fire way of knowing that you will be able to make the world a better place. Over the course of a career, a banker will earn about £5,000,000. Donating just 30% of that to efficient charities would improve the quality of living for hundreds of thousands of people in developing countries.

Philanthropy has advantages over working directly for a charity. You have the freedom to choose effective causes to support, rather than having to follow the funding. Also, with limited jobs to go round, if you turned down a job at a charity it would likely quickly be filled by someone else.

2.) Politician or Campaigner

One of the people who had the biggest impact on the world over the last century was Viktor Zhdanov. You have probably never heard of him. He was the deputy minister of health in the USSR and in 1958 he called for a program to eradicate smallpox, in 1959 the program was accepted and by 1977 smallpox was eradicated. During the 20th century smallpox killed between 300 and 500 million people, that is far more than all wars and genocides. And now it is gone.

The eradication of smallpox is of course an extreme example, but campaigning for governments to carry out high impact health interventions still goes on today (check out the charity RESULTS). There is no guarantee that that you will be able to make a significant difference by going into politics, but the potential is huge.

3.) Scientist

Like politics, scientific research has the potential to have a huge impact. Famously, research into drought-resistant strains of wheat saved millions of people from starvation. Consider research to eradicate Malaria. If faster research means that Malaria is eradicated one year earlier this would save 781,000 lives (the amount lost to Malaria each year). A single day's speedup would save 2,139 lives. Advancing the process by even 40 seconds would save a life. So even a tiny amount of research can have a huge effect. If there is a field that you are interested in or talented at then maybe this is the career path for you. It does not have to be public health related and could be anything from computer science to politics.

Charity Choices

If you want to make the biggest difference possible with your money it is important to donate intelligently. Some interventions will waste your money, for example by giving aid to corrupt governments. Other schemes are highly cost effective. And allow you to make a huge difference. A number of webpages such as www.givingwhatwecan.org and www.givewell.org provide detailed information on which charities are the best. Using the standard 'years of life at full health' measurement that the NHS and the World Health Organisation use, these top charities can provide a year of life at full health for about £16.

4.) Doctor

By becoming a doctor, you could have a direct impact on people's lives and wellbeing on a daily basis. This can be increased further by focusing on a specialty that is in high demand. You would also receive a reasonably large salary and be able to help people indirectly through charitable donations.

5.) Teacher

As a teacher you have the opportunity to inspire young minds. One thing I have realised in researching this article is that every one of us can make a significant difference to the world, maybe through research or charity work, or even by donating just a tiny fraction of our earnings. By teaching the next generation to care about others and do what they can to help you could magnify this impact many times over. For more on high impact careers see www.80000hours.org



What the Fee Rise Really Means

By Alana Maytum

The announcement of raised tuition fees was one of the biggest headlines of last year, causing national outrage and protest across Britain. The effect of raised tuition fees has been an ongoing debate ever since, and now that application deadlines have passed, the result hasn't come as a surprise to many. English Universities suffer an 8.7% fall in British applicants this year, more than any other country in the UK, representing the first real evidence of the impact that the hike in tuition fees has made.

It seems that many sixth-formers are opting to 'earn while they learn' instead of ending up in thousands of pounds worth of debt only to face a poor job market. Many students want to focus on their employability, rather than education, after all, experience in any many fields has become more valuable than a University Degree, and working your way up in an industry is looking more appealing to many school-leavers. Many students feel that some University courses are simply not worth £9,000 a year, considering that many full time courses consist of less than 10 hours a week class time, it isn't surprising. A lifetime of debt isn't a great way to start a career for anybody.

For students that are determined to go to University, their appetite for education will remain the same, and they will still apply, despite the fees. The experience is undoubtedly a character building one, and the opportunity to network with future colleagues that could potentially help you on the way to reaching future career goals is invaluable. In certain fields it is necessary to go to University, and medical courses are one of few that has seen a rise in applicants this year. Foreign languages and courses in the arts have drastically declined, although many Universities are positive that this is not as bad as it seems.

What about funding?

The students hit the hardest will those from families earning around £40,000 a year, those just outside the bracket that entitles them to receive generous grants and loans available to students from poorer backgrounds. The drop in students from wealthy backgrounds is larger than those from lower income families. Under the new system, students won't have to pay back anything until they earn £21,000 a year, which is considerably more than the old system. Although when students do earn more they will be paying considerably more overall, the payments will actually be less than they will be for graduates who entered Higher education prior to the fee rise. Assuming that over time student's earnings will increase rather than decrease, paying back the fees may not overly worry a lot of applicants. Although, it does seem that many are considering courses more carefully in order to maximise potential earnings post-grad. Talia Chirouf, a recent war studies graduate from Kings College London said: "I loved my degree, but I would have found it really frustrating if the fees were £9,000. I would of

seriously considered alternative options."

On a more positive note Joe Olivier, a screen writing applicant this year commented, "Assuming I achieve some level of success, I would say that the prospect of paying my loans back doesn't overly worry me. This may be very different however if I didn't have a huge support network of family and friends to fall back on if everything went wrong."

What does this mean for mature students?

Many people applying to University as mature students have had to re-think their next career move due to the tripling fees. Mature students make up around a third of undergraduates overall, and the fear of leaving their job to face £27,000 debt in tuition fees alone is over bearing. There has been a drastic decline of in mature students applications this year, as they are no longer eligible for loans and grants for a second degree. This area has been hit the hardest as many mature students may have family or financial commitments and the fee rise has made it even more difficult to afford. It's easier when you know where your next pay check is coming from, and the thought of being in so much debt is too daunting

"I loved my degree, but I would have found it really frustrating if the fees were £9,000. I would of seriously considered alternative options."

-Talia Chirouf

for many, especially when employers are under pressure to make cut backs.

What does this mean for Universities?

Most Universities have a positive attitude despite the drop in applications, claiming there is still a huge demand to study in Higher education, and the demand will continue to outweigh the amount of places available. Many Universities say that the raise in tuition fees will simply balance out cuts to teaching budgets, particularly in arts and humanities subjects.

Universities argue that much of the money raised from raising tuition fees will simply replace major cuts to teaching budgets, especially in arts and humanities subjects. Considering the surge in applications from students trying to enrol prior to the fee rise, the drop in applications may not be as detrimental as it first seems. The application rates are still higher than they were a few years ago in 2009.



WALK THE WALK

BY IRAM RAFIQ

"Style is quintessential". If you don't have good style it automatically reflects badly on your first impression of a person'.

Says 22 year old graphic designer Tim, and it appears that his view on style is one shared by many...

This could be one of the many reasons that Men's fashion Week is hitting London in June from the 14th to the 17th June.

The growth of interest in fashion appears to be a universal one...the fashion weeks in New York, Milan and Paris have all been incredibly successful. Gordon Richardson, Design Director, TOPMAN said **"No longer shoe horned into one condensed hectic day,** the newly established London Menswear Collections, over 3 glorious days now has the space to breathe, flourish and generate the buzz that will put its talented rising men's fashion stars firmly on the international fashion map."

www.londonfashionweek.co.uk

The three days will showcase the best of British talent in menswear. A buzz is already generating as there is now

more time to showcase new lines.

The growth and interest in men's fashion appears to be a universal one...the fashion weeks in New York, Milan and Paris have all been incredibly successful.

So, how important are style and fashion ?

'It always matters...the word metro sexual to me means having a good style, a good idea of what matches' ' Tim, graphic designer, 22

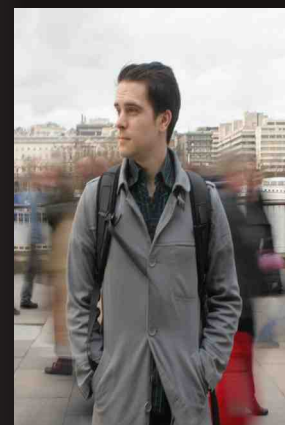
'Fashion is reflective, I guess I'm a person who likes to feel comfortable in his surroundings, so I dress with a casual but classy kind of style, like casual hoodies, chinos etc' Jay, student, 19 'Style is about being loud, like wearing bold colours with a nice design' Ricky, chef, 24

Style Icons

There's to denying that certain men have become style icons who seem to have altered and influenced the face of men's fashion everywhere...

www.uk.askmen.com call David Beckham 'a style icon'. Some of the reasons why

David Beckham is seen as iconic is because he's able to stay 'on top of trends



'mix things up', and because he's not 'afraid of breaking all the style rules'. He's everything 'that fashion's all about.' Melissa Sinclair on www.mensfashionmagazine.co.uk calls Kanye West a style icon because she believes that, while those in the music industry felt that he 'didn't look the part' by sticking to his distinct individual style his 'style became a template for men around the world.' he's also inspirational in 'pushing fashion boundaries.' Taking all of this into account, and not to mention the constant changing of trends and emerging of new style icons, it appears men's fashion week in London will be fairly unique. In addition to this, information from www.lon-

donfashionweek.co.uk tells us It's likely that the designers who are part of 'men's day' at London Fashion Week will be contributing to the showcase' in June. It will be an opportunity for the UK's 'most innovative new talents to show during this period.' Designers Margaret Howell and brands such as Aquascutum will join part of the showcase called 'London collections: Men to show the breadth of British menswear.'





The Cartoon Museum

By Iram Rafiq

When I first heard about the cartoon museum, I (apparently like many others) was under the assumption that I could have a quick glance around in about ten minutes. The cartoon museum, however, is more than just drawings. Not only does the cartoon museum show the best examples of British cartoons, caricature, and comic art dating back to the 18th Century, it's detailed layout and information about each individual item gives the cartoon images real...well... character.

Not too far away from the British museum, the Cartoon Museums gift shop, filled with funny books alongside other items, also acts as an entrance to the museum. Being London's first Cartoon Museum (it opened in 2006), it has an overview of cartoons and caricatures that date back to the 18th Century.

In total there are three separate galleries, one covering the his-

tory of British cartoons that date back to the 18th Century, another one 'showcasing an overview of the history of cartoon strips and comics from the late 19th Century to the present' Cartoon Museum, Press release. The last gallery is used for a range of different exhibitions that change every few months. Some of these included 'Alice in Sutherland: A Labyrinth of Dreams' (April/July 07) and 'Ink and the bottle: Drunken Cartoonists and Drink in cartoons' (July/February 2011). The most recent exhibition being 'Her Maj: 60 Years of Unofficial Portraits of the Queen'.

In the most recent exhibition, drawings of the queen over the past 60 years, by various different artists, were shown. What was most eye-catching about the exhibition was seeing the diverse selection of portraits of the Queen and how it's possible for one person to be seen in so many different ways. There are images that are portraits alongside comic strips in which speech bubbles



attempt to show what the Queen and the royal family are thinking during various historical events. There are a variety of comic strips regarding the Royal Wedding that happened last year.

There is also original artwork from famous British cartoons such as Dennis the Menace. Some interesting facts the museum tells us about Denis the Menace was he was first invented in 1951 by artist David Law, who made him in a 'loose energetic' style. When the time came for Denis to become an animation this begun to 'alter the way he looked'. The artist David Parkins said he had trouble getting the mouth to 'work'. A hard task considering there is no gap between his mouth and his nose!

The next exhibition to visit the Cartoon Museum is 'H.M Bateman: The Man Who Went Mad On Paper'. H.M Bate-



man is a cartoonist who is famous for drawing people not based on their physical characteristics, but how they felt on the inside. If he wanted to show someone who felt small or out of place, he would literally draw them smaller than everyone else. Born in 1887 to 1970, H.M Bateman was originally born in Australia although he came to the UK when he was a baby.



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Religion in Exile

Book Reviews by Sarraounia Christianson

The Good Muslim

by Tahmima Anam, Canongate 2011

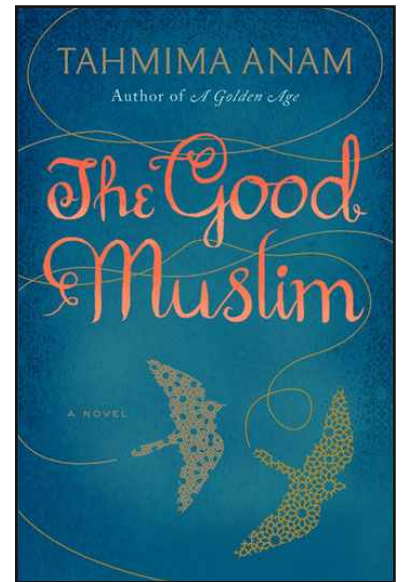
The Good Muslim opens as a soldier makes his way home, gun still in hand, from battle. The soldier is Sohail Haque and what he discovers in the aftermath of war hangs ghost-like over the ensuing novel.

Maya, Sohail's sister, is a doctor returning home to Dhaka from a seven year self-imposed exile in Northern Bangladesh, to confront the family from which she fled. Set in the 70s and mid 80s Anam's second novel's narrative is beautifully woven and tightly wound with tension. Rich with intoxicating imagery it's themes are deeply rooted in the struggle to compound war and religion and the re-forming of a nation reflected within a family.

'Even though she had been the one to choose her exile, it was as though a thick skin had formed over it, and it appeared to her now as a mystery.' Maya's attempts to 'repatriate' back into Dhaka life are fraught with difficulty as she attempts to reconcile with her old friends, her mother and Sohail's new-found extreme Islamic beliefs. Maya's exile has rendered her religiously rootless, the very opposite of Sohail.

Anam's depiction of the deep scars of war and the manifestations of lingering guilt attached to its survivors is vividly painted.

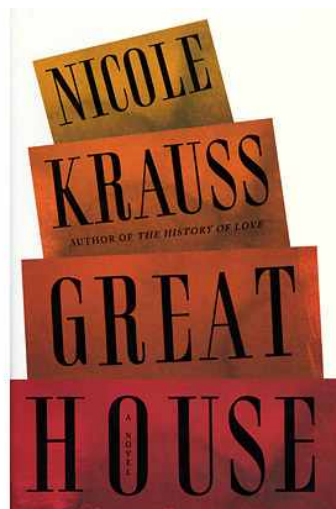
Although Maya 'had racked up a debt she was still struggling to repay,' Sohail is no different. He is purging his guilt through religion and Maya through what she perceives as acts of kindness. As the novel reached a compelling crescendo it begs the question, who is 'the Good Muslim'? Maya or Sohail?



'In her seven years of roaming the country, she had witnessed an altogether different form of faith.' The Good Muslim

A young Chilean poet tortured by an oppressive regime. An antiques dealer obsessively reconstructing his father's study that was destroyed by the Nazis. A husband looking after his ailing wife discovering her tragic secret. These are all characters in Great House, the third novel by the acclaimed young Jewish writer Nicole Krauss. Each is intertwined through the ghostly connection of a desk which passes through their lives at some point.

For Lotte Berg the desk 'overshadowed everything else like some sort of grotesque foreboding monster.' Escaping from Nuremburg and exiled in London, she has nothing but it's hulking form. Krauss' delicate rendering of the pain of each of the characters permeates through what could have been a false image.



Why should a desk carry such connotation? Its solid presence and permanence speaks to the Jewish soul at the heart of this novel. For the Jew who has been ostracized, something tangible is sought after. The antiques dealer Weisz clings onto this missing piece of his personal puzzle. He is forced to be wandering the globe, abandoning his children and forever in exile until he recovers the desk.

Krauss' style is haunting and poses unanswerable questions to its reader without being frustrating to read. This story is ultimately an examination of relationships. The desk is merely a lonely metaphor. The father and son, brother and sister and the lonely spinster who seeks an affair are all Jews and all in someway attempting to cope with the loss surrounding their exile.

'Maybe all exiles try to recreate the place they've lost out of fear of dying in a strange place.' Great House



Jainism in the 21st Century

By Neelam Shah

Some religions have difficulty adapting to the Western modern way of life. Various factors such as lack of visibility leads to a lack of understanding and loss of roots and traditions play into this. Jains in particular face this situation everyday.

Jainism is one of the oldest righteous religions of the world. It was founded on three basic principles:

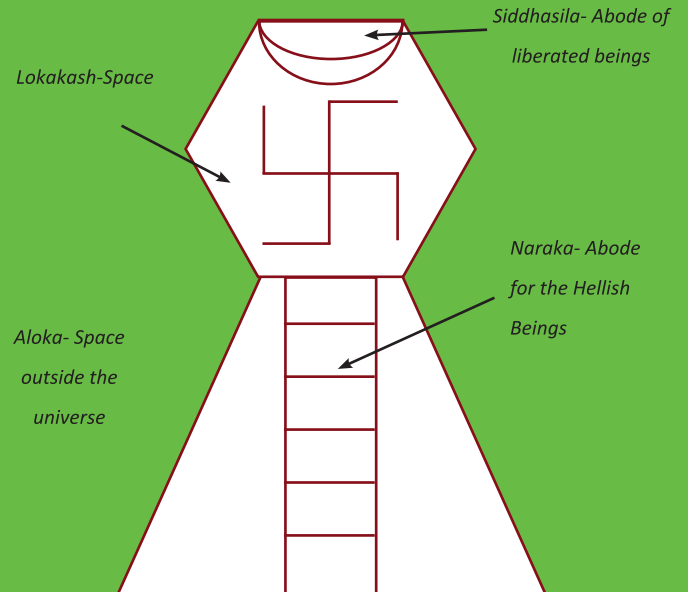
- 1. Ahimsa- Non-violence; No one should talk about killing living beings.**
- 2. Sanyam- Self-control; Proper control of action, thoughts, speech.**
- 3. Tap-Penance -The Austerity and control is aimed to lift the soul above the pleasures and pains of our life.**

These principles are the basic fundamental laws of the universe from a spiritual context and each connect with the philosophy of vegetarianism, meditation and yoga. It is not considered old fashioned but many 21st century Jains could consider the whole idea of yoga a bit traditional eg. Time constraints, lack of patience, loss of faith, lack of will power. On the other hand, Europeans seem to be more and more attracted by this discipline.

Vegetarianism, the heart of Jainism

Most Jain's believe in the soul 'atma', where karma is tied in with the bondages of actions humankind commits. Most Jain's diet is strictly tied with the Ahimsa 'Non-violence' principle therefore vegetarianism is the heart and root of Jain Philosophy, to respect all living creatures and choose their diet carefully to cause minimum harm to any living species. Living in a western society vegetarianism philosophy has been welcomed, there is an influx of more vegetarian restaurants and more people are converting into vegetarians due to health reasons, ethical and moral choice in the past few years.

In the 21st century sometimes it can be hard for young Jains to follow such strict codes of conduct due to societal influence.



Living as a Jain in a western country

In 2012 Jains have adopted a more western approach to life due to people they are friends with, the education system and the media. Even if media does not have a direct impact on my life, as much as what is broadcasted does not influence me, it does certainly influence the youngest, giving them a new idea of what is good and what is bad, and how they should behave themselves to be "cool".

In the UK, education system advocates Jainism in a positive way but usually it is covered by the whole religion of Hinduism as Jainism is only one small aspect. As a result most of the people don't know what Jainism is: for some Jains, this leads to the feeling that they are not recognized. There are 25 to 30 million Jains worldwide and each education system has a different approach to tackle Jainism faith.

A Personal view of Jainism

I have lived in the UK for 20 years and am open minded to all cultures and faiths. As time moves on Jainism maintains the philosophy of the principles on vegetarianism and non-violence but I feel the self-control (Sanyam) of actions, speech and thoughts are lost within the current climate of high media influence and a celebrity 'getrichquick' culture. But I think anyone can follow a belief or faith so long as they stick to their principles and have a strong will power meaning cannot be influenced!

© Anish
Shah



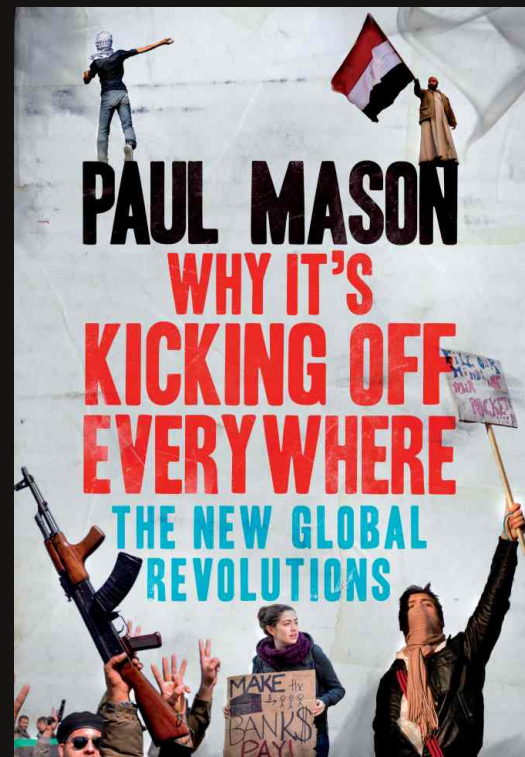
WHY IT'S KICKING OFF EVERYWHERE & WHY IT WON'T STOP

In early 2011, there were riots in Egypt to overthrow an authoritarian dictator. Earlier in 2008, Athens rioted over the corporate bailouts that caused the loss of many jobs and billions more in taxpayer money. In 2010, students riot in the streets of London some peacefully protesting while self-proclaimed anarchists vandalise several shops in the financial district. Even at the time of writing there are more violent protests in Greece as the populace gets frustrated with the minute amount of actual achievement against austerity occurs while bureaucrats debate over who foots the bill. The motives behind these uprisings are found on the mouths of the populace, and each opinion varies slightly.

Paul Mason attempts to bring a gathered summation of how this age of turmoil has come to be in *Why It's Kicking off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions*. Having had first hand experience in several of the protests, Mason is the first to admit, "the book is not a theory of everything...it's journalism." However modest his proposal of the book may be, *Why It's Kicking Off* provides a concise effort on his part to cover who has been at the riots and why they are there.

Stemming from a blog entry of his entitled *Twenty Reasons Why it's Kicking off Everywhere*, Mason makes a claim the protesters are just like every other society in that they are among three groups: the 'graduate with no future,' the working class, and the desolate poor. These protests cross paths with people of different faith, background, and status in society. In one instance,

Mason mentions the anecdote of a Christian and a Muslim walking hand-in-hand into Tahrir Square in the beginning of the protests that began Mubarak's downfall. Similar protests to Iran's 'Twitter Revolution' and the Arab Spring have erupted in developed Western cities including London and New York with the riots of 2011 and the Occupy movement respectively.



2008:
Uprising in Egypt,
Housing Crisis

2009:
Iranian Revolution,
Arab Spring begins

But what does this bode for the future? Mason stresses that the incidents of the housing market crash coupled with the vacancy of the jobs available for the generation of collegiate graduates have put a strain on the system that has been our form of an economy for years. The model for Capitalism is flawed, and in a big way.

What Mason is not saying is that there is another system to its place. He also stresses that the answer cannot be found in social media. Twitter and other varieties only serve as catalysts for revolution; most notably, only about 1,000 people had access to Twitter when the revolution began. Amongst the Egyptian revolutionaries,

possible focus on horizontalism, the idea of levelling the playing field. While VPs and CEOs reap the benefits of bonuses in millions, the voices of millions more beat on their doors. Mason ended his January lecture at the London School of Economics with the proposal that those who are looking for change to the system aren't looking for what can happen in the next 100 years of government; what about the next 10? Unless the austerity lessens, it may be sooner.

Written and Designed by Tim Strickland

Mason makes a claim the protesters are just like every other society in that they are among three groups: the 'graduate with no future,' the working class, and the desolate poor.

it was considered taboo to mention a social media revolution.

So what is the next step? Mason stresses only time will tell. Because of the rapid movements being organized now in Greece, in London, and globally, what the new generation is looking for is a new source of economic structure, with a

2012:



2010:
London Riots



2011:
Occupy Wall Street
begins in New York City





Culture

Everywhere I look I see culture,
Surrounding the world just like nature.

I gaze at the Indian saris gleaming with,
Radiance just like a peacock.
I taste the spicy hot food,
That sizzles in my mouth,
Like burning flames.
I am drawn towards these dances that,
Symbolise the lord of the dance Shiva.

I hear the African drums beats through the sky,
I see Colourful clothing bright as the rainbow
Shines the streets,
I smell the citric exotic fruits, which hides its
sweetness.
I watch the carnival bringing in
Joy, excitement and new life into our town

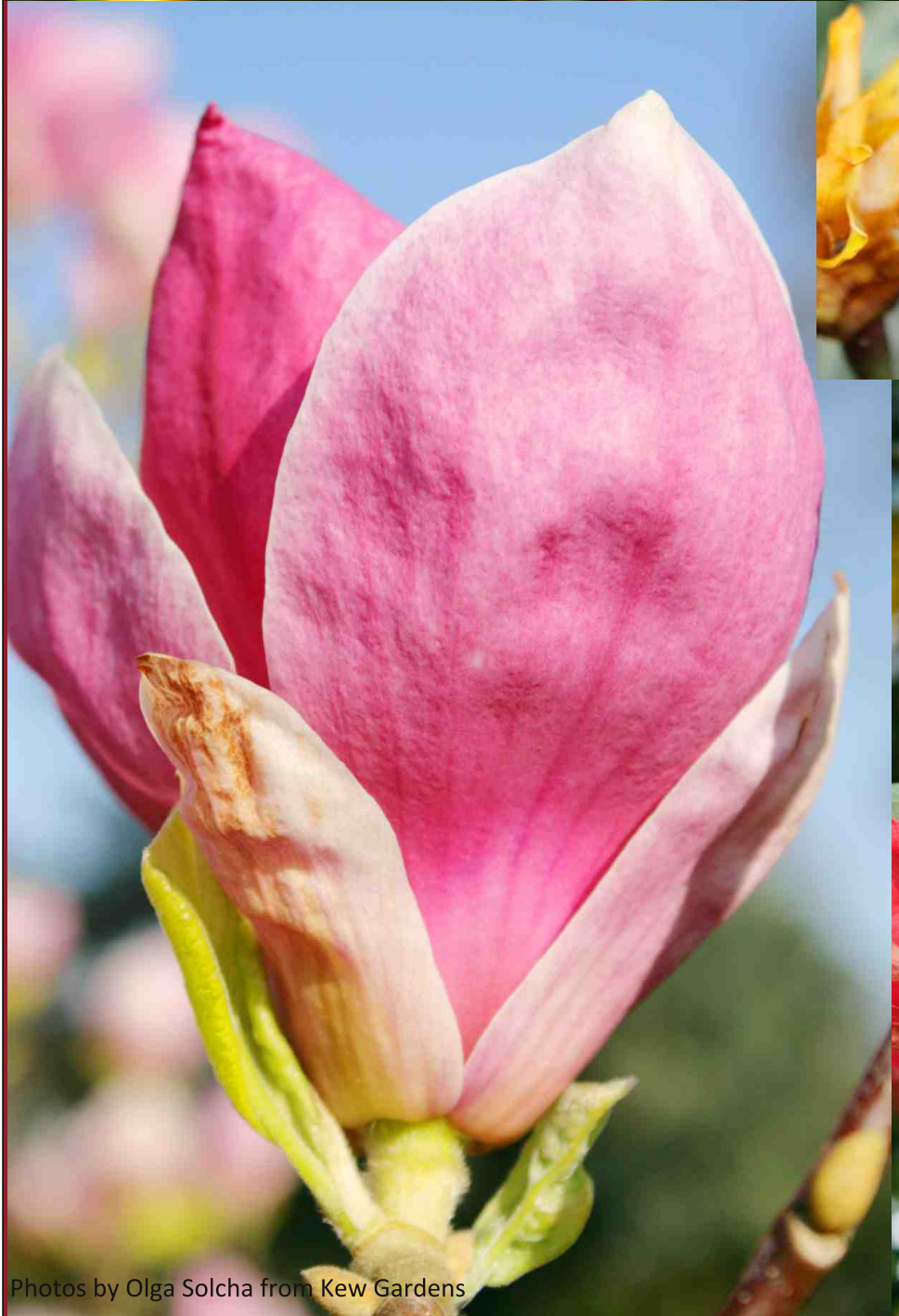
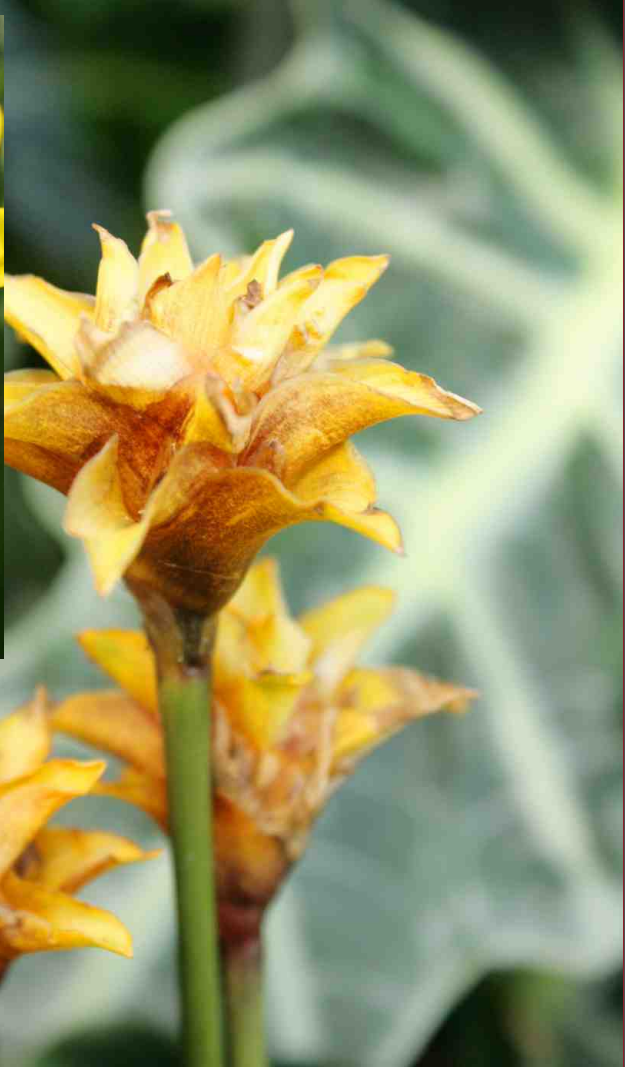
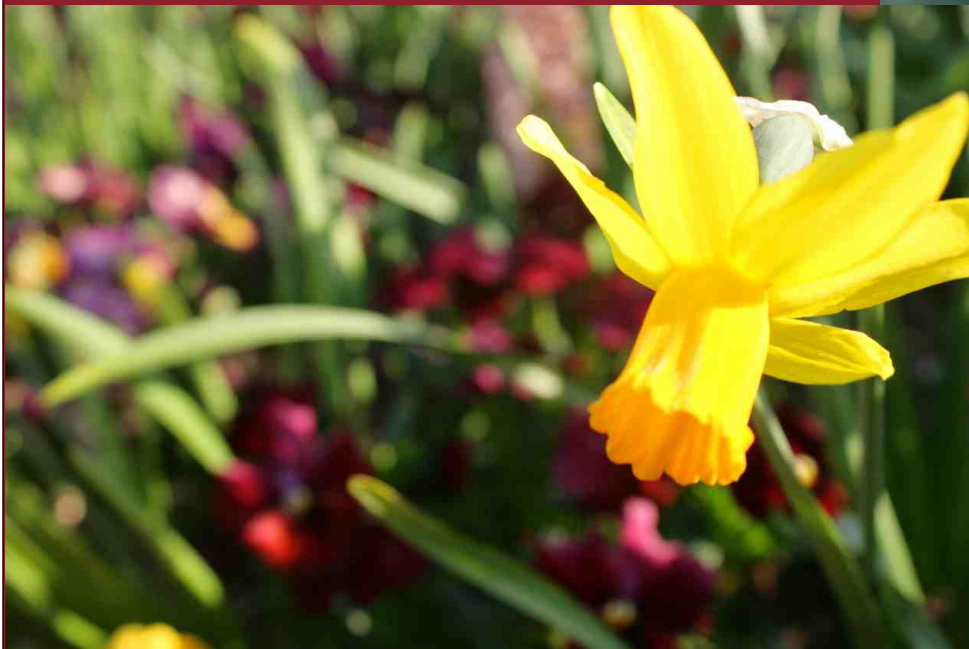
I look around to see the eye catching Chinese hidden
dragons, Parading through the city of China,
I wonder who's inside these magnificent dragons.
I tour around and admire the glorious sights
Of the temples in Beijing.

I venture of to see the spectacular world in Islam
I wear the embroidered salwar kameez which,
Has shimmering mirror work.
I walk around the Shalimar gardens,
Thinking what peace and tranquillity there is.
I see how devoted they are to their religion,
By praying to their god and fasting.

Everywhere I look I see culture,
Surrounding the world just like nature.

Neelam Shah

© Aaron Logan



Photos by Olga Solcha from Kew Gardens



Interfaith Recipes

Words: Sarraounia Christianson
Design/Illustrations: James Thurman

Religious holidays are a time for celebration and what better way to celebrate than with special food? I have hand-picked a delicious spread across the upcoming festivals and put together Interact's very own delectable vegetarian interfaith menu. Why not try something new this holiday season? All recipes serve a group of four, family or friends.

Starter: Baked Stuffed Aubergine.

April 6th-12th – Passover

This simple Sephardic Jewish recipe can act as a starter for the Seder table or a yummy appetiser on any other night.

Ingredients:

2 Aubergines (halved lengthways)
1 small onion finely chopped
4 Tbsp Tomato Sauce
½ tsp Parsley,
1 clove Garlic chopped
2 Tbsp Matzo Meal.

Method:

Scoop out the Aubergine halves, getting as much of the pulp as possible out. Heat the pulp, onion, tomato sauce and herbs in a pan for 5 minutes. Add matzo meal to the mixture and mix well. Re-stuff Aubergine with heated mixture. Place in a baking dish with a little water in the bottom. Bake for 30 minutes at 232 C/ Gas mark 8 until the Aubergine shells are soft.



MATZO MEAL

-Matzo, or matzah, is a kind of unleavened bread eaten during Passover.
- A traditional Jewish ingredient matzo meal is made from the crumbled bread.
-It has a consistency like flour or fine breadcrumbs, so if you can't get hold of any for the recipe wholemeal flour works in much the same way.

Main Course: Thai Coconut and Lime Curry.

**April 12th- April 16th - Thai New Year or Songkran
(Celebrated as a Buddhist festival in Thailand).**

This classic staple of Thai cuisine is given a celebratory citrus twist during New Year: it is packed full of lemongrass and lime zing.

Ingredients:

300g/11 oz basmati rice
200g/7oz potatoes par boiled
100g sugar snap peas or green beans
2 red peppers
1 red onion
1 can of coconut milk
3 limes, juice and zest

For the curry paste:

A handful of coriander
1 red and 1 green chilli
2 cloves of garlic
1 stalk of lemongrass
1 thumb size piece of ginger.



Method:

First make the paste, add the garlic, ginger, coriander stalks, chopped lemongrass and a drop of oil to the food processor and blitz. Add paste to a hot pan with more oil and cook for a minute. In the same processor add coconut milk, lime juice and zest and coriander and blitz.

In another pan cook the rice for 10-15 minutes, one part rice to two parts water. Stir the vegetables into the paste and pour over the coconut milk. Season and cook curry for 5 minutes.

Dessert: Hot Cross Buns.

April 7th - Easter

Contains the most processes of all the recipes, but is the most rewarding as they look beautiful and my hot cross buns have received more praise than anything else I've made!

Ingredients:

450g/1lb of bread flour
7g/ ½ oz dried yeast
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp allspice
100g/3 ½ oz raisin
100g/ 3 ½ oz sugar
50g/1 ¾ oz butter
250 ml milk
1 egg

For the cross:

75g/ 2 ¾ oz flour
4 tsp caster sugar
4 tbsp water

For the glaze:

1 tbsp smooth marmalade
1tbsp sugar (works best with brown)
2tbsp water.

Method:

For the dough:

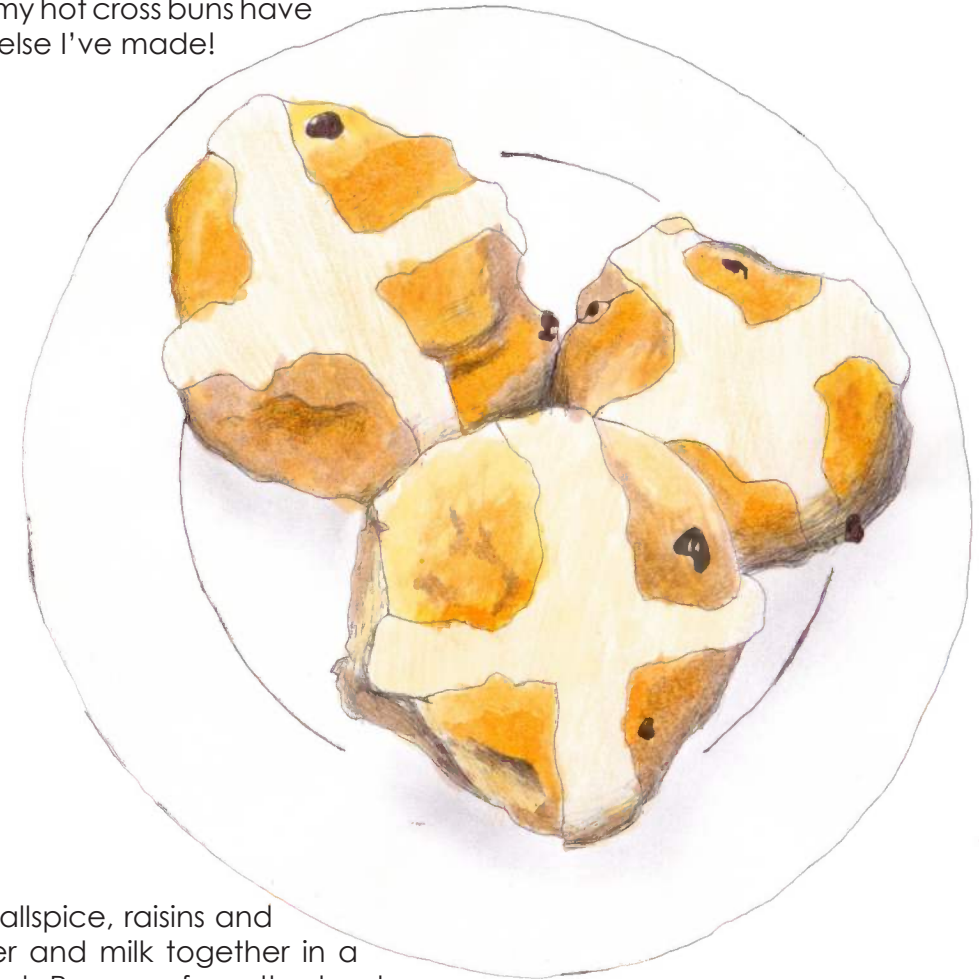
Sift the flour, dried yeast, cinnamon, allspice, raisins and sugar into a bowl. Warm the butter and milk together in a saucepan until the butter has melted. Remove from the heat and whisk in the egg. Fold the mixture into the flour to form a dough. Knead for 10 minutes on a floured work surface. Divide into 12 pieces, shape into balls, cover with a damp cloth and set aside for 12 hours or until the dough has doubled in size. Preheat the oven to 180C/ Gas mark 4.

For the cross:

Mix the flour, sugar and water in a bowl and spoon into a piping bag (I don't have one of these, I used a sandwich bag and cut the corner off!) Place the buns on a baking tray and pipe a cross onto each bun. Bake in the oven for 25 minutes.

For the glaze:

Heat the ingredients in a pan until the sugar has melted. Remove the buns from the oven and immediately glaze. Set aside to cool. Best served warm with butter.



Why Hot 'Cross' Buns at Easter?

- Traditionally eaten on Good Friday, but now so popular they are consumed all year round.
- The white cross directly reflects the Crucifixion of Christ.
- Although in England there are variations on the traditional spiced recipe in Australia the raisins are replaced with chocolate chips. Why not try that in your recipe?





SHARED ROOTS IN FAITH

Written by Olga Socha

Olga Socha went along to the opening of Interact's Shared Roots in Faith exhibition. The project is a community-centred initiative run by Interact aiming to help young people uncover the colourful past of London's East End and heritage shared by the three Abrahamic faiths, to build understanding and cohesion between faiths.



This project has brought participants together, furthering Interact's mission of engaging different faiths in respectful dialogue and celebrating religious diversity.

The participants learnt about the importance of oral history through recording stories and anecdotes from people of the East End, which may have otherwise been forgotten.

As well as the opportunity to preview the exhibition and sample the nibbles laid on, attendees also took part in a singing workshop lead by singer Judith Silver.

Exhibition Aims

- Celebrate the diversity of faith and culture in the East End.
- Explore and learn about the shared heritage of Abrahamic faiths in the East End.
- Discover how faith groups have influenced and contributed to the culturally rich East End community.
- Learn through oral history and intergenerational accounts of the East End.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of living in such an eclectic city with diverse faiths and cultures.



Quotes

"Everyone should take time out to enter someone else's religion, they find the basis are all the same. Love of mankind, love of the family... If you read the Qur'an or the Torah....they've all got the same meaning." Jacqui, Christian

"And at this time there were a number of Caribbean families coming over.



There was a lot of racial prejudice and as an Irish person I've experienced racism. And now the Irish were themselves being racist to Caribbean and people who were different. That seemed very difficult to understand how you could inflict on another, what you had suffered from yourself, it just didn't make much sense." Sister Christine, Christian

"And the Jewish people used to be in East London, they used to have a bakery...and they were good and there was a lot of places of worship in East London. There was one now in Brick Lane, it turned into a big one." A Jewish man, Whitechapel.

"I found no problem what so ever person ally of working very, very closely with the Indian community, the Bangladeshi community and with the ordinary Christian community. Indeed in the school that I went to as a kiddie, going back to that time, 50% of the people were Jews. But nevertheless there was no kind of faith problems of any kind." Aumie Shapiro, born in 1924 in Bow, East London



APRIL 2012

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- 6 Good Friday - Christian
- 7-14 Pesach (Passover)* - Jewish
- 8 Easter - Christian
- 14 Baisakhi - Sikh
- 15 Easter/Pascha - Orthodox Christian

MAY 2012

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- 6 Buddha Day (Vesak)** - Buddhist
- 10 Lag Ba'Omer* - Jewish
- 17 Ascension of Christ - Christian
- 27-28 Shavuot* - Jewish
- 29 Ascension of Baha'u'llah* - Baha'i

JUNE 2012

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- 12 Race Unity Day - Baha'i
- 29 Ss. Peter & Paul - Eastern-rite Catholic Christian

JULY 2012

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- 9 Martyrdom of the Bab - Baha'i
- 24 Pioneer Day - Mormon Christian
- 29 Tisha B'Av* - Jewish

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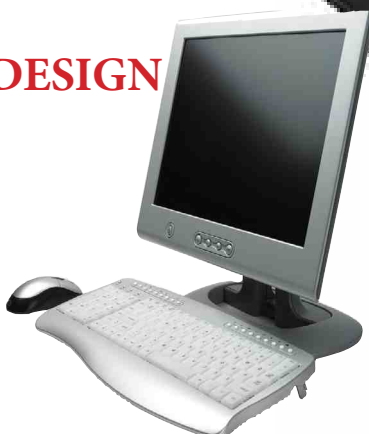
Work with a diverse
group to create the only
interfaith youth maga-
zine in London

Develop your skills,
express yourself and
meet new people.



WRITE

DESIGN



We have opportunities
for those interested in
writing, photography,
graphic design, blog-
ging, editing and mar-
keting



