

NOUSE

Est. 1964



The consequence of complacency

The BNP's racist dreams have become a potent reality. For the first time in its 27-year history, the BNP have gained an MEP seat in the 'safe' left-of-centre Yorkshire region. But false illusions must end now: there is no safety in political apathy.

Repercussions of the BNP's enlargement seep into every region of our student microcosm. The BNP were careful in their acceptance speeches to avoid the issue of race; but this is a party who deny membership to anyone of non-Caucasian origin and is committed to "stemming and reversing the tide of non-white immigration." Their extremist stance infiltrates aspects of all our lives and the people who fill them. Now is not the time to neglect your right to vote.

Anti-fascist activity should not stop at the ballot box. As students, we are a body of voters with some of the most passionate political views in the country – and vehemently anti-fascist views at that. We have a responsibility to ensure that the BNP do have the opportunity to further exercise their nationalist muscles. They've already become far too big for comfort.

Yorkshire's Hope not Hate campaign made its presence known on campus, but it's not enough. We need to place disillusionment with centre-party politics aside and recognise the growing authority of an intrinsically racist and increasingly influential party on our literal and metaphorical doorsteps.

Nouse has always remained committed to standing firm behind the democratic cause. Not only does our student media have a responsibility to uphold and advocate disgust of neo-Nazism, but so does our Union. YUSU have a commitment with our students to reflect and represent their views. They should do all they call within their legal powers to ensure that a platform for the BNP is never tolerated.

If we want to remain accommodated with the comfy liberalism of our spoilt daily lives and relationships, where fairness and democracy is taken for granted, we must take individual responsibility and fight against the dangerous, terrifying and disgusting rise of fascism. This doesn't just involve students of York, but the collective responsibility of all students across upstanding Yorkshire universities seeking to guard our rights to equality and democracy. Complacency ends now.

Protecting the past

Much has been made, in both this newspaper and its campus rival, of onomous whispering about media charter overhaul and 'moves to stifle the campus press'. To many on campus, this will both mean little and seemingly make little difference. If the latest threat is realised, all will be affected.

There are very few other, if any, chronicles of life at this University than *Nouse*, and in particular - due to the lengthy gaps between printed editions - its website. Nouse.co.uk's online archives go back to February 2005; finding information on student life at York prior to then outside of the Borthwick archives is an almost-impossible task.

Student life is, of course, not what those who would censor online archives have in mind. When appeals are made to 'balance people's right to enjoy their university experience with the need for accountability', they refer only to the assaults on students, the no-confiscating of JCRC chairs, and the mistakes that they - personally - may well make in their elected, sometimes paid, and always accountable and responsible positions.

This newspaper does not exist to ensure all students who serve in elected roles, doing important work for students, graduate without employment prospects due to unflattering - and easily searchable - headlines. However, those who in positions of responsibility must not be so arrogant to demand a clean slate upon degree completion. University is a place to grow as a person, not a place to have fun and act without consequences.

Removing online articles not only restricts this newspaper's ability to narrate the trials and tribulations of this campus and the figures that come and go, it also prevents it constructing a tale of the great successes and achievements that often occur. This campus has a rich and varied history, and those in power must accept that remembering the bad times is just as, if not more important, than remembering the good.

An uncomfortable position

This newspaper rejoiced at the RAE results when our departments were ranked among the best in the country. Finally we realised that not getting into Oxbridge wasn't as bad as we'd originally thought, because York was prestigious after all. But now comes the revelation that the University has fallen out of the Top 10 in the *Times Good University Guide*. For an institution that prides itself on being one of the best in the 1994 Group and demands of students grades similar if not equal to those required for Oxbridge acceptance, such a slide is simply unacceptable.

York's considered contemporaries - Bristol, Durham, Warwick - all sit comfortably in the Top 10. With York lingering with the Exeter's and Bath's of this world, the prestige that such associations and league position infers looks doubtful for York in the coming future.

The areas in which York score badly are concerning. Poor graduate prospects not only worry existing students, but in the current economic climate, those who are considering their academic future in high schools across the country are unlikely to choose a university whose post-study employment prospects are poor.

This University needs to take this news seriously. It owes it to both the students of today and tomorrow. This newspaper sincerely hopes that Heslington Hall will do everything it can to improve our national ranking

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No big spenders: JCRCs coveting college cash



Charlotte Hogarth-Jones

Someone once told me that there are three things you should never talk about at dinner parties – religion, politics, and of course, money. Apparently, whilst nasal hair removal, fungal infections and the use of Viagra are happily debated nationwide, everyone makes a beeline for the beetroot crisps when it comes to talking dosh.

Personal spending habits vary wildly, so perhaps unsurprisingly students are starting to kick up a bit of a fuss on how JCRCs are spending their precious moolah.

Half of the student population seem to want college chairs to stain their hard earned funds into some form of York Gringott's on acceptance, never to be seen again. As new allowances are allocated to colleges every year, it does seem a little unnecessary for treasurers to become Gollum-esque, hoarding their shiny pennies secretly, and greeting freshers with little more than bread and dripping on arrival.

On the other hand, the temptation for us all to take the Grenville Social Fund and, what I believe is termed "make it rain" can

be too much. Blowing the budget at a supermarket sweep on elephantine sofas and X-Boxes in the first few weeks of term brings only brief satisfaction – when the springs are gone and the disks are scratched, we start to question just how great those initial investments were.

Yet, as one who tends to

"Elephantine sofas and X-Boxes in the first few weeks of term bring only brief satisfaction"

shamefully fall into the buy-shoes-and-then-only-eat-pasta category, I have to confess my preference towards the latter. Thankfully, I belong to a college which seems to think along the same wavelength.

When I first discovered Derwent was the poorest college, I embarrassingly assumed that the

powers that be had just given way to the same kind of impulse purchasing that I'm so often prone to, splashing their cash on things in shiny packaging left, right and centre. Having taken everything into consideration though, I've decided that I'm really very proud to say that Derwent is a bit on the skint side. They inherited hardly any money from the previous year compared to other colleges, and they've spent the money on what it was designed for – I don't think there's any shame in that. Whilst I am the last person to be deftly hopping around the netball courts, I'm very glad that thanks to my college's initiative, those who want to, can.

Of course Derwent aren't the only one's using the Grenville fund as it was intended, and I hope more will follow suit. Think of it, if you will, that your grandparents are giving you some pocket money. It's fine to spend it all, because hopefully if you're very good, they'll give you some more. Just make sure that when they ask you what you've bought, it isn't something you're ashamed to tell them.

Jonathan Fransman



Why we must hold our elected officials to account

From the village parish council to the House of Commons, a necessary condition of any democratic organisation is accountability. Our campus microcosm must not be the exception; the representatives of the Union must be accountable to its stakeholders, the students. Even more crucial is a force that will hold the University – and especially its inadequate, winged-monkey commercial services – to account.

Though the part played by those involved in student politics should not be undervalued, the majority of ensuring accountability rests on campus media's shoulders. This is not to say that it is a burden accepted grudgingly. It would be ridiculous to suggest that, just like their national equivalents, campus media is not motivated by desires which occasionally result in relatively minor issues being blown out of proportion.

Though campus media does make mistakes, the service it provides is invaluable. If plans discussed by the University and the Union to further restrict the media come to fruition, campus media will be rendered effectively impotent.

The welfare argument advanced by the University holds no weight. University employees must be accountable to student consumers. Moreover, they are fundamentally distinct from the average student who is effectively, through the indirect route of YUSU funding, a stakeholder in all Union funded media.

The choice made by individuals to occupy elected positions also ren-

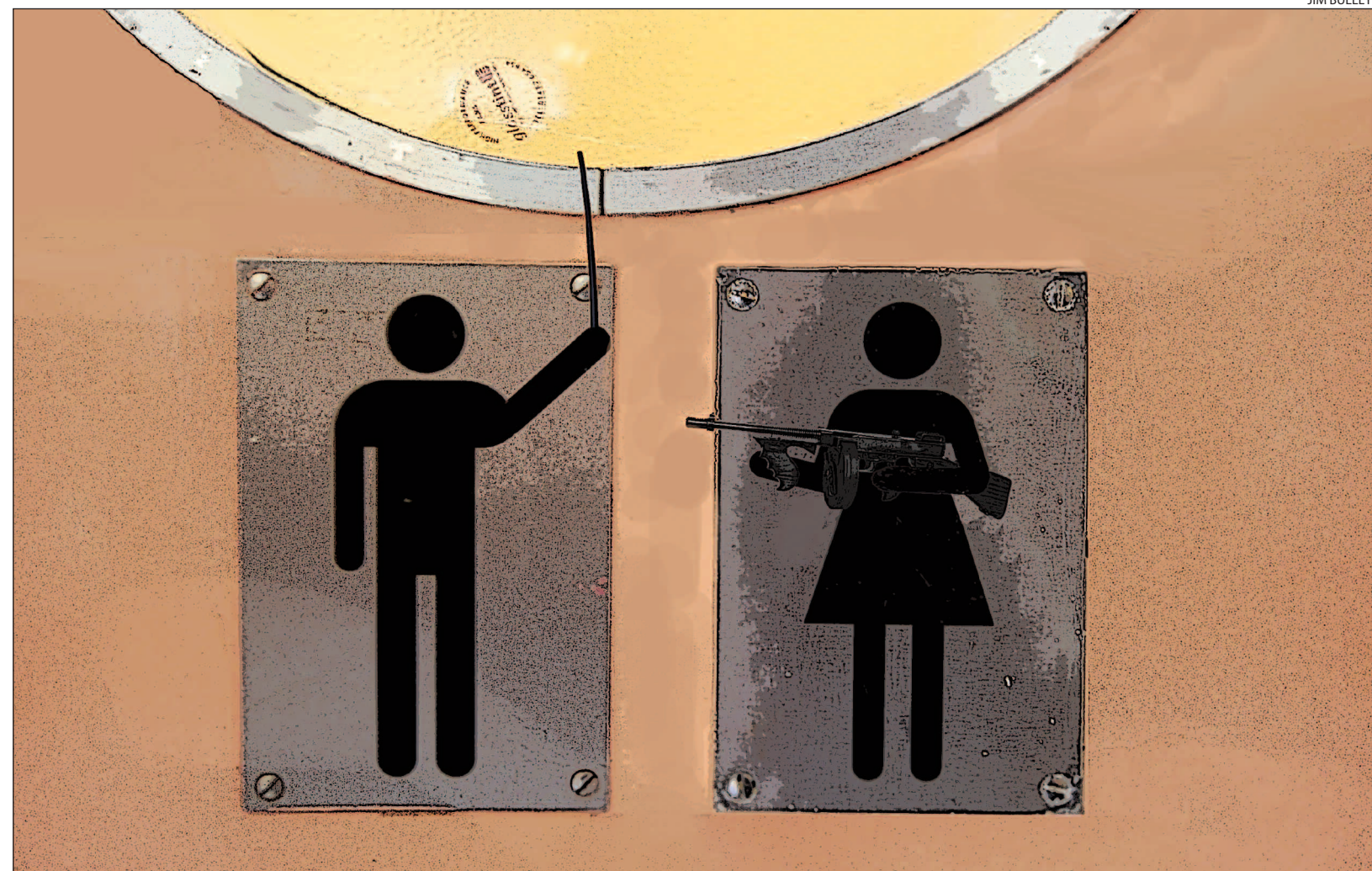
ders them fair game for campus media. This does not mean the individual forgoes their welfare entirely, just that they can be legitimately criticised on occasions which bear relevance to their job role.

Regrettably – as in the case of a former Welfare Sabbatical Officer – spill-over between work and personal life is sometimes inevitable.

Though the internet extenuates the matter, suggestions that the *Nouse* website should require a university log-in are farcical. The website has become a victim of its own success; the sheer number of hits has publicised the transgressions of York's political sphere to a national audience. For the Union and the University to vindicate this accomplishment in order to hide their own shortcomings would be inexcusable. As well as damaging the reputation of York as a media university, it would constitute the coup de grace for the relative financial



HARRIET ARSCOTT



JIM BULLEY

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The reaction to the LGBT welfare motions was disappointing and missed the point completely

Transgender transgression: how York reacted to GNTs

The reaction to the LGBT welfare motions was disappointing and missed the point completely

The LGBT welfare motions of the last UGM all reached quoracy and passed; perhaps highlighting that the university bubble is far more liberal than the big bad world. However, the most well-voiced reaction to the motions was disappointing.

To sweep aside one vein of argument: practically speaking, what was proposed was not ridiculous. Small changes to the "sex" section on university paperwork is a negligible undertaking. The provision of gender-neutral toilets "where possible" is also not unreasonable. Lest we forget, we're in the middle of a huge campus extension, a perfect opportunity for change and development, and I'm certainly not persuaded that Heslington East is so well-planned and close to completion that the provision of gender neutral toilets would be a great difficulty. Furthermore, when it comes to this campus the use of disabled toilets is an easy and perfectly acceptable temporary solution. It is blowing it out of proportion to see this as labelling trans-gender students as disabled: it is merely a matter of convenience.

But what about not practically speaking? What about those who stood up, if mainly behind a veil of Internet anonymity, and said "man up" and "grow a pair"? Their inconsiderate puns, not mine. The ignorance within the main body of opposition was astounding. It is one thing not to believe there is a distinction between gender and sex but it seems clear that most people simply didn't understand the dis-

inction between the two. Sex is, as Peter Warner-Medley suggested, biological; it is "asking what's between our trousers". The question of sex creates obvious issues for transgender students, who define against their sex, so gender seems the more appropriate question. However, it is not like "putting on a form what cock size are you or how big is your penis", quote Warner-Medley again. Whilst the ignorance of the opposition has been astonishing, the heavy-handed attitude of

"On the whole, it's not bigotry but ignorance that causes the arguments"

some LGBT supporters has exacerbated the situation.

In general, including "T" in the LGBT umbrella is unhelpful in every way other than administrative convenience. By entering into the discussion on transgender we are separating out the issues of gender and sexuality. People are using this debate to take another swipe at the gay community when really it is totally irrelevant. Whilst the gay community are deservedly retaliating, it surely leaves non-gay trans students feeling isolated and misrepresented.

What needs to be taken into consideration is that this is a diffi-

cult debate because for the majority of people it is wholly unfamiliar. I was born a "girl" and I've always felt like a "girl". It did not occur to me that one day I might not feel this way. Why would it? It had to be explained to me that someone might feel that their sex betrays their true gender. Even as someone who's never felt any gender-sex confusion or disparity, I understand, and in a society where it is far from an accepted norm, to be honest, I don't envy it.

Those who are in favour of welfare considerations for transgender students need to recognise the leap in understanding it takes for those who have never experienced gender issues. The misunderstanding of key terminology such as "sex" and "gender" is symptomatic of a wider confusion and it is going to take time and patience to educate and explain. On the whole, it's not bigotry but ignorance that causes the arguments. Some people will of course remain in opposition, but more people would be won over if the main participants in this debate took a step back from all the anger and frustration.

Ignorance aside, it is astonishing that people feel the need to arbitrarily dismiss the welfare needs of a minority, even if it is a minority they do not understand. But with the motions passing, it proves once again that the most well-voiced opinions are the most angry, not the most prevalent. We should be proud to be part of an accepting and progressive community who uphold minority representation.

Loosen the Buckle on Party discipline



Michael Appleton

According to the Conservative Party, York student Ralph Buckle is more important and influential than Lord Tebbit. That's right, a second year university student is more influential than a former chairman, a former right hand man to Thatcher and a peer of the realm.

It is difficult to draw any other conclusion than this when you hear the harsh penalty Buckle paid last month. In an article in this newspaper, he argued in favour of both the Conservatives and UKIP, stating, "I favour the latter and would encourage you to do the same". Tebbit meanwhile urged voters not to "vote for the major parties". Furthermore, it is not difficult to imagine which party an arch Euro-sceptic like Tebbit will be voting for instead of the Tories. Not too dissimilar? Not according to the Conservative central office who promptly expelled Buckle, whilst David Cameron gave Tebbit a slap on the wrist.

Not only is this grossly unfair to Buckle, who undoubtedly would have been treated differently had he been a Lord, but it also gives an insight into the rigidity of party discipline in modern politics.

It's not that different across the floor. Labour would expel me if I urged you to vote Conservative or any other party, and I'm sure the Lib Dems would confiscate your sandals if you said something similar. It appears modern political parties are completely intolerant of dissent. Take the case of Hazel Blears. She criticised Gordon Brown's appearance on YouTube and found herself in the harsh glare of the media over her expenses. I am of course in agreement with the Prime Minister that her claims were unacceptable, but she endured more coverage than other ministers. Meanwhile, during his tenure as Tory leader Michael Howard sacked candidate Howard Flight just for talking about tax cuts. Such is the tightrope that party members have to tread.

This level of discipline is completely ridiculous. It is important for government, or attempting to gain power, but complete allegiance is a nonsense. Politics is all about settling differences; clearly not everyone is going to agree on how problems should be solved.

All Cameron's iron rod has done is disunite the campus Tories. Why would anyone want to join a party as dogmatic as the Conservatives now appear? Anna Appleton has her work cut out to bolster the number of Tories, which is well below what it should be at this point in the electoral cycle. But more than that, she needs to ensure every article she writes, and every speech she makes is approved by Cameron and Co., else she may face the consequences Norman Tebbit didn't.

Join the debate at
nouse.co.uk/comment