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### WHEN HARRY MET FOLLY

► The prince will ride out this crisis but his antics have sparked a storm over media freedom

  
**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

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Jonathan Leake, Science Editor Published: 5 May 2013

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Objectors oppose both the choice of Prince Andrew and the conduct of the election (ChinaFotoPress/Getty)

36 comments

livefyre  David Colquhoun

34 people listening



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David Colquhoun

1 hour ago

Like @Robert Ball, I was puzzled by Paul Nurse's suggestion that "However, David's [Colquhoun] views about our royal connections are very much in a minority",

I'm not aware that fellows have ever been asked about the matter. I'd be interested to know the answer, but I don't, and neither, I fear, does Paul Nurse.

1  Recommend [Reply](#)

Henry Li

2 hours ago

The Royal Society shouldn't really be indulging in this sort of sycophantic behaviour. FRS is for people who have made substantial achievement in expanding the frontier of scientific knowledge, it's not for people that only get to swan around charitable events because of accidents of birth.

3    Recommend [Reply](#)

Robin Thomas

2 hours ago

Where are all the monarchists today? Cat got your tongue?

2   Recommend [Reply](#)

Warwick Mason

3 hours ago

I nominate myself King of Coventry and therefore claim my entitlement to a Royal fellowship, I have completed the de minimis number of ballot papers and need to know where to stick them.

[Recommend](#) [Reply](#)

Michael

2 hours ago

Avoiding (the invited obvious) answer, Does anyone know you have got loose from the dongeon in Warwick Casshole ? I think there may be a few bricks missing in the wall, mason. <D:-))

[Recommend](#) [Reply](#)

David Colquhoun

3 hours ago

If anyone wants a rather more blunt appraisal of recent events at the Royal Society, I recommend James Wilsdon who is professor of science and democracy at the University of Sussex, but was previously director of science policy at the Royal Society. [He says](#)

"as I witnessed at first hand, for such an incredibly clever bunch of people, elected themselves on merit (the very antithesis of hereditary royal privilege) many fellows of the Royal Society were susceptible to feudal levels of swooning at the merest flash of royal ermine."

As we say in the blogosphere, ROFL.

2   Recommend [Reply](#)

M Sheridan

3 hours ago

A Meritocracy?

Hardly.

We expect citizens of the UK to respect our institutions when this sort of blatant fixing takes place?

3    Recommend Reply**Alan Hawkes**

6 hours ago

As it is the Royal Society I can accept having the current monarch as a Fellow, or honorary Fellow, but the rest?

3    Recommend Reply**Richard Walters**

8 hours ago

I hope that Cameron doesn't use this voting tactic when he is forced to hold a referendum on Europe.

3    Recommend Reply**Helen M**

9 hours ago

He didn't go to Eton. How can he be qualified to do anything in public life? Surely going to Eton is essential: ask the PM, he knows this to be true.

3    Recommend Reply**Robert Ball**

9 hours ago

Surely this story illustrates perfectly the absurdity of monarchy in the 21st century. When the world of science based on observation, experiment, rational thought and logic collides with the world of royalty based on myth, magic and deference, the result is bound to be messy. The idea that Andrew Windsor or indeed any member of the royal family is deserving of a seat/ place in a society of scientists is absurd and frankly an insult to people who have gained their place due to talent and hard work.

I cant help but notice the person trying to defend the rigged ballot and justify the royal connections is a Sir ( an absurd medieval title handed out by royalty ). Call me cynical but is it just possible that there is a connection between Sir Paul Nurse's title and the fellowships/ patronages handed out to the royal family ?

I note also that Sir Paul Nurse claims that David Colquhoun's views are 'very much in the minority' when the data shows that only 11% supported Andrews nomination in a rigged ballot. Could it be that opinion polls about royalty that claim overwhelming support for royalty are similarly rigged ?

High time that we as a nation grew up and put away these childish ideas of kings, queens and royal magic it makes us look foolish and infantile to the rest of the world and is damaging to our own society. This sort of behaviour clearly demonstrates that getting on in the UK is about who you know and grovel to, not what you know and how hard you work.

16      Recommend Reply**David37**

9 hours ago

What a fix!

5      Recommend Reply**Robert Holmes**

9 hours ago

who next? Mik Jagger and the Spice girls?

7      Recommend Reply**Epimenides**

9 hours ago

The RS is an organisation that has as much integrity as most of the inmates of Wormwood Scrubs. It is funded by taxpayers' money and exists solely to promulgate global warming / climate change / extreme weather events / loss of biodiversity (a totally meaningless phrase) propaganda.

There is not one piece of empirical evidence that any of this is justified but the RS and its members are well paid to lie that it is.

Whether Prince Andrew is a member, or not, is a sideshow. Withdraw taxpayers funding and it would not last 12 months because of its debts.

Close it down.

4     Recommend Reply**Cornishman**

9 hours ago

@Epimenides Au contraire mon ami. The Royal Society is funded by membership fees and funds scientific research including a small amount of climate change studies but else besides.

I think you are also confusing it with the Royal Institution an entirely separate organisation with debts. Why don't you get your facts right before you post? Oh! You'd have no argument. Bless.

7      Recommend Reply**Emeritus**

6 hours ago

The Royal Society gets about fifty million pounds a year from the Government as a 'grant in aid'.

Recommend Reply

**Alan Thorpe**

10 hours ago

The EU will be adopting this voting system next rather than having a re-run until they get the result they want.

7     Recommend Reply**Dean Bainbridge**

10 hours ago

I read with interest and thought they had a point - until I read that Charles, William, Phillip & Anne are also members.

I assume the royal Corgi's will be next, together with a jar of royal honey.

It really is sycophantic nonsense. The Royal Society may be stuffed full of brilliant geniuses, but their attitude to rubbing shoulders with Royalty seems straight out of one of those many ghastly "celebrity" magazines.

Pathetic.

11     Recommend Reply**Shaun Ogden**

11 hours ago

Neither the controversies involving the sale of Sunninghill Park or his unsavory history should debar him from membership of the Royal society. The Royal Society claims it is a fellowship, which is made up of the most eminent scientists, engineers and technologists from the UK and the Commonwealth. That fellows and foreign members are elected for life through a peer review process on the basis of excellence in science.

Has Andrew contributed anything to science, engineering or technology, has he written anything ground breaking? I suspect that this fawning for royal patronage, will make the Royal Society look foolish and trivial.

15     Recommend Reply**Douglas Vere-Dresser**

12 hours ago

"its hysterical and uninformed utterances on global warming." very **UN-SCIENTIFIC**, it seems.

... and the voting system of the RS appears to be (much!?) on a par with the EU's treatment of Ireland relating to the first **FAILED** vote for membership of that farcical (not to mention the word unDemocratic) body/cadavre.

1  Recommend Reply**David Shipley**

12 hours ago

Prince Andrew and Sir Paul Nurse will get on like a house on fire, if Nassim Nicholas Taleb's story in "Antifragile" of meeting him on a plane is anything to go by. David Colquhoun should focus on more serious embarrassments to the Royal Society, like its hysterical and uninformed utterances on global warming.

4     Recommend Reply**Peter Burgess**

12 hours ago

David it is reasonable to question the evidence that scientists have used but to accuse the whole of the Royal Society of being "uninformed" is nonsense. They are informed, you may think that they have interpreted the data correctly but you show your intolerance and ignorance with this "hysterical" comment.

Not surprising for somebody supporting Andrew and who finds this story unworthy of being published.

3    Recommend Reply**David Shipley**

11 hours ago

I am not supporting Andrew, nor am I accusing the whole Royal Society of being hysterical and uninformed; however they have allowed their distinguished society to be used by those whose comments are both these things. The pronouncements of successive presidents are outside their areas of scientific expertise, and are not supported by the data or even by the IPCC.

6     Recommend Reply**Peter Burgess**

9 hours ago

What a biased comment there are plenty of scientists who do support the theory of global warning.

For any one side to completely rubbish the experts on either side shows that they have little or no idea on how to review scientific evidence.

I think any person who can remember the London fogs or the quality of the air in Northern Industrial cities or stands near our motorways today will vouch for the value of looking at cleaner ways of producing power.

By the way when you use the term "it's" you are referring to the Royal Society as a body not "those members".

3    Recommend Reply**David Shipley**

8 hours ago

You don't seem to understand that the comments go way beyond what all but a few activist scientists believe, or that they have been made in the name of the whole Society without consulting the membership.

Recommend Reply

**Bill Forrest**

12 hours ago

Harry got to Sandhurst with an "A" level in Art, after the most expensive education available. William was awarded pilot's "wings" within a couple of weeks instead of passing the proper training course. Charles has a chest full of medals and never heard a shot fired. Are we all

really as naive and sycophantic as the tabloid press seems to think?

23     Recommend Reply



**Robert Ball**

9 hours ago

**@Bill Forrest** No we are not but for some reason the tabloids, and I have to include the Times in that category, seem to think we are and that it is their duty to print royal propaganda without a scintilla of analysis or critical thought.

Incidentally I always wondered how William and Harry got to be pilots in the forces. As far as I was aware you need A levels in science subjects to become a pilot not History of Art. After all being able to BS about an old painting is not going to be of much use when trying to calculate a glide path or how much flying time you have left ! I feel sure the fact that mummy is head of all the armed services now Charles, might have helped their case ! Of course it is fabulous PR for the royals to have endless photo opportunities of the princes posing as pilots in the services and 'serving their country'.

1  Recommend Reply



**paul matthews**

7 hours ago

**@Bill Forrest**,

It's not just the tabloid press, Bill. The obsequiousness towards the Windsors is plain enough in the serious press too.

1  Recommend Reply



**David Tilley**

7 hours ago

**@Bill Forrest** Seeing The POW in one of his military dress uniforms a stranger to this country could observe the array of medals pinned to his chest and conclude that they were in the presence of one of the bravest men in the British armed forces.

As for William and Harry I take the cynical view that they pose for photographs with helicopters but I don't believe for one moment that the future King of this country is ever sent out on a hazardous search and rescue mission in one.

And why any credible organisation would want to be associated with Air Miles Andy escapes me !

1  Recommend Reply

**Geoffrey Fielding**

12 hours ago

"The Royal Society was founded to advocate the idea that science is what matters, not deference to authority," he said. "The exception to that seems to be deference to 'royal blood', but it is taking deference too far to elect Prince Andrew....."

.....Exactly right Professor Colquhoun. To have Air Miles Andy alongside the likes of Stephen Hawking and Sir Tim Berners- Lee just demeans the Royal Society in the worst possible way making it a world wide laughing stock.

22     Recommend Reply

**Critique**

13 hours ago

The intention was to raise the profile of the Society - well it certainly has done that - buffoons.

10     Recommend Reply

**Terry Carlton**

14 hours ago

If the election of this wholly inappropriate person as a Fellow against the background of his behaviour and actions is a total anachronism, as it seems to be, then the question has to be asked and answered, what is the point of the Royal Society? When that question fails convincingly to get a reply then the next question must be what is the point of the Royal Family?

20     Recommend Reply

**Peter Armitage**

18 hours ago

What a complete and utter farce. When are we all going to grow up and stop this silly, sycophantic, crawling deference?

42     Recommend Reply

**Mustangmarek**

20 hours ago

Privilege of this kind undermines the monarchy.

What is the point of Andrew? He should do something useful rather than just swan around expecting to be entertained and honoured.

His is not the behaviour of a gentleman but that of a free loader.

46     Recommend Reply



**Robin Thomas**

1 hour ago

**@Mustangmarek**

I'm afraid if you want to stop the monarchy from abusing privilege, you have to get rid of them altogether.

Recommend Reply

**john bowes**

20 hours ago

I am sure his great brain will help lead the society - er no where  
Does he get some expenses.....he likes them

37  [Recommend](#) [Reply](#)