

Comment & Analysis

Liam O'Brien



Students must stop complaining and start acting on their grievances

Students need to have the courage to question those they complain about

I often dream of no-confidencing our beloved editor, Henry. Never so strong was this desire as now, with the approaching dawn and my presence in the office uncomfortably colliding. As a direct result of my boss's affable sociability, I had just hours earlier been subject to attend the distinguished 'Mr York', and by consequence caught the perennial whimsy of Dan Taylor's penis.

In fact, no-confidencing Mr Foy wouldn't be too difficult [Henry I'm going somewhere with this, I promise]. With my polished skills in arch sophistry, I would organise a *Nouse* meeting (having got everyone absolutely bladdered beforehand), persuade some of the more doltish acolytes of my case and propose a Chewbacca defence to gloriously overthrow the Foy empire and assume de facto leadership.

Of course, I would never actually no-confidence Henry, firstly because I don't believe that he's a raving incompetent and furthermore because if I did, my friendship circle would reduce in size substantially. Whilst the first motive isn't really applicable on a wider scale, the latter represents the reason we don't question and challenge the decisions of our society and college chairs on a regular enough basis. I, and the majority of you, are cowards.

We have thrust these people into the sacred fraternity of the campus celeb, but I believe the reverence they have been shown, this year moreso than last, is only notional. We hear bitching about college chairs all the time, mostly from people within the JCRC

cliques, so why not address the problem face to face? If you think your society funds are being mismanaged or someone isn't pulling their weight then have a go! Take a close look at the figures released today on college expenditure. Why, despite an enthusiastic surcharge on the Freshers' tickets available online prior to autumn term, does James college appear less disposed towards rewarding those same freshers with small events or trips than, say, Vanbrugh?

A couple of weeks back the chairman of York Tories stepped down from his position after his article in this very rag suggested that students vote for UKIP in the European elections. Comments on our website and everything I've heard since suggest that the ex-chair is, by all accounts, a nice guy. Being nice doesn't get results, though, and the right decision was made. If someone isn't doing their job then it's time to go.

Whilst I'm hardly the definition of a diehard conservative, they had the right idea. If we learned anything from the Grace Fletcher-Hackwood saga last year, when an elected YUSU officer was narrowly no-confidenced for plucky, largely ineffectual fisticuffs, it's that the whole charade is profoundly entertaining.

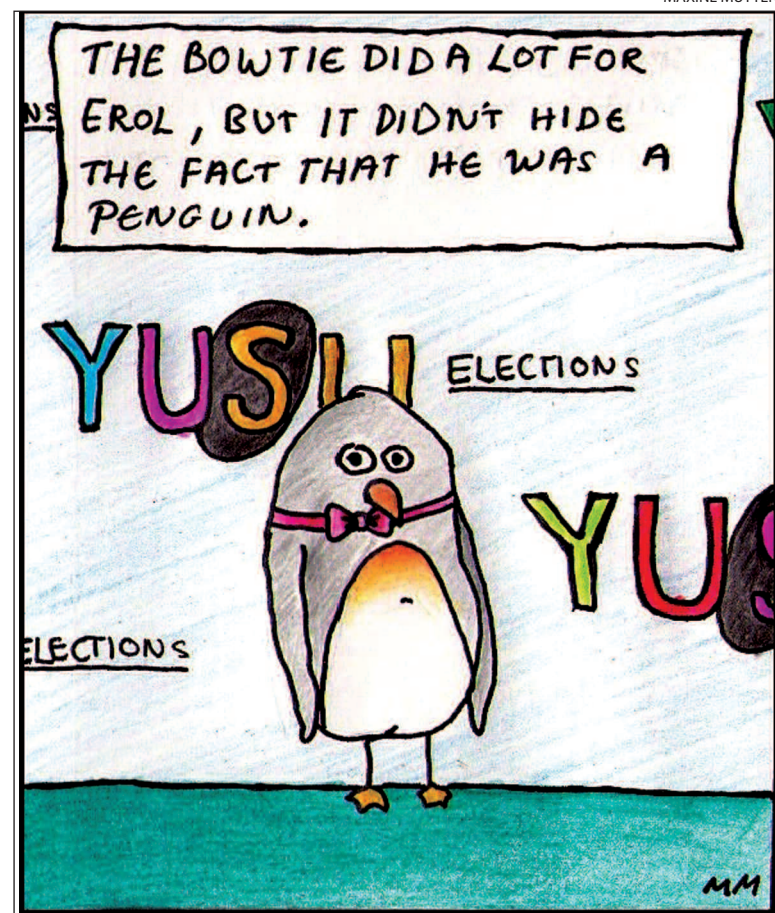
I'm not suggesting that the student body descend into no-confidence induced anarchy, but letting a few selective heads roll would make my dreary days under the waterboard of *Nouse* office banter more tolerable. Everyone's more than happy to click the anonymous 'RON' for YUSU voting, in spite of the knowledge that

people have worked hard and spent considerable time on their campaigns. RON is seen as an acceptable choice not because anyone really believes that all candidates aren't up to task, but because a lot of people perceive putting yourself up for nomination as shameless self-promotion. Why avoid the all-important no-confidence, which is essentially RON with a bit of material oomph?

So let's get the ball rolling with a few material targets. I'm sick of hearing about esoteric and ill-advised student campaigns, and do you know what? If the admittedly loveable Tim Ngwena tells me to "Keep it Cool" one more time I think I might take myself to a quiet room with a rope and stool.

This maudlin garbage that Henry is playing on Spotify is killing me. Bye bye Henry.

MAXINE MUTTEN



Jane Grenville



Why acting warm and cuddly won't work

By the time you read this, I will have sat my first closed exam for 29 years. The prospect of walking into Central Hall armed only with my pencil case is nothing short of daunting. I'm cursing myself for not working more consistently throughout the year, for not consolidating what I'd learnt after each lesson, and for leaving revision to the last minute. And the cause of all this angst? My attempts to learn something that is, literally, foreign to me – Mandarin Chinese.

I decided to learn Chinese for several reasons. Foremost, perhaps, is the fact that there is a sizeable Chinese population on cam-

pus, and I'm PVC for all students, not just the ones who come from a similar liberal intellectual middle-class British background as myself. I wanted to be able demonstrate to everyone that (to the extent that a PVC represents that amorphous beast, 'the University'), the University takes its international population seriously.

Secondly, I wanted to gain some insight into the causes of interpretational difficulties across the divide between Indo-European and Asian languages. It certainly hasn't taken long to find them – a language system comprising of no tenses, no articles, no alphabet and a completely different way of con-

structing sentences creates monumental problems for any beginner, let alone a student trying to express complex analytical ideas at

"Achieving inclusivity requires everyone to get out of their comfort zone"

degree level.

And thirdly, as my ageing brain atrophies, giving it a thor-

oughly rigorous workout once a week hopefully keeps it on its toes.

So I think it's fair to say that I'm well and truly outside of my comfort zone here – not an easy thing to admit to the student population as publicly as this. But it is worth saying, if only so I can make the major point of this little ramble; the VC has asked me to champion the strand of 'Inclusivity' in the new University Plan for 2009-19. And so it seems to me that I can either say 'Let's all be warm, cuddly and inclusive and love one another', or I can point out that to achieve inclusivity requires EVERYBODY to get out of their comfort zone and start making a

real effort to understand and debate differences, and to decide where the extents and boundaries of toleration lie. And of course, the latter is the only honest approach. Toleration is a central tenet of this University and it is hard to put into practice. It requires a breadth of imagination and empathy that really stretches us, and a firmness of purpose that says that some actions are anti-social and cannot be tolerated on an inclusive campus. I'll leave you to think about how we can achieve that – and doubtless *Nouse* will provide a comments section on their website, so I look forward to hearing some of your thoughts.