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London Connection



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An alternative look at the sights
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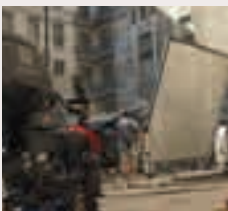
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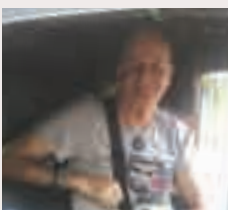
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Cover photo © Maria Vlotides; London Design Festival 2009 'The Tournament' by Jamie Hayón, Trafalgar Square

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We would welcome your feedback on the issue and your letters/comments for future publication. Please contact us on Tel: +44 (0)20 7664 4826 or email: lisa.pierre@london.ac.uk
This issue (and back issues) of the newsletter are available to download in the 'Alumni' area of our website:
www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni

I would like to welcome Andrew Bollington to the External System as our new Chief Operating Officer. Although Andrew has only been in post for a matter of months now, he has already made a huge contribution thanks to his wealth of relevant experience from working for the International Baccalaureate.

In the meantime, I continue to value meeting you, our alumni, for feedback on the External System. I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you at the annual Graduation Ceremony in London, and also at many other graduation and alumni events held across the world. More recently, these have included Hong Kong, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Mauritius as well as Trinidad and Tobago.

I am always touched by how enthusiastic our alumni are in sharing their past experiences of studying for a University of London degree through the External System. I would also like to thank those of you that have volunteered to become Chapter Leaders and Student Ambassadors through the Alumni Association. I personally appreciate the time you continue to devote in promoting the work of the External System.

When I visited the National University of Rwanda, it was noted that three of the four Deans at the University are alumni of the External System! How rewarding for me to appreciate, first-hand, the influence the University of London has had through the External System. Clearly our alumni are found across the globe, in all echelons of society.

We were also fortunate enough to have the Honourable Arthur N. R. Robinson, former President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, as a keynote speaker at one of our stakeholder events. As an alumnus of the External System, the former President spoke affectionately of his time as a student with us, when he addressed the audience in Trinidad.

It is my hope that I will continue to meet many more of you in different parts of the world throughout 2010 which, I feel confident, will be another good year for the External System.

Good wishes to you all for the coming year.



Professor Jonathan Kydd, Dean, University of London External System

From the Dean

150th Anniversary Campaign

Last year the University of London External System launched the 150th Anniversary campaign, coinciding with the government's matched funding scheme which continues until July 2011.

Thank you to all of you who have made donations and showed your support. As part of this scheme your donations will now go further. The government will pay an additional £1 for every £2 donated.

All money raised will allow us to put more money towards initiatives that will benefit future students and alumni. If you would like to make a contribution to the campaign you may do so by visiting: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/donations

If you are a UK resident please request a Gift aid form which allows us to reclaim the tax to increase the value of a donation.

LLB success in Mauritius



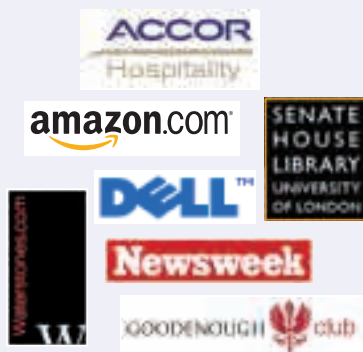
Congratulations to the winner of the 2008 Brigid M Cotter prize, Zareena Choomka, who this year was the only person in

Mauritius to pass the Bar vocational exams and become a Barrister. Zareena graduated last year with an LLB and is currently enrolled on the LLM. She is also a Student Ambassador, offering advice to potential students. While helping out at the Mauritius exhibition this year she attracted much attention after her success had been featured in local newspapers. She joked that she may go on to study medicine, as she would like the title 'Dr', but would hopefully pursue it with a PhD in Law. At the age of 21 she may be able to do both.

Services and benefits for alumni members

Don't forget to make the most of a number of discounts negotiated for alumni members. We have partnered with a variety of companies and organisations worldwide to offer you services and discounts on numerous products that may be of interest to you.

The following companies and organisations have continued to offer generous support to our graduates and the alumni association:



- Dell
- amazonon.co.uk
- Accor
- Senate House Library
- Waterstones.com
- Newsweek
- Goodenough Club

To find out more about what our partners are offering, please visit our website: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/services_benefits.shtml

Please note that this section of the website is password protected as the benefits have been negotiated for members of the Alumni Association only. If you do not have the username and password please email lisa.pierre@london.ac.uk

Alumnus wins Nobel Prize

Congratulations to Professor Charles K. Kao, winner of the 2009 Nobel prize in Physics for 'groundbreaking achievements concerning the transmission of light in fibres for optical communication'. Professor Kao attended Woolwich Polytechnic where he studied for a University of London External BSc Engineering degree.

Born in Shanghai, he studied for his PhD while working and researching at Standard Telecommunications Laboratories (STL). His research showed the loss of signal in fibre optic cables was a result of impurities in the glass rather than a fundamental

flaw in the technology. Manufacturers began to create fibre optic cables meeting his specifications in 1970. Since then, the technology has become crucial to all aspects of modern communication infrastructures, e.g. the internet would not exist without fibre optic cables.

In 1970, he founded the Department of Electronics at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), where he held the post of Vice-Chancellor. In 2000 he founded the Independent Schools Foundation Academy (ISF), a non-profit school in Hong Kong. He currently lives in Hong Kong after spending many years in the UK and USA.



The University of London Alumni Association is now on facebook!

To become a fan and keep up to date please go to: www.facebook.com/uol.externalsystem.alumni

This fan page has been created for all of you to start discussions and to connect with your fellow alumni worldwide!

Via the wall section alumni can add posts, links, video content and upload photos.

Spread the world about your unique global community online!

A twist of fate

Six years ago, Lakshan Madurasinghe had his bags packed and was set to leave Sri Lanka for a new academic challenge at the University of Nottingham. Changes in family circumstances meant that three days before his departure for the UK, all this changed. **Lisa Pierre** talks to Lakshan about this fortunate twist of fate.

Still determined to achieve his aim of furthering his education, Lakshan enrolled on a Diploma in Economics course one month after it had started at the Royal Institute of Colombo (RIC) in Sri Lanka. This was to be the beginning of a change of luck for him as he went on to achieve the only distinction that year in the island. This subsequently led to him being awarded a scholarship in his final year and in 2003 he graduated with honours in BSc Management.

Recalling how he felt about it all after his initial setback, he tells us: "It was truly a life changing and fulfilling experience to say the least. I learnt many lessons along the way. Most have moulded me into the person I am today." Did he have any regrets about how a twist of fate led him on a different academic path? Has his University of London degree helped him in terms of employment opportunities? "Yes, very helpful! Although it was done by staying in Sri Lanka, a University of London degree carries much repute and is highly regarded in Sri Lanka. It's a real winner at interviews."

With his degree opening many doors for him, at 23 Lakshan was offered the position of Human Resource Development Manager for Coke SL. After six months he was promoted to Head of PR & Communications, a job in which he learnt many life lessons; a gratifying challenge as he refers to it. "I learnt to work and live by values – honesty, integrity, teamwork, to take individual initiative, develop mutual trust and respect, and be committed." During his years with Coke SL he learnt to be disciplined, to truly multitask and to manage his time effectively. Such a working environment also meant networking opportunities were with the best in the business and the worldwide travel opened doors to meeting new people and embracing new cultures.

Truly believing that one must capitalise on moments and opportunities when

they come your way, after five years with Coke SL Lakshan was given the chance to start up his own business. He grabbed it with both hands and heart, feeling it was time to be independent and assume greater responsibility in his career and make his mark in society.

Lakshan started out by setting up a company that recycles PET plastic bottles. It had also been one of his key areas while at Coke and his contacts played a huge part when he got Coke and other key industry players involved. At this time he also set up his events company after a contact from his Coke days asked him to go into partnership. As if two companies were not enough work, he has recently set up a consultancy company, ARAM Consultancy (Pvt) Ltd (named after his son's initials – Athan Romaan Alexander Madurasinghe) after

Having worked in the private sector for many years, there were obvious differences in being one's own boss. Lakshan stresses that he now has the advantages of making his own decisions and that by working hard he can make a name for himself and thus reap the benefits of success over time. What of the disadvantages? The risks are higher, he explains, saying that as he is totally responsible for those who work for him his name and professional reputation is on the line, he is never guaranteed a fixed salary every month and that external factors – political, social or economic – can also govern how things work out.

With this in mind he turns to how Sri Lanka is now facing a period of positive change. When University of London staff visited in February earlier this year it was just days after a terrorist

'Away from his professional obligations, Lakshan is also the youngest board member of Habitat for Humanity SL, a global project in which volunteers from all backgrounds come together to build homes for families in need. He has so far been involved in the construction of two villages – consisting of 25 homes and a community centre – in the South of Sri Lanka.'

realising many agencies set high retainers for their work. Setting up his own virtual consultancy means he can now forgo the high overheads and fixed costs that PR and advertising agencies set and can select the best professionals in PR, events, marketing, carbon commerce, waste management, research, and tourism. ARAM's services are the same as these larger companies, only cheaper as their running costs are lower – a model he feels is what current markets need.

attack in Colombo. Many young Sri Lankans have grown up surrounded by the tension and political unrest of civil war. Lakshan thinks the future now looks great especially in regard to their export and tourism markets. After three decades of unrest, he hopes the world will now be able to know of the beauty of his country and its people and happily emphasises that this is the first time in his lifetime that they are living in peace.

With the new opportunities available in



The 'family man', Lakshan with his wife and son; below, on his wedding day, and fresh for a day in the office.

'I got to stay at home with friends and family and also earn a world-recognised degree.'



a time of peace, there are issues that may still affect young Sri Lankans today. He feels that although the standard of English and IT are high, it needs to be improved to reach a world standard. There is a lack of confidence to take risks and step away from the norm, or what is expected by society or family expectations.

Away from his professional obligations, Lakshan is also the youngest board member of Habitat for Humanity SL, a global project in which volunteers from all backgrounds come together to build homes for families in need. He has so far been involved in the construction of two villages – consisting of 25 homes and a community centre – in the South of Sri Lanka. This volunteering aspect is something Lakshan expressed an interest in expanding when he became the External System International Chapter Leader this year.

Is there time to relax and step away from his many obligations? When he can he enjoys spending time with his wife and son, travelling around Sri Lanka and shopping. In the future he hopes to do an MBA and develop his company to be one of the most respected in Sri Lanka.

After many changes, professionally and personally, since he enrolled on his

diploma course are there any regrets about not going to the university he intended to? None at all he stresses, he got the best of both worlds: "I got to stay at home with friends and family and also earn a world-recognised degree."

Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka

Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka is a registered non-governmental organization whose mission is to provide simple, decent, affordable housing for people in need. To receive assistance from a local affiliate project, a family must live in unfit or inadequate housing and must not be able to afford or obtain better housing through conventional means. Partner families are selected based on their ability to contribute labour and repay the cost of the house. Religion, Ethnicity, Political Status, Kinship and Friendship do not determine a family's eligibility. www.hfhsl.org



A helping hand

On Sunday 28 February 2010, University of London staff will be helping Habitat for Humanity (www.hfhsl.org) on a one-day build in Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, and we would like to invite alumni to come and take part! If you are unable to help, but would like to contribute, donations to this project are also welcome.

For further details on the Alumni Event on 27 February 2010 at the Galle Face hotel, or on the Habitat for Humanity day, please contact: lisa.pierre@london.ac.uk

To join the local chapter in Sri Lanka please contact: lakshan.madurasinghe@gmail.com





Around London: Electric cinema, far left; Portobello market stall; a Piccadilly shopping arcade; and performer on the South Bank.

Left: fountain in Trafalgar Square; below, delights from the Hummingbird bakery

Often, a city break turns into a whirlwind of sights and candid snapshots in front of iconic buildings. Many alumni from around the world visit London for business or pleasure and more often than not for their graduation ceremony. Away from the chimes of Big Ben, the hustle and bustle of Oxford Street and a visit to Senate House, what else does London have to offer in the fleeting hours one may have to spare? Can we help you make the most of your one day travel card? Or see something only a local may recommend. The Alumni Office went to find out!

Food for thought...

If you are visiting Senate House, as many of you do, you will no doubt have time to take in a spot of lunch nearby. If you like Thai food, top tips are **Busaba** (www.busaba.com) on Store Street, a short walk from Senate House. If you are after something hidden and a bit nicer the **Crazy Bear bar and restaurant** on Whitfield Street (www.crazybeargroup.co.uk) will not fail to please.

If Thai food is not for you, how about a taste of Paris is London? **La Creperie de Hampstead** is a food stall serving crepes well worth waiting in line for. Take the Northern line to Hampstead, turn left as you exit and follow the smell of melted chocolate and butter until you see a

very long queue, but do not be put off by the wait, it's worth it...and you may even queue up a second time! If Moorish flavours are more your taste head east to **Exmouth Market** for some shopping and a visit to the *The Observer's* Best Restaurant 2009 Award Winner, **Moro** (www.moro.co.uk) Their cookbook also makes a great gift. At the other end of Exmouth market lies the Caribbean flavours of **Cottons**, if you are not hungry it's still worth visiting for the cocktails (www.cottons-restaurant.co.uk).

Shopping too heavy on Bond Street? **Automat** may well serve you the best burger in Mayfair (www.automat-london.com).

London Bridge has not fallen down contrary to the popular rhyme, and **Borough Market**, voted best market in the capital, will give you tastes from around the world. Open Thursday-Saturday, have a wander and enjoy the delights on offer.

East meets West

In 2012, East London will be the face of the United Kingdom and millions worldwide will be watching as the Olympic Games unfold. However, East London currently holds many delights and if time allows one should venture out and discover the hidden places only Londoners will tell you about.

If you're lucky and the weather favours

Lisa Pierre takes an alternative look at the sights and sounds of the capital. Photographs by **Maria Vlotides**.

Discover your London

"To all the alumni of the University of London, the heartiest of good wishes. You've completed your studies and I hope achieved your goals – I've no doubt you had a fabulous time with your extracurricular activities! London has some of the greatest museums, world-beating theatre and many other cultural delights, plus scrumptious eating and buzzing nightlife. But if there's one thing I'd like to recommend to you, it's to remember that this city is also full of natural beauty – including the wonderful parks – a legacy that the Victorians left us – and the smaller green spaces like my own local, Highbury Fields, a wonderful haven to spend time with friends and family in the heart of urban London."

Boris Johnson, Mayor of London



your visit, you should take a trip to **London Fields**. This pedestrianised and cycle-friendly area is a true favourite with locals and you'll be lucky to find somewhere to sit on a hot day in the city. Close by lies **Broadway market**. A 'foody's' heaven and best visited at the weekend, if only to watch the people go by. The market has been around since the 1890s and today satisfies tastes from Africa to the Caribbean. The neighbourhood around the market also houses over 60 artist spaces, with a warren of tiny studios and galleries. **Kingsland High Street** plays home to the **Moustache Bar**.

If you actually find this basement gem, you will

enjoy a night without fellow tourists with music performed by numerous bands on the right day. Want to watch some theatre away from the crowds? The **Arcola Theatre** (www.arcolatheatre.com) hosts a number of varied performances, catering to all tastes and ages. Founded in 2000 it is now one of the most respected arts venues in the UK and is also the world's first carbon neutral theatre. **Dalston** in our opinion is definitely worth exploring if you want a taste of London as Londoners live it, in a world away from souvenir paraphernalia and the masses.

Heading to West London you will no doubt take in a trip to **Portobello Market**. If you do take time to visit, look beyond the antiques and the blue door of the *Notting Hill* movie fame. Take a visit to **Hummingbird bakery**; again you may spot a queue coming out of the door of this small bakery. Do not be put off, it may be the best cupcake you ever have! Further down the market you will find the **Electric Brasserie** (www.electrichouse.com). A great spot for coffee or lunch. If you are in the mood for a film, **The Electric cinema** offers true luxury. Enjoy the leather seats, foot stools and tables, all provided for the ultimate cinema experience. You may be lucky and get to bag one of the two-seater sofas. If film is not your thing, perhaps the small yet wonderful **Gate Theatre** (www.gatetheatre.co.uk) will satisfy your entertainment

desires. Founded in 1979, it is London's only theatre dedicated to international work. Newly opened **Cinephilia** on Westbourne Grove combines a café, bookshop, gallery and film club and is a must for any cinema lover (www.cinephilia.co.uk). If you make it through the whole market and have managed to fight your way to the Golborne Road end and your sweet tooth has not been satisfied, **Lisboa Patisserie** is worth a visit. Make sure also to look down the many side streets off Portobello for fabulous boutiques selling a range of things.

Ever wondered what happened to all those lovely traditional book shops? **Daunt Books** in Holland Park and Marylebone is a book shop that you will want to spend hours in. There is no coffee shop or high street stationers, just wonderful books. If you are interested in poetry, make sure to look on the pavement outside the Holland Park store. In fact, look at all the pavements in W11. Artist and photographer Maria Vlotides has brought a unique concept to west London. Her Pavement Poetry project involves putting text into paving stones in the form of iron coal hole covers. The text relates to the area or street, and is original work commissioned from local authors which was realised over a five-year period (2003-2008). Maria has not revealed where they all are; she just hopes that you serendipitously stumble upon them (www.mariavlotides.com).

Far left, Maria Vlotides's pavement poetry; National Gallery, Tower Bridge.

Above, left to right: Hyde Park; London skyline; performers on the South Bank; Big Ben, Lion, Trafalgar Square; The London Eye.



Thirsty work

Sightseeing all day may mean that some rest is called for by the evening. London has so many pubs and bars that you are almost spoilt for choice. **The Dove** on the Thames (Hammersmith) is a hidden gem with a lovely outside space in the summer and blazing fires in the winter. The food is also very good. If you are looking for something more traditional try the **Windsor Castle** in Kensington and sit under the thatched roof. Tall people need to be careful as you will have to duck and dive through the door fittings of this old pub.

Still up for some sightseeing while having a drink? If you want to go somewhere a little bit special take the lift to the 28th floor of the Hilton Hotel on Park Lane. The bar at **Galvin at Windows** (www.galvinatwindows.com) has fantastic views. If you are lucky enough to be visiting London during great weather, head to **The Boundary Rooftop** in Shoreditch. The Bar offers 360 degree views over London (www.theboundary.co.uk).

Another museum?

Feeling as if you have seen one too many portraits or landscape paintings? Try one of London's other great museums. **The Horniman Museum** in Forest Hill is based around the cultural and natural world. It also has a lovely garden to

escape to in the summer. Looking for somewhere closer to Senate House to pass the time? **The Wellcome Collection** or **Pollock's Toy Museum** should enable you to while away a few hours.

The Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising in West London presents the collection of one consumer historian. If you have been fascinated over the years by the changing faces of your favourite chocolate bar or soap powder, this collection of over 12,000 original items will be much enjoyed.

Seasonal London

Depending on when you happen to be in London, you may be able to take advantage of certain seasonal offerings. Here in the spring and summer? The **Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park** is definitely worth a visit. If you can get tickets to concerts or open air film screenings at **Somerset House** it is a very pleasant way to enjoy a picnic with a difference.

Here in the autumn and winter? October sees London host **The Times BFI Film Festival**. This is a great opportunity to catch films from around the world which you may otherwise never have the opportunity to see. If you are brave enough to risk the many falls and bruises, the open air ice rinks at Somerset House and the **Natural History museum** will provide a fun time for all. If music be your food of love then the 10-day **London Jazz Festival** in November will surely not disappoint.

The best things in life are free

When you have had enough of the traffic, the shops and the queues, London offers the perfect escape wherever you are. The capital's parks are some of its best assets. From Hyde Park to Primrose Hill, you will be spoilt for choice. If you are visiting Senate House you should head for Russell Square, Bloomsbury Square, Gordon Square or Tavistock Square which are all close by.

Something truly hidden

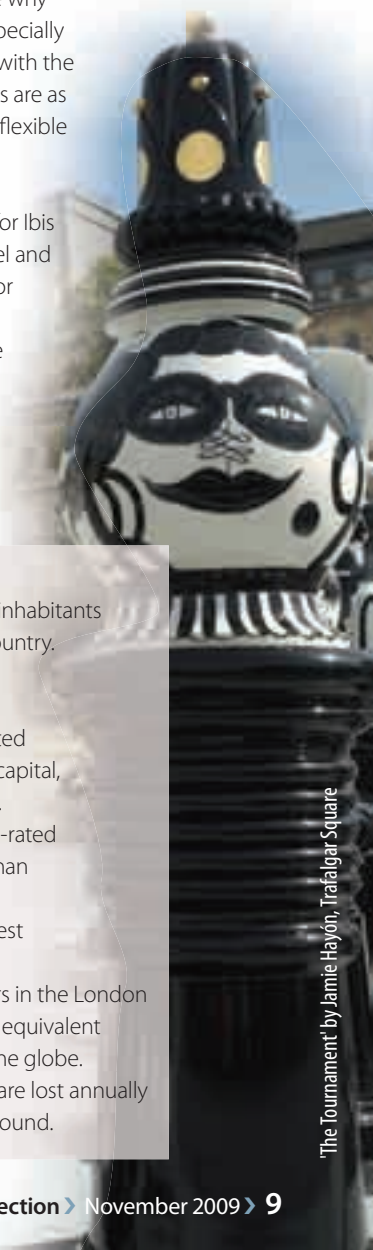
If all our suggestions are still too mainstream and you truly want something no one will know about – not even yourself until the day – book yourself and your friends in for afternoon tea at the **Hidden Tea Room**. This private underground tea room hosts traditional afternoon champagne teas and is booked months in advance (www.hiddentearoom.com).

Where to stay

If you are planning on visiting London or making a trip somewhere why not take advantage of our specially negotiated rates for alumni with the Accor hotel group. Discounts are as follows: 10% off online, fully flexible rate for Sofitel, Novotel and Mercure in the UK and 5% off online, fully flexible rate for Ibis in the UK and Sofitel, Novotel and Mercure across the world. For more information log on to the Services & benefits page at: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/alumni/services_benefits.shtml

Did you know?

- About 25% of London's inhabitants were born in another country.
- Over 300 languages are spoken in London.
- There are over 19,000 listed structures in the British capital, including Senate House.
- There are more Michelin-rated restaurants in London than in any city except Paris.
- London is the ninth largest city in the world.
- Each week 409 escalators in the London Underground cover the equivalent of several trips around the globe.
- Some 80,000 umbrellas are lost annually on the London Underground.



'The Tournament' by Jamie Hayton, Trafalgar Square

A star attraction

Niklaas van Poortvliet investigates the *glitz and glamour* behind the iconic building that is Senate House.

In August 2009, Senate House, home to the University of London Library, transformed into the set of a war office during World War Two for the production of the feature film *Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang*. Thanks to its period architecture and central location, the building has become a popular location for film and TV production companies.

Senate House was first seen on TV screens in 1981 when it was used to depict 'The London Tower' in the BBC TV series *Day of the Triffids*. Its popularity has steadily continued and the building can now be seen in a variety of UK productions and Hollywood movies. The building was designed by Charles Holden in 1932, a faultless example of Art Deco design particularly popular in America during the post World War One era. Its similarities to American buildings such as the Chrysler Building in New York gives Senate House a particular characteristic, useful when depicting iconic buildings such as the CIA Headquarters in Robert Redford's film *Spy Game*.

For British film makers, in particular, Senate House is a more accessible option than its American equivalents. Directors can film at Senate House to give the impression they are shooting in New York, Chicago or Washington. British director Tony Scott used Senate House in the vampire film *The Hunger* to represent a Manhattan hospital. Filming in a New York hospital would have caused many logistical problems therefore Senate House was a perfect alternative, particularly as the location is so quiet on weekends.

Peter Fewkes, the University of London Conference and Events Manager, was available to discuss his views on Senate House as a shooting location. Before the interview started the first thing he said was "look up". Senate House is clearly very generous with its space – large pillars, grand staircases, hallways, and marble interior – give one a sense of being in a law court, an American federal building or indeed a World War Two war office. "Senate House is a well recognised building and acts as a very effective backdrop for film and TV shoots" Peter explained. "Other than feature films like *Nanny McPhee*, Senate House has been



On the set of *Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang*

used for other productions such as BBC TV shows, documentaries and adverts for companies such as Samsung."

Senate House was described by the website *Movie Locations* as having a 'Brutalist exterior.' This style makes the building popular for productions attempting to capture a dark and menacing backdrop for their film. The American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald stated that the distinctive style of Art Deco was shaped by 'all the nervous energy stored up and expended in the War.' The films that are made at Senate House reflect this mood to an extent. Take the adaptation of George Orwell's *1984*, for which the director, Michael Radford, uses the building as a representation of 'The Ministry of Truth' in an oppressed England. Christopher Nolan, a University of London Alumnus, chose the Lobby of Senate House as a murder setting at 'Gotham Courts Lobby' in *Batman Begins*, one of the gloomiest comic book film adaptations in mainstream cinema.

Senate House is widely known to be a bustling library and an educational centre for the University of London and its students. It is also a testimonial to the style and design of the 1930s, a symbol of hard work and creative excellence during the postwar period. In today's society we struggle to fill the big lavish rooms and spaces that Senate House offers. However, the film and television productions breathe life back into the


rooms and the building to show us that there is more behind the walls of Senate House than you might think.

Peter Fewkes is available to show the location to prospective companies and to discuss filming options. Please contact:

Peter Fewkes
Conference & Events Manager
Direct Line: 020 7862 8227
Email: peter.fewkes@london.ac.uk

Film and television productions made at Senate House include:

- **Nanny McPhee and The Big Bang**
dir. Susanna White, 2010
- **Batman Begins**
dir. Christopher Nolan, 2005
- **Enduring Love**
dir. Roger Michell, 2004
- **Richard III**
dir. Richard Loncraine, 1995.
- **Blue Ice**
dir. Russell Mulcahy, 1992
- **1984**
dir. Michael Radford, 1984 (apartment building)
- **The Hunger**
dir. Tony Scott, 1983, (entrance hallway portrays part of a US hospital)
- **Jeeves and Wooster**
ITV series, 1990–1993 (exterior of Wooster's Manhattan apartment building)
- **The Day of The Triffids**
BBC series, 1981.



‘Senate House is widely known to be a bustling library and an educational centre for the University of London and its students. It is also a testimonial to the style and design of the 1930s, a symbol of hard work and creative excellence during the post-war period.’

Q&A with: Cheryl Brown

Cheryl Brown is an attorney in Jamaica, having been called to the bar five years ago. Graduating with an LLB in 1998 has, she says, "opened up lots of fields". Indeed it has. Cheryl is currently Jamaica's representative on the Inter-Governmental Bioethics Committee of UNESCO in Paris, manages the Office of Sponsored Research at the University of West Indies, and is Chief Adjudicator for the Literary Arts for the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission. Interview: **Lisa Pierre.**

You are involved in so many different projects. Is your career as an attorney still your career priority?

Yes. I have long wanted to study the law and feel strongly that everyone ought to do either a liberal arts or a law degree no matter what they end up becoming. I would not refer to it as a 'career' at the moment, in that I am not out practising the law exclusively. In my present job at the university, however, I do, surprisingly, as much law as several of my classmates from Law School, who are in-house counsels for large firms or for government departments.

For example, as the person who is supposed to protect the Intellectual Property of the Campus, I am always using the law – in contracts and various forms of agreements as well as in the filing of patents and so on. And generally on the Campus, if the senior administrators have a contract which they need to

sign, the practice is for them to ask for my opinion. Additionally, I am also involved in ethics and there is a surprising number of lawyers on National Bioethics Committees (NBCs) as well as on the IGBC.

How much has your LLB helped you?

It gave me many career options and opportunities which I had not had before. In fact, much of what I have done over the past 10 years can be directly attributed to having acquired a Law degree. It has been the underpinning for most of my achievements in the last decade.

Was there a particular reason that you chose to study through the External System?

At the time – and even now – I had obligations which prevented my being a face-to-face student. Not only was I then married, but I had two young daughters and am traditional enough not to have wanted to leave them for extended periods of time. The External System was a godsend for someone like me.

It turned out well, since, having to read all the texts and teach myself – which was what we did at the time – I acquired a fuller and broader grasp of the law. No one had to distil anything for me.

How important a part do you think education plays in shaping one's opportunities?

As we would say: *Res ipsa loquitur* ('the thing speaks for itself'). The world today is extremely competitive

and not only is one degree not usually enough, but a variety of interests and qualifications – even if not all tertiary – is extremely important if one is to really self-actualise and be competitive.

This, of course, is for those of an academic frame of mind. I have always maintained that if you are to be a dressmaker, be the best one there is. But, in any event, it is education or training which one must have to be able to use the opportunities which present themselves.

This, coupled with being in the right place, having the right attitude and being receptive will usually take one far. Education by itself though, is sometimes not enough; a little luck is often necessary. Let us not forget, as well, that entrepreneurial opportunities are also there for those who do not wish to work for others, and having the right education/training is essential.

No one will deny that there is still a bit of nepotism and the importance of having the right contacts exists, but I have also noticed that if you have the confidence which knowing your subject matter gives you, it is obvious to all and people will listen. Your opinions will matter. That is an important starting point.

In your opinion, what is the toughest challenge women face in the workplace?

Deny it though one might, women, I have found, always seem to be having to prove themselves in ways which are not asked of men. Just recently, my niece – who is a paediatrician – was being interviewed



'The LLB gave me many career options and opportunities which I had not had before. In fact, much of what I have done over the past 10-years can be directly attributed to having acquired a Law degree. It has been the underpinning for most of my achievements in the last decade.'



From left to right:
Cheryl with the then Chief Justice Lonsley Wolfe, entering the Opening Ceremony of an Ethics Conference; in her 'most important role' – mom, with daughters Elise and Lauren; Cheryl the attorney.

on the telephone by a university hospital in Canada. They asked her if she had children and when she said yes, the next question was who would look after them if she came to do postgraduate work. Men are not asked questions like this.

I would not like to prioritise the challenges – there is that of salary differentials and having to deal with the 'old boy network' which is alive and well – but overall, there is still general stereotyping, negative stereotyping in this part of the world, although my generation has made significant strides and we are slowly but surely being represented in the Boardroom.

Generally, though, to achieve this, women have to work harder and be more qualified, to stay in the same place or to be perceived as being competent. I will not live to see genuine equality – except in the professions – between men and women in the work place.

My daughters' generation is interesting to watch because they are not prepared, for the most part, to be as accepting as we were and so the changes re perception of a woman's role are happening for them. They are MAKING this happen.

Do you think opportunities for woman have improved in the Caribbean?

Yes. In the past decade or so. But at a price, as I suggested earlier and because so many more have gone into the professions where they can and do work for themselves. The Law, in Jamaica, is one of the greatest examples of progress.

For the first time we have a female Chief Justice; a female Attorney General/Minister of Justice and a female Director of Public Prosecutions (whom I happened to have taught English Language and Literature from Fourth Form to Sixth), all at the same time. But this tends to happen more in the professions – engineering, law, architecture, medicine. Much more needs to be done in the private sector where, for the most part, the females

are bunched in middle management.

This defies the statistics which prove that more women have had tertiary education than men, particularly in this generation. One of the repercussions of women becoming more educated is that the vast majority of professional women in Jamaica remain unmarried, or the marriages do not last. This is quite noticeable. And a pity. And the major reason is that most men do not like having a wife who is more educated than they are. The 'price' to which I keep referring. We apparently cannot have it all.

You recently moved into the field of ethics. Tell us about your role as Jamaica's representative to the IGBC (UNESCO, Paris)

The IGBC consists of representatives of 36 countries. Members are elected and each serves for four years. The countries are from the North and the South and includes the Vatican at the moment.

One can imagine, therefore, how discussions can range over a wide area and be filled with different perspectives and why consensus is difficult, if not impossible in certain areas. As Jamaica's representative I have to keep up with the literature; know what UNESCO is planning in training and education in ethics in all areas of the world; be aware of the agenda items for the sessions and be prepared to discuss them. I have always to know what my Government's position is and why it holds it and be able to articulate and justify it. Things become interesting when governments change and views on certain topics change overnight. There is still, however, a little 'wiggle room' for individual opinions, within the framework of the overall opinion of the country.

Do you find this role demanding?

I am not a trained ethicist. Not all members of the IGBC are. But I have written a Code and Policy on Research Ethics for the UWI and staged two international ethics conferences here. I

presented a paper on the Law and Ethics at one of them. And now that the National Bioethics Committee has been formed, the interest in ethics has been cemented.

There was to have been a week-long conference (three days of the IBC and three of the IGBC) in Mexico City, May 3rd to 9th 2009 and I was asked to make a presentation to the IBC. Well, as we all know, the outbreak of swine flu put an end to that and things have been postponed. The point was, I was a bit lacking in confidence re my ability to stand there in front of the world experts in ethics but it was a big honour and I spent three weeks preparing this presentation. It took a lot out of me and I hope I will still get a chance to do it.

One has to keep up with views and with what is happening in the field and this involves a lot of reading. Being 'moral' and knowing what one feels is 'right' will not suffice. One has to approach each situation from the ethical point of view and to know what these sometimes competing views are.

Last October (2008) in Paris and continuing this year, the topic being discussed is cloning. For some countries it is a scientific matter; for some it is religious and for others it is cultural or all of the above. The difficulty is that ethics is not a discipline and several other disciplines (medicine, law, for example) wish always to define what it is. It can, at times, appear to be a shifting target.

You used to be teacher. What would you say was the most enjoyable and hardest aspect of this profession?

I never found anything hard about teaching at the time. The salary was terrible and, in the end, that was a major factor in why I left the profession. And, given the subjects I taught, I was always marking essays and grammar, and that I did not love. But it was a natural fit, I loved the interaction and to this day, it gives me great pleasure to

have ex-students – some of whom are now teachers and most of whom have children – thank me for teaching them.

Just last month at a banquet, the Director of Public Prosecutions was the guest speaker and she took the time in the beginning to recognise, she said, “the person who taught me to love language and literature...”. I felt quite overwhelmed, especially since this had all happened so many years ago. One feels as if one is contributing to the development of the society in a very tangible way.

Do you think young people today have the perception that education is a waste of time in light of so many just wanting to be rich and famous?

This is an entire interview in itself. There is a perceived, general ‘dumbing down’ of the society – worldwide, some say – in the traditional forms of education and several of us older folk are on the verge of becoming ‘dinosaurs’, especially when we make literary references to Chaucer, Shakespeare and what used to be considered a traditional education. No more can we say: “Et tu, Brute?”, or “I wandered lonely as a cloud...” and expect our children to know automatically of what we speak. And if, like me, you are not so proficient in the technological arena, you are considered a bit past it. Education is now more relevant.

The internet and computer generally and all the attendant toys – ipods etc – have contributed. It is easier to access a summary on the net than to go to the library or to read the book itself. Then there are shows like American Idol where one can become rich and famous overnight; the adulation and wealth given to people in sports and so on. This generation moves in general more quickly and there is little time for

reflection. Where once one wrote a letter and waited several days for it to arrive at its destination and then for the response, now, one has only to press ‘send’ and voila!

Is there anything else you would like to be involved in, in the future?

I started in teaching and it is my first love. I had toyed with the idea of combining teaching and the law – teaching the law – but am not able to see how this could materialise.

I think it is much too late to start anything new, but recently I became a member of the National Bioethics Committee of Jamaica which was just established in the past two months, so that will take up a bit of time when we have to ponder issues like abortion and cloning and so on and deliver a position.

You play tennis three times a week. Where do you find the time?

If there is something you really want to do, you make the time. When I was doing the LLB, I was married, had two young children, worked full time. I found 20 hours per week, every week, to study.

I live with a lot of stress and the tennis is not only for enjoyment (which it is) but is a great stress-buster plus it energises me. On a light note, I tell people that every ball has a name and that is why I never miss. I go home after work and sort things out and then go to the Pegasus Hotel, which is only five minutes drive from my home, and play for an hour or an hour and a half on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturday afternoon. I did this even while at Law School. Each of us who plays there regularly has a tennis name. Mine is Venus.

Who has had the greatest influence on your life?

This is the easiest question to answer. My mother and my father – both of whom died within six months of each other in 2008. Neither of them, to the uninformed observer, was ‘successful’ as the world tends to define success and they were not educated to the tertiary level, but they were the wisest people I have known and instilled in their four daughters a love of learning and a sense of interior certainty. They also had two of the largest funerals I have ever seen which was a testimony to the way they lived their lives. They

were both extremely generous people.

My mother was very down-to-earth and full of little sayings such as “common sense is not common at all” and “all these educated fools” whom she heard on the radio or saw on the television. It was from my mother I first heard the expression: “If you do not stand for something, you will fall for nothing”. For her, the recipe for success was common sense, confidence and integrity.

They also told us, long before Barack Obama came on the scene, that we could do and be anything we wanted. We believed them. What both parents placed the most emphasis on, however, was family, love and loyalty. My father told me – perhaps not original – that he had never heard anyone say, on their deathbed: “I wish I had spent more time in the office”.

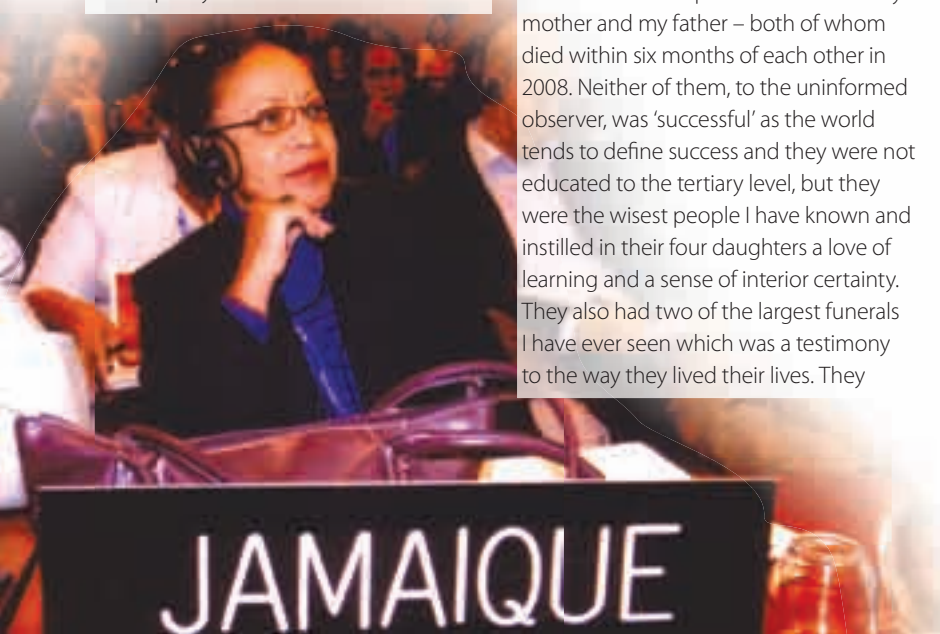
When I was called to the Bar in the Supreme Court in Jamaica, my father, who was then in his late 80s, with two of his brothers (they are all now deceased) were the first to arrive to witness the ceremony. My mother was ill and unable to climb the stairs. It was a very emotional occasion.

You love literature. Who is your favourite character from any literary work, and why?

I have two – one is /was a living human being and one is fictional. The fictional character is Elizabeth Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. No matter how many novels I read, Elizabeth retains her hold on me – or, perhaps it is Austen’s depiction in that subtle, ironic way.

The real human being is Diana Trilling in her book entitled *The Beginning of the Journey*. This is a counterpoint to her husband’s book, *The Middle of the Journey*. Diana wrote this book after her husband had died, and this in itself is telling. In his work, which reveals the ups and downs of his literary/academic career, partly because he was Jewish, he mentions his marriage to Diana, but one is only vaguely aware of her as his shadow or accessory. He speaks fondly of her but her views and opinions are not mentioned. Lionel Trilling was regarded – still is – as one of the finest literary minds of his time.

In her book, the situation is balanced and one realises that she was an intellectual in her own right and gets a glimpse of what it would have been like to walk always in her husband’s reflected glory.



Opposite: Cheryl representing Jamaica at the IGBC UNESCO, Paris.

Profile on: Chris Jenney



Over the years, the External System would not have achieved its outstanding reputation and success without the people who, behind closed doors, keep it ticking over. These people – from the Information Centre to the post room – have helped our graduates progress and become part of our unique global alumni community; Chris Jenney is one of those people. He has been here for over 20 years and is the Deputy Head of Admissions. Interview by **Lisa Pierre**.

What has been the most significant change you have seen in the External System over the past 20 years?

We used to merely provide a means of taking examinations in order to then be eligible for a University of London degree. Now, we have a much fuller programme in terms of the way we support students: not just administratively, but more importantly for them, academically in terms of study materials and the VLE for undergraduate students, and full online learning support at postgraduate level. Also, the important links we are continuing to develop with institutions around the world who themselves provide face-to-face tuition for many of our more popular programmes.

Tell us about a typical day for you in the Admissions Office.

It depends on the time of year. I spend a proportion of my time overseas, visiting our admission offices in Hong Kong and Singapore, also working every September in Malaysia, as well as attending exhibitions in countries like Sri Lanka. When in London it is primarily providing support in policy matters to institutions who teach our programmes, liaising with academic staff at the University's Lead Colleges, and giving advice to the 20 staff in the London Admissions Office whom I am responsible for. Of course the inevitable emails, student queries, Special Admissions Panel work etc all take up my time. No day is the same and it's a challenge to fit it all in.

You travel a lot for your job. What would you say is the biggest advantage of this?

Meeting 'real students', finding out about their lives and study plans and trying to help them move forward. Also, meeting with colleagues at local institutions. It's always good to meet the person behind the name and I believe that it makes for a better working relationship.

And disadvantage?

Having to be more organised than is my true nature! In order to know where I will be at a certain time in the year, to keep my life going in two or three different cities as well as in London. Sometimes it would be nice to be able to be more spontaneous.

You often deal with students in special circumstances. How hard is it to make a rational decision that is best for the student?

It can be hard when you read of the difficulties a particular student is facing, and my nature is that I want to help, but being practical, one must also accept that certain things are out of our control. Often it's a student facing financial difficulties who make you feel sad, but in reality our programmes are not possible for everyone, there is a financial outlay. I advise some students for whom this cost would be too much to seek a local qualification and then advance to the position whereby maybe in the future they can seek sponsorship for one of our programmes.

What has been the greatest thing you have seen on your travels?

Angkor Wat in Cambodia, somewhere I had wanted to visit for over 30 years; and Tina Turner in concert in Paris, that woman is incredible!

Is there anything in the world you still want to see?

Lots! I'll never see it all – I love travelling. The Grand Canyon, the Coptic churches of Ethiopia, the mud mosques in Mali, the South Pacific islands. The list is endless.

What, in your opinion, has kept the External System alive and successful for so many years?

That it does change, that it is responsive to changing circumstances and demands. And that in terms of what we provide to students gets better and better.

Do you think students and alumni you have met over the years are aware of the unique global community they are part of?

Not often enough, although the Alumni Association will help so much in doing that.

Do you think the economic downturn has had an effect on the pursuit of higher education?

It's made it more popular than ever, I think. As people are more concerned about job security they plan to spend their spare time improving their education and job prospects. Our programmes are more important than ever to help them achieve this. Other people are using their redundancy payouts to study and retrain for a new career, and people taking early retirement are opting to study. Maybe some are taking a degree which they never had the opportunity to take in their younger days.

What in particular do students ask you about?

The value of the degree: is it the same as if they attended the University full time. And, of course, it is!

What is the one thing you are most proud of in terms of your own contribution to the External System?

Meeting students years ago at an education exhibition. Advising them, seeing them apply, register, take exams and attending their graduations. Watching them progress, get married, have children and rise through their professions, becoming partners in law firms or, in one case, voted young solicitor of the year having established a successful international law practice. Hearing them say that it's all due to the External System that enable them to get started – and to then feel part of that process.

A unique global community

Over the past year the Alumni Office, accompanied by various members of University of London staff have hosted a variety of events worldwide.



Sri Lanka February 2009

Hosted at the Trans Asia, this event saw the launch of the alumni lecture series. A number of alumni from various sectors and External System staff enjoyed lectures from the Minister of Education, Hon Susil Premajayantha, Mr Simon Askey & Dr Razeen Sally.



Mauritius May 2009

The Dean of the External System and fellow University of London staff attracted a lively group of alumni staff and the president of the Republic Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC & Lady Sarojini Jugnauth at a cocktail reception at the Labourdonnais Waterfront Hotel in Port Louis.

Canada June 2009

On a sunny evening in Toronto alumni and University of London staff enjoyed the first alumni event in North America.



Hong Kong July 2009

On a cold and rainy day after a typhoon, alumni and University of London staff braved the elements to enjoy a fun day out at Ocean Park.

Be sure to join us next year.

Chapter Leader events were also held in Pakistan, Cyprus, India, Australia, USA, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka.



Pictured: External System staff and alumni from the various events that have taken place this year.



Alumni events in 2010

Alumni events held by the University of London allow graduates the opportunity to network with others who share similar academic and professional interests as well as meet key staff of the university including the Vice-Chancellor, Dean of the External System and other University staff.

Alumni events are currently confirmed for the following countries:

- **Colombo, Sri Lanka**
27 February 2010
Galle Face Hotel
28 February Alumni & University of London Staff Volunteer Day with Habitat for Humanity
- **Dhaka, Bangladesh**
6 March 2010, Venue: TBC
- **Singapore**
16 April 2010, Venue: TBC
- **Malaysia**
18 April, Venue: TBC
- **Moscow, Russia**
May/June 2010, Venue: TBC
- **Trinidad**
June 2010, Venue: TBC
- **Jamaica**
June 2010, Venue: TBC

All alumni who reside in a country where events are being held will receive an invitation to attend approximately six weeks before the event is scheduled to take place. If you are travelling to a country where an event is being held and you would like to attend, please contact lisa.pierre@london.ac.uk to request an invitation.

Would you like to help University of London staff promote the courses of the External System?

If you are able to offer advice to prospective students at any of the following Open Days or Exhibitions please contact Niklaas van Poortvliet, Marketing & Events Coordinator at: exhibitions@london.ac.uk

- **January:** Hong Kong
- **March:** Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia
- **May:** Switzerland
- **June:** Trinidad, Jamaica



Join your International Chapter

Reflecting the External System's global outlook, alumni chapters have been established in a number of countries, regions and cities. These chapters provide an opportunity for you to get together, meet old classmates and make new friends. Chapters have been established in the following countries:

Australia

Melbourne

Roshanthi Dias
Email: melbourne.uolalumni@gmail.com

Canada

Toronto

Mitra Mohammad-West
Email: mitrawest@hotmail.com

Cyprus

Panayiota Hadjiathanasiou
Email: yiota_h@cytanet.com.cy

Hong Kong

Pansy Lau
Email: pansylplau@yahoo.com
Alice Lee
Email: woodstock2046@yahoo.com.hk

India

Abhishek Shukla
Email: abhishek.shu@gmail.com
Anand S
Email: 108avatar@gmail.com

Jamaica

Lorna Green
Email: accompong@yahoo.com

Kenya

Wamuyu Waikwa
Email: wamwaik@yahoo.com

Malaysia

Rasamalar Gnanasundram
Email: rasamalar_g@hotmail.com
Evelyn Khoo
Email: lynyinkhoo@gmail.com

Nigeria

Chief Bolaji Ayorinde SAN
Email: bolajiyorinde@yahoo.com

Pakistan

Lahore

Ahmed Farooq Lateef
Email: farooq_lateef@hotmail.com

Karachi

Mariam Khan
Email: mariamkhalid79@hotmail.com

Islamabad

Syed Qamar Hussain Sabzwari
Email: Sabzwari@hotmail.com

Singapore

Anthony Chng
Email: aczeta@gmail.com
James Lee
Email: jameslee.uol@gmail.com
Prabu Naidu
Email: prabu@pacific.net.sg

Trinidad and Tobago

Patrice Valentine
Email: elite_productions_tt@yahoo.com

USA

New York State

Mary Jane Porter
Email: mjp4@cornell.edu

Texas

Hal Ray, Jr.
Email: halraytex@yahoo.com

UAE

Dubai

Swati Khanna
Email: swati.khanna@yahoo.co.uk

A week in the life of a University of London External Graduate

Paul Pearce (LLB, 2005) is a member of the NSW Legislative Assembly. Paul represents the seat Coogee in Sydney eastern suburbs. He also holds a Master of Arts degree from Sydney University and is currently a member of the governing Council of the University of NSW.



Politics is a seven days a week profession. Paul starts each day around 6.30am with a swim down at the local ocean pool at Bronte beach and, if time permits, coffee at the Bogey Hole Cafe.

Sunday is relatively quiet with a function at 11.00am for the opening of the sesqui-centenary boardwalk by the Mayor of Waverley, one of two councils in Paul's electorate. Planning for the boardwalk started some years ago when Paul was the local mayor.

Monday is largely spent in the office, going through correspondence. Monday evening is taken up with local Labor Party branch meetings.

Tuesday is a Parliamentary sitting day. The morning is taken up with various meetings of the Parliamentary Labor Party (known as Caucus), starting with a briefing session on legislation by the Attorney General. This is followed by a meeting with officials of the NSW Teachers' Federation. At 12.30pm there is a meeting of the Legislation Review Committee, whose role is to scrutinise legislation against any possible trespasses against international human rights covenants, common law principles, and other personal or property rights. The rest of the day is taken up with Parliamentary sitting.

Wednesday, Paul arrives at Parliament at 9.00am to have a brief meeting with the Assistant Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in his role as Chair of the Legislative Assembly Privileges and Ethics Committee to discuss a reply from the Premier on an issue raised by the Committee. This is followed at 10.00am by 'house duty'. At 5.00pm there is a meeting of 'marginal seat' members called by the State Secretary of the Labor Party. This is followed by an informal social gathering of Left members of Parliament hosted by the Deputy Premier.

Thursday starts early at the electorate office, then into Parliament. Paul is rostered on for house duty between 12.00 to 1.30pm. At 1.30 he meets with a school group from Brigidine College who are visiting Parliament as part of their curriculum. The students are staying for Question Time – always a vigorous session in the NSW Legislative Assembly (colloquially known as 'the Bear Pit'). Lunch is hosted by the Parliamentary Lions Club and consists of sausage sizzle held in the Parliament's rooftop garden. Thursday night is unusual: Paul has no commitments and takes the opportunity to catch up on the previous Saturday's episode of *The Bill*.

Friday is a short day in Parliament with no Question Time. There are a series of Committee reports. In his role as Deputy Chair of the Police Integrity Commission and Ombudsman Committee, Paul delivers the report of the annual public hearing conducted with the Ombudsman. At 12.00 he leaves Parliament to attend the opening of a new playground at Bondi Junction funded by the Federal Government. The Federal Infrastructure Minister, Anthony Albanese, opens the playground – almost being bowled over by a large number of under fives! The rest of Friday afternoon is spent in constituent appointments.

Saturday starts late and Paul is woken by his two resident cats, Claude and Cloud, and by a phone call from Ingrid who is in New Zealand for a few days visiting one of their granddaughters. At 11.00am there is a citizenship ceremony at Waverley Council. That evening is the Mayoral Charity Ball being held by Randwick City Council.

Sunday, at 11.30 there is the launch of a programme at the Royal Hospital for Women, by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, Carmel Tebbutt... and the week starts again.

Pictured left to right: Paul giving an election speech; with wife Ingrid holidaying in India; and with Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt at the launch of the Blue Gopher project.



Education first

On Saturday 23 May 2009, alumni in Mauritius attended an Alumni Association cocktail reception held by Professor Jonathan Kydd, Dean of the External System. Fellow University staff also attended the evening which was honoured by the presence of the President of Mauritius His Excellency The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth KCMG QC GCSK PC GOLH GOP ORS and his wife Lady Sarojni Jugnauth.

The event, at the Labourdonnais Hotel in Port Louis, unfolded with speeches from Professor Kydd and much reminiscing amongst the alumni. The University of London External System has a long and successful history with Mauritius spanning over 140 years, with some of the first graduates

completing their degrees in 1873.

Lady Sarojni, a former teacher stressed to Lisa Pierre, the Alumni Relations & Events Coordinator the importance of education in ones life, especially for women today. "It is one of the most important things for a woman today, before becoming a wife or a mother, and it is something that you should continue to nurture". She went on say that that it was encouraging to see that many of the alumni attending the reception where in fact women and that it was good to see the equal balance.

Top, pictured left to right: Professor Jonathan Kydd, Dean, University of London External System; The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth and his wife Lady Sarojni Jugnauth

Caribbean Open Days

The former President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Arthur NR Robinson, an LLB alumnus, shared his personal experience of studying with the External System and the challenges he encountered,

at a reception at the Hilton Hotel, Port of Spain, in June. The reception was attended by alumni, institutions which provide study support for University of London students, schools, representatives of the British Consul, the British Council and companies which employ our alumni as well as University of London staff.

Arthur NR Robinson also took the opportunity to announce that he would be publishing his autobiography very soon. He recalled that when he studied law as a young man in Tobago there were no libraries or tutors but he was inspired to overcome the difficulties when he read that the US President Abraham Lincoln, whom he considered to be one of his heroes, had studied for his law degree in a log cabin, and had then gone on to become the President of the United States. He admitted that when he started his studies he had no idea that he would later become the President of Trinidad and Tobago.

While in the Caribbean the University of London team also met over 800 potential students at recruitment events. At the Crowne Plaza a panel of eminent alumni answered questions from potential students about what it was like to study for a University of London degree in Trinidad. These included Debra Coryat-Patton, an LLB alumna who now works for the US Department of State in Port of Spain, Deborah Ragoonath-Rajkumar, LLB, National Tax Manager at BP; Diane Julian, MSc Environmental Management, a pharmacist at Petrotrin; and Sheldon Branche LLB, a Corporate Attorney.



New Climate change module from SOAS

Dr Rolph Payet, Nobel Peace Prize Winner and University of London External System alumnus, launched a new 'Climate Change and Development' study module. Dr Payet, pictured left, was presented with a study pack for the new module on 28 May 2009 by Professor Andrew Dorward (right) from the Centre for Development, Environment and Policy at SOAS.

New finance programme from CeFiMS

The Centre for Financial and Management Studies (CeFiMS) has launched a new MSc Finance by distance learning, with three alternative pathways in Economic Policy, Financial Sector Management, and Quantitative Finance, enabling students to select a study path best suited to their skills and objectives. The programmes are designed to deepen an understanding of financial markets, banks and their relation to economic performance. Each specialism can also be taken as a Postgraduate Diploma. To find out more about the programmes and to apply online, please visit: www.cefims.ac.uk or Tel: +44 (0)20 7898 4050.



Above: Arthur NR Robinson; Left, guests at the evening reception

Five-minute interview

Rosemary Gosling, Director of LSE External Study, takes a minute out of her busy schedule to talk about her loves, hates and who she'd have round for dinner.

What was the last country you visited?

Kazakhstan

How many frequent flyer miles do you think you have earned in the last year?

A lot, but many airlines do not count miles in Economy!

What is the best thing about travel?

Meeting really intelligent people and discussing similar issues: parents concerned about their children; students wanting to pass examinations; most students wanting to know more about the University and the LSE; generally finding out that the UK is not the centre of the universe!

And the worst thing about travel?

Being away from my family and grandchildren.

Describe yourself in 20 words?

A most bossy and determined person who will not accept that education cannot change the world.

What three things would you take with you on a desert island?

My laptop; my nightie; a comfortable rug.

Name three guests past or present you would like to have dinner with and why?

Roger Scruton – I like his intelligence and his ability to question everything you say.
Mahatma Gandhi – to discuss with him his vision and the ability to visualise such a dramatic transformation that occurred in the making of modern India. We would need to eat on banana leaves and the dinner would be very different from the one with Roger Scruton.
John F. Kennedy. I want to find out so much about how he felt he was portrayed in the media and the Camelot generation.

What is your favourite cocktail?

Probably Pimm's.

What is your favourite city and why?

Rome. You can see so much in one day and can feel the different centuries beneath your feet; you can eat well and people who travel with you change and become more relaxed.

Name one thing you want to do in the next year?

I want to ensure that the External System is secure.

What is your favourite book?

Jane Eyre.

Name something or someone that always make you smile?

Signposts/ posters/ placards which can be read a variety of ways.

How do you relax?

Listen to beautiful music.

What has been your biggest extravagance?

Buying a dress for my daughter's wedding.

What is your philosophy of life?

Honesty, enthusiasm and the belief that every person matters.

Lastly, tell us something you are really proud of.

My children and grandchildren.

For more information on LSE External Study programmes, please visit: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/lse

