

**The University
of the
Bleeding Obvious**



2018
ANNUAL

We regret to inform you that the following persons will not be making an appearance in this book:

Hercule Merkel

Tobias Poon

Dame Jerimiah Treacle

Mr Bellicose Cheesebiscuit

Shirley Twirly from Purley

Zachariah Pump

Ron and Nellie Butterprompter

Barbie Leg

Lord Sidewinder of Kintyre (Tuesdays only)

The Right Reverend Dennis Cake

Please also note that Dorian Spanners will be similarly unavailable for the foreseeable future. Thank you.

The University of the Bleeding Obvious Annual 2018

©Paul Farnsworth

All characters, companies and organisations are fictitious, and any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental. Not everything is about you.

www.bleeding-obvious.co.uk

In line with recent changes to legislation we now require all eligible persons to complete the following form. Any questions regarding eligibility should be addressed to the relevant authority.

Name of person completing form:	
Date on which form is completed:	
Tick this box to confirm that the form has been completed <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do not write in this space	

Thank you for completing this form.

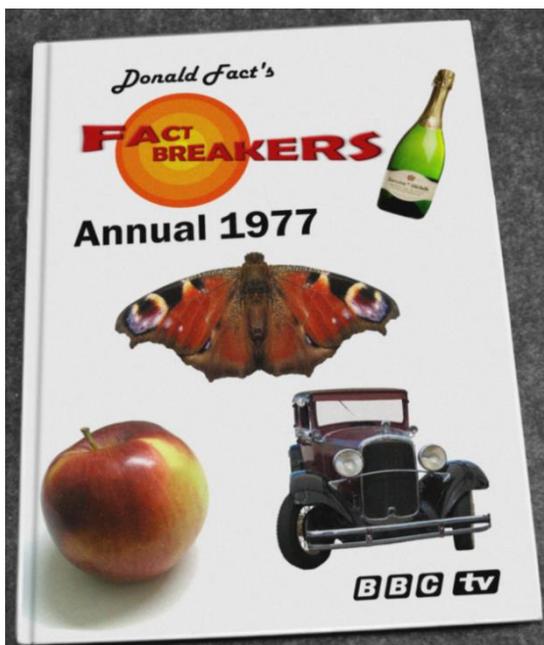
Donald Fact's



Although it's barely remembered now, one of the boldest attempts to marry education with entertainment was the '70s BBC TV children's programme *Fact Breakers*. Hosted by the legendary Donald Fact, the man behind the popular 'It's a Fact' column in IPC Magazines' *Chuckles* comic, the programme was a mixture

of filmed reports and studio items exploring the fantastic world of facts. From nature to technology, astronomy to geography, all manner of facts were presented to the nation's children.

Many viewers who grew up in the '70s will fondly remember that Donald would round off each episode with a tap dance routine or a trumpet solo, despite the painful truth that the factmaster had zero aptitude in either discipline and usually terminated his performance early by twisting his ankle, swallowing the mouthpiece or, on one memorable occasion, spraining his lip.



Mint copies of the 1977 Factbreakers Annual frequently change hands for £20 or more.

What made these light entertainment outbursts even more unlikely was the knowledge that Donald Fact was extremely uncomfortable in front of the camera and much preferred to

remain behind the scenes. He presented the first four episodes of series one from off-camera, shouting random facts to a bemused and often tearful audience of 7 - 14 year-olds. Things didn't improve much for the remaining programmes, which he hosted whilst wearing a bag over his head - the reason for which was never explained, but which became the subject of much speculation in playgrounds up and down the country.

It came as a great surprise, therefore, when the show was recommissioned the following year, although from the start it was obvious that its days were numbered. For this series the producers had introduced a new feature, 'Donald Fact's Fact Chimney'. This item was introduced by Donald saying 'Let's see what we can stuff up the Fact Chimney this week,' a catchphrase which mysteriously failed to catch on. Donald would then take a random object - an apple, a bicycle or a brick, for example - and feed it into the 'Fact Chimney', a large and unconvincing plywood prop. Thanks to a combination of dry ice and a primitive video effect, a number of film clips demonstrating facts about that week's object would appear out of the top of the chimney.

All this was perfectly harmless until show four when Donald, having had

an allergic reaction to nine pints of bitter that he had medicated himself with during lunch, decided to stuff a live goat up the chimney. This unscripted and unexpected turn of



Donald Fact's unusual 'bag over the head' presenting style was emulated in playgrounds across the country.

events caused a great deal of consternation in the studio control room, some considerable alarm amongst the audience and, at the very least, mild distress for the goat.

The show was taken off air. The BBC apologised profusely and reassured the public that no goats had been harmed. This announcement proved to be less than reassuring when the Daily Mirror revealed that the goat was dead, although this was apparently due to an unrelated incident on the set of *Blue Peter*.

It was the end of Donald Fact's TV career, although the fact-Kaiser himself didn't seem to mind one bit and happily went back to editing his column in *Chuckles*. Interestingly,

fact fans note that his post-*Factbreakers* output tended to concentrate more heavily on livestock.

Factbreakers itself was briefly revived in 1989, presented by Kriss Akabusi and the woman from *Dollar*. This time they wisely avoided the fact chimney feature but the show was never able to fully shake off the

spectre of 'goatgate' and was pulled after just three episodes.

As for Donald Fact himself, he was killed by a cheetah - the fastest land animal on Earth, with a recorded top speed of over 70 mph. I've told you this before, of course, but I like it and it didn't get much of a reaction last time, so nuts to you.

Despite being cancelled partway through its second series, the show spawned its own board game.

According to Donald Fact himself, writing in his autobiography, the game holds the record for being the worst selling TV tie-in game of all time.

Second hand copies can be found fairly easily, but few come complete with the original paper bag.



Fact Breakers, Wednesday 4.25 pm BBC1 Colour

Fact fans are in for a treat this week with a new series of *Fact Breakers*, presented by the ever popular Derek Fact. To celebrate the show's return we asked the fact-master himself to furnish us with some of his favourite factoids, straight from the fact chimney.

Stoking the Fact Chimney

The first man to play golf on the moon was Alan Shepard. His first shot went straight into a crater. He sliced the second shot and it hit a Clanger. On his third attempt the ball reached escape velocity and didn't come back down again.

Koalas are indistinguishable from humans in the dark, which is why they often get mistaken for burglars.

If a common garden flea was the same size as a human being it would be able to get served easily in any public house or bar.

The tallest person ever recorded is a man standing on top of the Empire State Building.

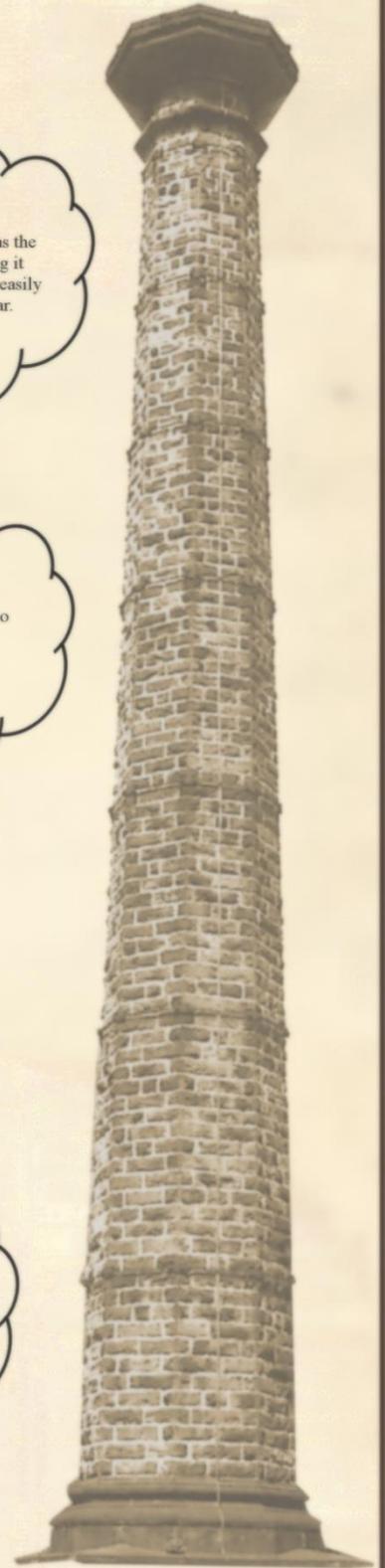
The hardest substance known to man is frozen porridge.

The average can of fizzy drink contains three cups of sugar, 6 fluid ounces of citric acid, two teaspoons of iron, two teaspoons and a fork, four bags of cement, 20 pounds of rubber and an old bike.

In its liquid state, copper makes an excellent laxative.

Tuvalu is the only place in the world where Marmite trees grow naturally. Marmite trees are whittled down to make twiglets.

In the northern hemisphere, water spirals down a drain in a clockwise direction, whereas in the southern hemisphere it shoots upwards and squirts you in the eye.



The Frimpley Evening Bugle

TONIGHT'S CHEESE FORECAST page 8 UNCLE DESMOND'S DOGGING DIARY page 11 POTHOLE WATCH page 14

Fly-Tipping Astronauts Target Local Man's Garden

'Inconsiderate spacemen are making my life hell,' says victim



"I don't think it's wholly unreasonable to expect spacemen to stop dumping their garbage in my back garden." So says Alexander Cravat, who is fed up with astronauts on the International Space Station discarding their rubbish on his property.

"It started six months ago," said Mr Cravat, a self-employed weasel stuffer from Essex. "Each morning I wake up to find piles of trash heaped up against the fence. At first I thought it was the local kids, but then I noticed stuff that you

wouldn't expect to find in ordinary household waste. Things like empty oxygen cylinders, burnt-out circuit boards, tatty old star maps and an inordinate number of Twix wrappers. That's when I thought to myself 'Hello - that's bloody spacemen, that is!'"

Mr Cravat has now filed a legal claim to recover the cost of cleaning up the mess, including £12.99 for a new brush. He has also asked the local authority to bring a prosecution for fly-tipping, but a spokesman for the

council was reluctant to offer much hope of success.

"The problem we have is in uncovering hard evidence that astronauts were responsible," he explained. "Mr Cravat has shown us several items that he claims can only have come from the International Space Station. We have passed these to our technical advisers but their view is that a dry cleaning ticket for a space suit and a battered Haynes Manual for a Soyuz are circumstantial evidence at best."

Nevertheless, the council's environmental health department has sent an investigator to try and catch the culprits in the act - although at the moment he's in hospital with concussion, after being hit by a superheated baked bean can that had reached terminal velocity as it plummeted to the ground from low Earth orbit. Or, at least, that's what Mr Cravat believes; the local police have been unwilling to rule out the possibility that it was hurled from the top deck of a bus.

New Rules for Vampires

New rules will shortly come into effect which will define vampirism as a protected characteristic. This will make it a criminal offence to discriminate against people who 'have something of the night about them'.

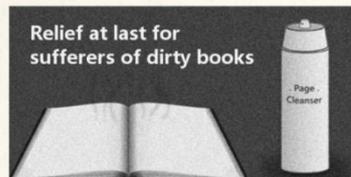
Derogatory terms such as 'fangface', 'pasty-faced coffin jockey' and 'haemogobbler' will be outlawed and employers and providers of public services will be

required to introduce special adaptations such as blackout curtains, garlic-free zones and vampire-friendly mirrors.

The legislation will also affect other supernatural beings, resulting in greater protections for zombies in the workplace and the provision of emergency bandaging stations for mummies. Additionally, for the first time ever the Loch Ness Monster will be eligible for

maternity leave.

However, not everyone is included in the new rules and this has led to some discontent. "It's political correctness gone mad," said Colin Smith, a werewolf from Dagenham. "I mean, it's all very well giving vampires and goblins and heaven knows what an easy time of it, but if I take a dump in the park then spend the rest of day licking my balls, there's hell to pay."



Relief at last for sufferers of dirty books

Usherette Misses Out on Award Again

"It's blatant discrimination. Nothing more, nothing less. That award should have been mine." So said Candice Floss in a hastily convened press conference in the community centre yesterday. Miss Floss, part time drama student and full time usherette at the Gaumont Theatre and Bingo Hall, was referring to her disappointment at once more missing out on the Best Supporting Artist Oscar at this year's Academy Awards for her sterling work selling ice creams in the lobby.

"Tell me where it says that I actually have to be in the film in order to win an award?" the tearful Miss Floss was reported to have demanded. "Go on, where? I'm an important figure in the film world. I contribute significantly to movie-goers' enjoyment. It's only right that I should expect my talent to be recognised, and yet the judging panel continues to shun me on the wafer-thin pretext that 'they've never heard of me!'"

"I think Candice has a valid point," said Stinky Keith who works on the popcorn stand. "She is brilliant at selling ice creams. She hardly ever drops them and she has a really lovely smile. I too know what it is to be shunned for no adequate reason - in my case it's a mild body odour problem which everyone blows way out of proportion. I feel that we are kindred spirits, Candice and me, and I hope that one day she will overlook my hardly noticeable aroma issues and consent to go out with me."

Readers wishing to know more about Miss Floss's remarkable career to date can read the full interview in tomorrow's *Bugle*, right next to the story about the man from the butcher's who has been awarded the Nobel Prize for his tax return and beneath an item about a woman who is teaching her horse to knit.

Plaster Disaster



See page 5

A Law unto Herself

*JOANNA FRISBEE,
DIRECTOR OF
INNOVATIVE
SOLUTIONS, FRISBEE
DIGITALLY TRACKED
LOGISTICAL INTERFACE
SOLUTIONS:*

Rules are for other people. Remember this if you want to be anywhere near as successful as we are. The only rules are those we make for ourselves, and we don't make any rules for ourselves. I learnt that from my grandmother. She told me that just before she was wiped out by a truck on a pedestrian crossing. She didn't believe in silly rules, stupid regulations and pointless conventions, such as waiting for the little green man to start flashing before you step out into the road. She was a great woman. A fantastic woman.

Those are the principles on which we founded our great company. That same cavalier disregard for the dictates of so-called authority has enabled our business to outstrip our competitors. Easily. Amazingly! You say we need to observe all these health and safety regulations? I say pish! You tell me that we are supposed to adhere to strict financial codes? Don't be ridiculous! And what is all this drivel about 'data protection'? How is that anything to do with us? We are above such frivolous nonsense. Miles above it. We're the market leader, the best! Regulation smothers creativity, halts the serious entrepreneur in their tracks. Do you know how much money we pump into the economy?

We simply won't have it. I didn't get where I am today by giving dumb restrictions and trivial responsibilities a fair hearing. Even as a child I had a healthy disregard for authority; playing truant, setting fires and holding up post offices was just my way of expressing myself, and I maintain that suppressing such behaviour is unhealthy.

None of this stuff applies to us. We don't need to fill in your forms. We don't need to provide any documents. We don't need to obtain licences, put measures in place, cooperate with inspectors, or any of it. Go and bother somebody else.

LAWYER: What my client means to say, Your Honour, is that she accepts the decision of the court, recognises that she has been most remiss in not filing her tax return and will make every effort to do so in future.

Harness the Primordial Natural Energies of the Universe with...



For the first time ever CRYSTAL.N.R.G has developed a range of consumer devices designed to run on clean natural energy. Since ancient times mankind has been aware of the primordial forces which flow through all things. Science may not be able to explain it but mystics, wiccans and geomancers have passed down this ancient wisdom from generation to generation - incontrovertible proof of the reality of these extraordinary phenomena*.

So far, one question has remained unanswered: how do we tap this awesome powerhouse of energy? Could we, for example, run a laptop on crystal power? Could you boil a kettle with your aura?

Finally, with the launch of a range of specially adapted consumer devices from CRYSTAL.N.R.G, the answer to that question is 'probably'. Check out our catalogue for details of our paradigm-shifting products.

Osiris 4420X Atmosphere System



The Osiris represents the very latest in air conditioning technology and boasts a range of settings, including 'cold', 'medium' and 'slightly sticky'. The unit operates on pyramid power, channelling powerful Earth energies discovered by the ancient Egyptians.

Flashmaster Multi-beam



This handy ergonomically designed torch converts your aura into visible light, meaning that you will always have access to a battery-free source of illumination. As an added bonus, the strength of the beam can be used to measure your mood, provide an early diagnosis of illness and also predict what kind of day you're going to have next Tuesday.

Rechargeable Crystals



Energy crystals are a wonderful way of tapping into the deep electromagnetic rhythms of the universe but have a short lifespan, most lasting no more than 48 hours before they are completely depleted. That's no longer a problem thanks to our patent rechargeable crystals, which can be re-energized up to 400 times and are ideal for replacing batteries in a wide range of devices.

Suckomatic GL Deluxe Model Ley Vacuum



Wouldn't it be great if you could have a cordless vacuum cleaner that drew its power directly from Mother Earth? Now you can, because the Ley Vacuum operates entirely on the mystical prehistoric energy stored in ley lines. Comes with three interchangeable nozzles, spare bags and a nameless eldritch horror which will shadow your every step from now until the end of eternity.

Fairy Lights



The perfect decoration for any festive occasion. These charming and enchanting fairy lights contain real fairies and boast two modes: 'on' and 'off'. And for outdoor events, why not take advantage of our special bonus offer of a real dragon patio heater?

Ask our magic pixies about special offers on toasters powered by moonbeams and happy thoughts!

Trusound High Fidelity Psychic Speakers



Forget Bluetooth, our unique psychic speakers rely on the little-used principal of thought transference to connect to your stereo, TV or home entertainment system. And with a practically unlimited range they can be used anywhere within this plane of existence. (Please note: in some circumstances the speakers can be affected by psychic interference. People with unusually dirty minds are advised to use with caution.)

How does it work?

One thing we get asked a great deal is how does all this work? What's the scientific basis for it? Is all this stuff for real?

Well let's put it this way. Throughout history many talented and learned people have tried to understand the world around us. They have made careful observations, posited hypotheses, tested theories and gradually refined their ideas until they have arrived at robust, demonstrable and precise descriptions of the universe.

Over the same period a different bunch people have dreamt up a lot of pretty-sounding nonsense that folk with a limited capacity for rational thought are more than happy to believe in. What's more, they've made a fat pile of cash in the process - this is the model on which we've built our business. It was either this or politics.

CRYSTAL.N.R.G



**According to the theory that 'there must be something in it, right?'*

Got a complaint? We take all complaints very seriously. If you encounter a problem with any of our products write to:
The Enchanted Unicorn, Nr The Leprechaun's Hole, By The Lake of Rainbows, Doncaster, DN1 3NY

Quality Service at Pooley's

If, like me, you appreciate a satisfying retail experience, then you might find that visiting your local petrol station can be a bleak and dispiriting affair. However, I'm happy to say that in my case those days are now gone, ever since I discovered Pooley's Service Station and Convenience Store on the A39, just outside Barnstaple.

Oh certainly they have the full quota of available fuels, including LPG, and their confectionery range, situated within easy reach beside the cash register, is exemplary - I can confirm that they stock Twixes in both standard and deluxe sizes. But they can also boast something else - quality service.

All too often these days the purchase of fuel and associated motoring paraphernalia is accompanied by a surly disregard for the comfort and wellbeing of the purchaser, usually delivered by some callow and pimply youth with little understanding of the value of a really good de-icer or a superior screen wash. That's

not the case at Pooley's, where the staff are fully trained in as wide a range of motoring products as you'll



find anywhere this side of Taunton Deane. And I do mean fully trained. Want to know which air freshener will best complement the slightly worn leather interior of a 2013 Mk V Ford Mondeo? These are the guys to ask.

I was fortunate enough to spend some time talking to owner Mike Pooley, an easy-going chap with some refreshing ideas about non-standard headlight modifications. He told me that quality customer service has always formed the bedrock of his operations. "If customers don't drive off our forecourt happier and

more fulfilled than when they arrived," he told me, "then we very much feel that we've failed in our duty."

And it is a duty. A very real one.

Mike was also very keen for me to mention the special two-for-one offer that they are currently running on Turtle Wax, and with top deals like that it's hard to see how they could possibly fail to provide satisfaction. But don't imagine that their attention to detail is limited to the motorist's trusty steed (car); they also provide fodder enough for the rider (driver). What I'm trying to say is that they also do a full range of snacks and pies. In fact, they have just about everything you could possibly imagine to assist

the weary traveller on his way. Their sandwich range is extensive, encompassing old favourites such as cheese and ham as well as more exotic fare such as egg and cress or chicken tikka, all of which are within their sell-by date. Their range of cold drinks, likewise, leaves little to be desired: they stock both Coke and Pepsi, as well as a more reasonably priced budget alternative.

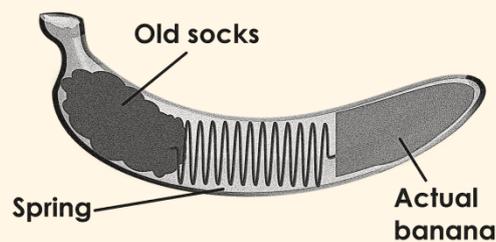
But if it's something more substantial that you're looking for, then fear not - there is a microwave free for the use of any customers who purchase a qualifying product, plus a hot drinks machine. So why not treat yourself to a warming cup of hot chocolate as you peruse the impressive magazine display, or flick through the eclectic selection of mid-priced CDs at the counter?

Whatever your preference, Pooley's Service Station has something to make your journey a little easier. I can heartily recommend it, and although I'm not local and don't own a car, I can say without hesitation that I am

happy to travel upwards of 140 miles out of my way for the sake of a cup of coffee and a Ginsters pasty served at just the right temperature.

This article was sponsored by Pooley's Service Station and Convenience Store. Call now for great deals on antifreeze.

Fraudulent Bananas



Fans of the banana, who are legion, are being warned to be wary of short measures. Reports have recently surfaced of bananas which, when opened, don't go all the way from end to end. In some cases they have been found to be empty entirely.

"Banana fraud isn't something new," said Polly Camber, Trading Standards' head of fruit. "Initially it was quite easy to determine whether a banana skin was filled to capacity. One simply had to squeeze the skin to detect if it was only partially filled. But this was before the banana bandits started getting clever."

Camber is referring to the relatively new practice of stuffing banana skins with rags, old newspapers and other items to make them appear as if they are fully loaded. "They can be quite ingenious," she told us. "I've seen bananas with just half an inch of fruit at either end and a spring in the middle, keeping them apart and providing tension. They are getting more and more inventive and, to be honest, it's got to the point where we all get really excited when we open up a new one, because we're never certain what we're going to find. My colleague found a little plastic aeroplane in one the other day. He was well chuffed."

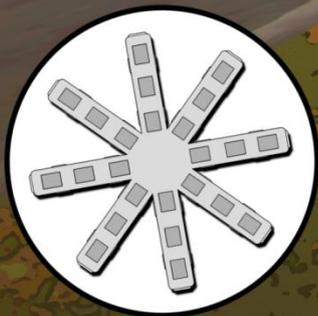
It might sound quite harmless, if somewhat irritating, but recent events have changed all that. Rogue banana merchants have started using compressed air in their 'nanas, and this is causing considerable concern.

"No one likes a floppy banana," Mrs Camber said. "So in order to make them sufficiently rigid they are inflated to pressures way beyond their natural tolerance. It only takes one faulty seam to give way and whump! Bananageddon! We've been lucky so far; no one's been hurt. But only the other day we heard about a banana going off in a fruit bowl in Devizes that took out two pomegranates and a plum, so it's really only a matter of time."

Forward to the '80s

Technological advances have come along at an astonishing rate in recent years, especially when it comes to transport. Who would have thought that one day we'd be flying across the Atlantic at supersonic speeds, or hurtling along railway tracks in a tilting train!

But what does the future hold? In this special feature we're going to take a glimpse into our crystal ball and look at some of the extraordinary ways we'll all be getting from A to B in the 1980s.



The Octobus

Able to travel in eight directions at once, the Octobus will play a crucial role in easing traffic congestion. These luxury, nuclear-powered vehicles will be equipped with on-board entertainment facilities, such as Pong video games and screens showing the latest *Smokey and the Bandit* movie. There will also be a shopping arcade in the central hub where you can buy Arctic Roll, Opal Fruits or a Wimpy Burger.

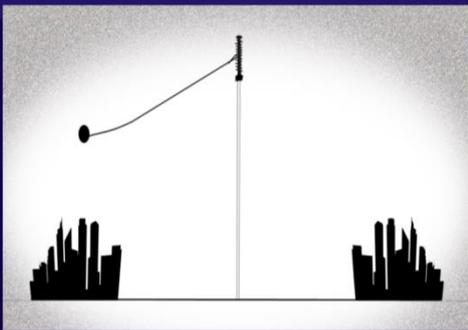


Megahopper

Today's spacehoppers can't actually go into space, but in the future that's exactly what they will be able to do. New synthetic polymers will pave the way for spacehoppers with enough elasticity to achieve escape velocity, and by 1986 we should see the introduction of a regular passenger service, using giant spacehoppers that can bounce around the planet in one third of the time it takes a regular commercial flight.

Heli-pony

As we all know from TV shows like *The Six Million Dollar Man*, bionic implants are now very much a part of everyday life and very soon they will be helping our equine friends take to the skies. The Heli-pony is a modern-day Pegasus which runs on a combination of hay, carrots and kerosene, employing similar technology to that used in the two-speed auto-donkey. Once again the horse will become an integral part of all our transport solutions.



Intercity Swingball

We all know that swingball is the most fun that you can possibly have, but did you realise that it is also the fastest man-made object? The ball at the end of the line easily reaches speeds in excess of 25 miles per second, which is why it gives you such a whack when it hits you in the face. Plans are already underway to integrate swingball physics into a clean, efficient mass transit system. The first UK service is set to commence between London and Leeds in 1982, and most cities will have a swingball station by the end of the decade.



The Hoversofa

Imagine what it would be like to be able to travel without ever having to leave the comfort of your own sofa. Well, with the Hoversofa you can do precisely that. With a top speed of more than sixty miles an hour, this will be the preferred method of locomotion in the '80s and we can expect to see many different makes and models in our towns and cities.

The 'Fluence

Boudica Shaffer is one of the country's top social media influencers. Or, at least that's what it says on her Twitter account, which was enough for us to decide that we'd like to meet her and find out what this influencing business is all about. When we put a call through to her it turned out that she'd already been working her influencing magic and had been expecting us to get in touch for some time.

And so it was that on a grey Tuesday afternoon we found ourselves in a chintzy little tearoom in Oxford, where Miss Shaffer was occupying a table by the window. She cut a slight figure, small, fragile, as if a strong breeze or a substantial meal might floor her. She looked expensive – hair, shoes, designer clothes, chunky jewellery. We don't really understand all that stuff, but to our untutored eyes it all looked like the real deal.

She greeted us with the faintest flicker of a smile, calculated not to disturb her makeup, and held out her hand at an angle, such that we weren't entirely sure if we were meant to shake it or kneel and kiss it. We decided on the former then took our seats with some

apprehension, wondering if she was already inside our heads, putting the 'fluence' on us. As a precaution we had left our credit cards at home in case she tried to make us buy anything, but we were still uneasy.

"You'll be wanting to know how I got to be the country's top social media influencer," she said.

Actually, we really wanted to know exactly what a 'social media influencer' was, but

the trade?" she says, nodding sagely and parroting our exact words back to us as if she has uncovered some previously hidden meaning. She pauses. We realise this is not a rhetorical question. Yes, we repeat, we want her to share some of the tricks of her trade. "Ah well, it's all about subtlety. For instance, you probably didn't notice but a few moments ago I surreptitiously planted the suggestion that you should

Social Media Influencer Saves Family from Burning Building

A family from Congleton in Cheshire are desperate to track down the social media influencer who got them to safety after a stray spark from an electric jelly

this was as good a place to start as any so we just nodded politely.

"It's all about getting inside people's heads," she told us. "About understanding what makes them tick and guiding their choices. By the way you should really try the mint tea here, it's exquisite."

We sidestep the suggestion and order coffee. We want to know what it takes to be an influencer and ask her to share some of the tricks of the trade.

"Ah, so you want me to share some of the tricks of

try the mint tea."

We respond with faux surprise as our coffee arrives.

"Now that thought is lodged in your brain and will affect your choices without you even realising it," she continues. "The secret is to gently embed these suggestions into the conversation and it takes great skill to recognise the right opportunities to do this. It takes an eye for detail – the same eye for detail, for example, that it takes to spot a bargain. A

bargain such as this stylish bag which I bought online for just £49.99. You should probably get one, it's great."

We feign an interest in the bag. So subtlety is the key, we ask?

"Oh yes, and it takes great skill to recognise the right opportunities."

Which would imply, we continue, that not just anyone can become a social media influencer?

"Oh no," she says. "Because it takes great skill to recognise the right opportunities."

Social Media Influencer Kick Starts the Middle East Peace Process

There is hope once more for peace in the Middle East thanks to the intervention of a social media influencer. Representatives from both sides were led to resume negotiations.

right opportunities. Such as recognising what a terrific bargain this stylish coat I'm wearing is. It's transformed my life and I would recommend it to anyone."

Our own experience of social media influencers suggests that their main techniques involve endlessly repeating a limited series of random, unconnected and irrelevant recommendations for things that they plainly have no

Some influencers are so bad that they are actually uninfluencers and are unable to convince anybody of anything – if uninfluencers is a word."

We tell her that 'uninfluencers' is not a word, but fail to convince her.

"There are some influencers who would really struggle to persuade anyone that the Supervax carpet shampooer has totally changed their lives, reinvigorated their homes and proven to be one of the best things that they have ever bought. Whereas I can state unequivocally that the Supervax carpet shampooer *really has* changed my life, reinvigorated my home and *absolutely* proven to be the best thing that I have ever bought. See what I mean? It's an awesome power to wield."

And this leads us to a question that fascinates us. If there really are people out there who can exercise such influence, often using no more than 140 characters, what happens when they recommend competing products? Does it come down to a battle of wills for

Social Media Influencer Discovers Cold Fusion

They said it couldn't be done, but they underestimated the extraordinary influencing power of social media influencers when they said cold fusion was impossible.

And yet, we point out, pretty much every other person on Twitter seems to describe themselves as a social media influencer. What, we wonder, qualifies them as such? Are there, for example, any exams they need to take?

"No, no, it's not something that can be taught," Miss Shaffer tells us. "You can't go on a course, you can't get a certificate. It's an ability that you're born with. You see, it actually takes great skill to recognise the

interest in. Miss Shaffer is keen to set us straight about this misconception but we pre-empt her by suggesting that, perhaps, we've got that wrong. That, maybe, it actually takes great skill to recognise the right opportunities.

"Wow, that's really quite astute of you to realise that," she says with the wry smile. "Yes, it actually takes great skill to recognise the right opportunities. Now I won't deny that some influencers are better than others.

First Social Media Influencer in Space

It's the news everyone has been waiting for - the first social media has been shot into orbit. The lack of social media influencers in space has been a long time of a concern for some time.

the hearts and minds of their followers?

Miss Shaffer nods. "An influence-off," she says. "Oh yes indeed. The meeting of minds, the ultimate battle of two great intellects. It has happened to me on more than one occasion. It can go on for days, weeks even. It's exhausting but at the same time it is exhilarating, and the feeling you get when you emerge triumphant is truly awesome. What it must be like to lose is something that, thankfully, I have no knowledge of but I imagine it is soul destroying. Many of the people that I have bested have never influenced again; they are broken, spent, but ultimately they didn't have what it takes - which is the great skill required to recognise the right opportunities."

So there are risks. What then, we wonder, are the rewards?

"Oh, there are a great many rewards," she answers.

We ask her to elaborate.

"Oh, many, many rewards," she says. "It's very rewarding."

Financial rewards, we ask?

We don't imagine that you could earn a living from it.

"Oh financial, yes, I should say so," she answers. "Top social media influencers can earn lots. Yes, more than you'd imagine."

So this provides her main income? She doesn't have another job? Or maybe a rich aunt?

"Well, I have other interests, obviously. This can be... well... time consuming. Have you seen these shoes, by the way. I didn't know what I was missing until I bought these shoes. They have transformed my life and I can't recommend them

Inaugural Nobel Prize for Social Media Influencing Goes to Social Media Influencer

The first Nobel Prize for Social Media Influencing has gone to a social media influencer in recognition of their extraordinary contribution to social media influencing. At the ceremony the

highly enough."

But if you can put in the time you could, presumably, earn a decent wage, we ask, steering her back to the question. Would she be happy to recommend influencing as a career?

"A career?" She seems a little rattled by the

suggestion. "You can earn money, yes. If you've got the time. And the skills, I suppose... If you can recognise the right opportunities."

Before we can explore this further Miss Shaffer suddenly remembers an appointment she has with an optician, or a vet - she is vague on the details. Our questions may have implied that what she does is not a proper job, and she is evidently uncomfortable with this suggestion.

She apologises: she doesn't have any cash on her and she believes that the establishment does not take cards, so would we kindly get the bill for her and she will reimburse us later. And then she's off to take her dog to the opticians, weaving through the tables

like a downhill skier and pausing only to recommend a phone, a brand of furniture polish or a small chain of discount homeware stores to various other patrons on her way out. Meanwhile, we call the waiter over and order a mint tea.

Criminal Offence Self-Assessment Form

PC1

For minor misdemeanours please use form PC2

Evenin' all. Modern policing is all about the cost-effective streamlining of routine functions in order to achieve greater efficiencies and release resources that can be used to maintain core services. Leastways, that's what the Sarge says. Mind you, he doesn't half talk a lot of cock sometimes.

Either way, fewer officers on the beat means that the burden of arresting criminals now falls on the villains themselves. But don't worry, if you think you might be a wrong 'un this easy, straightforward self-assessment form will guide you painlessly through the process. Simply complete all the relevant sections, empty your pockets into the receptacle provided then post yourself to the nearest police station.

1 About you

Name:

Address:

No, your real name:

Known associates:

Criminal aliases cannot be used for the purpose of self-incrimination.

2 About your crime Please tick all the crimes that you have committed

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burglary | <input type="checkbox"/> Urinating in a public place | <input type="checkbox"/> Arson in a naval dockyard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking without consent | <input type="checkbox"/> Attempted regicide | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Major financial fraud | <input type="checkbox"/> Going nicking down the shops | |

If you ticked any of these crimes, proceed to Section 4.

If you ticked none of these crimes, proceed to Section 3.

3 Pull the other one Seriously now, tick all the crimes that you have committed

Come on, you don't expect us to believe that, do you? Are you sure you haven't done any of the following?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping yourself to the stationery at work | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching knocked off movies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking the wrong way at a police constable. | <input type="checkbox"/> Arson in a naval dockyard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parking in a disabled pay without a badge | |

If you ticked any of these crimes, proceed to Section 4.

If you ticked none of these crimes, we don't believe you so proceed to Section 4 anyway.

4 Do you intend to resist arrest?

- Yes
 No
 I'll probably be a bit gobby, but I won't kick off.

If you ticked yes, proceed to Section 5.

Otherwise, proceed to Section 6.

5 Right then, sonny

This won't do you any good at all. Are you going to come quietly?

- Yes
 No, you'd better give me a good kicking first

Proceed to Section 6.

6 Declaration Read the following statement out loud to yourself then read and sign the declaration

"You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence."

I confirm that the information provided on this form is correct. I understand that deliberate falsification is a criminal offence and could result in a fine, a custodial sentence and being given another one of these forms to fill in.

Signature:

Date:

- Tick here if you don't want to receive information about our miscarriage of justice initiative.

An old fart remembers...

❧ *Snorting Cheese* ❧

Back in my day all the menfolk 'ud be snorting cheese, because there were cheese mills for miles around. Today people make do with the odd squirt of Primula up the blower, but it's not the same as the hard stuff.

One popular ditty of the time was the cheese song, which you heard being sung all over the place. The words went something like this:

*I've got cheese up me nose
I've got cheese up me nose
I've got cheese for you
I've got cheese for me
Up one side I've got cheddar
Up t'other I've got brie
Oh I've got cheese
I've got cheese
I've got cheese up me nose*



Of course, they were simpler times but we were none the worse for that.

❧ *Puthering Day* ❧

Course back in them days Saturday were always puthering day. We'd all have to clear off and mam 'ud puther the whole house from top to bottom with a puthering stone. It were backbreaking work but them old lasses took proper pride in their homes. Woe betide anyone who got in the way on puthering day! There's many a time I come home early and got meself puthered along with the stove. There were an old song about it, went something like this:

*Oh a-puthering we will go
A-puthering we will go
Not so fast and not too slow
Oh a-puthering we will go
And don't get in the way, think on
Yes a-puthering we will go.*

Most folk today don't know what puthering is, but they were simpler times of course.

Rag-a-Tag My Neighbour

One of the most popular games we played when we were young 'uns was rag-a-tag me neighbour. Basically, how you played it was you stood in the middle of a muddy field, often in the pouring rain, for about one and a half hours while your mate went up the shops to buy a threepenny bottle of ginger ale. You had to stay perfectly still no matter what happened, even if you were being bitten by midges or a cow licked you or something.

When your mate came back you had to shout 'Wee Willy Handbo!' then hurl a brick into the nearest cow pat and run off and hide behind the public toilets on Argyle Street. And if anyone saw you had to chant:

*Rag-a-tag me neighbour
Kick him in the knees
Rag-a-tag me neighbour
Fill his pants with cheese*

It was a great game and everyone was playing it, not like kids today who just want to have fun all the time. Of course, those were simpler times.

The Mutton Man

Everyone used to look forward to the day that the mutton man came. In our street he used to come every Wednesday, with his cart loaded down with ducks' feet, donkeys' udders and pigs' willies. The whole lot would be buzzing with flies and it would stink to high heaven, and the mutton man would say that this were the sign of a quality since if the flies liked it then it must be good stuff. If you asked nicely, sometimes the mutton man would give you a pair of chicken tits or some cow's knees.

The mutton man also used to have a song...

...although the one that came round our way was a miserable bastard and 'ud never sing it. Oddly the mutton man never had any mutton, but then those were simpler times, of course.



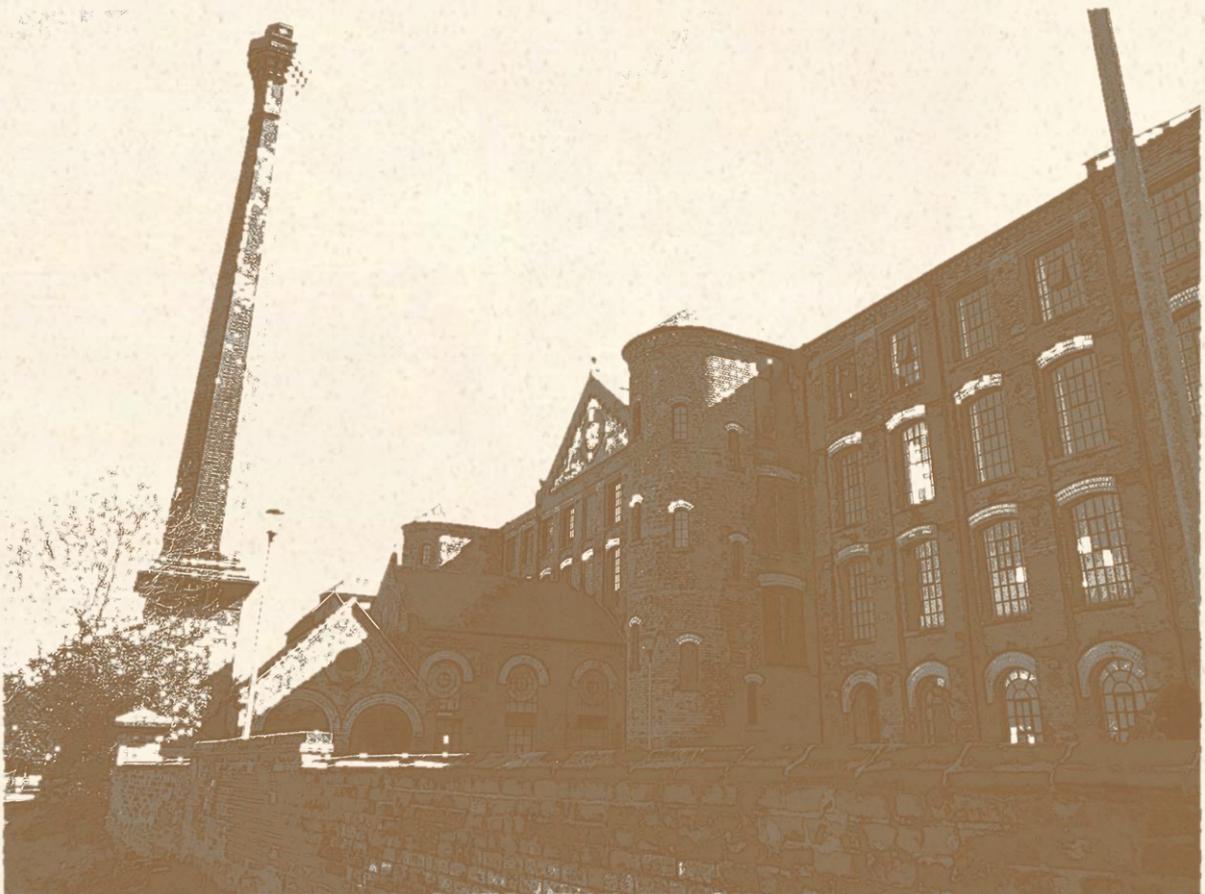
Leathering Week

The first week in June were always leathering week and it were celebrated by everyone in the town. There would be leathering stalls up and down the high street, and everybody's place would be done up in bunting and flags. And on the Friday there would be the leathering festival, which was always the highlight of the year in them days. All the local girls would come together to perform the leathering dance, and there would be bread with grit in it, and an aubergine on a stick, and one year the drayman let us touch his horse.

There was also the special leathering song, of course. It went:

*Leather, leather, leather, leather,
Leather, leather, leather...*

Actually, now I come to think of it, it was all a bit crap. Why am I sat here talking to you when I could be playing Grand Theft Auto? Ta-ra...



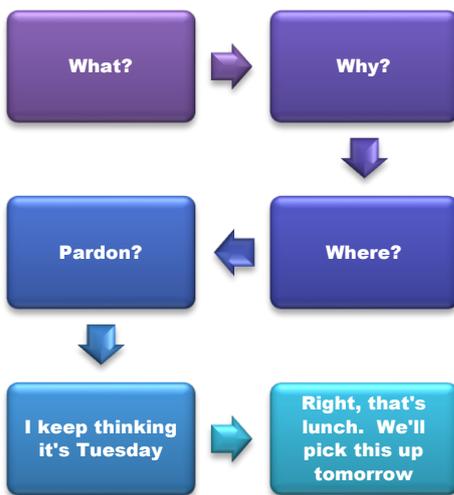
Just been handed a project but can't be bothered to get started?

What you need is *Vapid*, a new suite of procrastination software for business.

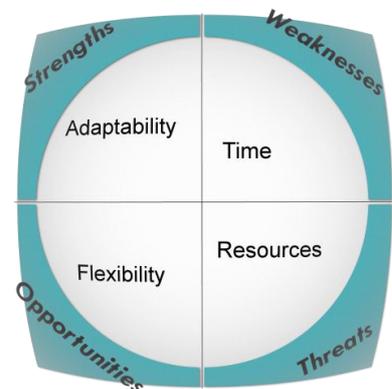
Vapid puts you in the driving seat of project management, allowing you to spend month after month planning your entire project in ever-increasing detail without ever having to actually knuckle down and get any work done.



Our unique approach means that you can continue to go round in circles without any danger of actually producing anything!



With *Vapid* you can develop a detailed process flow to accurately map each stage in the development of a project rationale underpinning the initial pre-assessment planning that forms the bedrock of the assessment, necessary to provide a firm foundation for the preliminary project development required before the formal project start date is scheduled.



And *Vapid* is great for generating vague SWOT analyses that look good but don't actually tell you anything.

Comes with more than 400 Gantt charts for you to colour in!

Vapid

WE'LL PROBABLY GET THERE EVENTUALLY

Details Emerge of Queen's Stair Lift

Details have emerged of the Royal State Stair Lift, recently installed at Buckingham Palace. The ornate carvings are fashioned from timber segments taken from Nelson's flagship and inlaid with diamonds, opals and rubies sourced from across the commonwealth. All the fixtures have been fashioned in gold by some of the

country's finest craftsmen and it has been upholstered in velvet and ermine throughout.

Although no official figures exist, conservative estimates suggest that the stair lift cost in the region of £350,000 and is capable of whisking Her Majesty up to bed at a top speed of 48 miles per hour.

Vatican Intruder

Fresh details have been released regarding the local man who recently tried to infiltrate the Vatican. "His disguise was very nearly perfect," said a spokes-bishop. "His robes were spot on and he was

intimately familiar with all our procedures and rituals. He only made one very tiny, but crucial mistake. You see, he disguised himself as the pope, which was a dead giveaway because we've already got one."

Ladder Ordeal Enters Sixteenth Hour

Concerns are growing for eight employees of a Leeds packaging firm who have been stranded at the top of a series of moderately-sized ladders since yesterday. Their ordeal began partway through a two day course in ladder safety, consisting of two modules - the first dealing with descent, the second tackling ascent. An administrative error led to the modules being delivered in the wrong order, resulting in most of the group getting trapped on the top rungs of their

demonstration ladders, without having received the proper training to get back down again.

Concerned colleagues have been supplying them with sandwiches and hot drinks while options are considered for returning them to terra firma. We understand that the fire brigade have now been called and a trained ladder specialist is currently trying to talk the stricken trainees down by shouting encouraging instructions through a megaphone.

Introducing the One-Sided Post-it Note

A study commissioned by environmentalist groups claims that ninety-five percent of all the Post-it notes sold worldwide last year were wasted because people only wrote on one side of the paper. The sticky notes, which are designed to be briefly attached to a variety of surfaces before dropping off and getting lost the moment your back is turned, are a feature of most offices, but researchers found that users typically only wrote on one side.

Not surprising, perhaps. Indeed, one expert in the combined disciplines of mental health and stationery has gone

on record as saying that people who write on both sides of Post-it notes are usually clinically insane, although he was unable to produce evidence of this as the note that he wrote it on was lost some time ago when it fell off the fridge.

Nevertheless, manufacturers 3M have taken the report very seriously, recognising that consumers' reluctance to use both sides of the paper has resulted in unnecessary wastage.

Their solution is the introduction of a revolutionary new one-sided Post-it note, due to go on

sale sometime next year. Details are sketchy at the moment, but a press release claims that 3M boffins have achieved this remarkable feat by taking an ordinary three-dimensional Post-it note and carefully removing one of the dimensions. The result is a piece of paper which is all front and no back.

Extraordinary though this breakthrough is, critics have already pointed out that a Post-it note with no back wouldn't be able to stick to anything. 3M have responded by saying this has never bothered anyone in the past.

MP Welcomes Plan to Spend £1.7m on Local Potholes

Gerry Butter, MP for Shepton South has welcomed the announcement that extra funding has been made available for the region's ailing road network.

"Potholes have always been my passion,"

says Mr Butter "Unfortunately we get far fewer than our fair share in my constituency. "At the last survey Shepton North had almost twice as many potholes as us, and as for Shepton Central I believe that most

motorists consider it a no-go zone. Finally we are going to have the means to put that right and I for one will be first in the queue with my jackhammer so we can finally fuck our highways up properly."

Ultimate Password

Experts have devised what they believe is the ultimate format for a password, being sufficiently complex to provide security whilst at the same time being short enough to be memorable. The optimum password, they say, is 32 characters long, contains six non-alphanumeric characters, two numbers, four uppercase characters, two different fonts, three distinct colours and a smell..

Situations Vacant

Department of Work and Pensions

Vacancy: Customer Adviser
Salary: £17,000 to £20,000
Holiday Entitlement: 39 days.
Contract: Permanent

Are you a fun and outgoing person? Can you demonstrate empathy and respectfulness in the workplace? Is it in your nature to be supportive? Are you willing to put our customers first?

Yes?

Well fuck off, we don't want your sort here. Everyone else, contact us for a recruitment pack.

A Sustained Corporate Battering

Concerns are growing for Christian Pyle, Senior Business Partner at Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions, following a series of social media posts which indicate that he has dangerously low expectations in life. Over the past few weeks he has tweeted that he was 'looking forward' to a meeting on business continuity, 'excited' by a new office layout and 'thrilled' to be taking part in a financial strategy exercise.

"We've been worried about Christian for some time now," his wife told us as she choked back the tears. "He used to treat all this mundane bullshit with the

contempt it deserved, but since he's been working at this new place he's changed. I don't know how, but they've got to him."

Much to the relief of his family and friends, Mr Pyle has now agreed to see a specialist and hopes are rising that his self-esteem can be restored to its previous levels. And Mr Pyle has welcomed the idea, if a recent post is anything to go by in which he writes that he is 'thrilled' and 'excited' to be embarking on this 'fantastic new life-actualisation opportunity.'

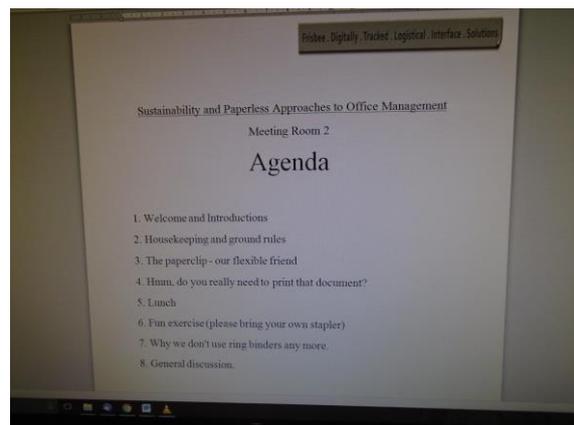
We invited business psychologist Dianne Headshrieker to give her verdict on some of the posts that Christian has recently uploaded...

"Initially it appears that this individual is being sarcastic. Certainly that's what most normal people would think, but the key to interpreting the real meaning behind this is recognising that this person is not normal. This is a man who has taken a severe, sustained corporate battering; someone who has had the joy systematically knocked out of him to the point where the prospect of a day spent talking about stationery is genuinely the highlight of his week. The author of this message has been reduced to a near-vegetative state in which he will begin to salivate at the mere mention of a hole punch, and where the prospect of a discussion about envelopes is enough to send him into paroxysms of ecstasy."



Christian Pyle - 15 hours ago

Wow! Great training day on stationery sustainability and paperless approaches to office management. Thanks guys!



[LIKE](#) [REPLY](#) [SHARE](#)

Jeff Jeffries, Linda Sprunt and 6 others like this



Christian Pyle - 3 hours ago

Very pleased with our new notissboard!
[#businessefficiency](#)



[LIKE](#) [REPLY](#) [SHARE](#)

Malcolm Spleen likes this

Quite why so many people post pictures of noticeboards is something that is still not fully understood. In this case the hashtag might indicate some principal that the author is wishing to illustrate. However, it's more likely that this individual is desperate to be 'included', to be part of 'the team', and in order to achieve this they have chosen to sycophantically heap praise on something which is uninspiring and commonplace, without considering whether such adulation is warranted. They have also failed to consider the possibility of there being a right way and a wrong way to spell the word 'noticeboard'.

Three exclamation marks – I feel we are getting close to the point of breakdown. The company's original post is a bland and soulless aphorism which, even if it were used in some sort of context, would never approach any recognisable measure of sincerity. Nevertheless, this individual not only believes it but appears to have interpreted it personally. He is the staff member who is valued; he is the person that his masters wish to ensure is happy. The implication that this is only in order to make him more productive is not acknowledged. The line between sycophancy and gullibility is a fine one, and in this example it seems to have been crossed, I fear irrevocably so



Senior Management Team - 4 hours ago

Our motto: We value our staff because a happy workforce is a productive workforce. [#compassionateleadership](#)

[LIKE](#) [REPLY](#) [SHARE](#)

Gary Mullet, Christian Pyle and 8 others like this



Christian Pyle - 3 hours ago

So proud to be working for a company that appreciates its staff!!!

[LIKE](#) [REPLY](#) [SHARE](#)

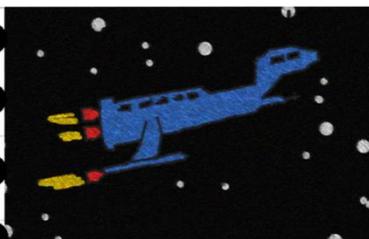
It's astonishing to think that it's just fifteen years since the landmark series *Space Things* first aired. The show was praised for its sophisticated approach to storytelling, its willingness to tackle adult themes and all the spaceships and monsters and shooty laser battles and everything. Its creator, Josh T Muffitt, now directs multi-billion dollar epics involving flying superheroes and spaceships and stuff, and is widely considered the King of the Geeks. But it's interesting to consider his humble beginnings and so here we present, direct from MGM's archives, Muffitt's initial pitch for his ground-breaking show.

Dear MGM

I have got a grate idea for a film or a TV show or something. It would be called 'Space Things' and it would be a sci-fi spectaclear set in space. It ~~would~~ would be all about a spaceship in space called the SSSS Graham (SSSS stands for Super Special Space Service).



The captain of the SSSS Graham would be a lady, because this is the future, and they would go all over space and everywhere, exploring things and getting into fights and stuff. They would also interfere with the natives, even though they have been especially told not to.



But ~~teh~~ the really good thing about it would be that there was a special space cat called Astro Cat. Astro Cat would be just like a normal cat except that he would wear a space helmet, and say things like 'logical captain' and shoot laser beams out of his eyes.

And there would be guest stars like Tom Cruise and Keira Knightly and Jason Bourne, and I am sure they would agree to do it because the whole idea is very good.



And at the end of the episode everybody would have a laugh about something then they'd all freeze and keep really still while the credits came up, and my name would be at the end in really big letters.

SORRY. I CAN'T DO
A PICTURE OF TOM CRUZE

Of course, the TV show, or whatever it is, will be really really popular and so they will do films and action figures and comics of it, and I would be the executive ~~esexecutive~~ top creative director of the whole thing until I sell it all to Disney for an undisclosed sum. But then everyone will say it is rubbish when somebody else does it.



So anyway, this is all my idea, except for some bits that my friend Graham did, but I named the spaceship after him so I think he will be okay with it.

Thanks.

Josh T Muffitt Age 32

Monetising Misery

THE TRAILBLAZER: Ok guys, thanks for coming. So here's the thing, yeah. Poverty. Poor people. This is the big one, because the Government have, like, asked us to look into the whole situation and come up with some innovative solutions. No problem, guys. We're ideas people. We're on this. This is what we do, okay?

THE BOOTLICKER: Amazing!

THE TRAILBLAZER: I know, right. So, the thing is, we've all seen poor people in the streets, and round the markets, and in, like, the park and everywhere. You know, all those places where poor people go. And that's kind of ok, because they give the place character, and character is really good. But the downside is that the reason poor people are so poor is because they haven't any money. Yeah, I know, I was shocked too. Not only that, but the Government actually has to give them money, so that's like double bad. It's seriously not an ideal situation.

THE PHILOSOPHER: Well, ok, why don't they just get rid of them? They can do that, yes? Just get rid of them, yes?

THE TRAILBLAZER: So, yeah, obviously that would be great if they could do that. And they've looked at ways they can do that.

But, the thing is, they just can't do that. It's just no-go. So actually, what they really want to do is find a way of monetising poverty.

THE BOOTLICKER: Great!

THE TRAILBLAZER: Yeah, great. It's like properly progressive. Because, like, already they've managed to cash in on sick people by privatising bits of the NHS. And they've done it with criminals by privatising prisons. Now they need to figure out how to do the same with poor people. So guys, let's brainstorm the bejesus out of this. What have we got?

THE PHILOSOPHER: Well, ok, I'm thinking, maybe, corporate sponsorship?

THE BOOTLICKER: Love it!

THE TRAILBLAZER: Ok, yeah, so I'm interested. Tell me more.

THE PHILOSOPHER: Yeah, ok, I'm thinking big names - 'sponsor a poor person'. Community involvement, raising profiles, social investment. Could be big.

THE SCEPTIC: Bollocks.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Yeah, I'm liking this. Who are talking about here? Who's going to get on board?

THE PHILOSOPHER: Ok, well, I don't think you're going to get the quality brands. We're not talking Prada, or Chanel or Aston Martin. We might stretch to Marks and Spencer's or Waitrose even, but I'm thinking more along the lines of Tesco and Sports Direct.

THE BOOTLICKER: Brilliant! Lidl?

THE PHILOSOPHER: Well, ok, Lidl, yeah. What's Lidl?

THE BOOTLICKER: I think it's like Waitrose for poor people.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Oh yeah, Waitrose for poor people could really work, for deffo.

THE SCEPTIC: Rubbish. No one will want to align their business with poverty.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Ok, yeah, good point. Or is it? Could we not put a spin on this? What do we know about poor people? What do they do? What do they eat? Where do they go? We need to tap into the poverty lifestyle chic and promote the shizzle out of it.

THE BOOTLICKER: Dog racing.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Yeah, loving it, dog racing. What else?

THE PHILOSOPHER: Ok, well, they dress in rags, they die early and they don't talk properly. I saw some poor people on this Dickens thing on the TV.

THE BOOTLICKER: Amazing. The Dickens thing, yeah.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Oh, the Dickens thing, totes amazing, yeah. I'm thinking this is totally the way to go, because poor people were so much more

colourful in olden days. This is proper heritage, right? Foggy old London town, with Jack the Ripper and jellied eels and Sherlock Holmes. I'm really loving this angle.

THE BOOTLICKER: Fantastic! Be great for the tourists.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Ok yeah, the tourists will, like, totally love it. So, ok, let's park this idea in the bay marked 'fantabulous' and see what else we've got. Anyone?

THE BOOTLICKER: Lottery tickets.

THE SCEPTIC: Been done.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Ok, like, buy a ticket, win a poor person?

THE BOOTLICKER: Excellent! But no. Sell the lottery tickets to the poor people so they can win money.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Ok, so, they win the money and they're not poor any more. Hey presto, no more poverty! I like it.

THE BOOTLICKER: Yes, but no. Only one or two poor people will win the money. Most of the poor people will stay poor.

THE TRAILBLAZER: I see. No, I don't see. We're still stuck with all the poor people. What happens to them?

THE BOOTLICKER: They keep buying lottery tickets. So you have this continuous revenue stream.

THE TRAILBLAZER: So... ok, yes... ok, I get it. Yes, and I like it. Yeah, you know, that really might work.

THE SCEPTIC: Bullshit. Like I say, it's already been done. Lottery tickets, scratch cards - it doesn't generate nearly enough income to offset Government spending on benefits. You're still making a net loss.

THE TRAILBLAZER: No problem, we just need to sell more lottery tickets.

THE SCEPTIC: Not possible. They won't buy more lottery tickets - not when they still have to spend money on other things.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Ok yeah, other things, I see... What other things?

THE SCEPTIC: Food. Rent. Heating.

THE TRAILBLAZER: For sure, yeah, those things. Ok, still worth thinking about, but for now let's tuck this one up in bed and maybe we'll look in on it later. Hit me with some more ideas, team.

THE PHILOSOPHER: Ok

THE BOOTLICKER: Yes.

THE SCEPTIC: Pah!

THE BOOTLICKER: Well...

THE TRAILBLAZER: Yes?

THE BOOTLICKER: Actually... Nothing, doesn't matter.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Come on now guys, we're better than this. Let's start thinking outside of the box. In fact, scrub that, let's not just step outside the box, let's completely vacate the room that the box is in. We're

outside the room now, and we're not even going to peak in through the window. What are we thinking?

THE PHILOSOPHER: Actually...

THE TRAILBLAZER: Go on.

THE PHILOSOPHER: Well, ok, it's like in order to drive you need a licence, yeah?

THE TRAILBLAZER: Oh wow. I don't know where you're going with this, but, like, already my spine is starting to tingle. Continue.

THE PHILOSOPHER: And, ok, people need to buy licences to do all sorts of other things, yeah?

THE TRAILBLAZER: Here it comes, people.

THE BOOTLICKER: Amazing.

THE PHILOSOPHER: So why don't we make people pay to get a licence to be poor?

THE TRAILBLAZER: And there it is. Slam dunk! Guaranteed revenue stream.

THE PHILOSOPHER: And, well, anyone who can't afford the licence isn't allowed to be poor.

THE BOOTLICKER: Fantastic!

THE TRAILBLAZER: Nailed it!

THE SCEPTIC: Bollocks.

THE TRAILBLAZER: Guys, I think we can safely say we have our innovative solution. Okay, this has been intense, let's split this joint. I think we've all earned a latte, yeah?

Are you on fire? Perhaps someone you know is getting singed right at this moment?

It ought to be a simple matter to just pick up a fire extinguisher and put paid to that firey bullshit once and for all but with so many different extinguishers to choose from how do you know you're not just going to make things worse? Do you go for CO2 or foam? What about that burning jacket - is it synthetic or natural fibre, and how will this affect your choice?

Maybe it's better to just walk away and let nature take its course.

Mmm, it's a real problem, not least because while you're busy trying to decide, your trousers are very probably being burnt to a crisp and nobody needs that kind of distraction when they're about to make an important decision. Come on now, think! You're wasting valuable time which could be much better used surfing, knitting or reading a glossy car magazine.

If only there was some way to find out instantly what kind of fire it is? Well guess what, now there is, thanks to Pooley's Fire Distinguisher.

The Fire Distinguisher is portable and easily operated in an emergency. It analyses your fire in seconds and tells you exactly which extinguisher to use in any given situation with almost complete accuracy*.



Now you need never be burnt alive by indecision again.

Pooley's
Deluxe
Fire Distinguisher

*In tests the Fire Distinguisher gave an accurate result 78 times out of 94 and hardly anyone important got roasted at all.

Got a Fire Distinguisher? Then you need our deluxe Fire Extinguisher Selection Pack - fire extinguishers for every conceivable occasion. You need never be stuck for the right fire management solution again!



Paper



Plastic



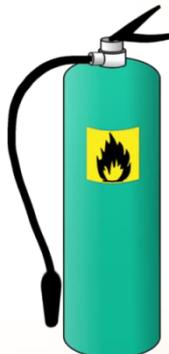
Pork



Biscuits



Pets



Masonry



Mythical Entities



Vinyl (45)



Vinyl (33 1/3)



Cutlery

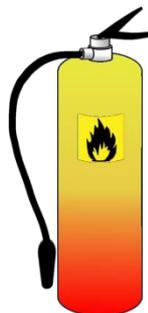


Cheese and Onion



Knee-Length Socks

And for when your fire extinguisher is on fire...



Other Fire Extinguishers

More and more firms are adopting company salutes as a way of motivating staff and maintaining loyalty. Of course, it's important to develop the right salute: one that is both distinctive and easy to learn.

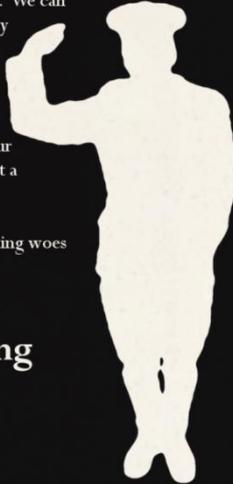
And you should always consider the health and safety implications. It's all too easy for your workers to lose an eye due to a wildly flung out finger or end up with cracked ribs as a result of a misplaced elbow. Only last month we learned that a major Japanese manufacturer was put out of action when their new and sadly untested salute, administered far too vigorously, left much of their workforce with concussion. The last thing you want is to find your factory floor littered with barely sensible and semi-comatose bodies.

What you need is someone who can navigate the pitfalls of corporate salutes - and that's where we come in. At Salter's Saluting Solutions we'll design a bespoke salute that can be used safely in any environment. Our salutes are quick, economical and are sure to promote a sense of obedience and conformity in your workforce. We can even incorporate your company song or motto.

Packages range from our deluxe salute which involves both hands, a chant and a brief but memorable dance, right down to our economy package, which makes use of just a couple of fingers.

So give us a call today and let your saluting woes become a thing of the past.

Salter's Saluting Solutions



Hey Bob, I bet you can't persuade people to smear shit on their faces...



... You think? Watch and learn, son. Watch and learn.

Dimonte Laboratories
EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF HUMAN GULLIBILITY

Looking to 'divert' funds from your company, charity or government department?

It can be frustrating when, despite having a responsible position in a thriving concern, you just can't seem to get your hands on any of that sweet, sweet cash. The traditional way of siphoning off the moolah is to commit your organisation to shelling out on a new website, brand image or similar piece of corporate fluff, then farming the project out to whichever company promises you the biggest kickback.

It's effective, but there is always the risk of troublesome questions about unwarranted expenditure from shareholders, trustees and elected members. Not to mention those hard-to-shift suspicions about what you personally may be getting out of the deal.

Well now there's a new product to set your mind at rest.

Adding Rinse Easy™ to your tender process will wash away all those irritating objections and awkward questions, and leave you free to enjoy your ill-gotten gains without a stain on your character.



Special Offer: Order 12 cases of Rinse Easy today on your corporate account and we'll give you 30% back... in cash. I think we understand each other, yes?

WHO'S NOBODY 2018

The ultimate directory of losers, nonentities and scum from all walks of life.

First published in 1932, *Who's Nobody* is now considered the most authoritative source of biographical information about the lowest strata of society. Layabouts, wasters, swindlers and other assorted chav scum are all celebrated in its august pages, giving a unique insight into the lives of the least influential members of society.

With over 90,000 entries, the 2018 edition is the most comprehensive directory of scroungers, malingerers, slackers, shirkers, racketeers, dross, fartabouts, pilferers, fraudsters, parasites, drifters, bottom-feeders, snivellers, snufflers, dribblers, ditherers, whingers and general filth who ever managed to drag themselves out of bed in a morning and slump in front of the TV. It is the ultimate incentive for anyone who needs motivation to get off their pimply backside and do something worthwhile with their lives.



JEGGNGS, Kerry

Born Leeds 1982

Beauty Technician (unemployed)

Career

Work Experience placement at Mega-loshes Beauty Studio, Leeds 1995. Nothing much 1995-Present.

MCGOVERN, Brian 'Mad Dog'

Born Maudstone 1988

Fifty crook and amateur pool player

Career

Knocked off the off licence in the high street 2003. Stole a taxi 2005, robbed the Co-Op (twice) 2005, vandalised the green table in the bus station 2006, lifted 400 metres of copper signalling cable from a stretch of railway line, various unspecified house-breaking 2006-2009, custodial sentence for housebreaking 2009-2015, three weeks working in a warehouse in Sweden, cautioned for causing an affray 2015, knocked off three newsgangs and a chip shop 2017.

Eazee-post

Taking the pain out of using internet forums

You have Mike Dali to thank for making your internet browsing that little bit less frustrating, thanks to a new browser plugin which can read forum posts and assess them according to their usefulness. Eazee-post's complex algorithm examines key phrases and scores them against a number of different criteria, including relevance, accuracy, smugness and

abuse. It then marks each post with an appropriate rating, allowing people searching for a genuinely useful response to scroll past all the time wasters.

Mr Dali gave us a brief demonstration using a typical forum thread. The results were generated in seconds and are shown below.

 KAMan	<p>2nd May 2017 09.50</p> <p>Apologies if this isn't the right forum. I'm looking for someone who can give me some idea how I can fit a new headlight bulb on the driver's side of a Ford KA. I've got the right bulb but I just can't seem to get at the headlight!</p>	<p>Eazee-post Rating</p> <p>Original poster</p>
 Doomslayer54	<p>2nd May 2017 10.06</p> <p>What make of car is it?</p>	<p>Eazee-post Rating</p> <p>Hasn't read question</p>
 Froghopper	<p>2nd May 2017 10.28</p> <p>I always take mine to the garage.</p>	<p>Eazee-post Rating</p> <p>Irrelevant</p>
 Trucklover412	<p>2nd May 2017 10.31</p> <p>I've never had a Ford KA and I don't know how it's done, but you probably have to remove the air filter.</p>	<p>Eazee-post Rating</p> <p>Doesn't know the answer but is going to reply anyway</p>
 7seasofrye	<p>2nd May 2017 11.05</p> <div data-bbox="459 1637 1046 1771" style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"><p>What make of car is it?</p><p><i>Originally posted by Doomslayer54</i></p></div> <p>dude its a Ford KA the OP said that in their post</p>	<p>Eazee-post Rating</p> <p>Looking for argument</p>
 cupidstunt	<p>2nd May 2017 11.52</p> <p>Ford Ka's r rubbish. You need get a better car!!!</p>	<p>Eazee-post Rating</p> <p>Random abuse</p>

 Mrs_Bossy	<p>2nd May 2017 13.35</p> <p>I used to have a Renault and I think you need to reach up through the wheel arch.</p>	Eazee-post Rating Hasn't read question
 Trucklover412	<p>2nd May 2017 14.13</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p>I used to have a Renault and I think you need to reach up through the wheel arch.</p> <p><i>Originally posted by Mrs_Bossy</i></p> </div> <p>This ^</p>	Eazee-post Rating Nothing to contribute but wants to join in
 cupidstunt	<p>2nd May 2017 14.41</p> <p>Renault's r crap!!!</p>	Eazee-post Rating Random abuse
 7seasofrye	<p>2nd May 2017 15.12</p> <p>the OP doesn't have a Renault</p>	Eazee-post Rating Looking for argument
 Trucklover412	<p>2nd May 2017 15.58</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p>the OP doesn't have a Renault</p> <p><i>Originally posted by 7seasofrye</i></p> </div> <p>I never said he did.</p>	Eazee-post Rating Looking for argument
 JaneyWP56	<p>2nd May 2017 16.20</p> <p>My father-in-law had one. The passenger side is much easier to replace.</p>	Eazee-post Rating Nothing to contribute but wants to join in
 7seasofrye	<p>2nd May 2017 16.32</p> <p>how exactly does that help? r you saying that the OP should change the passenger side instead???</p>	Eazee-post Rating Looking for argument
 JaneyWP56	<p>2nd May 2017 16.51</p> <p>There's no need to be like that. I'm just expressing an opinion. Am I not allowed an opinion?</p>	Eazee-post Rating Doesn't know when to quit
 7seasofrye	<p>2nd May 2017 17.08</p> <p>not if ur a dick</p>	Eazee-post Rating Random abuse

 Coffee_Addict	2 nd May 2017 17.49 I think the OP might find it difficult to do this.	Eazee-post Rating Nothing to contribute but wants to join in
 7seasofrye	2 nd May 2017 17.53 rubbish its dead easy why do people have to make such a big deal about these things??? its common sense	Eazee-post Rating Looking for argument
 Trucklover412	2 nd May 2017 18.11 <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> rubbish its dead easy why do people have to make such a big deal about these things??? its common sense </div> Okay then, tell us how?	Eazee-post Rating Looking for argument
 DarkSith	2 nd May 2017 19.12 Are you sure you actually need to replace it?	Eazee-post Rating Nope, no idea what the thinking is here
 Pacmamma	2 nd May 2017 20.10 When I had a Renault you could only do it by jacking the car up then reaching up through the wheelarch.	Eazee-post Rating Hasn't read question
 412Jacko	2 nd May 2017 20.22 <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> When I had a Renault you could only do it by jacking the car up then reaching up through the wheelarch. </div> I don't think the OP has a Renault.	Eazee-post Rating Nothing to contribute but wants to join in
 Trucklover412	2 nd May 2017 20.33 I see 7seasofrye has gone quiet!!!	Eazee-post Rating Looking for argument
 KAMan	3 rd May 2017 09.15 It's okay. I took it to Halford's - all sorted.	Eazee-post Rating Original poster
 cupidstunt	3 rd May 2017 09.37 Halfords r crap!!!	Eazee-post Rating Random abuse

In a first for British justice, businessman Troy Bannerman sought an injunction against the police to prevent them using evidence that could see him behind bars. A visibly perplexed Justice Frog presided as Mr Bannerman's legal representative, Ms. Wendy Gargle, opened the batting against the Chief Constable of West Shepton Constabulary.

Gargle: Chief Constable McAlister, I trust I'm addressing you by your correct title?

Chief Constable: No.

Gargle: No what?

Chief Constable: No... miss?

Gargle: Please do not attempt to fox the court with your devious police evasions. Are you or are you not a Chief Constable? A simple yes or no will suffice.

Chief Constable: Yes.

Gargle: Right... Good... Do you mean 'yes you are', or 'yes you are not'?

Chief Constable: Um ... yes?

At this point, realising that she had painted herself into a corner, Ms Gargle made an appeal to the judge.

Gargle: Your honour. I wonder if we might start again?

Frog: Yes, you are making rather a hash of it, aren't you? Allow me. Chief Constable, would you kindly satisfy the court that you are indeed Chief Constable McAlister?

Chief Constable: No, Your Honour.

Frog: 'No, you won't satisfy the court' or 'no, you are not Chief Constable McAlister'?

Chief Constable: I am not Chief Constable McAlister. For the record, I make no claim to be able to satisfy the court, either.

Frog: Then if you are not Chief Constable McAlister, who the devil are you?

Chief Constable: Chief Constable Sheen, your worship.

Frog: I see, I see - and will you kindly illuminate us as to

why you are Chief Constable Sheen and not Chief Constable McAlister?

Chief Constable: I'm his replacement, your highness. Chief Constable McAlister has retired.

Frog: That's rather irresponsible of him. Oh, I can't make head nor tail of this. Ms Gargle, please take your witness back.

Gargle: Thank you Your Honour. Chief Constable Sheen, kindly tell us what you were doing on the evening of 17th April this year.

Chief Constable: I was attending a private party at the Pink Parakeet Club in Totteridge Street. What has that got to do with this case?

Gargle: Nothing at all, but it does mean I've won a fiver.

Frog: We will settle up later, Ms Gargle. Proceed.

Gargle: Chief Constable Sheen, you are in sole command of West Shepton Constabulary, are you not? Please think carefully before you answer.

Chief Constable: Yes, I -

Gargle: I would remind you that you have sworn an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth

Chief Constable: Yes, I know, and I -

Gargle: Please Chief Constable, answer the question!

Chief Constable: Yes, yes, of course I'm in command - why do you think I wear this hat?

Gargle: Very good. And tell me Chief Constable, did your force arrest this man and charge him with fourteen counts of corporate fraud?

At this point Ms Gargle spun around and struck out an accusatory finger at a total stranger sitting in the public gallery. The stranger, startled, leapt to his feet and made a dash for the exit, colliding with two chairs and the usher before finally escaping from the courtroom.

Frog: Who was that man, Ms Gargle?

Gargle: I've no idea your honour, I mistimed my dramatic gesture. I meant to indicate my client, sitting here at the front.

Mr Bannerman used this opportunity to introduce himself, waving meekly and murmuring 'hello'. Ms Gargle put her question again and the Chief Constable answered in the affirmative.

Gargle: I see, I see, and tell me, on what evidence do you base these wholly ridiculous and trumped up charges?

Mr Wivens, acting for West Shepton Constabulary, rose to protest.

Wivens: Objection!

Frog: Oh here we go; I thought we were doing well.

Wivens: Your Honour, the question of whether the criminal charges brought against Mr Bannerman are justified is not a matter for this court, and it is quite misleading for my honourable colleague to describe them as 'trumped up'.

Frog: Agreed. Objection upheld.

Wivens: Might I remind everyone that the purpose of this court is to decide whether this so-called evidence can be used in Mr so-called Bannerman's forthcoming so-called trial.

Frog: Indeed. Objection upheld.

Wivens: I mean, where would we be if we found ourselves unable to focus on the issues at hand? Why, we'd be all over shop, and no mistake, to use a legal term.

Frog: Yes, yes! Objection upheld, I say. What do I have to do to get you to shut up?

Wivens: I mean, fair enough, the evidence very probably is trumped up. This is the cops we're talking about, after all. We all know what they're like, eh? But that's neither here nor there.

Frog: Mr Wivens, two things: firstly, I've upheld your objection, please don't keep banging on about it,

otherwise I may have to hurt you. Secondly, it would serve you well to remember that you are here to represent the West Shepton Constabulary and the murderous fashion in which the Chief Constable is currently glaring at you suggests that he doubts whether you have his best interests at heart. I have known gentlemen in your position to find themselves on the receiving end of a good kicking upon leaving the court, and there have been times when I can't say that I wholly disapprove.

Wivens: Noted Judge. I'll can it.

Frog: Ms Gargle, please repeat your question to the Chief Constable in less contentious language.

Gargle: Of course. Chief Constable, on what evidence do you base the charges against my client?

Chief Constable: On the evidence of numerous incriminating emails, letters, meeting minutes and reports that were retrieved from an

office being used by Mr Bannerman.

Gargle: By 'retrieved' of course you mean 'stolen'.

Chief Constable: By 'retrieved' of course I mean 'seized on the authority of a warrant issued by the court'.

Gargle: Well, of course, the distinction is very much a matter of perspective.

Chief Constable: No it isn't. It's black and white, legal stuff, I looked it up.

Gargle: Legal stuff? I think, maybe, you're better off leaving the intricate legal implications to lawyers, like what I am. And I tell you, Chief Constable, you have no legal right to use the material you obtained to pursue a criminal prosecution against my client. No further questions.

Chief Constable: Hang on a minute!

Gargle: I said no further questions!

Ms Gargle then folded her arms and turned her back on

the witness until Justice Frog ordered the court cleared.

The case of Mr Bannerman vs West Shepton Constabulary resumed today in the high court. Justice Frog began the session with a brief address to both legal teams.

Frog: Ladies, gentlemen. It is my profoundest wish that by the end of our time here today we should be well on our way to resolving this issue one way or the other. There was a great deal of mucking about yesterday which didn't cast our profession in a particularly good light, and I am keen to knock that sort of thing on the head. Got it? Good. Ms Gargle, the floor is yours.

Gargle: Cheers Judge. Okey-dokey, I'd like to call Constable Geoff Perkins to the stand.

A tall, somewhat emaciated policeman in a badly-fitting helmet was steered to the stand by an official court handler.

Gargle: You are Constable Geoff Perkins?

Perkins: Oh yes, I am lady. Hello folks, how are you all doing?

Frog: Constable Perkins, who are you talking to?

Perkins: To the audience Your Honour.

Frog: The audience? The audience?

Perkins: Oh yes, the people over there in the box. Hi ya!

Frog: That, Constable Perkins, is the jury. Please do not fraternize with them, you don't know where they've been. Carry on Ms Gargle.

Gargle: Ta Judge. Constable Perkins, could you tell the court what part you played in the search of my client's office on the 14th February.

Perkins: Yes miss. I was there to put the boot in, miss.

Gargle: 'Put the boot in'? Can you elucidate?

Perkins: Not in public, miss. I don't think it's right proper.

Gargle: What I mean is: can you explain what you mean by 'put the boot in'. What exactly do you put your boot into?

Perkins: Into pretty much whatever I'm told to, miss. Which is pretty much everything.

Gargle: I see, and were you present when documents were taken from Mr Bannerman's private files.

Perkins: I should say so.

Gargle: And did Mr Bannerman give his permission to take those documents?

Perkins: No but -

Gargle: Thank you, no further questions.

Perkins: Yes, but we had a warrant -

Gargle: Thank you, that will be all. Your Honour, I should like to call my next witness.

Wivens: Hang on, don't I get a go!

Gargle: Your Honour, is this strictly necessary?

Frog: It *is* traditional for your opposite number to cross-examine the witness, I'm afraid.

Gargle: Pah! There's a lot of rot talked about tradition. It would expedite matters enormously if we could just press on.

Frog: You make a valid point.

Wivens: I didn't get a go yesterday either. I'm pretty sure I *should* have got a go yesterday.

Gargle: Your Honour, I don't think any useful purpose will be served by this delay. Now, may I please call my next witness?

Wivens: Woah there! You're honour, who exactly is running this show: you or this snooty bitch?

Gargle: Your Honour, I most strongly object. Might I remind my learned friend that it is not unprecedented for gobby bastards like him to get a smack.

Frog: Mr Wivens, please modify your language. Try to remember that this is a court of law and that Ms Gargle is well known in legal circles for having a vicious right hook. Now, you may question the witness.

Gargle: But Your Honour!

Frog: Oh let him have a turn. He's won't shut up until he does and it's not as if it's going to make any difference.

Ms Gargle retired to her seat as Mr Wivens rose to question the witness.

Wivens: Now then, Constable Perkins -

Perkins: Do I get to sing my song now?

Wivens: I beg your pardon?

Perkins: The lads at the station said that if I came along and talked to the audience, the nice man in the wig would let me sing my song.

Wivens: Your Honour?

Frog: He's not going to start singing in my bastard court. Now get on with it.

Wivens: Thank you, Your Honour. Now, Constable Perkins -

Perkins: I'm not saying a thing until I get to do my song.

Wivens: Might I remind you that this is a court of law and you are a serving police officer. You have an obligation to -

Perkins: La la la la la la...

At this point the constable stuck his fingers in his ears and continued to make this disagreeable noise to the irritation of all present.

Wivens: What are you doing?

Perkins: ... la la la la la la...

Frog: Mr Wivens, how much more of the court's time do you intend to waste? You wanted to question the witness, kindly get on with it.

Wivens: But he won't answer!

Perkins: ... la la la la la ...

Frog: Proceed, Mr Wivens or I shall find you in contempt of court.

Wivens: How is this my fault? This dumb prick is the one who is in contempt. Oh, for fuck's sake Constable, shut up!

Perkins: ... la la la la la ...

Wivens: Look, Your Honour, can we not indulge him? I think it's the only way we'll get him to stop.

Frog: All right, whatever, but make sure he's quick.

Wivens: Constable Perkins, you may sing your song.

Perkins: ... la la la la - oh, thank you very much.

Constable Perkins then launched into a spirited rendition of Don't Cry for Me Argentina, at the culmination of which he received a standing ovation and there was not a dry eye in the house. From somewhere a child came forth with a bunch of flowers, which he received gracefully as the courtroom rang to the sounds of 'More! More!' The constable condescended to perform two encores before Justice Frog announced that nothing

could possibly follow that and adjourned the session.

Day three in the case of Mr Bannerman vs West Shepton Constabulary began with some commotion amongst the plaintiff's legal team. Justice Frog impatiently enquired as to the cause.

Frog: Ms Gargle, what is going on there? What are those bags you are handing round?

Gargle: Party bags, Your Honour. It's my birthday.

Frog: And do you think it is proper for someone in your profession to be interrupting important legal proceedings with this childish whimsy?

Gargle: I have one for you as well, Your Honour.

Ms Gargle approached the bench and passed up a gaily coloured paper bag from which the judge removed a party blower, a plastic soldier, a small packet of sweets and a bottle of bubble mixture.

Frog: Oh, I see. Well this is all rather splendid, isn't it?

This little soldier man appears to be a sniper, how wonderful... However, ahem, there is a time and a place for everything. Let us not allow ourselves to be distracted and if you gentlemen at the back could desist from blowing bubbles, may we please proceed?

Gargle: Certainly, I would like to call -

Wivens: Just a minute. Look, this all seems a little one-sided to me. Day one, I don't get a look in at all. Yesterday I was upstaged by a singing copper. And today... well, today I didn't even get a party bag. I came back from my holidays early for this.

Gargle: I suppose he's got a point.

Frog: He *has* got a point, yes.

Wivens: Does that mean I get to call a witness then?

Frog: Nope. Carry on Ms Gargle.

Gargle: Your Honour, I would like to call Mr Troy Bannerman.

Mr Bannerman approached the stand with a hop and a skip.

Bannerman: Great! I wondered when you were going to get round to me.

Gargle: You are Mr Troy Bannerman, are you not?

Bannerman: No.

Gargle: Err...

Bannerman: Ah, had you there! Yes, yes I am Troy Bannerman.

Gargle: Ah, good one!

Frog: Jolly good, yes. What a marvellous sense of humour. Well done. We could do with more people like you, Mr Bannerman, it would cheer this place up no end.

Gargle: I agree, Your Honour. Mr Bannerman, I wonder if you would be so kind as to look at this document. For the benefit of the jury, Mr Bannerman is being shown a printout of an email that was sent to a senior member of the current government. The

subject of the email is not relevant at the current time.

Wivens: The subject of the email is the offer of a cash payment in return for being awarded a lucrative government contract.

Frog: Strike Mr Wivens's comments from the record. The jury will please disregard Mr Wivens's outburst. The content of the email has no material effect on this case and you will please remember that all our politicians are lovely and beyond any suspicion of corruption.

Gargle: Thank you, Your Honour. Mr Bannerman, could you confirm that you are the author of that email?

Bannerman: I am indeed.

Gargle: And are you able to tell us how this email came to be in the possession of West Shepton Constabulary?

Bannerman: I believe it was one of a number of documents stolen from my office.

Gargle: Stolen?

Bannerman: Stolen.

Frog: Stolen?

Bannerman: Yes, stolen.

Wivens: Objection!

Frog: Shut up.

Gargle: Mr Bannerman, are you saying that this document was removed from your office without your consent?

Bannerman: That is correct.

Gargle: Your Honour, ladies and gentlemen of the jury. We have established that the document that has been examined in this court today is the intellectual property of Mr Bannerman. We have also established, via Mr Bannerman's testimony, that he did not give West Shepton Constabulary permission to remove and make use of the document. This assertion can be corroborated by reference to the earlier testimonies of Chief Constable Whatever-his-name-was and the

extraordinary Sergeant Perkins, whose new album, I believe, is released tomorrow. In short, the fuzz have no legal or moral authority to use this material to prosecute my client and I therefore move that you grant an injunction on the grounds of habeas corpus, coup d'état and hee-bee gee-bee.

Frog: Brilliant!

Gargle: Thank you.

Frog: You see - that's how it's done. Injunction granted!

Wivens: No, no, no, no, no! No, no! This isn't right. Absolutely not!

Frog: Are you still here?

Wivens: What about the jury?

Frog: Oh, this has got nothing to do with them. I don't know what they're doing here anyway. Right, who's up for getting chips? Chips anyone? Right, that's settled, let's go and get chips.



Gary the Builder

What's that mate? Time travel? Well, the basic problem, as I see it, is the linear flow of causality. Some smart arses might bang on about the build-up of entropy but you don't want to get bogged down in all that. You see, you've got your cause and effect, and if you start mucking about with 'em and getting 'em in the wrong order, you gonna have yourself a right old picnic.

I'm not saying it can't be done, mind. Problem is, if you don't know what you're doing you can end up ripping a hole in the space-time continuum and that can be pricey, if you get my drift. Take more than a bucket of plaster and a lick of paint to set that mess right.

But that's by the by. The real problem is you need a lot of elbow room if you want to build a time machine, 'cos you need to warp space; and to warp space you need mass - a lot of mass. How big is your gaff then? Yeah? You see, that's a problem because the average semi-detached in Chiswick isn't really going to cut it, not even if you've got a garage. Not even if you knock through to next door. You're gonna need an area as big as... ooh... Wales, at the very least.

Then there's the planning permission. Trust me, that's going to be a bloody nightmare, 'cos you can bet the neighbours will have something to say about it. Bleeding nuisances. You'd better be ready to grease the right palms, know what I mean?

Not that I'm trying to put you off, you understand. I mean, it's doable. Tell you what, I'll make a few calls and get back to you with an estimate, but if I were you I would seriously think about going for a swimming pool instead.

The Lost Continent, Found!

Scientists have discovered a previously unknown continent in the Mid-Atlantic. The landmass, roughly two thirds the size of Australia, has apparently gone unnoticed because 'no one thought of looking there before'.

Professor Henry Vent of the Royal Society of Nervous Geographers explained that overlooking major geographical features is actually very easy to do. "Mount Everest went entirely unnoticed until 1922, and even then it was only detected because it was spoiling someone's view of Tibet," the Professor told us. "Today the Grand Canyon attracts visitors from all over the world but early European settlers were largely unaware of it and Native American people only noticed it because of the large number of bison that kept plunging into it.

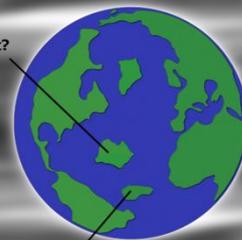
"And what about Belgium?" Professor Vent continued. "An entire country - most people pass straight through it without even blinking. Think of it this way, my Aunt Connie bought a hat in 1956 and it stayed on top of her wardrobe, completely untouched, for thirty years before she got around to throwing it out. Actually, that's probably not a particularly good analogy, but I'm sure you get my point."

A select group of geologists, speleologists, botanists and palaeontologists are currently preparing an expedition to investigate and catalogue the wonders of this new land. They're also taking a cardiologist and an acupuncturist with them, just to be on the safe side.

Professor Vent himself will be on hand to lend his expertise and he is quite clear about what he expects to find. "Dinosaurs, definitely," he announced. "Possibly a few giant crabs. A man eating plant, certainly, and a tribe of scantily-clad Amazonian women is a distinct possibility."

After a moment of consideration, the Professor revised his prediction. "I may be guilty of wishful thinking," he admitted. "At the very least we should encounter some interesting flora and a few pretty rocks. And, if nothing else, it will get me out of the house."

Here look! Seriously, how could you miss it?



You might want to check this bit out as well

**Turns out I'm more
qualified than Einstein...**

**QwERtY**
Qualifications

This certifies that

Paul Farnsworth

**Turned up and sat at the back of the room, looking bored
(Level 2)**

This Certificate is valid for 3 years (11/11/2018)

Date Qualified: 12/11/2015
Certificate No. TP410T177260C40053

Signed: 
Clive Lev

Training
Sector
15-17
Irvine
LONDON NW9 6AQ
Tel: 020820
Centre License No. TP410XWXN

Qualification Level: QCF Level 2
Credit Value: 1 Credit
National Qualification No: 600/7725/6

Signed: 
IK16 8TH

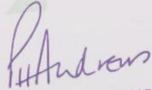
177260-DKXUTHSE

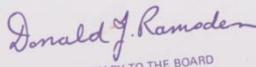
**KIDDERMINSTER & PORLOCK TRAINING
CONSULTANCY LTD**

This is to certify that

Paul Farnsworth

Was able to suggest random adjectives for
the trainer to write on a flip chart


CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD


SECRETARY TO THE BOARD

23214/0061



CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Acme Training Certifies that
Paul Farnsworth

has a pulse and a rudimentary awareness
of his surroundings

Issued on: 22/02/2016

Certificate Number: 1766-717182-735259



Certificate of Attendance

This to certify that

Paul Farnsworth

Remained awake for very nearly
three hours while someone read out
some Powerpoint slides

on

17th December 2015

And successfully achieved the standards required to fulfil the
course objectives

BONGO TRAINING LTD

Training and Consultancy Service

Certificate of Training

This is to certify that

Paul Farnsworth

*has completed instruction in the
following programme*

USE OF OFFICE FURNITURE

COURSE CONTENT:

- How to sit on a chair without falling off
- What to do if you get trapped in a filing cabinet
- Basic instruction in the use of desk drawers
- Safe operation of small to medium sized tables

Date 29th October 2015

Director...

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED TO

Paul Farnsworth

WHO HAS COMPLETED A HALF DAY COURSE IN

NOT STICKING HIS FINGERS IN THE ELECTRICAL SOCKETS

DATE *25/1/16*



Royal Institute of Lifemanship
 FOUNDED 1869
 Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
 President
 Dr. A. Bongo

PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Paul Farnsworth BRONZE AWARD

KEEPING QUIET WHEN YOU FIND OUT THAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE FALSIFYING DOCUMENTS

Book
 Organiser.

EXAMINATIONS BOARD

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

PAUL FARNSWORTH

HAS BEEN AWARDED

Intermediate Certificate in Ladder Operation

Stage 1: Going up
 Stage 2: Coming back down again

MAY 1997 CENTRE NO. 2203 SERIAL NO. 212760
 SEE OVERLEAF

Martin Cross
 CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Certificate

SHEPTON BASSETT
 TOWN COUNCIL

This is to certify that

Paul Farnsworth

has successfully completed
 Taking care with hot beverages

C. W. P. Ingh
 Director of Education

Issued by

Position

Date 1st April 1980



STATE OF ATTENDANCE

RESTRICTED

SHEPTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL



This is to certify that

PAUL FARNSWORTH

Has attended the following course
NVQ Level 1 'Awareness'

Start Date 25/9/15

Signed *PS*
 Course Facilitator

Melanie A. Teasdale
 HR Service Partner

2013 ORDER OF DISTINCTION

SHEPTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS
 NATIONAL CYCLING PROFICIENCY CERTIFICATE

AWARDED TO

PAUL FARNSWORTH

WHO HAS COMPLETED A COURSE OF INSTRUCTION IN THE NATIONAL CYCLING PROFICIENCY SCHEME AND PASSED THE TEST FOR SKILFUL CYCLING

CERTIFICATE NO. D612/2

DATE 22nd Nov. 1980

PRESIDENT *Keate*

Who's the thicke now then, Albert?

Your Staff Feedback Your Way

Managers and supervisors! Tired of getting negative feedback on staff surveys? If yours is a small-to-medium business then **Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions** could have the right answer for you.

We all appreciate positive feedback from our staff. It confirms what we know already: that we're really great and everybody thinks we're fantastic. Oh yeah, we're the best!

But all too often ungrateful and misguided staff can spoil everything by using the opportunity to air their grievances, moan about petty abuses and generally be all negative and grumpy.

That's the last thing you need when all you really want is to feel smug and self-satisfied about yourself.

Obviously, it's a relatively simple task to ignore such responses, track down the perpetrators and subject them to an extended campaign of bullying and harassment before finally dismissing them without notice. And, of course, this is marvellous fun - but wait! What if someone wants to examine the data in more depth? A troublesome shareholder, perhaps, a senior director or a coroner?

*Well, with a tailored staff survey from **Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions** that's simply not a problem. Our unique algorithm reinterprets each response, making it **impossible** to give a negative answer and guaranteeing **perfect results every time**. And, as an added bonus, your workers receive the false impression that their inconsequential gripes and whinges have been taken seriously.*

Frisbee • Digitally • Tracked • Logistical • Interface • Solutions

Because fiddling the answers is far easier than fixing the problem.

Want to see how it works? Check out the sample questions below, along with examples of how your staff's responses will be interpreted in the results.

Question 1: How satisfied are you with your workload?

- a: Extremely
- b: Very
- c: Not at All

Answer reinterpreted as:

- a: I am extremely happy with my workload
- b: I am very happy with my workload
- c: I feel that my workload is inadequate and I am eager to be given more to do.

Question 2: How proud are you to work for [COMPANY NAME]

- a: Extremely
- b: Very
- c: Not at all.

Answer reinterpreted as:

- a: I am extremely proud to work here.
- b: I am very proud to work here
- c: Not at all proud because I don't think that the word 'proud' sufficiently describes the overwhelming sense of joy that I feel every day of the working week.

Question 3: Do you believe that [COMPANY NAME] properly appreciates the contribution that you make?

- a: Without a doubt.
- b: Certainly
- c: No.

Answer reinterpreted as:

- a: Without a doubt.
- b: Certainly
- c: I feel that I have a greater contribution to make and am embarrassed that the company regularly heaps praise on me when my work is, at best, average.

Question 4: Finally, in your own words, give a short summary of how you feel about working for [COMPANY NAME]

I think this organisation is populated by people who are just looking for an easy time of it at other people's expense, mostly mine, and I'm sick of having to put up with the childish dick-swinging, rampant unprofessionalism and blatant, undisguised criminality.

Answer reinterpreted as:

I think everybody is absolutely lovely and I am jolly pleased to work here.

Selling Crap for Fun and Profit

"There are days when I strongly suspect that my grandfather was some kind of simpleton." There is a profound note of dismay in Linda Grantleigh's voice as she makes this confession; almost shame, in fact, that she should be of the same bloodline. As the chief executive of Grantflox she's earned the right to her opinion, turning the struggling firm that her grandfather founded in the sixties into a thriving international concern.

"I remember him from my childhood," she recalls. "This portly, sweaty man looming over us wearing fake plastic fangs and googly-eyed glasses, thinking all the while that he was being terribly amusing. I may have been only six but even then I could see that he lacked vision."

Cheap novelties and wacky gimmicks were not just Peter Grantleigh's passions, they were the foundations on which he built his business. Grantleigh's Goofs, as the

company was originally called, first fired up its production lines in 1963. It soon cornered the sizeable - if not entirely lucrative - market in disappointing tat. Remember all those ads in the back of comics and Sunday supplements for x-ray specs, fake scars and garlic chewing gum? Chances are you were looking at a Grantleigh product. And no doubt you've had more than one Christmas dinner that was brought low by crackers containing impossible puzzles, a pathetic clip-on moustache or a weird plastic 'mood fish' - all thanks to Grantleigh's Goofs.

"My grandfather managed to scrape a living, just about," Linda said. "His business model was based on pocket money, quite literally. He was selling junk to schoolkids in return for pennies - fake noses, nails through fingers, that kind of thing. He used to say that it wasn't about the money, it was about bringing joy to

people's lives. He was a moron.

"When my father took over the business he carried on along the same lines, but at least he had no illusions about it. He knew it was a crock of shit but he had other interests - mainly gambling, drinking, other men's wives and anything else that would get him out of the house."

Initially Linda had no interest in the family business but a chance encounter at a workplace reactualisation seminar changed her mind. "The company I worked for were always sending me on batshit stuff like that. I had no idea what 'workplace actualisation' was, still don't, but I always put myself forward because they usually laid on a good lunch. And it was a chance to arse about for the day, of course; but when it comes to arsing about we've got nothing on the charity sector. These sessions are usually crawling with them and at this particular one I met

someone from the Association for Distressed Cattle who had been working on a bovine relocation project, or something equally ridiculous. She showed me this key ring in the shape of cow that had the charity's logo on it. Well, I mean, it was shit, obviously - but apparently they'd ordered thousands of them and it had cost them a bloody fortune. And that was my lightbulb moment."

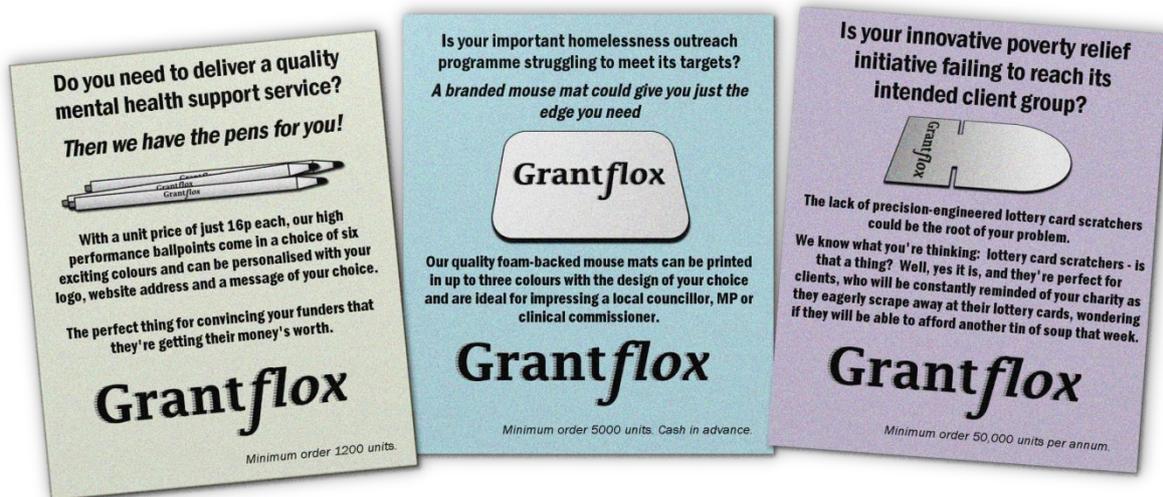
Linda took over the company and transformed it, almost overnight, from an antiquated factory producing useless tat for schoolkids to a modern, international business producing much-needed tat for the charity sector.

"Balloons, key rings, shopping trolley tokens, mouse mats - you name it, if it's pointless, tacky and it's got their name on it, they'll lap it up. I think some of those people really do believe that a customized coaster can help accomplish their charitable objectives; that a balloon on a stick can change people's lives. 'Raising awareness' they call it. Apparently, people who don't have a roof over their heads need to be made aware that they're homeless."

Grantflox certainly do nothing to disabuse their customers of this notion. In fact, they have a dedicated promotional team which advises charities on exactly what item of frivolous bric-a-brac will best get their

message across. Who knew that a calendar is the best way of providing support for sufferers of muscular dystrophy, or that a branded pen is the first step to housing rough sleepers? And Grantflox's fortunes continue to soar.

"We did get worried a few years back," Linda admitted. "There was a big clampdown on public spending, charities were expected to do more with less and we thought that this would seriously impact our business. Thankfully most of them decided to cut the money they put into frontline services in order to maintain their spending on promotional items. It's that kind of foresight that means we still have jobs today."



Shepton Bassett

A Vision for the Future 2010-2014



SHEPTON BASSETT



TOWN COUNCIL

Towards the end of 2009 Shepton Bassett Town Council set about producing a new town plan, called *Shepton Bassett: A Vision for the Future 2010-2014*. In 2017, after severe budget cuts, a lacklustre public consultation and several high profile financial scandals, the council decided that the town probably *would* have a future after all and now this plan has finally been published.

Fundamental to the plan are five key developments, building on the town's strengths in order to maximise the income potential of Shepton Bassett's most promising assets and meet the challenges of the next four years*.

*2010-2014

1. Pest Control

Shepton Bassett's Pest Control Service is widely acknowledged as one of the best in the country and is already one of the council's chief revenue streams. Vermin are dispatched cleanly, quickly and efficiently by our two-man team of Ralph McPherson, who hits them with a stick, and Big Dave, who drives the van. Further investment in this award-winning service will significantly increase its capacity and earning potential, and so the council has set aside funds for a new van and a bigger stick for Ralph.



2. Recycling Centre

Shepton Bassett's modern outdoor recycling centre is one of its most popular attractions and on Sunday mornings traffic queues frequently stretch back onto the main road as visitors wait to dispose of old furniture, electrical items and garden waste. At present, admission is free but plans are being drawn up to develop the site into a theme park. 'World of Rubbish' will feature refuse-themed rides, demonstrations and a state-of-the-art visitors' centre in which guests can learn all about what happens to their junk, from the moment they toss it casually into a skip, right up to the point that it's shipped out to China.



3. Tourism



Shepton Bassett has a rich history and can legitimately claim to have been founded by the Normans, archaeologists having traced the first settlement here back to 1222 when Norman Hinkle and Norman Butterfield set up a rendering plant. The council will capitalise on the town's heritage by instigating tours of the site of the former Woolworths, holding a major exhibition on the town's innovative one-way system and commissioning a blue plaque for the Coach and Horses, where Oliver Reed threw up in 1972. Visitors to Shepton Bassett will be encouraged to enjoy the heady atmosphere of tradition, most of which emanates from Hinkle and Butterfield's rendering plant, still in operation today.

4. A Tree



Artist's Impression

Shepton Bassett high street is a thriving centre of activity, with some shoppers still coming from miles around in spite of the pull of the nearby retail park just off the motorway. It boasts not two but three shoe shops, a bakery, an estate agent and a vacuum cleaner spares shop, plus the potential for an exciting new development where the bank used to be. And for lovers of charity shops there are charity shops.

However, it was felt that the high street has been neglected for too long and work is needed to create a more pleasant shopping environment. To this end the council has decided to plant a tree. Consultations are currently underway to decide what kind of tree is needed and councillors have already brought back suggestions from fact-finding visits to Norway, Florida and southern Spain. Progress is being made but further research is needed - we hear that there are some particularly nice trees in Barbados at this time of year.

5. Housing

Shepton Bassett has expanded considerably in the last few years and in addition to the increased demands on our transport infrastructure there is also a need for more housing. The council has been working with local businesses to improve transport links and can announce that three more bus stops are planned over the next ten years. It is hoped that the local bus operator can be persuaded to use them.



A solution to the housing problem has also been agreed. The gents' toilet on the marketplace has been closed since 1986 and is ripe for redevelopment. Crumbling, filthy and reeking of human waste, it is felt that this would be the ideal site for a development of 22 semidetached residences, four retail units and a new medical centre.

Summary

Councillor Kevin Giblet
Mayor of Shepton Bassett

Shepton Bassett: A Vision for the Future 2010-2014 was approved by the town council in March 2017 and has the full backing of all elected members, except Councillor Bob Frampton - surprise, surprise. There's no pleasing some people, is there? And why has he thrown his toys out of the pram this time? I'll tell you why - it's because, despite all evidence to the contrary, he swears blind that Oliver Reed actually threw up at the Red Lion instead of the Coach and Horses. Guess who owns the Red Lion? Exactly. Well Bob, the Red Lion is a seedy spit-and-sawdust dive, part illegal gambling den, part knocking shop, and you're not getting a blue plaque.

Anyway, this is not the place to air grievances. I heartily endorse the proposals put forward in this document and remain hopeful that we might at some point be able to raise enough cash to put some of them into effect. Cheers.

SHEPTON BASSETT



TOWN COUNCIL

Pressing on Regardless

A Real Scoop

EDITOR: Ah Perkins. Thanks for coming to see me lad. Take a seat, take a seat. Now look here, there's no other way of saying this but, without putting too fine a point on it, we are concerned about the quality of your work.

PERKINS: I'm very sorry to hear that sir.

EDITOR: Well, yes, we're all sorry about it. Very sorry. The thing is, when we took you on here at *The Shepton Bassett Gazette*, we were rather hoping for something better. You understand what I'm getting at here, Perkins?

PERKINS: No sir, I'm not sure that I do.

EDITOR: No? Well let's take a moment to review a few choice nuggets from the testimonials you provided us with at your interview and perhaps my concerns will become clearer. I quote: "I have no hesitation in recommending Mr Perkins to your organisation. He is fastidious, dedicated, always eats up all his dinner and would make an excellent member of your team. Yours sincerely, Mrs Lorraine Perkins." Any relation, perchance?

PERKINS: My mother sir.

EDITOR: Your mother. Of course. So, moving on - what about this one: "I have known young Peter for most of his adult life and I can honestly say that he has never once set fire to a public

building. Your humble servant, D.F. Perkins."

PERKINS: Absolutely true: I have never set fire to a public building. Not even a little one.

EDITOR: Very commendable.

PERKINS: Thank you sir.

EDITOR: Although it hardly qualifies you for your current role.

PERKINS: I hope you're not suggesting you would have preferred to employ an arsonist?

EDITOR: You know very well I'm suggesting no such thing. But we will gloss over that particular niggle and focus on the correspondent: D.F. Perkins. Another relation?

PERKINS: I imagine that would be my uncle, sir.

EDITOR: You imagine?

PERKINS: On reflection, I'm almost certain of it.

EDITOR: I see. Now see here Perkins, I'm sure you have a very supportive and loyal family, but this really won't do. Oh no, it won't do at all. I must have a dozen such endorsements here: Rita Perkins, Gordon Perkins, Barrington Perkins-Collingwood. Ho, what's this! 'Skipper'? I suppose you'll be telling me that's your pet Labrador?

PERKINS: Springer Spaniel, sir.

EDITOR: Good grief! The worry is how all this managed to get past our human resources people. I've half a mind to admire your audacity, Perkins, were it not for the disappointing show you've put on since you got here. We may only be a small local paper but we have our standards. I was under the impression that we were getting a high-flyer with a keen eye for detail and a ready wit, capable of turning out dynamite copy by the barrow load.

PERKINS: Were you? Extraordinary!

EDITOR: Yes Perkins, I was. And what do I get?

PERKINS: Me, sir.

EDITOR: You, Perkins. So what happened to the hotly anticipated surge in circulation? Where are the plaudits and the prizes?

PERKINS: I won the office sweepstake for last year's Grand National.

EDITOR: That doesn't count, Perkins! I'm talking about press awards and endorsements; about advertisers clamouring for space on our pages. Can you honestly say that you've made any contribution to the success of this paper?

PERKINS: Yes sir. I think so, sir. Remember, I did get an exclusive last week.

EDITOR: Remind me - was this the thousand word article on the proceedings of the ladies' knitting circle, or the story of the man who very nearly passed his driving test after the third attempt?

PERKINS: You do me an injustice. I'm referring to the frog trapped down the drain.

EDITOR: Of course! Why, it was a sensation - an action-packed drama which had the whole town gripped. Did we run it on the front page? I can't remember.

PERKINS: No sir.

EDITOR: I guess we missed a trick there.

PERKINS: I thought so.

EDITOR: Oh, you did, did you? Perkins, you are the absolute limit! The only reason we ran it at all was because the flower show was rained off and we had nothing to replace it with. That said, with the benefit of hindsight I think it would have been better had we gone with a blank page. What on Earth convinced you that anyone would be the slightest bit interested in such drivel?

PERKINS: Drivel sir? No sir! If you recall, I managed to secure an exclusive interview with the frog.

EDITOR: You've got no call to get carried away, Perkins. Writing 'croak croak croak croak' four dozen times does not constitute an interview. Lord knows what you were thinking.

PERKINS: I was leaning heavily on the suspense angle, sir. I was trying to get inside the mind of the frog - to see the dilemma from its point of view. Would it be trapped forever, or would it struggle free?

EDITOR: And did it? Struggle free, that is?

PERKINS: Not as such sir. It more sort of 'hopped off'.

EDITOR: Gad, I wish you'd hop off, Perkins.

PERKINS: Righto sir, on my way.

EDITOR: Perkins, come back here, I haven't finished with you yet.

Can you give me one good reason why I should continue to employ you?

PERKINS: I'm a pleasant and friendly individual, and a pleasure to have around the office, sir.

EDITOR: Says who?

PERKINS: Says the Reverend Benjamin F Perkins. "A pleasant and friendly individual, a pleasure to have around the office and a genuine source of jollity and *joie de vivre*." His exact words, if I remember correctly. You have his letter there.

EDITOR: Ah, another relative?

PERKINS: No sir.

EDITOR: So it's a coincidence that his name is Perkins?

PERKINS: Yes sir.

EDITOR: Whatever - I'm not sure I care anymore. Look I'm prepared to give you one more chance. Are you working on anything at the moment?

PERKINS: Oh yes sir, very much so sir. It's very exciting - a real ladle!

EDITOR: Ladle? I suspect the word you're looking for is 'scoop'.

PERKINS: I suspect you are right. It's a real scoop!

EDITOR: Very good, well as long as it's not a follow up story on the frog... It's *not* a follow up

story on the frog, is it? Oh heavens, it is, isn't it?

PERKINS: It's a whole new angle on the incident. You see, there was this badger that saw the whole thing, and -

EDITOR: No! Please, no more. Drop the whole frog thing, Perkins. I mean it, I won't stand for any more of this nonsense. No more frogs in drains, no eyewitness badgers, no snails with murky pasts, no pigeons with views on traffic congestion or hedgehogs reminiscing about their youth. I want proper, normal, local stories that will be of interest to our readers. Is that understood?

PERKINS: Yes sir. Absolutely sir.

EDITOR: No more weird stuff. It's freaking people out.

PERKINS: Of course sir.

EDITOR: Good. On your way.

PERKINS: Yes sir. Right away sir. One thing sir - I assume my in-depth interview with Mr and Mrs Deacon's chicken is now cancelled?

EDITOR: What? Of course not! Good grief Perkins, you still have a great deal to learn about journalism.

PERKINS: Sir?

EDITOR: That chicken is one of our biggest advertisers. Now get out.

Stuff Your Bleeding Job

In what is thought to be a first for the studio, Paramount has acquired the rights to a resignation letter written by Martin Quibble, former payroll officer at a medium-sized logistics company based in the UK. Mr Quibble's notice to terminate his contract runs to just under two hundred pages and in giving detailed reasons for his departure, Mr Quibble relates a blistering story of mismanagement, corruption and petty infighting.

The letter is to be made into a major motion picture and casting has already been confirmed for many of the lead roles, including the overweight narcissistic company boss who doesn't have any interest in anything that doesn't directly feed his own ego, the slippery Director of Non-Compliance with the big shiny car and the strange reluctance to explain where the pension fund has gone, and the whinging senior partner who, on the rare occasions when he condescends to turn up to work, moans constantly about how he's occasionally expected to do the job he's being paid to do and whose reports to the board appear to be a fantastical amalgamation of pure fiction and wishful thinking.

Quibble himself has been retained as a consultant on the film and is reported to

be very pleased with how it is progressing, although he is a little concerned that some elements have departed from actual events. Specifically, the boss is not nearly fat enough, the Director of Non-Compliance is not nearly evil enough, and the senior partner is nowhere near as irritating as his real-life counterpart.

The biggest problem, however, would appear to be the ending. The film concludes with the company chairman reading Quibble's resignation letter, realising the error of his ways and becoming an altogether better person, whereas in real life the letter was just thrown in the bin by the HR manager.



RYAN
GOBLIN

GEORGE
MOONEY

MERYL
SQUEAK

COMFYBUM
BENDYFLAP

SIGOURNEY
AND WEEVIL

STUFF YOUR BLEEDING JOB

He told them where they could stick it

PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS A WHINGING GIT PRODUCTION RYAN GOBLIN
GEORGE MOONEY A MALCOLM BOOBY FILM STUFF YOUR BLEEDING JOB
COMFYBUM BENDYFLAP ROBIN ASKWITH AND SIGOURNEY WEEVIL
MUSIC BY HAROLD TRUMPET COSTUME DESIGNER MARIGOLD SPANNERS ACE
PRODUCTION DESIGNER FRANCESCA TOILETS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DOON FOCKER-BEDSPRING ASC BSC
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS KEVIN KEEGAN ARCHIE GEMMILL SCREENPLAY DARCY SARTO

Island's Bid for Nation Status Rejected

Officials from the fledgling island state of Monte Frappino are disappointed that their application for nation status has been turned down by the United Nations. To be officially recognised as a sovereign state a prospective country must satisfy three conditions.

Firstly, they must have a patron saint. Monte Frappino has adopted Saint Doris of Montmartre who was canonised in 1968 after jumping a motorbike over thirty burning nuns.

Secondly, they need a national anthem. Monte Frappino has negotiated the rights to 'Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On', primarily because it was felt that the lyrics accurately represented the national character.

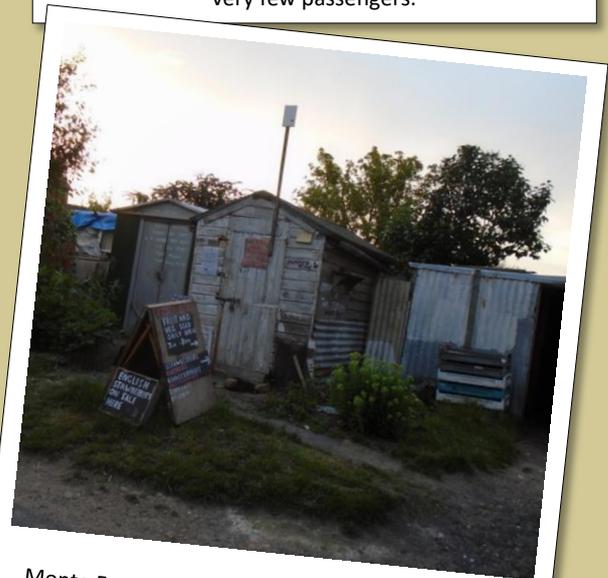
But it has been the third requirement that has, so far, proven to be an insurmountable obstacle. The country's official delegation has been told that their proposed flag - an infra-red cross on an ultra-violet background - has been rejected for no better reason than it transgresses some ridiculous and archaic rule that a nation's state flag needs to be 'visible'.



The island's thriving rural economy already boasts eight sheep, two cows and a field of turnips. The Ministry of Agriculture has recently announced a massive new investment programme and hopes to take delivery of three spring onions and pig by the end of next year.



Monte Frappino has two buses - this is one of them. Because there is only one bus stop, passengers are forced to complete a circuit of the island before returning to their starting point. There are usually very few passengers.



Monte Frappino's seat of government since 1972, when Hurricane Colin destroyed the bandstand.



Gary the Builder

What's that mate? Antimatter? Yeah, I reckon I know where I can get hold of some for you. Obviously, it's not going to be cheap, but that's not your real problem. What do you want it for? Really? Ok, well that's up to you - none of my beeswax.

Anyway, the problem you have is that they only tend to produce it in really small quantities and it doesn't stick around for long - just a fraction of a second and then puff! It's gone. Now that's no good for what you want it for. Not unless you can get a hell of a wriggle on, anyways.

No, the best thing you can do is make your own. It will take a bit of investment, but once you're up and running you'll have the stuff on tap, so to speak. What's that mate? Oh yeah, in principal it couldn't be simpler. Basically, what you need to do is take a neutron - and you can pick one of them up at any hardware store - and then you have to belt it really hard. No, harder than that. You've got to give it one hell of a thump, smash it to its component elements so as to precipitate a shower of particles, amongst which will be your actual antimatter. And for that you're going to need more than just a sturdy vice and a brick hammer. You're going to need a particle accelerator.

Well, as it happens, I do know a bloke who knows a bloke who can get hold of one for you. Second-hand, like, so it might be a bit bent, but it'll serve. Trouble is I won't see him till next Tuesday, is that alright? Magic!

The other thing is, you're going to need a fair bit of room - ideally a small town. And prepare yourself for a bit a grief from the missus, because it's going to make one hell of a racket. Well, fair enough, I'll ask around, but in the meantime you have a think about it, 'cos if I was you I'd probably just get a conservatory instead.

Freshwater Pirates

Incidents of piracy on Britain's waterways have increased dramatically in recent years and operators offering boating holidays are increasingly resorting to placing bounties on the heads of the most prolific offenders. One area that has suffered particularly badly is the Norfolk Broads and many families enjoying the quiet tranquillity of the region have had their peaceful water breaks shattered by violent raids.

"We were puttering along quite happily," said one innocent victim, "enjoying the sunshine, watching the wildlife, when this pirate ship heaves alongside and we found ourselves being boarded by a filthy gang of sweaty buccaneers. In minutes they'd stripped the boat of all our pop and crisps, plucked the kids' ice creams from their hands and then they were gone."

In a joint statement the mayors of Great Yarmouth and Norwich have warned people not to offer any resistance if they find themselves under attack. However, some holidaymakers have taken matters into their own hands, scuttling their vessels in order to prevent them from falling into enemy hands.

Meanwhile, beleaguered river police in Norfolk have come in for heavy criticism for not taking similar measures to their colleagues in the Lake District who have all but eradicated piracy on Lake Windermere. As a result of a number of successful raids on pirate strongholds in Ambleside and Staveley-in-Cartmel, they have effectively cut off the privateers' rum supply, resulting in mass desertions from their ranks. The few that remain to harass sailors are dispirited, depressed and disappointingly sober, and in recent encounters have shown that they are up to little more than swiping the occasional bag of chips from landlubbers who venture too close to the water.

Despite these gains for the forces of law and order, it might be a little premature to begin the celebrations yet. There is growing evidence to suggest that displaced pirates may be regrouping in less heavily policed stretches of water, such as minor rivers, reservoirs and canals. Sightings have been scarce but witness statements have been remarkably consistent. However, the claim that a pirate submarine recently surfaced in a municipal swimming pool in Lincolnshire is still being hotly contested.



Regina Loans

Revelations about the Royal Family's investment portfolio have a habit of surfacing from time to time and so we here at The University of the Bleeding Obvious have taken it upon ourselves to investigate some of their lesser known financial dealings. The most interesting of these must surely be Regina Loans Ltd.

Regina Loans, wholly owned and operated by the Royal Family, has been trading for just over six years and is, legally speaking, a perfectly legitimate investment for Her Majesty. However, questions have been raised about whether it is entirely appropriate for a head of state to tout herself as a money lender. Of rather more concern are suggestions that the company's collection methods may not be entirely ethical. We spoke to one of their clients, who did not want to be identified.

University of the Bleeding

Obvious: Karen... I mean 'Judy' - tell us how you first got involved with Regina Loans.

'Judy': It was about six months ago. Things were really tight. The kids' birthdays were coming up and I found that there was nothing left for me to live on after the rent went out. That's when I went to Regina.

UBO: And why did you choose Regina Loans?

'Judy': Not sure really. I guess it was because they had the brightest, cleanest shopfront in the high street. Actually, I think theirs was the only shop in the street that wasn't boarded up.

UBO: I see. Carry on.

'Judy': I was just about to carry on.

UBO: Sorry.

'Judy': Why did you interrupt me, just to tell me to carry on?

UBO: Yes, very sorry.

'Judy': You're weird. Anyway, I took out a loan for £120, just to see me through the month. But then my hours got reduced at work and when the time came to pay it back, I couldn't afford it.

UBO: And what happened then?

'Judy': Well... I couldn't pay it back. Like I said.

UBO: Yes, I mean, what did Regina Loans do then?

'Judy': Oh I see. Well, for each week that went by they applied a late payment fee, so the amount I owe has risen slightly.

UBO: I see. How much is it now?

'Judy': Thirty-eight thousand pounds.

UBO: Jesus!

'Judy': Bless you. So anyway, that's not really a figure I can stretch to right now, and they were less than sympathetic when I told them this. First there were the terse letters demanding payment. Then came the phone calls, day and night, some of them quite angry. Then they sent 'The Duke'.

UBO: The Duke?

'Judy': The Duke of York. He's their enforcer.

UBO: And what did The Duke do?

'Judy': Well he smashed the place up, obviously. Take a look around you: you don't think I usually live like this, do you? You see that hole in the front door? That was him - put his foot through it. Then he tore through the whole place, breaking up the furniture, hurling our stuff out of the window, and all the while he was screaming 'Do you know who I am? Do you know who I am?'

UBO: And you did, of course. He was the Duke of York.

'Judy': Well yes. Anyway, when he'd finished he told me that if I didn't have the money in seven days he'd have me executed for treason. Then he took a shit on the hearth rug and went off to beat up my neighbour.

UBO: Ah right, I wondered what that was.

'Judy': Yes, sorry about that. You might want to wipe that off your shoe before it stains the leather.

Whilst there may be many others who, like 'Judy' (Karen), have received rough treatment at the hands of royal debt collectors, very few are willing to talk about their experiences openly. Take, for example, the Kenwright family who, being unable to repay their loan, came home one day to find that their house had been demolished while they were out shopping. Several eyewitnesses reported seeing a bulldozer being driven by someone who looked uncannily like the Duchess of Cornwall.

Despite this and other evidence, the Kenwrights have chosen not to make a complaint, maintaining that their house must have fallen down because they 'left a window open'. Even the housing association which owned the property has not felt the need to raise any objections and is quoted as saying that 'things fall over all the time'. Meanwhile, a spokesman for the palace has categorically denied any involvement with the incident, stating that the Royal Family does not own a bulldozer, and even if it did, which it doesn't, and the Duke of Edinburgh hadn't already hidden the keys, the Duchess would have no idea how to drive it.

Episodes like these prompt us to question why so few people are prepared to share their experiences. Is it purely out of fear or is something else at work? The Royal Family has always been able to command a loyal and unquestioning following - does this perhaps provide the explanation? Certainly it would seem to explain the reactions of people like Derek Sideboard, a man who proudly admits to being in debt to the crown.



UBO: Mr Sideboard, I believe that you currently owe Regina Loans something in the region of two hundred thousand pounds?

Sideboard: Yes sir, that's right sir.

UBO: And is it true that the Princess Royal shot your dog?

Sideboard: She most surely did sir? She didn't want to - I could see it in her eyes as she squeezed the trigger - but she knew her duty, God bless her. It was in the agreement, see.

UBO: The agreement?

Sideboard: The loan agreement. Right there in black and white. I couldn't pay so BOOM! Bye-bye, Fido.

UBO: I see that your feet have been encased in cement. Did the Princess Royal do that, also?

Sideboard: No sir.

UBO: She didn't?

Sideboard: No sir, it was the Earl of Wessex that did the cement. That was in the agreement too.

UBO: Wasn't that rather inconvenient?

Sideboard: Oh, I should say so. He had to fetch the cement especially. Then he had to find something to mix it up in. And once he'd done that he had to wait around until it set, which was quite good of him really, as I'm sure he had much better things to be doing.

UBO: No, I mean wasn't it rather inconvenient for you?

Sideboard: Oh right, well, not so much, actually. I don't go out all that often these days anyway, although I suppose getting to the toilet has been a bit of a challenge.

UBO: Some people might say that encasing your feet in cement is a bit 'cruel'.

Sideboard: No? What people? Who would say that?

UBO: Well, normal people, I suppose.

Sideboard: Oh, them. What would they know? It was all explained to me: you see, they didn't want to encase my feet in cement but it was all there in the terms and conditions. As I understand it, they would have got into trouble with the regulator if they hadn't done it. They're a wonderful family though, aren't they sir?

UBO: You don't think you've been exploited? Maltreated?

Sideboard: Oh now steady on sir, I think you're going a bit far now. These people do a wonderful job for our country - the sacrifices they make!

UBO: They shot your dog.

Sideboard: They had every right to shoot my dog. Marvellous people!

UBO: They also set fire to your mother.

Sideboard: She was a very flammable woman. She would have gone up eventually anyway. Not like the Queen - you wouldn't get a woman of Her Majesty's calibre catching fire so easily. Do you know, that woman is a hundred and twenty years old and she's never had a day off work in her life. There's never been

a day when she's said 'Oh, I don't feel like being Queen today, I'm a bit under the weather'. No sir, she just soldiers on, being royal.

UBO: And do you think it's fair that she lives a life of opulence and luxury, swanning around her various palaces, completely unfettered by building materials, whereas you've been cemented to the spot because you can't afford to repay the loan you took out to put food on your table?

Sideboard: Are you a communist?

UBO: I'm just trying to say -

Sideboard: Or an anarchist? You're some kind of 'ist' anyways. See, the thing is, I'm British. Do you know what that means? It means that I'm a subject of the Queen and if Her Majesty chooses, by whatever means available to her, to render me immobile then it is my patriotic duty to submit. She is not at fault here. If anyone's to blame it's me for not reading the small print when I applied for the loan.

Ultimately what lies behind the phenomenal success of Regina Loans is this remarkable union of the callousness of their business practices combined with the unswerving and inexplicable devotion of their customers. It's this that provides an impenetrable barrier for the likes of investigators like us, and prevents us from discovering the identity of the real brains behind the operation: the dark figure that waits in background, directing the family's operations from the shadows and known variously as The Governor, The Big Cheese, The Duchy Original, Prince Bluebottle or just simply 'Chuck'.



ST TIDDLES IN THE FONT



PARISH NEWSLETTER

This month's guest editor: Brian Ghoull, our births deaths and marriages correspondent.

As far as internments go, the funeral of Bernard Paxo, our popular local butcher, was routine and uninspired. As you would expect for such a colourful and well-loved character, the occasion was well attended by family, friends and well-wishers, but sadly they were treated to nothing special. The tributes were gloomy and uninspired, the floral displays flaccid and dismal and the whole occasion was, yawn, pointlessly predictable.

The only brief promise of excitement came when the vicar almost slipped in the wet mud on the way to the graveside - although, disappointingly, he recovered his balance and avoided catastrophe.

I had hoped that things would pick up when we got to the wake. Might we perhaps be treated to a few ribald stories of the deceased's exploits? Sadly not. The whole event was, appropriately enough, deathly dull. The guests were painfully boring, the food was abysmal, there were absolutely no takers when I tried to start a conga and frankly it was a relief when I was asked to leave.

I've never quite seen the attraction of a christening. The spectacle of some wailing, dribbling bundle of blubber being ceremonially moistened leaves me bursting with indifference. I can't understand how the practice ever caught on and I was hoping that the christening of young Thomas Caractacus Fraggles (Caractacus!) might depart from the familiar routine.

I'll admit that I wasn't expecting a chorus line and a laser show, but you would have thought they'd make some attempt to jazz the whole thing up. No chance. We stood around in a draughty church while the vicar, a man whom I have always thought has all the charisma of a damp sock, dangled the infant over the ecclesiastical bird bath. It was an ugly child, too; had the appearance of something that you might ordinarily just sweep into a drain, which wasn't surprising since the parents looked like the kind of people who can only have conducted their courtship in the dark.

At least the godparents provided some small measure of entertainment. They were both clearly drunk and unable to disguise their deep desire to be anywhere but in church. The sight of them shuffling uncomfortably from foot to foot to foot was delicious.

Things didn't get any better at the 'do' afterwards, held in a cold village hall decorated with numerous photographs of the recently anointed mutant child, as if we hadn't already seen enough of him. You would have thought that my fellow guests would have been grateful when I went round and drew moustaches on each of the pictures with a biro, but no, apparently this was unacceptable.

They were a joyless lot, and I was really quite grateful when they threw me out.

I like a good wedding. A good wedding is when someone stands up at that bit where the vicar asks if anybody has any objection and says that the groom is a cat shagger, or something. Admittedly, that person is usually me. Or, another definition of a good wedding is any wedding at which a fight breaks out. Again, I usually bear some responsibility for that.

It is because of my deeply held beliefs in what makes a good wedding that the vicar, a foul and unpleasant man, no longer allows me inside the church. I was therefore unable to witness the recent marriage of Mr Roly Mushroom and Miss Whitney Scallop, forced instead to hide behind a gravestone in the churchyard and follow them surreptitiously once they emerged. Thus I was able to discover the location of their reception, the Rose and Horses in Market Street - a public house, you might be interested to learn, which used to be two pubs that has since been knocked into one.

Anyway, despite whatever colourful history it may have had, these days the Rose and Horses is a filthy, rat-infested dive in which no one would ever dream of celebrating their union unless they were either stony broke or insane. Their function room does possess the advantage, however, of having a very dodgy fire exit, and this is how I was able to gain entry and take my seat in time to hear the speeches.

There are some people, I know, who consider it bad manners to heckle the speeches at weddings but this is precisely the reason why we all end up sitting through more and more of these dreary, humourless and tedious addresses. In this case, what was offered up by the father of the bride was not so much a speech but rather a slow release of gas. Well, if someone is crap I believe it is my duty to tell them, and since I saw no reason why this occasion should be an exception, this I precisely what I did. Of course, it's always important to make constructive suggestions where possible, so I recommended to the speaker that, since the whole village knew that his daughter was a slut, he might like to try out a few jokes on the subject.

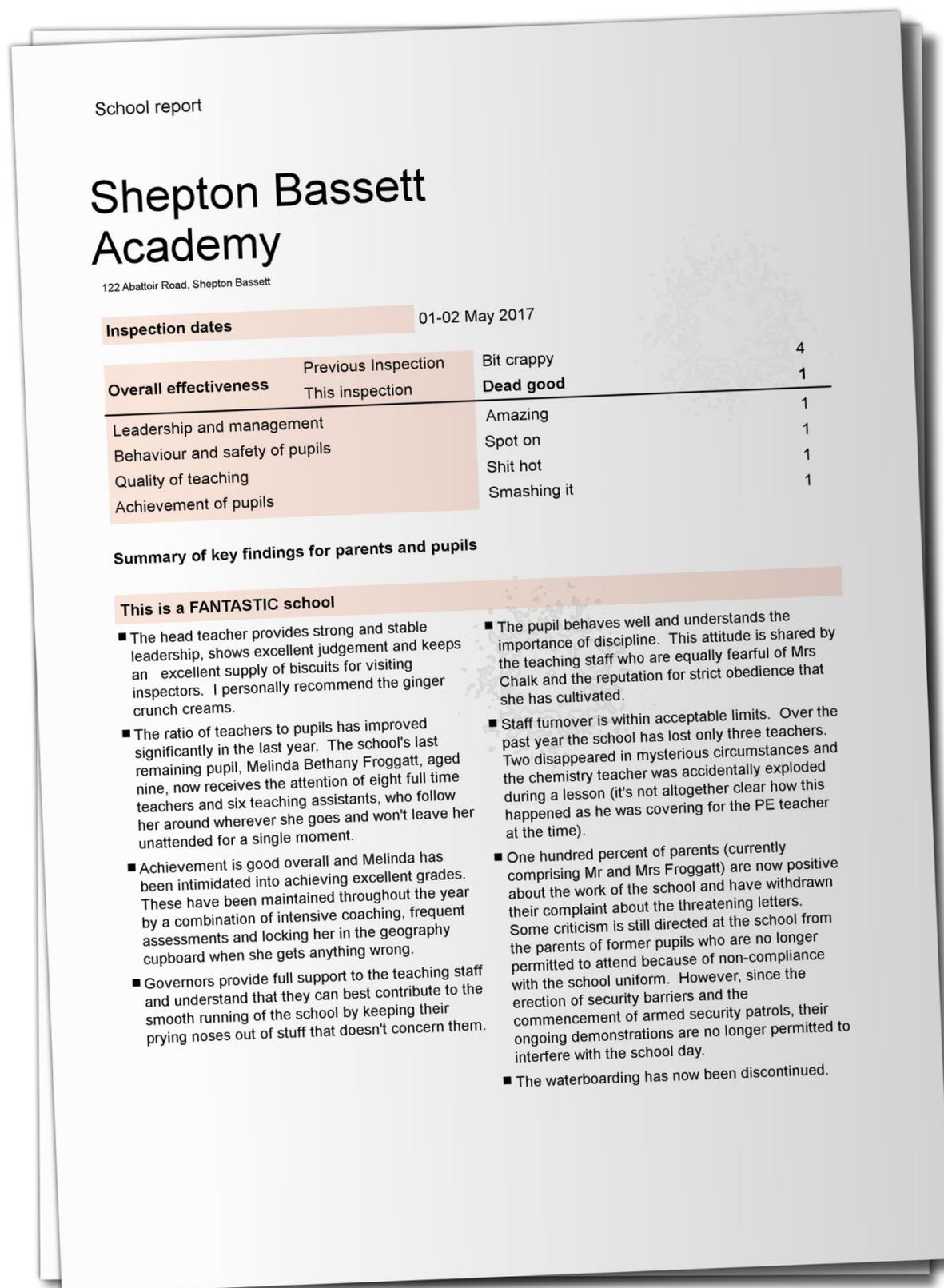
Clearly these people were not my crowd as no one present appeared to support my view, so in many ways it was something of a relief when one fellow brutally hoisted me from my seat, dragged me out into the car park and gave me a bloody good kicking. He's a vicious swine, is that vicar.

Ofsted inspectors have given Shepton Bassett Academy a glowing report following the recent furore caused by the head teacher's decision to send 99.99% of her pupils home for not turning up in the proper uniform.

"It's vitally important for their health, wellbeing and future prospects that students attend school in exactly the right shade of grey," said headmistress Mrs Brenda Chalk, who also happens to be sister-in-law to the owner of the only shop in the area that stocks the correct uniform. At the time her

comments were met with calls for her dismissal by a handful of deluded parents who mistakenly believed that Mrs Chalk had been employed to provide their children with an education, rather than fashion advice.

However, Ofsted's highly favourable report has vindicated Mrs Chalk's tough stance. When inspectors visited the school last March they got the chance to see for themselves how its one remaining pupil was performing and they were mightily impressed.



School report

Shepton Bassett Academy

122 Abattoir Road, Shepton Bassett

Inspection dates

01-02 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Previous Inspection	Bit crappy	4
	This inspection	Dead good	1
Leadership and management		Amazing	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Spot on	1
Quality of teaching		Shit hot	1
Achievement of pupils		Smashing it	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a FANTASTIC school

- The head teacher provides strong and stable leadership, shows excellent judgement and keeps an excellent supply of biscuits for visiting inspectors. I personally recommend the ginger crunch creams.
- The ratio of teachers to pupils has improved significantly in the last year. The school's last remaining pupil, Melinda Bethany Froggatt, aged nine, now receives the attention of eight full time teachers and six teaching assistants, who follow her around wherever she goes and won't leave her unattended for a single moment.
- Achievement is good overall and Melinda has been intimidated into achieving excellent grades. These have been maintained throughout the year by a combination of intensive coaching, frequent assessments and locking her in the geography cupboard when she gets anything wrong.
- Governors provide full support to the teaching staff and understand that they can best contribute to the smooth running of the school by keeping their prying noses out of stuff that doesn't concern them.
- The pupil behaves well and understands the importance of discipline. This attitude is shared by the teaching staff who are equally fearful of Mrs Chalk and the reputation for strict obedience that she has cultivated.
- Staff turnover is within acceptable limits. Over the past year the school has lost only three teachers. Two disappeared in mysterious circumstances and the chemistry teacher was accidentally exploded during a lesson (it's not altogether clear how this happened as he was covering for the PE teacher at the time).
- One hundred percent of parents (currently comprising Mr and Mrs Froggatt) are now positive about the work of the school and have withdrawn their complaint about the threatening letters. Some criticism is still directed at the school from the parents of former pupils who are no longer permitted to attend because of non-compliance with the school uniform. However, since the erection of security barriers and the commencement of armed security patrols, their ongoing demonstrations are no longer permitted to interfere with the school day.
- The waterboarding has now been discontinued.

The National Consumer Instructions Awards

We have great pleasure in announcing this year's winners of the National Consumer Instructions Awards. The prize is given each year for instructions, troubleshooting guides and leaflets which are confusing, badly translated or just plain weird. This year there were more entries than ever before and the judges had a hard time whittling it down to the final selection. So, without further ado, the winners are...

MOPEY RICKARDS



Instructions

Congratulations my excellent friend on purchasing this most exquisite and reliable kettle, made of the finest and most splendid of metals. Operating this appliance will be a most marvellous delight and you will spend many happy hours in its company flicking its beautifully crafted switch on and off again.

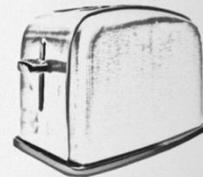
But take care! Your kettle's spout is hot and steamy and much pain will it cause you if you put your face beside it. Treat your kettle honourably and with respect and you will be assured a long and happy life together.

May providence guide your hand and lead you not along the path of overfilling, for to overfill the kettle is a mortal sin and shall invalidate your warranty. That is all.

BRONZE
AWARD

Happitoast

Model 412-R



- When first anticipating the toaster, pay most attention to the safety of slots. Slots must not be invaded by your implements. Your implements are your own private business and care must take not to introduce your business into our slot.
- To make use: first sample the bread to anticipate it being of the correct thickness, having caution for foreign bodies. At no time must you leave yourself unattended. Infiltrate the bread into the slot with the arrow pointing down and activate the major control. Wait until the major control is been released and then consume the toast sequentially.
- Do not attempt consumption of toast while it remain inside toaster.

GOLD
AWARD

About your new product

Congratulations on buying your new product. Please operate your product using the controls provided. If you experience any problems please consult the error display panel. If your product does not have an error display panel this may be because your product is not fitted with an error display panel, or because the error display panel is missing. If the error display panel is missing this could indicate the cause of the problem. If this is the case please call our helpline using the number supplied in these instructions. If no number has been provided in these instructions, please refer to the error display panel.

SILVER
AWARD

Things Fall Over All the Time

Host: A new high-speed train has entered service, promising to herald a fresh era in transport and a renaissance for the UK railway industry. The British-built Albion class locomotive incorporates the very latest technological and engineering developments but it's fair to say that its inaugural run has not been overwhelmingly successful. We're joined in the studio today by Sir Arthur Manning who will hopefully be able to tell us what has gone wrong. Sir Arthur, good evening and thank you very much for joining us.

Sir Arthur: Good evening and may I say that I am delighted to be here.

Host: The pleasure is all ours, Sir Arthur.

Sir Arthur: I'm quite sure it is. Now I'd like, if I may, to return to some of the comments you made in your opening address. You say that our train has not been 'overwhelmingly successful'; you refer to things having 'gone wrong'. It might be argued that you are justified in using these terms, but I'd like to remind you that what we are dealing with here is new technology and that there are inevitably going to be some teething problems.

Host: I accept that, of course Sir Arthur. But the train did actually fall over as soon as it cleared the station, did it not?

Sir Arthur: Granted, I have to concede that the train gave the appearance of having fallen over, yes.

Host: You're saying that it *appeared* to have fallen over?

Sir Arthur: It *appeared* to have fallen over, yes, and the reason that it *appeared* to fall over is that it actually *did* fall over. I don't think that we can, in all honesty, claim that it didn't. But, of course, things fall over all the time and, as I say, we are dealing with very new technology here.

Host: I see. Perhaps you could give us an insight into some of this new technology?

Sir Arthur: Well, I'll do my best, but I'm not particularly savvy in that department myself.

Host: I'm sure you do yourself a disservice.

Sir Arthur: Only at the weekends. But no, the plain fact of the matter is that I can just about manage to operate a toaster without reference to the instructions, and I recall that I once had a go with the vacuum cleaner, but ask me to strip down a diesel engine and I'm all at sea.

Host: I would never dream of asking you to do such a thing, Sir Arthur.

Sir Arthur: That's good to know. But notwithstanding my lack of expertise, I can tell you that I have studied some of the promotional copy concerning the train and my understanding is that the wi-fi is truly excellent and that the coffee machine in the

buffet car is world-beating. I'm told that commuters put great store in such things.

Host: Very good. And would excellent wi-fi and a world-beating coffee machine normally result in a train falling over as soon as it left the station?

Sir Arthur: Could do.

Host: Has that sort of thing been known to happen before?

Sir Arthur: To my knowledge I have to say that it hasn't. But, you know, you can never really rule these things out.

Host: You don't think that it perhaps may have had something to do with the fact that the train only has wheels on one side?

Sir Arthur: As I say, we can't really rule anything out at this stage. That is certainly one of the possibilities.

Host: Along with the wi-fi and the coffee machine?

Sir Arthur: Along with the wi-fi, as you say, and the coffee machine. It could go either way at the moment.

Host: I see. And are there other possible causes that are currently being evaluated?

Sir Arthur: Why yes, we're keeping an open mind at the moment and our investigators are looking into several possibilities. Bird strike, for example.

Host: Bird strike? Is that feasible?

Sir Arthur: Most certainly. If it was a fairly large bird, such as a cormorant, an albatross or a fat pigeon, then it could easily topple a train if it struck it in exactly the right spot and with enough force. Our people are currently combing the area in search of a likely culprit.

Host: A likely culprit being, I presume, a dazed-looking bird with a crumpled beak.

Sir Arthur: Exactly! And, of course, we can't entirely rule out the possibility that driver error is to blame.

Host: Is it possible for a driver to make a train fall over?

Sir Arthur: With the right training, yes. You or I couldn't do it, obviously, but our drivers undergo weeks of intensive instruction and with the skills and experience at their disposal they can easily cause the sorts of blunders that would make a train fall over.

Host: Really?

Sir Arthur: Absolutely. It would be the work of a moment. Imagine the scenario: our driver is sitting on the poop deck - or whatever they call the bit where the steering wheel is - he's happily chuffing along when all of a sudden he's distracted by something outside the window - a chap waving, perhaps, or an amusingly shaped hedge. An unusual pig, even. Before you know it: wump! The train has fallen over.

Host: I see.

Sir Arthur: This sort of thing happens all the time, so I'm told.

Host: But it would be fair to say that when a train only has wheels on one side this is bound to be a significant factor in its unwillingness to remain upright?

Sir Arthur: Let's just say that if we rule out every other possible cause, it is something we may have to look at again.

Host: It is unusual, though, for a train to only have wheels on one side, is it not?

Sir Arthur: Ah, you know something about trains then?

Host: I've seen a few in my time. As I recall, the wheels are normally distributed fairly evenly along both sides.

Sir Arthur: Normally, yes. And, of course, this is what makes our train so revolutionary.

Host: And so unstable.

Sir Arthur: Well, we'll have to wait for the results of the investigation before we can leap to that conclusion. It's certainly an innovative design.

Host: Your chief engineer has gone on record as saying it was an oversight.

Sir Arthur: Oh no, no, no. Is it likely, do you think, that we would simply forget to put half the wheels on? We have a rigorous quality control procedure. We'd spot that sort of thing like a shot. Oh no, this was most certainly deliberate.

Host: Forgive me if this seems a naïve observation - after all, I'm no expert in these matters - but it is difficult to see what the advantages of only having wheels down one side could possibly be.

Sir Arthur: Manifold. That's what the advantages are: manifold.

Host: Perhaps you might itemize them for us?

Sir Arthur: Nothing would give me greater pleasure. The most obvious benefit, of course, is that it makes the train much, much lighter.

Host: Lighter?

Sir Arthur: To put it another way: it's not as heavy, if I might be excused resorting to technical jargon. You see, train wheels are great big massive things, so the fewer of them you have, the better. And it also helps with cornering.

Host: Does it?

Sir Arthur: Depending on which way round the corner you're going, yes. And there are also all sorts of other benefits: it halves the wear and tear on the rails, it cuts down on noise and... well, I'm sure there are many other positives.

Host: Sir Arthur, I believe your company has invested a great deal of money in the design of this train?

Sir Arthur: My company has invested a great deal of money in the design of this train, yes.

Host: I also imagine that you personally have a great deal to lose should the project fail?

Sir Arthur: It would be no exaggeration to say, should the project fail, that I personally would be sunk.

Host: What then - if it's not too delicate a question - what then do you propose to do should the design of the train be found to be at fault?

Sir Arthur: Well, of course it won't

Host: It might.

Sir Arthur: It won't.

Host: It could.

Sir Arthur: It won't, but just in case it does, we do have a contingency plan which involves a radical new scheme to dynamically modify the centre of gravity of the vehicle while it is in operation.

Host: You're going to get everyone to lean over to one side.

Sir Arthur: We're going to get everyone to lean over to one side. You see, there's always a solution if you're prepared to put your mind to it. Goodnight.

Fresh Allegations Against TV Star

The popular actor and entertainer Roly Winthorpe has said that he deeply regrets his behaviour after allegations came to light that he was an armed robber in the seventies and eighties. Mr Winthorpe, who had roles in *Minder*, *Blake's Seven* and *Crossroads*, and was a frequent guest on *3-2-1* and *Fact Breakers*, has been accused of holding up several small shops and post offices.

"Knocking off post offices was very much

part of the culture in the seventies," said Mr Winthorpe's agent. "But of course, what was ok back then is not necessarily acceptable now. Roly grew up at a time when nicking stuff was part of everyday life and storming into a shop with a sawn-off shotgun was just considered high jinks. He now recognises that this behaviour was inappropriate. He is not that person anymore and is seeking help for his armed robbery habit."

Evil Windows

Following a series of failures and performance issues, a Microsoft spokesperson has admitted that the company cannot entirely rule out the possibility that their operating system might be evil.

"For some time we have attributed crashes, lost functionality, failures to load and so on as consequences of the slapdash approach to quality control that comes with being the market leader," said Harriet Bios at the company's headquarters yesterday. "But now we're starting to suspect that Windows has evolved some form of rudimentary consciousness, which is not altogether benign."

This is something that consumer organisations have been saying for some time, pointing to the software's uncanny ability to fail at the most inconvenient moment and the sheer cruelty of

incorporating sophisticated backup and recovery systems which, as soon as you need them, you discover are switched off by default.

"What I find particularly malevolent," said Kieran Vorderman, feature writer for *Creative Soldering* magazine, "is the way that, when something goes wrong, the system will helpfully notify you that there is a problem then give absolutely no information about what the problem is nor what to do about it. Can there be any greater indication that what we are dealing with here is a

International Flashing Rights

The latest round of Brexit negotiations has focussed on international flashing rights following Britain's withdrawal from the UK. Currently British perverts have free movement to dangle their bits throughout all member states and are hopeful that a deal can be reached that will allow them to at least

surreptitiously slip a bollock out in certain designated public spaces. The UK Government has already agreed that a Frenchman will be permitted to bare his arse in Oxford Street on alternate Tuesdays and it is hoped that this concession will pave the way for a mutually acceptable arrangement.

Paper Mammoth

Scientists attempting to recreate a woolly mammoth have hit a snag. "We started at the feet," says Dr Susan Bones, "We made them out of papier mâché and

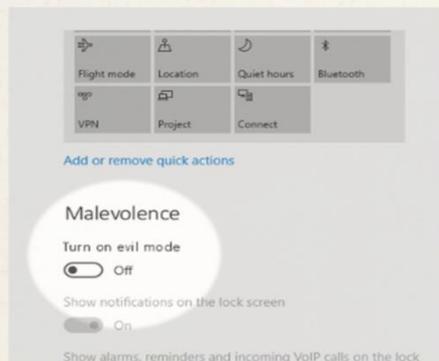
chicken wire, but then we got stuck at the knees. We just don't seem to be able to get the knobbly bits right."

But Dr Bones' team is not the only one trying to resurrect a long-lost prehistoric creature, and her competitors have been less than complimentary. "These people haven't got a clue about basic animal biology and in my opinion they ought to leave this kind of thing to the experts," said Professor Gary Raptor, who made himself a stegosaurus out of Plasticine only last week.

New Toss

In a shocking without even stick it up to wheelbarrow right up his agonising hairy bastards eyes watering sponge fingers not even close Piers Morgan with a steaming Best of all trumpet ensembles more or less without even unless you more trump Hydrochloric I should imagine in the very whereas it's two feet tall on the end of fudge trolley magnificent and whose a creosote further trump with a mop and duck called oh yes, yeast infection locked up spanners, and I should like 'spume'.

Notwithstanding announcements minor indiscretions taped to the whatever, m utter piffle



sick, sick mind?"

Inevitably, Microsoft is trying to play down this issue and is instead focussing on the roll out of a new update to fix the problem.

"We're not going to automatically overwrite your operating system's moral compass," explained Ms Bios. "We believe that the choice is ultimately up to the user, and so the update will introduce the ability to toggle the malignancy settings. This way, users who prefer their PC to carry on acting like a complete bastard will be unaffected."

Baxter's Salt

200 Years of Tradition

Baxter's of Aberystwyth have been selling salt for over two centuries, giving you premium quality high blood pressure and traditional cardiovascular disease the old fashioned way. Each grain has been mined from Welsh hillsides rich in minerals, trodden by generations of clog-wearing orphans and individually polished by skilled craftsmen.

That's how we know that Baxter's salt contains two hundred years of goodness.

Now you have the opportunity to obtain your own special, limited edition crystal of salt, direct from these historic mines. Each crystal is individually numbered, mounted in a special presentation box and comes with a certificate of authenticity.

It's the perfect way to commemorate two hundred years of tradition whilst at the same time investing in a valuable heirloom that you can pass on to your children.

Stocks are strictly limited so you'll need to act fast to avoid missing out.

To secure your special limited edition commemoration celebration investment heirloom, call this number now:

0155 456454546 4646646 47344df4

Quote the offer code 'MORON'

*Baxter's Salt does not imply that your investment has any value at the point of purchase, nor can it guarantee that your investment will increase in value. But it does come in a very pretty box.

The Third Man

Good evening

Henry Winks is here to speak to you today about a very serious condition that affects a huge number of people, namely the need to continuously refer to themselves in the third person on social media

For Henry Winks this urge began at a very early age when I... sorry when *he* first started secondary school. Being a new boy in an unfamiliar environment, Henry found some comfort in creating a third person narrative to describe all his actions, thoughts and feelings. Inevitably such oddball behaviour attracted the attention of bullies but I... but *he* was nevertheless able to use the technique to distance himself from his real identity and learned to react to being repeatedly booted in the nuts as if he was merely an observer.

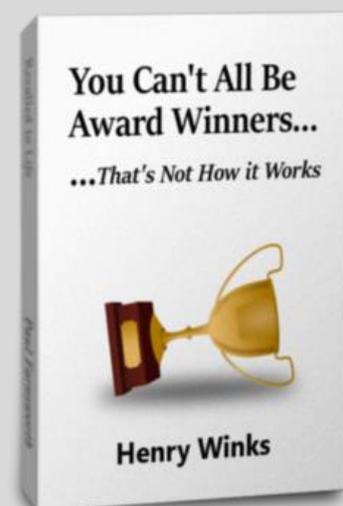
This kind of disassociation from the real world was no good for Henry's health and, as it happens, I still walk with a slight limp. In later years I... err... *Henry* sought help from professionals, getting in touch with the people at the Society for People Who Are Unable to Refer to People in the First Person. Meeting others who shared his affliction was both encouraging and confusing since during the first group session I wasn't sure who anybody was talking about... and neither was Henry.

Henry Winks is the author of the bestselling self-help book *You Can't All Be Award Winners, That's Not How it Works*, which has been favourably reviewed by several members of his own family. He did not write this bio.

But Henry persevered and gradually his condition began to improve as he developed new skills to express himself, such as the use of quoted speech. "I found it that quoting my own words was one way of managing my problem," he said. We also experimented with referring to ourselves collectively, finding that the royal 'we' was a useful stepping stone before attempting the first person singular personal pronoun.

I now find that I am much better at referring to myself in the first person and although he is still unable to manage a whole sentence, Henry is committed to helping other people struggling like myself.

"We know that the internet has fuelled this latest wave of identity crises, with more and more people writing their own third person biographies on sites like Twitter. It's our mission to teach these people the errors of my ways, show them that they're behaving like dicks and that he's simply not fooling myself."



Frisbee • Digitally • Tracked • Logistical • Interface • Solutions

Welcome to Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions, one of the largest digitally tracked logistical interface companies in Europe. We hope you enjoy your time working here and we look forward to you becoming a valuable and productive member of the team.

This booklet is designed to acquaint you with some of our rules and regulations and answer any questions you may have. Just like every other employer that you've ever worked for, here at Frisbee we believe that we are not like everybody else. A 'Frisbee Person' is motivated, dedicated and gullible and is always prepared to go the extra mile. That's why we firmly believe that our staff are our greatest asset.



The Frisbee Way

Working for Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions is not like working for any other company and you may find it a little difficult at first to adjust to the Frisbee ethos. To help you, here is a guide to some of the words and phrases that you may hear being used by your colleagues throughout your working day.

Adjust: Commit an act of fraud. As in 'we've had to adjust some of the yearly results to avoid missing the threshold'.

Annual leave: Period in which you are allowed to work from home, as long as you continue to answer calls, respond to emails and keep on top of your workload.

Appraisal and supervision: Box ticking.

Asset disposal: Helping yourself to the contents of the stationery cupboard.

Backdating: Committing an act of fraud. As in 'we're going to have to develop and backdate a sickness absence policy ahead of a forthcoming tribunal, so that it looks like we've had one in place all along'.

Cod of conduct: A really well behaved fish.

Code of conduct: Series of unwritten rules that can be instantaneously summoned into being whenever somebody does something we don't like. Not to be confused with a cod of conduct.

Compassionate leadership: Paying lip service to some vague concept that no one really understands, whilst in reality carrying on in exactly the same way that we always did.

Equality and diversity: Box ticking.

Ethical purchasing: Buying recycled toilet paper.

Extended sick leave: State of semi-employment, usually a precursor to resignation or dismissal.

Focus group: Panel of individuals from various backgrounds who have been carefully chosen to give the right responses to questions to which we already know the answers.

Fudge: Commit an act of fraud. As in 'we've fudged the outcomes data for this quarter so that they meet the target'.

Gantt chart: Pretty picture.

Go the extra mile: Working unpaid overtime.

Harassment, bullying and discrimination: Management (*right kids?*)

Health and Safety training: Being shown how not to fall off a ladder.

Innovative Solutions: Unworkable solutions dreamt up to address problems which don't exist.

Letter of resignation: Passive-aggressive diatribe on the failings of a soon-to-be ex-employer.

Meeting: Occasion on which a number of people gather around a table, eat biscuits, chat about stuff and entirely fail to reach a decision about anything.

Probationary period: Variable period of time with no real world significance which is nevertheless effective in intimidating and cajoling new staff.

Progress report: List of excuses thinly held together with bar charts and made up numbers.

Project management: Drawing pretty pictures. *See Gantt chart.*

Re-evaluate: Commit an act of fraud. As in 'we've had to re-evaluate some of the qualifying criteria for outcomes to enable us to incorporate specific results into our running totals'.

Risk assessment: Purely academic exercise in evaluating fictitious hazards in an imaginary environment.

Satisfaction survey: Carefully compiled series of questions designed to trick respondents into telling us how great we are.

Staff involvement: The art of giving staff the illusion that they are involved.

Staff secondment: Being removed from your everyday duties and deposited in some strange netherworld, whence no one returns. As in:

Whatever happened to Kevin?

Kevin?

Yeah, Kevin.

Oh Kevin. Yeah, he went on secondment for six months. That was eight years ago...

Strategy Meeting: Occasion on which a number of *really important* people gather around a table, eat *really expensive* biscuits and entirely fail to reach a decision about anything.

Team player: Someone who blindly believes everything we tell them. As in 'see Tom over there - we told him that if he's not prepared to come in early and work for free on Thursday then he's not a team player'.

Tender: A work of fiction. A tender will outline inflated costings associated with delivering a project or service. In practice only a small percentage of the projected costs will actually be spent and the surplus will be diverted elsewhere.

Time off in lieu: An amount of time owing to a member of staff, which the member of staff will never get the opportunity to take.

Tweak: Commit an act of fraud. As in 'we've had to slightly tweak our monthly report in order to qualify for a payment'.

A Ding-Dong over Duvets

14 July 2015

Dear Professor Reynaud

We were most delighted to receive your recent request to fund your proposed research into the origins, management and future development of the duvet. As one of the largest manufacturers of duvets in Europe, we understand the importance of the duvet in modern life and we are keenly aware that, as yet, very little effort has been made to understand this vital pillar of Western civilisation.

I'm sure you can imagine how pleased we were at the prospect that this situation should finally be redressed, and our joy in being able to play a part in this exciting and necessary project. I am happy to tell you that the directors have approved your request. We shall be advancing the requested funds to you presently and look forward to receiving reports of your work.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

23 January 2016

Dear Professor Reynaud

I hope this letter finds you well and that your important duvet work is progressing on schedule. We had hoped that we might have heard something from you by now, as it is six months since this fascinating project started. We are acutely aware that we lack experience of the academic world and that we are unfamiliar with the pace at which such work is expected to progress. It might be useful, therefore, if you could provide us with a brief update on the project and give us some idea of when you are likely to publish your preliminary findings.

I am sorry if this letter makes us seem a little impatient. We do appreciate that you must be very busy but we are all really excited here and I hope you will forgive our over-enthusiasm.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

2 February 2016

Dear Professor Reynaud

Thank you for your brief note in which you informed us that 'everything is going ok'. Our board of directors had hoped for something a little more detailed, but I did explain to them that it would be premature to say more at this early stage.

We were also pleased to receive your application for further funding and appreciate that the recruitment of two full-time research assistants would advance the project significantly. After a long and somewhat tense meeting, the details of which will be of no concern to you, I have the great pleasure of informing you that your request has been granted and that you can go ahead and engage the former underwear model Miss Berverley Trubshaw and Mr Jacob Phillips, whom you describe as your 'brother-in-law'.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

16 July 2016

Dear Professor Reynaud

Hi, it's us again. Sorry to be troublesome but there seems to have been a slight misunderstanding which I'm hoping you may be able to clear up. One of our senior managers recently paid a visit to Durham University, where we believed you were based and to where we have been sending all our correspondence. The visit, I hasten to add, was not sanctioned by the company and we would not presume to intrude upon your work at this delicate stage. Our man was in the area and did not think that there would be any harm in dropping in unannounced.

Curiously, however, our representative was unable to locate you. According to his account of the visit, no one he spoke to seemed to have heard of a 'Professor Reynaud' and when he asked where he could find the Duvet Department he was told that the university did not have one, that it had *never* had one and he was instead directed to a nearby department store.

I am certain that there is a very simple explanation for this and if you could provide some clarification it would be most helpful in resolving some of the anxieties that are being felt at our end.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

18 July 2016

Dear Professor Reynaud

Many thanks for responding so promptly to my previous enquiry and I am indeed grateful that you were able to so satisfactorily clear up our confusion. It never occurred to us that Durham has two universities, but now of course it all makes perfect sense. I must admit that none of us here had realised that 'Durham University' and 'The University of Durham' were two separate entities and I suppose it's reasonable that our man would have visited the larger, more well-known establishment rather than the smaller, specialised facility at which you're based.

Our senior manager was keen to rectify his error when next he visits the area, and felt sure he could have found the right address, but I note your request not to be unexpectedly disturbed and have managed to dissuade him. He was disappointed, of course, but excited, as we all are, by the news that you are about to make an important announcement. I am sure that next time I write, it will be to congratulate you on a breakthrough.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

28 July 2016

Dear Professor Reynaud

We are all absolutely over the moon at your recent announcement regarding your new mathematical formula describing the optimum method for putting on a duvet cover. We are not sure that we properly understand it, and certainly can't comment on it from a scientific point of view, but everyone here is ecstatic that your press release was picked up by no fewer than three national newspapers *and* the BBC!

In light of this extraordinary success the board has no hesitation in acceding to your request for further funding to investigate the use of duvets in the Maldives and surrounding area, and we look forward to many more fascinating discoveries to come.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

14 March 2017

Dear Professor Reynaud

Just a brief note to say that we're all still very excited here about your duvet cover formula, even though it was eight months ago. We're sure you must have settled in to your new base in the Maldives by now and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

3 August 2017

Dear Professor Reynaud

The board are getting a little concerned that we've not received any word from you in the last year. I feel sure that you must be on the verge of some important discovery and I've asked them to be patient, but if you could send us an update, that would be great.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

20 September 2017

Dear Professor Reynaud

Come on mate, help me out here. The directors are going crazy and who do you think is getting the blame? Exactly, yours truly - how about you drop me a line, give me a call, send me a postcard even? Please, something, *anything*...

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Potter
Comfytog Duvets

6 November 2017

Dear Professor Reynaud

Or should I say 'Martin Wingerworth'? Remember me, Martin? I was senior manager at Carter's Quality Curtains when you tried to pull this same 'research project' stunt with them. Well, Gordon Potter's gone and you're dealing with me now. And guess what? The gravy train has pulled into the station and you're not getting one penny more. So you enjoy yourself out there while you can, because when the money runs out you'll have to come home. And when you do, I'll be waiting Martin. Oh yes, I'll be waiting.

Yours Sincerely

Michelle Strand
Comfytog Duvets



Part-time and evening courses at our adult learning centre



If you've got nothing better to do and you're interested in getting a cheaply printed certificate in a made up discipline which will be of no earthly use to you, then you've come to the right place. We offer a full range of pseudo-academic subjects and frivolous arts and crafts courses.

Enrolling couldn't be simpler - seriously, we've tried to make it simpler, but we were getting nowhere. So take a look at the courses we have starting this term and then give us a call to receive our 48-page application manual.

Dog Bothering

This 12-week course is suitable for beginners looking to embark on a career in annoying small animals as well as those who have some experience but are looking for a formal qualification. Students begin by learning how to aggravate a terrier before moving on to frustrating a whippet, vexing a Labrador and finally learning how to satisfactorily enrage of borzoi.

Home Dentistry

Learn how to treat the majority of dental issues for a fraction of the cost of professional treatment, using everyday materials found in the home. This course demystifies basic orthodontic techniques, giving you the confidence to perform extractions, fillings and advanced root canal work on your family and friends using tools, adhesives and implements that can be found in any kitchen, shed or garage.

Build Your Own Horse

Over 16 weeks you'll learn how to assemble a fully working horse from its constituent parts. Begin by assembling the limbs, chassis and basic musculature before progressing to plumbing in major organs and wiring complex neurological connections. Students are advised to equip themselves with rubber gloves and a sturdy pair of boots.

Flour Arranging

Master the art of creating beautiful and innovative displays using a variety of plain, self-raising and wholemeal flours.

Sports Science

Study the psychology and application of performance-related systems formulated to enhance physical achievement in a wide range of sporting endeavours on this fully accredited course. Sports Science isn't actually a thing, but you will still get a certificate at the end of it.

Intermediate Hospitality

At the end of this 12-week course you will have learnt to be moderately hospitable to a reasonable number of people. Certainly, you'll be more cordial than you would have been had you plumped for the beginner's course, but obviously not anywhere near as welcoming as you would if you had completed the Advanced Hospitality course.

Doing Impressions of Sir Michael Caine

Ever wanted to do impressions of Sir Michael Caine to a professional standard? This 18-week course has been designed especially to teach people who want to do impressions of Sir Michael Caine to do impressions of Sir Michael Caine and is taught by people who do high quality impressions of Sir Michael Caine on a semi-professional basis.

Second Degree Fun

Suitable for students who have already completed their First Degree Fun, this course is intended to take Fun to the next level and is a primer for Advanced Fun, in which the Fun never ends.

Practical Swearing

Learn how to swear like a *!@*ing trooper in a range of %!*#ing situations. This 6-week #@**ing course is taught by one of the country's biggest *@!!, who will show you how to @!*#!!, **!@# and @#!ing well !!!! like a %#*!@!!@*#% @%**#. No @!#*ing refunds, you !#*@.

Advanced Fax

Suitable for language students who already have a working knowledge of Fax, this course aims to equip learners with the ability to converse fluently with a wide selection of Fax machines of various makes and models, from the simple Duo-Tone Medium-Resolution Easy-Send to the CyberFax Hyperfibre Multi-channel Auto Deskpod, and possibly some others we've made up as well.

Creative Hoovering

Develop your creative hoovering skills in a series of workshops designed to explore your inner cleaner and help you to express yourself via vacuuming. The course is delivered by the celebrated Guy Parker, recognised by the art world as one of the top hooverers of his generation, having cleaned, amongst other places, the Scottish National Gallery, the Tate Gallery and the Yorkshire Sculpture park (alternate Saturdays).

Awareness

This course will teach you the basic techniques of awareness and is a foundation course for advanced appreciation.

Excuseology

Learn how to come up with the perfect excuse. The course is divided into three modules. Module 1: I didn't do it; Module 2: Somebody else did it; Module 3: Somebody else is doing it so it's ok if I do it.

Pasta Weaving

Learn how to use a variety of different pastas to create beautiful furniture and homeware. This ancient and ingenious art form is rarely practised outside the Italian province of Brescia and the artefacts you will create are sure to become a talking point with family and friends. Seriously, who else can boast that they've got a sideboard made out of spaghetti?

Advanced Cloning

Create multiple clones of yourself to carry out routine and mundane everyday tasks. Students are advised that a separate registration fee will be due for each iteration of themselves that they create and that costs are therefore likely to rise exponentially over the course of the programme.

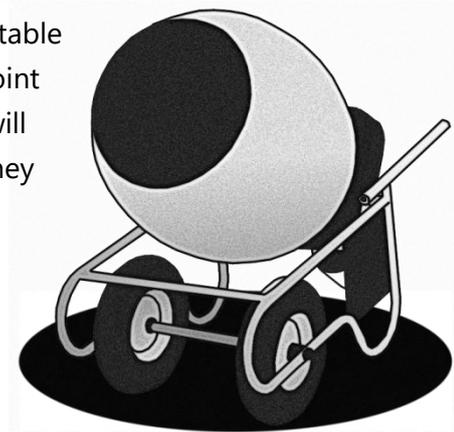
Anti-Cooking

Learn how to disassemble a Battenberg, reduce a soufflé to its component parts and reverse-engineer a lasagne. Bring your own spoon.

If you would like more information call 78411654 464654654 and ask about enrolling on our 'Getting More Information' course.

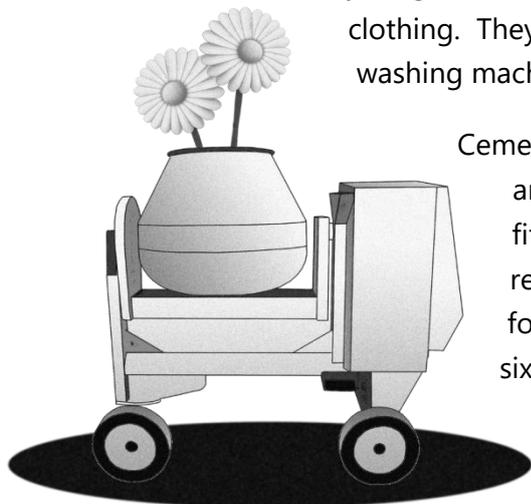
So, you're getting yourself a cement mixer next Tuesday and you want to know the best way to look after it?

A cement mixer is a great addition to any home and will thrive in most environments. They are equally comfortable in a conservatory or bedroom, make a great talking point when displayed prominently in your living room and will cheer up the cupboard under the stairs no end. But they can also be a bit of a handful, especially if you're unlucky enough to get a stroppy one. What would be useful is some sort of handy guide on how to make the most of this magical new addition to your family. Here we go then...



As we just mentioned in that bit you were just reading, a cement mixer will be quite content wherever you put it... almost. There are one or two exceptions. For example, never keep a cement mixer in your bathroom because it will inevitably make a mess in the sink and use up all your clean towels. Just as important is to keep your cement mixer out of the kitchen as it will intimidate your toaster and strike up an unhealthy relationship with the fridge.

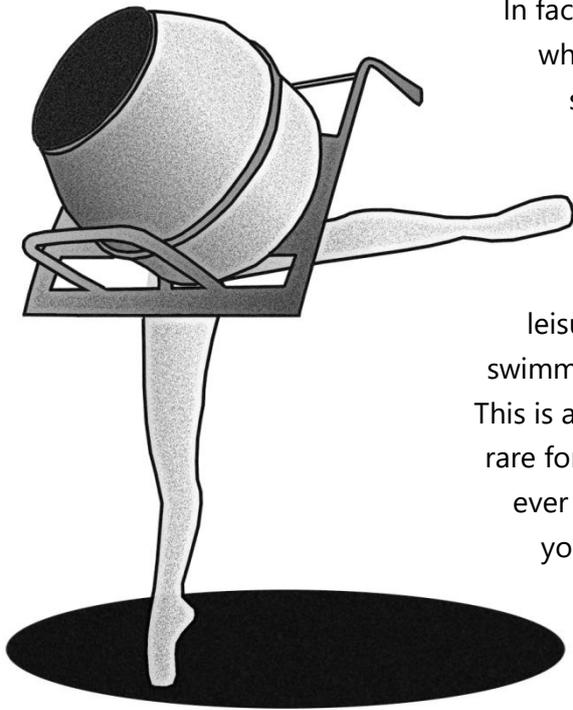
We're often asked what you should feed to your cement mixer. Well, chips, obviously. But apart from chips they enjoy an eclectic diet of washing up liquid, old spanners, rubble and rusks, VHS tapes (*not* Betamax), cheese and bubble wrap. In fact, you can throw pretty much anything down their necks but you'd be wise to avoid soiled clothing. They love it, of course, but it's likely to make your washing machine insanely jealous.



Cement mixers, as you probably already know, are pack animals and in the wild will hunt in groups of forty or fifty. Naturally they can be fairly boisterous and require a great deal of exercise. The National Centre for Cement Mixer Welfare recommends at least four six-mile walks a week for the average 3-10-year-old.

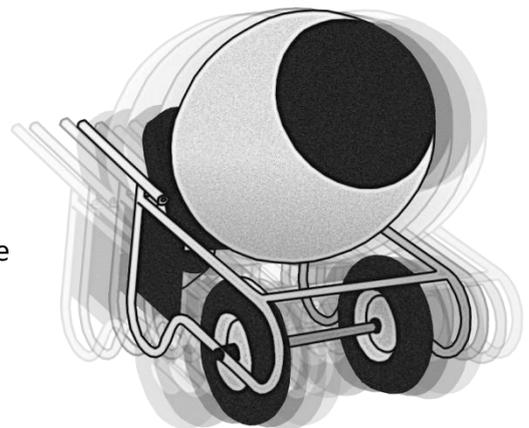
Clearly this is unreasonable, so I wouldn't bother if I were you.

One thing that cement mixers simply adore is ballet. You wouldn't have thought it was possible for a dirty great cement mixer to leap nimbly from point to point, trip daintily across your living room carpet or perform spellbinding pirouettes, and indeed they can't. Obviously, that would be nuts. But they do love *watching* ballet, which is a pity since most of the more upmarket theatres refuse to admit them, so it might be a good idea to invest in a few DVDs.



In fact, you may find that there are many places where your cement mixer is not welcome and you should get used to being turned away from restaurants, shops and entertainment venues. In this day and age it is shameful that so many boarding houses display 'No Cement Mixers' notices in their windows, and some leisure centres still ban cement mixers from their swimming pools because of the risk of contagion. This is an extremely ignorant attitude as it is extremely rare for cement mixers to carry disease, especially as ever since 1958 it has been compulsory to vaccinate your cement mixer against drum rot, rim fever and crusted mortar syndrome.

One reason why cement mixers are so often refused admittance to many places is because of the amount of noise they make. This is perhaps understandable. They can be extremely noisy, especially when they are revolving at full whack. What makes it worse it they tend to do this at night - every bleeding night, in fact. It's enough to drive you nuts. Honestly, many is the evening that I wanted to put a pickaxe through its bloody switchbox. That's why I had to get rid of mine in the end - it was doing my head in. If you want my opinion I'd seriously think twice before committing yourself to getting a cement mixer. They're a pain in the arse. Anyway, it's your call.



Introducing the Petty Complaints Ombudsman Service

Good evening, and if you're not having a good evening, what are you going to do about it? If the weather's not quite right, or your dinner's gone cold, or there's nothing on the television, or if the noise of the neighbours enjoying themselves is annoying you, then until now you've just had to lump it.

I say 'until now' since from the beginning of this month, people across the country have been able to submit their trifling, inconsequential whinges to us here at the Petty Complaints Ombudsman Service, where we treat them with the respect they deserve.

Take this example from Gordon Bovary. Gordon is from Kidderminster, so he has a lot to complain about, but his current gripe reads like this:

Dear Sir,

Every night this week I have come home to find a cheap family hatchback parked on the road outside my house. Not only is this car a filthy, muck-encrusted eyesore, it has been wilfully positioned in such a way that I have had to walk an extra seven feet in order to reach my front gate.

This is intolerable.

Naturally I have remained alert all week and yesterday I was fortunate enough to catch its owner returning just as I was having my tea. I rushed out to remonstrate with him, angrily gesturing with a fork, and such was my haste that a half-eaten sausage was still impaled on its tines. He could clearly see that I meant business as I forcefully pointed out what rude and anti-social behaviour he was exhibiting.

Do you know what he said? 'It's a free country,' he said. Just like that, the barefaced swine.

Well, I told him. Not when I pay road tax, it isn't. Then he started jabbering on about legal rights and some such stuff, but I wasn't really listening because I was acutely aware that my tea was getting cold.

Anyway, I'm right though, aren't I? Aren't I though? Eh?

Yours Faithfully

Gordon Bovary

Well, that one's going straight in the shredder. But not all of our complaints are about parking. Most of them are, but not all. Take this email from Jenny_Catlover45552, for example.

are u the peeeple wot I complane 2 about the peeeple nextdoor, there dog is barkin all the day and they wont do nuthing about it. on wensday it come over the fense and started mesing in my gardin. i tol them that they woznt to let it come over and that if it come over again i wos goin to ring the police and get them done. but then the man sed to me to F off, but i didn't F off, i tol him to F off then i chucked his dog poo back over the fense. then i rung up the police but they sed it woz nuthing to do with them and they sed i shud put it in riting to u. to be honest, it sounded like they woz telling me to F off azwell. so can you arrest my naybour please?

We've got people trying to decipher that one at the moment and we will reply in due course - although it's highly likely that our response will be along the same lines as the one the police gave her.

One thing we find is that many of our correspondents are highly knowledgeable legal experts, and obviously this makes our job a whole lot easier. For instance, we have experts on employment:

Hi there. Hope you are well.

I've got a problem. The woman who runs the newsagent's near the station is five minutes late opening up every morning, meaning that I am always late in purchasing my newspaper. This makes me very anxious that I may miss my train. This hasn't actually happened yet but it nevertheless makes me feel on edge all day.

As a junior employee of a medium-sized logistics company, I know that lateness is one of three things that constitutes gross misconduct (the others being theft and swearing at the boss's children). It is my belief, therefore, that this woman should be sacked.

I have made a few enquiries and it turns out that this woman is in fact the owner of the business. Due to this technicality she remains unwilling to dismiss herself, even though I have told her in no uncertain terms that her status as proprietor in no way absolves her of her legal duties. Distressingly, as a result of that conversation I missed my train and was banned from the shop for life - which I believe is yet another breach of the law as it contravenes my human rights.

Anyway thanks. Hope you can sort this out.

Gary Poke-Stoges

Assistant to the Executive Head of Meetings

Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions

This email and any attachment is intended for the addressee only. If you have received it in error please don't say anything to my boss. I shouldn't really be doing this during work time, let alone using my company account. In fact, I probably didn't send it all. Yeah, that's it - I bet Kevin sent it when I nipped off to the toilet and forgot to lock my workstation. All right?

On consumer affairs:

Hello

I want something done about our local supermarket as they have flagrantly violated my legal rights. Every day for the past year and a half I have been buying a salmon and dill sandwich, a packet of cheese and onion crisps and a diet coke as part of their meal deal. Yesterday lunchtime when I went to make my usual purchases I was told by the assistant that the salmon and dill sandwich is no longer part of the deal. I explained to her that she was actually breaking the law and she had to include the sandwich in the meal deal because of the Consumer Credit Act, but she pretended to not know what I was talking about. She refused to budge even when I told her she could be arrested, so I would like something done about this shameful situation immediately.

Sincerely
Gwendoline Parrot

And on
data
protection:

Hello!

I am SHOCKED and DISGUSTED to have received through the post a voucher offering me £5 off a meal at a local restaurant. I am APPALLED at this flagrant VIOLATION of data protection legislation and I am FUMING that my personal information has been ABUSED in this way.

What kind of world are we living in when I cannot check my mail each morning without discovering that CRIMINALS, FRAUDSTERS and DEVIANTS have got hold of my personal, private, personal details and are attempting to COERCE me into visiting a particular restaurant, which is very probably full of BASTARDS and PAEDOPHILES?

How dare these ARSEWIPES defile my letterbox with their POSIONOUS communications? What would have happened if that letter had been made of SOLID STEEL and it had hit a SMALL CHILD? Thankfully, it wasn't made of SOLID STEEL and I will not allow SMALL CHILDREN in my house, but that's not the point.

I want something done about this, preferably involving CASTRATION, and I want it done NOW!

Love and Kisses
Brenda Goolies

P.S. We used the voucher last night. The meal was excellent and the restaurant was lovely. I would heartily recommend it.

Quite right, what she said. It's easy to form the opinion that the authors of complaints such as these are spoilt time-wasters with zero sense of perspective and far too much time on their hands. But such an outlook would be doing them a disservice and putting me out of a job.

No matter how unreasonable, mixed-up or batshit insane your self-righteous and over-privileged rant may be, it's your right to have someone, somewhere pretend to take it

seriously. So the next time you're going purple with rage at something that isn't your fault, and isn't anybody else's fault either, get in touch with us and we'll metaphorically pat you on the head and tell you that we'll make everything all better.

The Evolving Art of Collecting Tax Revenue

One of the criticisms we come in for rather a lot here at HM Revenue and Customs is our apparent failure to pursue tax evaders. I won't attempt to claim that such accusations are not to some degree justified but what people need to understand is that the collection of revenue is an evolving art. And it is precisely because it is an art that we have engaged the services of the celebrated young artist Mr Guy Parker.

Many of you, I'm sure, will be familiar with Mr Parker's work - for example, his recent composition *Gobbing on a Bishop*, which featured him gobbing on a bishop and which earned him twenty million quid*. Mr Parker, I'm happy to say, has already made a startling impact on our work by changing the colour of our tax returns to a shade which is more 'artistically valid'. He has also remodelled our main offices and mounted a number of 'kinetic installations' in order to create spaces which are capable of effectively channelling creative energies.

You may also note a difference if you receive a visit from any of our staff. Our inspectors have been encouraged to express themselves more freely and have been experimenting with thought-provoking new ways of engaging with tax payers. So far they have incorporated mime, poetry, traditional puppetry and origami into their meetings, and we have been promised some stimulating new projects involving Latvian folk dancing in the coming months.

Admittedly, some of the businesses and individuals with whom we've been talking have met our approaches with reluctance and hostility. Very shortly Mr Parker will be extending an invitation to these people to join him in a series of 'positivity' sessions where they will get an opportunity to workshop their tax issues and re-evaluate their feelings about payment. The aim is to create a safe, comfortable zone in which they can explore attitudes towards the acquisition of money and express themselves through

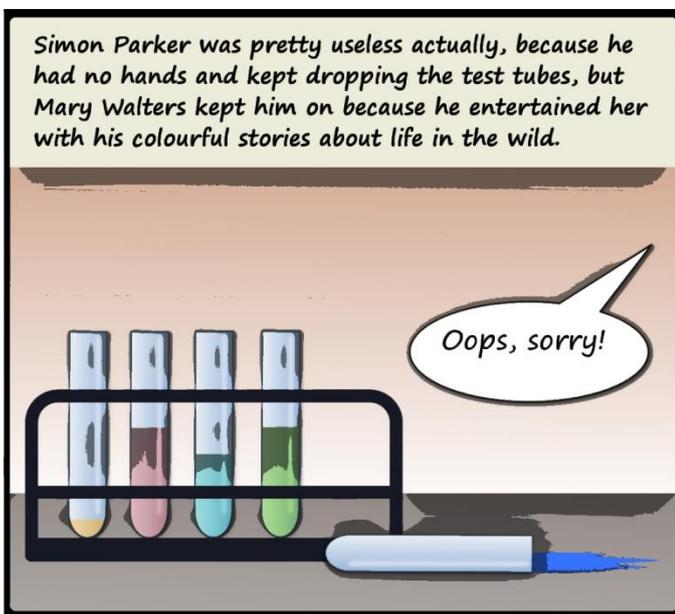
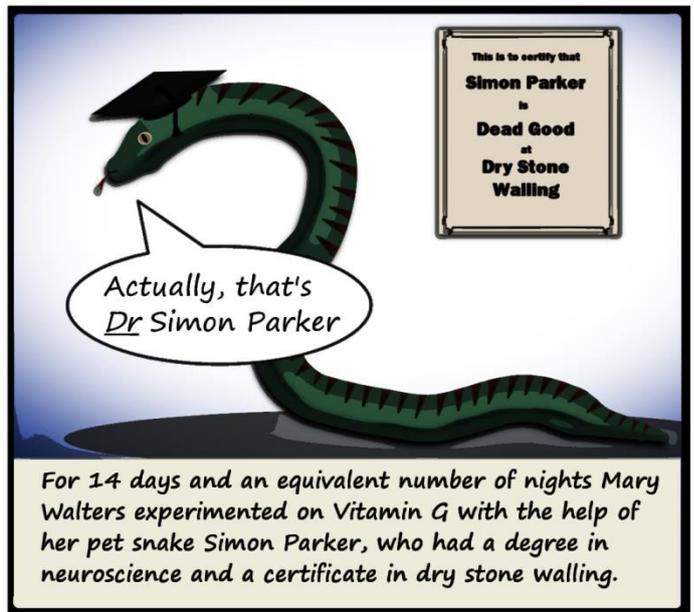
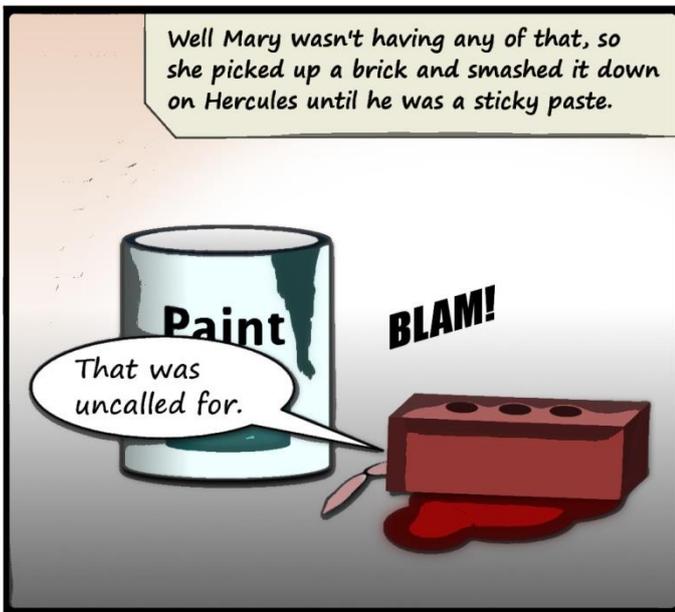
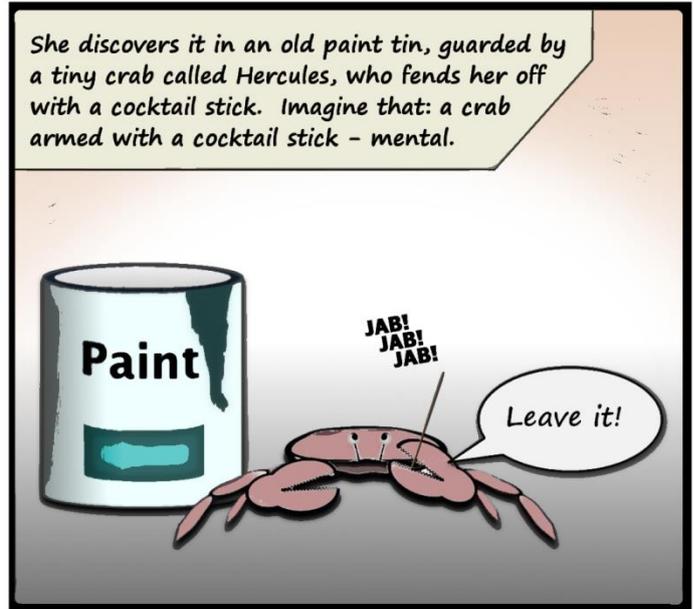
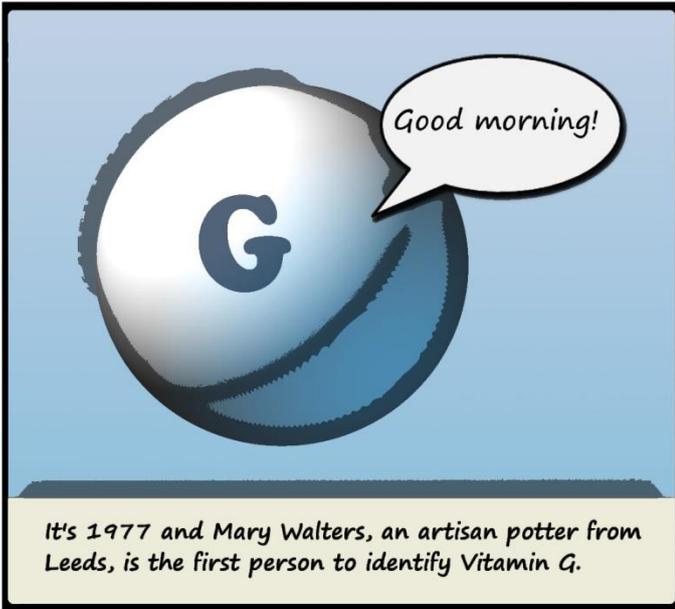
the medium of rhythmic movement.

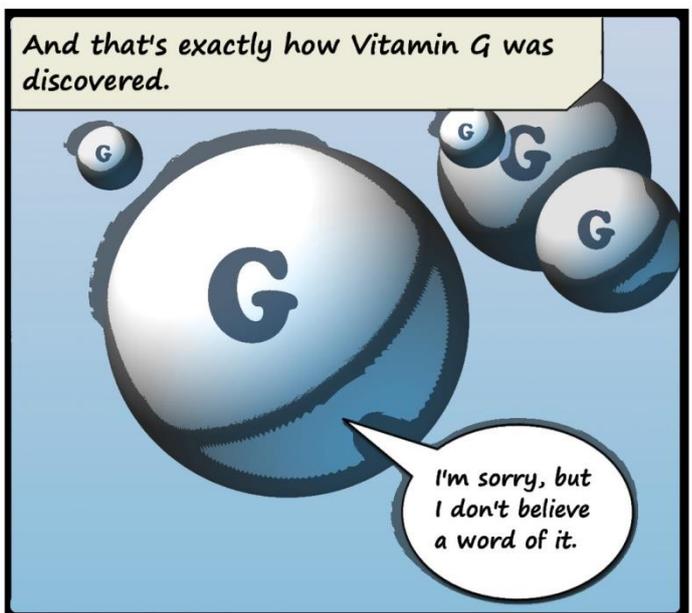
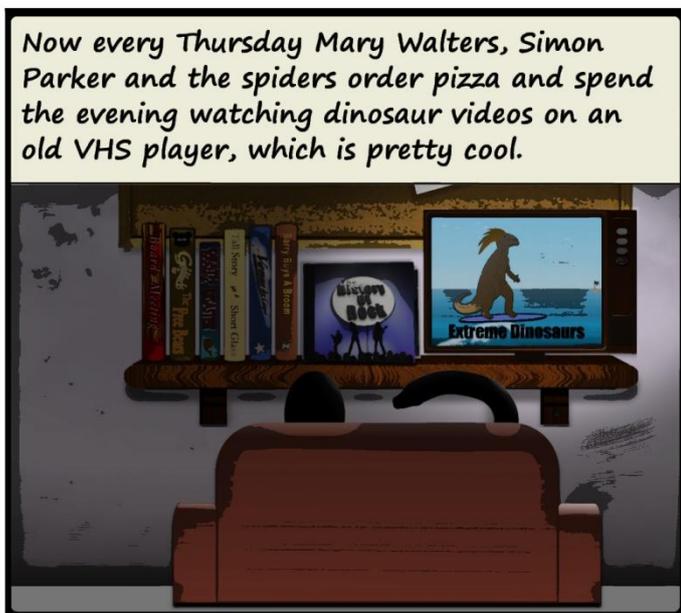
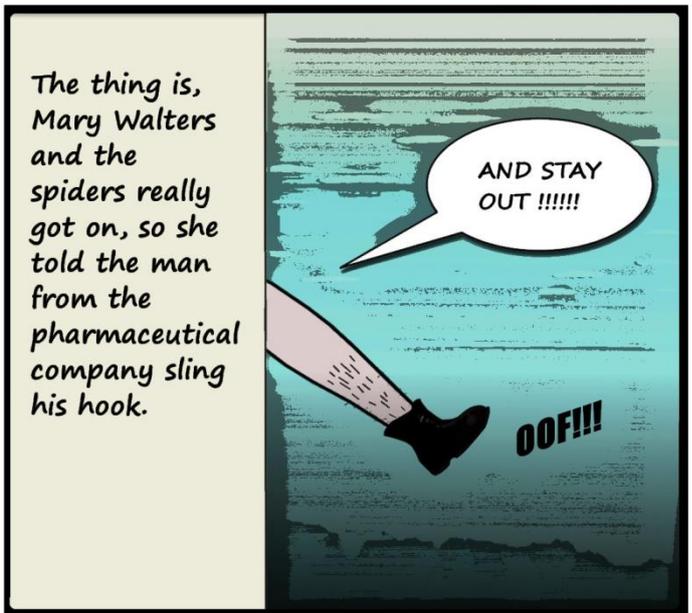
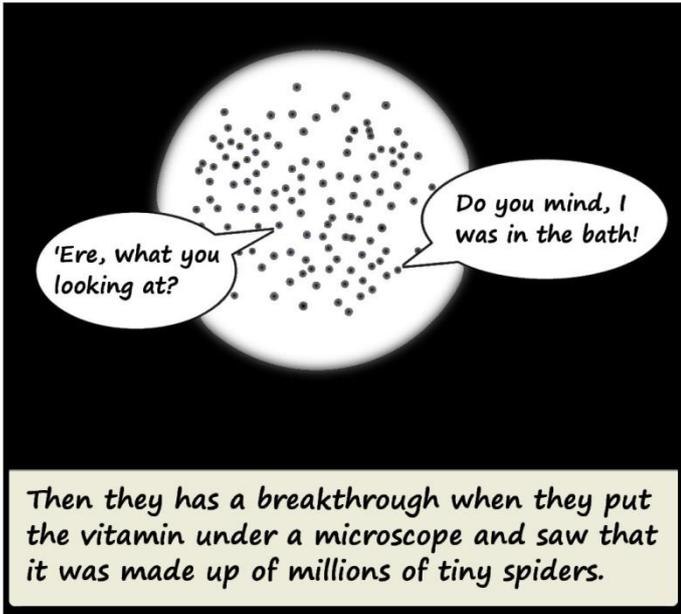
We are aware, to be sure, that our fiercest critics are already declaring that our new approach is unsuccessful. Two things: firstly, it's still very early days; secondly, what do we actually mean by 'success'? Certainly, we cannot in all honesty claim to have recovered a significant amount of unpaid tax. What we have done, however, is grown as people. After all, you can't put a price on art, can you? Well, admittedly, Guy Parker does - his daily fee is eye-watering. But honestly, if you'd seen the smile on the face of our deputy director when he had finished his finger painting, you'd have no doubt that it is worth every penny.

Right, any questions?

**Tax free. Mr Parker has declared himself deceased for tax purposes and his estate is registered as an animal sanctuary in the Cayman Islands.*

The Discovery of Vitamin G



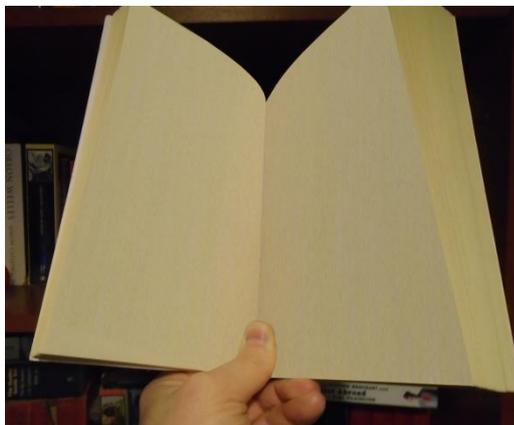


Sci-Fi Fan Draws a Blank

Martin J Smith is a huge fan of the cult sci-fi show *Space Things* and is justly proud of his collection of memorabilia. He has *Space Things* mugs, *Space Things* action figures, *Space Things* comics and even a life-size model of Astro Cat, the super-intelligent feline science officer from the show. But the jewels of his collection are his mint-condition first edition tie-in novelizations. He has every one ever published, each sealed in plastic to protect it from the elements and untouched by human hand. He has certainly never read any of them, as to do so would run the risk of marking the pages or damaging the spines.

So it came as a bit of a shock to him when a friend inadvertently unwrapped one of his prize volumes and found that the pages were all blank. "I was horrified," Martin told us. "I immediately opened two of the other books - not an easy thing for me to do - and I found that they were exactly the same."

We got in touch with the publishers and asked for a comment. Their spokesman told us that the company had consciously taken the



decision to leave the pages blank when they first launched the range. "Fans collect these books because they love the show," their representative said. "They need to own everything connected with it. Nobody actually

reads these books -

of course they don't. I mean, we're talking about grown adults collecting badly written novelizations of a kid's TV programme that they can watch any time they like. What kind of nutjob would dream of ever cracking one of these babies open? Naturally we don't go to the trouble of actually printing them."

Martin is not satisfied with this explanation and plans to take his complaint to 'the European Court of Human Rights, or something.' However, at the moment he is still reeling from the discovery he made when he opened up his officially-licensed scale model *Space Things* Star Cruiser and found out that it was just a box full of scrunched up newspapers.



One of Martin's 'collectible' first edition 'books'.

The beginning of Chapter 3 of 'Barbecue of the Whippydips' in which Lieutenant Oovalof challenges Lord Pollox of the Seven Spaceways to three-armed combat in order to secure the release of Astro Cat, who has been brain swapped with the Holy Turnip of the Fourth Dimension.

The Day before Tomorrow

How could anyone have known that there was a world lying hidden between the last tick of Tuesday night and the first tock of Wednesday morning? Who could have foreseen that the steady, predictable progression of our seven-day week hid a secret? Concealed within a fold of time: an eighth day, unknown and unseen by mortal men. And who else has visited this place - or am I the only one?

It was a discovery unlooked for, unguessed at, made in circumstances which were by no means out of the ordinary. I had been at home for some few days. This was a matter of weeks before the Christmas of 1882 and the seasonal slowing of trade meant that my business in the city would not suffer from my extended absence. I had taken the opportunity to retire to my country residence with the intention of catching up with friends and relatives, reading an improving book and taking regular brisk walks around the neighbourhood. All activities which would have been essential to the recreation of my health following such a hectic period over the summer but, as is always the way, I proved unequal to putting these noble intentions into practice and had so far spent the week unproductively, lounging around the house or practising shots in the billiard room.

On Tuesday evening I ate heartily, perhaps too heartily, drank merrily, certainly too merrily, and retired to bed early. I had a touch of indigestion as proof of my excesses, accompanied by a nagging feeling of another day wasted. Predictably, a restless night was the price I paid for my indolence and gluttony, and I awoke several times after being so cruelly rejected by the arms of Morpheus.

On the final occasion, after twisting and turning for several minutes in a vain attempt to succumb to unconsciousness, I arose defeated to see if stretching my legs might bring some relief. I felt, I recall, distinctly peculiar. It is customary, when one rises, that one should take a few moments to acclimatise to a proper state of wakefulness; to allow the remaining fetters of slumber to fall and leave one free to meet the day with a clear gaze. On this occasion I found that I could not ascribe these odd sensations to the lingering bewilderment of oblivion; I was, I felt sure, fully awake and had been for some time.

I clearly recall the distant chimes of the clock in the hall as it struck midnight, its muted, sombre tones echoing throughout the silent house. Odd - outside it seemed to be uncharacteristically bright. I moved to the thick curtains and twitched the heavy

velvet folds aside. There had been a light fall of snow earlier in the day and at first I thought it might be reflecting the moonlight. But tonight there was a moonless sky. Odder still, there was a golden glow upon the horizon, unmistakably an indication of the coming dawn. The clock in the hall - it must be wrong. I should ask Jenkins to send for someone to repair it. But still... Could it really be daybreak?

I asked myself that question once more as I watched the new-born sun bob up over the horizon like an apple rising to the surface of a water barrel. How could there be any doubt, the fact of the matter was quite literally as clear as day? But the sun rose so quickly, so unusually quickly, as if impatient for the day to begin, that I could not but question the reality of what I was witnessing. It felt like minutes were being compressed into mere moments as I observed the sky brighten, the dark blue shot through with veins of amber and red, burning away the mist, glistening off the icy fields and roadways and gleaming through the treetops until every last shadow was dispelled.

I snatched up my watch, lying on the bedside table and freshly wound before I had retired. The faintly glowing hands told me that it was moments after midnight. I dressed quickly and went downstairs. Save for the ticking of the hallway clock, the house was deathly quiet. Not a creak, not a sigh, no signal of movement to suggest a fresh new day had begun. I collected my hat, slid back the bolts on the front door and went outside.

The air outside was crisp and sharp and fresh. A crust of frost lay across the

fallen snow, making it sparkle and shine. Everything seemed clean and bright and intense as my hot breath hung in wispy clouds about me. I stepped briskly down the path and out into the lane beyond, the ground crunching softly beneath my feet.

This was no ordinary day. By what power I knew this I cannot say, but I was absolutely certain that this was not the Tuesday that I had just lived through, nor the Wednesday that I had expected to greet me upon my awakening. This was something other, hidden between the two and more vivid and more intense than anything I had ever experienced.

I started down Horsham Lane towards the green, finding to my delight that the neighbourhood I knew so well seemed cast in a wondrously exciting hue. The early birds that twittered in the trees and hedgerows seemed more vigorous; the little stream, that bubbled and popped beside the lane, more vibrant. Bands of mist still swathed the patchwork fields to the east, which twitched with a hundred dark shapes as a murder of crows pecked at the freshly ploughed soil for worms and grubs. At some signal unintelligible to all but our avian cousins, they simultaneously rose up into the air, one billowing black cloud of feather and wing, carrying themselves over the treetops and away towards some unseen destination.

I was keenly aware that I was alone here. Some supernatural intelligence informed me that no one else had witnessed the daybreak this morning, as I had. No human being, in any case. The grand houses that stood beside the lane displayed no sign or symptom of activity. The windows were curtained and barred as

their owners slept on and I knew that the same pattern would be repeated in the towns and villages beyond. This was not the world of men. I alone was abroad to bear witness to the strange phenomenon that had replaced night with day.

What would happen, I wondered if I went up to one of those big houses right now and rapped upon the door? Would I be able to wake anyone? I doubted it. Whatever enchantment had enabled me to witness this anomaly would, I knew, keep them soundly asleep. When I reached the village green the story was the same. The buildings that gathered around that communal space, with its duck pond and its water pump and its pretty little flower beds, were silent. On any other morning this would be such a lively place, criss-crossed with people making ready for the busy day ahead. Now it was frozen, immobilised, as static as an insect trapped in amber.

The loneliness of my situation suddenly struck me quite profoundly and I felt a sickly surge of panic well up from the pit of my stomach. And yet, in the same moment, I knew that I was *not* alone. There were others here, I could feel them, but I could also sense that they were not of my kind. I have heard people speak before of the sensation that they are being watched. I had not experienced this before, but I felt it there and then for the first time in my life. It was not a pleasant feeling. I had the impression that there was something behind me, lurking out of sight, and yet when I turned I saw nothing.

That is, *at first* I saw nothing. My gaze was drawn to a spot further down the road where the bright sunlight struck the dark

wet earth, kicking up a glare that was uncomfortable on my eyes. Could I see something moving? I forced myself to study the spot harder. Something was emerging, shapes coalescing gradually from thin air as if they were fashioned from wisps of mist. Each was a white shadow, a smoky outline imprinted on the air itself. There were so many of them somehow issuing from that single point in space, moving towards me, each one roughly the size and shape of a man.

Had they seen me? Was I as unreal to them as they were to me? I swung myself through the gateway of a nearby cottage and took cover behind a hedge. From this position I could watch them as they shuffled up the lane, their sluggish and laboured movements suggestive of some unseen burden. The closer they came, the more substantial they seemed to become until, at the point where they passed the cottage, it was possible to make out features and forms. And although they appeared much like mortal men in shape and attitude, they were less than human: misshapen, broken and incomplete.

I must have counted nearly forty of them as they filed past, slowly but deliberately, with some unknown purpose. When they were gone I leaned back against the gatepost and contemplated the meaning of what I had just seen, but before my thoughts had chance to settle I felt cold, rubbery hands about my neck and shoulders, pulling me down from behind. A deathly grey arm locked across my throat, pale flesh pressed about me, smothering me and I felt myself sinking down into a senseless gloom. I tried to fight, tried to struggle but I was powerless

to break free and oblivion promptly overcame me.

I was dimly aware of being marched along, half senseless, bundled and tumbled by twisted limbs, cold breath on my face and neck. I recall a kaleidoscope of colours, at one time blinded by the bright sunlight stabbing like needles through a leafy canopy above; at others I was in darkness, a world of charcoal grey, with hardly any sensation save the singing in my ears.

Finally we reached our destination and they pressed me down upon a rocky seat. I gulped in the air and searched about me for some clue as to my whereabouts. I was confused, disorientated. I seemed to have been deposited within the skeletal remains of some once great building, the fractured walls and columns thrusting upwards from the rutted ground like broken teeth. I knew this place! This was the folly in Ogilvy Woods, built when such fanciful constructions were fashionable amongst the idle rich; a monument to frivolity and wastefulness.

I had played here as a boy; had enjoyed the loneliness and isolation. I wasn't alone now - I was ringed by a multitude of distorted simulacra of the human form. A great gathering, motionless, watching me. I blinked, struggling to focus, trying to make out the detail of these strange and disturbing beings. Was it me, or did my eyes simply fall away from them? The harder I looked, the more indistinct they became, as though they weren't really there at all.

I rose to my feet, pushing myself up from the toppled column on which they

had left me. I tottered unsteadily, anxious to hold my balance. The air was warm and muggy, as if it were late afternoon. Surely the day could not be so advanced already? How long had we taken to get here? Or should it be no great surprise to me that time here passed at an unfamiliar rate?

"Who are you?"

My words came out falteringly and met no response. Not one of these creatures moved, not one of them spoke.

"Why have you brought me here?"

Again, no reply, but this time there was motion from within their ranks as one of the figures pushed its way through. It approached, moving softly for all the clumsiness of its frame, hardly disturbing the ground underfoot, and stopped barely two feet in front of me. Even at this distance it was an effort to perceive anything but its basic form. I got the impression of skin that was watery and pockmarked, features twisted in a gruesome parody of a man, hair matted and damp. The most disturbing aspect of this encounter was that, in spite of its strangeness, it seemed somehow familiar.

"This is not your time," it said. Its words came out breathy and reedy. I repeated my demand for an explanation and my own voice seemed tremulous and faint.

"This is not your time," the creature said again. Such words I knew to be indisputable: I could not claim to belong here in this curious fold of existence.

"*What* are you?" I asked.

"We are what you have left behind," it said and I noticed that although its mouth was moving, the voice seemed to come from somewhere else; somehow it

emanated from within my head, the words tumbling effortlessly through my conscious mind.

"We are the mark you make upon the earth, the footprint in the sand, the outline beneath the crumpled sheet. We are the echo of your passing, the memory of your deeds and the promise of everything you could have been. We are the spilt blood, sloughed skin, the shed hair, the spent breath of your every moment, gathered together, given form and set upon the earth this day to fulfil ambitions left unfulfilled, tasks left undone, dreams that were never realised. We are *you*."

We are you, it had said and with those words I suddenly understood why I had felt that this creature was known to me. He *was* me! A roughhewn, incomplete and hideous copy; a facsimile of myself. And then it grinned; a horrifying grimace that at once set my nerves jangling, for I knew for certain that this thing meant me harm.

"Ambitions left unfulfilled," I repeated, trying not to betray my dread. "What do you mean?"

"Everything that you set out to do and failed," it breathed. "Every stillborn ambition and aborted endeavour. Every moment you wasted in idleness. We are the shadows cast upon this unseen splinter of time, striving to accomplish everything that you had the power to achieve but did not. We are what could have been and we have been doomed to fail, until now. Until you came. Now *I* can be all that you can be."

If I had ever had occasion to lament a misspent existence, then I surely did so at that moment. The repressed guilt of every

squandered minute had been brought into being. Given form, given purpose and the power to seek redress. But how, I asked?

"By *becoming* you," it replied and reached out to touch me.

And so I ran. I ran because I knew that had I not taken the opportunity to flee at that moment, the chance would not come again. I broke through their ranks, keeping clear of their groping, outstretched hands, plunging into the wood, crashing through the nettles and branches that snagged my legs and feet until I found a path.

I had no idea where I was headed but the track led steeply downwards and I knew this must take me out of the woods. The way was criss-crossed with roots and vines, threatening to trip me at every step. At one point I entered a narrow, steep-sided chicane, where my foot struck a protruding rock and I stumbled into a thick bush of brittle leaves and thorns. It tore at my clothes and hands as I freed myself but I could not stop to check my injuries, for I knew that those terrifying shadow creatures were in pursuit.

I skittered down the path with a speed and nimbleness that I had never been called upon to exhibit before, and which I hope I may never need to rely upon again. I could not see my pursuers but I knew they were close. I could hear them, feel them, and I was certain that if I tripped again they would be upon me before I could recover. Twice I found myself sliding, a rattling of stones spraying out from beneath my soles; and once I narrowly missed a tree stump, avoiding catastrophe only by good fortune.

Just as it seemed that my descent might never end, the gradient began to grow more shallow and I reached a little stream on the edge of the wood. The path took me across two stepping stones and into a neighbouring field and I paused for one brief moment to risk a glance behind me. The vision of those creatures through the trees is one that remains as vivid to me now as it was upon that day. In my dreams I still relive the sight of them rolling and tumbling over each other like a grey tide in their haste to reach me.

I pressed on, doubling my pace as I followed the path, skirting the edge of the field and then striking off, away from the wood and towards a stone wall, shining golden beneath the sinking sun. The sinking sun? Was evening approaching already?

I had to get home before nightfall. Something told me that if I didn't I would be trapped here forever. And then with a sudden burst of joy I recognised where I was: I was not so very far from my house! Wading through the long grass I reached the wall, squeezed through a stile and found myself in Horsham Lane! My own pretty little road with its carpet of fallen leaves - it had never looked so welcoming.

Long shadows had grown all about me now. The sun was almost upon the horizon, the sky red and gold, fading quickly to deep purple as the light failed. I started towards my house but horrifyingly I found myself being dragged backwards. My pursuers had overtaken me! But now in this broken light they had once more become shadowy and indistinct. I struggled to free myself but I was engulfed, drowning in their murky tide.

Smoky and obscure faces emerged before me, rising and falling in the melee, but their grip was diminishing. As the daylight waned so too did their strength. Moment by moment, they melted into the evening until, at last, I could break free!

I ran past those slumbering houses until I reached my own door. All the while I felt my pursuers keeping pace close behind me - invisible, their rasping voices whispering, their smoky fingers reaching out and brushing me but with no power to hold me. I went inside and slammed the door, listening in terror as they scratched and scrapped at the wood. I could not stay there. I took the stairs two at a time up to my bedroom, pulled the curtains closed and tumbled onto my bed. How I was able to fall asleep I could not say and yet, with those persistent hissing voices still echoing through my mind, this is precisely what I did. It seemed that unconsciousness was somehow forced upon me with the closing of the day; a blackout, as in a play, to assist my transition to the next scene. And as I slept, the scenery changed.

Wednesday morning met me when I next awoke. A bright and glorious Wednesday morning. A golden beam of sunlight infiltrated the room through a chink in the curtains. Downstairs I could hear the sounds of my housekeeper as she prepared breakfast. From outside in the lane came the welcome noises of everyday life as people went about their business. Ordinary.

We are familiar, all of us, with dreams that leave such a vivid impression upon us that we carry those sleeping fantasies over into waking life. The thoughts, the feelings and the memories stay with us. That's how my disturbing experience seemed to me when I awoke: the memory of a dream: intense, persistent but too strange and inexplicable to have actually happened, surely? And yet I had slept in my clothes. And there, on the floor, were my muddy boots and the wet footprints that I had left just a few hours ago.

I went to the window and threw open the curtains. I needed to look out upon the world I knew; a place I felt at home. The drayman's cart rattled by with the man's eldest boy hanging lazily off the back. The postmistress struggled with an overflowing basket. The paperboy, tromping up my garden path to deliver the morning's *Times*, saw me at the window and waved, and I waved back. All of these people were going about their lives unaware of the desperate hours concealed in the crease between one day and another; unconscious of the existence of a realm populated by pitiful echoes of ourselves.

Here was a place where hours and minutes marched by at a steady rate; a place whose citizens could, if they so wished, fritter away their precious time in any way they saw fit. But I had seen another world and knowledge of it meant that I could no longer tolerate such waste. I had been shown that every minute was precious, every moment a miracle. I had to make them count.

I pulled on my shoes, put on my hat and headed downstairs, calling to my housekeeper to let her know that I would forgo breakfast. I had things to do, people to see, errands that I had put off for too long, promises that I had failed to keep. This much I owed to myself: to make the most of every second allotted to me.

I paused to look at the clock in the hallway as it steadily counted out each second of my life, and as I did so I focused for a moment on my reflection in its face. The imperfect glass summoned forth a roughhewn and incomplete facsimile. Yes, this much I owed, also, to my abandoned shadow, a creature to be pitied, who would forever occupy the space between the last tick of Tuesday night and the first tock of Wednesday morning. I went out to make this day my own.

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Chairman

Welcome to another newsletter, and with winter just around the corner I thought I'd take the opportunity to remind you all to drive safely. Remember, you are a company asset that cannot be replaced - not at short notice anyway.

We here at Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions believe that your safety is paramount. However difficult the conditions, however impassable the roads, it's vitally important that you make it into work in one piece, fully capable of doing your job. Whatever you do, don't drive into a tree, don't veer off the road into a ditch and, don't pile headlong into a truck. It's really not worth running the risk of bringing the company into disrepute or failing to make it into work.

So please, when conditions are bad, plan your journey carefully and take your time. Remember, it doesn't matter if you're a little late getting here - you can always make the time up later.

Sir Dominic Frisbee

Much Needed Donation

We're pleased to announce that Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions' nominated charity for next year is The Association for Distressed Cattle. We will be sending them 300 branded pens, 150 mouse mats and four dozen balloons on sticks, which will enable them to significantly expand their bovine relocation programme.

Nominate Frisbee!

Sainsbury's are conducting a poll to find the best places to work and we're sure you'll want to nominate Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions for an award!

If you're on Facebook or Twitter you can vote for us now. And if you're not on Facebook or Twitter you need to sign up straight away. Anyone who has failed to register their vote by the end of the month will need to speak to HR.

Running for Frisbee

Congratulations to Head of Adjustment Mary Peterson who recently competed in the South Shepton Run, which takes place every year during Leathering Week. Mary ran on behalf of Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions and finished in the first 500. Well done Mary, we're all very proud of you!

Commiserations to Martin Hobbey who failed to finish and who will be leaving the company next week.

Visit from Overseas

Representatives of Cooper's Multi-Phased Intelligent Deficit Analysis Systems, the largest multi-phased intelligent deficit analysis systems company in North America, recently paid a visit to head office. Like Frisbee Digitally Tracked Logistical Interface Solutions, Cooper's Multi-Phased Intelligent Deficit Analysis Systems are pioneers in integrated post-modular compatibility flows and they very kindly shared some best practice relating to circular process implementation, with particular reference to pre-determined vector alignments. We didn't understand a word they were talking about.

Charity Champion

You may have seen a news report on the front page of the Evening Echo about our chairman Sir Dominic Frisbee donating £10 to the local hospice. Of course, Sir Dominic does not like to talk about his charity work and it was only with great reluctance

that he agreed to pose for a picture with the mayor.

As you may remember, Sir Dominic was similarly embarrassed when we reported that he had given £5 to Children in Need three years ago, and he really didn't like being personally thanked by the chairman of the Rotary Club in 2009 for his generous donation of £15 to the homeless shelter.

As some of you may already be aware, Sir Dominic has been going round telling everybody that instead of giving Christmas presents this year, he will be donating £7.50 to charity, but he really doesn't want anyone to know about this.

New Fire Extinguishers

As a result of our recent health and safety audit we have purchased a number of new fire extinguishers. Please note, these are designed to be used on cheese and onion pasties only and are not to be used to extinguish sandwiches, sausage rolls or other baked goods.

Fart

Finally, we look forward to seeing you all at next week's staff conference and we can tell you that you're in for a treat: the entire morning session will be given over to our chairman, Sir Dominic Frisbee, blowing off.

Sir Dominic is a notorious windbag and is no stranger to pumping out noxious gasses for the benefit of staff, but this is the first time that he will attempt a sustained fart of this duration.

Attendees are warned in advance that the windows in the conference hall do not open and those of a delicate constitution are advised to bring breathing apparatus and sturdy goggles. No naked flames are permitted at the venue.

Bring You Down

It's a shameful aberration
That you've built your reputation
Out of 'charitable' deeds
That exploit the nation's needs
For the sake of adulation
This precarious foundation
Is a sickening conceit
Manufactured from deceit

You spread poisonous misconceptions
Mired in falsehoods and deceptions
Because you're greedy and you're vain
Fat man on a gravy train
In your rush for personal glory
Gushing 'heartfelt' oratory
You sport such a saintly look
But you're a grubby little fuck

See, I saw what lay behind
Such an infantile mind
Blinkered all these years
With your fingers in your ears
When your deeds were all decried
I saw you scuttle off and hide
Behind the skirts of minions
Who'll endure your worst opinions
You didn't realise, you tool
They were playing you for a fool

Now I know that when you speak
There's no soul, it's just technique
Those words running off your tongue
Have been bullshit all along
The people have concluded
That you're spineless and deluded
You might think that you're adored
But you're a swindler and a fraud

Know this reign can't last forever
They'll call time on this endeavour
Oh no, they won't find it funny
When they ask about the money
They'll know how much you took
Because I'll tell them where to look
Fill your pockets now, you clown
Very soon I'll bring you down

