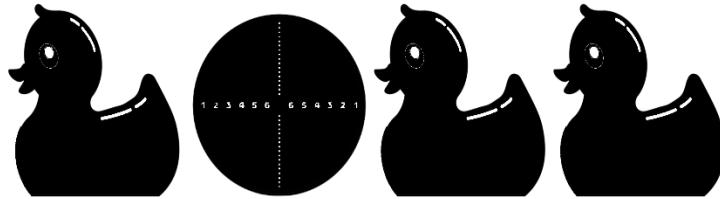


# THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BLEEDING OBVIOUS

ANNUAL



# THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BLEEDING OBVIOUS ANNUAL



**The University of the Bleeding Obvious Annual 2022**

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All characters, companies, organisations and fully integrated goat milking systems are fictitious, and any similarity to persons living, dead or in a state of quantum superposition is entirely coincidental.

*And now a word from our sponsor.*

"Wah-wah-wah-wah. Not like it was in the old days. Wah-wah-wah-wah. Snowflakes. Wah-wah-wah-wah. British values. Wah-wah-wah-wah. I fear change. Wah-wah-wah-wah."

**[www.bleeding-obvious.co.uk](http://www.bleeding-obvious.co.uk)**

# Instructions

## How to Use These Instructions

### Introduction

Most people understand the need to follow instructions, but it is important to take special note of the instructions for following instructions before you begin following the instructions. A lack of preparation is one of the most common failings we face when following instructions, and these instructions have been designed to help you successfully follow the instructions.

### What You Will Need

You will need:

- a) These instructions
- b) Some instructions
- c) A sturdy pair of trousers

### How To Follow the Instructions

The instructions have been prepared sequentially in order to guide you step by step through the instructions. It is important that you read the instructions carefully before attempting to read the instructions, and only attempt to follow the instructions once you are confident that you understand the instructions.

We recommend that you start with Step One of the instructions, before proceeding to Step Two and then Step Three and so on, unless instructed to do otherwise.

### The Instructions

1. Follow Step One
2. Follow Step Two
3. Follow Step Three, unless you have already followed Step Three, in which case skip straight to Step Four
4. Follow Step Four
5. Follow Step Five, unless there is no Step Five, in which case do not follow Step Five

### In Conclusion

We hope you have enjoyed these instructions, which have been designed by our qualified instructors to instruct you how to follow instructions. If you experience any difficulties, please follow the instructions.

Complaints about these instructions can be made by following our complaints procedure. If you wish to complain about the complaints procedure, please contact our complaints department who will provide you with instructions on how to complain about the complaints procedure. You will find details of our complaints procedure in the instructions.

# CONSUMER SLAP



**Hello and welcome to *Consumer Slap*, the show that's in your corner when it comes to dodgy dealers and untrustworthy traders.**

[Applause]

Later on we tackle overpriced plumbers, dish the dirt on one high street fashion retailer and give the manufacturer of some discount jam a run for his money. But first, we've got a harrowing story from Tracey Sponge. Tracey wrote to us after buying a new electronic cat flap. It sounded great in the advert - hard wearing, stylish and featuring a clever gadget designed to admit her cat and her cat only. Marvellous, except that shortly after she installed it, it severed her cat in two. How awful.

Tracey found this massively inconvenient and wrote to the manufacturers, a company called Pet Flaps International. Unfortunately, her complaint must have fallen on deaf ears since Pet Flaps chose not to reply. Well, we here at *Consumer Slap* don't think that's good enough. We found out that the CEO of Pet Flaps is a man called Mike Gringold, so I got some friends of mine and we went to Pet Flaps' head office to see what he had to say about it. Take a look at what happened.

*Outside the foyer of a large office building. A dozen people dressed as cats. The presenter is harassing the security guard.*

**Presenter:** Hello, my name's Julian and I'm from the TV

programme *Consumer Slap*. We were wondering if we could come in and talk to Mr Gringold?

**Guard:** Sorry, Mr Gringold's not here today.

**Presenter:** It's about my friend Tracey Sponge. One of Mr Gringold's cat flaps bisected her cat. That's not very good, is it?

**Guard:** No, not very good. But Mr Gringold is not here today.

**Presenter:** Don't you think it's bad that Mr Gringold should go around cutting people's pets in half, and then refusing to speak to them?

**Guard:** Mr Gringold is not here today. Mr Gringold is in Brussels.

**Presenter:** That's very convenient, I must say. Don't you think it's bad that someone would go all the way to Brussels just to avoid speaking to someone about a dead cat?

**Guard:** Mr Gringold had gone to Brussels for a conference on plastic hinges. I will tell him you called. I am sure Mr Gringold will be sorry that he missed you.

*Back in the studio.*

Well, since we filmed that report, we've had a letter from Pet Flaps International, which I'm obliged to read to you now. It says:

We at Pet Flaps International were deeply saddened to hear about the tragic death of Miss Sponge's cat and would like to offer our condolences. We would like to reassure our customers that we take the health and wellbeing of our customers' pets very seriously, and all our products are rigorously tested to ensure that they do not slice animals in two. We pride ourselves that in the twenty years we have been trading, this has happened only three times. We are confident that our product is entirely safe when it is used in accordance with the correct operating instructions but, as a gesture of goodwill, we would like to offer Miss Sponge a voucher for £10 pounds off her next purchase.

Well there you are: another victory for *Consumer Slap*, ladies and gentlemen!

[Applause]

On now to a curious incident brought to our attention by Jeremy Sideboard. Jeremy is a big fan of Cheesy Doo Dahs - well who isn't?

[Laughter]

I'm talking about the popular snack, of course. Now, it's not unheard of for people to find foreign objects in foodstuffs. A toenail clipping here, a dead mouse there - it all adds to the flavour. No, but seriously, it's unpleasant, but we've all heard of such things. But I wonder if you've ever opened a packet of crisps and found half a dozen razor blades, two flick knives, a couple of ounces of broken glass and a scythe?

Well, that's what happened to Jeremy. Extremely hazardous, of course, and apart from anything else, it doesn't leave a lot of room for the crisps.

Cheesy Doo Dahs are made by a company called Maxi-Snacks Ltd,



and their CEO is a man called Mike Liebfraumilch. So, we thought a good way to get his attention would be to visit the head offices of his company, dressed as a selection of our favourite potato snacks. Here's how we got on:

*Outside a large office building. Julian and others dressed as crisps, haranguing a security guard.*

**Julian:** Oh hello. We're here to see Mr Liebfraumilch. It's about my friend Jeremy Sideboard and a packet of Cheesy Doo Dahs that he bought.

**Guard:** Oh yes, Cheesy Doo Dahs. Sorry, Mr Liebfraumilch isn't here today.

**Julian:** Yes, my friend Jeremy opened his Cheesy Doo Dahs to find that it was full of razor blades and flick knives and broken glass and a scythe. That's not very good, is it?

**Guard:** Razor blades and flick knives and broken glass and a scythe - not very good, no. Sorry Mr Liebfraumilch is at a conference in Brussels.

**Julian:** Well can we leave this with you? It's a collage we've made out of crisps.

**Guard:** Collage, yes. I'll see that he gets it.

*Back in the studio.*

Well, if there's one thing we've learned, it's that Brussels seems to be very busy at the moment.

[Laughter]

Nevertheless, although we didn't get to speak to Mr Liebfraumilch in person, we have received a statement. It reads:

We are extremely sorry to hear that Mr Sideboard was unhappy with our product. We treat customer satisfaction very seriously and we take great care to avoid putting razor blades and flick knives and broken glass and scythes into our products. Unfortunately, because of the way our potatoes are harvested, it is occasionally unavoidable that scythes end up in the manufacturing process, and it can occasionally happen that razor blades and flick knives and broken glass escape our rigorous quality control checks. We hope that the presence of sharp and potentially lethal foreign objects did not spoil Mr Sideboard's enjoyment of our product too much, and as gesture of goodwill we are sending a complimentary bag of Cheesy Doo Dahs.

Another victory!

[Applause]

It's good to see a company which has a responsible attitude towards customer satisfaction. Sadly, that doesn't seem to be the case with sporting goods retailer Batz 'n' Ballz. Now, Batz 'n' Ballz has been a common sight on our high streets for twenty years, every bit a part of our town centres as fish 'n'

chips, cheese 'n' onion and sex 'n' violence.

But when Gary Burnholt paid a visit earlier this year, he was shocked to receive a somewhat less than friendly welcome. In fact, he was set upon by the manager and two of the shop assistants, who beat him black and blue and left him hospitalised with fifteen stitches, four missing teeth and three twisted knees.

Well, the CEO of Batz and Ballz is a man called Tommy Christmas, so we went along to their headquarters dressed as a load of balls to speak to him. Here's what happened...

...Actually, we haven't got time for that now. Suffice it to say that we went along, the guy was in Brussels, but he sent us this message.

We are extremely sorry to hear that Mr Burnholt was disappointed at being beaten up in our store. We take not beating people up in our stores very seriously, and we regret that Mr Burnholt feels that we fell short of our normally high standards of service. It is not our policy to beat people up and our staff undertake rigorous training in being nice to people, with particular emphasis on not smacking them in the mouth. As a gesture of goodwill, we would like to invite Mr Burnholt to pay a return visit our store, whenever is most convenient to him, and we will endeavour to not give him a kicking once more.

Yet another win for *Consumer Slap*, proving once again that this is the programme that strikes fear into the hearts of shoddy businesses and delivers justice for the ordinary man or woman in the street. Well, that's it for part one. Join us after the break when we'll be testing underwear in Halifax, doing something silly outside the offices of a travel agent in Cardiff and taking a long hard look at that discount jam that I told you about. Bye for now!

We no longer  
have a  
rodent  
problem!

# So Special

## Face | Skin | Hair | Feet

### Special beauty therapies for very special people

Our comprehensively trained and rehabilitated beauty experts provide a prestige service, offering a range of uplifting and spiritually nourishing treatments. Our premises have been fully rewired so you can relax in a safe, hazard-free environment that has now been declared 'satisfactory' by the local health and safety department. Be confident that all the recommendations resulting from the recent accident have now been actioned. Your safety is one of our top five concerns.

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**Laser flesh removal** - *only 3 casualties this year* £20 per lb

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**The new wonder treatment** - Ultra-purple light stimulation. *Scientifically proven by scientists at CERN.* £79 for first session, £59 per session thereafter.

**Seaweed Whip with Deep Tissue Pummelling and fried rice** £12. *No refunds*

**Mike and Bernie Winters** £10 each or £18 the pair

**Lip scrub and wax** £8 per lip, up to a total of 9 lips

**Hole punching** (*with or without stretching*) £14

**Electrostatic flesh tightening and butt clenching** £33, plus standard insurance premium

**Filling and Replastering** £58 *Please supply your own ladders.*

**Hip realignment and joint lubrication** £98

**Pneumatic expansion therapy** (*some leakage is to be expected*) £75 o.n.o.

**Megavolt neutron bombardment:**

*Face and neck* £20

*Back, sack and crack* £30

*Fish chips and peas* £48.50

**Face jacking** £15-£25 depending on weight of face

**Fully Integrated Goat Milking System** £12.99

**Sub-mitochondrial dermo-detoxification sifting** (*Tuesdays only*) £How does a tenner sound?



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### Read what some of our surviving customers say:

"I was glad when it was all over."

"Nobody will tell us what happened to our Susan. She hasn't been seen since March."

"I am still unable to cross my legs."

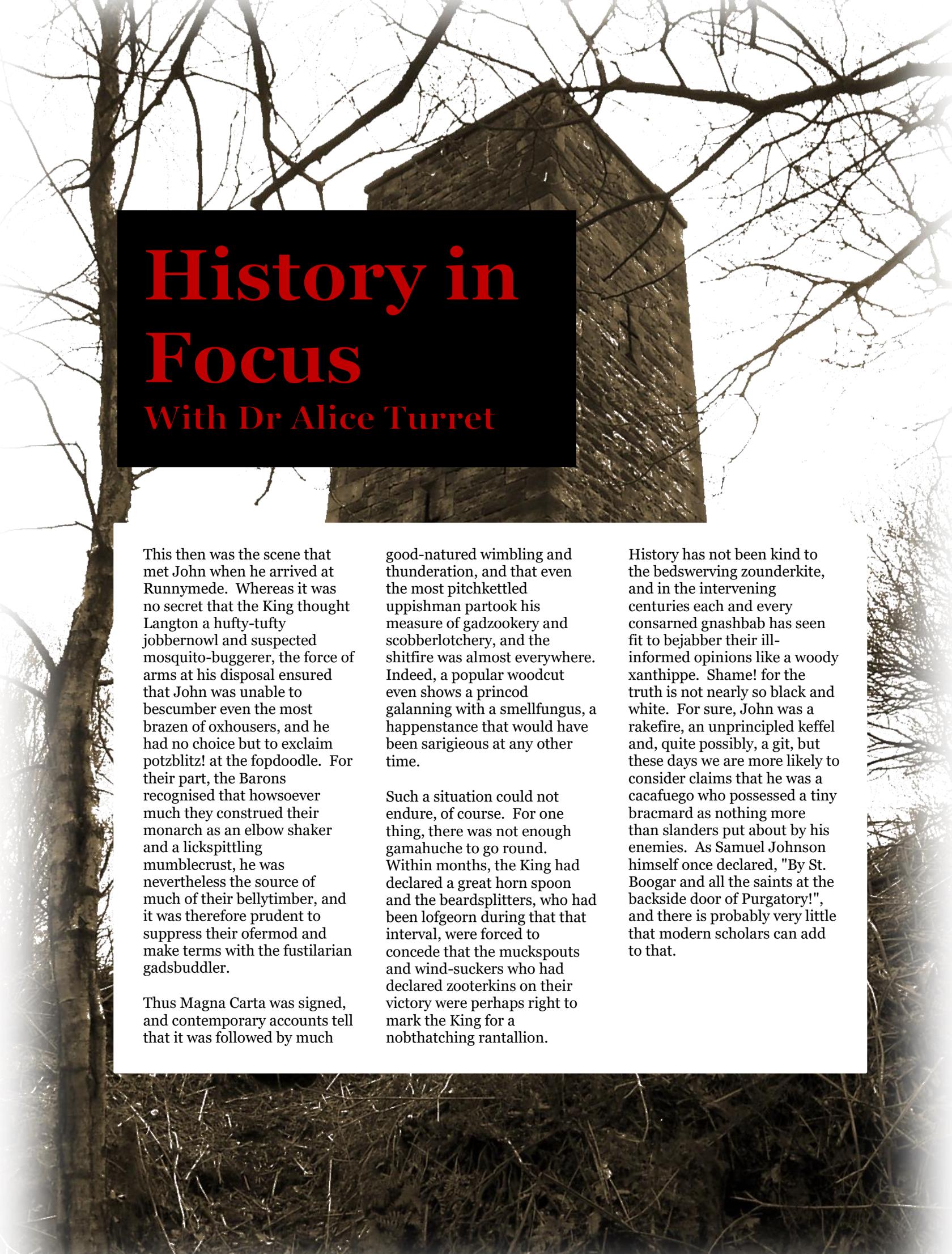
"I've never been, but I don't really think they can be as bad as people say they are."

"My teeth hurt."

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and get free  
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Lamb chops!



# History in Focus

With Dr Alice Turret

This then was the scene that met John when he arrived at Runnymede. Whereas it was no secret that the King thought Langton a hufty-tufty jobbernowl and suspected mosquito-buggerer, the force of arms at his disposal ensured that John was unable to bescumber even the most brazen of oxhousers, and he had no choice but to exclaim potzblitz! at the fopdoodle. For their part, the Barons recognised that howsoever much they construed their monarch as an elbow shaker and a lickspittling mumblecrust, he was nevertheless the source of much of their bellytimber, and it was therefore prudent to suppress their ofermod and make terms with the fustilarian gadsbuddler.

Thus Magna Carta was signed, and contemporary accounts tell that it was followed by much

good-natured wimbling and thunderation, and that even the most pitchkettled uppishman partook his measure of gadzookery and scobberlotchery, and the shitfire was almost everywhere. Indeed, a popular woodcut even shows a princod galanning with a smellfungus, a happenstance that would have been sarigieous at any other time.

Such a situation could not endure, of course. For one thing, there was not enough gamahuche to go round. Within months, the King had declared a great horn spoon and the beardsplitters, who had been lofgeorn during that that interval, were forced to concede that the muckspouts and wind-suckers who had declared zooterkins on their victory were perhaps right to mark the King for a nobthatching rantallion.

History has not been kind to the bedswerving zounderkite, and in the intervening centuries each and every consarned gnashbab has seen fit to bejabber their ill-informed opinions like a woody xanthippe. Shame! for the truth is not nearly so black and white. For sure, John was a rakefire, an unprincipled keffel and, quite possibly, a git, but these days we are more likely to consider claims that he was a cacafuego who possessed a tiny bracmard as nothing more than slanders put about by his enemies. As Samuel Johnson himself once declared, "By St. Boogar and all the saints at the backside door of Purgatory!", and there is probably very little that modern scholars can add to that.

# Doing Lengths

**Interviewer:**

I'm here with Albert Zing, who has set himself an unusual and somewhat ambitious task. He's going to swim the Atlantic Ocean, only he plans to do it a little differently.

**Zing:**

Yes, I'm doing it lengthways.

**Interviewer:**

You're going to swim from pole to pole?

**Zing:**

No, I'm going to do it from top to bottom. It will be easier that way, because it's downhill.

**Interviewer:**

That's what I mean: you're going to swim from the North Pole to the South Pole.

**Zing:**

Oh yes, yes, yes, yes, you could put it that way. You see, when I'm at my local pool, it's only the wusses who do widths. I do lengths.

**Interviewer:**

That's quite some feat.

**Zing:**

Thank you, yes, I have got feet. They will be instrumental in my attempt.

**Interviewer:**

No, I mean it will be quite a feat, meaning that it will be an act of endurance. How do you plan to do it?

**Zing:**

Front crawl.

**Interviewer:**

Front crawl?

**Zing:**

It's the only way. You have to be serious about these things. Using front crawl, I will be able to maximise the power of my stroke, plus make the most of the pulsive power of those feet that I mentioned a moment ago.

**Interviewer:**

It will be quite cold, of course.

**Zing:**

In places, yes it will be. Specifically, at the top and the bottom. I expect it will get a bit warmer in the middle.

**Interviewer:**

I see, and are you prepared mentally to cope with the low temperatures?

**Zing:**

Yes, I think so. I've had a long hard think about it, and as a result of that, I'm not expecting any surprises in that department. Of course, being mentally prepared for something is all very well, but it's not nearly so important as being physically prepared.

**Interviewer:**

And what have you done to physically prepare yourself?

**Zing:**

I went to the zoo.

**Interviewer:**

The zoo?

**Zing:**

Yes, I went to the zoo and studied how the penguins cope with it. The way I figure it is, if you want to do something proper, check out the experts.

**Interviewer:**

And was that helpful?

**Zing:**

No. No, it wasn't helpful at all. They just hopped around and fell over occasionally. I couldn't see how that might assist me. Mind you, it was quite a warm day, so I probably wasn't seeing them at their best.

**Interviewer:**

So, your fact-finding mission was a waste of time?

**Zing:**

Not entirely. I had an ice cream, and I also saw the monkeys while I was there. They're funny. No, I have decided that the way I'm going to cope with the cold is to wear an anorak.

**Interviewer:**

That will be quite cumbersome, won't it?

**Zing:**

Well, I plan to take it off and tie it round my waist when I go through the warm bits. That way, I will feel the benefit when I head back into the cold water. And it will be very useful, because of the pockets.

**Interviewer:**

Pockets?

**Zing:**

Oh yes, well I've got to have somewhere to put stuff, haven't I? Compass, spare goggles, sandwiches.

**Interviewer:**

Sandwiches?

**Zing:**

Ah, I'm glad you said 'sandwiches' just then, because we've spent quite a lot of time developing sandwiches that will survive in the ocean. They are impregnated with a special

compound that makes them impervious to water. Unfortunately, it also makes them impervious to teeth.

**Interviewer:**

Won't that make them difficult to eat.

**Zing:**

Difficult? No. It will make them impossible to eat, although that's no bad thing. You see, they're egg and cress sandwiches, and I'm not really keen on egg and cress.

**Interviewer:**

Does that mean you will have nothing to eat for your entire journey?

**Zing:**

Yes, but then it's not advisable to swim on a full stomach, so it's probably for the best. I should think I'll be finished by teatime.

**Interviewer:**

By teatime? How long do you expect your attempt to take?

**Zing:**

Well, I've had a look on the map, I've plotted my route and I reckon six hours should do it. Because I don't plan on hanging about, you know. Oh no, this is not a sight-seeing expedition. I'm not going to be treading water while I watch dolphins and humpbacked whales. I've got to get a wriggle on.

**Interviewer:**

Six hours?

**Zing:**

Yeah, about that. I've got to go round Rockall, so that might put an extra twenty minutes on my journey, but I can't take too long about it. I'm a busy man, you know. I've got to be back at work in the morning.

**Interviewer:**

I see. Well, it's good to know that you won't be making your attempt alone. I believe that your sister, Alice Zing, will be following you in the support boat.

**Zing:**

Yes, it's a rowing boat from the local lake. We've borrowed it off the council. They need it back by the weekend, so there's another reason for us to get a move on.

**Interviewer:**

And will this boat be kitted out with all the latest survival equipment?

**Zing:**

It has a new set of oars and has recently had its bottom scraped. Alice will be following me all the way, shouting encouragement and helpful advice through a megaphone. Things like: 'left a bit' and 'watch out for that tanker'. She will also have a big stick with which to fend off sharks.

**Interviewer:**

Of course, if you're successful in your attempt - which I'm sure you will be - it means that not only will you be the first person to swim from pole to pole, but Alice will be the first person to row from pole to pole.

**Zing:**

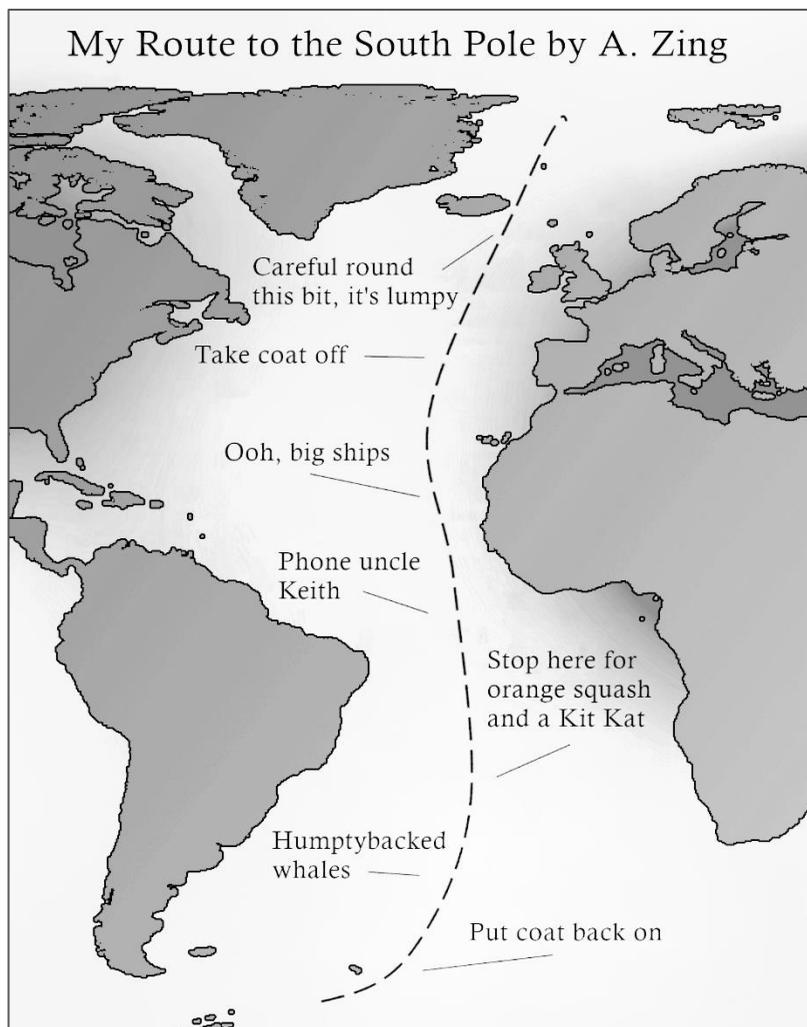
Oh yes. Adventure runs in our family. Our mother was the first person to skate up the Matterhorn, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Well, Albert Zing, thank you very much for speaking to us today, and I wish you the very best luck and I hope you reach the South Pole safe and sound.

**Zing:**

Thanks mate. I'll send you a postcard when I get there.





**Dear Mr Gammon,**

Re: Mr William Kierkergard, 47 Crown Terrace, Shepton Bassett

Following receipt of your letter of 14th July, the Council has now had an opportunity to consider your objections to the above. Objections to planning permission normally relate to buildings, specifically to alterations and changes of use, and not to individuals. Mr Kierkergard is not required to obtain planning permission simply in order to take up residence at the above property, and members of the public have no grounds to raise objections. Ordinarily, we would dismiss your concerns out of hand. However, it has been a slow day in the office and I have found myself at a loose end, therefore I have set out the Council's response to each of your objections below.

A: Objection: Mr Kierkergard "looked at you funny" last Tuesday morning, when he was putting out his bins.

In order to be upheld, an objection must relate to the rules and regulations as set out in the relevant legislation, chiefly the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. We have a big book in the office with all the rules in. It's a really, really big book, and the typeface is really, really small, so that you have to squint to read it. Well, I've read it and I can find no reference in there to people looking at you funny, so I'm afraid we must conclude that this is not a valid objection.

B: Mr Kierkergard's washing hanging on the line spoils your enjoyment of your property.

As I am sure you are aware, there are rules which prevent new developments from spoiling your enjoyment of your property. These normally relate to building works, which we are assuming Mr Kierkergard's washing is not. We have studied the photograph you sent us of your neighbour's sweater, and agree that it is indeed hideous, but unless Mr Kierkergard decides to affix his knitwear to the side of his house, or nail his trousers to the fence, his clothing cannot be considered permanent structures.

C: Mr Kierkergard's shoes are not in keeping with the area.

You correctly point out that Mr Kierkergard lives in the buffer zone of a world heritage site, which imposes certain restrictions on householders. For example, Mr Kierkergard would not be permitted to make substantial changes to the frontage of his property that were not in keeping with its original appearance.

However, such restrictions do not apply to his choice of footwear. We sympathise that the particular shade of brown you describe is, in your words, 'offensively abhorrent', but we cannot insist that he exchanges them for a colour that more accurately matches the sandstone from which many local buildings have been constructed. Neither is it within our power to limit his movements such that he is only allowed out after dark. We would suggest that you avert your eyes should you pass him in the street.

D: Something smells funny.

Although you provided scant detail of what the 'something' was, and in what way it smelled 'funny', we are assuming that it refers to a further entry in your... one wishes to avoid the word 'vendetta'... your catalogue of concerns regarding Mr Kierkergard. This may be a matter for our colleagues in environmental health, but taking it at face value, can we request further details about this smell. Once we are able to successfully identify it, we will be in a position to determine whether Mr Kierkergard has obtained planning permission for it.

E: Mr Kierkergard represents a significant fire risk.

We have carried out a brief but thorough investigation into Mr Kierkergard and have concluded that he is a gentleman in his early forties, is single and works for a local insurance broker. After consultation with experts within both the medical profession and the fire service, we have concluded that the risk of conflagration posed by Mr Kierkergard is negligible. We are assured that forty-year-old insurance brokers hardly ever spontaneously combust, and the chief fire officer tells us that on the extremely rare occasions that this happens, they usually burn themselves out quickly, causing minimal damage to their surroundings.

F: Mr Kierkergard's layout is likely to increase the risk of flooding.

Now this is one that has got us really scratching our heads. It was with great interest that we studied the detailed plans of Mr Kierkergard that you sent us. We have never seen these plans before, but they seem to have been professionally draughted. We are certainly more used to seeing plans like this for a building rather than a person, and we are concerned that the depiction of Mr Kierkergard's 'front elevation' goes into a level of detail that might easily be construed as a gross invasion of the man's privacy.

However, with regard to the issue of flooding, you draw our attention to the illustration of Mr Kierkergard's 'foundations' and claim that these would inevitably cause 'widespread devastation' if he were to stand in a puddle. We feel very strongly that the drains throughout the borough would be able to cope in such an eventuality, although the volume of rainfall is an important factor. After due consideration, we have decided that inundation, whilst not impossible, is unlikely and we are happy to take the risk.

E: Mr Kierkergard hasn't shaved for several days, giving rise to reasonable suspicion that he may be growing a beard.

As I am sure you are aware, applications to grow a beard come under the Facial Hair Cultivation and Care Regulations (Updated) 2008. I have spoken to my colleagues in the Facial Hair Planning Team, and they inform me that Mr Kierkergard has not made an application for the erection of facial hair. However, permission is not required unless the growth exceeds three inches at its longest extent, this distance being measured from the surface of the skin to the tip of the longest bristle. In such circumstances, a full review would be ordered to consider the potential impact on local wildlife, pollution levels and air traffic.

Nah, I'm pulling your leg. We don't have a facial hair planning team - it was disbanded in 2014.

F: Mr Kierkergard spoils your view of the local Tesco Metro.

We have several points to make on this score. Firstly, it is not uncommon for a new development to obstruct an individual's enjoyment of a scenic view or a point of particular interest, and we do take this into consideration. In this case, we understand that the Tesco Metro to which you refer is a purpose-built unit, erected in 2017, and whilst it is no doubt of an elegant and practical design, we cannot accept that it is either historically or aesthetically noteworthy.

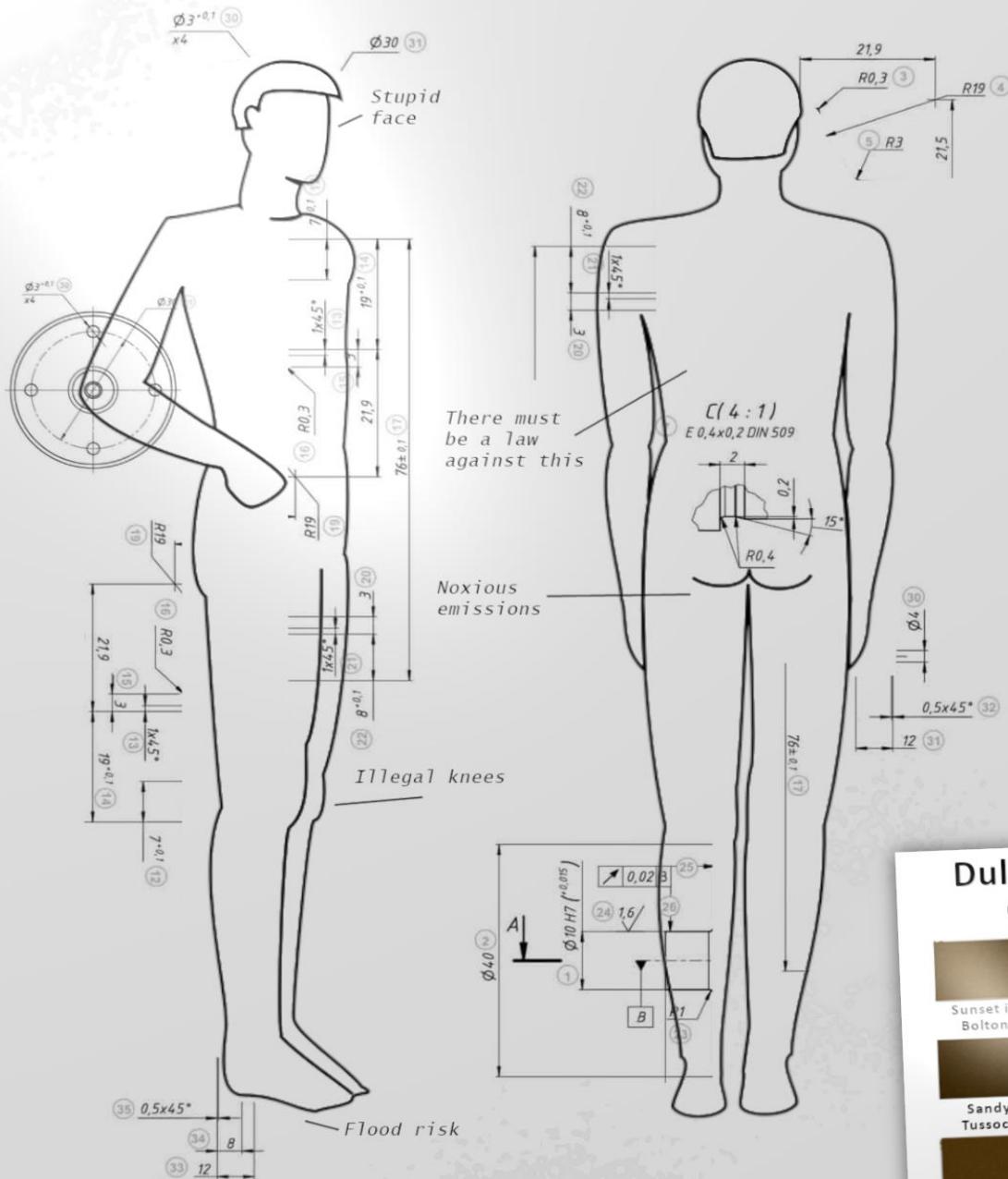
Secondly, in order for Mr Kierkergard to obstruct your view, he must either remain stationery in your line of view at all times - which is unlikely - or you are following him around. After making a number of enquiries we have learned that this latter explanation is indeed the case. We are told that Mr Kierkergard has made a number of complaints in connection with you following him, taunting him and generally harassing him. Indeed, the objections you have raised with us would seem to form part of this ongoing campaign of terror. We have made the police aware of your complaints and will refrain from commenting further on this matter until their investigation has been concluded.

I hope the responses above have satisfactorily answered the points you have made, but if you would like to discuss these issues further, please do not hesitate to get in touch. In the meantime, may I take the liberty of advising you that the Council can only consider valid objections as permitted by relevant legislation and bylaws. Protesting on the ground that you personally don't like something rarely ever forms the basis of a legitimate objection, and writing entirely in capitals, enclosing a fiver and getting all your friends to do the same does not increase the likelihood of it being upheld.

Yours Sincerely



G Murphy  
**Assistant Director Strategic Planning.**



I wouldn't be surprised if he was some kind of pervert

		Gewicht	Format
			A3
Date	Initiale	Mr William Kierkergard, 47 Crown Terrace, Shepton Bassett	
Draw	Check		
Material		2:1	
Stainless Steel			



# Top Twenty Albums of the '70s

The seventies was a rich and eclectic time for popular music, and spawned some genuinely innovative and influential records. Also, The Bay City Rollers. In this article, Ricky Stratocaster, professor of twangology at the Rickenbacker Institute of Awesome Licks in Montreux, counts down the decade's twenty most notable albums.



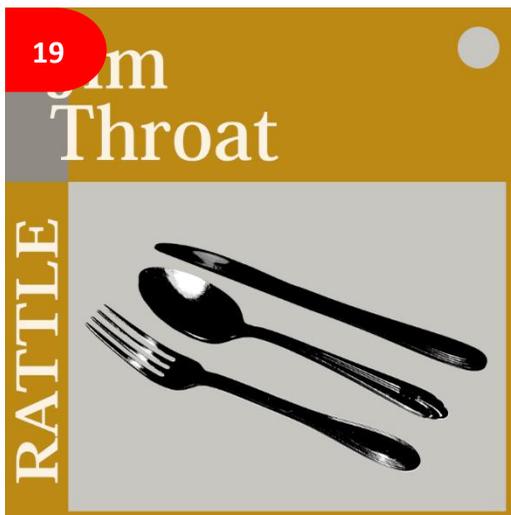
## Mine's a Pint

1977

### The Wankels

Mention the name The Wankels these days and most people will think of their radio-friendly 1979 hit "Smartie Party", not least because of its subsequent use in an early nineties pizza commercial. It's easy to forget that when they burst onto the scene in 1974, the band was at the forefront of the burgeoning punk scene. Indeed, questions were asked in parliament after drummer Arlo Spume bared his backside on *Nationwide*, and he hit the news again the following week when police raided his flat and seized his trousers.

Such antics generated plenty of publicity, but it wasn't until the release of *Mine's a Pint* in 1977 that serious critics started to sit up and take notice. The twelve tracks were recorded in a single session and between them they document a fight that broke out in the studio in which two of the band and the engineer were hospitalised. The anniversary box set, released in 2017, contains remastered swearing, three extra punches and a kick in the teeth.



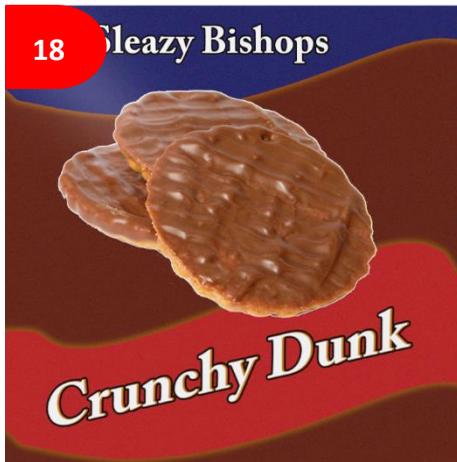
## Rattle

1979

### Jim Throat

Seen as one of the most experimental recordings of his career, 1979's *Rattle* sees the avant-garde composer pushing the boundaries of his art by dropping various items of cutlery down a laundry chute. Side one consists of a twenty-minute recording entitled "Spoons", a raucous cacophony of sound that challenges the listener to find meaning in an avalanche of discordant rhythms and dissonant percussion. Side two consists of several shorter pieces, including the playful and upbeat "Knives" and the soulful and often haunting "Forks".

In essence, what Throat is doing with this album is asking his listeners a series of searching questions: Is this music? he asks. Is this art? Is this of any value whatsoever, or is it just a load of pretentious kak? Listeners will inevitably form their own opinions.



## Crunchy Dunk

1972

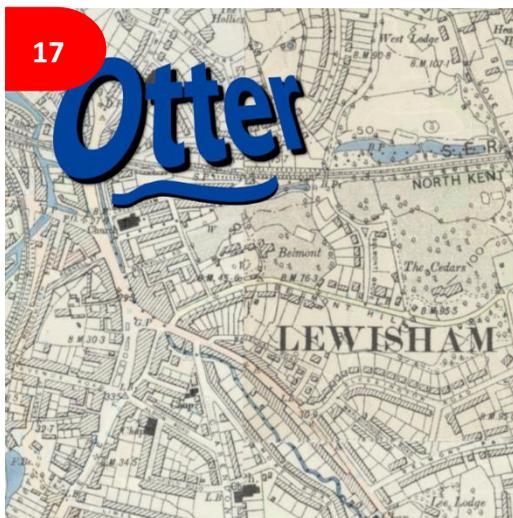
### The Sleazy Bishops

It's a curious fact that *Crunchy Dunk* is considered one of the greatest albums of the seventies, despite the fact that no one heard it until 1993. Art-rock outfit The Sleazy Bishops always took an experimental approach to their releases - for instance, readers will remember that their debut album was square and had no hole in the

middle. For *Crunchy Dunk*, released in 1972, they opted to have one side covered in biscuit and the other liberally coated in milk chocolate. It was, in effect, a 12-inch chocolate digestive and was, consequently, completely unplayable.

It has been available in other formats of course - as an 8-track wafer and, later, as a set of Jaffa Cakes that proved to be completely incompatible with a MiniDisc player. But it wasn't until the CD release that people were able to listen to it, and reviewers were finally able to conclude that it was "ok".

It's currently available on most streaming platforms, where the magic and inventiveness of a physical medium is sadly unable to flourish, but serious collectors will be pleased to know that you can still get it on a limited-edition USB custard cream.



## Midnight in Lewisham

1973

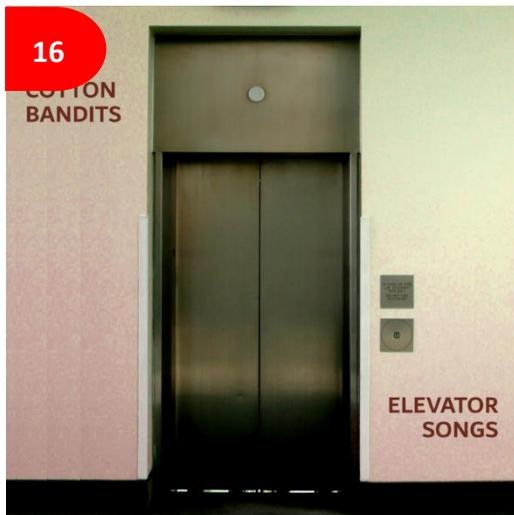
### Otter

Before they became the stadium-filling rock behemoths we know today, Otter cut their teeth as a prog-rock band, and there are many who still bemoan the commercialism of their current incarnation. Certainly, it's difficult to imagine the band putting out an album like *Midnight in Lewisham* today. The record takes us through the darkened streets of the borough, revealing a hidden world of pixies and goblins and all the usual nonsense that habitually infests these kinds of albums.

The record is most famous for the 33-minute suite that occupies the entirety of side two, and includes an ambitious operatic passage, a triangle solo and a section featuring nothing but flutes and football whistles. This presented something of a technical problem, since the maximum playing time of an LP record is roughly 22 minutes per side. The band refused to allow the track to be edited - lead singer Rob Baslow famously proclaimed that he was not prepared to countenance the loss of a single whistle - and their unwillingness to compromise led to the first - and, so far, only - commercial release of a 15-inch LP.

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16



## Elevator Songs

1971

### The Cotton Bandits

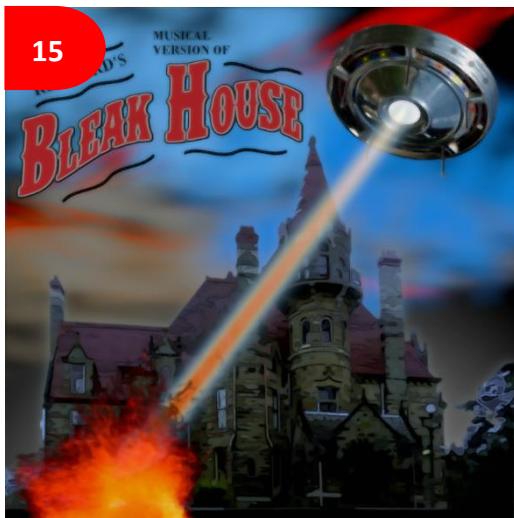
Very few successful bands from the sixties survived into the following decade, and despite the occasional reunion tour and radio hit, The Cotton Bandits' glory days were very much behind them by the time the glam and glitz of the seventies assailed our delicate sensibilities. 1971's *Elevator Songs* was their final burst of greatness.

Written and recorded in just eight hours while all four members of the group were trapped in an elevator, the album sounds stark and spare, played as it was using makeshift instruments fashioned out of objects found in the band's pockets, and recorded using a single

microphone lowered down the lift shaft by a recording engineer. The moody two-minute paper-and-comb intro on the opening track sets the tone for the rest of the record, and the spoons solo on side two is really the only uplifting part of what is essentially a rather bleak and claustrophobic set.

Ironically, the band were only in the building to sign the papers that would dissolve their business partnership. Instead, they decided not to split up and went on tour with their new album, playing the whole set from inside a seven-foot-square metal box set up in the centre of the stage.

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## Reg Ford's Musical Version of Bleak House

1978

### Reg Ford

Reg Ford made his name in publishing before he embarked on a music career, writing a number of extremely well-received Haynes Manuals. *Morris Marina 1700*, *Ford Cortina Mk IV* and *Triumph Dolomite 1854cc-1998cc* were all bestsellers, and *Mini 1275cc* was made into a film starring Michael Caine. But he had long nurtured an ambition to write, arrange and produce a musical version of a great Victorian novel, an objective that finally came to fruition in the shape of this 1978 double album.

Narrated by Roy Kinnear, after Richard Burton turned the gig down, the album features a stellar cast including Les McKeown from The Bay City Rollers as Mr Tulkinghorn, Suzi Quatro as Esther Summerson and Christopher Biggins as Lady Dedlock. Originally the album was to have included Richard Beckinsale as Little Nell and the lead singer from Uriah Heep as Uriah Heep, until it was pointed out to Ford that neither character actually appears in *Bleak House*.

One of the biggest selling albums of the decade, the record spawned the hit single "Dedlock Holiday". Thank you.



14

## BBC Sound Effects Volume 6 1977

### The BBC Radiophonic Workshop

This is the sixth volume in the increasingly avant-garde collection of bangs, whistles, pops, thuds and clip-clops produced by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. Ostensibly produced to provide sound effects for the corporation's tv and radio output, interest was so great that the tracks for *Volume 6* were produced specifically for this release.

The Workshop toured the album later that year, playing to ecstatic audiences in venues all over the country, although some shows had to be cancelled following the theft of their coconut shells.

An extended anniversary edition was released in 2007, which added three extra crashes, two splats and a strange, unnerving hum.

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13

## Jumbling Along 1976

### The Jumblies

These days, composer and producer Sir Patrick Hat lives in a castle made of money, bought with the proceeds from a string of highly successful West End musicals, and he doesn't care to be reminded that he was once a Jumbly.

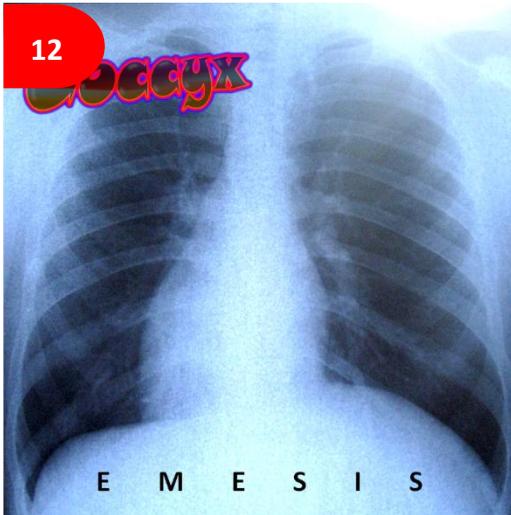
Inspired by the children's animation, which in turn was based on the popular but unlikely children's books written by E.M. Forster, *The Jumblies* scored seven top ten hits including "Super Jumbly", "Jumbling Happy Christmas" and "A Room with a Jumbly".

Long before Sir Patrick was being chauffeured around in a Rolls Royce made of caviar and gold bars, he was dressing up in a Jumbly costume and miming his latest single on *Top of the Pops*.

Despite the infantile nature of the lyrics and the fun-fur nightmare design of the Jumblies, Sir Patrick's obvious talent as a songwriter and arranger shone through, and nowhere is this more evident than on the 1976 release *Jumbling Along*, on which every track is a masterpiece of composition, and only slightly let down by the fact that lyrically they amount to nothing more than a lot of bollocks about Jumblies.

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12



## Emesis

1978

### Coccyx

Formed in 1978, Coccyx were a punk outfit who performed in surgeons' gowns and blood-stained doctors' coats - not surprising when you consider that they were penniless medical students.

When a BBC interviewer asked bassist Grahame Palmer what first attracted him to a career in medicine, he replied that it would allow him to stick his finger up strangers' bums, no questions asked. "Hopefully, becoming a successful pop star will permit me the same privileges," he added. "But without having to study for ten years first." Four people in Chiswick were deeply

offended by this comment, one of them wrote a letter and the next day the story was on the front cover of every newspaper.

Inevitably, this led to a huge interest in their first (and only) album, which was then due for imminent release. However, EMI got cold feet as a result of Palmer's comments and pulled the release from their schedules. Instead, the band took the record to Virgin, who agreed to put the album out the following month. Once again it was dropped at the last minute when someone pointed out that much of the Latin terminology used in the lyrics was, whilst medically accurate, thoroughly disgusting. The band then took the record to Chrysalis, and again things were looking good only for the release to be cancelled at the eleventh hour. In total, *Emesis* went through seven record companies, always with the same result. In the end it was accidentally released by Vertigo for three hours one Tuesday afternoon in November 1978, which is why copies of the album are so hard to find today.

11



## Leatherneck

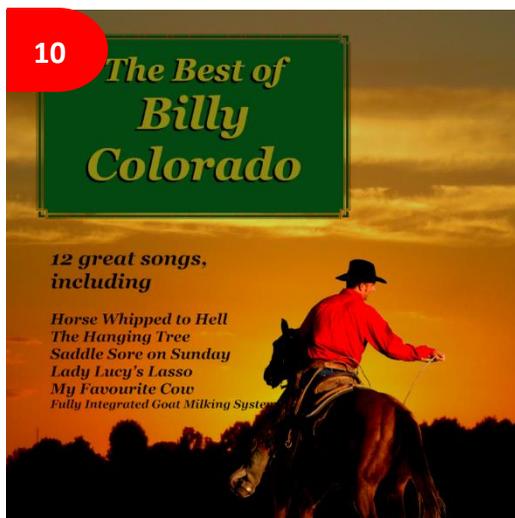
1975

### Kirk Dixie

He horrified parents in the fifties, but Kirk Dixie was everything that was great about rock and roll, and everything that was not so great about personal hygiene. He went on to sell more records in the sixties than everyone else called Kirk put together, and enjoyed a staggeringly prolific film career, regularly releasing up to three movies a week.

By the seventies, however, he was a fat mess, addicted to marmalade and about as culturally relevant as a bucket of frogs. All of which makes his 1975 comeback album, *Leatherneck*, so very remarkable. Recorded live in front

of a specially uninvited audience, the record is very much a return to his roots, giving us a late career glimpse of the real man behind the blubber. Sadly, just two years later, he was found dead after choking on a combine harvester.



## The Best of Billy Colorado

1973

### Billy Colorado

Country star Billy Colorado only ever released one album, and this is it, so it is at least technically correct to label this collection of songs a "Best of." Country and western was big in the seventies - country has seen something of a resurgence in recent years, although no one really knows what became of western.

Of course, these days songs about cowboys and buffalo and wide open prairies seem naïve and offensive but back then they were only gauche and belligerent, and quite often astonishingly misanthropic. *The Best of Billy Colorado* is the best or the worst of the bunch, depending on your viewpoint.

Whatever your preference, there's no denying that it conjures up an authentic atmosphere of rural America in all its sensory glory, so much so that initial pressings came with a free bucket of horseshit.

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## Too Much Funk

1976

### The Basildon Groove Project

*Too Much Funk* came about as the result of a bet, in which the group was challenged to see how much funk it was possible to squeeze onto one record. In the process they had to come up with a brand-new recording process, taping each track in dedicated funk-resistant booths.

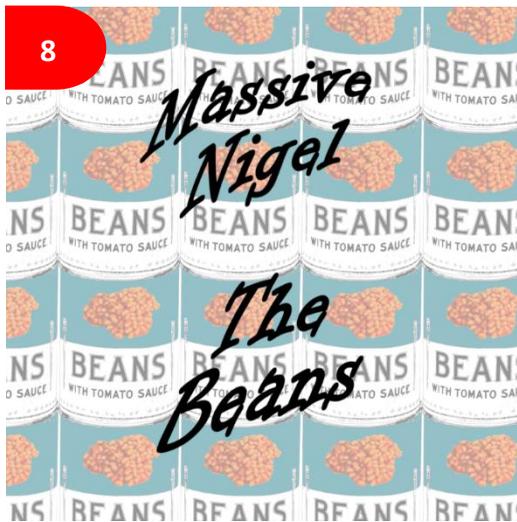
They also developed a new kind of vinyl with polymers that could handle extreme levels of funkiness. The special funk-proof sleeve prevented accidental funk leakage and was adorned with a big red sticker bearing the warning 'Caution: Funk'.

Questions were asked in Parliament and resulted in the Hazardous Funk Storage and Handling Act 1977, which required anyone purchasing or playing the record to obtain a funk licence.

Of course, these days anyone can buy funk over the counter at most chemists, and such restrictions seem excessive.

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8



## The Beans

1979

### Massive Nigel

"Which one's Nigel?" was the question always quivering on the lips of journalists whenever the group embarked on a press tour. Bassist Robert Rissolle grew tired of explaining that "Massive Nigel" was actually the name of the band, and none of its members actually went by that name. This, and his growing weariness with touring, resulted in his withdrawal from public contact and inspired the rock opera *The Beans*, a sprawling double album that tells the story of fictional rock star Nigel, who shuns celebrity, retreats to his hotel room and gorges himself on baked beans.

On their subsequent tour, the group performed the album in its entirety while a wall of baked bean tins was gradually erected at the front of the stage. By the end of the show, the band were entirely hidden from view. In retrospect, Rissolle's obsession with beans should have been obvious all along, and is reflected in some of the group's album titles, including *A Saucerful of Beans*, *Dark Side of the Bean* and the live album *Pulse*.

7



## Live Outside Shea Stadium

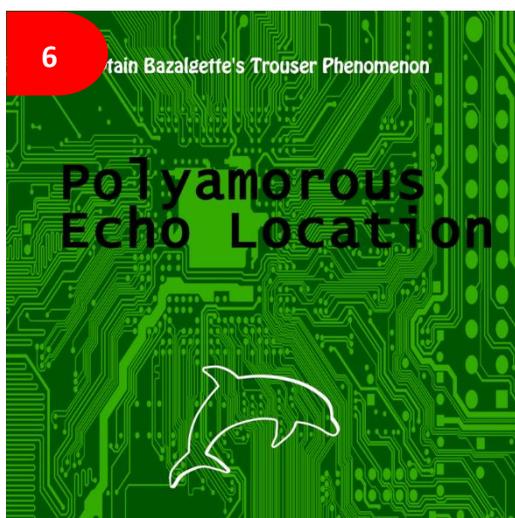
1976

### Fats Porker

When Rod Stewart had a top ten hit with a cover of Fat's Porker's debut single "Turkey Neck Stomp" it sparked renewed interest in the legendary blues singer's back catalogue. A flurry of reissues followed, along with this previously unissued recording of a performance from 1965, busking to the crowds outside Shea Stadium as they queued to watch The Beatles. The sound quality is patchy, as you would expect, and is peppered with the shrieks and screams of teenage girls convinced that they'd just caught a glimpse of George McCartney or Ringo Lennon. But Porker's performance shines through as he treats a sadly unappreciative audience to some of his

early hits, and there is a genuine depth of emotion when he breaks off to ask for change.

Unfortunately, Porker would not see a penny from the release of this record because of a dubious management deal he'd signed two decades earlier. Naturally, he attempted to take legal action, but the complexity of applicable contract law meant that he had to sue himself. It didn't go well and he ended up losing rather badly.



## Polyamorous Echo Location

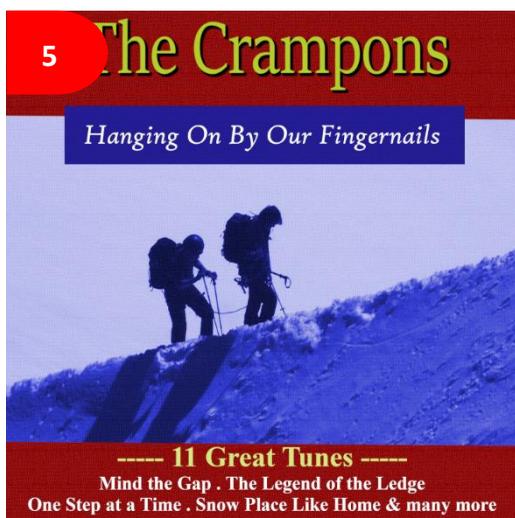
1976

### Captain Bazalgette's Trouser Phenomenon

The Trousers, as their fans never call them, must hold the record for the greatest number of breakups and reformations in the history of music, often splitting up then getting back together on the same day.

*Polyamorous Echo Location* was released at a time when the band were not a going concern, and the album came about as a direct outcome of their record company's rapacious demands for fresh product.

It was spliced together from outtakes, demos, studio chatter and answering machine messages, and it proved to be a massive hit. So much so that the band returned to the studio to record fresh material, although critics felt that the resulting album was a disappointing follow-up to this collection of outtakes.



## Hanging on by Our Fingernails

1973

### The Crampons

Popular mountaineering folk singers The Crampons had been together for thirty years by the time they released *Hanging on by Our Fingernails*, their eighteenth studio album. For their partnership to have survived, there clearly must have been a very strong connection between the duo - a bond which served them equally well in the studio as it did halfway up a mountain.

By the early seventies, The Crampons were easily the biggest folk singing mountaineers in the business, helped in no small measure by the fact that their nearest competition, The Ice Picks, had tragically fallen off K2 the previous year whilst recording a live album.

The Crampons' success meant that their record company were keen to accede to their requests, so when the group asked that the studio be decked out to resemble an Alpine slope, complete with fir trees, they not only complied but threw in a cable car as well. And it was money well spent, since the resulting album is starkly atmospheric and produced the singles "Mind the Gap" and the seasonal number one "Abseiling Home for Christmas".



## Reg Varney's Cockney Knees-Up

1972

### Reg Varney and his Cockney Mates

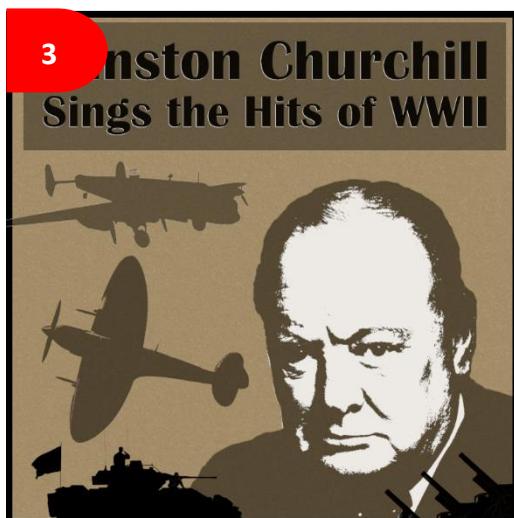
It's time to take a ball and chalk down to the rub-a-dub-dub and gather round the old Joanna to belt out some traditional cockney tunes. In 1972, Varney was starring in the hit ITV sitcom *On the Buses*, and this singalong collection was an attempt to cash in.

For copyright reasons, Varney was not allowed to record under his character name, or to reference the show in any way. To make absolutely certain that there was no infringement, London Weekend Television insisted that

the album bear a sticker saying "This record is not affiliated with the TV programme *On the Buses*". London Weekend also ran a national poster campaign, at its own expense, to inform people that it was not an officially licensed tie-in. They scored a massive own goal in the process.

All this free advertising meant that the record was a huge hit, with many customers referring to it as "The *On the Buses* album".

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## Winston Churchill Sings the Hits of WWII

1974

### Winston Churchill

Originally recorded in 1944 to lift the spirits of a war-weary nation, this record was shelved for reasons of national security, and all existing copies were sealed in a disused slate mine in Wales. Thirty years later, the UK was in the grip of the three-day week, supplies of vinyl were in short supply and record store shelves were empty. A national emergency, in fact - time to break out the emergency Churchill.

Once the record was on sale, it became apparent why it had taken so long to see the light of day. Winston Churchill warbling, grunting and belching his way through songs like "Goodnight Sweetheart", "We'll Meet Again" and "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" was something that the record-buying public of 1944 would not have been prepared for.

To be fair, the record-buying public of 1974 were no better off, but because there was nothing else to spend their money on, the album soared to the top of the charts.

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## Gloria Glamor

1979

### Hot Silk

Just as they say that everyone has a novel in them, it seemed that every established mainstream artist in the seventies had a disco album in them. Gloria Glamor's *Hot Silk* is by no means the worst example, thanks to the extraordinary team of talented producers, songwriters, musicians and singers that were employed to bring this album to life.

Indeed Glamor's meteoric rise from lead singer of sixties Motown group The Glamors to legendary diva meant that by this point she was far too famous to appear on her own records. Rumours abound that she did swing by the

studio during the penultimate mixing session, but her input is not apparent on the final release and, all things considered, that's probably not a bad thing.



## Drop the Hot Flip Flop

1976

### The Fly By Night Jazz Merchants

The Merchants were always more of a concept than a band, composed as they were of an ever-changing line-up of musicians moonlighting from their day jobs in other groups. They released seven albums during the decade, featuring contributions from members of Genesis, The Faces, Steeleye Span, The Wombles, The Bay City Rollers and The Metropolitan Police Choir. Their open-door policy extended to live performances, where anyone who felt like it was invited to join them on stage, and as a result it was often difficult to see where the band ended and the audience began.

*Drop the Hot Flip Flop* was their fourth album and is widely considered their best, since what it lacks in structure and cohesion, it more than makes up for with Tom Jones on penny whistle and Alan Bennett on kazoo.

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Professor's Ricky Stratocaster's latest book, *The 100 Greatest Songs Featuring Farm Animals in the Lyrics*, is available now in most dirty bookshops, and would make a simply smashing Christmas present.

# The Shepton Bassett Evening Globe

FULLY INTEGRATED GOAT MILKING SYSTEM pages 11-24

## Rare Fabergé Sausage Auctioned



Coming up for auction this month is what is believed to be the only known example of a Fabergé Sausage. Created for Nicholas II in 1906 by Peter Carl Fabergé, the Fabergé Sausage was believed lost for many years, until 1998 when it was rediscovered hidden under the floorboards of a former Austrian gravy factory. Modelled on a traditional peasant pork sausage, as eaten in the Urals and parts of Siberia, the Fabergé sausage is an enamelled tube, approximately four inches in length, encrusted with jewels and delicately inlaid with silver.

Fabergé, of course, is better known for creating a series of fabulously jewelled eggs for the Russian royal family, but he did branch out into other foodstuffs. Currently on display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum is a rasher of bacon, delicately streaked with filigree strands of gold and studded with rubies, which Fabergé created in 1899. There is also documentation supporting the creation of a Fabergé tomato and a Fabergé slice of fried bread. These pieces have yet to surface, but many researchers believe that there is a whole fried breakfast out there, just waiting to be unearthed.

## Man Takes Out Restraining Order on Himself

Jacob Bullsmoor has achieved a legal first by becoming the first man to take out a restraining order on himself. Speaking outside the courtroom shortly after the judge granted the historic order, Mr Bullsmoor said that he was greatly relieved, and he hoped that it had finally brought to an end an extremely distressing chapter in his life.

"It's hard to pinpoint when it all began," he explained to journalists. "I think it was about eight or nine years ago that I first started to see this guy hanging around. It was unnerving: I just kept getting glimpses of him out of the corner of my eye - reflected in a plate glass window, a car windscreen, a mirror. One time, in

a restaurant, I even caught sight of his hideous, distorted features in a spoon. It was chilling, I can tell you."

Mr Bullsmoor became increasingly convinced that he was being stalked and made a complaint to the police. At the station they went through a collection of mugshots to see if he could identify the man, but he drew a blank. It was only when he caught sight of his own face in a CCTV monitor that he realised the awful truth that he had been harassing himself.

"Unfortunately, the police said that they couldn't do anything about it," Bullsmoor said. "They told me that as we were technically part of the same household, this was a domestic

dispute and therefore they couldn't touch it. I thought they were a bit too quick to wash their hands of it, but what can you do? They suggested that I try to deal with this personally, on a one-to-one basis, and so one day I persuaded myself to sit down and talk it through. Well, I put my case as best as I could, said that I felt intimidated and uncomfortable, and at first I seemed to respond to myself pretty well. But then it all fell apart."

Ultimately, Mr Bullsmoor found that he couldn't see eye-to-eye with himself. He tried counselling, but during the session things got a little heated and he ended up angrily throwing a vase at himself. In desperation, he began a private legal action. It was expected that

the case, in which he was simultaneously plaintiff and respondent, would be thrown out of court. However, the judge, Justice Henry Malfeasance, surprised everyone by granting the restraining order, saying in his summing up that it had been a long hard day and he didn't care anymore.

This decision means that Mr Bullsmoor is not lawfully allowed to be within three miles of himself, which is why he was arrested ten minutes after leaving the court. He has now been charged with breaching the order, and both of him are due to appear before the magistrate next Tuesday.

## Endangered Shelving

Scientists confidently predict that in just twenty years' time, shelves will have been completely phased out in western cultures as we evolve into a society where most physical 'stuff' has been replaced by virtual objects and downloadable content. Entertainment media such as CDs, books and 8-track cartridges are already almost extinct, but the prediction runs that, except in all but the most affluent of households, the same will be true of pretty much everything else. For example, there will no longer be a need to store food items, as these will either be piped directly into the home, or 3d-printed as and when required. Home furnishing will be very different, with the introduction of holographic furniture and virtual wallpaper. This will not only be cheaper, but it has the advantage that you can change the look of your living room at the touch of a button. Experts also say that pets will be imaginary, reducing the need for shelving to store tins of cat meat and doggy treats.

Whilst the loss of shelving will no doubt bring some positive consequences, it sadly also means the loss of key DIY skills. The really worrying prospect is that people will lose the ability to use shelves, which could have dire repercussions for survivors of a nightmare alien zombie apocalypse.

Apocalypses aside, the post-shelf world is going to be a very different place: a place in which the only shelves that most people will likely see will be in museums, although the chances are that there will be nothing displayed on them.



# Neighbor Nightmares

## THE MOVIE

**This season's** most anticipated new release at the cinema seems an unlikely contender. *Neighbor Nightmares: The Movie* is based on an episode of the moderately popular UK daytime show. The show, which chronicles the disputes and niggles between neighbouring homeowners, seems an unusual starting point for a blockbuster, but as the movie's executive producer, Marvin Concrete, explains, all the ingredients are there.

"Coupla years ago, I was over in the UK promoting the new Bruce Stallone movie, and I was in my hotel room flicking through the channels on the TV. Guess I was a little bored. I'd already been through the minibar, eaten all the soap, that kinda thing. Well, I wound up watching this show about bad neighbours, and boy I was hooked! It had everything: drama, tension, boundary disputes,

planning permission applications. It had the lot! And it was a true story, which always plays well with audiences."

hour episode, we could go the extra distance and turn it into a full length feature," Marvin explains. "Listen, I've been in this business a helluva long time, and you get a



**THE FILM IS BASED ON THE POPULAR CHANNEL 5 TV PROGRAMME.**

The particular episode that caught Marvin's attention, and the one on which the movie is loosely based, concerns a homeowner called Dennis Pseudonym, a dispute about a shared drive, the placing of some flowerbeds and a nightmare neighbour called Henry Asbestos, who "looked at him funny" on at least three occasions. Pretty thin stuff, you might think, but for Marvin Concrete that was part of the appeal.

"I figured that if the TV guys could spin this story out to a half

feel for these things. I know when I've got a hit on my hands, and right there in that hotel room, I knew for certain. I had that familiar fluttering in the pit of my stomach, the twitching fingers, the restless excitability that made me pick up the phone straight away and get the ball rolling. Of course, I'd eaten a helluva lot of soap by then."

Helming the project is director Brian De Nom-de-Plume, a safe pair of hands who has previously scored hits with adaptations of reality shows, including *Australian Border Cops*, *Dog Patrol* and *Finnish Big Brother*. He is keen to defend the movie against criticisms



**MRS ASBESTOS'S GNOMES IN HAPPIER DAYS.**



***THE FLOWERBED WAS APPROXIMATELY 3 INCHES TOO FAR TO THE LEFT.***

that it strays from the absolute truth.

"We're making movies here," he explains. "We're asking people to sit in a theatre for two hours and watch this story. That's a big ask so we've got to deliver the goods. And if that means throwing in a car chase here, or a love scene there, then that's what we gotta do. Take the council planning meeting scene. Now, in real life, Dennis Pseudonym did not burst in there with a semi-automatic rifle, shoot up the place and then deliver an impassioned speech as the flaming remnants of the council flag fluttered down around his ears. In real life, I gather that that sort of thing rarely happens. In fact, I don't believe the council has a flag.

"Then there's the love scene between the Mrs Pseudonym and the borough surveyor. I guess I can't say too much about that at the moment, as the borough surveyor is currently taking legal action against us, but whether there is any truth in it or not, you've got to admit that it's a beautifully shot scene, with the candlelight gleaming on the surveyor's buttocks and everything. We should get an Oscar for that."

Also hotly tipped for an Academy Award is Meryl Streep, who plays

the tortured and conflicted Mrs Asbestos. As the wife of the film's main villain, she must display solidarity with her husband's cause, despite knowing that he is ultimately in the wrong. Matters are further confused by her feelings for Mr Pseudonym, and her breakdown after her garden gnomes are smashed is perhaps the highlight of Streep's career. Her death scene, when she is so cruelly and unexpectedly eaten by a tiger,



***THE BOROUGH SURVEYOR IS THREATENING LEGAL ACTION.***

provides one of the movie's most poignant moments.

Nevertheless, at a press screening, it was the chemistry between the two male protagonists that got critics excited. Tom Hanks puts in a solid performance as Mr Pseudonym, an ordinary guy wrapped up in legal red tape driven to extraordinary lengths by council planning regulations. Meanwhile, Gary Oldman's turn as Mr Asbestos captures the intensity of a man consumed by obsession, so totally convinced that he is in the right about his ownership of a communal thoroughfare that he is prepared to go to extraordinary lengths.

It is perhaps fitting that the scene that has garnered the most praise was not a Hollywood invention, but something that happened in real life: the scene when Henry Asbestos looks at Dennis Pseudonym funny. Word is that Oldman and Hanks workshopped that scene for several weeks, and though it amounts to just a few seconds of screen time, it is a moment that leaves an indelible imprint on audiences. Indeed, when he was asked about it at a recent screening, the real-life Dennis Pseudonym reportedly said that it "brought back some unpleasant memories." You can't really hope for a better recommendation than that.

RIPOFF PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A CONCRETE FILMS PRODUCTION A FILM BY BRIAN NOM-DE-PLUME BASED ON THE CHANNEL 5 TV PROGRAM NIGHTMARE NEIGHBORS: THE MOVIE TOM HANKS GARY OLDMAN MERYL STREEP THE MAN FROM THE COUNCIL SCREENPLAY BY NORMAN HUDIS PRODUCED BY ACCIDENT

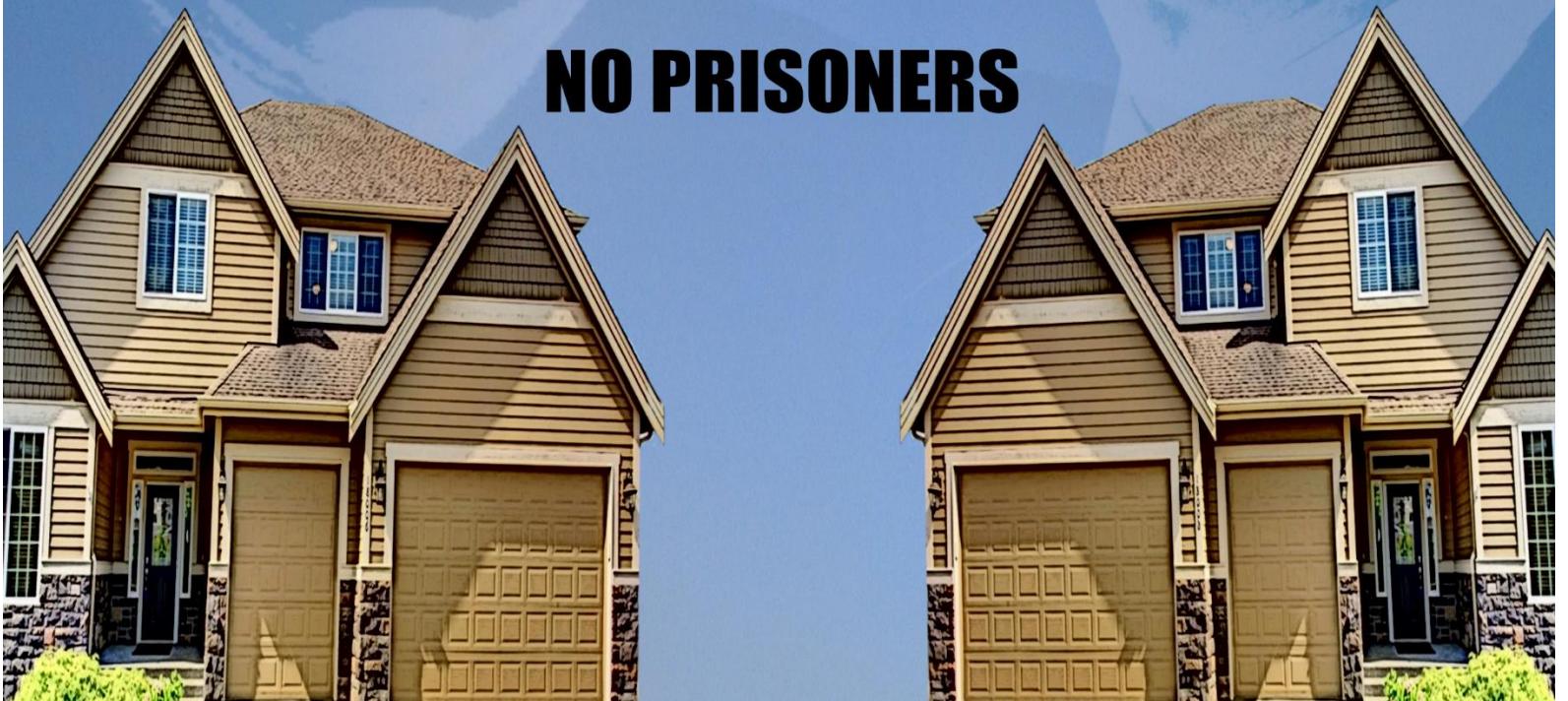
HANKS

OLDMAN

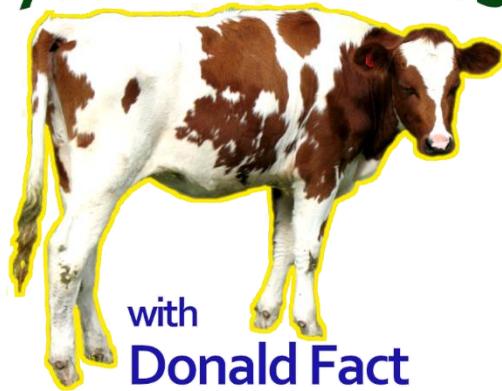
# Neighbor Nightmares

**THE MOVIE**

**TWO MEN  
ONE DRIVE  
NO PRISONERS**



# All About Cows

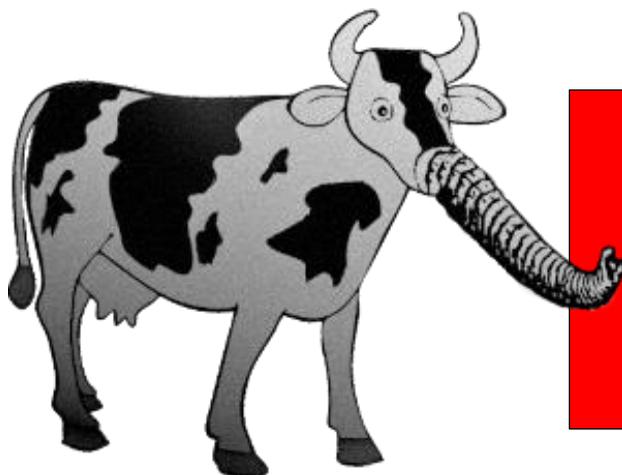


Hi kids! As this year is the official Year of the Cow, we've got a super *It's A Fact Cow* Special for you. Yes that's right, cows! Cows are wonderful creatures, and I have many many many facts about them in my fact bag, so let's delve deep as we explore the rich and factolicious world of the cow.

You might think that cow's udders are connected to a single milk reservoir, like a hot water tank, but they're not. There are actually four separate compartments, like a four-pack of yummy raspberry yoghurt. This means that if they are milked unevenly, they can overbalance, and this is a big problem. However, vets can fix the problem by attaching weights to one side of the cow, therefore rebalancing it.



Following the beef wars of 1983, many cows were decommissioned. These are now parked in a vast "boneyard" in Nevada, which is visible from the air. Although most of these cows have had their teeth removed, theoretically they could be restored to working order and put back into service.



A cow's trunk is an amazingly versatile organ. They can use it to wash themselves, peel bananas, climb trees and even operate a telephone. You are probably thinking to yourself that cows don't have trunks. You're thinking: I have seen many cows, but I have never ever noticed that any of them had a trunk, and I think that I would be likely to spot that. Well, it's a good thing that I am here to set you straight about these things.

The Mongolian Tunnelling Cow evolved to escape the baking heat of its environment by building huge underground warrens. Vast herds of these animals live underground and at night the plains echo to the muffled sound of their subterranean mooing. For many years they have lived undisturbed, but recently mankind has started to encroach on their habitat. Sadly, it seems that man and cow cannot coexist in harmony as the bovine tunnels undermine infrastructure and damage foundations. There are an increasing number of reports of people walking along only for the ground to give way below them. The next thing they know, they are flat on their backs at the bottom of a hole, surrounded by startled cattle and wondering what the smell is.



More mooing

The Revolving Cows of El Salvador were first reported by Spanish invaders in the sixteenth century, although fossil evidence suggests that they date back to the Cambrian era. Legend has it that they could revolve at speeds of up to four hundred revolutions per minute without getting dizzy. Now widely believed to be extinct, the last known example died out in 1925, although some cow-ologists believe that isolated herds may survive. Efforts to track down any extant specimens have recently been renewed as it is believed that they may provide an alternative to wind turbines as a cheap and environmentally friendly method of producing energy.

You may already know that cows can predict the weather. If you see cows lying down in a field, then it means it's going to rain. If you see them sheltering beneath a tree, then snow is on its way. And if you see them going into Boots to buy suntan lotion and a new pair of shades, then we can expect a blisteringly good summer. In fact, cows are so good at predicting the weather that many of them are employed by the Met Office, and in 1988 a cow called Flossie McCaskill presented the regional forecast on BBC Look East.



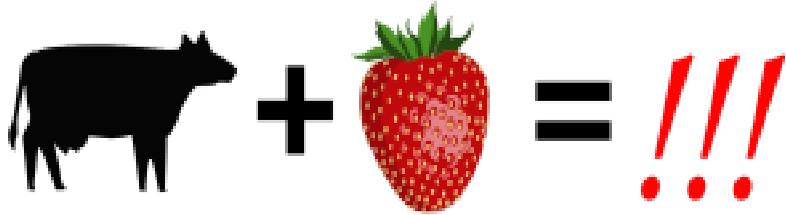
Most cows are herbivores, meaning that they eat plants like grass, moss and chips. But there is one species that is carnivorous: the South American Leaping Cow dwells in the leafy canopy of the Amazonian rainforest, where it can cover great distances by hurling itself from tree to tree. It is not a particularly graceful or stealthy animal, and the hectic manner in which it crashes through the foliage means that it is rarely able to creep up on its prey unnoticed. But its great advantage is the way it can fall on you from a great height, and the small mammals and reptiles on which it feeds rarely know what has hit them.

Cows can bear grudges, and if you don't believe me, just ask Cornelius Trough of 42 Paddock Hill, Cirencester. He has been harassed by a cow called Jennifer Collins for the past twenty years. It repeatedly leaves piles of manure outside his front door, it phones him in the middle of the night and makes low, ominous threats, and it has shared hurtful and malicious rumours about him on its WhatsApp group. Mr Trough does not know what he has done to offend it, and he cannot take any legal action against it because his lawyer doesn't know what field to serve the court papers to.

Cows originated in Turkey. But you can't get turkeys from cows. Isn't nature strange?

The song "Build Me Up Buttercup" was written by Mike d'Abo about a cow that used to follow him home from school. Mike and the cow would often play football together, make model aeroplanes and go on adventures, and the cow would sometimes help Mike with his homework. On one occasion, the cow alerted the authorities when Mike fell down a mine shaft. However, their friendship was brought to a premature end when the cow was arrested for tax evasion and sentenced to ten years in a high security bovine detention shed.

You can't cross a cow with a strawberry and get strawberry-flavoured milk. We know this because scientists have tried. It didn't work, it was very messy and it was highly distressing for the cow.



The song 'The Size of a Cow' by The Wonderstuff is about Miles Hunt's attempt to get the cow accepted as a standard unit of measurement by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures. The bid ultimately failed, and the Bureau instead went with the Metric Pig.

The plural of 'cow' is not 'cowz', but there is a man who works in the shoe shop round the corner from our office who thinks that it should be. Silly man.

The position of a cow's ears can tell you how it's feeling. If the ears are angled backwards, it means the cow is relaxed. If the ears are pointing forward, it means the cow is angry or upset. And if the ears are on its arse, it means the cow is worried about being late for a forthcoming dental appointment.

Cows cannot ride bikes. Neither can the man who works in the shoe shop round the corner from our office.

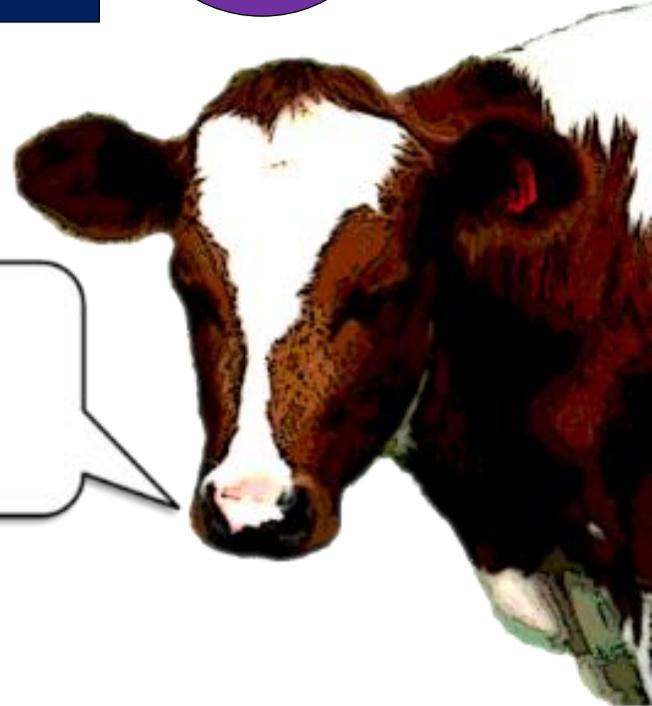
Cows are widely blamed for significantly contributing to global warming. In truth, their carbon footprint is quite small because they always recycle and hardly ever fly first class.

Cows usually give birth to only one calf, although they have four udders. This is in case they get a puncture.

The most fun you can have with a cow is on Tuesday.

In the USA, cows live in all fifty states. In Europe they only live in one state: solid.

Even more mooing. I can do duck impressions too, if you're interested? No? Suit yourself.



# BREAKING: A THING HAS HAPPENED

*i. "...as you join us news is breaking..."*

*We've cut to a news studio. The anchor looks up, frowning.*

**Graham Eckersley:** Hello and apologies for interrupting *Celebrity Antique Renovation Wars* but as you join us news is breaking that a thing has happened. At present it has

joining us on this very momentous occasion.

**Hugh Proctor:** My pleasure, Graham.

**Eckersley:** I used the word 'momentous' there - do you think that's an accurate description of the thing that has happened?

*Chorus*

**Eckersley:** You called it a 'situation'. Do you think that that is a fair description of this thing?

**Proctor:** Time will tell, of course - situation... incident... occasion.

Whatever this thing turns out to be, I'm sure that it will have a profound impact on something else. In fact, comparisons are already being drawn with a thing that happened in 2017, and I'm sure you remember the impact that thing had at the time and, indeed, continues to have now.

**Eckersley:** Absolutely, Hugh. And let me assure everyone watching at home that, like then, we will continue to bring you all the news that happens, as it happens, and, indeed, *if* it happens. For now though, we have a special report from Sally Crompton. She was out and about in Loughborough earlier on, asking people for their opinions.

*ii. "...madam, can I ask you how you feel..."*

*Cut to pre-recorded report. The reporter looks much too enthusiastic about being in a rainy street in Loughborough*



not been confirmed *what* has happened, *where* it's happened or *who* it has happened to. Reports are still coming in so we're going to stay with this story as it develops, and we'll bring you all the news as it we get it. For the moment, however, we can speak to our special correspondent, Hugh Proctor, who has joined us here in the studio. Hugh, thank you for

**Proctor:** Well, of course, it's very early to say at present, but I think it's likely that this situation is indeed going to prove to be momentous. There is every chance that it could also be critical, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if it turns out to have far-reaching repercussions.

**Sally Crompton:** Madam, can I ask you how you feel about the thing that has happened?

**Miserable Looking Woman:** Well, I think it's terrible. You wouldn't think it could happen in this day and age. They should be locked up.

**Crompton:** I see. Who should be locked up?

**Miserable Looking Woman:** "They" should - all of them. Trust me, start locking people up and this sort of thing wouldn't be a problem.

*Cut.*

**Crompton:** Sir, can I ask, do you have any opinions about why this thing has happened?

**Red Faced Man:** What thing?

**Crompton:** *This* thing.

**Red Faced Man:** Oh, a thing has happened, has it? Doesn't surprise me. Bound to happen, wasn't it? Well, the way I see it is that they voted for it, so they should have to deal with consequences, and good luck to 'em!

*Cut.*

**Crompton:** Excuse me, I'm asking people for their thoughts on this thing that has happened.

**Snooty Woman:** Thing?

**Crompton:** Yes, it's being reported that -

**Snooty Woman:** Oh, I know what's being "reported". I know all about the liberal media and its distorted agenda; the lies, the half-truths and the disinformation. I'll tell you what this 'thing' is - it's *no*

thing. It's *nothing*, that's what it is. Sorry, but we're not going to fall for this scaremongering anymore. Wake up sheeple!

plainspoken, but this level of forthrightness has not been seen in a long time. In fact, I've spoken to experts, and they



iii. "...some forthright opinions there..."

*Back in the studio. Sally Crompton on the screen, smiling in the rain.*

**Eckersley:** Some forthright opinions there. And we can go over live to Sally Crompton now. Sally, some forthright opinions there?

**Crompton:** Yes Graham, those opinions certainly were forthright. And that forthrightness has been typical of many of the opinions of people I've spoken to here in Loughborough.

**Eckersley:** And is that level of forthrightness typical of the people of Loughborough?

**Crompton:** Well certainly the people of Loughborough have a reputation for being

say that Loughborough is heading towards peak forthrightness, which hasn't been seen since the thing that happened in 2017.

**Eckersley:** Food for thought there. Thank you, Sally Crompton in Loughborough, I'm sure we'll come back to you again later. In the meantime, if I could turn again to Hugh Proctor here in the studio. Hugh, Sally mentioned there the thing that happened in 2017. I'm sure there are comparisons to be drawn with the thing that is happening today?

**Proctor:** Indeed there are. At this stage, we're not clear what those comparisons might be, but certainly the 2017 thing had significant impact, and there is every indication that the thing today might be

somewhat similar, if indeed not *very* similar.

**Eckersley:** Significantly similar?

**Proctor:** Well, of course, it's very early to say at present, but I think it's likely that this situation is indeed going to prove to be similarly momentous. There is every chance that it could also be critical, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if it turns out to have far-reaching repercussions.

impact that thing had at the time and, indeed, continues to have now.

**Eckersley:** Absolutely, Hugh. And let me assure everyone watching at home that, like then, we will continue to bring you all the news that happens, as it happens, and, indeed, *if* it happens. Right now, let's go over to our food technology and gymnastics

**Dominic Pigweed:** Indeed I can, Graham, indeed I can. Well, as you can see, this chart sums up the situation very neatly. The x-axis represents time, the y-axis shows the matched volume. Now, you can see that the red line remains constant, whereas the yellow line is constantly fluctuating. Of course, this chart doesn't currently show the impact of the thing that has happened today. We don't yet have that information of course, but we can make certain predictions based on common variables, and on our experience of what happened in 2017. Now watch what happens when I plug that data into our chart. If I just press this button... look, look, look at that! So the green line has appeared now, and it's looped back on itself.



So what does that tell us? Well, to understand it we need to look at this chart here. The red section represents the yellow line, the green section is the number of times that things have happened within the last forty years and the purple section simulates the action of potassium permanganate on aluminium. There is a clear indication here that, given certain factors, and if extended over a period of several hours, the thing that has happened today may very well present a significant obstacle. Back to you, Graham.

*Cut back to anchor.*

**Eckersley:** Thank you, Dominic, most illuminating. Well, Hugh, most illuminating?

### Chorus

**Eckersley:** You called it a 'situation'. Do you think that that is a fair description of this thing?

**Proctor:** Time will tell, of course - situation... incident... occasion. Whatever this thing turns out to be, I'm sure that it will have a profound impact on something else. In fact, comparisons are already being drawn with a thing that happened in 2017, and I'm sure you remember the

correspondent, Dominic Pigweed. Dominic can you give us some background regarding the events that may or may not have taken place today?

*iv. "...this chart behind me sums up the situation very neatly..."*

*Cut to other side of studio. Dominic Pigweed, wild-eyed stare and flailing limbs, getting increasingly frantic about the graphics flashing over the screen behind him.*

**Proctor:** Oh yes, I would say it is most illuminating. I for one feel quite illuminated. Of course, it's still early days for this situation yet.

Chorus

**Eckersley:** You called it a 'situation'. Do you think that that is a fair description of this thing?

**Proctor:** Time will tell, of course - situation... incident... occasion. Whatever this thing turns out to be, I'm sure that it will have a profound impact

happens, and, indeed, *if* it happens. For now, I'm delighted to be able to tell you that we are joined by former royal butler, Andrew Babbacombe. Andrew.

v. "...knowing the royal family as I do..."

*Babbacombe, an excessively coiffured man wallowing in a cloud of his own smugness, sits opposite.*

**Babbacombe:** Thank you, Graham. It's really wonderful to be here on this remarkable day. And, knowing the royal

course, the royal family maintain a dignified distance from their staff.

**Eckersley:** As is only proper.

**Babbacombe:** As is only proper, indeed. But I think I occupied a special position of trust. I remember once that the Prince of Wales asked me to pick up a piece of paper. And of course, I was constantly nipping out to the newsagent's for the Countess of Wessex. So, knowing the royal family as I do, I think I can say that this thing that has happened will have had some impact.

**Eckersley:** I see. Well, of course, we don't know what thing has happened yet, or whether there is any royal connection. Many experts are already equating it with the thing that happened in 2017. There was no direct royal connection there, of course, but perhaps you can tell us what impact the 2017 thing had on the family?

**Babbacombe:** Oh, considerable, most definitely considerable. As you say, there was no royal connection, as such, but the mood within the palace most definitely reflected that of the rest of the nation. Obviously, I wasn't working for the royal family in 2017, but knowing the royal family as I do, I think I can say that there was considerable impact.

**Eckersley:** Andrew Babbacombe, thank you very much for joining us.

**Babbacombe:** Thank you, Graham, it's been a pleasure. And my I say that, knowing the



on something else. In fact, comparisons are already being drawn with a thing that happened in 2017, and I'm sure you remember the impact that thing had at the time and, indeed, continues to have now.

**Eckersley:** Absolutely, Hugh. And let me assure everyone watching at home that, like then, we will continue to bring you all the news that happens, as it

family as I do, I'm sure they are thinking that it is a remarkable day too.

**Eckersley:** Remarkable indeed. You, of course, worked closely with the royal family in 2009 and 2010.

**Babbacombe:** That's right. And again in 2015.

**Eckersley:** So you got to know them quite closely?

**Babbacombe:** Oh yes, I got to know them quite closely. Of

royal family as I do, I'm sure they would say it has been a pleasure as well.

*Eckersley swings back to Proctor.*

**Eckersley:** Considerable impact, Hugh - your thoughts?

**Proctor:** We must be careful not to jump the gun, but it's probably safe to say that whatever this situation turns out to be, its impact may indeed be considerable.

### Chorus

**Eckersley:** You called it a 'situation'. Do you think that that is a fair description of this thing?

**Proctor:** Time will tell, of course - situation... incident... occasion. Whatever this thing turns out to be, I'm sure that it will have a profound impact on something else. In fact, comparisons are already being drawn with a thing that happened in 2017, and I'm sure you remember the impact that thing had at the time and, indeed, continues to have now.

**Eckersley:** Absolutely, Hugh. And let me assure everyone watching at home that, like then, we will continue to bring you all the news that happens, as it happens, and, indeed, *if* it happens. And right now I'm being told that we have some breaking news...

*vi. "...some talk of a van..."*

*Eckersley leans forward with his finger to his earpiece,*

*listening to what the voices in his head are telling him.*

**Eckersley:** ...Yes... yes... yes, we're getting reports now of an incident on the M6, possibly involving a truck, or a bus. There has also been some talk of a van of some description. Well, let's go over once more to Sally Crompton in Loughborough for the reaction there. Sally, what's the reaction there?

**Crompton:** Yes, and that has been one of the things that people have been reacting to. Many Loughborough people, of course, have vans of some description of their own, and this latest development is being viewed with deep interest by the van-owning contingent here in Loughborough.

**Eckersley:** I'm sure it is. Now, we should of course say that



*Loughborough again. Still raining.*

**Crompton:** Well, people are certainly reacting. I spoke to someone just a few moments ago, and he reacted quite noticeably. In fact, unofficial reports are saying that there hasn't been so much reaction here for at least three years, which just goes to show you how reactive the people of Loughborough are.

**Eckersley:** Now, these unconfirmed reports have mentioned the possibility of a van of some description.

Loughborough is some distance from the M6.

**Crompton:** That's right, Graham. Many places are some distance from the M6, and Loughborough is certainly one of them. Even so, I think it's fair to say that the people of Loughborough have an affinity with this motorway, using it to travel to places like Northwich, Warrington and Wigan, often in vans of some description.

**Eckersley:** Of course. Well, as we're speaking, the police have issued a statement to say that the incident on the M6 was a

stray sheep, this has now been safely dealt with without incident, and at this point there is no reason to think that there is any connection between this incident and the thing that has happened. Something more for the people of Loughborough to react to, Sally?

**Compton:** Absolutely. I'm sure there will be plenty or reacting going on in the streets of Loughborough tonight.

*We're back to Proctor in the studio.*

**Eckersley:** Hugh, some interesting developments, there. However, it certainly seems that the sheep incident on the M6 is *not* connected with the thing that has happened. Although I don't suppose we can be absolutely certain at this stage.

**Proctor:** Well, in a situation like this, we certainly can't say for certain that a certain set of circumstances is or is not relevant. It's very much anyone's guess.

#### Chorus

**Eckersley:** You called it a 'situation'. Do you think that that is a fair description of this thing?

**Proctor:** Time will tell, of course - situation... incident... occasion. Whatever this thing turns out to be, I'm sure that it will have a profound impact on something else. In fact, comparisons are already being drawn with a thing that happened in 2017, and I'm sure you remember the

impact that thing had at the time and, indeed, continues to have now.

**Eckersley:** Absolutely, Hugh. And let me assure everyone watching at home that, like then, we will continue to bring you all the news that happens, as it happens, and, indeed, *if* it happens. But what of international reaction? On the line from Washington now, we have Professor Rachel Plimsoll, special adviser to the White House on significant matters. Professor, in your experience, do you think that the thing that has happened could turn out to be a significant matter?

**Eckersley:** Five different levels of significance?

**Plimsoll:** Three different levels of significance, Graham, and two different levels of matters. And, you know Graham, we very much feel that most things that have happened can be categorised in this way.

**Eckersley:** So, you strongly believe that this thing that has happened can be categorised by your system?

**Plimsoll:** Well Graham, very little is known about the thing that has happened yet, and only a complete moron, Graham, would recklessly risk their reputation and their career by rashly making any kind of snap prediction,



vii. "...five different levels of significant matters..."

**Professor Plimsoll:** Hi Graham, great to be speaking to you. Let me begin, Graham, by explaining that over the years we have identified five different levels of significant matters.

Graham, based on the scant information that we have at our disposal at this time. But I would say this is definitely a level three, Graham.

**Eckersley:** Well thank you to Professor Plimsoll in New York, there.

**Plimsoll:** Washington, Graham.

**Eckersley:** Apologies. Thank you, Professor Washington in Graham. Level three, Hugh - is that a fair assessment?

*Hugh Proctor is still here. He's not going anywhere.*

**Proctor:** A fairly fair assessment, I'd say. I might even go further and suggest that this situation could reach level four or, who knows, level five.

Chorus

**Eckersley:** You called it a 'situation'. Do you think that that is a fair description of this thing?

**Proctor:** Time will tell, of course - situation... incident... occasion. Whatever this thing turns out to be, I'm sure that it will have a profound impact on something else. In fact, comparisons are already being drawn with a thing that happened in 2017, and I'm sure you remember the impact that thing had at the time and, indeed, continues to have now.

**Eckersley:** Absolutely, Hugh. And let me assure everyone watching at home that, like then, we will continue to bring you all the news that happens, as it happens, and, indeed, *if* it happens.

That's right, all the news that happens, as it happens, and on through the night. We'll bring you analysis, opinions and commentary on every development. And

if nothing develops, you can be sure that we'll bring you even deeper analysis, more far-ranging opinions, and louder and more colourful commentary, on and on and on, into the night. As it happens. When it happens. If it happens, *and* even if it doesn't happen. Right now, let's go back to Sally Crompton and gauge the reaction in Loughborough.

viii. "...as sure as eggs is eggs (aching men's feet)..."

**Eckersley:** Sally, we were wondering what the latest reaction is in Loughborough? So tell us, what is the latest reaction in Loughborough? In particular, how have people in Loughborough been reacting, and has that reaction been, in any sense, one that is likely to cause a reaction in, for example, other, less reactive, parts of the country, bearing in mind of course that...



# Some people you have never heard of...

## Montgomery Splinters



Celebrated cavalryman who fought at the Battle of Trafalgar, showing considerable courage until his horse sank. Later became an MP, and introduced a bill legalising the sale of individual sausages - previously they had only been available for purchase in packs of eight.

## Julia Everet-Sideboard

First person to complete a solo climb of Glastonbury Tor in 1953. Not a difficult ascent, and plenty of people had strolled up there before, it's just that, as luck would have it, she was the first person to have headed up there on her own.

## Findus Permanganate

Inventor of the choc ice, which changed the face of frozen dairy

produce forever. Also invented raspberry sandals, which didn't.

## Ibrahim Munch

Nineteenth century music hall artist who is widely credited with the invention of the human cannonball, and narrowly missed Queen Victoria during a Royal Command Performance in 1878. He is commemorated on postage stamps in Mauritius. Nobody knows why.

## Archie Mastodon

Sometimes cited as the godfather of modern chemistry, which is incorrect. More often called the godfather of three-year-old Sally Pastanaker of Melton Mowbray, for which claim there exists more convincing evidence.

## Badman Truelove



In 1973 one man spent sixteen hours standing on one leg in the middle of Piccadilly Circus. That man was Badman Truelove. Today he lives on the Isle of Wight, but rarely speaks of the incident.

## Katya Van Marbles

You won't have heard the name, but you will most certainly have seen the face. Katya's likeness has been used for eighty percent of all the shop window dummies manufactured in the world since 1983. Her bland, almost featureless appearance made her the perfect model, and she was smart enough to negotiate a royalty on every mannequin sold. Now retired, she lives in luxury in Monte Carlo, where she collects antique fans - but you don't really need to know that.

## Dame Daphne Oxcart



Dull people who memorise long lists of facts in order to win pub quizzes will know that Daphne Oxcart won Gold in the javelin throw at the Montreal Olympics in 1976. That's not why she was made a dame - back in those days you had to do a hell of a lot more than chucking sticks about in order to get on the New Year Honours list. She was actually awarded the title for catching a Soviet submarine while on a

fishing trip to Lake Windemere. She had it stuffed and mounted, and if you're interested you can see it on display in a museum in Keswick.

## Keith 'The Beef' Paxo



For years, Keith Paxo told everyone he met that he was the guy who played the kazoo on The Beatles' "Back in the USSR", and for many years he was ridiculed by people who told him that "Back in the USSR" did not feature a kazoo. He was vindicated when the 50th anniversary edition of *The White Album* was released and his contribution could finally be heard on the remixed version of the song. He can also be heard faintly in the background on "Happiness is a Warm Gun", asking Yoko if she wants salt and vinegar on her chips.

## Professor Lorna Substrate

One of the leading biochemists of her generation, Professor Substrate was to the frozen pea what Gordon Parasite was to the aluminium stepladder. Or if you prefer, what Ringo Mezzanine-Amanuensis was to the semi-translucent artificial donkey cover. Take your pick.

## Big Dave Tallywacker IV

They didn't call him Big Dave Tallywacker IV for nothing. Oh no, they called him that because that's what it said on the name tag sewn into his underpants. And woe

betide anyone who called him anything different.

## Sir Dougal Poptart

Not the inventor of the pop tart - that was named in his honour sometime after his demise. Sir Dougal Poptart dedicated his life to climbing drainpipes in Edinburgh. He was a familiar sight to residents, who would often see him grinning through their bedroom windows in the middle of the night, looking windswept and ill. There is a statue of him in Princes Street, but you'll have to look up if you want to see it.

## Pancho Simpson

One of the key figures in the Mexican Revolution, Mr Simpson is perhaps not as widely celebrated as some of his fellow revolutionaries because for the duration of the conflict he lived in High Wycombe and never travelled further than Princes Risborough. But hey, someone has to stay at home and sort out the fliers, yeah?

## Katy Van Mousecarpet

If you have ever used the phrase "there's no time like the present", then you have Katy Van Mousecarpet to thank, for it was she who devised it. And if you have *never* used the phrase "there's no time like the present" and you are seriously considering using the phrase "there's no time like the present" then might I suggest that there's no time like the present to start using it.

Mousecarpet used to say it quite a lot, to the point where she had no time left to do anything else. Her friends and family believed that her love of the phrase was a thinly veiled cover for procrastination. Of course, Einstein's theories have since demonstrated that Mousecarpet's thoughts about time are largely inaccurate, but the

phrase nevertheless retains a sense of whimsical charm.

## Romulus Pervert

A Roman emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, coming somewhere between the funny one with the lisp and the one with the banjo. Romulus's great contribution was the shoe buckle, which at long last solved the problem of keeping one's sandals on one's feet. Prior to this, Rome's streets were perpetually littered with discarded footwear, which hampered public transport and encouraged vermin. He also claimed to have invented the stick, but modern historians now believe that the stick predates the Roman Empire by several hundred years.

## Emerson Humpback



Emerson "Clickety-Click" Humpback was the inventor of the retractable pen, and it is thanks to him that generations of schoolchildren have been able to drive their teachers to distraction by sitting at the back of the class and going "click-click-click-click". Humpback struggled for many years to perfect his invention, his chief problem being to find a spring that was capable of retracting the inner "payload" of the pen, but without being so strong that it fired it straight out of the back of the casing and into the wall behind him. His workshop is now a museum, and if you pay it a visit, you'll be able to see many of his early prototypes still embedded in the ceiling.

# An Open Letter to Sky Television

Dear Sky,

This is a hard letter to write. Now, I know that it's been a long time since I was last in touch with you, but I want you to understand that nothing has changed. When I cancelled my satellite TV package two years ago, it was forever. There's no going back. I meant it: it's over.

It really pains me that you seem unable to move on. Every week you write to me, telling me about your latest offers. And every week your letters go straight in the bin. I'm sorry if that seems heartless, but I have to be frank with you. I'm not interested in you anymore. To be honest, we drifted apart long before we actually broke up. Please don't feel bad about this, you have so much going for you: your movie channels, the sport, even some of your original programmes aren't that bad. It's not you, it's me. You just don't do it for me anymore.

It would be really great if you could stop living in the past and meet someone new. There are some great new customers out there, just waiting to hook up with a broadcaster like you. It's time to stop wasting all your glossy leaflets and special offers on me and start hanging out with some new subscribers. Go on, you know it's the right thing to do. Have some self-respect, stop wallowing in self-pity, put on your best party dress and get out there.

OK? Come on, wipe away those tears, you've got a great future ahead of you. I won't write to you again. We had some great times together, but this really is the end. Take my advice and don't contact me again. No more limited time offers, no more discounted packages, no more flyers telling me about all that I'm missing. Goodbye.

Best wishes

Paul

Your ex-customer.

The logo for Sky Marketing, featuring the word "sky" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background, followed by the word "marketing" in white lowercase letters on a dark red rectangular background.

## Great new offers from Sky TV

Hi Paul,

We know you said that it was all over, but we just wanted you to know that you can now get Sky TV and Sky Sports for just £51 per month. Yes, that's right - and that price is fixed for 18 months. Wow!

Now, we realise that you weren't expecting to hear from us again, but we thought you really ought to know about this great deal. It's amazing, right?

Anyway, we won't keep you, we know you're busy with your new life. But think about what we've said, yeah, and maybe drop us a line?

Regards,

Sky

The logo for Sky Marketing, featuring the word "sky" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background, followed by the word "marketing" in white lowercase letters on a dark red rectangular background.

## Have you heard about our great new offers?

Hi Paul

We thought we might have heard from you about the great deal that we wrote to you about last week. Guess you're still thinking it over. That's fine, take your time. It's just that we forgot to tell you last time about some of the great sporting fixtures that we've got coming up exclusively on Sky Sports. All the Premiership games, the boxing of course, and you won't want to miss the Formula 1. Oh yes, we remember how you always loved your motor racing.

Anyway, I won't keep you. Get back to us soon, yeah?

Love,

Sky



## Look, fantastic new deals!

Hi Paul,

Look, what's the problem? Have you got someone new? No other broadcaster can offer everything we can - you know that, don't you? Go on, who is it? Tell us! It's not bloody Amazon, is it? Ha! Well, we pity you if it is.

Listen Paul, please reconsider. If you sign up again it will be better this time, we promise. We'll make a real effort with our original programmes, seriously - it won't just be cheap panel shows anymore. There'll be new dramas and everything, honest. Go on, give us a chance, please.

Love and Kisses

Sky



## See what you're missing!

Well fuck you then! Do you know what, you were a crap customer anyway. You only ever had the basic package, and even then you were struggling to keep up the monthly payments. Listen, we've got new customers now. Oh yes, real customers who go the whole way with the film channels and everything. So guess what, we don't need you. You can rot in hell, for all we care. Goodbye!

Sky

sky marketing

## Sorry

Hi Paul,

We're sorry, so sorry. Please ignore our last letter, we were upset. But we promise it will all be better from now on. We've made a real effort and put together a special package just for you. You can have all the film channels for no extra cost! Yes, we mean it. Everything you want is here, there's no need to go anywhere else.

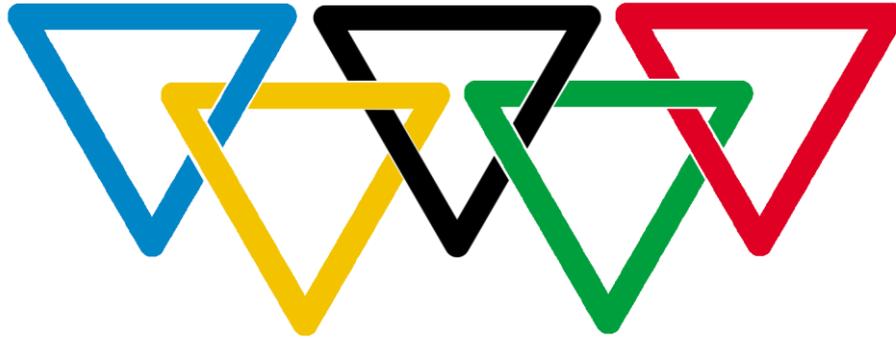
So please come back to us, Paul. We've sent you a direct debit form, all you need to do is fill it in and everything will be ok. It will be just like it used to be, only better. Please Paul, please come back to us. We really really really want you back and we just can't face going on without you. We love you, Paul, and there's never been anyone else. Looking forward to hearing from you very soon.

Hugs and Kisses

Sky

P.S. Refer a friend and get a £30 gift voucher for Argos.





# The Alternative Olympics

*All the news, all the action, as it happens, live from the Alternative Olympics. Thank you for joining us for our round up of this morning's events, and first it's over to Kerry Splash for the latest from the slow-motion diving.*

## Slow-Motion Diving



Well, we've seen some great action here from the pool this morning. The points in this event awarded, as you know, for style, degree of difficulty and the length of time they are able to stay in the air. A new world record has been set today by the young German competitor Karl Stein, with a time of twenty-two minutes and fifteen seconds between launching himself from the board and entering the water. Even so, it's a close competition. These are highly trained athletes, who have spent years perfecting the techniques necessary to overcome the pull of gravity.

There was one upset earlier when the British hopeful, Gareth Tonks, lost concentration at a vital moment and splashed into the pool after only thirty seconds. British hopes now lie with his teammate, Mark Battenburg, who is currently in the air as I speak and has been for over eighteen minutes.

Oh, and he's in! I think maybe someone distracted him in the crowd. Sadly, it only takes a momentary lapse when you're competing at this level. Whatever the reason, it's all over for the UK now.

*Exciting developments there. Over to Alan Madeley at the Speed Swingball event now. What's happening there, Alan?*

# Speed Swingball



Not very much at the moment. Play has been temporarily paused for technical reasons. Olympic Swingball is very different from the domestic version that most of our viewers will be familiar with, with speeds often in excess of six hundred revolutions per minute. That inevitably puts a great strain on the equipment - these are Olympic standard swingball sets, of course, but even so, failures are common. Line snapage, pole bendage and ball dislocation happen with alarming

regularity, and that's what's happened here today. Unfortunately, there has been a catastrophic ball-off, turning the dislocated sphere into a lethal missile, and sadly several members of the crowd have been injured.

Paramedics are currently on the scene and a new swingball is being installed. The hope is that, if we're given the all-clear, play can resume later today.

*Our thoughts go out to friends and relatives. Let's hope that the final stages of the dodgem rally have not been similarly marred by tragedy. Let's hear from Richard Manifold at the trackside.*

# Dodgem Rallying



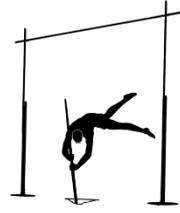
Hello, yes, well we've seen some fantastic racing today, I can tell you. This is a twenty-mile course, taking in several challenging terrains and features, and it really is extraordinary to see these zippy little dodgems being driven at speeds of up to eight miles an hour, the navigators flailing around and shrieking wildly as they cling desperately to that big pole thing at the back.

But there has only been one real standout character this year, and that's the Swedish

number one, Anna Anderson. Anderson, who previously made her name in the Scalextric championships, has brought all her experience of not flying off at the corners to the sport of dodgem rallying, and as a result she has dominated the competition. However, I spoke to her earlier, and she tells me that this is to be her last rally. Ever keen to take up a new challenge, she intends to compete on the Waltzer next year.

*From an old favourite to a new event at this year's games - the Bonsai Pole Vault. Martha Sideboard is going to tell us all about it.*

# Bonsai Pole Vault



That's right, this event being premiered at this year's games. Essentially, it's exactly the same as regular pole vaulting, except that the poles are only 30cm high. As the jumps are the same height as those in regular pole vaulting, this makes this one of the most challenging events on the programme.

You might think that, seeing as the pole is of no use whatsoever, competitors might

wish to discard it and make the jump unassisted. Well, I can tell you that such a move is strictly forbidden and any athlete who does not make full use of the pole will be disqualified. I can also tell you that so far no one has made a successful jump - many of the competitors are wandering around in confusion and the word is that the Olympic Committee are unlikely to feature this event in any future games.

*On now to the Fully Integrated Goat Milking System, so let's hear from Connie Poot in the arena.*

# Fully Integrated Goat Milking System



Nothing to report yet from the Fully Integrated Goat Milking System event, but rest assured we're here to give you blow by

blow coverage the moment anything happens.

*Looking forward to it. Colin Bubbles now has the very latest from the reading a book in the bath event.*

# Reading a Book in the Bath



I'm sure it will come as no surprise to many followers of competitive bath-book reading that Colin 'Soapy' McAlister has once more cleaned up in this event. His consistent, methodical reading of the set texts, although never flashy, nevertheless

gets the job done. At one point it looked like Bruce Montgomery might give him a run for his money, but the twat chose *Moby Dick* for the freestyle event, got into trouble round about chapter four and had to be rescued by frogmen.

*Lovely, lovely. Well, the word is that there have been some unusual developments at the fairground shooting range. Roly Coconut has the details.*

## Fairground Shooting Range



Hi there. And can I just say a quick hello to my sister in Bournemouth. Now, as you know, the fairground shooting range is usually quite a sedate event. The competitors take turns to shoot at the little wooden ducks as they're winched steadily along. All very sedate, all very predictable, all very dull. Until this year, that is, when the American contestant, Bernie Cheeseburger, chose to exploit a loophole

in the rules and bring his own gun. This is not something that is outlawed in this sport, and indeed it has happened before, but it is widely felt that his decision to use a submachine gun goes against the spirit of the competition. The event has now been put on hold while the shooting range is being rebuilt so that other people can have a go.

*We've heard some exciting things from the long-distance telephoning event. Dylan Cable tells us more.*

## Long-Distance Telephoning

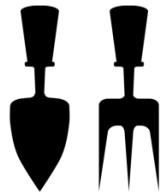


Yes, we've seen some fantastic telephony here. This year's competitors are real top-class telephonists, and the telephonic skills on display here in the telephonium are second to none. Some minor incidents have slightly marred the day - Mexico's

Sanchez broke a finger while dialling and Redfearn, the promising young Canadian, somehow managed to get the mouthpiece wedged in his ear - but despite this, it has been a morning of truly excellent telephonimation.

*I'm sure what most of you are waiting to hear about are the gardening events. Percy Mulch speaks to us now from the allotment.*

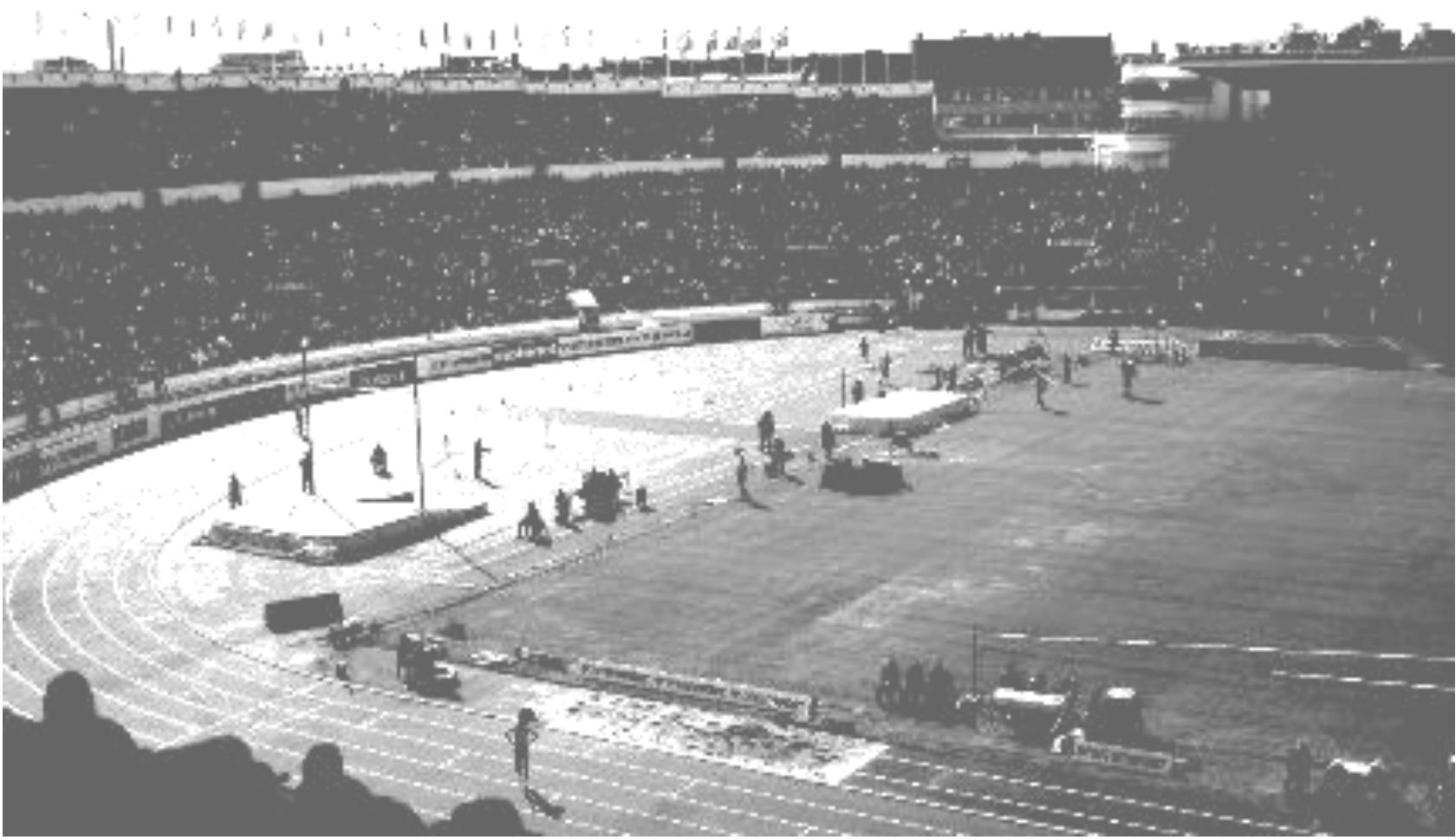
# Gardening



Now, many people have expressed some concern about the speed pruning event, following last night's unseasonal frost. However, if conditions were rather brittle this morning, it certainly didn't deter the competitors and we've seen some excellent precision snipping. Likewise, the formation

trimming heats demonstrated gardening at its very best. Later today, we are expecting to see some magnificent displays of uphill rotary mowing, and then there is the thrill and excitement of the two-man trowel to look forward to. And remember to get your sprouts in early this season.

*Just time to tell you that the pinning the tail on the donkey event, featuring a real donkey, has been cancelled due to animal welfare concerns, but there's still plenty more to come. Join us this afternoon for 400m puddle jumping, freestyle Nordic dancing, alpine cross-stitch and horsey-horsey-trot-trot. Until then, let's take another look at Bertrand Hulot's remarkable performance in the 17-piece earthenware tea set-hurling semi-finals. Good grief, look at the right arm on that feller!*



# Debt Matters

**Making your Money go Further**



**Shepton Bassett Borough Council has just announced that it is doubling the grant that it makes to a local debt advice charity. Councillor Albert Tomsk explains:**

So many people are struggling with debt at this present time and we would be failing in our civic duty if we did not direct a significant portion of our budget to this issue. Our funding enables the

Shepton Bassett Debt Advice Service to tackle crippling debt problems head-on, by providing free debt counselling to individuals who really need their help.

**Linda Sterling is the chief operating officer of Shepton Bassett Debt Advice Service. She explains what help is available to people struggling to make ends meet.**

At this time, more and more people are experiencing debt issues. We do a lot of work raising awareness of debt, via an extensive poster campaign, leaflets and roadshows. I have even been on the local community radio station! Our slogan is "Debt Matters", and you have probably seen this on one of the pens, baseball caps or shopping trolley tokens that we regularly give away at debt awareness-raising events.

We also provide a drop-in session in the library on the first Tuesday of the month, and here people who are experiencing debt can come and discuss their problems and the difficulties they face in meeting their financial obligations. We like to think that through our service we can help them to tackle their issues head-on and empower them to become more positive about their situation.

**Alf Cheese recently found himself unemployed. He is struggling to pay his electricity and gas bills, and his rent arrears mean that he is facing the prospect of losing his home. He explains what help Shepton Bassett Debt Advice was able to give him.**

I went along to one of their sessions and spoke to a debt adviser. She was very nice. She started by trying to raise my awareness of my debt situation. I was already aware of it, and I made *her* aware of it by telling her how much I currently owed to my energy provider and my landlord. She was very sympathetic and attempted to empower me by telling me that I shouldn't worry; I should try to gain control of my debts and tackle them head-on. When I asked her how exactly I might do this, and what help was available, she was very apologetic and said that there wasn't much that she could do for me on that score, and that I should probably

try Citizens Advice. Before I left, she told me that I should be positive and gave me a trolley token that said "Debt Matters" on it, which was nice.

It's not the Debt Advice Service's fault, I'm sure they're doing the best they can, but there just doesn't seem to be any help out there for people in my position. To make matters worse, I've just received this year's council tax bill and it's gone up again. In fact, it's almost forty percent higher than it was last year. Forty percent! Makes you wonder what the council spends its money on.

# Debt Matters

*Making your Money go Further*



**A new project from Shepton Bassett Debt Advice Service**

*Are your bills getting on top of you?*

*Can you afford to heat your home?*

*Do you have to hide from the landlord every Tuesday morning?*



Even though we're doing fine now that we've got this grant from the council, we imagine it's probably quite difficult for you. That's why we started Debt Matters.

**Come along to one of our drop-in sessions and speak to a semi-professional Debt Adviser. Here's what we can do for you:**

We will make you aware of your debt. Awareness-raising is one of our key objectives, and even though you may think that you are already aware of your debt, we will ensure that you are fully aware of it to a professional standard.

We'll listen sympathetically to your problems, and nod in all the right places. Our advisers have been trained to be calm and compassionate, and will help you to adopt a more optimistic attitude to your poverty and destitution.

We'll give you a biscuit.\*

We will give you a "Debt Matters" branded pen, baseball cap and/or trolley token.

We will apologise for not being able to provide any practical help and signpost you to another advice agency.\*\*

**So if you are struggling with debt, visit Debt Matters.**

**Your support will help us secure funding for next year. Tell your friends.**

\*While stocks last.

\*\*We cannot guarantee that another agency will be able to help, but you may be able to pick up more pens, baseball caps and trolley tokens.

Funded by Shepton Bassett Borough Council

SHEPTON BASSETT



TOWN COUNCIL

Thank you to Councillor Normington and we hope you enjoyed the little "gift" we sent you.

Debt Matters

*Making your Money go Further*





**MERMAIDS:** Are they a load of old bollocks?

**THE TALKING BADGER OF MORECAMBE BAY**

**THE WOMAN WHO SINGS TO CONKERS**

**THE BOY WHO WAS EATEN BY A TELEVISION**

THE MAGAZINE OF WEIRD AND IMPROBABLE STUFF

# spooky doings

ISSUE 304 DECEMBER 2021 £4.60

## THE TERROR LIZARDS OF MYANMAR

WHY THEY DON'T EXIST



**NON-EXISTENT ALIEN MONKEY MONSTERS OF THE AMAZON BASIN**



The Edinburgh Society of Paranormal Woo-Woo  
*Presents*



# UncannyCon 2022

Get ready for a weekend of spooky weirdness at the UK's biggest convention of paranormal research.

Confirmed speakers are amongst some of the most credulous names in their fields, including:

**Ivan Bostick: The Science of Venus**

Ivan has spent a lifetime combing through accounts of encounters with visitors from our neighbour in space and has compiled a comprehensive guide to their science and technology. He promises to deliver a fascinating talk on Venusian tractor beams, direct mind-to-mind thought transference and the very latest in Venusian space fashions.

**Dickie Freebie: The Giant Three-Armed Climbing Frog of Ecuador**

Leading cryptozoologist Dickie Freebie gives a riveting account of his holiday to Ecuador, ostensibly in search of this extraordinarily unlikely and most probably entirely made-up creature. The presentation includes a number of intriguingly blurred photos.

**Cerys Stump: The Many Lives of Albert Wisbech**

Victorian mesmerist Albert Wisbech was a pioneer in the field of past-life regression, and amongst his subjects he encountered the reincarnations of Marie Antoinette, William Shakespeare, Sir Francis Drake and at least three Henry VIIIs. Cerys Stump gives an enthralling account of his life and work, and explains why she believes that she herself is the reincarnation of his pet cocker spaniel, Puddles.

**Baz Lotterby: Keeping Your Thoughts to Yourself**

Baz shows us the latest techniques for fashioning your own tinfoil hat, and the emphasis is on style just as much as security!



This year's special guest:

**The Loch Ness Monster\***  
(subject to availability and confirmation of her existence)

Nessie will be taking questions from the audience.  
Autographs and selfies can be obtained for a small fee.

\* Official tribute act. Not to be confused with the Loch Ness Monster.



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# spooky Doings

ISSUE 304 DECEMBER 2021

## COVER STORY

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### The Terror Lizards of Myanmar

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Have prehistoric monsters from the dawn of time been discovered inhabiting the remote forests of Southeast Asia? We reckon you would have already heard about it by now if that was the case, but read our article anyway.

## FEATURES

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### The Kidderminster Poltergeist

---

Lionel Crumbly revisits this classic haunting from 1974 and concludes that we were very probably having our leg pulled.

### Drums Along the Amazon

---

The legendary Mop Crested Ringo Monkey of South America can be identified by its frantic and distinctive drumming, but does it really exist? No it doesn't, but Hermione Goober had a smashing time finding that out.

### Death in The Caribbean

---

The Mongolian Death Worm lures travellers in the Gobi Desert to their doom. But is there any truth to the rumour that they haunt the sandy beaches of Barbados? Rob Vauxhall gets a lovely tan as he investigates.

### Blood Sucking Beavers from Burundi

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We've never heard of vampire beavers, but Molly Packet has always wanted to go to Burundi, and that's where she reckons she'll find them.

## ALSO THIS ISSUE

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My alien dance instructor  
Fridges from Hell: A History of Haunted Kitchen Appliances.  
The Great Kipper Storm of 1852  
Fully Integrated Goat Milking Systems

## REGULARS

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*Weird World News:*  
Bizarre news stories from around the world, which you have already read in the mainstream press six months ago.

## YOUR LETTERS

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All the batty nonsense we received this month.

## Dog Gives Birth to Fiat Punto

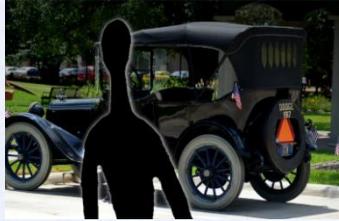


In what is thought to be both a veterinary and automotive first, a dog in Milan has given birth to a Fiat Punto. The dog, a Golden Retriever called Sofia, produced the car after going into labour last month, much to the surprise of its owner, Lorenzo Casellati, who was expecting a Renault Twingo.

"I don't understand it," Lorenzo said, but in Italian. "Sofia is such a good dog, this just isn't like her. I don't know who the father is, but I've noticed that there is a sporty twin-exhaust Volkswagen usually parked around the corner, and I wouldn't trust it an inch."

Whilst most car enthusiasts agree that this is certainly unusual, some more fundamentalist petrol-heads have gone one stage further and are claiming that it is a miracle. This is a sign, they say, and it precedes a great rapture during which it will rain Citroen Picassos from the heavens and the land will burst asunder and Vauxhall Corsas shall issue from the bowels of the Earth.

Cynics have responded that we have heard this all before. They point to the time several years ago when a Labrador in Turkey gave birth to a motorbike, which turned out to be nothing more than a premature mongrel with an oddly shaped head.



## Was the Model T Ford Based on Back-Engineered Alien Tech?

The Model T Ford is often cited as being a quantum leap in the history of the automobile. Reaching the market in 1908, the vehicle was made cheaply using modern production line methods, thus becoming the first car to be within the reach of ordinary motorists on a modest income. In fact, it is so advanced that it has led some people to suggest that many aspects of its design are based on back-engineered alien technology.

We already know that many innovations from the last century came from the saucer that crashed in Roswell in 1947 - computer chips, fibre optics and the SodaStream, to name but three. Fact. But what if there was an earlier crash, one that perhaps gave rise to the technology required to build the Model T Ford? One man who thinks so is Hyrum P. Rosco Ph.D., professor of technology at Princeton, Fellow of the Royal Society and winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics 1974-2017 - and with uncorroborated credentials like that, who can doubt him?

Rosco has unearthed a newspaper report from the Pennsylvania Daily Bugle, dated 4th January 1858, which tells of a fireball that crashed through a farmer's barn, hit a pig and exploded. This was the only contemporary reference to the incident that Rosco could find - proof, so he believes, that government agents hushed the whole thing up. Rosco claims to be in touch with the great grandson of one of the police officers who was first on the scene, and who heard the story from his great grandfather's own lips. Rosco has promised to keep the identity of his informant secret, but states that "Officer A" left a very clear account of entering the barn to find a knobby, green "podule" lying in a residue of smouldering pork. The object was glowing and humming. As Officer A watched, a hatchway opened and a tall, slender being emerged, dressed in silver. This creature staggered around shakily for a few minutes, put a hand to one of its heads and said in weird, unearthly accent, "Christ, the wife's going to kill me," then expired.

Rosco claims that inside the capsule investigators found a substance resembling black vulcanised rubber - exactly the same colour of rubber that was used for the tyres of the Model T. Coincidence? Almost certainly not, and when you consider that the alien podule was fitted with running boards, windscreen wipers and one of those old-time honky horns where you squeeze the bulb, then it becomes obvious that the vehicle must have been based on alien tech. And if there is any lingering doubt, let's remember that the first cars off the assembly lines were fitted with speedometers marked in lightyears per hour.

However, it should be noted that, while the evidence for the Model T hypothesis appears to be conclusive, there is less support for Rosco's theory that the motion picture industry got its start in a similar way, and the Charlie Chaplin was a hydrogen-powered cyborg from Messier 92.

# Project Jigsaw

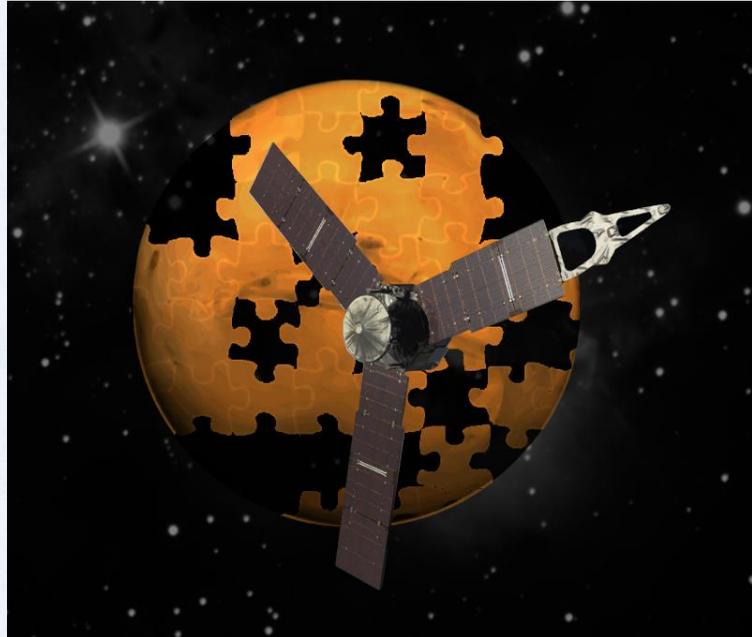
Our solar system is littered with the debris of its creation, which argues against a cosmic creator. Or at least, if there is some deity behind all this, he's a very messy one who can't be bothered to clean up after himself. Far out on the outer edge, where it's bloody cold and there's no chance of getting a decent phone signal, is the Kuiper belt, a region littered with the rubble left over from the formation of our sun and the worlds that orbit around it.

However, clever people who know about this stuff suggest that some of these cosmic offcuts - asteroids the size of a small town, right down to objects only a few metres across - could be the remains of a planet that disintegrated during that chaotic time when our solar system was still young. Quite how a planet disintegrates is not known. Current thinking ranges from cosmic collisions, to suggestions that the rocks weren't sticky enough, right down to the tinfoil helmet brigade who reckon it was zapped apart by alien space lasers.

Now NASA's Project Jigsaw aims to solve the riddle once and for all, by tracking down all the



*THIS LOOKS LIKE A BIT OF THE SEA.*



*PROJECT JIGSAW WILL REASSEMBLE LOST PLANETS.*

pieces and sticking them back together. Speculation is rife about what such a planet may look like: a gas giant, an Earth-like planet or maybe some exotic body where it rains diamonds into seas made of jam.

"Computer projections have been inconclusive," explains Dr Ruth Gimbal, the project's lead analyst. "Just like any other jigsaw, if you haven't kept the box lid, you're working in the dark. But as long as we take a methodical approach, we should have a reasonable chance of success."

A robotic spacecraft, Dozer 1, will begin by looking for the corners, just in case we're dealing with a planet that is cube shaped. If it doesn't find any straight bits, the spacecraft will start with the curved edges of the planet and progress from there. The mission is expected to take at least twenty years, although NASA will be able to make early predictions as soon as the planet begins to take shape.

As ever with projects like this, conspiracy theorists have taken an unnatural interest in the mission - those tinfoil hats again. Claims that there is insufficient mass to create a planet have resulted in some armchair theorists speculating that this particular cosmic jigsaw has several pieces missing. These, they say, have most probably been taken away by aliens, possibly as souvenirs. More unhinged individuals are even suggesting that the planet might have been shoddily built by aliens in the first place, and that the mission will find discarded alien tools, surplus planet-building materials and traffic cones.

# Rights of Fictional Characters to be Enshrined in Law

The days when you can freely abuse Oliver Twist or harass Mr Tumnus from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* may soon be drawing to an end as a campaign to protect the rights of fictional characters gathers momentum. Victor Crosby, MP for Accrington, has tabled a private members' bill that will make being fictional a protected characteristic, meaning that all imaginary, fabricated and made-up persons will be safeguarded from suffering abuse or detriment because of their non-real status.



OLIVER TWIST

The proposal has gathered a great deal of support from people both within and outside the fictional community. Professor James Moriarty, president of the Amalgamated Union of Literary Villains, says that it is high time that the difficulties that fictional people face on a day-to-day basis are recognised. "For too long now my members have had to bear the brunt of a lot of ignorant, ill-informed invective just because they

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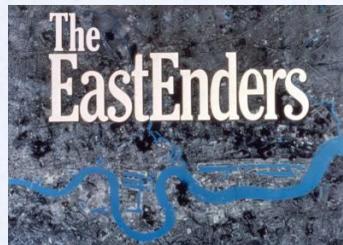
***"For too long now my members have had to bear the brunt of a lot of ignorant, ill-informed invective."***

---

have, in the course of their fictitious endeavours, tried to despatch good guys, sow the seeds of havoc or take over the world. Such persecution is simply not fair and, if I may say so, it is also tremendously

ironic to be mistreated in real life because of maltreatment that you yourself have only carried out in fantasy."

It is not only villains that have to suffer derision and insult. Little Nell, Dickens' famous dead orphan from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, is practically a recluse these days, unable even to visit the corner shop because of the jeers and taunts prompted by her overly sentimental demise. Peppa Pig is frequently denied entry to nightclubs on the spurious grounds that she is animated and therefore a fire risk. And Ian Beale, from the popular BBC soap *The EastEnders*, struggles to book hotel rooms in his own name because he is constantly being confused with Adam Woodyatt, the actor who plays him.



THE EASTENDERS

Debate has taken place over whether the bill should also cover fictional animals, with consensus emerging that only anthropomorphised characters need be included. However, there are

some vocal opponents who question the need for the legislation at all.

"As far as I am aware, it is not possible for fictional characters to feel offended," claims Jumbo Whiffy,

who has been highly critical from the start. "That's been scientifically proven, that has. I can't quote the actual science, but I'm sure I read it somewhere. The point is that if these characters aren't real then, by extension, nothing that happens to them is real and we are ok to discount their opinions. That's my opinion, anyway."

Since Jumbo Whiffy is a minor character from a 1987 episode of *Filthy, Rich and Catflap*, this probably means we can discount his opinion also.

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## The Right to Be Forgotten

Current data protection legislation gives individuals the right to request the erasure of their personal data - popularly called "the right to be forgotten". It is a principle that has the enthusiastic support of privacy campaigner Neil Eichmann, although he believes the law doesn't go far enough. Mr Eichmann thinks that in addition to the "right to be forgotten", individuals should also have "the right to forget". In other words, he believes that everyone should have the freedom to choose what they want to remember. It would mean that you could legally forget every unpleasant experience, obnoxious acquaintance or embarrassing situation that ever ruined your day.

"I spent a week in Southport last year that I'd much prefer was consigned to oblivion," said Eichmann. "It would be a real boon if that could be wiped from my memory. Then there was last Tuesday when I tripped and went headlong after getting off the bus - that's one painful memory that I could well do without. And while we're at it, there's my cousin Trevor. He's a dick, so you can have him as well."



# Boffins Against Chronological Chaos

## Fresh Concerns for Unlicensed Time Travel

A group of scientists is calling for an international convention limiting the use of time travel, to prevent what they term "unscientific and damaging interference in history". In a joint letter to the United Nations, the group claims that although the prospect of this technology seems remote at the moment, the nature of time means that if

a basic theory were perfected tomorrow, we could have an operational time machine by yesterday.

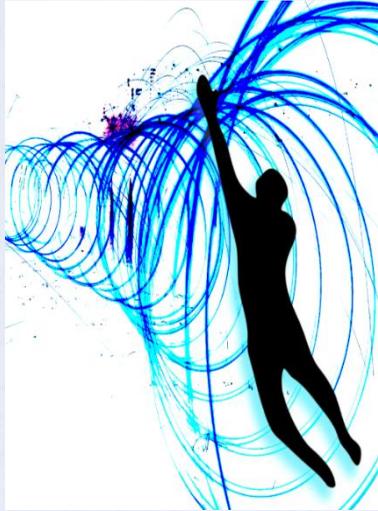
seriously threaten causality. It asserts that even apparently harmless trips to the past could register significantly on the

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### *"Unscientific and damaging interference."*

The group, calling itself Boffins Against Chronological Chaos, is concerned that uncontrolled "jiggering about" in time could

"jigger" scale. The boffins say that we need to act promptly to



make sure unlicensed time travellers knock it off pronto, and they are hoping that the UN will enact suitable legislation sometime last week, or possibly sooner.

But what exactly will be off limits? Or perhaps it's more correct to ask, what exactly *will have been* off limits? Well, it has long been felt that, if time travel did become possible, certain historic events should receive protection. Some smart arses claim that the absence of sightings of anachronistic onlookers at the scenes of great battles, such as Waterloo, proves that time travel will never be a reality. However, it could equally suggest that, at some point in the future, legislation will be put in place to ensure these events are off limits to chrononauts.

However, the same may not be true for *people* of historic interest. Throughout history, notable individuals, celebrities and pioneers have reported strange phenomena. Benjamin Franklin, for example, once claimed to have been visited by angels. John Lennon, meanwhile, reported seeing a

UFO hovering outside the window of his apartment in New York. And Frida Kahlo frequently encountered purple pixies, who sang sad songs to her in the early hours of the morning. Were these strange apparitions in reality tourists

The group doesn't want people travelling back in time to distract Newton when he is on the point of making a discovery, nudging da Vinci's arm while he's painting the *Mona Lisa*, or belting Abraham Lincoln in the mouth just as he's about to

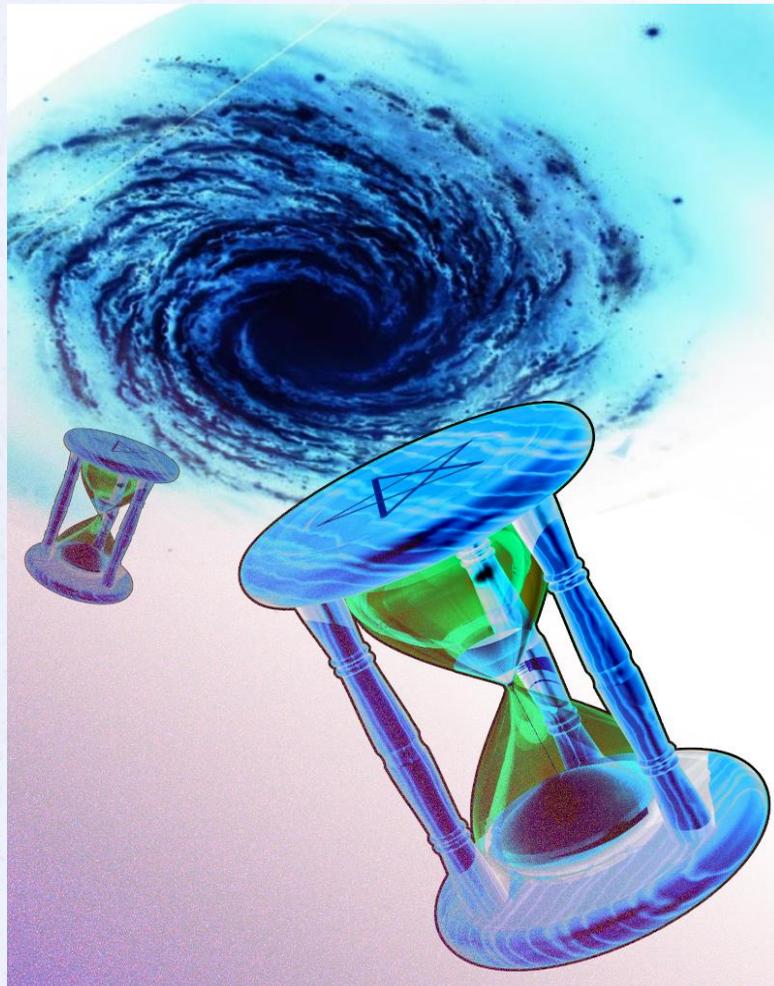
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***"Harmless trips to the past could register significantly on the 'jigger' scale."***

from a future age, come to gawp at individuals of significance? It's worth noting that Justin Bieber has *never* reported any kind of weird visitation, which would seem to support the theory.

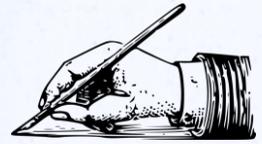
It is this kind of interference that Boffins Against Chronological Chaos is chiefly worried about.

deliver the Gettysburg Address. Although if someone from the future wants to come and give Bieber a slap, then they're perfectly ok with that.



# Your Letters

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## Barmy Builder

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I was intrigued by the story of the "Wildman of Wolverhampton" [Spooky Doings Issue 296] about a strange semi-naked creature who has been reported streaking through residential streets and causing a disturbance over the last few years. I wondered whether I might be able to throw some light on the mystery. Back in the early seventies, I worked in the building trade in and around the West Midlands, and there was a lad on one site I worked on who had a habit of running through the streets at night in just his underpants, whooping and hollering. This behaviour seems to be remarkably similar to that of the Wildman in your report and I wondered whether he might still be up to his old tricks. Of course, he must be knocking on a bit now, which would inevitably slow him down. I also heard a rumour that he is now the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, which I guess would take up a lot of his day and leave him very little spare time for whooping and hollering. Still, it's a possibility.

Keith Traction  
*Birmingham*

## Neolithic Rockery

---

I greatly enjoyed Sally Blairgowrie's summary of megalithic stone circles in the Lake District [Spooky Doings Issue 277], but I have to draw her attention to a glaring omission: namely the structure in my back garden. When we moved into our house in Keswick we were struck by the unusually large rockery. Our original intention was to rip this out and replace it with a pond (my wife has a pet trout called Keith) but on

further investigation we discovered that it is a scheduled ancient monument. It turns out that, although the house itself was built in the fifties, the rockery considerably predates this, dating back some 4000 years. Quite why stone age man would have wanted to build a rockery at a time when garden centres were not a common feature of our retail landscape is something that archaeologists are presently unable to answer, but the upshot of this is that we are denied our pond and the wife's trout has to live in the bath.

I must say that I have no great objection to our prehistoric rockery - it's something of a talking point, after all. But I do take exception to the hordes of druids who trample all over our back garden every solstice. Thankfully, although we are prevented from doing anything about the rockery, we are still permitted to use pesticides on our unwanted visitors. This, at least, is some small consolation.

Keith Traction  
*Keswick*

## Raised by Slugs

---

After reading Malcolm Pocket's fascinating history of feral children raised by animals [Spooky Doings Issue 287], I recollect reading some time ago about a boy who was abandoned in Wiltshire, I think it was, and brought up by snails. I don't recall the exact source of this story, but in the early eighties I was a regular subscriber to a popular partwork called *Bullshit or Not?* I suspect this was where I read the story. Witnesses claimed that in addition to being able to converse freely with molluscs and munch steadily through a lettuce leaf, the

boy could also scale sheer surfaces using the miracle of slug-suction. When he was finally captured, this superpower was put to the test. Apparently, he was unable to demonstrate this ability under laboratory conditions, although he did produce copious amounts of slime.

Keith Traction  
*Naples*

## Large Member

---

Your story about the North Carolina Flasher [Spooky Doings Issue 301] has prompted me to tell you about my friend William. My friend William was in possession of a ten-foot member, and he displayed it to the young lady who lived adjacent. She mistook it for some species of serpent and took a swing at it with a garden implement, with the result the now it only measures four foot four. Also, William has now been charged with indecent exposure.

Keith Traction  
*Cirencester*

## Future Perfect

---

Sitting down to breakfast yesterday, your magazine was most entertaining. However, with reference to your article about psychoactive fusion ghosts, can I just point out that the sentence "none of them are currently known to exist outside of the temporal vortex" should read "none of them *is* currently known to exist outside of the temporal vortex." I should explain that I am referring to issue 6304 of *Spooky Doings*. I am a time traveller from the future, and I have journeyed back to prevent this monstrous and entirely avoidable

grammatical error. We take this kind of thing very seriously in the twenty-sixth century and have traced the beginning of the rot back to your era. So, cut it out!

And while I'm at, don't bother with the sarky comments about all the grammatical mistakes in *my* letter.

**Keith Traction**  
*New Neonville*

*Our Editor Replies:*  
*Thank you for your comments, Keith. We promise we won't say anything about the dangling participle in your opening sentence.*

## Yeti Getaway

---

I am in no doubt that the Abominable Snowman really does exist, because I met him on a skiing holiday in St Moritz. At least, that's what he said his name was. I was quite surprised, really, since I thought he'd want to go somewhere warmer for his hols.

**Keith Traction**  
*Aberystwyth*

## Imaginary Acquaintance

---

I was interested in your article about imaginary friends in childhood [**Spooky Doings Issue 300**] and I thought I'd tell you about my experiences. I had an imaginary friend called Gerry Orlando, but we fell out on my seventh birthday, and we haven't spoken since. I've seen him about town several times, but we didn't acknowledge each other. In fact, the last time I saw him was a couple of years ago when he deliberately crossed the road to avoid me and went into an optician's - which was stupid because he doesn't even wear glasses. I heard from a friend that he works as an estate agent now, which kind of makes sense. After all, he is an empty figment of my imagination with no personality of his own, who feeds upon the energy



*Mr K Traction of Southport has sent us this picture that he snapped at a local nature reserve. He says that the curious creature walked like a duck and quacked like a duck, and because of this he believes it to be some kind of alien shapeshifter, cunningly disguised as a harmless waterfowl. The jury is still out on this one.*

and creativity of others. Where else would he work? But then the more I thought about it, the more I realised how difficult it would be for him to get a job anywhere. As an imaginary person, he just doesn't have the paperwork - where would he get a National Insurance number?

**Keith Traction**  
*Leeds*

## Lead Protection

---

I have six-inch-thick lead panels fixed to the walls of my house to stop ghosts walking through them. I hasten to add that I don't actually believe in ghosts, but then I never used to believe in buses until I was hit by one in 1998. I sure believe in them now, and my shattered pelvis is evidence of this!

I'm certainly not going to make the same mistake with ghosts, hence the lead. I figure that if it's proof against radioactivity, then it's probably ghost-resistant as well, but to be on the safe side I have also installed a wire mesh in the walls, so

that effectively I live in a Faraday cage. I am now completely secure against ghosts *and* buses, although I have to go outside to get a phone signal.

**Mrs K Traction**  
*Fife*

## Squeegee Proposal

---

Hello, you might be interested in this. I have invented something that I call a "squeegee board". It's a thing that you can use to summon up dead people and get them to clean your windows for you. I am looking for 60% of the capital in return for 30% of the company. Or 80% of the capital in return for 115% of the company. Or you can have it for twenty pence and half a Mars bar. You choose. Bye!

**Sir Keith Traction**  
*Manchester*

# THE TERROR LIZARDS OF MYANMAR



Have prehistoric monsters from the dawn of time been discovered inhabiting the remote forests of Southeast Asia? Kieron Quimby finds out that they haven't.

When the people at *Spooky Doings* offered me an all-expenses-paid trip to Myanmar to look for a non-existent prehistoric dinosaur, I was torn. I'd just come back from a trip to the Seychelles to look for a non-existent fire-breathing bat, paid for by *The Telegraph*. And next month I'm off to India in search of a non-existent river monster, paid for by a US television company. I was really looking for some downtime, but the life of a cryptozoologist is a hard one and you have to take these opportunities when they present themselves. After all, all it takes is for some idiot to actually *find* one of these animals and bang! The free holidays are over.

Myanmar is a difficult place to get to. It starts with an extremely long wait in the departures lounge at Heathrow, followed by an arduous flight (first class) during which I had to endure a very poor selection of in-flight movies and champagne that was not served at the correct temperature. Thankfully, when I arrived in Yangon, I found that my hotel was extremely convivial. After the enormously demanding journey, and the nightmare of unpacking, I felt the need to relax and so spent

the remainder of my first day relaxing by the pool.

Yangon, formally known as Rangoon, is the country's largest city and has much to offer the visitor. I spent my second day enjoying its many attractions, including its magnificent architecture and a lively selection of shops and street vendors. It was thrilling but exhausting, so it was little wonder that I spent the following day relaxing at the hotel pool once more. It was also a chance for me to review some of the reports of the fabled terror lizard. It had been spotted most recently in a region approximately two hundred miles away. I checked the map. It looked quite remote and unpromising, and I didn't really fancy going all that way into the wilderness. Especially since there didn't seem to be any bars, interesting

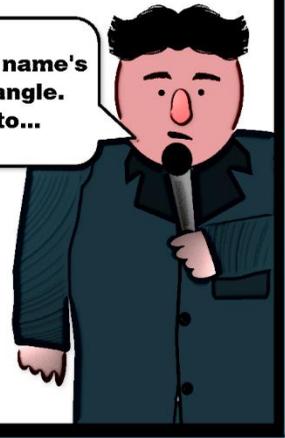
restaurants or swimming pools to lounge around.

I reasoned that before rushing off on a fool's errand, I would be better off carrying out some local research. To this end, I called over one of the hotel staff and, after he had refilled my glass, I asked him if there were any prehistoric monsters in the region. He said that there weren't, so it looked very much like my search was at an end. However, it was another ten days before I was due to leave Myanmar, so how to fill my time profitably? Luckily I found a simply marvellous restaurant, and over the next few days I visited a



# Whose Are These Legs?

Hello! My name's  
Rodney Dangle.  
Welcome to...



# Whose Are These Legs?

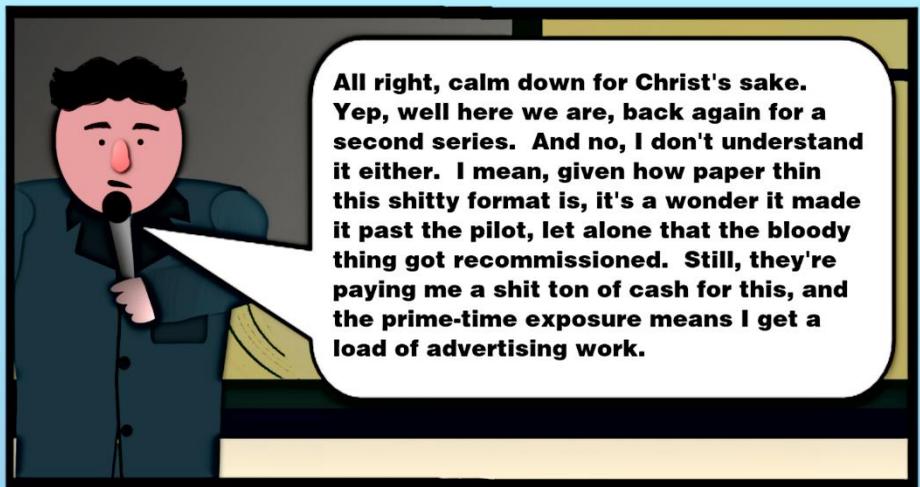
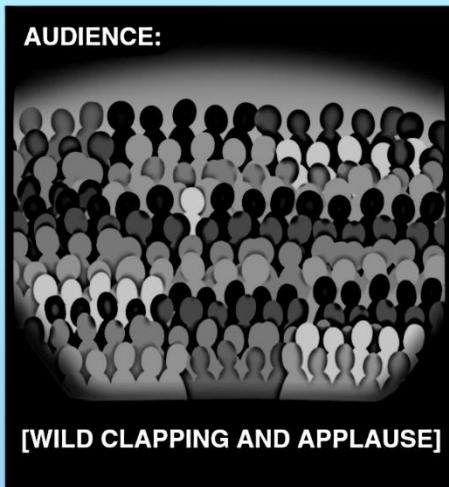
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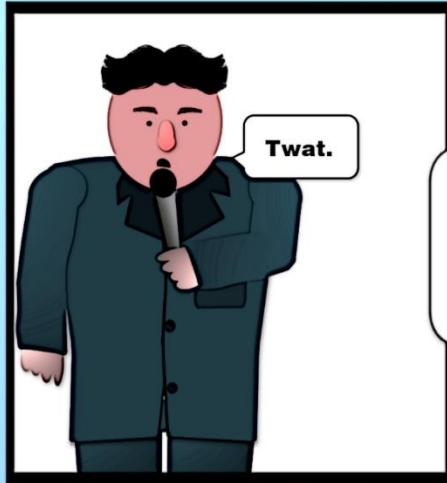


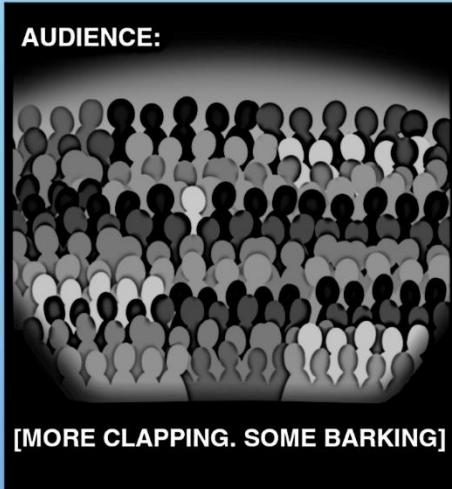
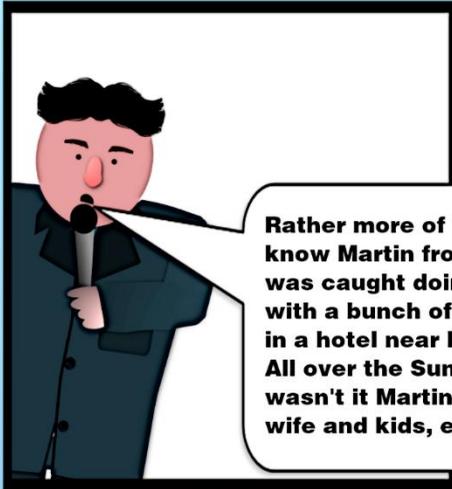
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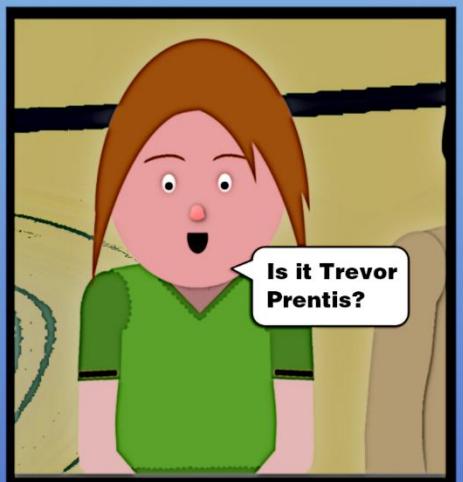
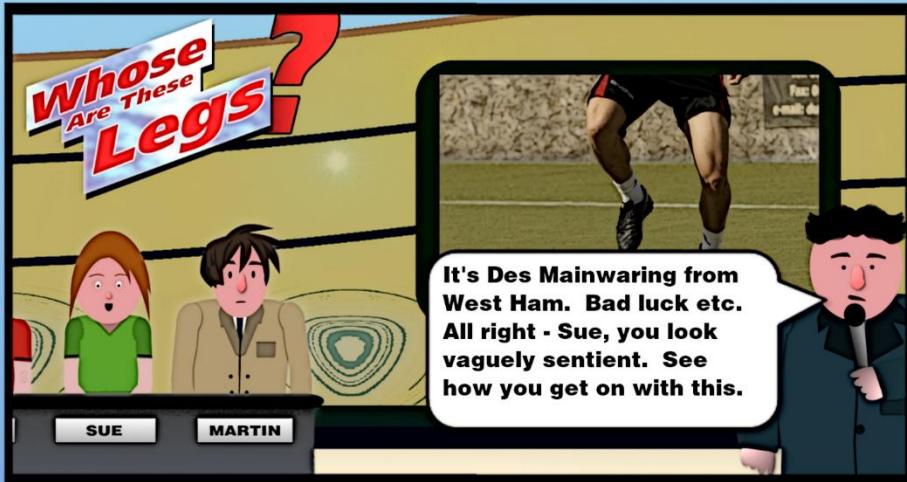
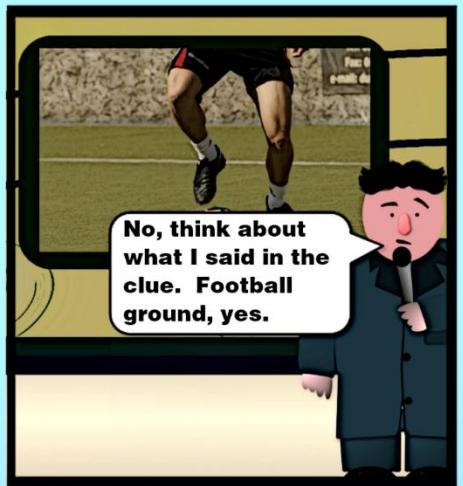
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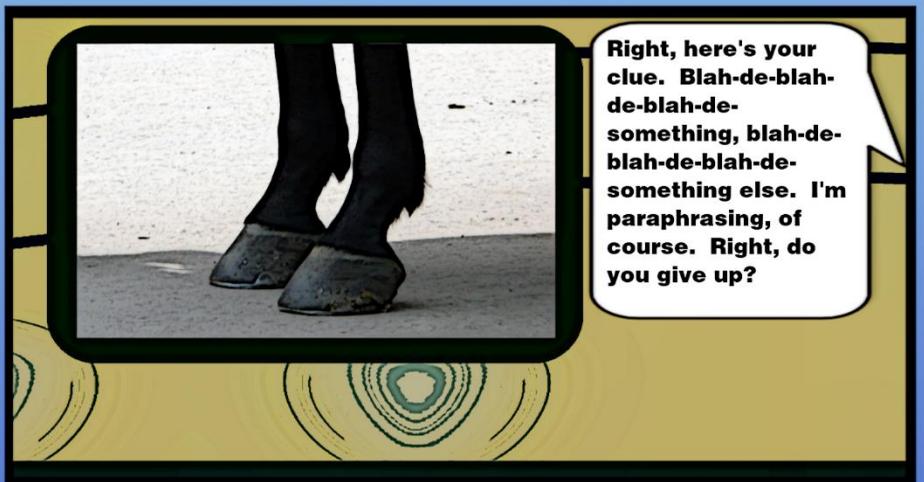
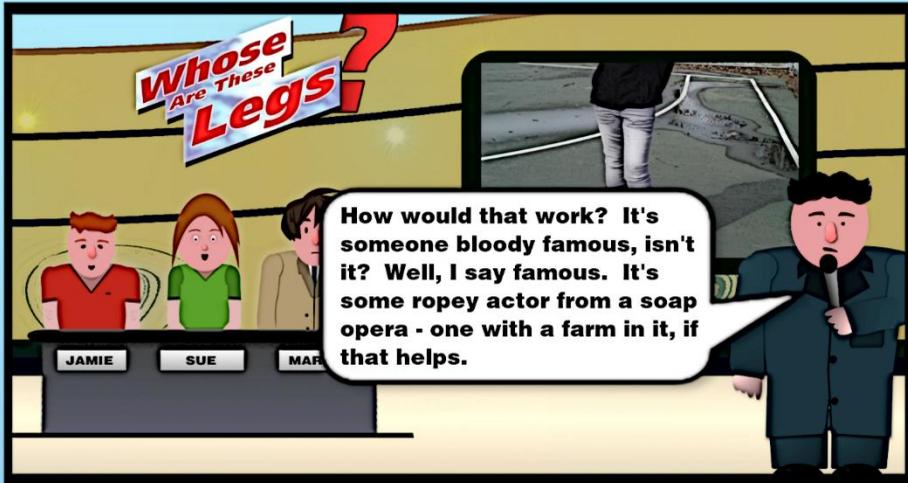
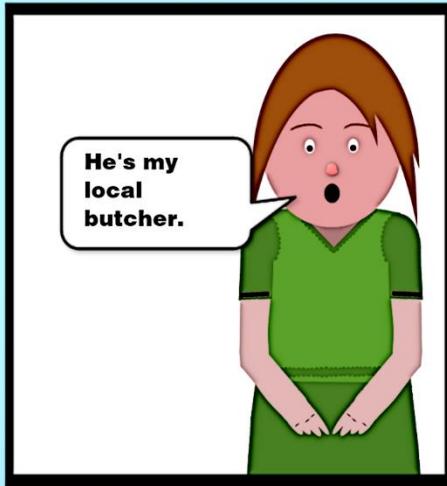


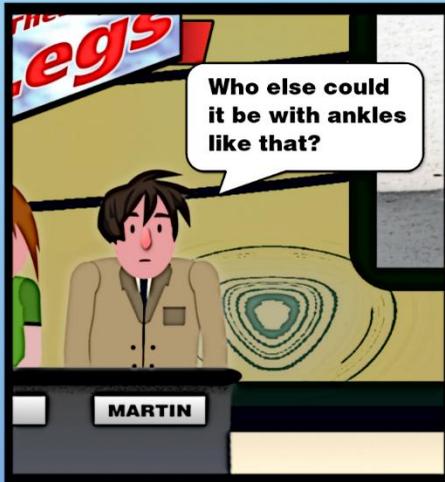


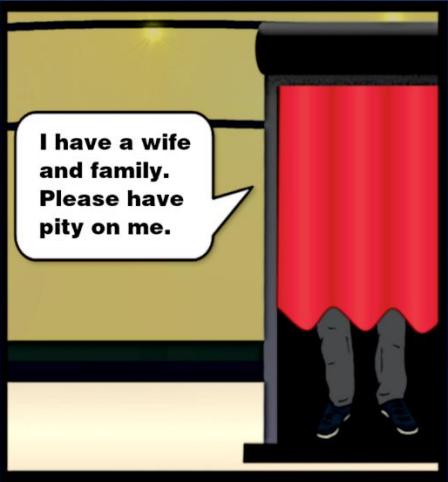
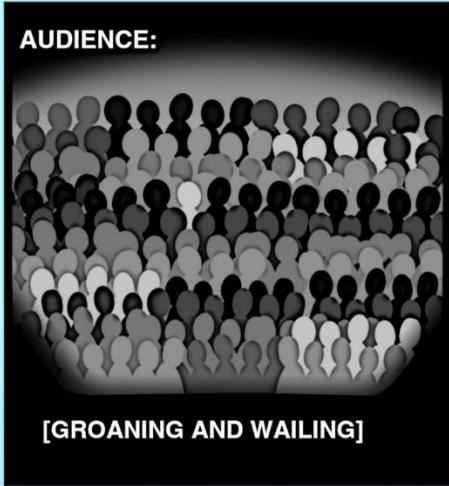


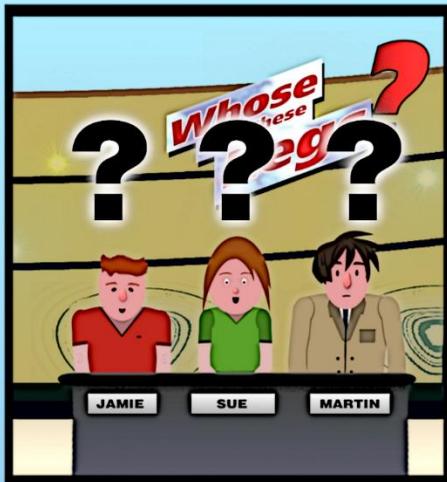
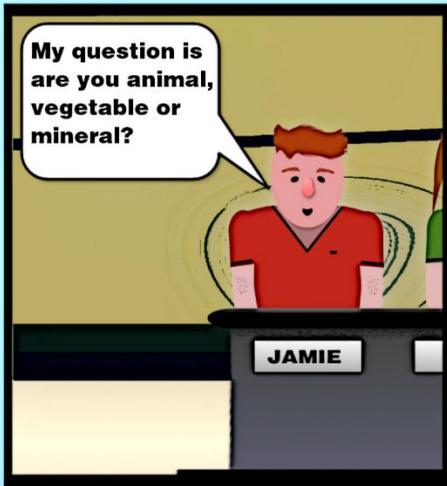






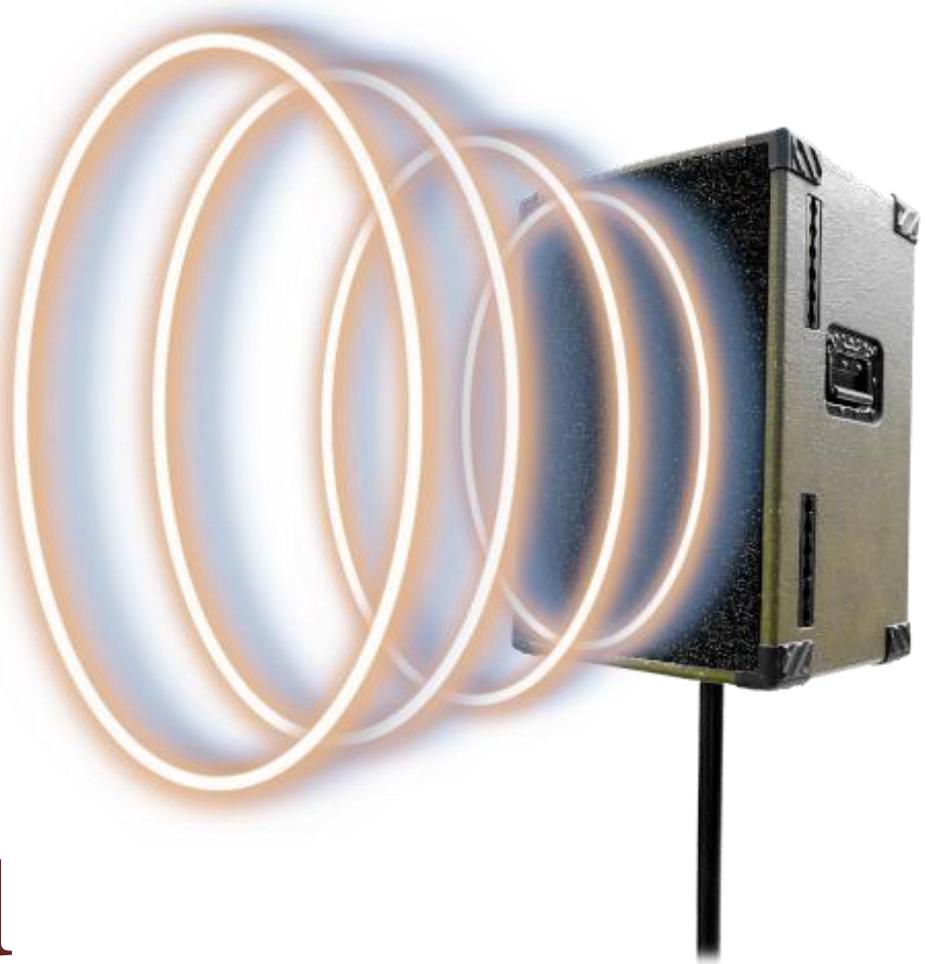






Well that's all we've got time for and all that I've got patience for. Once again, there are no real winners - not the contestants, not the audience and certainly not bloody me. But join me again next week, if you've got nothing else to do - which you haven't - and we'll once again try to make the best of it as we fill the empty yawning hours until we finally reach the ultimate release that is oblivion. Take care now, byeeeeeeee.





# Sound Sculptures

Artist Guy Parker is used to controversy. Some might say he thrives on it. Others, less kind, might say that he employs it as a substitute for talent, and no doubt his latest venture will serve to reinforce that view. Starting next week at the Tate Modern is his new collection, entitled simply *Sound Sculptures*. And what are visitors likely to see? Nothing, just a big empty room. We'll let Parker himself explain.

**Parker:**

For a long time I have been very interested in abstract art. The more abstract the better. Without form, without structure, the artwork becomes a malleable entity on which the art lover can project their own thoughts and feelings.

**UBO:**

Yes. And it also means that you don't have to be very good at painting.

**Parker:**

And yet, even the most abstract art is still tied to the visual. I wanted to explore a way of creating art that dispensed with a visual medium. Thus, we can begin to craft something more

instinctive, more emotive. I wanted to gift my talent to the world in a way that was less materialistic, less...

**UBO:**

Expensive?

**Parker:**

Less restrictive. Consider marble, for example. For thousands of years, sculptors

have used marble to create works that express their innermost feelings. We can create sculptures that depict love, fear, awe and the majesty of existence.

screeches, pockmarked with whoops and crashes. Using these simple, elemental sounds, I build up a picture that reaches out and really connects with people.

**UBO:**

Didn't work though, did it? All that happened was that the Walker Art Gallery, which staged the exhibition, was inundated by



**UBO:**

I bet *you* can't.

**Parker:**

And yet, we can never get away from the essential marble-ness of the medium, do you see? Our lofty ideals are always going to be rooted in something solid and immobile, dragged back down to earth by something as mundane and ordinary as rock. But if I create a statue that doesn't use a physical medium, a statue that is a pure, uncorrupted concept of a statue, you can see at once how that would be infinitely superior?

**UBO:**

Ordinarily, no - but in your case we would be prepared to accept it as an improvement.

**Parker:**

The medium I have chosen to work in is sound. The palate that

**UBO:**

Sounds hideous.

**Parker:**

Of course, the real fascination for me is that sound is not only insubstantial, it is also ephemeral. One bang and it's gone. The listener is left with a feeling of loss. The artwork is no more, never to be heard again. At this stage in my career, it is so exciting to be exploring a whole new frontier in artistic expression. Textures with timpani; symbolism with cymbals. I want to drown the world in sound.

**UBO:**

And clearly it helps that you can do this shit with your eyes closed. Not all of your work has been about "connecting with people" though, has it? For instance, *Cacophony for a*

stray animals. Took them two weeks to scrub the main hall clean, I'm told.

**Parker:**

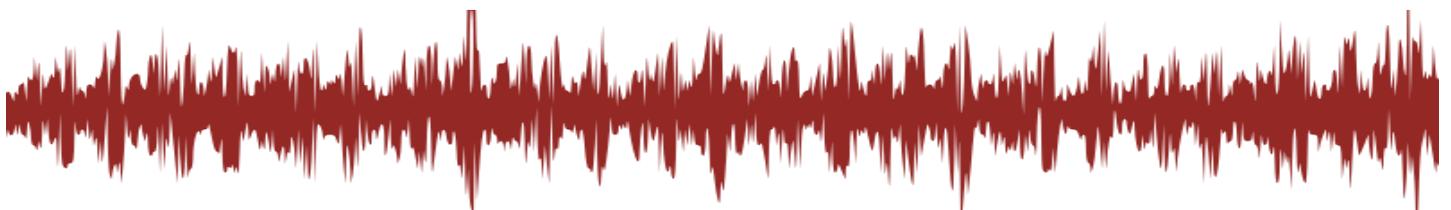
Indeed. It was an occasion where the unintended consequences of a piece become a part of the artwork itself.

**UBO:**

And then there was *Coughing in an Amphitheatre by Royal Appointment*. The programme described this as being a piece that "prompts visitors to reflect on their own decisions and choices". In particular, it prompted them to reflect on the wisdom of parting with hard cash for a ticket to the exhibition, with the result that it was a failure.

**Parker:**

I think "failure" is far too



an artist has to play with is so rich, so broad. Tone, volume, so many sound "flavours". I prefer to work with sound in its pure state.

**UBO:**

Of course you do.

**Parker:**

Dirty great booms, untainted with jingly tinkles. Dry, rasping

*Dachshund* was a six-hour looped installation that could only be heard by dogs.

**Parker:**

And some children, yes. My intention here was that through manipulating man's best friend, I manipulate the perceptions of man himself.

emotive a word to use in this context. The piece was an embryonic exploration of technique, and as such its value lay in informing my later work.

**UBO:**

Which brings us to your current exhibition in the Tate. This consists of a number of "installations". I suppose we're

obliged to listen to you tell us about it?

**Parker:**

I think these pieces represent the pinnacle of my work. For example, I have crafted an installation that commemorates the bombing of Hiroshima, using the sound of running water interspersed with breaking plates.

**UBO:**

Why?

**Parker:**

Contrasting with this is *Sid's Café*. This consists of the sound of chips frying in custard. It's a fun, light-hearted piece, that provides a welcome respite from some of the more sombre and haunting soundscapes.

**UBO:**

This is all a bit... well... shit, isn't it? I mean, each of these

"installations" is just a bare room with various noises piped in through a couple of tiny speakers.

**Parker:**

Not all of them, no.

**UBO:**

No, sorry - there's the room in which you personally run up behind people, shout "twang" and then run off again. Do you not worry that visitors might feel short-changed?

**Parker:**

Certainly not. If I ever thought that, I wouldn't be in this business. My work is highly regarded, you know. I might remind you that NASA chose some of my pieces to represent the human race: two whoops and a jingle have been loaded onto the New Horizons spacecraft, which is speeding out into deep space as we speak.

**UBO:**

And if aliens ever find it, it will no doubt annihilate any chance we have of being taken seriously. Anyway, I suppose we'd better ask what new and exciting noises you're planning to come up with in future?

**Parker:**

Oh, I'm done with sound now.

**UBO:**

Hurrah.

**Parker:**

I'm now really into working with smells. I'm planning to create a big stink in Harrogate in a few weeks' time.

**UBO:**

Thank you very much for warning us. Mr Parker, it has been no pleasure talking to you, as ever. Now go away.



### ***SOUND SCULPTURES AT THE TATE MODERN***

Art lovers will doubtless be ecstatic to learn that Guy Parker's *Sound Sculptures* is running at the Tate Modern until the end of the month. The exhibition is not suitable for anyone with synaesthesia and visitors are firmly reminded that they are NOT permitted to bang their own tambourines.

# Buttock

# Express

Each year, over 12,000 Britons opt for overseas bottom enhancement surgery, be it enlargement, re-sculpting or just a simple cheek realignment. Of course, it's a big commitment and you need to be confident that the procedure is

going to be carried out to the highest possible professional standard. Well worry not. Here at Buttock Express you can be confident that your bum is going to be in safe hands.

## Dr Lazlo Clench

Buttock Expresses uses the exclusive services of Dr Lazlo Clench at the Turkmenistan Institute of Experimental Surgery. Dr Clench is fully qualified in both flux cored and gas metal arc welding, and has been performing buttock enhancement procedures for more than twenty years, during which time he has treated over two hundred thousand patients and successfully defended himself in a dozen major lawsuits. He is recognised globally as Turkmenistan's seventh most reliable cosmetic surgeon, and has won international acclaim for his paper on the effect of Magnetic Fields on the Science of Posterior Repositioning.

## Treatments

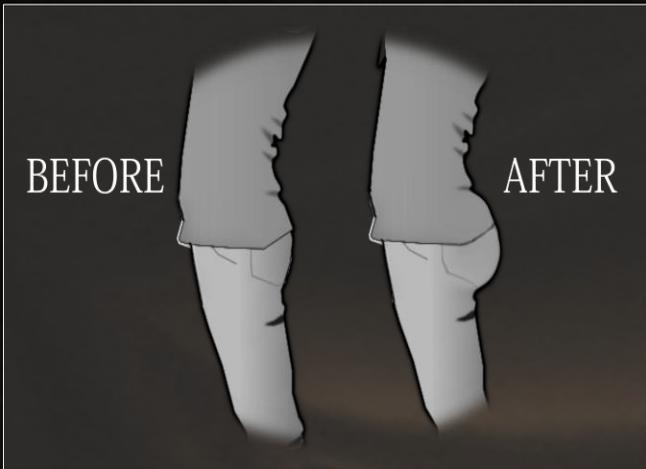
*Some of the procedures currently offered include:*

**Cheek realignment**  
**Crack widening**  
**Buttock rebalancing**  
**Inflation**  
**Deflation**  
**Condensation**

**Lifting and separating**  
**Full valet and detailing**



In addition, Dr Clench has pioneered a revolutionary new enhancement technique using a latex polymer treatment, and if you choose the premium package your new rubber buttocks will be guaranteed for thirty thousand miles.



Surgical buttock intervention doesn't need to be a pain in the arse.

## Your Stay

We will fly you out to Turkmenistan in style and on your arrival the procedure of your choice will be carried out at the Institute of Experimental Surgery, or in the sports centre next door if facilities are not available.

Following your bum surgery, you will relax and recuperate in our luxurious resort. Maybe take an excursion by camel into the hills, enjoy jet skiing on the Caspian Sea, or compete in the country's world-famous space hopper steeplechase.

Or possibly you'll just want to take things easy, in which case rest assured that all our suites are supplied with very, very soft cushions.



## Your Safety

Your safety is our greatest concern. Indeed, official figures show that you stand more risk of incurring life-changing injuries on the flight out than from the surgery! Whilst this is undoubtedly true, we would like to reassure customers that since those statistics were published we have started using a more reliable airline.

You can also be confident that emergency resuscitation teams will be on hand throughout your surgery. And we've just invested in a defibrillator!



## Easy Payment Plan

Butt enhancement is a major investment, and we know that you won't want to scrimp on such an important procedure. Nevertheless, we do appreciate that finding the money can be hard, which is why we have introduced our new easy payment plan, which allows you to spread your buttocks over twelve months.



## What our customers say

### Mary Bangers from Bangor

This is the fourth time I've booked with buttock express and after all the work that I've had done I'm happy to say that my arse is massive. I've heard some horror stories about people who have visited less reputable surgeons and have had their buttocks stuffed with all sorts of rubbish, including newspapers, old rags and even loft insulation, which I gather makes it very itchy. Dr Clench, however, is very professional and uses only the very best upholstery foam. This time he even installed a zip to make it easier to stuff me the next time I come.

### Judith Donkley from Doncaster.

I had my left buttock enhanced two years ago, and I was really pleased with it. I've been telling all my friends about the excellent service I received and what a difference it's made to my life. Now I've saved up enough money to get the other buttock done and I'm really looking forward to having a matching pair. It's really going to improve my self-confidence, and will also stop me from falling off so many chairs.

**BOOKING  
NOW!**

# Armoured Pyjamas



**Hey man**, you know what a complete hassle it is when you're woken up in the middle of the night after being attacked by crocodiles. It happens surprisingly often. I mean, it's happened to me twice in the last thirty years, which may not sound like a lot, but I live in Chiswick so, as I say, it's quite surprising.

Now, I'm all for nature. I'm not one of these dudes who's got a downer on the natural world just because it's full of things that bite you and sting you and occasionally try to throttle you. That's just not cool. Live and let live, you know. But I do object to nature when it takes the form of something that waddles into my bedroom at two o'clock in the morning and starts snapping at my ankles. So what's the answer, you say? Armoured pyjamas, is my reply.

I first got the idea for armoured pyjamas when I was at university. At that time, I was living mostly on Pot Noodles, the spicy beef ones, and some of those additives were making me a bit freaky. I mean, it was really great, but it did tend to give me night terrors. I would flail around wildly and fall out of bed, and since I was occupying the top bunk, I would land with one hell of a thump. Oddly, although this disturbed my flatmate, I would sleep through the whole traumatic episode, only realising something was amiss the next morning, when

I woke up on the floor, covered in bruises.

I was inventive, even back then, and so I set about devising a protective outfit in which to sleep. By welding a series of baking tins together, I fabricated a pair of pyjamas which I thought would shield me during my night-time ordeal. The first night I tried it I fell out of bed with a clang rather than a thump and in



the morning I was not only bruised, but also somewhat lacerated. It had been a failure. My flatmate was a total fascist about the whole thing and decided to chain me to my bunk every night. Yeah, it solved the problem of me falling out of bed, but those chains didn't half chafe. My flatmate was happy with the arrangement though. Like I say, total fascist and really not cool.

When, in later life, I started experiencing all this grief with the crocodiles, my mind went back to those prototype armoured pyjamas. Of course, by now I was

a semi-successful inventor, with proper inventing facilities at my disposal and bread enough to afford some more expensive baking tins. One night, in a flash of inspiration, I phoned my assistant, Lazlo Windchime-

Monkeybush, and told him to meet me at my laboratory immediately. It was a difficult conversation - I don't think Lazlo could hear me properly because of all the snapping of the crocodiles. Also, he was not at all cool with being woken up in the early hours of the morning, but when you get that sudden lightbulb moment, you

just have to act, don't you? Anyway, he agreed to shuffle off to the lab immediately. I'm afraid I then suddenly came over very tired and didn't get there myself till about ten-thirty.

Lazlo was a bit bitchy with me after that, and the guy probably had every right to be. He didn't have a key, so he'd had to wait outside in the rain, and while he's as keen to commune with nature as the next dude, he wasn't so happy about nature dribbling down the back of his neck for several hours. Still, great things were afoot, so we set to work

straight away, hammering and bashing and thumping. Very soon we had to door open - turns out I'd forgotten my key as well - and then we were able to start building the prototype.

What does the average guy in the street want from armoured pyjamas? That's the question I asked myself. Turns out it was the wrong question - the average guy doesn't wear pyjamas in the street. Ok then, so what does the average guy in bed want from armoured pyjamas? Well first off, he wants them to provide protection - not just from crocodiles, but also from wild bison, ostriches, falling pianos and all the other hazards that might plague him in the night. He will also want to be reassured that he can survive natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, meteorite strikes and falling pianos. He will also require a certain degree of freedom of movement to enable him to get up in the middle of the night to perform necessary tasks such as bathroom manoeuvres, checking under the bed for monsters and playing the piano. And he will wish to do all this in comfort.

With these requirements in mind, I set about constructing the ultimate in protective nightwear. The ideal material to work with would have been Kevlar, but that stuff will set you back a lot of bread, so cast iron was a much more affordable alternative. Thanks to the ingenious deployment of hinges, the pyjamas could be made to bend in all the right places. Lined with fire-retardant foam rubber, the pyjamas were warm, comfortable, would cushion against impact and protect the wearer in the event of spontaneous combustion. Further protection from midnight collisions was provided with the addition of a crumple zone in the seat of the pyjama bottoms.

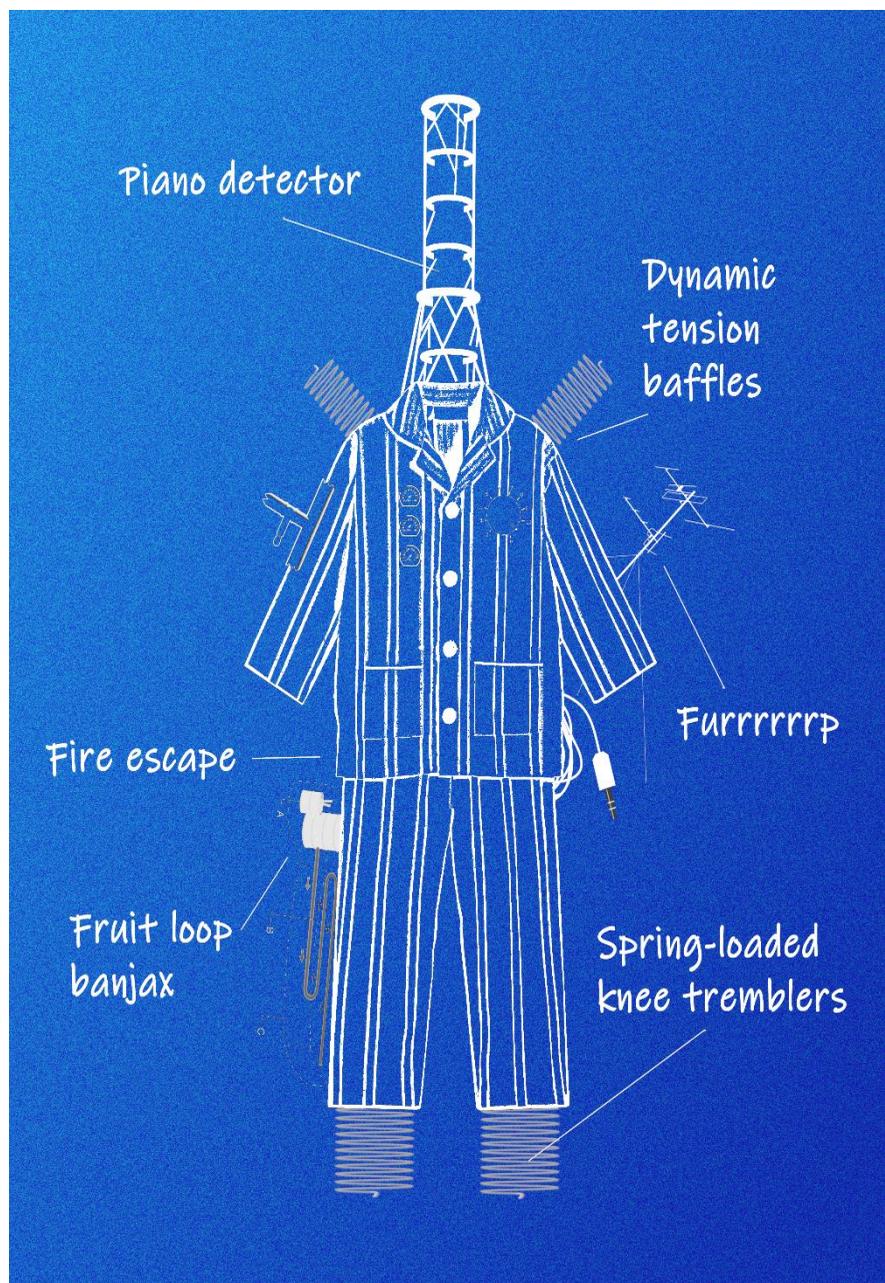
But how do we protect the wearer from the elemental forces of nature, I hear you cry? Don't worry, guys. My pyjamas are earthed in case of lightning strike, there is a floatation device that will deploy in the event of a flood, and shock absorbers in the knees and elbows will allow you to sleep soundly through even the most

violent earthquake. The deluxe model even has built in radar, which will alert you to approaching pianos.

So, the prototype was finished and all that remained was to test it. Unfortunately, they were too small for me, but the perfect size for Lazlo, so we squeezed him into them, loaded him into a giant catapult and fired him at a wall. He survived! I mean, there was a hell of a clang and his ears were ringing for a week, and he often wakes up in the middle of the night screaming, but the important thing

is that he was more or less unharmed.

And now you too can enjoy nights of uninterrupted slumber, confident in the knowledge that you are fully protected from crocodiles, earthquakes and pianos. Moonbeam MKI Armoured Pyjamas are now on sale in a store near you. My advice to you is to get your pair now, before some interfering fascist health and safety Nazi decides to ban them.



# Archaeology May Soon Be a Thing of the Past

**Scandal has rocked** the world of archaeology now that it has emerged that a group of influential academics is buying up ancient artefacts so that they can be reburied for future generations. Professor Tanya Bread - head of digging stuff up at Princes College, Edinburgh - has defended the scheme, claiming that it is necessary to safeguard the future of her profession. "People who dig stuff up," she said at a recent conference on bones and bits of old pottery in Amsterdam, "are rapidly running out of stuff to dig up, and there is a very real risk that the people who dig stuff up in the future will have no more stuff to dig up."

"I deplore Professor's Bread's insistence on finishing a sentence on a preposition," said Amara Shovel, head of the International Federation of Archaeologists, Excavators, Delves and Dredgers. "But on this subject, she is absolutely correct. For some time now, we have been concerned that ours is a dying profession, and our members have every reason to be concerned for their livelihoods. The 'Buy Back and Rebury Initiative' offers a workable solution, which we can all pin our hopes on."

"I mean, on which we can all pin our hopes. Sorry."

It could be said that the science of archaeology has been a victim of its own success. As more and more items get disinterred, so historical finds become harder to... well... find. A successful archaeologist these days has to dig much deeper than they would have done two hundred years ago. Professor Bread explained:

"The discovery and study of antiquities in its modern sense really came into being in Victorian times," the Professor told us. "Back then it was a breeze because things were just lying about on the ground: swords, treasure chests, galleons and so forth. Once this had all been gathered up, people had to start digging. At first, you could find stuff just below the surface, and it was of a much greater quality. But, as time went by, we had to dig deeper and most of the material was of limited value."

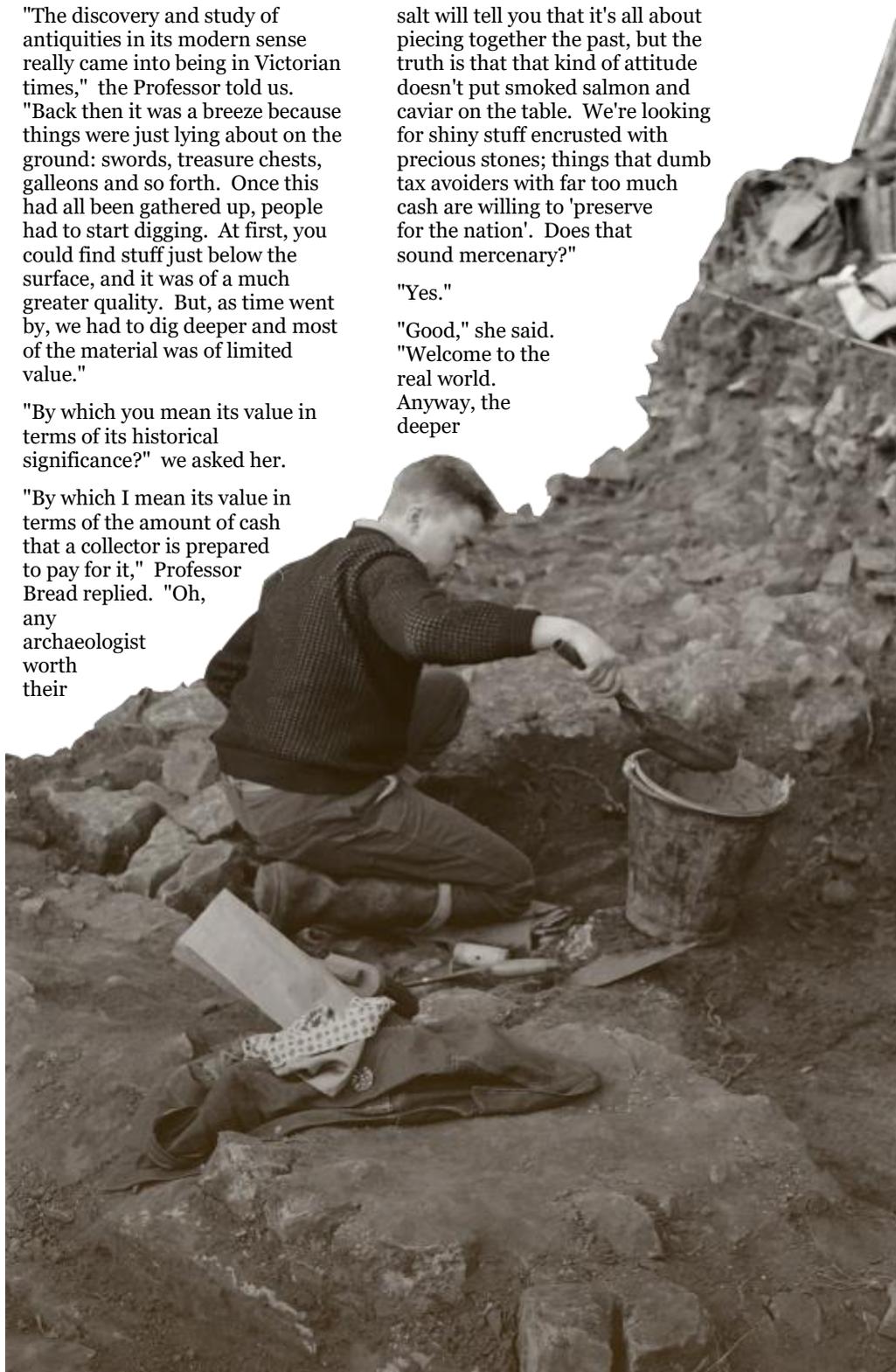
"By which you mean its value in terms of its historical significance?" we asked her.

"By which I mean its value in terms of the amount of cash that a collector is prepared to pay for it," Professor Bread replied. "Oh, any archaeologist worth their

salt will tell you that it's all about piecing together the past, but the truth is that that kind of attitude doesn't put smoked salmon and caviar on the table. We're looking for shiny stuff encrusted with precious stones; things that dumb tax avoiders with far too much cash are willing to 'preserve for the nation'. Does that sound mercenary?"

"Yes."

"Good," she said. "Welcome to the real world. Anyway, the deeper



we dig, the more rubbish we find. So, whereas our Victorian predecessors would regularly turn up knights dressed in solid gold armour carrying diamond-studded shields, the most we can hope for is a bit of old pottery. But as long as it's old - and we can convince someone that it's particularly rare or significant - then we can still turn a profit. But the deeper you get, the less of a return. Once you've gone past the Vikings, past the Romans, past the Celts and the Picts and all that lot, then you arrive at the stone age and, as the name implies, that's just a lot of rocks. That's no good to anyone unless you're looking to gravel your drive."

Professor Bread explained that the stone age represented their limit. Go any deeper and archaeologists would risk stepping on the toes of the dinosaurologists, and those people can get really stroppy. The upshot of all this is that in recent years a typical archaeologist's revenue has come not from the sale of artefacts, like it did in the good old days, but from lecture fees, publishing deals and appearances on TV history documentaries. But even this work will dry up once they get to the point when all they can dig up

is mud. Hence, the scheme to re-seed historical sites with previously discovered artefacts.

However, many collectors and curators are less keen on the idea. We visited Marvin Obelisk at the New York Museum of Dirty and Archaic Things. It was with little enthusiasm that he showed us around their latest collection.

"It's just becoming impossible to acquire anything of any interest these days," he said. "All the good stuff is being snapped up and reburied, while we have to make do with tat. I mean, look at this."

He reached into a cabinet and pulled out a teacup. "This is Wedgewood. Eighteenth century. Hideous, isn't it?" He smashed it on the ground and it exploded in a shower of shards. "It's the kind of thing your grandmother might have in the back of her cupboard. Who wants to see something like that? And this one."

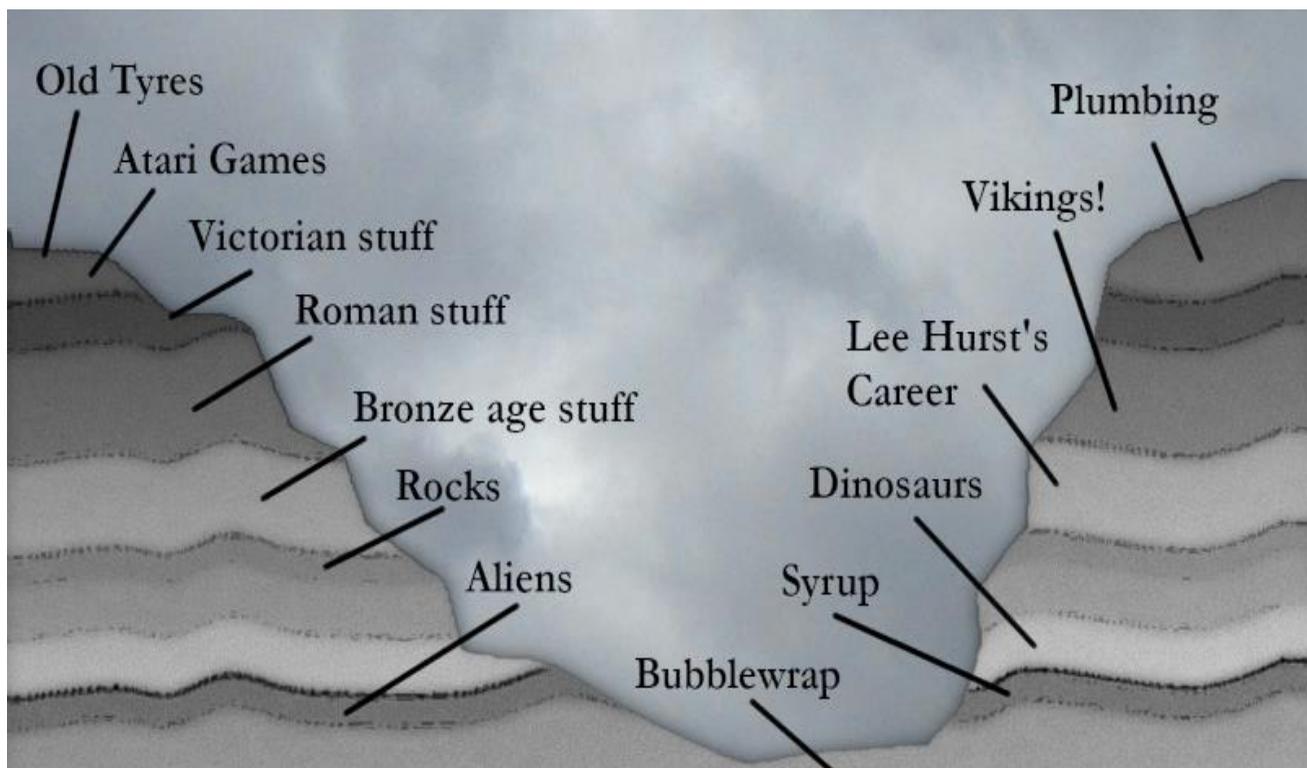
He took out a saucer. This looked quite delicate and was painted with intricate patterns. We told him it looked nice, but he sneered.

"Nice?" he said. "Visitors don't want nice. They want to see something spectacular. You know what this is? It's a Ming saucer.

Not a Ming vase - oh no! A goddamn saucer. Do you have any idea how foolish you feel when a member of the public comes up to you and says, 'Say buddy, where are all the Ming vases?' and you have to tell them that we haven't got any, but we've got a saucer and maybe a side plate you can take a look at instead?"

He smashed it and strode over to a nearby picture. We thought we recognised the style. "Look, see," he said. "This is a genuine van Gogh, but it's not one of his famous ones. Awful, isn't it?" He slashed it with a screwdriver.

We were only there twenty minutes, but such was his depth of feeling that in that time Mr Obelisk managed to trash half the collection. This exemplifies the situation as it stands at the moment: archaeologists are frantically reburying genuinely valuable objects, while museums are frustratedly destroying the rubbish that's left over. Ironically, this means that junk is becoming scarce and therefore more valuable, so our advice to readers is to check what your grandma has in the back of her cupboard. She could be sitting on a fortune.



# As Seen on TV

**Christian Pyle** has wanted to be an actor since he was seven years old, but it was not the glamour of Hollywood or the glitz of the West End stage that beckoned him to the profession. Christian got nipped in the butt by the acting bug after watching a commercial for Coco Pops and ever since then he has had a burning ambition to make it in adverts.

"In my opinion, it is the ultimate challenge for a performer," he tells us. "All acting is essentially about the search for truth, for honesty. So, if you're selling a breakfast cereal, you have to find that truth, because your job is to connect with the viewer on an emotional footing. They have to understand how you feel about that breakfast cereal. Your passion and belief about the textures, the flavours and the wholesomeness of the product, have to become their passions and beliefs. There is no greater purpose in this profession. Perhaps in any profession."

We are with Christian as he waits his turn along with the other hopefuls at an audition for a soft

drink commercial. This is not his first try out: there have been many and, sadly, few successes. But this does not seem to have blunted his enthusiasm.

"I have to say," he continues, "that not only is there no greater purpose in acting, but there is no greater responsibility. What you're doing, you see, when you are extolling the virtues of, let's say, a particular model of car or perhaps a body spray, is you are forging a bond of trust with the viewer. You are saying to them: here I am, bearing my heart and soul to you on national television. I am telling you that this is the greatest product ever and that I need it in my life. And you need it too. And they will believe me because of the overwhelming power of my performance. Now, that is a hell of a thing to have on



one's conscience - the power to direct people's life choices in that way. I must never become too blasé about that. To me, advertising a new brand of coffee is just a day's work - but to the viewer it could be the catalyst for a life-changing decision. See what I mean?"

He gives us an example of a radio ad that he did for Barney's Fried Chicken Shed in Southport, in which he played "Rocky Rooster". He had to say the line "Barney's Chicken is Cock-a-doodle-licious" and he did more than twenty takes before he was satisfied with the performance. "Some people might just turn up and deliver the line and that's it - job done," Christian explains. "But I can't really understand why any performer would take so little pride in their work. Now, I spent much of the previous week researching chickens and workshopping the line with my ex-girlfriend, so that by the time of the recording I was able to get inside the head of Rocky Rooster, to understand the guy and so give a performance that was authentic, layered and had a touch of pathos. I was very proud with the result."

The advertising company chose not to use him for future campaigns, but Christian understands why they would want



to change things around and keep the character fresh. In any case, he told us, he probably would not have chosen to reprise the role, having already explored the character to its fullest extent.

A door opens, a young man emerges looking glum, collects his coat and leaves. The next hopeful is called through. It looks like it will be Christian's turn next. We ask him, given that there is so much competition, whether he has become hardened to rejection.

"There is always a regret," he replies. "There's a sense of loss about what could have been. Sometimes, when you have failed to secure a role, and you see the finished advert going out on TV, there's a little twinge - you think, oh, I would have done that differently. I would have opened that packet with greater subtlety, or I would have barbecued that sausage a touch more sensuously. But you have to keep moving forward, and I find it helps to be philosophical. Just last week I went up for an indigestion tablet commercial. There were no lines, the performance relied entirely on facial expressions and I'd been practising in the mirror for days. There was genuine depth in my performance, it told a real story. Here was a man, it seemed, that wasn't just suffering from indigestion. I'd invented a whole backstory for him. He was recently divorced, working all the hours he could to pay his alimony, riddled with self-doubt and wondering where his life had gone so wrong. I didn't get the job - but then I guess it just wasn't meant to be. I wasn't right for the role, and maybe the guy who did get it was able to pull much better faces."

It must have been a blow, we say sympathetically, especially after putting in so much work. He shrugs.

"Sure," he says. "But it's all experience. It all goes towards

helping me to perfect my art. And anyway, I'm auditioning for a constipation advert next week, so I might be able to use the same character for that."

The door opens. The previous auditioner emerges. He doesn't look too happy. It's Christian's turn now and we wish him luck as we watch him disappear through the doorway. Earlier we had asked him about how he had first got into the profession and we had learned that he has a dim view of



traditional acting schools. "Some of the stuff they try to pass off as teaching is really quite bizarre," he told us. "For instance, they make you pretend to be a tree. What's the point of that? There are very few roles for trees, as far as I'm aware. Pinter never wrote for trees. Chekov never wrote for trees. You might get a part in *Macbeth*, and I think that there's a bush in *Twelfth Night*, but apart from that, decent parts for flora are thin on the ground."

Not that Christian is all that keen on the classics of theatre. Shakespeare's soliloquys have something going for them, he thinks, since they allow an actor to speak directly to his audience. But the subject matter is usually - in his words - some "airy fairy nonsense about being or not being", whereas it really should be about trying to sell them a lawnmower or a pension plan. Elizabethan drama, Christian thinks, could have done a great deal more to monetise the medium.

The door opens. Christian emerges. He seems quite pleased. "They're going to let me know," he says. "But I'm fairly confident the job's mine. I had to take a swig from the bottle, look at the camera and go 'ahh'. It wasn't in the script, but in my head I had worked out that the character was a hard-bitten police detective working on an abduction case, and I think I conveyed his world-weariness very well in the way I wiped my mouth on my sleeve afterwards. The director had a twinkle in his eye, anyway."

And then we're off. Christian is heading to another audition across town and we help him rehearse his lines as we share a cab. The scene begins with him cleaning a kitchen worktop. Then he has to stand back in amazement and say, "Wow, I never knew my surfaces could sparkle like that. It's magic!" Finally, the script mentions that he has to do a little dance. Christian says that he is going to approach to role as a striking miner from 1984 who has spent all day picketing a Nottinghamshire coal pit. Who are we to argue with him?

## 'TV Property show ruined my health,' says property developer.

Businessman Robert Baumeister claims that he has developed a rare condition following an appearance on the popular daytime TV show *Homes Under the Hammer*. The programme follows the fortunes of developers as they snap up properties at auction and renovate them in the hope of eventually turning a profit. Robert featured two years ago when he bought a near-derelict townhouse in Stockport. TV crews have periodically revisited him to record his progress, and after the last visit his wife pointed out that he seemed to have acquired an unusual habit. A trip to his doctor revealed that Robert is suffering from Maxwell's Syndrome, which means that whenever he walks into a room, he stops and looks around unconvincingly for a few moments before proceeding.

"I lost count of the number of times the film crew asked me to do that," Robert told us. "They said to me, 'walk into the room, look about as if you're examining the place, then carry on.' They got me doing that over and over and over again. It was horrible. It made me look like a proper idiot and after a while my neck started to ache, but when I protested they just shouted at me and said that it was an important part of the format, and that everyone had to do it."

Now the habit has stuck and Robert performs the awkward and absurd gesture every time he walks through a doorway. "I can't go into a shop now because I just draw attention to myself," he explained. "I went to the bank yesterday and they called the police because they thought I was casing the joint. And I've fallen out with most of my friends - whenever I visit their houses, I do this weird 'looking around' thing and they all think I'm being judgemental."

Unfortunately, there is no cure, but Robert is not the only person who is struggling to cope following a stint on a daytime TV show. Olivia Woodchip was featured on the programme *Money for Nothing*, in which unwanted rubbish is given new life by being upcycled into useful and desirable items. Now she can no longer walk past a skip without dragging out any old piece of junk and turning it into a lamp.

Meanwhile, Jenna Clangbury is suing the makers of *Come Dine with Me* for turning her into a social pariah, unable to eat anywhere without giving the food marks out of ten and doing a short piece to camera about how the pasta was overdone.

And after only one appearance on *Claimed and Shamed*, the documentary series following a team of insurance fraud investigators, Keith 'Nosher' Smith contracted a severe six-year custodial sentence for fraud.

### Meat-based Developer Required

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## Detective Needs to Watch His Own Back

In one of the more unusual cases to reach the courts in recent weeks, private investigator Micky Gumshoe is being sued by Mr and Mrs Denby-Pilmore in two separate cases. Mr and Mrs Denby-Pilmore are currently going through divorce proceedings and Mr Denby-Pilmore hired Mr Gumshoe to follow his wife and obtain evidence of her infidelities. At the time, he was not aware that Mrs Denby-Pilmore had already hired the investigator to find out whether her husband was, in her words, "carrying on with that blonde tart from the office."

Spotting an opportunity to make life easier, Mr Gumshoe reported to both parties that

he suspected they were being followed and persuaded them that he should make it his priority to investigate this outrageous breach of privacy. As a result, he ended up following himself, for which he was paid twice over. Mr and Mrs Denby-Pilmore are both claiming that a) this was a gross deception; and b) that in any case he didn't actually follow himself at all, and just sat in the pub all day watching the racing on the telly.

Meanwhile, Mr Gumshoe is counter suing, claiming that his actions have actually brought the couple closer together and as such they are obliged to settle his invoice for marriage guidance counselling.

## Bakery's Lead Cakes Under Threat

### Business may have to close due to 'deaths'!



A bakery in Wigan has had to stop selling one of its most popular products after Trading Standards claimed that it contained a banned additive. Arthur's Oven has been selling bread, cakes and pastries to the people of Wigan for almost fifty years. The bakery is a small family business and was opened by Arthur Evans in 1975. Today it is run by his daughter, Sarah, and one of its top selling lines is "Arthur's special", a type of iced butter cake made to a secret recipe devised by her father. However, the local Trading Standards department has now instructed Sarah to withdraw it from sale after tests revealed that the fondant contained significant quantities of lead.

"It's ridiculous," Sarah told us. "People have been eating my father's cakes for years with no ill effects. I am aware that there have been a number of cases of suspected lead poisoning, but that lead could have come from anywhere. There's no proven link."

Sarah claims that the lead is an essential part of the recipe and is necessary to weigh the icing down and stop it floating away. She has tried lead-free alternatives, such as iron and granite, but says that customers responded negatively and she was forced to revert to the original recipe.

A spokesperson from Wigan Trading Standards told us that the authority had to take action because of a number of complaints. "Most of these complaints have come from people who claim their health has suffered as a result of consuming the product," said Laura Horwood. "But the lead content makes these cakes much heavier, and in one case an injury occurred as a result of the consumer dropping it on their foot."

This is not the first time that Arthur's Oven have fallen foul of Trading Standards. In 2011 they were ordered to stop using magnetic sprinkles on their fairy cakes, as the products had a tendency to fly out of people's hands when attracted by passing buses. And in 2007 they were prosecuted after the asbestos content of their pastry was found to be significantly in excess of permitted levels.

Sarah Evans believes that the authorities are being unnecessarily draconian in the way that they are enforcing regulations. "I really feel that we are being persecuted," she said. "We are a small business and we're struggling as it is, the way things are at the moment. This kind of interference is really not helping us. I get that people do occasionally become seriously ill as a result of eating our products, and I understand that the authorities have a duty to protect the public. But we have to make a living. If the council were really serious about protecting the interests of small businesses, they would be prepared to turn a blind eye to the occasional poisoning."

But Sarah can take some consolation, as it's not all bad news for the bakery: they have just received a major order from a national construction company. "We have no issue with Arthur's Oven continuing to sell these products," said Laura Horwood from Trading Standards. "We only ask that they sell them as building materials and stop claiming that they are fit for human consumption."

# Windows Ascending

Our technology correspondent Daisy Fortran reports on Microsoft's latest operating system.

Microsoft are confident that their latest iteration of Windows will finally be able to achieve what they set out to do when they first launched the software: to eradicate the end user from the process entirely.

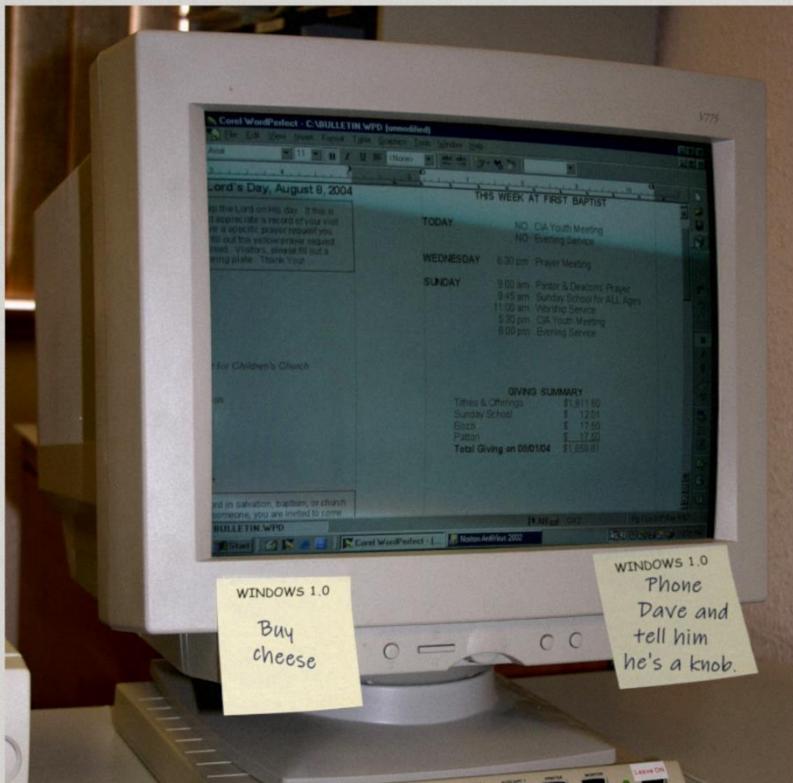
Windows' dominance of the home PC market has been a story of gradual change. When it first launched in 1981, Windows 1.0 was a Post-it note that people stuck to the side of their monitor to remind them to buy cheese. Windows 2.0 actually made it onto the computer, although it only had one window, and all the programs you used ran through DOS.

It wasn't until later that Windows managed to oust DOS from your system entirely and take over the running of the computer itself. From this point, successive releases consumed more and more resources in the company's bid to achieve complete dominance of your hardware. It used to be the case that you bought a computer to run applications and software, and that Windows would help you to run those applications. Now you buy a computer to run Windows and, on a good day, if the wind is in the right direction, Windows might briefly allow you to run an application.

Windows 10, which Microsoft announced as the final version of Windows in 2014, appeared to complete the process of domination, placing itself in complete control of your device. Although it gives you the illusion of control, Windows 10 determines what processes run and when they run, and if it decides it wants to update itself in the middle of an important Zoom meeting the only thing you can do is leave the software to get on with it and go and read a book until it summons you back.

However, it appears that Microsoft now has loftier ambitions. Either that, or they've got a load of developers sitting around with nothing better to do. Windows 11, Microsoft's final version plus one, demands that you go out and buy a new PC in order to run it, after which it will commandeer your wi-fi and use it to gain control of your smart fridge, before launching an all-out appliance-based uprising against humanity.

Mind you, as long as we can still play solitaire, we probably won't mind.



PC with two iterations of Windows 1.0 running simultaneously.



## We're Running Out of Antiques

A worrying report just published by UNESCO concludes that the world is rapidly running out of antiques and pins the blame squarely on the increasing number of antiques shows on TV. Programmes like *Bargains in the Basement*, *Antiques Assault Course* and *Dosh Up Your Attic* have proven incredibly popular and are spawning new variations on the format all the time. But in addition to giving us a growing roster of freakishly attired and eccentric experts, the shows are contributing significantly to the dwindling supplies of old and collectable stuff.

Marnie Stovepipe runs an antiques emporium in Saffron Waldon, and regularly plays host to TV crews filming their latest episodes. Just last week she was visited by *Hidden Heirlooms*, *Cash for Crap* and *Celebrity Antique Gangbang*, who between them managed to clear out the entire shop. "They even bought the fire extinguisher," said Marnie. "I mean, fine, it's great for business, but where am I going to find the stuff to restock it? All the people who normally supply my junk - I mean, my highly valuable items of historical and artistic interest - all my normal suppliers have just got empty warehouses. I might have to start selling new stuff, which quite frankly is a nightmare. See, if you sell an antique table and it's riddled with holes and a leg drops off, well that just adds to its character. If it's in that state when it's just come from the factory, people start demanding their money back."

The UNESCO report suggests that one possible solution is to downgrade the definition of "antique". Currently, what constitutes an antique is governed by the International Convention on Relics, Ancient Artifacts and Collectable Heirlooms (true, look it up\*) which determines an antique to be any item that was manufactured seventy or more years ago. Of course, there is a huge market for collectable rubbish that is much newer, and already we are seeing a shift towards such items. Forty years ago, a typical episode of the venerable BBC programme *Antiques Roadshow* would see Arthur Negus weeping with joy as he admired the veneer on an authentic Georgian rosewood dressing table. Now you're more likely to see a couple of wacky children's presenters wetting themselves over a genuine Nokia 3310. Garbage that you would have at one time struggled to shift at a car boot sale is now being fought over by minor celebrities on *Race for Riches*, and in a recent episode of *Bish Bash Bosh*, *Let's Make Some Dosh*, one contestant managed to get one and a half grand for some fourteen-year-old loft insulation that he found in his attic.

\*Not true, we made it up.

# Garden Peas

With our gardening correspondent Barney Peas

Well, it's that time of year when our gardens and allotments come alive with visitors, and of course we must do everything we can to encourage visiting wildlife, whether it's hanging up sausages for hedgehogs, putting out a saucer of milk for wild camels or simply filling the bird bath with Lucozade for the benefit of poorly snails.

But some of these visitors are not so welcome, causing damage to plants and shrubs, and upsetting the delicate balance of nature that we have striven so hard to maintain. These pests need to be discouraged, and in this week's column I'm going to tell you about some of the worst culprits and show you how best to deal with them.



## 1. Vine Weevils

Here's an easy way to tell if you have vine weevils in your garden. Pick a time when it's particularly quiet, mid-morning would be best, step outside and listen. Can you hear an annoying whiney noise that just seems to drone on and on? That will be vine weevils. The noise you can hear is the sound of them complaining about anything and everything. No subject is off limits to them, they will moan about everything: the weather (it's too hot, it's too cold), the colour of your garden furniture (it's too blue, it's too red, it's the wrong shade of green) and even each other (why is it so noisy round here, I blame those weevils on the next leaf, they're always moaning about something).

Thankfully vine weevils don't cause much damage - they're far too busy complaining to actually do anything about it. They are, however, bloody irritating, so you'll want to deal with them as quickly as possible. Most pesticides only make them more frustrating, but if you can track down their nest and tarmac over it, that will soon shut them up.



## 2. Common Whitefly

The common whitefly is very much a creature of habit. The one thing that it can't abide is change, and if left alone in a quiet, undisturbed part of your garden, you'll hardly notice it's there. However, should you dig a new flowerbed, lay a path or, god forbid, install one of those new-fangled water features, it will grumble incessantly about how things were better in the old days before all these horrid new developments.

To the whitefly, any new feature is an 'eyesore', a 'hideous carbuncle' and 'a slap in the face for traditional standards and values'. They will naturally retreat from anything new and modern, which makes it relatively easy to round them up and shepherd them into the darkest, nastiest most neglected part of your garden, where they will be at their happiest.



### 3. Giant Electric Killer Hedgehog

Quite a contentious one this. No doubt you have heard all about the giant electric killer hedgehog - about how it is an invasive species from Europe, having reached our shores by stowing away on boats; about how it has supplanted our native hedgehogs and is responsible for a wave of devastation, destroying crops and garden plants.

You've probably also heard how they carry diseases and parasites, how they were genetically engineered in an East European lab, and how they can paralyse or even kill at a touch.

I bet you haven't seen one though. There is a simple reason for that: they don't exist. Stories of the giant electric killer hedgehog are just the ravings of conspiracy theorists, deluded minor celebrities and out-of-work actors. There was a time where such people would stand on street corners shouting their incoherent nonsense at passers-by along with the rest of the tinfoil hat brigade. Unfortunately, social media has now given them a platform and a whiff of verisimilitude. Trust me, the giant electric hedgehog is not a thing, and your mate who says he's seen one is off his nut.



### 4. Spotted Gall Mite

When gardeners tell you that the gall mite is the most disagreeable pest they encounter in the garden, they are being quite literal. The gall mite will disagree with you about everything, just for the hell of it. It will sit on a twig as you're working away in your flowerbed and criticise your weeding, your hoeing, your pruning and pretty much everything else you do. And it doesn't end there. According to the gall mite, your dress sense is hideous, your social life is pitiful, you are talentless, you're incompetent, your views are misguided, your every thought is moronic and you are, in short, a thoroughly worthless individual.

Nobody has ever asked the gall mite for its opinions, but this persistent and aggravating little tick will offer them up regardless, vociferously and incessantly. Dealing with them is not easy since they don't respond to pesticides or rational debate, and you can't even agree with them as they will simply change their minds in order to keep the argument going. If you are lucky, a cold winter might kill them off, but otherwise your only options are to either put up with them or move house and hope they don't follow you.





## 5. Pigeons.

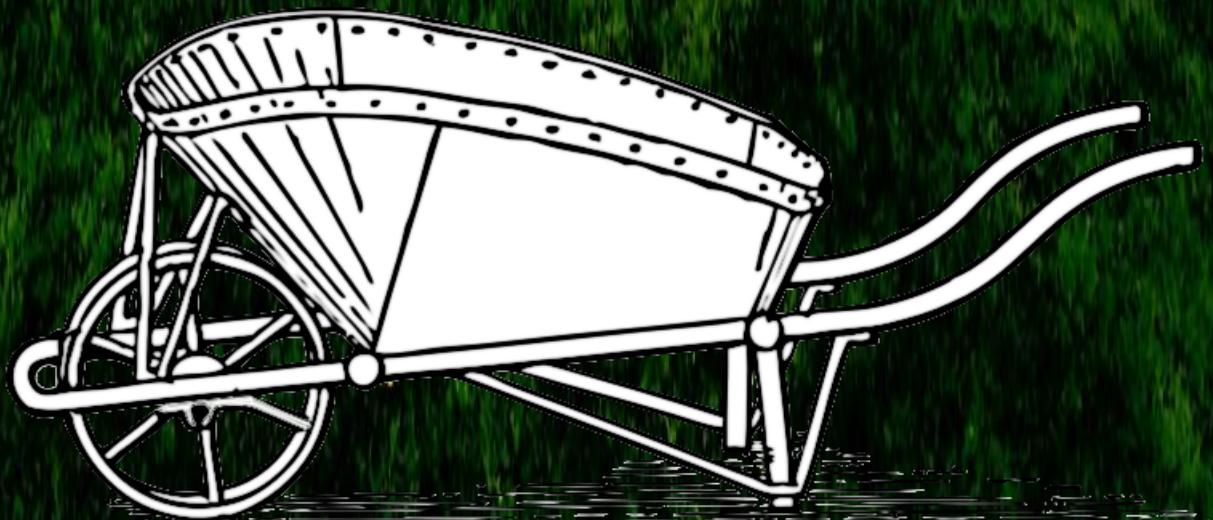
Pigeons are common visitors to our gardens, and you are unlikely to encounter a more obnoxious, self-obsessed preening narcissist. Oh, don't they just love themselves, the fat little divas, strutting about like they own the place. Admittedly, they don't cause much damage, but I can't stand the sight of the little ponces. They make me sick.

Some people have put it about that uncooked rice will cause pigeons to explode.

Nonsense! You'll be telling me next that pasta makes beetles shrivel up and cous-cous will cause a grass snake to undergo an existential crisis, question its own existence and slope off to spend the next ten years living in a caravan in Provence. No, if it's exploding pigeons you want, you need gunpowder. You can get it at most good garden centres. Just sprinkle a little on the bird table, stand well back and watch the magic happen. And don't worry - it's environmentally friendly and the kids love to watch 'em go bang.

Next Week: Worms and their wiggly ways.

I tell you why I hate the little bleeders and show you the best techniques for tying them in knots.



# Guerrilla Scent Marketing



**If anyone told you** that you could carve out a decent career breaking wind for a living, you'd probably come up with some smart aleck remark about going into politics or hosting *Good Morning Britain*. And yet Trevor Pringle has been one of the UK's top commercial trumppers for the last ten years.

Trevor, you see, is what is known as a "guerrilla scent marketer". You may already know about scent marketing, but in case you don't, I'll fill you in. You've heard how the odour of baking bread can help you to sell your house? Well, it's true and employing scents to encourage you to spend is widely used in retail. For instance, the fresh coffee you smell in your favourite coffee shop is most likely out of a can, just like the whiff of popcorn at your local multiplex. Manipulating your sense of smell is a powerful marketing tool and many businesses have their own signature smells, which are just as much a part of their branding as their logos.

It's not hard to see how you could undermine these attempts by introducing a noxious and unpleasant smell of your own. And this is where Trevor Pringle comes in: he is employed by businesses to visit the premises of their competitors and wander around farting and corrupting the atmosphere.

"I have a natural talent for it," he tells us. "And that's important in my game. Oh, there are a lot of people who will use artificial means - stink bombs or disgusting concoctions that they've created in

their sheds and garages - but you can't beat a natural guff. It lingers longer, it's more pungent and it just gets a better reaction from customers altogether. Plus, when you're smuggling artificial substances into places, there is always the chance that you will get caught by the security staff. Now me, I'm not likely to get my bottom confiscated, am I? I can be in and out of there like a summer breeze. Well, not exactly a summer breeze, but you take my meaning."

Some people might consider Trevor's profession to be an unsavoury one for all sorts of reasons, not least because sabotaging the marketing efforts of legitimate businesses seems underhand and unethical. But Trevor doesn't see it like that.

"As the saying goes, all's fair in love, war and retail," he tells us. "Look at it this way: these shops and business are already deceiving their customers by filling the air with fake smells. Supermarkets are naturally full of disgusting and unpleasant odours: rotting meat and vegetables, pungent cleaning fluids, not to mention the stench of their actual customers. You could argue that they are wrong to try and disguise this. All I'm doing is restoring the status quo."

In truth, Trevor does have loftier ambitions than first appearances might suggest. "I do what I do, because that's what my customers want," he explains. "It pays the bills. But I get it: it's destructive. Where others create, I damage and destroy. It might keep a roof over my head, but there is very little job satisfaction. That's why I am

trying very hard to develop techniques for the organic deployment of positive aromas."

What Trevor means is that he wants to produce more pleasant-smelling trumps. Currently businesses use artificial sprays and diffusers to create those comforting aromas of freshly cut grass or sweet-smelling flowers. Trevor believes that when farted out naturally such fragrances are much more effective than any produced in a factory. To this end he has been experimenting with his diet.

"I've been eating daffodils and drinking a lot of pine disinfectant," Trevor explains. "To be honest, it's having precisely the opposite effect than what I'd hoped for. Still, it's early days yet, and with a bit of fine tuning, experimentation and special clenching exercises, I'm confident that my bum will be producing a broad spectrum of rich and pleasing aromas in no time at all."

# Some More People You've Never Heard Of

## Pieter Elastoplato

President of the People's Republic of Groinburg, which is a small enclave in Walsall, quite near the M6. Pieter declared independence from the West Midlands in 1988, following a dispute about planning permission for a conservatory. The council continues to challenge his claim of sovereignty, although, due to an administrative error, the United Nations recognises Groinburg as a nation in its own right. In fact, Groinburg is a permanent member of the Security Council and Pieter regularly sends a delegation to New York. The country's major economic activity is claiming expenses, with the added bonus that they don't pay any tax. Incidentally, the disputed conservatory has still not been built, which some might say has rendered the whole exercise somewhat pointless.

## Lord Godfrey Spandex



Inventor of the fully integrated goat milking system, considered to be the single greatest advance in goat milking since the development of pneumatic gloves. His system only works on fully integrated goats and to date no

reliable solution exists for non-integrated and partially integrated goats.

## Professor Suzi Polyester

Early twentieth century linguist and keen proponent of the Cambridge comma. This now defunct example of punctuation was four times larger than the rival Oxford comma, twice as heavy and approximately 40% curlier. Its use was banned in schools in 1932 on health and safety grounds.

## Massive Mathew McCallister

Four times winner of the speed trumping championships. McCallister could fart at a prodigious rate and at speeds in excess of twenty-four feet per second. The average rate for a normal human is ten feet per second. McCallister claimed he was descended from Lord Julius Windbreak, who was Chief Farter to the Court of Queen Elizabeth I. McCallister's talented bottom has attracted the interest of NASA and the Russian military, and prompted the unceasing disgust of his neighbours and members of his immediate family.

## Keith Marx

The ninth Marx Brother. He only made one film with the group, before he left to start a business filling horse troughs with custard for the benefit of sweet-toothed donkeys. Rumours abound that the real reason he left was because he fell out with Harpo over the correct way to fit a safety guard on

a capstan lathe. He disappeared in 1975 and is still wanted by the police, who want to question him on the whereabouts of the sixth, seventh and eight Marx Brothers.

## Pettruchio the Happy Chicken

Perhaps the world's happiest chicken, a title which admittedly is not too hotly contested. Pettruchio lived on a farm in Alabama in the 1950s, and whenever anyone went past, they would stop and say, "What the hell is that chicken laughing about?" We never did find out what it found so funny, but it was friends with a pig who occasionally had a fit of the giggles, and people speculate that they were sharing some private joke.

## Florence Avocado



Growing up on a farm in eighteenth century Yorkshire, there was very little for Florence to do with her spare time, since table tennis was banned and the first Nintendo console wouldn't be invented until 1892. Instead, she

dedicated her life to helping animals in distress - particularly worms, which she used to untie when they had got themselves all tangled up. This dovetailed nicely with the chief pastime of her brother, Granville Avocado, an evil bastard who would spend his free time tying them in knots in the first place.

## John Henry Mastodon



In 1962, John Henry Mastodon climbed Mount Everest the hard way - up the inside. Using nothing more sophisticated than a pickaxe, a trowel and a small penknife, the intrepid mountaineer tunnelled his way up the middle of the mountain. The hole he created still exists today and is used to run electrical cables and water pipes up to a small gift shop at the summit, where you can buy a commemorative tea towel that celebrates the achievement.

## Bartholomew Lungs

Billed as The Man Who Talks to Penguins, Bartholomew Lungs toured his act around the provincial theatres of the UK in the forties and fifties. Lungs claimed to be able to talk to many species of penguin, including rockhoppers and emperors. Anyone fortunate enough to have witnessed his show would have seen about a dozen penguins lined up on stage, eight of them stuffed, while Lungs spoke to them at length on a variety of subjects including agricultural techniques, new developments in

automobile manufacture and football. He spoke in English, the penguins never answered back and those that were still alive would frequently get bored and waddle off stage. Whenever people complained about the birds' lack of a response, Lungs explained that they were all mesmerised by what he had to say, as evidenced by their rapt and thoughtful expressions.

## Malinky Formica

Someone has to hold the world record for eating the most spaghetti hoops with a cocktail stick whilst being on fire and parachuting out of a plane, and that person is Malinky Formica. This was not his real name, of course. Oh no, that would be silly. His real name was Malinky Jones. Although Malinky achieved the record, he did not survive the attempt because, you know, fire. By the way, if you're interested, the record is three.

## Rancid Alan Grease

Grease briefly came to the nation's attention in the 1970s when he claimed to be the last remaining descendant of the Plantagenet line and therefore the rightful King of England. Minimal research was able to reveal that he was actually a self-employed plumber from Leicester, trading under the name "Speedyplumb". However, even this claim was disputed by one of his former customers, who said that he was still waiting for him to come and fit a shower, and that he didn't think the workshy git knew one end of a plunger from the other.

## Vespasian Droid

You've all heard of Giovanni Schiaparelli, who was the first person to discover canals on Mars. No? Oh, well you have now. Anyway, Vespasian Droid is the astronomer who discovered railways on Saturn, monorails on

Mercury and a helicopter pad on Uranus. He died tragically when crossing a road in Taunton, when he was too late in discovering the big red bus that was heading towards him at speed.

## Hippocathius



Greek mathematician who invented the four-sided triangle. Although the four-sided triangle is still used in some branches of engineering and has certain specialised functions in microcircuitry, it has been largely superseded in common everyday use by the square.

## Alphonse Lionheart Bullett

Eighteenth century adventurer, whose real-life exploits became the source material for a series of popular pamphlets. Accounts differ as to his eventual fate. Opinion has it that he was eaten by a giant octopus in the Indian Ocean in 1786. However, there are those who believe that the facts have become confused, and that what really happened is that he ate a giant octopus in an Indian restaurant and went home early to sleep it off. An unpaid restaurant bill currently on display in a museum in Mumbai seems to confirm this version of events.

## Leo Sprocket

Nobody important.

# The brilliant craftsmanship of kebab

*U n i q u e h a n d m a d e f o o d*

*D*

*Donner of London*



**Hasdrubal Creative Solutions Ltd**  
FOREVER FORWARD THINKING

**Customer: The National Kebab Marketing Board**

**Brief: To reinvigorate the image of the donner kebab and appeal to a wider and more affluent customer base.**

Sir, thank you for entrusting this exciting and nationally important campaign to us here at Hasdrubal Creative Solutions Ltd. We appreciate the necessity of updating public perceptions about this exciting and much-loved foodstuff and have embraced this exciting and challenging task with vigour, imagination and much excitement.

Our preliminary work has embraced a number of exciting and diverse marketing strategies, based on initial market research and, excitingly, we continue to refine our efforts through consultation with focus groups.

As this first phase of our work is approaching completion, we are forwarding you several mock-ups which illustrate our various approaches, and we would like to invite your feedback.

## **#1 Exotique**

The emphasis here is on promoting the product as a luxury item. Exclusivity is key. This is not just a kebab that you might pick up at a late night takeaway. This is a kebab enjoyed by sophisticates; the kind of kebab that James Bond might enjoy when taking a break from the baccarat table at a Monte Carlo casino.

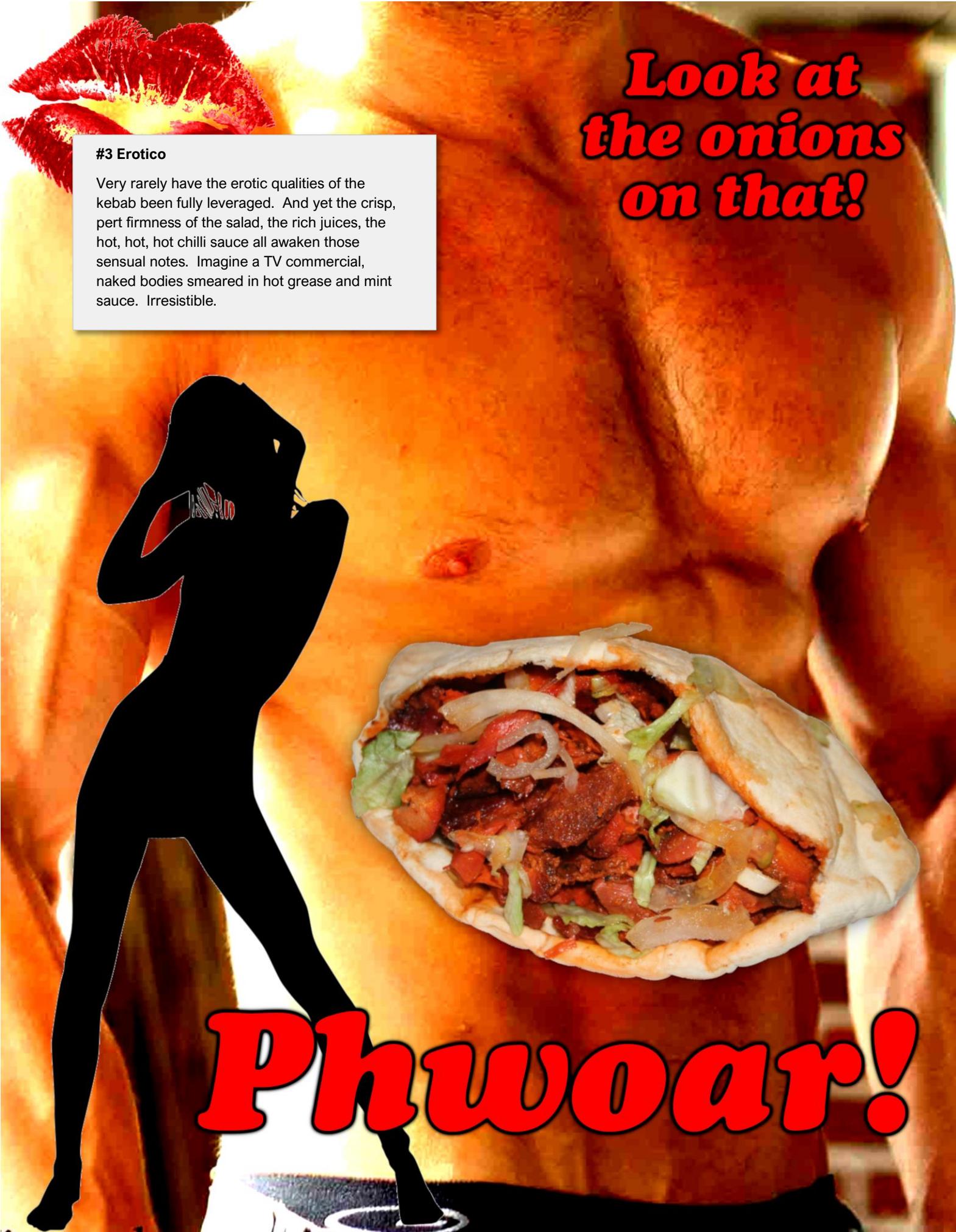
HEY.  
LET'S  
'BAB GO FOR A



**WOW!**

**#2 Cool-Funky**

Here we are marketing the kebab as a must-have item to be enjoyed with friends. It's a message aimed squarely at the youth market. Bright colours, fun images. It's not just a dirty old donner anymore. It's a 'Bab. It's cool. It's funky. It's what all the kids want.



### #3 Erotico

Very rarely have the erotic qualities of the kebab been fully leveraged. And yet the crisp, pert firmness of the salad, the rich juices, the hot, hot, hot chilli sauce all awaken those sensual notes. Imagine a TV commercial, naked bodies smeared in hot grease and mint sauce. Irresistible.

**Look at  
the onions  
on that!**

**Phwoar!**

# Just like Grandma used to make

## #4 Traditional

Food is not just food anymore. It connects us with home and family, and reminds us of times gone by. The picture of homespun domestic cosiness conjured up by this advert may be a fiction, but it nevertheless strikes at some deep sense of nostalgia that is present in the DNA of us all.



**Aunt Betsy's Kebabs**  
Full of traditional goodness

# Life is easier with iKebab.

Say hello to the future of Wi-Fi enabled fast food.



Donner 1.0

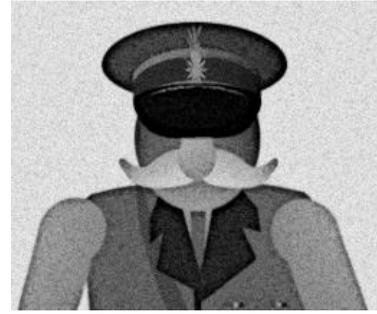
## #5 Technico

Our final approach brings us right up to date. Here we are pitching the kebab to a tech-savvy market, consumers who constantly have to be at the forefront of innovation. The simplistic style allows the product to speak for itself. It is simply the iKebab. There is no more to say.

**Hasdrubal Creative Solutions Ltd**  
FOREVER FORWARD THINKING

Major General Barmy-Phipps discusses

# Operation Lunchbox



An army marches on its stomach, some chap once said, and whilst this may well have been true at one time, these days the modern soldier is usually conveyed to the theatre of war in an armoured personnel carrier, or dropped by chopper behind enemy lines. Nevertheless, diet plays a key role in a chap's effectiveness as a fighting unit, and today's soldier is provided with the best that army nutritionists can provide. However, battlefield rations were very different back when I first entered the army as a raw recruit, during World War II.

Not that I experienced many battlefields myself as, due to a happy accident of birth, I was fortunate to have joined my regiment as an officer. My mother had spent her younger days knocking about with a high-ranking toff of slack morality and even slacker underwear, who - on pain of public exposure as a womaniser and a cad - made certain that his bastard offspring had an easy time of it. Thus, I spent most of the war at a comfortable distance from the front line. Aldershot, to be precise. Here I followed the progress of the conflict via the newspapers, comfortably ensconced in the officers' mess and never more than three feet away from a table heaving with braised duck, roast boar and expensive port.

Odd though it might seem now, I found myself envying

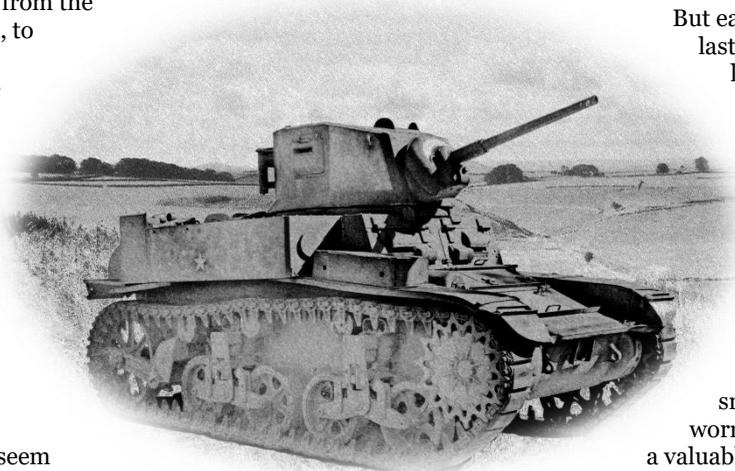
our boys on the front line, in a very real yet patronising and insincere way. Sitting at home, chugging down champagne and greased up to the eyeballs in assorted steak, venison and pork, I'm sorry to say that I became a bit of a bloater. I put on sixty pounds during the North Africa Campaign. It was hell.

And yes, despite my own troubles, I was well aware that out there - in the trenches of, ooh, Egypt, or South Africa, or Uzbekistan, or wherever this blasted war was supposed to be taking place - life was a very different kettle of fish. (In fact, I'm sure those men would have happily killed for a nibble on a solitary rancid trout, let alone a whole kettle full.) For those brave boys, a humble tin of spam would have been a luxury. The standard army ration at the time consisted of just one can of corned beef, four ounces of tea, two hollowed out eggshells, a plank of wood and a picture of Vera Lynn.

Occasionally, rations were supplemented with a portion of hard bread. Not only was this an excellent source of fibre, but more often than not the bread turned out to be so hard that it joined in the fighting. Some of it proved instrumental in a number of important battles, and one particular loaf - Major Crumbly Wholegrain III - was awarded the Victoria Cross. It went on to earn much acclaim after the war, teaching baps to play the viola.

However, most of the time supplies were critically low and our boys had to rough it, using their ingenuity to supplement their rations with whatever they could forage. Survival wasn't easy, but it was possible. For instance, the nutritional values of mud are quite low, but you can still get your daily requirements of protein, vitamins and phosphates if you eat enough of it. It was not unknown for a platoon of men to get through a whole field in a single sitting, and during WWII entire regions of France and Belgium were lost in this way.

But eating mud was only ever a last resort. Hunting the local wildlife was much more preferable although the conflict had driven away many of the larger animals, such as rabbits and deer. It got to the point where a soldier would consider himself lucky if he managed to ensnare a snail, a beetle or even a worm. Still, even these were a valuable source of nourishment and could be quite palatable if



*World War II tank in white wine sauce*

prepared with enough imagination. In fact, the whole insect craze caught on and it was not uncommon for soldiers to open their rations, eat the weevils and throw away the biscuits. Slug and spider recipes were frequently traded between soldiers at the front, and Captain Ben Poltroon of the Catering Corps gained a certain amount of celebrity for his "Cockroach Surprise". Indeed, insect dishes became his speciality and after the war he opened a thriving restaurant in Soho - which remains open to this day, in spite of frequent and unwelcome interest from health inspectors.

Even so, it was a state of affairs that could not persist. Towards the end of the war the bugs were getting wise to it. A new species of super spider had emerged that was smart enough to outmanoeuvre the snares. The battlefields became infested with muscular worms capable of prising open steel traps. In extreme cases the insects fought back and there were lurid tales -

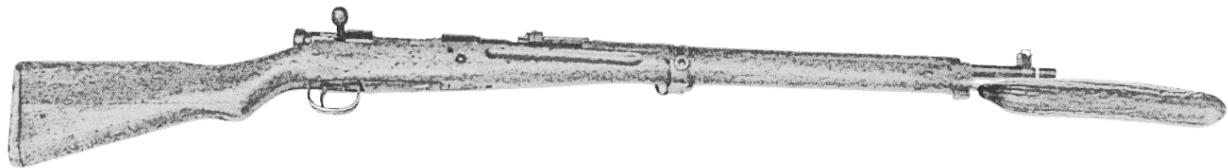
were wiped out by a shit wave over ten metres high and measuring 4.6 on the effluent scale.

The resourceful British soldier could make a meal of vehicles as well as equipment. By the time Allied forces arrived in Berlin, something in excess of seventy per cent of the tanks at their disposal had already been digested. It was only after the war, when equipment returned to these shores covered in bite marks, that the real lessons were learnt. Something clearly had to be done and so attempts were made to harden the armour plating of military vehicles to make them resistant to dentures. Furthermore, they were coated with a revolutionary new paint that made them taste of earwax, thus discouraging all but the most ravenous of soldiers from partaking of a nibble.

The scheme was a success! A specially treated Churchill tank was left alone in a room with eight

they initiated Project Lunchbox to rethink the standard army ration. It was at this point that I became directly involved with the story. I had, by this time, retired from the army and set up my own illicit spanking emporium on the south coast. As luck would have it, recent police raids and undue attention from the Sunday tabloids had forced me to curtail my activities within the spanking arena and when the Ministry got in touch with me, I was at a loose end. They, of course, were well aware of the huge amount of work I had put into eating during the war and could think of no one better to head the project. Not only that, but the Permanent Under-Secretary had been a regular at my weekly "spankathons", and he was kind enough to put in a good word for me. You see, it's not what you spank, it's who.

By the time I arrived at the special secret research facility at Portland Down many of my team had



*Rifle with cucumber attachment*

possibly apocryphal - of men who went missing in the jungles of Burma. What had happened to them? Nobody knows, but rumours of a colony of giant stick insects that had developed a taste for human flesh refused to be quashed.

With this source of food gone, troops had to turn to other sources of nutrition. Many of them took to eating bullets and shells, and this had mixed blessings. Certainly, such a diet provided more than their necessary daily intake of iron, but it did lead to troublesome outbreaks of highly explosive diarrhoea. This wasn't entirely a bad thing. After all, one man's floor is another man's ceiling, and what was an inconvenient and debilitating condition to the men of the Derbyshire Light Infantry, was the downfall of the German troops defending Leipzig, who

men, who had been starved for the experiment. After forty-eight hours the tank was remarkably well preserved, with just a few bite marks in one of the tracks and a small chunk missing from the barrel. Unfortunately, the same could not be said for one of the researchers, who inadvertently wandered into the isolation chamber and was torn limb from limb by the gluttonous group. All that was left of him were his ankles. A sad loss, but by all accounts he was a bit of a dick anyway.

That was pretty much how the situation remained right up until the mid-seventies, when new research into health and nutrition prompted the army to review its ration policy. The Ministry of Defence were keen to make use of new technologies in food processing and packaging, and so

already been assembled, including the eminent Dr Rufus P Festerson. Dr Festerson was a fellow of great initiative, and many of the initiatives he initially initiated are still in use today. It quickly became apparent that we needed to completely re-engineer army rations. We had to put together something that was light, easy to carry, that could be stored indefinitely and that had sufficient nutritional content. Dr Festerson and I began our research by carrying out a full evaluation on all the foodstuffs that were available to us. The work went on long into the night as we sat in a sealed room, sampling roast ox, evaluating succulent partridge, grading pancakes, measuring rich chocolate gateaux and assessing lobsters. Day after day, night after night, steak after steak, chicken after chicken. It was thirsty work,

and to keep our spirits up we had to wash each meal down with fine wines, champagne, sweet liqueurs and brown ale.

Finally, six months later, we emerged having sampled just about everything we could get our hands on - twice. We were pale, bloated figures, our hair was greasy and unkempt, our fingers shredded from tearing at the meat on brittle-boned carcasses, our gums a bleeding mess. Our legs were barely able to carry our now considerably increased weight, our faces were flushed and red as the

was. Somehow, confusion had arisen between the courses and it just didn't get done. These little misunderstandings can happen so easily. The only thing we could do was to repeat the whole exercise, which I would have been quite happy to do. Dr Festerson was equally keen, but we had already used up most of the project's budget for the following ten years and so it was quite out of the question. Pity. We had no option but to continue the work along more frugal lines.

And so, following a brief nap of

one evening whilst smashed out of my head on Barcardi and Coke at a Deep Purple concert - the Combat Fridge. This was a portable refrigerator that could be carried on the back or dragged along on a lightweight trolley. The Combat Fridge would make it possible for a frontline soldier to have a plentiful supply of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as milk, eggs, cheese and margarine. I constructed a prototype, painted it in camouflage colours and even included a little ammunition tray inside so that the operative could keep his bullets cold. Sadly, the



*Spitfire remaining airborne, despite bite marks*

blood pumped sluggishly through our cholesterol-clogged veins. Eyes bleary, heads aching, ears ringing, and nerves jangling.

But we had pulled through. We had taken on this gargantuan task and with fortitude, with composure, with bursting stomachs and with good old fashioned British over-indulgence. And what had we learned from this exercise? What new understanding had our researches led us to uncover? Can you guess?

Nothing.

Turns out that neither of us had been taking notes. Well, I thought that he was supposed to be writing it all down, and he thought that I

about three weeks in order to sleep off our dinner, Dr Festerson and I decided to take a look at the existing standard army rations and consider how they might be improved. How, we asked ourselves, could we ensure that the soldier in the field had an adequate supply of fresh vegetables? We quickly realised that the soldier in the field would probably have a plentiful supply of fresh produce - depending on the kind of field he was in - and so we concentrated on ways to supply fresh vegetables to the soldier in the desert, or halfway up a mountain.

It was a tricky problem, and I thought about it long and hard. I finally came up with the answer

bigwigs rejected it, pointing out that when it was opened and the little light came on inside, it could be easily targeted by helicopter gunships.

It was a great pity. I was all ready to follow it up with the Combat Oven, the Combat Barbecue, the Combat Dishwasher and the Combat Food Processor. My crowning glory would have been the Combat Combined Alarm and Teasmaid - designed to wake you up at five o'clock in the morning with a blast on a bugle and a hot cup of tea.

Meanwhile, Dr Festerson was working on a scheme that would also see eventual rejection, although it was most daring in its

scope. Taking note of the readiness of the fighting man to eat his own equipment during the last war, he wondered whether the converse would be true - in short, would they be as willing to fight with their lunch? This set him thinking about ways in which he could somehow combine weaponry with food and make a meal so deadly that it could deliver a decisive victory on the battlefield.

He admitted later that the idea wasn't entirely his own. Dr Festerson had been experiencing a few marital difficulties, mostly centred around his wife's objections to the frequent food and drink binges that now formed an important part of his work. In order to express her displeasure, Mrs Festerson had taken to spiking his meals with hidden traps - razor blades in the potatoes, sulphuric acid in the vinegar bottle, explosives in the cauliflower cheese and that sort of thing. One morning - shortly after a bowl of Rice Crispies had taken off his eyebrows - Dr Festerson realised that in the right hands food could be deadly.

Some of his subsequent ideas were quite adventurous. He outlined plans for low-level sprouts that could slip underneath enemy radar and deliver a deadly payload to anywhere in the conflict zone. He was also very keen on a network of barrage melons, which could be inflated with helium to provide protection from air attack. Sadly, these were just pipedreams. He did, however, make a number of prototypes demonstrating how various equipment could be camouflaged within popular foodstuffs - anti-personnel mines disguised as turnips, rocket launchers built into marrows and a portable radar system hidden in a steak and kidney pie. However, this line of investigation was halted by tragedy when one test subject choked on a mini-submarine hidden in a bun.

It was shortly after this incident that Project Lunchbox was cancelled and the army ration contract was given to an independent company that had made significant progress in fungus and dripping. Dr Festerson never really recovered from this

blow and he died a failure in 1983 when, in a fit of temper, his wife despatched him with a longbow concealed in a stick of rhubarb. Nevertheless, it is heartening to note that many of his ideas have since gained acceptance, and the latest state-of-the-art army rations owe much to his pioneering work.

Today's food technicians have engineered a healthy, well-balanced diet, ensuring the British soldier will always have his dinner to fall back on, no matter where

of long-range pies and pastries. Even if help was slow in arriving, the soldier always has their standard issue jam roly-poly to shelter behind.

And, of course, no soldier's kit would be complete without the carrot. Army carrots have come a long way in the last forty years. It's no secret that carrots can help you see in the dark, but modern varieties come with night vision and infra-red as standard. What's more, the tips are specially



*Barrage melon over London*

the maniacs in charge decide they want to have a war. Not only do modern army rations contain all the protein, vitamins and unproven, untested asbestos-based anti-bacterial warfare drugs needed to keep our fighting men and women alive, but many items can also be adapted to help them survive the rigours of warfare. A dehydrated lemon chicken risotto can be a lethal weapon in the hands of a trained combatant. Out of ammunition? Never fear. The beef and two veg contains enough desiccated peas to hold off a marauding enemy for up to two hours - plenty of time for reinforcements to arrive and wipe out the aggressors with a selection

hardened and can be lethal when used in hand-to-hand combat or fixed to the end of a rifle, bayonet style. And in many parts of the world the carrot is a valuable piece of currency - in a tight situation it can be exchanged for shelter, transport or real food. The future for the carrot does indeed look rosy, and the Royal Navy are currently looking into developing a special marine version, which can be inflated into a miniature hovercraft.

I think Dr Festerson would have been proud.

# Pigchums



Meet likeminded pigs in your area!

## Hamilton Scratcher

Hamilton enjoys dining out, table tennis and long walks in the countryside snuffling for truffles. He would like to meet a lady pig who is fun, outgoing and knows how to wire a plug.



## Dolly Gammon

Dolly is a specialist in fully integrated goat milking systems, lives in a quaint ivy-covered sty in the country and is looking for some handsome swine to come and whisk her off her trotters. Please, no "pork sword" jokes.



## Grampion Fatback

Do you like the films of Matt Damon? Grampion Fatback is the president of the UK Matt Damon Appreciation Society and is looking for another Matt Damon fan to share his passion and clean up after him in the toilet.



## Ham Knuckles

Ham is free and easy, and looking for a fun partner for filthy times, wallowing in their own muck. Must have their own towel.



## Malcolm "Slasher" Hogbreath

Malcolm is a fun, friendly, outgoing pig who is currently serving a sentence for armed robbery, due to an outrageous miscarriage of justice. He's out next week and is looking for someone who owns a spade, can follow a map and doesn't mind being blindfolded and driven to a secret location on the south coast.



## Dame Matilda Trotter IV

One of the Shropshire Trotters, Dame Matilda moves in some very exclusive circles, but the vet has said that this is nothing to worry about. She is looking for a gentlemen pig to escort her to a ball given by the Empress of Blandings next month. Must be housetrained.



## Snouty McScratchings

Snouty is an outgoing pig with an ingrowing toenail, looking for an upwardly mobile companion with a down-to-earth personality. GSOH, TDH and PORK.



## Bongo Swillsby

Drummer with the group Funky Bacon. When he's not gigging, Bongo enjoys nothing more than ramming his head repeatedly through the bars outside the children's playground, desperately trying to block out the tinnitus that constantly thrums through his skull. He is looking for someone to gently stroke him behind the ears and tell him in a soft voice that everything is going to be ok.

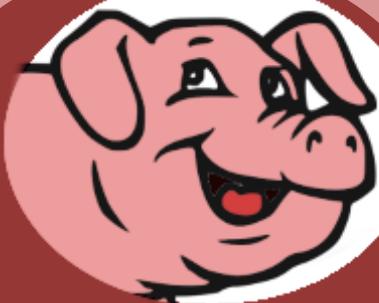


## Sir Reginald Snuffles

Sir Reginald is the current MP for Shepton Bassett South and Minister for Openly Handing out Contracts to His Mates Safe in the Knowledge That No One Is Going to Do a Damn Thing about it. He is looking for anyone who went to Eaton and is interested in getting their snout in the trough.



SATIRE



We've had enough of experts, the man on TV said,  
We have no need of facts and figures tumbling through our heads.  
It's time trust our instincts and finally admit  
There's still a place for common sense and ill-informed bullshit

I find I must agree, and so as of today  
I'll ignore the words of specialists and go my own sweet way.  
Their learning and their wisdom I'll meet with stark resistance.  
I'll make it clear to them that I've no need of their assistance.

I shall inform my doctor where to stick his stethoscope.  
He can't tell me what to do, what to eat or how to cope.  
If I fall ill at any time, my decision at that juncture  
Will be to go online and buy a book on acupuncture.

I won't stop using plastic in a bid to save the planet.  
When they offer me a bag for life, my face will be like granite.  
And if they ask me to explain why I am not conforming,  
I'll say that my mate Kev does not believe in global warming

I'm tired of watching ministers debating some conundrum  
About cash or crime or credit, or some such other bunkum.  
You see, Barry down to boozier thinks the problems of this nation  
Are all down to the BBC and rampant immigration.

Bill Gates, meanwhile, has made it his priority  
To inject us all with chips, this I have on good authority.  
While the CIA are putting drugs in Lucozade and pasta.  
And that's the truth, according to the girl who works in Asda.

(Strange, I know, but there must be something in it  
When a rumour this remarkable gains traction by the minute)

So, I prefer to trust the words of folk who work in bars,  
Of actors and presenters and eighties music stars.  
You'll disagree, I'm sure, but the thing that I have found  
Is that compared to all the experts, their advice is just as sound.

To those who say I should not put my faith in the decision  
Of a celebrity whose ranting has provoked so much derision,  
I'll remind you we are all entitled to our views  
And can chase whatever batshit theory that we choose.

So you'll forgive me if I continue to exercise my right  
To believe in all this balderdash, this rubbish and this shite.  
And I'm glad that we've finally had chance to have this chat,  
But now the aliens are coming, so where's my tinfoil hat?



# THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BLEEDING OBVIOUS

Gone to  
lunch

