

# My week Nadine Dorries

## Maggots trump the chancellor

Nadine Dorries laments the Budget's failure to do more for the NHS, and signs an EDM backing an unusual type of therapy



Nadine Dorries is Conservative MP for Mid-Bedfordshire

### THURSDAY

Today is a one-line whip, which is a relief; I have to be in Bedford by 1pm for a joint schools' 'Question Time' panel. I was on the same panel last year. I remember it well – 150 very astute and unforgiving 17- and 18-year-olds firing one question after another. I can't wait.

The students look less ferocious than last year, or am I now more comfortable in my role as an MP? I do recognise a fair number of them, especially those on the organising committee. Think this may have earned me some brownie points.

The committee generously provided nibbles and tea for the panel and involved adults in the library, whilst the students from across Bedfordshire arrived and were seated in the hall. One of the other MPs chose not to partake in the pre-match niceties, but decided to wait outside the hall. Think he may have lost some brownie points.

Questions were harsh, as expected. I was relieved that Nick Gibb, shadow schools minister, was also on the panel to take some of the heat for our side. I think I almost lost it when I heard the Bedford MP tell the audience how well the hospital was doing and how happy the staff were.

"Only 30 nurses have lost their jobs so far," he said. Only? So far? Thirty nurses took 90 years of training. Ninety years of hopes, ambitions, exams, pride and achievement. I sup-

pose if you can refer to such a travesty as an 'only', then you could never begin to understand any of that.

### FRIDAY

My researcher, Peter, and intern, Skye, are meeting me at my home at 9.30am. We have an extensive and gruelling tour of the constituency arranged to highlight British Tourism Week. We are beginning at Woburn Safari Park at 10am. Peter has arranged a schedule of visits which will be made slightly more difficult by the fact that we are producing our own promotional video of Bedfordshire for the website as we go.

Timing is going to be crucial. Peter and Skye arrive at 8:30am and don't even mention the fact that they are an hour early. I go upstairs to dry my hair whilst they make coffee and toast. They have come from London and must have been up since 6am. We meet the Duke of Bedford at the Safari Park.

He rang me once when I was in my kitchen. I was making pancakes for my daughter and friend at the time and was wearing an apron and holding a frying pan – I wasn't expecting a duke to call.

He said, "Hello, it's Andrew here." I said, "Who?" He said, "Andrew Bedford!" I said, "Sorry, who?" He said, "The Duke of Bedford!" I said, "Oh, I'm sorry your Grace!"

My daughter's friend said, "Who's your mum talking to?" She thought for

a minute and then replied, "The Pope" as she flipped another pancake – yeah right, like that happens all the time.

### MONDAY

Caroline Spelman visited my constituency today. We held two public meetings. Milton Keynes expansion is about to gobble up two of our communities, needless to say the residents aren't very happy. Neither am I. The fact is that Milton Keynes has areas of its own screaming out for urban regeneration.

The North of England has vast areas in need of regeneration and is desperate for inward investment and jobs. So why in that case does the unelected Milton Keynes Partnership want to spread out and destroy our beautiful villages and small communities?

Local people have no say, and neither do the councillors. Decisions are taken by the East of England Development Agency and the Milton Keynes Partnership – both of which are unelected. The strong feeling, which came across from both meetings, is that people feel totally powerless about what is happening to their local communities.

### TUESDAY

Just signed an EDM supporting the use of maggots for wound debridement therapy. As a former nurse I first used maggots to clean a wound almost 20 years ago. One night I admitted an 18-year-old man onto the ward

post-surgery following a motorbike accident. When this young man had first arrived at A&E, the surgeon was faced with two choices – to save the young man's leg and life, or initially clean up his extensive wounds before surgery. Taking him into surgery with a leg and groin full of tarmac and dirt posed a risk of post-op infection.

He was operated on straight away, and his leg was saved. However, nasty post-op infection did take hold. There were two trips back to theatre to remove necrotic tissue, but antibiotics were losing the battle. We sent in the maggots, and they did an amazing job in seven days.

The proposal now is to use sterile, specially bred maggots. There was absolutely nothing sterile about ours.

Each maggot is, in itself, a little sterile self-contained unit, and they love nothing more than to munch on a nice bit of infected flesh.

No surgery, no anaesthetist, no theatre, minimal antibiotics, easy on the patient, low-cost, reduced risk of cross infection, speedy, proven. What else did God create maggots for? So British anglers could pretend to catch fish on a Sunday afternoon? I don't think so!

**WEDNESDAY** Budget Day. All the way through Gordon Brown's statement, I kept thinking, "What about the NHS?" It was the great big fat elephant sat in the chamber. He mentioned the NHS once. This was so that it couldn't be

said that he made no reference to it. "We need to defend our borders," said the chancellor. Yes we do, but we need to stop people dying in our hospital wards too.

Has he seen the figures relating to the number of deaths from MRSA and C-diff? "For the 10th year, duty will be frozen on spirits." So that's the distilleries in Scotland taken care of then, but the poor beer and wine producers are hit, yet again.

When David Cameron stood up to respond, he looked positively jubilant – he knew he was about to nail Gordon Brown. He almost galloped through his response as though he wanted to get to the end because he knew he had got him – the clunking fist had played right into his hands. ■



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