

# THE CAERULEAN

Happy new year to all members of the society both past and present!

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## 'Why Do We Bother?!'

*"A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservatism"*

- Edmund Burke

It was a usual Thursday evening when my friends and I returned to our student halls after a pleasant evening at the East India club. Dressed in Marc Jacobs, Chanel, YSL and the like, not to mention slightly worse for wear.

We thought it a good idea to visit our peers in the Common Room. We were received by an unusual silence when a rather nonchalant student remarked: "Ah the Conservative Party of today - clearly not for me, I'm better off apathetic."

It was only the following morning when I realised what had happened. My friends and I didn't utter a single word - clearly we didn't have to. Our image said it all, I never thought I would live up to the stereotypical Tory - for one, I am not a white middle class male, nor am I an old Etonian or at Oxbridge. Yet many of us succumb to that very Stereotype.

It is a growing concern that more and more voters are choosing apathy over actively engaging in what they may or may not believe in. Is electoral apathy really due to the alleged lack of choice resulting in falling voter turn-outs? Perhaps it is time we listen to the fundamental principles of Economics - and that is to listen to consumers. After all, we all know of the financial difficulties faced by local associations due to falling memberships.

Perhaps it is time we remind voters of the basic

principles of freedom, remind them that they as individuals have the right to run their lives according to what they see is best; and not in accordance with Gordon Brown's targets. As ambassadors to our Party we should be promoting the importance and benefits of smaller government as opposed to a conglomerate of monopoly services managed by politicians and civil servants, who for the most part, lack the necessary management experience and subject knowledge.

It is time we remind people that the centralisation of power poses a real threat to democracy. David Cameron pledged in January 2007 to end the top-down, centralised, target driven culture of Government, and promises to devolve power to those that know best. This would in turn leave politicians with more fulfilling roles leaving citizens with higher quality services and greater control over their lives and incomes.

We should not let voters forget the work of the past eleven years. Thanks to the Labour Government the state education system is failing. After a cost of over £75,000 per child pupils are leaving school functionally illiterate, innumerate and unskilled. 40% do not achieve at least a C grade in GCSE English. Some seven million adults in England cannot locate the page number for plumbers in an alphabetical index to the yellow pages. 47% would be unable to achieve a grade G at GCSE mathematics.

The national audit office in 2000 estimated that at least 100,000 patients are affected by hospital acquired infections such as MRSA resulting in 5,000 patient deaths a year. Patients in the UK are up to 40 times more likely than other Europeans to contract infections in hospital. (Continued Overleleaf)

Whatever happened to Atlee's intentions of providing a healthcare system accessible to all, free at the point of use, and according to need and not ability to pay? This inspiring ideal is not what we experience in today's Britain. The Prime Minister himself admitted that the UK has a deeply unequal system, where the poorest too often receive the worst service.

One might say that the performance of the police force should be judged by the absence of crime. Why then has the number of recorded crimes soared from under half a million in 1950 to over 4.5 million in 1997?

In addition, one might wonder why the vast majority of crimes go undetected and unpunished – a shocking 2 million! A survey by Scotland Yard revealed that the average time taken by police to process a single arrest is now 10 hours and six minutes. Where is the incentive for our police to track every crime committed?

As a result Britain has become a less cohesive, less caring, less respectful and less self-disciplined society. This may be due to the difficulties of family breakdown which has led to an alarming increase in violent crime, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse.

This is not helped by the fact that politicians have made divorce easy and encouraged couples, through the tax system, to live apart, whereby an average family could be up to £12,000 a year better off. Whatever one's political affiliation might be it is important to remember that the role of politicians is to serve people, and not to be their master.

It is important that our system of Democracy does not fail its electorate. It is important we remind voters of the broken promises of the past eleven years, particularly on the European Reform Treaty.

Gordon Brown said of the Treaty in May 2004: "If we secure a Treaty that is acceptable for Britain, then I believe we can also put it successfully to the British people." Again in January 2005: "It's not as though this is being imposed on the country. People will have the chance to put their views."

The 2005 Labour Party manifesto clearly states that "The new Constitutional Treaty ensures that Europe can work effectively... We will put it to the British people in a referendum."

Why then, is there a sudden change of heart? Why do politicians undermine voters' intelligence? We must insist therefore, on a matter of principle, for the referendum we were promised, it is time we stopped accepting orders and answered back.

Does the public not realise that their money is being spent on failing public services and endless "enquiry reports" whenever government failure – namely the disappearance of 25 million child benefit records - arises? The solution of yet more funding towards these services is not a conservative approach, nor is it a socialist approach; it is in fact a departure from left-wing idealism. A departure rooted not in ideological evolution but electoral calculation.

Handing power back to the people is an uncomfortable topic to the fabled big tent that is government, particularly for Gordon Brown. As in his case acquiring power involved a sacrifice of so much – indeed the greasy pole that is the political ladder – the surrender of power therefore is an acutely painful exercise.

Our democracy is seriously threatened. The more we allow Governments to get away with broken promises and yet more wasting of resources the more we are likely to end up with a society our forefathers tried to protect us from. It is up to every one of us to change what we want to be changed.

Serene John-Richards

## Four Reasons Not to be Apathetic:



## 'But everyone speaks English anyway'

Many people have asked me why exactly I study Russian with Czech and Slovak, not just because these languages are quite rare and obscure but because 'Everyone speaks English anyway.'

Not only is this attitude ignorant and insulting to my choice of degree it is also steadily ruining the Education system in the UK. At a time when other European countries are making it compulsory in school to learn two foreign languages our Government is allowing students to drop languages from the age of 14. In the long run this is not beneficial as with languages travel becomes easier and indeed more companies are looking for multi lingual employees but are becoming unable to find them.

In recent years the number of students studying languages in school has progressively dropped according to a survey done by the BBC in 2001 around 80% of all GCSE students studied at least one foreign language however in 2006 only 50% of all GCSE students were studying languages.

More worrying still it was found out in 2006 that out of all the 25 countries in the EU the UK only beats Hungary in the percentage of its citizens that can converse in a second language. A study taken by the EC has shown that only 30% of people in the UK are able to do this compared to 91% in the Netherlands, 88% in Denmark, 62% in Germany and 45% in France. This was proved to me while out on Czech Language Summer School – of all the Russian, German, Polish, Bulgarian and Slovenian students I met only 2 could not speak English out of about 50.

Universities have also noticed this alarming drop and have started to take action. Universities including Oxford, Cambridge and LSE are lobbying the Government to reverse the law that allows pupils to drop a language at age 14. Even UCL has joined the debate and according to the Guardian 'University College London is so concerned by the lack of language ability among pupils that it is considering making a language qualification at 16 compulsory for all applicants.'

What is in some ways worse is that progressively being able to learn a language is becoming an elitist thing. Many State schools simply do not have the funding to provide language departments where as Independent school have the funds to introduce more exotic languages such as Mandarin and Japanese.

This example can be clearly seen in Cheltenham, my home town, all of the 10 secondary schools only two offer Russian to A-level they are Cheltenham Ladies College (Independent) and my school Balcarras Comprehensive. Even within my school it was possible to see a decline of around 100 students in my year 12 studied French A2, 6 studied Spanish and 3 studied Russian. It's not just school language departments that are having to close due to funding, University ones are too. Back in year 12 I looked round Exeter University and enquired about their language department and whether I could study Czech there. The reply was simply 'well you could have 5 years ago'.

Back in May, the then Education Secretary, Alan Johnson proposed that from 2010 it should be compulsory for children to learn a foreign language from the age of 7 in all Primary schools. In my opinion this is the only way to raise the number of people able to converse in a second language. From looking at our EU neighbours it is blindingly obvious that this system works. Only by encouraging more people to study languages will be properly benefit them in the future.

Compared to other degree options like, Media Studies and Health and Social care, Languages is a hard option involving hours of study both in linguistic aspects like grammar and vocabulary but also of the culture, history and politics of the country. It may be hard but it is most rewarding as you not only get to travel to the country and meet native speakers but you also get to experience a totally different culture and learn more about the world. I love my degree and I would most certainly not change it for the world!

Laura-Rose Saunders

### LAURA'S USEFUL PHRASES BOX!

English	Hello	Goodbye	Yes/No	Please	Thank you	I love you	Can I have a Gin and Tonic please?
French	Bonjour	Au revoir	Oui/non	S'il vous plaît	Merci	Je t'aime	Je voudrais un gin et tonic
Russian	Привет Privyet	До свидания! Do svida-niya !	Да/ нет Da/nyet	пожалуйста Poshalsta	Спасибо Spasiba	Я тебе люблю Ya tyebye Loobloo	Дайте мне джин с тоником Daitye minye gin s tonicom
Czech	Dobrý den	Na shleda-nou	Ano/ne	Prosím	Děkuju	Miluji tě	Dějte mě džin s tonikem
Spanish	Hola	Adios	Si/	Por favour	Gracias	Te quiero	Querría un gin-tonic

## 'Woe is Gordon...'

What else has the Brown government got in store for us? Thus far we have had the Northern Rock Crisis, the loss in the post of the personal details of seven million families, the phantom-election, the criticisms from former chiefs of defence over the government's attitude to the military covenant and the ongoing saga of 'Donorgate.' It finally appears that the wheels are falling off the New Labour bandwagon. Any reputation for economic prudence that they have built up over the last ten years now seems to be slipping away. Incompetence is rife and it would appear that so too is corruption.

It seems bizarre though that it has taken this long for it to happen. There was far more sleaze under the Blair government than there has been any indication of under the Brown government, though of course Blair's reign was rather longer than the months Brown has been premier. Under Tony, we had the two falls from grace of David Blunkett and the disgracing of Tessa Jowell(s) via her husband. We had the shaming of John Prescott and the cock-ups of Peter Mandelson. Yet these were not enough to bring down Tony Blair – ultimately it was only the aftermath of Iraq that brought him back down to Earth.

Moreover, many of the problems that we see in Brown's government are blatant hangovers from the Blair years. The problems we saw with Northern Rock were a result of the culture of debt that has grown up around the economic growth of the previous decade whilst the problems of donations to political parties have been with us for some time now. Previously a general apathy meant that any of these problems were brushed off with the usual response of, "the same would have occurred under the rule of any political party, particularly the Tories."

So what has changed to make Gordon so unpopular? The answer seems quite simple – although the Blair government was seen as corrupt and sleazy as any of its predecessors, it was not seen as incompetent. The actions of Alistair Darling however, in bailing Northern Rock out, have put taxpayers' money on the line whilst the loss of personal data by HM Revenue and Customs does much the same. The latter example is of particular stupidity – the government claimed that they would pay back any money that was taken fraudulently from the accounts of the people whose details were lost. If the discs fell into the wrong hands, large scale fraud would be inevitable and the sums of money needed by the government to replace such losses would be enormous. Where would this money come from? That's right - increased taxes on the very people who had their money lost by an incompetent government in the first place!

The British people have never tolerated incompetence in their governments – from Neville Chamberlain's unsuccessful appeasement of Hitler to the 'Winter of Discontent' under James Callaghan – public opposition will always push those unfit for jobs in Westminster out of office.

Do we as young conservatives want this though? Although it would put a smile on our faces to see Gordon slump out of Downing Street, it is probably not in our interests for him to do so. Our best chances at the next election will come if the British public has become so sick of Labour that they come flocking back to the Conservative Party. There are a number of reasons for this. If we are to win the next election we will need to be consistently 9% ahead of Labour in the polls - that figure only giving us a single figure majority! To have any real opportunity to put a proper conservative program through Parliament after the next election we need to be polling over 11% more than Labour on Election Day. That is an incredible lead that needs to be achieved when we consider that at the 'landslide election' of 1997 Tony Blair polled only 12.5% more than the Tories on Election Day.

Gordon Brown must stay in office. If we are to stand any real chance of success in the coming decade we need Labour to become stale and outdated. Gordon's enthronement in June was just what we needed. It was the same party with same ideas as the previous ten years. There was such lethargy in the debate about the direction of Labour that there was no change and more importantly, no perceived change in the public eye. Any idea that Gordon Brown was going to clean up politics and remove spin has now also finally been nailed into its coffin with the re-appointment of his old spin doctor, Charlie Whelan, to dig up dirt on Lord Ashcroft.

For the Tories to win there must be absolutely no resurgence in Labour. We cannot risk David Milliband, the only likely successor to Brown, taking a precious two or three percent from the Tories as the result of interest in a Labour leadership contest. We are going to have the ride the wave of misery and incompetence that a Brown government will spew out – for it is the only way we are going to be able to see a Conservative government elected at the end and the only way we are going to see positive change in this country once again.

Eamonn Hurley-Flynn



From Left to Right:  
Bored Gordon,  
Stressed Gordon,  
Gordon the Lemon,  
Sleepy Gordon

# 'The Year of the Melon'

## January

George Bush announces plans for a surge of 21,500 troops in Iraq. Tony follows obediently in his lead by deciding to continue with the gradual British withdrawal – Manchester wins the vote for the first supercasino, much to the consternation of bingo halls throughout the north-west.

Devon wreckers strike for the first time in living memory as MSC Napoli is first beached then looted at Branscombe. Several locals declare it the best day out since witch hunts were banned.

## February

Tony Blair is questioned for the second time by police involved in the cash for honours inquest whilst David Cameron is grilled over his drug past – Gordon Brown laughs to himself as he wiles away the days watching Steptoe and Son – No one cares about Menzies Campbell – David Milliband is touted as a rival to Gordon, mainly by people who don't like Gordon – Peter Mandelson is seen skulking around muttering dire tidings should Gordon Brown be elected.

## March

15 British sailors are captured by Iranian. One cries when the nasty Iranians take away his iPod. – Alan Johnston, the BBC journalist, is abducted in Iraq.

At the cricket world cup, Ireland win nearly as many games as England as Freddie Flintoff falls off a pedalo blindly drunk. Even Sir Ian Botham is outraged! Bob Woolmer dies in suspicious circumstances after Pakistan are knocked out of the world cup.

## April

President Ahmadinnerjacket nobly releases the British servicemen who he had captured. Two promptly sell their stories to the press, forgoing a fair bit of goodwill.

The Virginia Tech massacre takes place as 32 people are killed by a lone psychopath. The American gun lobby takes this as firm proof that more people need guns if tragedies like this are to be avoided. Boris Yeltsin dies, after a life dedicated to proving that being an alcoholic was no handicap to high political office.

## May

Labour lose control of Scotland for the first time, and the SNP sneak into power. Humiliation follows humiliation for Labour as the Welsh elections go sunny side down, and they are forced into a coalition with Plaid Cymru to maintain power. Local elections follow where the Conservatives make ground in the north. Gordon starts to wonder if this job is all its cracked up to be.

Tony finally announces he will be stepping down on June 27th, as does big John Prescott – DC gets into trouble with his own party over grammar schools.

Sarkozy becomes prime minister of France, promising a long hard shock to the all powerful unions, and Northern Ireland finally decides anything is better than the British, as the Rev. Ian Paisley and Martian McGuinness manage to come to a power sharing agreement.

## June

Gordon Brown and Harriet Harman become Prime Minister and deputy – Large tracts of the North of England are flooded. Nobody really seems to care.

In other news, a Melon 2100 years old is discovered in western Japan.

## July

Smoking is banned anywhere the government possibly can. Terrorists respond by attempting to bomb London and Glasgow – The South is flooded, and suddenly it's important. Gordon responds heroically by being pictured in England. DC is stuck in Rwanda. He does however express regret that Witney was not worse hit – Alan Johnston is freed and there was much rejoicing

Meanwhile, Mr. Testicle makes his first appearance at Goodison Park.

Foot and Mouth breaks out in Britain. Brown the Brilliant clicks his fingers and solves all - places phone call to Tony comparing performances.

(Continued Overleaf)

The Liberal Democrats appear to have dropped off the face of the earth. Suspicions remain that Charles Kennedy drunk the soul of the party.

Slovenia ban smoking too.

### September

Northern Rock descends into chaos, leading to the first run on a bank in over 100 years. Gordon's polls continue to rise. Election fever reaches boiling point.

British troops pull out of Basra. There are rumours that they will be used to restore democracy to Burma. These are later found to be false when Burma is revealed to have no oil.

### October

Gordon's grandstanding over a possible election backfires spectacularly as he manages to unite the Tory party. DC calls him out, leading to Brown the Bottler emerging into the public psyche. After the Lib Dems poll an outstanding 11%, Menzies finally realises the time has come and steps down.

England lose in the Rugby World Cup final, prompting a call from Tony to Gordon about how much better England were when he was in charge.

### November

The Labour slump continues, as news emerges that the government have not only accepted over half a million pounds in unlawful donations, but have also managed to lose 25 million peoples personal information. Vince Cable memorably mocks Gordon's transformation from 'Stalin to Mr. Bean'.

### December

Political stories dominate – The Liberal Democrats elect Mr. Clegg as their new leader – Elections in Pakistan prove less smooth, as Benazir Bhutto is assassinated – By converting to Catholicism, Mr. Blair takes his first step to being Pope Tony I.

Arthur 'I'm Not a Tory' Verdin

## 'Free Speech and the Far Right'

We have all heard about the recent controversial debate that took place at the Oxford Union with Irving and Griffin, but was the Union right or wrong to have invited these speakers. Hundreds demonstrated and delayed the debate in protest that the Union was wrong to give a prestigious platform for such divisive speakers. The event was likened by one critic to a 'children's tea party'.

The president of the Union maintained that it was in debate that Irving and Griffin could be challenged. In effect, by allowing free speech and debate to happen, both sides can civilly discuss the topic and the audience are presented with both arguments allowing them to make up their own minds. Free speech is a key issue today in politics, especially in the light of anti-terrorism legislation, which many argue restrict and curtail human rights. Consequently, can the Union use the 'excuse' of free speech in order to allow such a problematic event to take place? Despite the huge turnout of demonstrators, the event still went ahead.

From the point of view that the Union was wrong to have invited such controversial speakers, the Union was irresponsible to have given a prestigious platform to such controversial speakers. The sheer volume of protesters only shows how opposed members of the public are to these pillars of 'fascism'. Nick Griffin angers many liberals and ethnic minorities in his role as the head of the BNP, he is therefore branded a racist. David Irving, a holocaust denier is equally as contentious

On the other hand, the Union received a lot of media coverage which most certainly benefited them. A recent poll on the UCL Conservative society claimed that most were in favour of the debate going ahead. A present student remarked on how the Union are notorious for planning such heated debates at least once a year. One thing is for certain, this debate will not be forgotten by many for some time. In fact, it provokes us to question how far should free speech allowed and how can we protect this right which is so valued in our democracy?

Hannah-Ruth Bysouth

# Coming events

## Reception with Steve Norris



Tuesday January 22nd @7.30pm  
Venue: Haldane Room

The last Conservative candidate for Mayor of London and former Vice-Chairman of the party Steve Norris will be paying us a visit. Norris is currently working on the party's transport policies and will no doubt provide us with some insight into the work he is doing.

**Tickets:** Members: FREE. Non-members: £5.

## Reception with Douglas Murray



Tuesday, February 19th @7.30pm  
Venue: Haldane Room

Douglas Murray has been described as 'Britain's only neo-conservative' and has been outspoken on many issues. The evening should provide an excellent opportunity for debate within the society and the ensuing discussions will undoubtedly show the breadth of UCL Tory opinion.

**Tickets:** Members: FREE. Non-members: £5.

## UCL Conservatives Alumni Dinner



February 29th@7.30p.m.  
Venue: Haldane Room and Wilkins Terrace Restaurant

The Society is celebrating its 100th anniversary so join us for a champagne receptions, witty banter, fine wine and even finer food. To usher in its second century there will also be a special guest of honour.

**Tickets: Student:** £25 if purchased before February 11th, £30 thereafter

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