JUNIOR RISE

ALL OUR FUTURES... PUPILS’ PERSPECTIVES

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When approached by Salford University in December and invited to participate in a challenging project with a tight time schedule, my initial reaction was one of energised trepidation.

The task presented was to produce a magazine which, to a degree, reflected some of the issues voiced in the prestigious RISE publication. What was unique about the project, however, was that the contentious issues addressed would be written entirely from the pupils’ perspective. Therefore, not merely a hybrid, the magazine would provide an opportunity for several of the school’s talented writers to showcase their skills. As an educator, my primary role is to encourage a multiplicity of skills – not least innovative thought and solution based strategies to facilitate problem solving.

The press so often totally misinterprets young people with negative stereotyping. Rarely does it praise significant achievement. The group of pupils I have been working with embody and exemplify what is best in our youth. They embraced the challenge presented, demonstrating maturity and a very real thirst for knowledge. However, under Mrs Hynes’ guidance, support, and expertise, our fears were allayed and the task actually became extremely enjoyable and energizing.

Above all, we wanted to disprove that unfortunate myth and demonstrate that this is rarely the case as the majority of teenagers are dedicated, inspirational and, most of all, mature enough to express themselves clearly.

Samuel Deakin, Gemma Robinson, Niall Whitehead, Ilaria Arnetoli

When we were approached by Mrs Hynes, our English teacher, and given a clear explanation as to what was involved in the process of producing Ipso Facto, we experienced a sense of excitement, tempered with a degree of apprehension.

We knew that, not only would we be creating a magazine for a prestigious audience, which is nerve wracking in itself, but also, that there would be time constraints involved as we endeavoured to produce the main articles to meet publication deadlines.

We genuinely hope that you enjoy reading this magazine as much as we have enjoyed producing it.

Deirdre Hynes
Head of English

Message from Marie Garside, Headteacher
St Ambrose Barlow R C High School

This project has been an excellent example of this relationship in practice. The opportunity to produce such a professional, high quality magazine has inspired the pupils to reflect on both local and international current affairs for the benefit not only of themselves but also the readers.

We would like to thank Salford University for their help and look forward to other exciting collaborations in the future.

We hope that you enjoy this issue.

Marie Garside
Head Teacher
A History of Social Housing

Social Housing is the practice of tax-funded housing for those who are incapable of purchasing and running their own property. Council houses specifically began development in the late nineteenth century but reached a peak in production in the mid-twentieth century. Well-built houses gathered together over large suburban areas, known as council estates, were made available below market-rate rental agreements. Also many of these urban developments featured large tower blocks.

Right to Buy Scheme

Individual local councils have always had the ability to sell council houses to their tenants but these sales were extremely rare before the 1970s. However, during the 1960s, Horace Cutler, the Chair Housing for the Conservative Greater London Council, persuaded the rest of the council to create a general sales scheme (GSS). Under Labour’s administration at the time, however, this was disallowed until Cutler became leader in 1977. As Cutler and Margaret Thatcher (then a London MP) were close and the GSS was becoming ever more popular, the scheme was passed on as a Conservative Party policy to be rolled out implemented in the Housing Act of 1980.

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FACT BOX

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Right to Buy scheme, it was seen that many people in need of social housing were being pushed out of their only chance to live in affordable homes, by well paid, full-time workers who had the capital to renovate the dilapidated buildings. Therefore, the only possible way out for these people was to purchase the council house privately. Those who could not afford to do so were at the mercy of their local councils who were still expected by government, to provide the people with accommodation.

This resulted in people living in squalor at low rent B&Bs, often with whole families sharing small rooms. Money for other essential services thus became constrained as Councils struggled to ‘pay the bills’. ‘Rackmanism’ therefore thrived (the practice of landlords charging extortionate prices which had to be paid for by the council). Peter Rackman was a wealthy and notorious Landlord of Polish descent. He exploited desperate local councils by charging over the top prices for poor, often foul accommodation for homeless families. Due to the lack of council houses, the councils had no choice but to comply with these charges.

However, to the scheme’s credit, people who had lived in social housing for two years or longer were able to purchase their homes with a 44% discount. This sounds laudable but there were many rules to abide by, meaning that if you did not fulfil the numerous requirements, you and your family were rendered homeless.

Unfortunately, Margaret Thatcher’s policy resulted in massive social upheaval which people are still paying for now, as affordable housing stock remains depleted. Was she ‘anti’ social housing or just ‘anti-social’ housing? I suspect a little of both.

In America, over 60% of trees cut down are used for the building of ‘modern’ houses and with the average house size rapidly increasing each year, the requirement for wood is sure to rise with it, leading to a negative impact on the environment.

One way to save energy, and thus reduce carbon emissions, would be to develop a ‘smart grid’ throughout Britain by coupling the current National Grid with the Internet. At present, suppliers have few ways of tracking the electricity they produce, and consumers, fewer ways of controlling when and how their appliances use it. The result, is an electrical grid prone to wasting energy through heat, leaving suppliers ‘in the dark’ regarding blackouts.

A smart grid (coupled with smart appliances) would be able to power down automatically during price peaks and repower once electricity is cheaper. It would better integrate intermittent energy sources such as solar and wind power, which cut carbon emissions and save consumers over £10 billion over the next decade. The main result, however, would be a flattened demand curve, reducing the need for new, polluting power stations. Provided that, as in California, suppliers were rewarded for essentially selling less electricity and that the grid was safe-guarded from hackers, it could be a viable way of cutting Britain’s electricity use.

Get Smart (The Electrical Grid)

Across the country different structures have emerged, from the child-like simplicity of a square structure with a triangular roof, to being replaced by curved surreal edges, glass walls, open spaces, self supporting moveable floors! I could go on. Indeed, although they may be very attractive to look at, we have to question; are they really meant to be lived in, and just how much do they cost? Further, does the process of sourcing the materials and creating the building itself have a good or bad impact on the environment?

Practicalities

Everybody’s heard of solar panels and wind turbines. Today they seem like buzz words that make you more ‘eco-friendly’, but are they really the best way to go? And why are not many people buying into them? I’m afraid solar panels may not be the ‘god send’ we are after. It is a common misconception that they do not produce electricity in heavy cloud cover; they do, but they do not, however, by definition, work in the dark, which, in our dark winter months means they would only be generating electricity for just nine hours. Unlike other mammals, I’m afraid we can’t hibernate. Also, are they worth the money? Solar panels are not only very expensive to install but expensive to buy in the future. It is a common misconception that they do not produce electricity in heavy cloud cover; they do, but they do not, however, by definition, work in the dark, which, in our dark winter months means they would only be generating electricity for just nine hours. Unlike other mammals, I’m afraid we can’t hibernate. Also, are they worth the money? Solar panels are not only very expensive to install but expensive to pay for themselves, using battery packs that store energy, even when the sun isn’t shining.

Electric cars would draw a lot of power from the grid, but with the smarter scheme, mobile batteries could be used. Plus you would be able to control electricity use through a laptop making it simple and controllable. New, smarter appliances would run when the demand is low and in the smart grid, the thermostat would remotely control the houses’ heating and cooling. Finally, sensors on the power line could control blackouts before they cascade out of control. Let’s just hope that it and we are smart enough to take action.

Thus, if both of these power sources are unreliable and expensive, what else is there? Alternatively, there are modern houses being built which are extremely environmentally friendly. If modern houses used the ‘Smart Grid’ approach then it would be easy to use renewable energy throughout the household.

It is clear that solar panels and wind farms aren’t enough on their own. This future house will utilise many alternative sources of energy, more obscure ones that will really make the future house ‘smart’. Whilst it will use solar panels in a smart grid, this will facilitate the generation of electricity. Further, a smart grid would make it easier for house owners to generate their own electricity and then sell it back to the grid. This way, the solar panels will practically pay for themselves, using battery packs that store energy, even when the sun isn’t shining.
Facebook is a globally popular social networking site. It is a website on which people can share pictures, play on games and socialise with friends near or far. It was not built as a format on which terrorists can flaunt their corrupt opinions and eugenists can advance their perverted Nazi views.

Gemma Robinson

Perceptions of Salford

With the BBC moving to media city UK at Salford Quays, a flock of ‘southerners’ is planning to migrate north this winter. Many will not just be bringing family and luggage with them, but preconceptions of the local Salfordians. So we are all flat caps, wooden pipes and Coronation Street?

In 2008, BBC Director-General Mark Thompson announced the staggering declaration that the BBC was moving from the capital city to Salford. Its river of employees, including journalists, presenters, researchers and administrative staff, would thus be flooding onto our sunny shores. Remember, many of these intrepid explorers have lived in mighty London, or its affluent surrounding areas all their lives, having little knowledge of the hapless north, or indeed northerners, using Coronation Street as a guide to life in ‘the sticks’; Salford and Manchester. I wanted to find out what were the preconceptions of Salford from what some see as the ‘invading southerners’. Therefore, I interviewed Channel M reporter, Richard Johnson, who spent most of his child and young adulthood in London, living there before moving to the ‘grim north.’ Unfortunately, as expected, his perceptions at the time were a xenophobic consensus of opinion about Salford. He expected to be confronted by the Victorian image of an industrial city, all thick with dirt and smoke, children playing hopscotch on the pavement – you get the idea. Interestingly, Salford at that time, was considered ‘better off’ than neighbouring Manchester! Yet whilst Manchester seems to have altered her image, the traditional image of Salford has obviously been perpetuated and, thus, Richard expected a deprived, crime-ridden haven for society’s reprobates; nowhere for the smart-suited city type.

However, although he did not expect cloth caps and whipsticks, as he had spent some time in North Wales as a child, where he probably actually met some northerners, he knew that these notions of Salfordians were what his less informed colleagues in London had internalised. Despite all the negative stereotypes, Richard Johnston had ‘hopeful expectations’ that people in the north would be ‘generally friendlier’, would ‘talk to strangers’, ‘would take the time to give directions or just engage in a general chat’. In other words, we are simple up here, but engaging in a patronising sort of way.

I have to question, why does this stereotype stand? The Economic Intelligence Unit’s annual survey of the best cities in the world for ‘livability’ revealed that Greater Manchester, which includes Salford, is the best city to live in the whole of England, ranking five places above London and even beating the fashion capital of the world, Milan! Surprisingly, this study even included a consideration of the weather! No, it isn’t always raining in Salford. Thus, ignorance can be the only reason for this. However, one thing made clear in the interview with Richard is that Salford has a lack of identity. Many people from the south even believe that Salford is a ‘bouffon’ of Manchester and not a city in its own right. Perhaps this is understandable. In Salford, where the writer of this article abides, the postcode is M27, not S27. Does Salford still have an identity crisis and is this the reason why so many ‘southern jessies’ quake and tremble at the thought of moving to our glorious, modern city? Salford is the greatest city in the country. Its inhabitants need to recognise that it is, in order to eradicate the erroneous opinions of others. – Samuel Deakin

Salford Unearthed

As the city of Salford, as a city, moves ahead in the digital revolution, due to the massive BBC complex being built at Salford Quays, enormous benefits will be reaped not only by businesses, but also the educational sector, notably the university. One of the major projects which interests the young particularly, is the new archaeological enterprise which the university has set up. The centre will be primarily based at the CUBE gallery on Portland Street and will investigate archaeological sites, historical buildings and industrial heritage across the North West. Uniquely, this will provide local communities with the opportunity to be a part of an archaeological excavation. There is already an ongoing project at Buckton Castle, a 12th century building in Stalybridge. Members of the public will be trained in the specific methods and techniques needed for an archaeological study and will also be exposed to much more of their community’s history than ever before.

This is a chance for all citizens of Salford and the surrounding areas to become more knowledgeable and skilled in practical study but it is an especially good opportunity for Salford’s youth. The young today are often accused of being ‘unruly’ at best and many blame this on their unoccupied time; this project gives them a chance to do something worthwhile and may even interest them into a career. Personally, as a Salford teenager, I believe that this project presents a fantastic opportunity to work alongside committed and conscientious adults. It would be so energising to be part of a team excavating our past, for as we know, the past always informs our future. – Gemma Robinson
Thus, it could be argued, that our knowledge of our ‘world’ remains rather limited. 2009 was the 200th anniversary of the death of Haydn, the composer of the world famous oratorio – ‘The Creation’.  

‘The Creation’ was a magnificent composition, written to illustrate the biblical Book of Genesis. It portrays the beginning of the world, and the magnificent features that occurred in the formation of the universe. Haydn cleverly used music to broadcast his work, so that people could gain a deepened knowledge of how their world was created and how man fits in the scheme of things.  

To commemorate Haydn and to act as a ‘homage’ to ‘The Creation’, Alan Williams, a composer, and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, have recreated a vocal version of Salford and a piece that elaborates on our understanding of the Big Bang theory, named ‘Wonder’.  

This is a fitting title as we all wonder, ‘What happened?’ and ‘How?’ and, ‘When did it all begin?’ One can only assume the marvels that took place which are still yet to be discovered!  

Being a Salford based composer, seven schools from the area were involved in sharing and collecting their ideas and accompanying the oratorio. The pupils’ vision of the creation formed the impetus for the development and completion of the oratorio. To this end, the pupils worked with Jodrell Bank to compose their own versions of the original, which would be played alongside a presentation by Alan Williams.  

The lucky pupils were able to perform their work in Salford University’s Maxwell Hall. What a unique opportunity! When interviewed, Alan Williams talked about his enthusiasm for working with the pupils and people from Salford. ‘I think it’s great that my work will be premiered in Salford.’  

I’m very proud that this will be a celebration of Salford and a piece that elaborates on our understanding of the Big Bang theory, named ‘Wonder’.  

The Phoneme Machine will give – for the first time ever – a multi-sensory classroom-based resource which teachers can use to teach phonics to deaf children and which children can also use individually. I expect it to transform the teaching of the phonetics to deaf children and which children can also use individually. I expect it to transform the teaching of phonics to deaf children and which children can also use individually.  

At the last Olympics, Britain was phenomenally successful, winning 47 medals, including 19 gold. We smashed world records throughout the competition and exceeded all expectation. Hosting the 2012 Olympics, provides us with the opportunity to show the world that, not only do we shine in sports, but we are a nation comprised of passion, pride and accomplishment. Therefore, we need to put on an outstanding performance, more spectacular, more daring and more innovative than Beijing and Sydney. Do we have the resources and, in this economically bleak time, the money?  

In and around the capital, new stadiums, sport and aquatic centres are being designed and constructed. Unfortunately, architects, conscious of the recession, are facing limitations. If this is the case, why then is Britain throwing away money and making foolish economic mistakes?  

DUBAI – The Desert Singapore is just a Mirage  

Dubai is well known throughout the world as a wealthy Arab desert paradise with rivers of money flowing into this coastal haven of glamour. However, this river is dry, bringing drought to Dubai and it appears that Dubai’s dream to become the Middle Eastern Singapore is just a mirage.  

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) glittering embodiment of capitalism is broken. As of the 25th November, Dubai has had to postpone its giant $80 billion debt, sending its economy crashing. This has led the world to ask the question: Where did it all go wrong?  

Whilst Dubai’s origins are shrouded in mystery, it is known that this now cosmopolitan principality started as a humble pearl fishing village.  

However, along with many other neighbouring cities, Dubai’s fortunes changed in 1966 with the discovery of oil in the UAE.  

Although its reserves are actually quite low, compared with Abu Dhabi and other Emirite cities, miraculously, the area has prospered. Indeed, the paucity of ‘natural resources’ led to Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum to focus upon other industries. Thus, over the years, this has become a free trade jewel in the UAE’s crown with the opening of the tax free InfoTech hub; Dubai Internet Cities, bringing business from all around the world.  

With the most expensive hotel in the world, the Burj al-Arab and the breathtaking manmade islands such as the Palm Jumeirah, financial security and outside investment seemed limitless and ‘safe’. But even Dubai isn’t recession proof! In 2008, Dubai halted all real estate ventures. The Crown Prince, of course, has played down the recession which can be estimated at rising more than 100% GDP.  

This is bad news for the investors who looked for a ‘quick buck’ in a sure-fire money maker. David Beckham has reportedly lost millions in his investment of Dubai. Unluckily, David, maybe you can just take Tiger Wood’s spot in the Gillette adverts or sell some more permanent markers.  

Despite a $15 billion bailout from Abu Dhabi, the dream for Dubai is fading into the desert.  

On Your Marks, Get Set ... Go!  

Although 2012 may seen a long way away, it is actually just thirty months from now, when Britain hosts the biggest sporting competition known to man. The question is – are we ready?  

Take for example, the fact that the Manchester Velodrome, built for the Commonwealth Games, hosts international meetings and is renowned as a world class venue, with world class facilities yet is not being used! Why is the Olympic Committee spending millions of pounds on the creation of a new Velodrome in London? Manchester is a forty minute plane journey away from the capital, a two hour trainride, and a four hour bus or car trip.  

Further, would it to be too much to ask, to spread out the wealth generated by the Olympics across the country? Surely this would benefit London also? It would decrease the amount of tourists in the capital, which appears to be causing headaches for organisers, as accommodation is limited. More importantly, it would spread the income across Britain meaning businesses in other parts of the country would benefit.  

The athletes are preparing, so why isn’t our country? I don’t mean in the form of building stadiums, but in building minds. We all want to be part of the celebration.  

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The Next Dimension: Holographic Imagery

Far from the futuristic depiction of holograms found in many popular science-fiction works, to find one today, you need only to look in your wallet. Simple holographic images (2-D images on a 3-D surface) can be found on your driver’s licence or credit card, utilised specifically to prevent forgery. They can be found on DVD, CD and software packaging, as well as anything sold as ‘official merchandise’. However, more often than not, these holograms are usually simple, unclear shapes such as sparkly pictures or smears of colour. Even the images endorsed on official merchandise often appear more as green pictures than 3-D imagery.

However, large-scale holograms, usually displayed in a darkened room and enhanced by laser effects, are incredible. They are two-dimensional, requiring no special glasses or ViewMasters. Recently, American news station, CNN, decided to put this technology to the test by beaming a three-dimensional image of reporter Jessica Yellin from outside an Obama campaign tent before the election to their news studio in New York. It was revealed that this technology was achieved by placing a ring of high-definition cameras around Yellin. As the cameras picked up her every movement from all angles, the film was placed on top of each other and played back in 3-D. However, sceptics argue that this method differs from ‘true’ holography and should not be counted as such.

So, will we ever reach a point where true holographic imagery can be beamed into our homes? Other companies have tried. Telstra, an Australian phone company recently learned its chief technology officer from Melbourne to a business meeting about 460 miles away in Adelaide. Cisco recently unveiled its latest product, On-Stage Presence Holographic Video Conferencing through using high-definition cameras and TV screens to make executives in different locations feel like they are having an in-person meeting. They showed this through beaming in their CEO from New York to Bangalore, India.

For the most part, holography is still too expensive for most companies to deploy commercially. However, if it could be applied to schools, a single, accomplished teacher could educate multiple classes, while different images could be examined for subjects such as biology and possibly DT. At home, it could mean you could talk to relatives and make friends from the other side of the globe and represent the next possible step in social networking. "The possibilities are immense." Niall Whithread

Girls into Engineering

Dirty hands, being a member of the ‘stronger’ sex, overalls, and an unhealthy obsession with motor cars are the obvious prerequisites if you wish to become an engineer. Recently, whilst attending a school organised trip, I learned otherwise. It is quite normal to associate being an engineer with being a man, but this is quite wrong. There are numerous areas of engineering that are eminently suitable for both sexes.

I was lucky enough to interview Sarah Curran, who is a civil and structural engineer. I asked her about her experiences: “When I first started my course to become an engineer, as I walked into the lecture hall, it struck me that only about 20% of the people in there were women. People predict that, being an engineer is about getting messy and working with tools. It isn’t. I had to work hard to get where I am now. You do have to achieve good A-levels, but the course I took was really good and, at the same time, challenging.”

Sarah completed a four year Masters course at Durham University, graduating with a degree in Civil and Structural Engineering. Sarah, who now works for ‘Jacobs Engineering’ assured me that anyone who works in engineering, both male and female, are treated equally and the training involved, for example completing placements in different countries, is a brilliant experience.

So why are females so turned off from becoming an engineer? Why aren’t women as enthusiastic as Sarah about such an occupation? Perhaps it is because of the negative images we are influenced by on TV and in various other media. Plus our female role models tend to come in the shape and form of Cheryl Cole and Katie Price. I somehow cannot see them exploring the intricacies of a petrol powered machine! Actually, I probably have metaphorically hit the nail on the head myself! We relate engineers with mechanics, aka Phil Mitchell and Kevin Webster. However, let’s be positive! I attended a Manchester University training course recently, entitled ‘Girls in Aerospace’.

The purpose of the course was to encourage and engage girls into considering engineering as a possible future career. The day was filled with an interesting challenge that numerous schools from across the North West had to tackle. We had to design, make and then race hovercrafts entirely without assistance. I thought it was a brilliant exercise and it made me contemplate all the possible options I could choose from in my future career.

So, come on girls, let’s show the boys what we can do! ▶ Ilaria Arnetoli

Addendum: This article was written before the recent Haiti disaster. The school children have been facing floods into the affected areas of Haiti.

When Disaster Strikes

Finally, after years of turmoil, Sri Lanka clawed back control from the separatist Tamil Tigers this May. However, one of the longest armed conflicts in Asia’s history has left the Sri Lankan people, who already live in a third world country, destitute. To what extent is disaster management and how it is defined in countries such as these?

Mozambique has recently been added to the ever growing list of third world countries struck by disaster. In 2000, Mozambique experienced its worst floods for 50 years. Whilst this left hundreds of thousands destitute, Mozambique also has the highest number of land mines in Africa, thus these floods washed mines from known minefields into villages, covering them. As a result, these landmines are invisible killers in a country plagued with disease and pestilence. They are a foul reminder of the civil war in Mozambique which lasted for two decades, fuelled by Cold War ‘politics’. However, in 1997, a law was signed that stopped the production and selling of landmines, if many minefields still remain. There are campaigns in the west gaining momentum to remove these mines, but no action as of yet has been taken by the Mozambique government. Imagine if you lived in a war torn country where your house has been destroyed and every step you take could literally be your last! Unfortunately, the list of countries devastated by natural disasters and war is sadly endless, with Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti and Madagascar, to name but a few.

So what is disaster management? How does it help those who cannot help themselves? Disaster management is a concept that involves preparing for a disaster and then supporting and rebuilding the societies that are left broken or severely damaged. There are three stages of disaster management: Preparedness, Response and Recovery. Salford University has recently invited a selection of invited experts in different fields to a workshop focused on disaster management. National disasters are either caused by geographical location or nature and it obviously is not feasible to control such. However, rapid and effective response must be the key and, hopefully, Salford’s initiative will inform future practice.

However, a rather clichéd saying is more relevant now than ever before: ‘prevention is better than cure’. Would it not be more effective to put in place defences against disaster in what we know are high risk areas? New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. This was in America, the world’s leading global power. Surely it could have spent money fortifying houses in high risk areas like New Orleans? We have international agencies that stockpile and provide food, water and shelter. The question is, ‘Why don’t individual countries follow their lead?’ ▶ Samuel Deakin
The Liars, the Snitch and the Parliamentary Glitch

There are currently 646 Members of Parliament in Britain, but do we know, or even need them at all? They all represent different political parties and serve different purposes. Surely, as they are supposedly representing the electorate, then we should know all about them, warts and all …? — Samuel Deakin, Gemma Robinson, Niall Whitehead, Ilaria Arnetoli

Do we know our Leaders?

Up until recently we were told to trust our MPs. Recent revelations about expenses and secrets exposed, however, have shaken that trust. Perhaps it is because of the recession or a shift in our values, but the financial ‘mismangement’ for want of a better word, by our representatives, seems to be more heinous than the salacious stories written about them in ‘The Sun’ and ‘The Star’. In my mind, what is really wrong about politics today, is that every politician is ‘grey’. They no longer seem to have real opinions but rely on sound bites and towing the line. This was not so in the past.

Love or loathe her, Margaret Thatcher was an independent woman and for a significant period of time, one of the most powerful women in Britain. Did we really know what she stood for? I believe voters did. Thatcher herself was full of character and revelled in always finding herself on the side of the political spectrum, was passionate about his politics. We knew what he stood for and there was a real honesty about him – unlike today. Instead, we seem to be presented with faceless bureaucrats, more interested in sound bites and presentation. No wonder we are no longer engaged in politics.

It is important that we influence young people like me, to become interested in politics because, as ‘thee’ as it sounds, we are the future. If young people, teenagers especially, continue to be so blantly isolated from politics, then what will happen when they reach voting age?

Unfortunately, they will not know who to vote for and why they are voting for a specific political party or ideal. Young people will not be influenced by a politician who comes across as dry and bland, but instead will be attracted to the MP who has a personality, is publically recognised and passionate about his or her politics.

Sun shining on Tories

Let’s face it; media is one of the most powerful channel in America recently turned down Barack Obama’s desire to address the nation in favour of an interview with the ‘Hairy Angel’, Susan Boyle. Unfortunately, such is the state of affairs in our brave new world where celebrity status soars above the ‘message’ to be delivered by the most important man in the world. So what happens when this almighty force, the media, actually backs a politician? Tony Blair, new Labour’s ‘saviour’ in 1997 was famously supported and elected thanks to the red top tabloid, the same-what-see’d ‘The Sun’. Let’s not hide it; it is the lowest common denominator, with it being the only newspaper I’ve had the misfortune to read that features economic hard news opposite and vying with virtually pornographic topless women. Unfortunately, ‘The Sun’ is the most popular newspaper in the UK, which I think says more about us as a nation, when we care more about ‘John and Edward’s new shoe’ than news that directly affects us. Although it favours ‘reality TV’ shows such as ‘I’m a bus has been – Get Me On TV’, ‘Big Brother’ and the ‘Next Factor’ with hard news ‘hidden’ within, its comic like style and status seems to appeal to the nation. It was ‘The Sun’s’, not just Tony Blair’s charisma that won him numerous general elections, re-inventing Labour from the old ‘poor-man’s party’ to a more contemporary one. Yet ‘The Sun’ has grown sour of Labour and Gordon Brown, switching to the Tories and David Cameron. A more vulgar carbon-copy of the notorious ‘Daily Mail’, can David Cameron repeat what Tony Blair achieved in the upcoming election? Does he have the ‘Celebrity Factor’? It appears we’ll just have to wait and see.

No Expenses Spared

From chocolate bars to second homes, from junior ministers to Gordon Brown himself, MPs have been found guilty of abusing their expenses claims for personal gain. Far from using such expenses claims as they were intended, to subsidise extra costs associated with their position, many have been using them simply to support their lavish lifestyles and home lives while the taxpayer foots the bill. The claims vary from Sir Peter Vigger’s lame £9,100 gardening bill. The impact of the ‘claims scandal’ has resulted in a serious decline in voters’ trust in the ‘main’ political parties. This could benefit parties such as the Green Party, which could be deemed as positive, or the BNP, which would be catastrophic. Whether this lack of trust will extend to the next election, however, remains to be seen. The Labour Party is attempting to save face through the election of a new Speaker, John Bercow, who promises greater transparency in the expenses system. This also remains to be seen.

Pasteurised Policies

In 2002, Labour was deemed to have kept 80% of the promises it had made upon its election into power five years previously. The remaining 48 out of 229 promises were deemed too difficult to judge or had not been met. In today’s political climate, however, do politicians rely on popular-sounding promises that not only have no chance of fulfilment, but also contradict their own party views?

For instance, recently, a popular bill was posted claiming that non-residents should not be able to offer donations to political parties as they do not pay tax. However not only is one of the main Conservative donors a non-resident, Lord Laidlaw (who donated £4m since 2001) but one of Labour’s donors, the party whose backbenchers founded the idea, is also registered as a non-resident for tax purposes (Lord Paul). There are other incidents. Labour has approved the sale of 187 school playing fields despite claiming they would end the sales in 1997. The Conservatives, meanwhile, recently decided not to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, despite David Cameron’s promise to do so in 2007. All this could further damage trust between the public and political parties. In future, politicians would do well to remember their manifestoes and party morals instead of pandering to the trends of the day.

Teen Views

Teens today hold a very cynical view of politics. The vast majority are completely uninterested and the rest are either inactive observers of politics’ publicised policies or pessimistic critics. The first group, the uninterested, hold a very biased approach to Politicians; they have no opinion on the policies and are often ignorant of all but the names of the most significant heads of state i.e. Barrack Obama. They don’t make derogatory statements but are also, through lack of knowledge, incapable of making speculative comments.

I believe this is the fault of a political mindset which only targets those who are eligible to vote, ignoring potential future voters. The inactive observers are like myself, we carefully monitor political goings-on but are legally unable to act upon any of our views. I think this in itself is a miscarriage of justice because I and many others have strong views and relevant ideas about the running of our country but are, again, ignored due to our adolescence.

The cynics or ‘pessimistic critics’ are rare, as not enough of us have enough political knowledge to condemn others. These people scrutinise every aspect of Politics, people like my opinionated fellow writer, Samuel Deakin. Such people often express damming opinions about politics’ publicised policies but can do little about them.

All these groups respectively have a high chance of becoming non-voters like those in the ‘passive public’ who will not vote through a lack of motivation. Those who are observers will not vote due to confusion and bewilderment, and finally the cynics will not vote due to a belief that all politics is corrupt and, therefore, their votes are lost as a result of our democracy’s failure to deliver ‘the message’. I think that the key to teens’ understanding of politics is education. All adolescents should, further, be pursued by politicians as, after all, we are the voters of tomorrow. Remember: ‘Silence Speaks Volumes’
The Large Hadron Collider: Economic Black Hole?

By Niall Whitehead

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the world’s largest and most powerful particle accelerator. In layman’s terms, it will loop opposing particle beams around a track, accelerating the particles until they finally collide at 7 teraelectrovolts per particle, around 7 times the kinetic (movement) energy of a flying mosquito. The results will then be monitored by scientists from the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, or CERN. The Collider lies in a tunnel, 27 kilometres in circumference, as much as 570 ft beneath the France-Swiss border near Geneva, Switzerland.

But is the LHC anything more than a billion-pound toy for prestigious scientists? Actually, it may be pivotal to proving or finally debunk creationism. As stated above, it may be necessary to flood the masses with an inundation of scientific evidence and observation. It is the dominant scientific theory about the origin of the universe.

According to the Big Bang Theory, the universe began sometime between 10 and 20 billion years ago from a cosmic explosion as a single point and has since been expanded in all directions. It has evolved from a primordial dense and hot state in a finite time in the past and continues to grow until today. Thank you, physicist, Nick Greene. Am I the only person yawning? I’m not trying to offend Mr Greene, who is an esteemed scientist, but does the average man or woman on the street understand this? I’d recommend this long string of scientific jargon as a cure for insomnia. This is sad, as the science that explores the creation, is potentially the most interesting topic of all and it pains me to see people turn sour at the idea of a long, tedious explanation riddled with scientific jargon. Unfortunately, it is this that turns people away from the most realistic of all theories on how the universe was formed.

In layman’s terms, the Big Bang Theory is that a super-dense, super-hot mass, smaller than a proton, exploded and expanded rapidly, eventually cooling and forming the stars and planets. See, what’s so difficult about that?

The same can be said about the Hadron Collider. Obviously, scientists do not want to patronise people and the general intelligence of the public is underrated, but surely some compromise could be made to elucidate the condescending tone and alter the impenetrable jargon? We asked Pete Redman, a nuclear engineer and employee of CERN, if he could explain the Hadron Collider to us. Here is an extract from his e-mail: ‘The circumference of the LHC is 26 km. As an electron travels around in circles, it loses energy in the form of photons which is not good, so the bending radius of the accelerator is smaller; consequently the circumference is bigger. The size is also a combination of cost and practicalities! So thank you Mr Redman, you’ve really cleared that up for us. Is it necessary to flood the masses with an inundation of scientific bombast? Maybe more people would support the Hadron Collider if there wasn’t such a dense copse of jargon associated with its explanation. Is this why so many people have fallen out of love with science?

Married to the Web

One of the University of Salford’s latest initiatives was the Digital Cluster (founded in 2005). The Cluster is a network of academics, practitioners and teachers from across the University, some of whom specialise in computer and video game design and research, digital animation, new media, virtual environments, mobile media, interactivity and digital arts and cultures.

One of the projects currently underway is investigating the potential of social commentary on social websites, in particular SecondLife. This was inspired by many online ‘embassies’ of a far-right French political party and shows the website may have a far greater degree of social conscience than the consumer aesthetics of SecondLife suggests. The project, as a whole, aims to bridge the gap between virtual reality and reality itself and to compare virtual avatars to their real creators.

For years, the consensus has been that the main way to reduce the global damage and reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. This was first endorsed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and extended in Kyoto 13 years later. At present, we all can show for this ‘devotion’ to the plan is a long list of unmet targets followed by a rise in the number of people who believe climate change is ‘not worth worrying about’ or ‘someone else’s problem’.

So why has this approach failed? Well, economically, it proposes a cure arguably worse than the disease. It is estimated that by doing nothing about global warming, its damaging effects will cost the world close to £4 trillion a year by the end of the century. To prevent this, a plan has been drawn that would require cuts in global emissions in order to keep average temperatures from rising any higher than 2 degrees Celsius above current industrial levels (the amount the Earth is expected to warm even if the summit is a success).

Whilst this goal is ambitious, many experts do agree that it could make a difference to global warming’s effects. The problem lies in the fact that, to support this goal, the leading industrial nations would have to place a huge tax on fossil fuels. By the end of the century, said tax would be £300 per tonne of CO2, or £341 a tonne. This would reduce world GDP by around £30 trillion a year. No wonder we aren’t getting anywhere. It also means that, to support this figure, alternative energy sources would need to be developed that produce 20 times the energy they do now. For all the optimistic talk of sustainable, carbon-friendly resources, none are capable of bearing the extra load. The fact is, around half the world’s electricity comes from coal.

For emerging, yet poorer countries like China and India, the figure is around 80%. For them, burning fossil fuels is the only way to rise out of poverty. A memorable (paraphrased) quote from a summit read, “The Chinese leaders understand the threat of global warming perfectly. However, they have millions of people under them who are more interested in making money.” It is worth bearing in mind. So what can we do? Instead of trying to make fossil fuels more expensive, we should focus on cheapening alternative energy resources.

The cost of fully implementing the Kyoto Protocol (in terms of lost economic growth) has been estimated at around $180 billion a year. For around half that amount, we could increase our spending by fifty times on research and development for technological breakthroughs such as smart grids, or ultra-efficient batteries on hydrogen fuel cells. These will be needed to break the addiction to fossil fuels. Developing nations would be far more likely to follow a plan that supports their economy, rather than handicaps it. At present, we have little more than good wishes and fanciful promises that either mean nothing or have zero chance of fulfilment. If we are serious about removing the knife over our heads, we need action that actually works rather than conscience-boozing and moral posturing that makes us feel good, but only lowers the knife further.

Overall, the Digital Cluster is a versatile and ambitious project that has been recognised by the government as ‘a key example of British university supporting new sector growth and engagement’. The report highlights the Digital Cluster as ‘a forum and centre of excellence, which combines and leads on high quality research, academic enterprise and teaching in areas of informatics, digital media and new and convergent technologies.

Addendum: This article was written before the close of the conference, it would appear the author’s tears were realized.

Wonderful Wonderful Copenhagen

As many of us are aware, global warming is a serious issue looming over the collective heads of the world and may be causing serious (possibly catastrophic) problems now and in the future. However, will the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference produce a concrete plan to reduce carbon emissions perceived to be the major pollutants? I have serious doubts and reservations about its ability to do so.

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Another project achieved by the Cluster is the Digital Economy Scooping Study. In layman’s terms, the project acts as an evaluator, looking at subjects such as infrastructure and equipment in order to determine where grants should be given and where help if needed, can be assured in order to ensure UK leadership in researching the field. It is primarily focused on the application of new research, rather than the preservation of the outcomes of previous research which has been the focus of similar projects.

Finally, the most ‘solid’ of its three main projects has been the recognition of the government as ‘a key example of British university supporting new sector growth and engagement’. The report highlights the Digital Cluster as ‘a forum and centre of excellence, which combines and leads on high quality research, academic enterprise and teaching in areas of informatics, digital media and new and convergent technologies. Overall, the Digital Cluster is a versatile and ambitious project that has been recognised by the government as ‘a key example of British university supporting new sector growth and engagement’. The report highlights the Digital Cluster as ‘a forum and centre of excellence, which combines and leads on high quality research, academic enterprise and teaching in areas of informatics, digital media and new and convergent technologies. Overall, the Digital Cluster is a versatile and ambitious project that has been recognised by the government as ‘a key example of British university supporting new sector growth and engagement’.

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I wish I wasn’t your average teenage Salfordian boy, but I am. I live with my loving parents, older brother and older sister. People say I’m dominant, but they’re wrong. I wouldn’t say I’m a sport-wise person and I’d prefer to watch rather than play, so I follow my favourite football clubs; Chelsea FC and Queens Park Rangers (don’t say Manchester United fans here in Salford. My brother is very interested in Mixed Martial Arts which, in layman’s terms, means he likes hurting people. This sport has never really appealed to me! I am a keen, yet hopeless musician who has tried and failed many times to play the guitar, still only mastering simple chords. I am very interested in politics, to the chagrin of my family, who know me to be quite argumentative. I am passionate about many different topical issues and, apparently, I have an opinion on everything. I’ve always believed ambivalence should be a crime.

Ambitions

In life, I hope to achieve a great deal. One thing I’ve always found appealing is the thought of travelling the world, visiting new and interesting places, whether it be Moscow or Madrid, Toronto or Tokyo. However, this will have to be put on a ‘back-burner’ until I attain my goal of graduating university with a PhD in Medicine, but overall, psychiatry has always seemed the most appealing to me. I have great expectations for my future as my elder sister is a lawyer and my cousin, a doctor. I have high hopes. I am undecided as to which career path I will take.

Experience of working on this project

I feel privileged to be part of such a prestigious enterprise as Salford University. It has been enlightening writing about topical issues that are bothering me, almost like stress relief. It has definitely improved my understanding of researching and writing articles. However, whilst I have wanted to do more than anything is to show the general public that teenagers are not ruffians and vagabonds and that the media representation of British youth is unjustly stereotyping the majority of honest, hard-working teens. Not just this, I wanted to also show that the views of youths are just as mature and valuable as those of adults.

I am just your typical teenager from Salford. But that’s boring, so I’ll go into detail. I live with my parents, brother (unfortunately and my dog, Spoty-wart, I am reasonably good at keeping, but not a fan of football. However, I do support Manchester United by default. My brother is more into wrestling which is one of those sports where you have to be careful in one sometimes start a fight. I am also trying to learn the piano, tin whistle and trombone. In my spare time, I am currently waiting one of five lives on computer games, as well as the internet and TV. Oh, and I use the cinema and cinema from time to time.

Ambitions

At the moment, I am trying to figure them out! I have high hopes. I am currently waiting one of five lives on computer games, as well as the internet and TV. Oh, and I use the cinema and cinema from time to time.

Experience of working on this project

Initially, I was apprehensive about working on the project due to the wide range of topics covered and the prestige of the magazine we were supplementing. I nevertheless, soon enjoyed the opportunity to voice my opinions once I began writing articles and would definitely take part in a similar project should another ever be offered.

I have quite a bubbly and happy demeanour and am known for my lively, witty sense of humour. But, I can adopt quite a mature and demure stance in the face of adversity. I have a very large close-knit family network. But, I do enjoy spending time alone, reading or studying. I am also lucky enough to have a widely spread, varied group of friends where I know I can rely on and trust fully. My family and I am massive Manchester United fans. I enjoy different types of music but I have a particular passion for indie which I pick up and carry on with matches just for the sheer exhaustion of the atmosphere when we win (which we nearly ALWAYS do), I enjoy staying as well as listen to. My current favourite bands are The Kooks and Me First and the Money. I have recently approached by a modelling agency and now hold a contract and portfolio with which I hope to earn some money to believe I would be made of me to form a fair judgement when my policies. I only know a moderate knowledge of the various political parties and their policies.

Ambitions

I have great expectations for my future as my elder sister is a lawyer and my cousin, a doctor. I have high hopes. I am trying to get a job of such GCSE grades and A levels and my parents have already started saving for my university fees. I believe this training will be a major part of my adult-life, and I also hope to keep up my guitar. Although I know what type of job I would like, primarily a well-paid one! I am reminded of as to which career path I will take.

Experience of this project

I feel privileged to be part of such a prestigious enterprise. I am particularly honoured to be working alongside such an exalted and influential organisation.

I guess from my name you can tell that I am not entirely British, but fear not, this girl’s 100% a British Citizen. I am, however, also a fairly Italian who enjoys nothing more than having a conversation using my hands! I live with my Mum, Nana and brother in an ordinary detached house, but it is nothing in comparison to our traditional Italian apartment – how I love to bask in the rays of the sun that shines over all of Florence. In addition to my Italian ‘addiction’, I also enjoy dancing and playing the piano. When I can’t be surrounded by the sun, I like to lose myself in music. The gentle resonance of a classical piano piece can be completely overwhelming. Boring. I am not in comparison to my fellow classmates Sam, I am a proud and privileged Manchester United fan. Who wouldn’t be? And, whilst Sam shoots down my ear “Who will win the league this year?”. I think he should be anything but confident. I have definitely been blessed with the family and friends who surround me. I couldn’t ask for better; such a variety of characters working together to make a friendship that is strong. Despite arguments, I love my brother Giorgio dearly and treat my cousinLeila like a sister. Two 14 year olds in the same family are invariably in competition with each other and often this applies to us. However, when we start to gossip, there is no stopping us!

Ambitions

Where to begin? I could start with my education. As you know I attend St Ambrose Barlow R C High School, but since my high school is finished, I hope to attend either Liverpool or Manchester College or Bolton Grammar Sixth Form. I am not a fan of long distance travelling, so after lengthy conversations with my Mum, I have decided to attend the University of Manchester, where I hope to study, I am a PhD in Medicine. I shall name a gift to help those with problems to live a healthy lifestyle.

Experience of working on this project

When I first heard about the challenge, I have to admit, I panicked! The thought of creating a magazine with just four contributors scared me. But once underway, not only did I feel honoured, I just couldn’t wait to meet the challenges that were lying ahead of us. It has been a wonderful experience and I feel that my point of view on today’s society has had a chance to be expressed. This is an excellent project that should be available more often to teenagers, because, not only do we express our own opinions about subjects as controversial as politics, war and life, but also voice opinions about basically being young. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Salford University for giving me the opportunity to speak!
The school was the first school in Salford to be awarded Specialist School’s status in 1999 and was re-designated in 2003 and 2007. St Ambrose Barlow has now been awarded a second specialism, Applied Learning, and has also been designated a High Performing Specialist School.

In 2004, St Ambrose Barlow was identified by the DCSF as one of the country’s top 100 most improved schools for the period 2001 to 2004. The following achievement awards have been presented to the school by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust:

- 2004: Value Added Club 70% Club and Most Improved Club
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- 2007: Value added club
- 2008: 60% or more A*-C including English and Maths
- 2008: Top 20 Specialist Schools achieving 60% or higher in 2007
- 2008: Success in Adding Value and Most Improved Schools Award

Ofsted Outstanding School 2005 and 2008

National School of Creativity
(one of only 30 in the country in both primary and secondary sectors)

Artmark Gold Award
The school was awarded Artmark Gold by the Arts Council in 2005 and re-designated in 2008.

Inclusion Quality Mark
St Ambrose Barlow was awarded Inclusion Quality Mark in 2007

Healthy Schools Award
In 2009 the school was awarded Healthy Schools status

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Awards
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Forthcoming Events at St Ambrose Barlow

7th January
Making Sense of Your Child’s Report
A workshop for Parents

5th February
Key Stage 3 and 4
Boys and Girls Badminton Championships

28th January
Year 7 Sing Up Project
Music and Performing Arts Department

29th January
Salford Children’s Book Award Ceremony
LOWRY THEATRE, SALFORD

8th February
MFL Department
Trip to Berlin – all year groups

1st March
Year 8 Retreats with Just Youth Chaplaincy Service

11th March
BBC school report
Radio broadcast from St Ambrose Barlow to BBC radio stations in the North West

18th March
Part 2 – Year 7 Sing up Project

Easter 2010
Art Trip to CHINA

Ipso Facto Reflections

A voice can spread, and build a home,
That’s warm and safe and calm.
A voice can spew out fear and hate,
And spread such painful harm.

A voice can judge for others, men,
Whom they have never met.
A voice can look into the past,
And save us from regret.

A voice can make the Lords a-leap,
Like Brown, Cameron, Barack.
A voice can pierce like an alarm
When the Tigers claw it back.

A voice can question, pry and poke,
The timing of the Games.
A voice can beam out an idea,
That shines through rivals’ shame.

A voice can make the Lords a-leap,
Like Brown, Cameron, Barack.
A voice can pierce like an alarm
When the Tigers claw it back.

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Like Brown, Cameron, Barack.
A voice can pierce like an alarm
When the Tigers claw it back.

A voice just might have saved Dubai:
Now, here’s the final choice.
When opportunity knocks, will you,
Respond or silence your voice?

Samuel, Gemma, Niall, Ilaria