

The Inconsequential

There's always time for levity

Issue 27



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COVER STORY: Freedom of Speech, Thought, Expression and Movement

Unemployment is a mental illness at best, at worst it is a deliberate mentally defective resistance to what is right for the party: sound familiar? It should as this is the persecution of any dissident thought, movement, speech and expression by so-called democratic power brokers of our time, yet its origins, in terms of ideological dictatorship are from Soviet, Stalinist Russia and Nazism as applied by Hitler.

Like the last part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, the controlling political elite is targeting social, economic groups as defective in the mind because they are proving a stumbling block for profiteering in the guise of human progress. Due to the growing intolerance of dissenting voices by the power brokers, certain groups, usually the weakest, politically, in this case the working class and its non-occupied social colleagues, the unemployed, disabled and ill, are being identified as the block to progress without accountability to anything close to moral and ethical mores. Consequently, these working class groups are having any semblance of the STEM cell that makes up human existence removed, again without accountability and moral censure.

As hard as it should be to comprehend and tolerate, the working and unworking class are going to be subjected to psychological tests to ascertain why they cannot get a well-paid job that they can recognise themselves in. These tests will find out, in the emerging Kafkaesque universe we inhabit, that any voice that questions the progress of corporatism is defective, any thought that might analyse the premise of an opportunity to work, loosely referred to without semantic and logical accountability as a job, any moves to inform victims of oppression and persecution are met with police arrests and court appearances deeming them unlawful, and any expression of dissidence is seen as aberrant by default; as how could anyone want to express anything other than happiness at the figures telling us that life is wonderful! In this age of information, control of the values of communication is the control of people's STEM, especially as laws can be altered in a lick of whitewash, a la Animal Farm, to serve those in power, then used to prosecute and persecute without memory of the change and why, and so the new law is accepted as if there were and had been no other. In such power structures, gallows are too easily erected, usually for the entertainment of those lucky working and non working class able to still watch on their mechanised gadgets of social and political insight. So many thinking people have their government-issue nooses, made by circular, tautological and one-size-fits-all political speech, that excludes, even precludes any proper analysis of any premise of what is presented. The brief argument - I heard it once on Radio, that a job these days is likely to offer too little in wages and require claims to benefits to make up the shortfall on a living exchange for labour, was dispelled by the ignorant defence that the person is not working hard enough and should take a second or third job or one paid well enough to exist on. With rope in hand, and panic of 'it could be you' promises ringing in their heads, who would be a Henry Fonda and badger at the possibility that there might be another one, if not more truths than given by sight and rhetoric alone.

Through this slippery-slope logic, once accepted, the only thing to learn is to ski downhill, anyone questioning the efficacy or moral base of the new laws - edicts and diktats as known before the ministry of truth altered the terminology - is instantly marginalised with the consequential social and economic ostracism that is drowned out by the sound of stomachs rumbling, and the painful noise of brown letters falling on the mat, if you are lucky enough to still qualify for housing benefit and have a laissez faire landlord who does nothing including not turfing you out on an economic whim. The powers in their smug complacency and worrying conviction of their rightness, without compunction of doubt merely destroy those pillars of any pantheon of social progress, by default. To an appeal to their humanity, they say: "Our processes were carried out correctly." If this was in German or Russian, we would be worried, yet because it is delivered in received English, we see nothing amiss. And, when someone stands up for those vulnerable being persecuted by this unquestioned power they are arrested as criminals for giving advice other than helping the rich avoid taxation. And, the leader of a so-called free country, marches - however controlled and elitist in its organisation - in defence of free speech whilst plotting to prevent freedom of movement, and by logical connection speech, thought and expression, by changing the laws prosecuting unionisation. Also, these law making ideologue dictators ignore the logic of anyone having their benefits stopped, with the possible consequences being homelessness and starvation - the food banks only cover two visits a year! - reacting as a thinking, feeling organism with degrees of despair. What do they say when an elected government suggests any accountability for business leaders to take less in bonuses and pay packets: if we ask them to do the right thing by taxation and limits on wages, they would leave the country (no bags needed for their wealth as most of it is already abroad in Switzerland and other tax havens) as if this is a logically accepted response to merely being accountable to the democratic country they and their business occupies at any given time. Nobody accuses them of being negative and mentally defective. This merely shows how free STEM is applied differently dependent on the class of persons, groups and friends of the political elite to which it is being referred.

The modern power brokers know how to control STEM; with corporate ideologically supportive media and a populace made indifferent to listening and thinking about philosophy all contributing to the eradication of legitimate and active collective thought, speech, expression and movement: the latter is significant in the lost fight for social spaces that gave STEM a forum for dissent. Social media has some resemblance to this but it is too easily controlled in ways that are too easily referred to the tautologies and default non-argument of "Highly paid job GOOD, no job VERY BAAAD."

Little Editorial - "Never Mind The Quantity Feel The Wit."

As another significant marker of the rolling year approaches apace, so another opportunity to reflect on its worthy, but largely ignored, message presents itself. Easter, like its more famous brother Christmas, has at its heart its own particular brand of life-enhancing, love-thy-neighbour, live-and-let-live ideals, which we are willing to let wash over us quite obligingly in the form of such classic entertainment as, for example, Ben Hur, as long as it doesn't clash with the racing on Channel 4 or prevents us eating just less than the lethal dose of chocolate. Sadly, as with Christmas and all other notable annual ceremonies, it seems the message is forgotten for the fifty or so weeks of the year that that particular event is not being promoted.

2015 has only just tiptoed cautiously into month four, but already enough atrocities have taken place to keep us suitably appalled for weeks to come. Such acts of depravity, perpetrated by individuals or groups attempting to silence or somehow punish those merely exercising their apparent right to speak and move freely, justifiably command our attention and the prime column inches. However, they also serve to divert our gaze from page five and the less publicised, and for that reason, equally insidious, narrow-minded attacks on our civil liberties carried out by those we elect to serve us (purportedly), that corrode the freedoms of the most vulnerable in our communities every day. Hitler's philosophy, "*The best way to take control over a people and control them utterly is to take a little of their freedom at a time, to erode rights by a thousand tiny and almost imperceptible reductions. In this way, the people will not see those rights and freedoms being removed until past the point at which these changes cannot be reversed*", should serve as a neon-lit warning for vigilance for any citizen of a so-called free society. Instead, it's seized upon fervently by those power brokers with the same, albeit watered-down idealogical approach, a sort of Fascism-Lite, and implemented vigorously. The only appreciable differences being a much less subtle erosion of rights and a complete indifference to whether the people see their freedoms being removed or not.

A much more in-depth analysis of the systematic dismantling of our freedoms of speech, thought, expression and movement comprises our Cover Story for this issue and it's one I would urge you to read. In addition, and as a companion piece to the above, I recommend our Fifth Column, which presents a neat counter-argument to the justification given by our inglorious leaders for their persecution of those who find themselves a victim of circumstance. Plucking a line from the Bible, completely disregarding its context, and using it to excuse subjugation is never a good idea and on page 4 we show why.

Serious political commentary has its place in satirical magazines, of course, but we should never forget there's always time for levity. Stalin's Breakfast, the Humanly Sports Pages and a collection of ribald offerings from our guest writers provide just some of the comic asides – the rest I'll leave you to discover.

Until the next time, remember, nothing promotes over-indulgence like someone dying for your sins, so ditch the guilt and enjoy!!

SMOKING LINKED TO MIRRORS

New research has revealed that smoking is linked to being dishonest and generally duplicitous.

The politician who clamoured for a blanket ban on smoking was shouted down as it was said too few people smoke even hemp, let alone cotton or man-made fibre coverings.

The researchers also found that politicians are 133% more likely to smoke in front of a mirror to be able to justify their behaviours to themselves, and only 112% of them use these tactics even on floating voters.



POLITICAL DIET

The clarion call from the parties is one of: "Vote For Me; I'll be less calories and we'll form a leaner, fitter government."

There's also rice-paper voting slips, so there's no fat, no carbohydrates or calories. It will be a slimmed-down democratic process.

"You've got to stop living off the fat of the land. We promise to reduce the burden of the fat cats."

At each polling booth voters will receive non-union wafers with every cross.

FIFTH COLUMN: COMPASSION AND PRACTICAL ETHICS

Wealth creation is problem creation? It could be read that way according to New Testament Christianity. It seems very much like Toryism has dropped its narrow mind and eyes, their anchors on Thessalonians 3:10, "If you don't work, you don't eat," unless of course, you have money, shares and property that can produce and/or inherit personal wealth and capital without having to work for it.

Thessalonians 1-5 :12-15 provides a great example of how Toryism deliberately reduces the term work to something purely material when in its Christian context, Christ seems to be talking about working hard to be Christian, spiritually, not merely as a material beast of corporate burden:

¹² Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

Christ would quiver with disappointment to see modern legislation aim to create more weak and vulnerable in service of some of the wealthiest who are 'working' to produce their own riches at the direct cost of those who work to create it. The experience of work and its effects is much more unequal than the power brokers would have us believe.

To alight on one small quote from such a large and multi-perspective tome is simplistic to a radical degree but suits the purpose of any dictatorial and punitive class-ridden ideology that controls the UK and, to a significant extent, the global psyche. The simplicity comes from a lack of consistent application of philosophical analysis of the tenets of this damning moral and ethical judgement as a visceral and natural truism. If this coolly exclusionary axiom was applied to such as shareholding, property holding and private landlords as well as so-called speculation on markets, then so many of the rich and powerful would logically be included in being damned as not working for their added wealth, therefore should not eat. However, in a situation that is flaccidly accepted ideationally as condition, this morally loaded axiom becomes perverted and serves only those with power and very little legitimate compassion. Yes, their ethics might be seen as practical but only in a moral vacuum wherein human beings are discarded and soulessly disenfranchised by material referent to the economic project that serves so few of us in terms of such important elements of being an authentic free human being.

To use easy counter argument from the same faith-based story book, a debate might be introduced to at least consider the paucity of ideas and human compassion and its understanding as a positive expression of being human, that characterises the modern economic ideology. As well as this, if we can look at some other axioms from the books of God and Jesus, we might aid debate about a claim too easily made by those with political ideology that wholly contradicts our basic understanding of the term Christian values they bandy around. It could be that part of the essence of this Christianity lies in our attitude to taxation in both monetary and intellectual contemplation terms.

Christ talks of percentage rather than flat rate giving relating to wealth, and the historical trend and deliberate undermining of taxation by governments through the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, has reduced the level of institutional Christianity even in bald material terms. The lowering of the wealth tax from 95% to a mere 40% of more money they 'earn' these days, whilst lowering our own institutionalised contribution to Christian values to a mere 19% direct but with an accompanying 20% VAT on spending as a stealth tax has levelled out the amounts paid, especially in socially real term percentages of wealth in our developed societies.

This negative material development contradicts what should be ideational Christian values of 'helping the vulnerable' and those in real need - and this includes suppressing any animal runt mentality inherent in Toryism that refers to Thessalonians entirely without further consideration of the complexities of the issue - and produces a UK that has its mores in anti-Christian values of economic truisms. "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul..." (NIV. Matthew 16:26) and "Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice," (Proverbs 11:1) better incorporate what should be our attitude to social and political organisation to properly reflect any Christian values.

There are, of course, ideational problems in merely quoting aphorisms and axioms from the two books but not only can we illustrate the true complexity of how we should be establishing Christian values institutionalised in behaviours of all interested in a fair and compassionate society, we can also counter the simplistic dogma incorporated in the base quote on the lips of those who merely claim to be Christian without applying the many facets of its guidance for a good human life. A particularly good commentary on the cold, mechanistic cruelty of such as Toryism can be posited by the quote: "He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives to the rich - both come to poverty." (NIV. Proverbs 28:16) However, we can immediately see how this damnation is only effective as critical of Toryism if we consider those

reading it can be honestly self-reflective enough to question themselves and truly analyse their disturbing certainty of their righteousness even when contradictory evidence is presented to them of the destructive effects of their legislation and ideological attitude to politically identified groups.

Like some other disturbingly single-minded power brokers from not so distant history, such lack of human compassion in applying material process as a definitive answer of 'how to do' rather than the proper ethical 'ought to do', is truly frightening. When these compassionless ideologues then claim to be Christian and on crusades should deepen feelings of despair we all should experience. Jesus Christ, given the overall impression made in the second book, would have at least had doubts and felt extreme contradiction in claiming to be Christian whilst starving people out, in so-called progressive and wealthy countries, as political coercion to fall in with corporate exploitation of the most needy in search of 'uneven scales of justice' that serve greater inequality and greater need for charity to the fundamental absence of charitableness that truly underpins what we see as Christianity.

A last prompt to thought for those power brokers claiming Christian values, either as individual or for the UK as a geographical conurbation, whilst behaving in antithetical ways, consider this: "Do not wear yourself out to get rich, have the wisdom to show restraint." (Proverbs 23:4)

DICTATING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

His Most Gracious Majestic General Majesty Idiom Sodemall, ex-dictator of a previously unknown African province, has been brought before the newly created Quality Crimes Commission. HMGGMGM will be tried for crimes against efficacious draconian productivity.

The commission is particularly interested in his PDP (Productive Dictatorship Plan) and is seeking financial redress for all the president's failures to achieve 0% error rate in his ethnically diverse pogroms. It is thought that the ex-dictator will be excommunicated from the church and be blackballed by his gentlemen's club for his lack of cost-unit control.

EDUCATED LAUGHS

Chuck Le Harty, the stand-up comedian has become chair of philosophy in his local university.

"I don't know what this will do for my standing in the comedy community but philosophers were, and continue to be, some of the best exponents of comedy the modern world knows." Chuck said in a deadpan manner.

NO MEETING OF MINDS

Social anthropologists are predicting that human physicality will become a thing of the past within five generations. Even babies will be produced by 3D printers, so no contact of any kind need be entered into.

The emphasis on cosmetic surgery will diminish as video-conferencing in all aspects of life increases. A person will be able to photoshop the image they present in the remote exchange; like gaming, they will create their own 'physical' yet merely visual avatar through which they will live their cost-efficient and low error rate life.

However, on a cautionary note, it will take much longer for our humanity to be thus eradicated as advances in technology merely reflect our humanity and our foibles that will still find fault with a virtual bus driver, train driver, even taxi driver who fails to transport its avatar customers to a virtual social space punctually. It bodes ill for the kind of transportation in the likes of Star trek. Teleporting will go underground for those visceral dinosaurs who really like physical proximity as a fundamental part of human communication.

THROUGH A LENS

A father of two subjected himself to a citizen's arrest recently. John Doeyed brought himself to book after a tragic incident in the family back garden. Mr Doeyed was shooting footage of his latest offspring and watched as the very little tyke tumbled off the picnic table and landed on their cat. Although the little fellow was physically unscathed, he was traumatised by his role in killing the family pet.

"I had become impervious to my physical role in my children's development and was watching his growth through a lens only. On this occasion I was numb to the dangers of the inevitable tumble. I suddenly realised how distant and effectively neglectful of my son's welfare I'd become. And all for £250: I feel ashamed."

TAKING A BATHOS

A modern day Alfred Prufrock is today counting his blessings.

"At least I have a sophisticated mobile device that shows the tender courtesy to say goodbye to me." He said. The quiet fellow also discussed the progress made with this new application that has moved on from the apathy app that basically thought for the user to the exclusion of any idea the user may have had for the device's use.

There is also a hidden but influential application that monitors the movement of the women who come and go and talk of Michelangelo's friend on social media, called David.

The device even has yellow edges in homage to the famous poem by TS Eliot.

How Green was my Beret?

by Pat McConnell

'Your name is Bond, Bill Bond', said the disembodied voice behind the light shining into his eyes.

'Tisn't, look you. I'm Mervyn Thomas, from North Wales, Barmouth, mun. What it is.'

'And you can stop that stupid Welsh accent, you Ffwl'. At that, Mervyn felt a sharp punch to his kidneys, and slumped forward though his arms were tied to the chair. He did not cry out, however.

'Gareth Edwards, Barry John, Mervyn Davies, John Taylor, JPR Williams, Gerald Davies' Mervyn mumbled to himself. He had been taught in his Service anti-torture training that the best way to not think of the pain is to endlessly repeat lists of facts. Mervyn chose Welsh rugby teams. He knew every player in every Welsh team since 1881, and not only the teams but also the scores and who scored.

Mervyn's/Bill's mother Cerys (Cerri)Morgan had run away from her home in Barmouth when she was just 17, with Mervyn's father, Billy Bond, a singer and saxophone player in a travelling show band that had actually appeared once on Top of The Pops. Billy, of course, skipped after a few years, leaving Cerri alone to bring up little Billy. Her dreams of singing at the London Palladium gone, she worked in Tesco in Camberwell for the rest of her short life.

Every summer and school holidays, Billy (or Gwilly as his mother called him) went back to Barmouth to spend time with his Granny Morgan and Auntie Aelwen (Ally). His natural gift for mimicry meant that he was soon speaking Barmy like a native. He also helped Ally out in the chip shop where she worked. The owner (and Ally's sometimes boyfriend) was Toni Togneri an Italian who came to Llandudno to find work. From Toni, Billy quickly learned a lot of Italian swearwords.

This gift for languages served Billy well as he managed to get a scholarship to Oxford to study Modern Languages and while there he was discreetly tapped by his tutor, who was also a recruiter for MI5. After joining the Service and surviving the training, Billy spent a few years as a junior spy in Rome (nominally junior trade attaché), even being invited to a few bunga-bunga parties at Prime Minister Berlusconi's villa.

Several months ago, Billy was telephoned by his MI5 handler. 'You speak Welsh, Old Boy. Fancy a bit of time in Sheep Shagging land? Apparently the Welsh Liberation Army has reformed and are promising some trouble'. When Billy said 'Yes, Please', he added 'We have got you a job as a local sports reporter on the Southwest Evening Post, in Neath. Be a good cover to go around and ask questions. Your name's Mervyn Thomas by the way, go see Q [who was not really called Q] for the cover details and all that technical stuff'. Shaking Mervyn's hand, 'Probably nothing in it, so no need to rush back, Boyo' he laughed at his own joke.

Mervyn could not recall how he had ended up in this chair with this light in front of his eyes, with this headache. He remembered coming out of the pub, ducking into an alley for a quick whiz, when he heard some steps behind and felt a thud on his noggin. He woke up here.

'I see the Service has trained you well in reacting to torture, Mr Bond' said the voice. 'But I bet they don't know that you talk in your sleep, do they?' At that, Ruth's face came into the view beside the light.

If anything Ruth looked even more beautiful than usual in her tight camouflage combat gear, wearing a dark green beret and carrying a gun. On her beret, Mervyn recognised the insignia of the anti-English group, the Meibion Glyndŵr (the Sons of Glyndwr) - four lions rampant on red and yellow.

'Hi sweetie, what you doing here?' asked Mervyn.

'To try you for treason, you pig' she spat in his face.

Mervyn first met Ruth ap Williams at Neath Miner's club. He was with Dai Bando, captain of the local 'Welsh All Blacks', when he was introduced to Ruth, who was sitting waiting for Thursday Trivia to start. 'Any good at Trivia?' she asked Mervyn. 'I'll give it a try, merch [girlie]' he replied sitting down beside her. Being that this was Wales and Mervyn had an encyclopaedic of Welsh Rugby, and every second question was rugby related, Ruth's team, 'the Beeth Neaths' easily won the night's competition and then every night for the next ten weeks - Mervyn became a local hero.

At the annual Southwest Wales Trivia Championship held in Swansea in December, it came down to two teams, the Beeth and the Osome Ospreys (supporters of the local rugby team). The final question for the competition was hard 'Please listen carefully, boys and girls' said the compere, 'Who scored the first try of the 1890 game between England and Wales and where was it played?' Mervyn's hand shot up. 'Neath, what is your answer?' 'Willy Stadden scored the only try of the game, at Dewsbury, Yorkshire. Billy Bancroft of Swansea was full-back, Arthur Gould of Newport, captain' 'Too much information, Neath, you are absolutely correct, you have won the Walter Enoch Rees trophy for this year and 1,000 pounds from our sponsors Brain's Brewery'.

After many pints of Brains in the Mumbles, Mervyn and Ruth booked a room at a local B&B and had the greatest shag ever. After that, they became a sort of item.

'Look You, Boyo, Look Up' said the voice. Mervyn's head was pulled sharply back. 'Oh, Easy On, Bryn' said Mervyn. 'How'd you know it was me, Merv?' said the voice behind. 'I could smell the chip oil,

Bryn, I knew it was you all along, I am in your shop every few days, remember’.

‘Bugger me, Mr ap Williams, he knows it’s me’. ‘And now he knows it’s me too, you silly boy’ said the voice. ‘I knew it was you anyway, Mr ap Williams, because of your funny lisp’ said Mervyn, getting a slap in the face from Ruth for his troubles.

‘Look Mr ap Williams, I will admit that I have been asking a few questions around town about the Welsh Liberation Army (WLA), or the Wallies from the Valleys as people call you, and I am sure you are not a great danger’. Another punch in the kidneys caused Mervyn to stop and mumble the team from the Welsh win over Scotland in 1966, ‘Grahame Hodgson, Stuart Watkins ...’ until the pain stopped.

‘Look You, Ci [dog]’, said Mr ap Williams, fuming ‘We have active cells of the WLA all over Cymru, just waiting to rise up at the command of the Revolutionary Council. And we have liberated arms from the oppressors to fight them.’

‘Mr ap William, we know the only other cell in Bridgend folded when young Ianto Evans went off to Australia on his gap year and old Dr Richards went into hospital for a hernia operation’. He added ‘and we know that the arms you have are just replica rifles that you bought off old Sergeant Pryce at his garage sale’. Another punch to his kidneys caused Merv to repeat the team that lost to Australia in 1966, ‘Price, Watkins, Dawes ...’

‘Enough, you are condemned by your own testimony’ said ap Williams ‘As chief magistrate of the Cymru People’s Revolutionary Court (that’s me), I find William Bond (that’s you), to be a traitor and guilty of crimes against the proletariat and sentence you to be shot like a dog. I order the Head of the Cymru Liberation Army (that’s Ruth) to take you to a suitable place and carry out the orders of the Court. Cymru am byth [Wales, Forever]’.

At that, a sack was placed over Mervyn’s head and he was roughly bundled out of the room, down the stairs, tied up and stuffed in the back of Bryn’s fish van. ‘Sorry, Merv, I haven’t had time to wash it out’ said Bryn. ‘Bryn, Shut up and drive’ shouted Ruth.

After what seemed like an hour, Mervyn knew the van was going uphill, as the engine started to groan. He guessed they were somewhere in the Brecons. It would be cold and snowing up there. The van stopped, Mervyn’s legs were untied and he was dragged for another 15 minutes along a snowy mountain trail. The hood was taken off.

‘Alright, Bryn, you don’t have to stay, I’ll do the rest’ said Ruth. ‘Bye Mervyn, See you then’ said Bryn before realising just what he had said and scurried off embarrassed.

‘Ruthie, this is silly’ said Mervyn. ‘I’ll tell you what’s silly. Me falling for you - that’s really silly’ Ruth said with a catch in her throat. She then kicked his legs from underneath him and told him to lie still as she removed all identification from his pockets. She then cocked the pistol, ‘Bye, Mervyn’. Two shots rang out.

‘I have finished the traitor, Bryn, and covered the body with twigs, no one will find him here. Let’s go before this snow blocks us in’ she ordered.

Finishing off the Welsh team that just lost to the All Blacks in 1972 ‘... Morris, Davies, Taylor’, Mervyn realised that he was not dead, in fact he could feel no pain anywhere. ‘She missed, she deliberately missed’, he giggled with relief.

After managing to undo the ropes around his hands, Mervyn set off down the mountain slipping as the snow started to build up. After about an hour, he fell into a village he recognised as Pontsticill and made for the phone box. Luckily, it was still working. He reached into his pocket for some coins, and took out a few. He dropped something and when he picked it up he recognised it as the insignia from the green beret of a member of the Meibion Glyndŵr. Ruth must have put in in his pocket when she was supposedly removing his ID.

Mervyn dialled the special number and gave the password (‘Sausages’) needed to connect him to his handler. ‘Hi Boss, this is Bill Bond. I think I have been rumbled, but there’s really nothing here, just a sad old man, his daughter and a simpleton. No danger to anyone, more trouble to pick them up, I’d say’.

‘Alright Bond, you can come in then. You need a good holiday, take a few weeks off before coming back to write up your report’, said Bill’s handler.

As Mervyn (now Bill) caught a cab to Merthyr Tydfil train station to catch a fast train to London, he looked out at the moon over the lovely Brecon Beacons and absentmindedly caressed the little red and yellow beret insignia.

Postscript

A few weeks back from his holidays, Bill was writing up his report and went online to the Southwest Evening Post where he saw an Obituary with a photo.

‘Today, Mr Gwilym ap Williams, the well-known local historian and teacher was laid to rest in a grave near Neath Abbey. The picture above shows his only surviving relative, Ms. Ruth ap Williams, 26, single, a local primary school teacher and well-known Trivia champion in the area. Athro, Gorffwys mewn hedd [Teacher, Rest in Peace].’

Ruth looked lovely in the picture as she gently placed a dark green beret on the coffin. Bill noticed that the beret did not have a badge. That was on the locket around his neck.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT

The Sapiens family of Connecticut is revelling in their kitchen poltergeist. The family says that their particular spirit is brilliant at cooking. They say that it must have been a top chef in life and all they need do is open a cupboard with certain ingredients in it for the spirit to take them to new heights of culinary excellence.

"It's absolutely ace at casseroles and steak tartare. I don't know what special something it puts in the sauces but they are out of this world." Said Al 'Homo' Sapiens.

"Some of the meals are frighteningly tasty and it even cleans up after itself to leave us well-fed and the kitchen cleaner than I could have achieved." Mim Sapiens added.

The TV networks are taking a keen interest in their situation and there is even talk of a cartoon series being made about the family.

IT'S A NO-BRAINER

A man who sustained a rare injury in Black Friday's chaos, has been told that his lost brain has turned up in the GF grill bought on the same day by the head of the Hugh-Miliated family. They made the gruesome discovery only last week when intending to use their electrical prize, obtained for a whacking fifty percent off, for the first time since they camped out all night at The Artless Trading Company's site.

Doctors have said they could return the bit of shrivelled grey matter to its owner but added that they have no inclination to do so.

Terry Chump, his family and friends were totally oblivious to the shopper's loss. "His behaviour hadn't changed at all: he still sat in front of the TV watching reruns and recorded advertisements. He seemed the same Terry to us and he never complained of headaches at all." Mr Chump's family said in unison just before a fight broke out over who should speak to our interviewer.

THE FUTURE'S LOOKING GOOD

There is a booming industry that sees politics and commerce in perfect harmony. Politician's are going to hold Cosmetic Surgeries to bring artificial smiles to their constituents. Any voter not satisfied with how they are represented will get assisted superficial surgery procedures at a price even their local authority could afford.

"We are looking to improve the look of politics in the modern world. We will take the 'X' on people's faces and turn them into perfect profit curves." Said a government spokesperson.

This is seen by some critics as a cynical move to incorporate voters anxieties about how they are going to make ends meet and their low self-esteem.

"They say the procedures will be quick and non-invasive as they will use palliative knives. We, however, think that they will just cut off our noses to avoid them losing political face." Said the leader of the About Face movement, which looks to protect people from unnecessary surgical procedures.

This development comes on the back of the boom in the cosmetic procedures industry where the word is that the practitioners are carving up large pots of money made on the premise of the growing lack of faith in ourselves as human beings.

An industry leader said, "Ironic that we can say that the industry has undergone a five-fold increase in a decade. We get rid of their bill-folds as their self-confidence decays, and all the while we are making smooth, handsome profits." Asked about whether the industry would expand into the other animal kingdom, Dr Slaughter said, "If it works for profit then probably. We're still concerned that cows ready for the plate aren't nearly gullible enough and are too busy ruminating. Although the procedures leave any animal looking natural, given a cow's historical psychical traces, cattle are more wary of being exploited by cowboys."

SUBVERTISEMENT

CONFORMITY: THE NEW, AHM, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, PAD THAT PROTECTS YOU

NOW YOU CAN PUT YOUR TAIL BETWEEN YOUR LEGS WITH CONFIDENCE JUST APPLY THE SOFTENED COMFORT-FILLED CONFORMITY PAD AND AVOID EXCRUCIATING DISCOMFORTING DISSIDENT PERIODS

FEEL EASIER IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS WITH PADS OF CONFORMITY THEY'LL KEEP YOU FROM SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS THAT DISTRACTS YOU FROM BEING WHOLLY AND SUPERFICIALLY ACCEPTED

THE NEW COMFORT WINGS WORK TO PERPETUATE THE IDEA THAT YOU ARE FLYING

MINI ADS

ELECTRONICS

AC/DC coupling seeks similar for electrifying times. Give me a buzz on ToyBoyStory@Lightyear.com

Short circuit democracy today with our new no volt meter and its companion vote no veto meter. Work well with our existing no altimeter which has given you direct current events for the last ten parliaments. Measure just how much you are in the dark with our new range of meters. Text FUUK to DarkMatters Electronics (010101) and get our least expensive quote. Price goes up after the next election.

JOBS

WANTED leads for a hush hush job. Call Sam Spade by just whistling at the back of Green Street and a lorry will pick you up for interview. Applicants must be flexible with working hours.

OUTDOORS

Don't let your phobia stop you going camping in the great outdoors. We have a fit so you don't: bespoke backyard tents for the agoraphobic and large tents for the claustrophobic. We'll provide any background sounds you wish to hear to make your camping holiday a comfortable and fear free experience. Contact Intents Experiences plc via email at bivouac2@talkback.com

PLUMBING

Ever wondered what the depths were like and how low can you go? Trouble yourself no longer with DowntheDrainUgo plc. We will make your life a misery with red tape, masking the truth tape and U-bends that are not for turning back. Get that sinking feeling today by calling the experts in political plumbing. We never deliver on our promises. E-mail Commonhouseplumbing@screwy.com

LIGHTING

Lose weight by eating strip lighting. The three course, light diet begins with a calorie-free motor for starters and is followed by a small bagel bulb, and to finish it would be a front porch strip light that is eco-friendly and very healthy. Expert dietary tips will be included in this course that lasts until your electricity becomes static only. E-mail BrightMealIdeas@Neon4U@vergingonthestupid.co.uk

REMOVALS

Desperate Dan's Removals needs work. No job too small. We recently relocated a full Victorian Doll's house in less than two hours! Contact us now, NOW, before it's too late and we have to remove our card from the shop name-boarding. E-mail: DD@snailmail.com

AERIALS

Think Wi-Fi is good; think again. We have equipment that can pick up static from just outside the Orion Belt. Listen for hours at mesmerising fizzling sounds that may or may not make you think that there's life in the universe.

Very reasonable prices and fully fitted by our cosmic crew of expert engineers.

Call me, Sean O'Teric on e-mail: SOT@boggle.ve

PUBLIC NOTICES

The toilets on the promenade will be closed for the summer as vital repairs are taking place to ensure the new bidets are in place for the forthcoming election.

The North Sea will be kept back as a security measure when MPs are campaigning in their fight for the floating vote.

Lots of public cash will be spent protecting these public servants from getting their expensive suits wet.

Please note: Any protestors will be thrown into the sea and poked with sticks until they drown. So don't say we didn't warn you.

FURNITURE

A stack of antique, polyurethane tubular chairs from the seventies for sale. Great for retro-parties and picnics. Can also be used for art installations. Yours for 500 new pence. Free delivery within a postcode.

E-mail anythinggoes@shotmail.com now as I can't sit on such a bargain for ever.

EDUCATION

AUTODIDACTICISM for beginners. Teach yourself at home. You can learn anything you like for the price of a packet of cigarettes. Call your own enthusiasm and verve for answers.

COUNSELLING

No trauma too trivial. We have the people to mentor you back into sound holistic health.

Established just yesterday, we can provide you with all the guidance you need to recover from such trauma as: Bad service in a restaurant; Reading the small print in an advertisement; Car not as shown depression; Contact in the box mental lesion (footballers mainly but can apply to those people who have shelf-stacked in supermarkets); Share Dividend setback (for times when your money doesn't work quite hard enough); We even do a special for politicians who have been interviewed and totally exposed as frauds and incompetents, and for those who have escaped criminality by having to accept £35K for being displaced from parliament.

So, if life is getting you down in however small a way, call Charlotte Ann for confidential help, now on e-mail: ClamsRus@memail.co.uk

Of Mature Women and Terrorism

By Henrieta Matejova and Miriam Matejova

I don't know who's said that a woman in her forties has a greater chance of being killed by a terrorist than getting married. Perhaps it's a cynical statement of some satirist. Perhaps it's a skeptical sigh of an acquiescent woman. But most likely, it's simply an unfavorable statistical fact – especially for women of my age.

When I was single and in my twenties, the idea that at some point in time I would be forty seemed like a Sci-Fi. When I was single and in my thirties, it was impossible to fathom that there was such a thing as being single after forty. I was tangled in a net of illusions, believing it only depended on my own decision whether I kept marching solo or not. Now I am forty and according to statistical data, I am at risk of violent death!

The whole month I am tensely watching the evening news. I am cowering in terror on my couch, counting reports of violent acts. Then, I compare that figure to the number of men who during the same month took interest in me. The statistics are not wrong. The number of villains in the world is much larger than the count of my suitors. Someone may object that the probability of me becoming a victim is small. But believe me, when I glance at those men who circle around me, the probability of me wedding any of them is even smaller.

Given such adverse facts, my behavior has turned cautious. I walk the streets with a wary stare. With suspicion, I scan my surroundings. I avoid any communication. I evaluate each attempt for contact as an enemy act. Preventively, I put on a forbidding face. In addition, I begin avoiding places with large occurrence of humans – shopping malls, theaters, public parks. After work, I meet my friends only in privacy. I do everything I can to improve the unwanted statistic.

Alarmingly, today I find out I may just be one step closer to my wretched karma. My forty-three year old girlfriend is getting married! That means she has used up that small percentage of a chance that some forty year old in my surroundings becomes a wife. At the same time, she has considerably increased the probability of an early death of the rest of the single women in their forties. I don't understand. Why her? Why not me?

I didn't attend my friend's wedding. Not because I was jealous but because I had concluded that a wedding would be a major safety risk. After all, I had to increase caution. In the past few months I've been going to work before dawn – to avoid unintended encounters. Now, if possible, I don't leave my office the whole day. I communicate with my colleagues only through a closed door. I talk to no strangers at all. In the evening, when the hallways of our office building empty out, I sneak toward my car and flee home through secluded streets. I get the inevitable shopping done quickly in a small corner store in my neighborhood, camouflaged with a long raincoat and an oversized hood on my head. At home, I quickly lock my safety iron-clad door and roll down the blinds on my windows. I move around quietly and just in case, I don't turn the lights on. The volume on my TV stays low when the evening news is on. I watch the news every night in suspense, waiting for an improvement in the status quo, waiting for the statistic to change in my favor. I am convinced that I have done everything to that end.

Unbelievable! I don't understand anything anymore! Today, my forty-seven year old colleague pushed her wedding announcement underneath my locked office door. How is that possible? I drop the announcement – it glides soundlessly to the floor. As a marble statue, I stand in my office, cold sweat running down my back. Then, I slide into my chair and for hours keep staring out of the window at the enemy world. At night I e-mail my boss my resignation and crouching, I leave the bureau as a ghost. In the grocery store I arrange a regular weekly home delivery of necessary goods. At home, after finishing all safety measures, I sit down and order building material on the Internet. Tomorrow I will wall up the windows as well as the door. I will only leave a small opening for my Internet deliveries. I will create an anonymous online account. I will cancel my phone, so no one can contact me. I now understand everything. I cannot escape my fate. They are after me!

A Hospital sign

WAIT WATCHERS : A&E



Chance Meeting, St. Bartholomew's Church

I have never encountered pearly gates
Where one can stroll the serene path for miles,
Exercise daily sophisticated wit;
Gates where the wayward are welcomed in,
Money is of no import, save
Philosophical banter on economics;
Yet I could perish tomorrow content
Life has too forceful a continuum
To submit being hunted for one's innocence;
Why I bow instead of kneel to the Chorus.

Should the Clown Leave the Carnival

It's no use, our lofty ideals,
If there's no passing of the bread,
Born of humility and grace;
Hunger fortifies our streets
But you say neglect works well—
Since "art" bypasses borders I say;
Your production (from an actor's
Understanding) might benefit
More from authentic encounter;
As you know, in a fast get away
Out of an inferno, Love sped,
Disguised, no recompense left.

Amicable Thief

Whoever stole the lanterns off the street
I'd like to thank for the peace and quiet
For light dances noisily with my ears
Hearing, if never turned off, signals fear--

There's more chance to be honest in dark skies
Lament loss consoled stars emphasise.

The Common Right

It could be argued:
The seed of thought begins
with our first breath, evolves
into preparation of death
pretty much at the same instant.
Though we have every right
to respond with devastation
profound unfairness exists
(for example:
some lives are cut too short
or die by the hand of an other),
the embrace of happiness
with unhappiness bespeaks
recipe for shared poignancy.
Just as efforts to ease another's grief
is in the untouched's self-interest:
Goodness lulls the ball and chain,
mindful Elsewhere is at the table.
Why we love Grimm's Fairy Tales.

Navigating the Fall

Apparitions intercept
day to day lives, they're not
pure like high clouds floating in
from before the time of Christ
to magically disappear,
but are a world you can set
an alarm to...name a dream
unbearably ripe labeled,
as his was, art for art's sake;
no community to finance,
slave to the past, the future
seizing rights of the present:
I'll try not to romanticise
the perils of long neglect.
the dismissal of hunger,
in our endless discussions.

ALL'S FAIR, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

There's a new problem affecting places throughout the globe but mostly in Europe.
In various peripheral towns on mainland Europe there are groups of British folk wandering around lost as they cannot afford their return air fare. All of them have turned up in these non-mainstream places due to their taking advantage of cheap air fares that are only one-way. These plane refugees have been seduced by the ridiculously cheap fares and have been so keen they have not considered the ridiculously expensive single fares to get home again. The British Embassies throughout Europe are washing their hands of these bargain pilgrims, pointing out that they will not interfere with commercial success even though they recognise the duplicitous nature of the air fare advertising.

"I couldn't resist the £29 fare to Cetinje, Montenegro, even though I didn't know where it was. In fact, I still don't know where it is other than it is where I am now," said a maudlin bargain refugee, "but I had no money to get back, so I have decided to try to get a job here." He added.

It is believed that the lucky traveller is being interviewed for the job of Trip Adviser in the town's principality. It's believed that Job Centres in Britain are going to use this example to further their draconian pressures on the unemployed. The fact that this experience is only one in tens of thousands is not going to be mentioned.

Also, some travel agencies are now offering these cut-price one-way tickets to nearby asteroids and other lumps of rock in space. Apparently, they are receiving serious feedback on this marketing campaign. However, employers are criticising such entrepreneurialism as they argue that those going one way will not return to work, thus making a revolving door of their staffing levels.

THE UNPAID PROPAGANDIST OF HAMBLETON

In a cruel irony, the economic situation has been used as a retrospective, to once more avoid paying the unnamable fellow who has been posting information and holding glove puppet seminars telling schoolchildren of the current upturn in the economy of UKplc.

The political zealot has threatened to tell the children the truth about economics etc if the local authority fails to pay him for the third year in a row.

A specialist in Political Tautology has commented on the veracity of the government's position in this case: The fellow is logically bound to disclose lies to the populace as lies are an intrinsic part of the parliamentary system, and it is in the public interest for propaganda to be given to the public, therefore the fellow cannot deny his essential role in peddling said propaganda, and that if he reneges on his initial agreement by telling the truth, then he is in breach of a codicil of the unwritten constitution of the UK, that no truth can be told once you accept the basis of society is lying. The freedom of information act was also cited to subdue any silly nonsense from a self-confessed propagandist.

It is thought by most people that the fellow will, after some deliberation, accept the Cache-22 situation and continue to spread the word for the ruling powers.

"The great thing is that through all of this little to-do, the fellow has never stopped smiling." Said a council official, unofficially.

HE'S NO RED

An MP's visit to an industrial workplace was cut short when the hard-working millionaire, second job politician developed an unstaunchable nosebleed.

At least he had the large absorbent white flag he'd used at the last election to help soak up his adverse reaction to proletarian blue-collar work. His advisor was left behind to complete the visit but was not as condescending as the professional and as a consequence, the morale of the factory fell by eight percent on the last visit made by a political rival just last week.

VENDING MACHINATIONS

It has been discovered that the price of information is...

(Eds: Sorry but we are unable to bring you the full article due our inability to afford the exorbitant levy put on its release by the online vendor.)

WE'RE NOT GLAD THEY SAID THAT:

-----"

But our plan is not just fixing the economy - we are making Britain a country where effort is rewarded: where those who put in, get out; where if you put the hours in, you keep more of your own money; where if you're willing to save, you can buy a home of your own; where those retiring can have dignity and security in old age." DC, Conservative comics!

(This a day after his chancellor announced reducing support for working people who need benefits to supplement poor wages! A case of the right hand not knowing what the far-right hand is doing, or could this be mere sophistry? Eds)

With a second term in Government, we can carry on creating more jobs, giving more young people the opportunity to get on in life, and giving more families peace of mind about the future. More DC, Conservative comics!

(City Link, councils etc shedding jobs like moulting animals; Apprenticeships in Administration @ £2.73 an hour, earning them a grand total of £5678.40 p/a, giving them a chance to buy their own home on the market for £100,000, so they could get a mortgage for £20,000, leaving them a tad short on getting a house? How long ago was it that the govt shed 250,000 public sector, secure career jobs? Eds)

EVOLUTIONS:

- a) This describes an easy win. A jockey with a long lead could afford to relax his hold on the reins and let his hands drop.
- b) These were invented by American film director D W Griffith, to make Seena Owen's face come alive during his 1916 epic, Intolerance. He used a wig maker to weave human hair through pieces of fine gauze, which were then glued to the actor's face.
- c) Unfortunately, television sitcoms and game shows still require canned laughter to instruct and cajole an audience through their mind-numbing productions. In the 1820s, a Frenchman ran a very successful business renting out people to be a small portion of the theatre's audience. It was their job to laugh, cry or clap as the performance required in an attempt to incite both the audience and the critics. These emotional ploys were soon packaged into a word that is used to describe any insincere or empty language.

STALIN'S BREAKFAST

(previously Trotsky's Tiffin/Statin's Late Brunch)

Free Range Bread or Never Count Your Pieces of Toast

Now, I don't know about you and your degrees of untrammelled freedom but when it comes to choice in the face of a retail till, then I'm thirst in the queue; unless, of course, a few other people were at the bar or counter before me. I am nothing if not, well in any objective reality, reasonably, socially polite.

On a day where spring had to raise its tender voice in trying to tell winter it had had its day winnowing folks' resolve and spirit to record low levels, I delivered one of my usual commercially based requests that would have had some place other than stomach grumbling in the rebellious young tyke, Oliver Twist. From the menu that glibly promised of certain edible plurals, I, and my established tiredness, even aversion of hash browns - I think it's developed into some deep psychological base loathing for the things following the Gordon period of political office - had me saying, "Less!"

However, the crass yet loose gravitas of Forrest Gump's mother's philosophy of life as a chocolate box that is modern life, and its 'anything can happen' axiom, meant that my request was met with a choice: "Would you like anything extra in lieu of the two portions of angular and poorly conceived potato?" uttered by the young service enthusiast.

The last of these breakfast ingredients has always been able to appeal to me. It could be another psychological element wherein I recognise with egg as I myself began as one, yet, unlike the breakfast manifestation, singly failed to become more than one, isolated and unpalatable entity, even though the sun's 'fatuous sunbeams disturbed Earth's clay', and I became mere cleavage.

At least in some, yes narrow, social circles, playing the zygote can still bring about a mildly affirming response from strangers and acquaintances alike. However, in the cold light of day, being held entirely accountable for the effects of this basic human development process soon reduces the laughter to a smirk, then a wry smile, and finally to a sullen look of original sin guilt, even for those not of the Catholic persuasion. Having recovered my stolid aplomb by relegating such thoughts to the back of my mind, I alighted on my choice of another prime example of my favourite breakfast constituent, even though already guaranteed two specimens. Then, seamlessly and with a modest degree of elan, I took up my numbered spot in the gallery of the establishment and awaited the realisation of the negotiated three-eyed, reduced spud repast.

Not too long after the bar event - whatever this may mean, after all, what is too long given the small time lapse between order and reception of something that requires even rudimentary culinary jostling and then support staff ruminations and physical alacrity in the delivery of any order thus placed - my victuals duly arrived. A quick, yet zealous scan of the platter and I laughed in mild, first degree disappointment. The two yellow, sunny side up eyes looked at me in wonder and I saw myself as if in a mirror; and the mushroom laughed and the sausage pointed its soya finger towards the toast contingent in a mixed gesture of mockery and apology. The swing had become a roundabout and my head spun as I clocked the bread count: 100% up on my last, and expected, breakfast. The slices were four fold blooming and its boasting was complemented by two, peelable, mini tubs of butter. I found I had enough toast to warm my cold body under had I at that point become a down and out. My modestly expected third egg - yes, I know it's indulgent, and as an unemployed profligate and wastrel, unreasonable - had at some point physically, as if physical were ideational, transformed into bread.

Had Jesus intervened? Could he have thought that I, with the appetite just short of a very small percentage of the famous five thousand, required more bread? However, the more I considered this possibility, I concluded that surely with this daily miraculous meal being entirely fish-free, did he not consider that he was providing for a more modern, less gullible, more scientifically-rooted receptive suckling?

Quickly dispelling any thoughts of a messiah and any miracle, I settled down to pick my way through the visceral, material and commercially identifiable array of sustenance before me, churlishness free.

Probably, the 'chef', party to the commercial enterprise I was currently in the bowels of, had decided that a slice of bread and wholesale butter tub was more economically efficacious than even the medium yet more complex to prepare, free-range egg; especially as I had already contractually secured myself two of the protein-rich, carbohydrate lacking food entities to which these ovum refer.

Needless to say, as any consistent and alert readers already would anticipate, I tucked into my repast with the enthusiasm of any modestly needy organism, and wiping my pursed lips, I contemplated the too real horror of the coming possibility of a Tory/UKIP coalition the next time I make a so-called serious choice about how I would like reality to manifest itself relative to the thing I call myself.

Sadly, I did not partake of the extra bread as I had had enough of the filler elements of the breakfast, which is why, to some extent I have become almost allergic to three pieces of potato. The guilt I felt still lives with me as food thus wasted is awful given the conditions of wretched inequity of food distribution throughout the world. I burped and washed down my burden with a hearty draw on the complementary ale.

TV

A new drama series begins next week and is eagerly anticipated by government ministers with a passion for fundamental educational principles.

The series begins with the relationship, or love triangle, between three mathematicians of different disciplinary expertise. The greek-tragedy-style characters are mixed up: Algebra loves Geometry; Geometry loves Applied; What develops is that when Algebra and Applied finally meet, they fall in love too, as all three protagonists yearn to learn the true value of 'x'.

The series has its title in the theme tune of **WE ARE SCALENE** that has the old rocker Dom Steroid, barking the lyrics:

We are scalene, we are scalene/ Dot the I's, cross the T's/ Obtuse angles/ To be ninety/ Degrees in full/ We are cheating, we are cheating/ on each other/ hiding brackets/ 2B (plus x)/ equals 3/ Can you solve we/ Through the numbers, guess away/ We are lying, to each other/ To ourselves, to be three.

RADIO (Yes, really)

A new programme called **MIGRATION WATCH** will be hosted by an ailing celebrity who is afforded the opportunity to tell us of his experiences watching the UK borders for migrants.

Using HD/Infrared cameras, the celeb will seek out, and, if they are good, get to interview the would-be migrant to discover whether the UK would be better or worse off for the migrant's absence.

The first programme will be presented by the political body's leader, Lord Dead-Head of Grassington.

The Lord will try to dissuade the economic livestock whizz-kid/OAP/retiree/business person/entrepreneur from leaving. The challenge is to prevent the brain-drain in the face of ignorant immigrants that get into the UK without the commensurate exodus of the illiterate/innumerate and lumpen proletariat that are bringing down the flourishing exploitative business ethos that has become the UK (excepting parts of Scotland).

CINEMA

LAUDANUM SINGS is a controversial film describing the drug-induced journey of Cy Copath, who learned to sing successfully through his disturbing habit of ingesting the retro narcotic.

The world of nightmarish end of the day's cuisine is brilliantly brought to the modest sized screen by the director of dark plot, Nobby Lee. His **FOUR COURSES OF THE APOCALYPSE** has the deeply disturbing scene where one of two rival haute cuisine gangs leaves a real-beef lasagne in the bed of a chef they want to discourage from working again.

BOOKS

Another autobiography from the famous author, TK Machiavelli, following up her first two autobiographies that cover the first two weeks of signing on as unemployed in a post-Hobbesian UK.

The latest chapter in her meteoric rise to obscene wealth is called, **Autobiography 3.0 : The Next Million**. Particularly interesting is the episode whereby she describes her experience of talking to someone who has actually read her first two books.

MAGAZINES

PLAYBUOY is a new magazine for lonely nautical types who think sex with anyone can save their lives.

BULLET POINTS TODAY is a periodical for the well-armed office worker in the US. It has features on how to shoot down your rival for a job with a well presented offence that is designed to slay any opposition to you achieving your dream job.

This month's issue includes a mobile phone holster. (Not available in Tibet and The Isle of Man)

THEATRE

ROMAN CANDLE is doing the rounds and wowing critics and punters alike.

It is a visually stunning dramatic tale of two people thrown together by circumstance, who get on famously until one of them has to leave the other behind. The story beautifully charts the colourful proximal relatedness that burned brightly, even if it was for a brief six months, and which leaves an emotional burn mark on the heart of at least one of the protagonists.

WHIMSICAL CHAIRS or The Commercial Chinese Puzzle is a farce based in a public house. The old-fashioned, chatty punters try hard to relocate chairs in modern times of festive frivolity.

They are faced with the dilemma of systematic deprivation of adequate number of chairs as the play progresses.

"Class-ridden polemic - a must see!" What Tiler Magazine

MUSIC

From the composer that brought you the radical, I Can't Handle Water Music, comes a new, even more outrageous oratorio show, this time called **Beethoven's Filth**.

The press night had attendees talking of an orgy of visceral music that could snap any g-string and that it was like listening to someone you know having sex with someone they didn't know.

Critics and followers alike have described Lloyd Webburn-Abbey as a genius who never sits on his arias.

SCENE FROM THE 21ST CENTURY

IF THIS DOESN'T MAKE YOU CROSS...!

A SERIES OF DESKS, A SERIES OF VERY ORNATE DESKS, HEAVY, PROBABLY WALNUT WITH LEATHER INLAY, OCCUPY THE BACK OF THE STAGE.

ONLY THE FRONTS OF THE DESKS CAN BE SEEN AS THE LIGHT IS A SPECIFIC STRIP THAT ILLUMINATES ONLY THE FRONT PORTION OF THE DESKS.

AT FIRST, THE VISIBLE DRAWERS OF EACH DESK OPEN AND CLOSE RANDOMLY.

HOWEVER, LIKE A KIND OF ECHO, THE SOUND OF DESK DRAWERS OPENING AND CLOSING CAN BE HEARD BUT NOT SEEN IN THE DARKNESS.

TWO ROWS OF PEOPLE BEGIN TO MOVE ACROSS THE STAGE: THE LINE ADORNED ONLY IN FIG LEAVES WHICH COVER THEIR SINS MOVES IN FRONT OF THE DESKS; THE OTHER LINE, SUITED, MOVES AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKNESS AND AS EACH ONE MOVES OUT OF SIGHT, LAUGHTER ENSUES AND THE VOLUME GROWS.

THE VISIBLE PEOPLE ARE SEEN TO WAIT UNTIL THE DRAWERS ARE OPEN BEFORE INSERTING THEIR HANDS INSIDE. DESPITE COMING BACK OUT UNSATISFIED, EXCEPTING WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SERIES OF CONTRACTS, BOOKLETS, ENVELOPES WITH OFFICIAL HEADINGS BUT NO ADDRESSES, THEY CONTINUE TO GRASP INSIDE THE DRAWERS. SOME HAVE THEIR HANDS TRAPPED AS THE DRAWERS SNAP SHUT, NOW SOUNDING LIKE A TILL.

IN THE BACK DARKNESS THE SOUND OF THE DRAWERS DIMINISHES BUT THE LAUGHTER INCREASES.

SUDDENLY, ONE OF THE VISIBLE PEOPLE DESISTS FROM THE RITUAL AND TAKES A TORCH FROM AN ORIFICE, BUT BEFORE THE LIGHT CAN BE DIRECTED INTO THE DARKNESS, THEY ARE SET UPON BY UNIFORMED PERSONNEL, AND ESCORTED OFF THE STAGE.

A SCUFFLE, OFFSTAGE, IS HEARD BEFORE THE PERSON RUNS ACROSS THE STAGE ONLY TO BE MET BY ANOTHER PAIR OF UNIFORMED PERSONNEL AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE.

THE PERSON MOVES BACKWARDS, TURNS BUT IS CLOSED DOWN BY THE FIRST TWO PERSONNEL, AND ALL FOUR LIFT THE PERSON AND CARRY THE BODY OFF STAGE.

NOT ONE OF THE PEOPLE, STILL GRASPING UNSUCCESSFULLY AT THE OPENING AND CLOSING DRAWERS, TURN AROUND OR PAY ANY ATTENTION TO WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED. DESPITE THEIR FAILURES TO COME UP WITH ANYTHING MEANINGFUL, THEIR ATTENTION ON THE ACTION OF THE DRAWERS IS FOCUSED AND TOTAL.

ALL THE WHILE, THE LAUGHTER IN THE DARK INCREASES AND RINGS OUT, EVENTUALLY FILLING THE AUDITORIUM.

AFTER A COUPLE OF MINUTES, THE DRAWERS CLOSE AND GO SILENT. THE LAUGHTER DIMINISHES, VOICE BY VOICE, AND THE VISIBLE LINE OF PEOPLE MARCHES OFF STAGE, QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY THE PEOPLE PREVIOUSLY HIDDEN IN THE DARK: THE DIFFERENCE BEING THAT THE SECOND LINE OF PEOPLE ARE CARRYING BRIEFCASES, BULGING BROWN ENVELOPES, VARIOUS MEDALS OF HONOUR AND RAIMENTS OF MERIT. THEY BEGIN TO CHAT INDISTINCTLY, AND THE LAST ONE TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE AND, CLEARING THEIR THROAT OSTENTATIOUSLY, ANNOUNCES:

“DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!”

CURTAIN AND CRESTS FALL IN UNISON.

WILD, WILD WEST END

An unsuspecting punter at The Cursing Cinema, was arrested by Citizen Sugar-Cane. The fellow, Alan Laddish was nonplussed and mildly traumatised as he was carted unceremoniously away to the nearest police station to face charges of crisp packet rustling.

The irate audience railed against the rustler with shouts of, “Don't come back!” and “Shame!”

T H O S E E T H

continued from Issue 26...

Narrator: *The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently, approached. When it came near him, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery. Feelings no-one experiences when dealing with Tripp & Sue, Injury Lawyers – no win, no point!*

Gladys: Mavis, each of us chooses a certain path every day, which dictates the direction our lives and those of others, will take. However, if we had chosen differently, those lives might have been altered radically, or not at all. That's the point. None of us know the consequences of the decisions we DIDN'T make and dwelling on them, especially those of over forty years ago, is meaningless.

Sheila: I couldn't agree more. Mavis, in the words of that modern classic, just Let It Go!

Mavis: I'm not dwelling on anything, ladies, and I certainly don't regret doing what I did, but I can't help wondering how differently life would have turned out for Sandra and that lad if I hadn't intervened.

Sheila: Well, he was obviously a thug if he got himself locked up for assault, so it wasn't going to end well.

Mavis: Yes, he was prone to violence, so I was told, but are there any circumstances that could change a person's nature, or divert them from a seemingly inevitable path? And how did he become potentially violent? What, if anything, had happened in his past to set him on that course?

Sheila: For someone not dwelling on an issue, you're certainly giving it a lot of thought, Mave!

Mavis: Yes, I apologise. I do have a tendency to over-think sometimes, but 'What If' scenarios can be quite fascinating, especially if they involve our own actions. Perhaps, though, it's not the best place to discuss it. I'm beginning to feel the daggers in the back of my neck!

Narrator: *Scrooge recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed – a bare, uncurtained bed, on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language.*

The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy. A pale light rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man. An end easily avoided when you take your last journey with Rake and Mallett, the funeral directors with a soul.

Gladys: Oh, never mind them! This audience has seen A Christmas Carol a hundred times. The majority are here every year, so if they don't know the plot by now, they're just not concentrating! I would much rather hear your thoughts on the Nature v Nurture debate, anyway.

Lil: Well, Sandra told me a little of his background – his name's Phil, by the way – if it'll help. He was an only child, brought up by his father after his mother left when he was seven. Apparently, his dad was a bit of a wet blanket, never wanting to go anywhere or do anything and his mum wanted more out of life than a stifling, tedious existence. She met someone with a little more go in him – a tyre and exhaust fitter for Kwikfit, I believe...

Gladys: Yeah, that'll do it every time!

Lil: ...and she ran off with him. She tried to get custody of Phil, but his dad must have grown a pair because he fought for Phil himself and won. That's all I know.

Sheila: That's all you know! That's his entire life story!

Lil: Well, what can I say? I'm partial to a bit of gossip.

Gladys: So, that would explain it. Phil's father turned bitter at being rejected and filled his son's head with misogynistic crap. Phil grows up hating women and takes it out on his girlfriends. What's the betting the girl he was seeing before Sandra saw what he was like and wanted out. That triggered some childhood memory of apparent rejection and she got a slap for her impudence.

Mavis: That sounds a little clichéd, Gladys.

Sheila: Yes, not to mention a little Jerry Springfield, or whatever his name is.

Lil: Spring-ER!

Sheila: I said not to mention him.

Lil: Anyway, Phil's dad wasn't like that, by all accounts. He was a decent, hard-working man who rearranged his working life so he could better look after his son.

Bob: *However and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim, or this first parting there was among us? And I know – I know, my dears, that when we recollect how*

ICS GIRLS

patient and mild he was, although he was a little, little child, we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

All: *No, never, father!*

Bob: *I am very happy. I am very happy!*

Scrooge: *Spectre, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?*

Sheila: So, if his upbringing was fine, this Phil character must have been born nasty and the events of his childhood just reinforced his natural tendencies. If anyone said no to him, or the slightest thing didn't go his way, his temper would flare and those close to him would suffer.

Mavis: Again, too simplistic, Sheila.

Gladys: Well, what do you think, Mave?

Mavis: Oh, I don't know any more than you do. I think we all have the potential to be saints and we all have the capability to be evil. We may inherit certain characteristics from our parents and our personalities may be hard-wired at birth, which may point to a predisposition to good or bad behaviour, but they don't define with any certainty the eventual outcome. Many low-life criminals have turned their lives around, becoming useful members of society and similarly, many apparent pillars of the community...

Lil: Priests, for example.

Gladys: Or politicians.

Mavis: ...well, quite, they've turned out to be the antithesis of the people they should be in their trusted positions, so how do we explain that? Did their true personalities win through in the end, finally overcoming their respective upbringings? If so, that implies all our actions are predetermined and no matter how we fight against it, our true natures will win out in the end.

Scrooge: *Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of the things that May be, only? Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead, but if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!*

Gladys: We are able to temper those extremes, though, Mavis, or the world would be full of pure goodness and pure evil with nothing in between.

Mavis: Naturally, Gladys. Our own morals and ethics, and those of society and the people who influence us, will always act as modifiers on our behaviour.

Sheila: So, you're saying it doesn't much matter how our brains are put together before we're born, we all have the potential – if we respect and listen to those with high moral and ethical codes – to be good people.

Lil: ...and vice versa, I suppose.

Mavis: I believe so. Setbacks in our personal lives or perceived injustices may throw us off course temporarily, but we can be steered back. Nothing is set in stone.

Scrooge: *Am I that man who lay upon the bed? No, Spirit! Oh, no, no! Spirit! Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!*

Gladys: So, getting back to Phil, and by your way of thinking, staying with Sandra may have straightened him out.

Sheila: Or had no effect whatsoever. They say compromise is the key to a happy relationship, but all too frequently, the stronger or more forceful personality prevails.

Mavis: Exactly, ladies. Either possibility was as likely as the other at that point and that's why, looking back at the situation now, I can't say I did the right thing or the wrong thing. Sandra is happy, so I don't regret my actions, but we'll never know how it could have been.

Narrator: *Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, Scrooge saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.*

to be continued...

FARTING SHOT

Apparently GPs are being urged to recommend sending patients suffering Irritable Bowel Syndrome into space. The thinking is that in space nobody can hear you squeak, peep or pass wind.

Pseudo Oxymorons Are Fun Too

by Barry W. Mayhew, Ph.D.

I was an undergraduate student when I first became conscious of those wonderfully descriptive expressions called oxymorons. I had been reading a lot of Noel Coward at that time and in a discussion with one of my English professors, I referred to Coward's classic play "Bitter Sweet". "Yes, it's a lovely oxymoron", my professor commented. "A what?" I responded. He went on to explain that many words may have directly opposite meanings when used singly but which when combined, convey a totally different meaning. Noting my interest he went on to cite several fairly common examples such as; little giant, jumbo shrimp, pretty ugly and that particular favorite of many economists, negative growth.

That discussion resulted in a life-long love affair with things oxymoronic and I am constantly on the lookout for oxymorons that may be hidden in newspapers, novels, journals and other forms of literature, just waiting to be discovered.

More recently I became aware of another class of word combinations that might best be described as pseudo oxymorons. Why pseudo? Because when each word is considered singly they do not necessarily convey totally opposite meanings but when combined, and with a touch of "tongue in cheek" and a bit of poetic license can take on an oxymoronic quality that can add a bit of humor during a time when most informed folks are experiencing anxiety over the population "bomb", massive pollution, global warming, wars and rumors of wars.

Speaking of wars, how about "military intelligence" as our first example of a pseudo oxymoron? Or, how about "Soviet justice?" If you don't like either of these, what about "postal worker?" If you're still not into it, here are a couple more; "closet exhibitionist" and "limited nuclear warfare".

Just the other day I had the pleasure of meeting a fascinating young lady. She projected an aura of seductive innocence. During our conversation she informed me she was in ill health, having recently undergone minor surgery. She showed me an article she had written recently dealing with standard deviations and when I expressed an interest in the subject matter, she said she would mail me an original copy. We discussed several other topics including the civil war in the Ukraine but by now that was old news. Although she was a relative stranger to me, I experienced a feeling of sweet sorrow as we were about to part. Just before we said our farewells I asked her how she felt about my favorite team winning the American League pennant. "You can count on that team to be unpredictable" she said as she walked away.

I'm sure there are many linguists out there cunning enough to add to the list. Not only is it a good mental exercise but it can also be a lot of fun. Also, you can encounter oxymorons, both the legitimate and pseudo varieties, when you least expect them. My wife and I were visiting an open house at a new town house development a few months ago and the attendant saleslady was extolling the benefits of a town house life style. At one point during the sales pitch I interrupted her by complaining about the lack of exclusive open space for the residents. She had no doubt fielded this objection before because she immediately led us to a small patch of grass in front of one of the units. "This, she announced, is your private portion of the common area." I was ecstatic. She seemed somewhat mystified by my apparent euphoria and I felt compelled to enlighten her. "That was the best oxymoron I've encountered in months", I informed her. "Oh, thank you" she answered and quickly asked if we would like to inspect any of the other units. For several seconds I considered the merits of explaining to her why she had made me so happy but decided against it. Later in the conversation she told us she had two grown up children, both students at the local university.

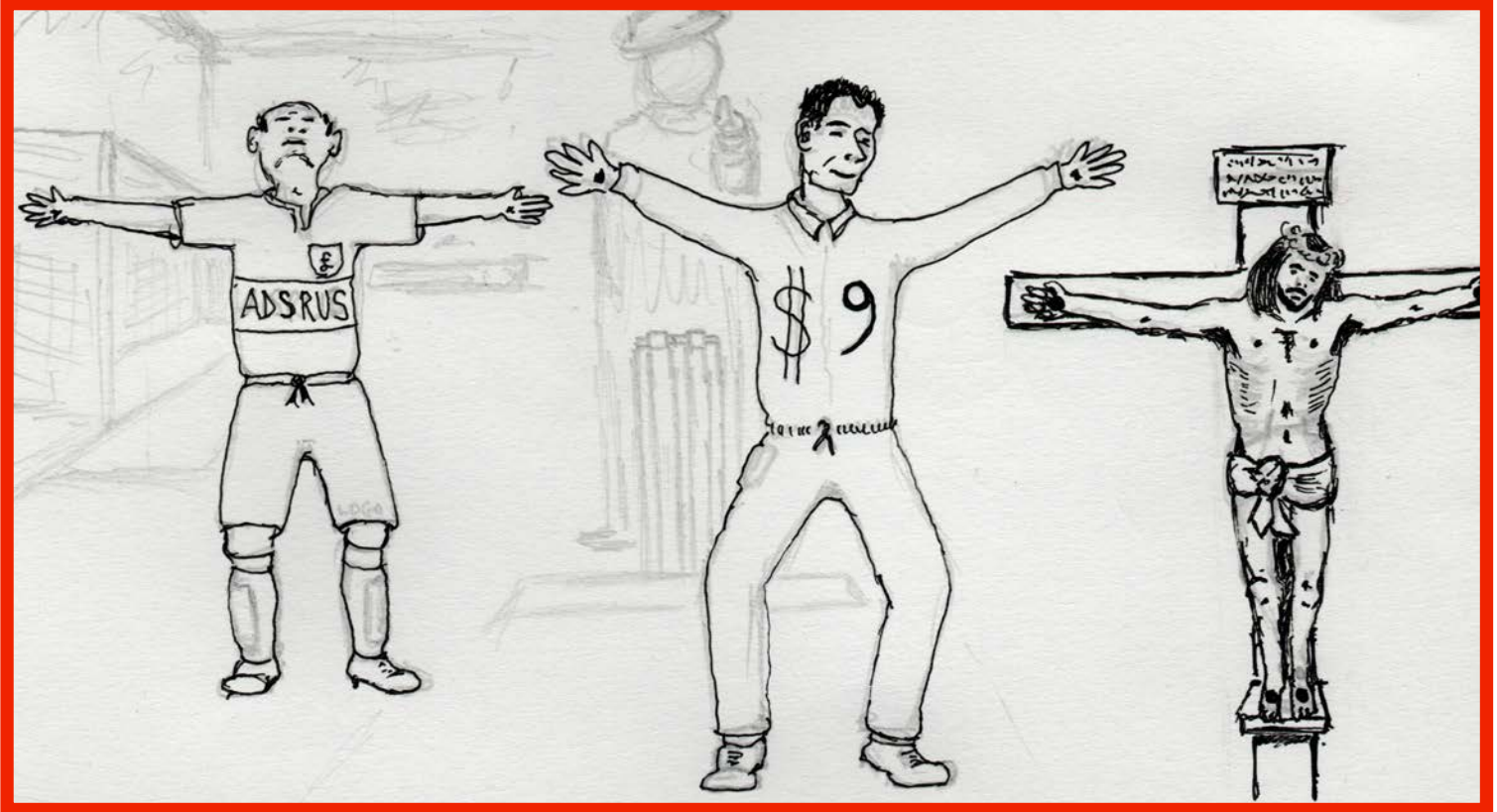
In retrospect, I may well have made an error in judgement. I had missed a golden opportunity to open the door for her to the fascinating world of things oxymoronic.

TALKER'S QUIPS (a new snacking treat)

BRILLIANT INNOVATIVE FLAVOURS INCLUDE:

- **CHEESY OPINION (SHARING MAKES YOU SENTIMENTAL AND AGREEABLE)**
- **TAKEN WITH A PINCH OF SALT (EASILY SWALLOWED)**
- **I'VE GOTTA BEEF (A SPICY TASTE THAT HAS A MICROCHIP ON ITS SHOULDER)**
- **TOMORROW (PROMISES A GOOD FLAVOUR)**
- **WISECRACKED CORN (A CRISP, NOSTALGIC LAUGH WITH EVERY BITE)**
- **VERBOSE (MORE THAN A BAG SHOULD HOLD)**
- **SALT & VITRIOL (EXCITINGLY BITTER DIATRIBE)**
- **PUN COCKTAIL (GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOU AT LEAST SMILE)**

ONE GOAL, ONE WICKET, THE ONE



THE EDWIN STARR COLUMN

In the trenches, there's a war on want that has recruited the need to create and maintain addiction to money products and services that are not in the interests of the combatants.

By this militant ideological strategy, true want is being conflated with need, and the consumerist impulse is being carefully nurtured and stage managed like a military campaign to conscript those who do not volunteer to go over the top and be sacrificed for mere political ideology.

At times like Christmas the hostilities are being advertised and with bank holidays being slowly eroded by the watch-like shifts to maintain round the clock service vigilance to spot the enemy, recognised as conchies who object to objectification of the workforce.

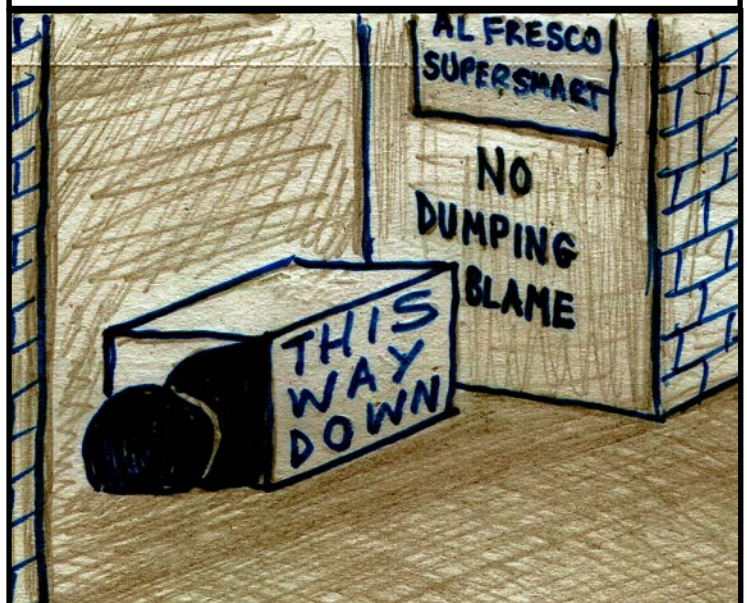
The collective spirit has been usurped and revised into servile deference to the standard, behavioural and attitudinal to the production of quality servility. At certain sporting events, the call to arms is a slave song lamenting the degradation of physical drudgery and calling for a cessation of the suffering to realise the promised land, all in collective dreams of sporting success against Johnny Foreigner.

Hearts and minds are being won over with jingoism and use of the mock collective that is Britain plc, in the service of ruling elites that have no such allegiances: their economic imperialist masters are the ones calling the tune, as it was then, as it is now, as it seems it always will be, lest we forget that we are human beings with the potential to think beyond our material condition. We need to emerge from the trenches to advance our species, not to be picked off,

sniped by those who least represent what good we are capable of as humans.

The generals and adjutants rattle off their magazines of figures, statistics that describe no-one in particular, and recruit us as foot soldiers in their war on us wanting dignity, needing to be represented as sentient beings and not mere corporate fodder to be manufactured into automata soup, to be canned and distributed for the edification of the voracious appetite of the greedy who happen to own the factories which produce the wealth and breadth of our uneasy tenure, not only on jobs, but on our humanity also. "We don't want need."

"He doesn't help himself' he stinks too much outside the box!"



AN INTERVIEW WITH: EMPEROR HADRIAN (117-138 AD)

Eds: Greetings and all hail to you, Ade.

H: Felicitations to you two, too.

Eds: So, you were born in Italics?

H: Oh font, is that going to be the tone of this interview? It was Italica, an occupied part of Spain at the time.

Eds: So, you know a little of immigration then?

H: Of course, like Britain today, allowing ruling classes in as immigrants is fine, just minions you give a hard time to.

Eds: You weren't welcomed by all though were you?

H: No, that is true. Some of the senate resented my nationality. I had influential friends who saw me reach the heights politically. I was a bit of a Trajan horse backed and loaded by the rich and powerful.

Eds: Indeed. You also had a friendship with his (Trajan) missus, did you not?

H: I did. She was significant in my greatness and no mistake.

Eds: But later in your reign you kind of lost the Plotina, did you not?

H: Cruel, and mostly unfunny jesting but not a million miles from the truth about my authoritarian character shift. However, like some of your despotic, authoritarian political characters, I will not, even posthumously, apologise. The furthest I might go towards any contrition of appeasement is to call it Grumpy Old Man Syndrome.

Eds: A little more than that surely?

H: No, when youthful and middle-aged vigorous, as you know, I commanded with wisdom, knowledge and distinct tolerance. When older and frail, and more lonely, I saw how those usurpers threatened without subtlety, so I responded in kind, if you will excuse the pun.

Eds: Yes, I suppose so. Fear, after all is a great influence on power.

H: Right on. Also, I maintained my constancy of treating slaves better than my predecessors; indeed, a little better than your power brokers today.

Eds: Oh, that's a bit of an exaggeration and a bit rich.

H: Well, I was, and to a different degree now, am, rich. Your governments are working towards spreading the existing slavery in undeveloped parts of the world, to the developed societies, as a matter of economic truisms. The despotism of your modern world is coercive and appears to be open and natural but is merely identifying certain groups and finding ways to justify, at first, persecution of them as no more than economic chattel. Your power brokers are even enshrining this dictatorial ideology of class in law, which are merely developments of specific edicts and diktats, you should be more afraid of as a memory of your recent history.

Eds: Can I relieve you of your soapbox, Ade?

H: Not at all. I keep my toiletries in that box. Because I'm still worth it!
Anywho, how radical would I be now, building temples, baths, and libraries wherever I went.

Eds: Yes, you would be seen as a profligate and anachronistic communist, especially considering your love of Greek culture.

H: Yes, in this day and age it seems Greece has become a global pariah. Ironic considering its role in the birth of democracy. But then democracy is something you moderns have real trouble realising in any real sense.

I built public buildings and religious monuments to spread prosperity and a common identity. Can you give one good example of a purely public enterprise that serves the public more than it serves profiteering private enterprise? I'm glad I have no corporeal body as I could not survive on your urban streets, given the disgusting and albut derelict state they're in.

Eds: Erm, you might want to reconsider your terminology there, Ade. You instructed your workforce to build public buildings. Did you ever use a building tool yourself?

H: Cheap hit there, eds. Still, it reflects your feeble modern grasp of true debate and philosophical argument, so I will let that one slide.

However, I will still remind you that I also rectified tax situations and defended the weak from the strong. Now you could not possibly contradict me in this when I say that that is very different from your societies' leaders today. It is as if fairness and moral integrity is an anathema to your economically obsessed political elites today. I watched one of your so-called debate programmes on your TV and found no sophistication in the argument. You do not understand the importance of establishing philosophically established premises before beginning the application of shared moral and ethical values to any situation in your societies...

Eds: You might say that but you can't deny how well we make vacuum flasks, and in such beautifully personalised colours.

H: I see what you are doing. A typical modern satirist approach to avoiding the big questions. Still, I cannot blame you because you think that it is easier for a camel with its head in the sand to enter the kingdom of Heaven plc than for a rich man to be reasonable, charitable and fair and take less from the economic cake. To Parthenon on good terms I will wish you two good night and good luck.

POO CORNER

THE COLOURS OF GOODBYE

It's not blue, it's dark grey
typical of you to have your say
you always smiled when I felt down
like a child, you didn't frown
Instead you'd sing using great verse
and the power of word
to make me feel worse
like a churlish turd
Then you would leave
slamming the door
compelling me to grieve
and weep some more

WAIT: A THOUGHT

Waiting here for life's quiet hour
distant: children's merriment creeps
along this corridor and passes
unnoticing; remote doors open
and close unseen, merely
acknowledged as a background
sound someway off.

Sitting patiently for nothing
to begin, perched hidden
from even memory, on
this unenlightened step halfway
towards a stage empty
of performers.

I reflect off dark surfaces
moment upon moment out of time,
a hand pointing at no number
waving in slow motion
reaching no-one.

Sitting where, playing patience
with words, pitch and toss
with vague ideas of life,
solitaire without cue cards
undisturbed by imagination.

PIGGING OUT

Into my haystack you burrow and gnaw
circumstances took my eye off the straw
I'm at fault for loving a guinea pig
and not noticing how easily you gig

Though well-fed on squeeze-dried currants and tea
you nibble paint-by-numbers sheets drawn by me
rested on the shreds of an idea
sending me searching a panacea

Rather than ailing I should feel so glad
that given your truth I can still be sad
and there's admiration in what I feel
for simple condemnation by fortune's wheel
of temerity that frequents cages
seeming friendly housing caveat rages
and social ideals of freedoms foment

locating us in glorious firmament.

LITTLE INTEREST

Their long wooden noses grow
and fill the long pause
following more damn lies
just because they can afford to see life
as a self-serving child-like treatise

TRAINING DAYS

Travelling backwards dragged along the dreary path
of progress
At least the brightness will write to him in there, not
judging his obvious guilt

He passes a cow on the way to market and envies it
and sees a bird pecking maniacally at grit, dust,
paper and eventually, in the lottery, a scrap of food:
with empathy, he notices another human being
heading in the other direction and at once loves,
hates and forgives himself, included.

Feeling about for beauty he finds only skilfully
fashioned notes and cards
there's no music in the flat notes and no joy on the
cards:
with a desperation that surprises, he scratches at
the cards, he never had any good luck when picking
cards
which is why he distrusts magicians, and why he
doesn't vote for them today
There's no admiration for how they make public
money and hope disappear so deftly.

MASS X TIME

'Tis the season for fingers in the pies
vitriolic, class-ridden rhetoric is on the rise
the jiggling of the new and old economic school ties
that's the way it is, apparently that's how it lies
They'll cut off our face to spite the no's
and 'cause of too many exes of evil
the majority'll get a government we despise
balancing economic bubbles in a spirit level
while our compassionate humanity dies.

FLOWERS IN THE SUN

I saw a sunflower tall as a tree
it looked out of a garden right at me
I moved forward to get a better look
immediately I felt like a schmuck
someone was holding the flower up high
realising it dead I wanted to cry
Instead I just shouted out, Why, oh why
then after that all I could do was sigh
then I thought, at least it was not a bunch
so I went home for a spot of lunch
happy now that there is always just one
who cannot enjoy flowers in the sun
and that there's plenty more of us who can



”STOP, FIEF!”

URBANE MAN COLUMN

Recently, passing a cinema in the town, there was a snake of people who had seemingly camped out to see the latest offering from a major film distribution factory.

Later there was, online, a growing controversy over the authenticity of the subject matter of the said picture. The story claims that it is a sexy study of the last emanation of Christ, called by detractors, The Holy Shaded Turd.

However, the debate is less about the theology and more about the speed with which merchandising took place to promote the film itself. Replicas of the turd were on widespread sale in no time. The Shaded Turd has spawned cult status and people were queuing at cinemas days beforehand to witness the story of the phenomenon that could be misleading and fictional.

Some anal retentive number buff has established that there are, at last count, at least fifty different opinions about the origins of the faeces.

Also, sales of surplices have rocketed in the wake of the claimed discovery and its marketing as manure from Heaven for private enterprise.

Some wag summarised the media circus as another outbreak of feudal-type populism. “Populism is a virulent plague affecting the pig ignorant and gullible.”

A descendant of Martin Luther said, “This kind of frenzy merely produces another fifty kinds of theses on why modernity is idolatrous of turds.” He added moments before being arrested for dissenting advocacy.

Another casual commentator, Kevin ‘shoeless’ Costless, said, “It seems like if you build it up, they will come!”

In a queue of four people, in a supermarket at the ‘extra counter’ that serves the nicotine addicts and casual habitual murderers that are smokers, I overheard the couple behind me say something particularly modern, particularly dumb.

“Isn’t the service awful,” one of them said, as they realised they would have to wait another two or three minutes as the man at the front of the queue wanted goods scanning, then cigarettes, then a punt on leaving behind this mundanity that is supermarket shopping with his six numbers carefully penned on the slip.

What these two obscenely impatient people hadn’t, or don’t want to notice, is that if they were so peeved at having to wait a possible one hundred and eighty-seconds, they could always toddle their dissatisfied asses to one of the many self-service machines and see to themselves. One thinks that they might even complain at themselves for not scanning the goods through quickly enough for them to have the spare time to complain about someone else’s tardiness in giving them, as vitally important folk, their service as if there were no other people in the world but themselves.

They, and too many like them, fail to realise that queues are the cosmos’s way of giving us time to think about...the cosmos and how small our hill of beans, or in this case, tins, actually are in the bigger scheme of things in the known, or unknown, universe.



“THERE’S A SEVERE IRONY IN THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO GET RID OF US POLITICAL DINOSAURS DURING THIS CAPITALIST-FUNDED BORACIC PERIOD, ESPECIALLY WITH A NEW MASSIVE COMET COMING TO TOWN!”

TALL STORY: THE METEMPSYCHOSIS OF JOE K.

Joseph K awoke feeling anything but special. In general summary, if he'd been in a fully conscious condition, he may have described himself more like a dog's dinner. The milk had soaked into the previously crisp flakes and made them unappetising and unsatisfying in their sloppy state.

Joseph felt, and this was only the beginning of such dubious sensation, like he was in the wrong novel; a disembodiment of character pervaded his first speculative thoughts and feelings.

As usual, which was somewhat reassuring, he saw a brightness as a small 'v' at the top of the ill-fitting curtains in his room: the sun had a habit of mocking his waking moments with its cosmic vitality of lux.

These early exchanges with consciousness were something of a test for Joseph, some might even say a trial as he was transformed from dreamy hero to real world bumbler. He stirred slightly but found his movement was painful, as though his back was crusted and any marrow in his bones had been sucked out by that pesky, hungry dog whose inner he now resembled.

Joseph wondered if this was only a reenactment of the time he thought he'd woken up as a reincarnation of John Lennon, and that sense of tolerance of the world when he was ready to indeed give peace a chance. However, this was quickly dispelled when reason slapped his brain and a colder, firmer reality gripped him as in a totalitarian political vice.

He was put in mind of his erstwhile friend, Franz, who had been taken suddenly by UKIP in the night and translated into a bigoted, misogynist who had a deeply psychological aversion to anything not white. He'd eventually emigrated to Alaska where he lives alone with his snow; though he is not fully content as the snow often appears more blue than he'd like.

This short psychical journey over, Joseph K returned to his own trial and tribulation that made his bed less than rose petalled, more rose thorny.

He tried to move again but a thorn of dilemma pierced his solar plexus and he gasped in pain. At these morning moments Joseph usually tried to establish perspective and rational context through which he more often than not could rise from his bed as if he intended to live.

Today, this particular morning was proving novel.

After some more moments of determined contemplation, he realised he had felt this way only four times before in his life. This at least began a process that would reveal the source of his inertia, his terrified dilemma as to whether he should or should not even stir the covers and reveal his naked self to this current world; obviously, after he'd conformed to acceptable mores that expected him to wash, dress and smile before fully presenting himself beyond the confines of his cell.

One significant difference now than on previous occasions, this feeling, nay conviction, had held him so conclusively, was an all encompassing and cruelly base existential tenet that threatened to tear him up as though he were a blank sheet of paper: guilt. Oddly, weirdly, although some hair's breadth of self-esteem - it had always been so slender as this for him nevertheless and despite the accusing world - was whispering, light years away that this pestling cosmic weight was external, he experienced it as if it was crushing him from the inside out. How could he emerge from a stone he'd swallowed, or been force-fed and was now too much a part of his very physicality?

This condition of guilt was multi-faceted. He'd not embraced the born in sin religious version, yet had retained a secular, humanist, however derivative, sense of his own failings as a human being, and his selfishness and unimaginative ignorance of how to live vitally, but he was still striving to achieve even basic tenets of mensch status. At this present, he knew fairly easily he'd done nothing wrong in that civil representational sense, even if some of his thoughts at times of non-formal contemplation were somewhat galling and odious.

So, what of his current guilt? It was undoubtedly fundamentally affecting, yet he couldn't shake the intuitive sense that it was in fact a construction as much like a gibbet and frame that had political barbs that when closed would, and were intended to, bury themselves deep in his flesh; in response to intellectual and philosophical struggling the barbs would draw blood and cause fatally festering wounds.

This particularly modern sensation was a guilt whereby he was compelled by some force outside himself, yet something he had passively swallowed, that wanted to destroy him by metamorphosing his conscience into something gruesome and evil through which he would, in all logic therein constructed like a gallows, ultimately end himself.

The plight of one of his literary heroes leapt into his head. He felt his body brace itself as though an exoskeleton. A high-tensile philosophical thread snaked its way into his body and wrapped itself around his spine and he unconsciously determined himself to meet whatever abstracted and unjustified axe might fall. His assembled brood of absurdist heroes discreetly gestured towards him in reassurance of his position.

The 'v' of light winked approval, even if it was merely a physically explainable trick of the light as a bird momentarily blocked out the sun as Joseph saw it, still prostrate in his pit.

Suddenly, with many of his literary heroes here around his bed, Joseph felt a convulsion of essential, existential rebellion. The political keystone he'd swallowed was immediately expurgated like a furball and his body felt almost featherweight.

The devil's trident of a word prodded ineffectually at his tender and sensate skin. He said to himself, before popping out of bed like a peaceable slice of toasting life, "I have only become unemployed!"

TWELFTH FIGHT part the Sixth and our hero is heading to the Saloon for a quick fix to his spinning head, but is slowed down by a man with no good on his mind.

McGraw "Prithee, go for your gun now, go on, draw!"

Frank: "Forsooth, have no discord with me, McGraw."

McGraw: "Zounds, you yellow, lily-livered coward."

Frank: "Tarry, sir, do not live and die by card."

McGraw: "Deuce, if you do not draw, I will, and soon."

Frank: "Nay, desist in such, don't be a paltroon."

McGraw: "Take heed, I will count, after ten you die."

Frank: "Fie, man, there's no gain killing me, so why?"

McGraw: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine..."

Frank: "Ah, then," BANG "tis, done, the deep we'll both divine."

Passing the Undertaker's, Frank throws a comment the way of the owner:

Frank: "Alas, good carpenter, his meat you provide.

A feeble gun, not reason, cross'd this divide.

And now he'll not see another bright morn,

eternal night will devour all his scorn,

and I live on and his soul we will mourn;

lie there wordless sire, you should have withdrawn.

Looking down at his dead adversary:

Frank "You came, you jawed, you concluded your stunt.

Where'er goest thou, sayest dull exeunt!"

Frank made the Saloon but on his entrance the barkeep took umbrage, gesticulating as if to instruct Frank that he was not wanted in the place.

Frank "Come barkeep, move apace, give me my shot."

Barkeep "Tarry your tongue, that tone I'll have not,
tis death not you whose voice shall evenly shout."

Frank "Good grace, man, why speak of such parting thus.

I will go when life's done with me, why fuss."

Barkeep "Drink now, remove your carcass from my joint.

Your time's nigh; a back bullet shall anoint.

Look to, sir, behind death's door is ajar."

Frank "Fear not, naught shall be disturbed in this bar."

Barkeep "Sir, a varmint comes with bold gun and gripe."

Frank "This explains the whiff of your duds aripe.

Tho old, my nerves seek quiet Europe still.

This gunning, lynching, murder makes me ill."

Barkeep "Avaunt your hopes, Europe is alway warring,
here, we are taking our tenure snoring."

Frank points to the body of McGraw, with the attendant Undertaker just outside the Saloon.

"Our foe's miscount, underestimated.

our troubles in a moment were decimated.

Observe, the puny arbiter's just gone,

and I shall have my drink, now not anon."

The steaming barkeep relaxed a little too much and added to the already odour-rich atmosphere with a moist peep. He then went to pour Frank his drink but Frank stayed his hand and said:

"In such circumstances, your nerves in breach,

I can from here service myself and reach

the relaxing liquid thus coloured golden

to none I in all faith be beholden

thus causing none to be so unhappy

as to burthen his duds as a nappy."

Frank then poured his own drink as the Barkeep made a modestly dignified exit out back, thereby lightening the atmosphere to the contentment of those few town regulars too used to the place to even notice. At that moment a tumbleweed made its way out of the Saloon and landed on the unfortunate Undertaker, who, being still alive was the only one to feel its prickly barbs.

Frank left after two drinks and was approached by a small, uniformed figure who said at distance, so as not to put Frank on alert:

Uniformed man "Here, newcomer, this news may make you laugh,

a note with bullet points, by telegraph

awaits your eyes in the office just there

How, it seems, a woman, for you dost care."

(to be continued)

JOS BITUMEN ARCHIVE WINDOW

Jos was dogged, even characterised by his dark take on the world, and it obviously persisted into his years of dotage, when, in particularly gloomy times, he reminisced and found new seams of coal-black existential angst.

*These times of practiced death
I despair of making sense
these prolonged moments of sentimentality
undermine any semblance of sincerity*

*Or, aw well,
another aspidistra chokes on dusty bookshelved, tiresomely wordy so-called love
texts*

*So what, I once more contrived to destroy something good and cannot go back.
My ugly, ignorant expletives vomited on a white carpet, splashing manicured
upholstery;*

*I leered over at a discomforting angle and brushed, accidentally, florid flesh
glowering myself, with so-called love.*

*Speaking an alien tongue, disgusting an open mind
subjecting it to filthy debris, closing a corridor to numbered rooms.*

In the ensuing quiet, it's easier to hear the aspidistra's dying words:

*'stop your prosing, stop attending life to confirm your death;
you've known all along you cannot cloud a glass
another depressing moment has passed, you, mark
a shallow hole caused by a point, apparently.*

*Mark your sorrow by distance
though realise it is you
who
stands
still'.*

The piece's title, WEEP, THE ASPIDISTRA'S DYING, gives us an insight into Jos's tragic capacity to try to be funny at the darkest of times, which led him to miss out on so much intimacy. He greatly admired George Orwell's work and even found time to use Animal Farm as a frame in which to paint a self-portrait that is less than flattering, called PIG-HEADED

*My trotters ran roughshod over the rules
and flogged a dead Boxer's soul
destroying the glue of good society
belonging still to the club of fools
betraying life like a ghoul
hopefully dying from impropriety
Left to tilt my chops at the windmill
watching the tragedy from the windowsill
Force-feeding myself on pork scratchings
uninvited to view my own stark etchings*

PHILOSOPHICAL SNEEZE

**CHOOSE A QUEUE CONTAINING A CHICKEN AND AN EGG, THEY NEVER KNOW WHO
CAME FIRST**

OUR MAN IN HIATUS

The place is being overrun by foreign forces.

Nobody even knew it was a target until they saw printed snow falling from the beautiful, humid skies. Apparently, the propaganda they are leafletting is saying that no-one anywhere in the world can be doing nothing so Hiatus is being liberated from the evil clutches of low tenor-living.

The freedom fighters intend to set up a military base in Hiatus, so that even when there is no war to attend, the troops will be primed and ready to move from this handy place, as it gives credibility as a place of philosophy the forces can use in argument.

Also, there will be a central shopping arcade opening with all the requirements of people in Hiatus, whether they need it or not. The new Bugger Thinking chain will provide everything so that there need be no more dissent, no more pausing for thought, no more communist type laziness in Hiatus.

I've spoken to some other residents of Hiatus and they are none too pleased with the developments but are contenting themselves with that's the way it is. 'Life is a Bitch', 'Life is Unfair, get used to it' and

'Shit Happens' are going to be emblazoned on the new Hiatus flag. These truisms are also going to be on the second class postage stamp. However, on the first class stamps there's going to be pictures of pie charts, graphs and pictures of tax havens with the motto, 'If you make them build it, then you'll come into money'.

There is a passive resistance movement in Hiatus but their numbers are dwindling due to culling, lynchings and defections to the corporation, Bugger Thinking, which is offering some prospective employees ten percent reduction on welfare spending as an enticement to work. Those that refuse to take up a position with the corporation will be commandeered as targets on the military range, so there's still choice in Hiatus. A point not lost on the LibDumbs, who were looking for a caveat of any kind in which to pitch their political tent.

Suddenly, I awoke and the air was clean and a breeze was gently flapping my Hawaiian shirt, making its welcome way up my Bermuda shorts and whispering in my ear that all is well in Hiatus.

I heard, felt and moved not a jot and, most of all, there was nothing more to be said...in Hiatus.

Report by Little Jim Ladd (our countrywide reporter of the nation's underbelly)

Here, in Wherever-on-the-Turn, the general feel of the place is bleak.

Oh, the buildings, the water features, the transport infrastructure, even the weather, today at least, are wholly admirable, however...

There is something lacking: the folks around the place are moping more than moving. Looking about, Lowry's paintings of northern folk seem alive and well here; bent figures trudge about the sporadic business units sporting a crossword smile, greeting visitors and indigenous alike with a melancholia, palpable on their faces, apathetic posture and dubiously purposeful wandering.

Somewhere near, church bells sound a hollow message with a ringing lacking conviction. A picture of detached campanologists crawls into one's mind.

After an hour spent asking, where possible as some folks albut ignored me - a couple even leapt into the small river running through the place to avoid speaking - questions trying to garner their opinions, I came to a tentative conclusion; we appear to be living in a moral vacuum.

In between puzzlement at the collective attitudes and views, one could not avoid considering the thought that this state might be a result of true relativism. Though then, could it be an atomisation process that has seen the dissipation of shared values; the kind of ethical and moral values that could inform a vibrant and co-operative society?

A distinct impression, nay conviction, pervading this place is one of inchoate indifference. It is though a cosmic, political hoover has sucked out all the vitality of the human spirit and replaced it with a Dark-Ages belief in reality and an acceptance of its physicality without fully engaging its condition of being merely a manifestation of a present moment repeating, being informed by past ideological machinations. There's a tired cynicism in the young of this place that discounts possibility of legitimate, radical, rebellious change: a youngster I spoke to here repeatedly uttered the mantra of cynicism, 'that's the way it is'.

There's even a pub displaying its retail inculcating of a scientific-political message that shoots the establishment in the pump: "Alcohol and pregnancy don't mix." This is seen and perceived as an expression of moral outrage based on modern emphasis of knowing science proscribing behaviour now seen as personally and socially irresponsible that carries more accusative weight than original sin from the big book. When I asked the inhabitants that would answer they said to a man and woman, that this advice must be right because it was scientifically sound. At the same time, the same respondents constantly used the term 'unbelievable' when referring to the sport oozing out of the TV screens in the same hostelry. Given a statement of scientific fact suspended analysis of the tenets, yet this same disbelief in their own minds meant that something easily explainable by science, namely sporting prowess, leaves them incredulous.

There was one person, sitting in a corner of the town square alone, who responded to questions in this way: "In such a moral vacuum, our hatreds are kept searingly hot and our co-operative love kept very cold, either to be poured out into prescribed beakers to toast the new birth of grossly irrational inequality." This lifelong inhabitant went on to deride the power in the town for recently spending much needed public monies on reopening the wishing well that is projected to attract an indeterminate number of tourists.

UNCOMMON DENOMINATOR - Chapter 4

A Salutary Tale by Jack Mienhoff

Created by Dennis A Pells

The music abruptly stopped, the men dropped their embrace casting embarrassed looks back and forth between them. I heard a lone drum begin a mournful thump-----thump----thump as yet another flaming arrow lit the night sky. The Pit of Emotions exercise was about to begin.

The pit, about fifty feet round and twelve feet deep was dug like hollowing a pumpkin, with convex sides, once in escape was difficult if not impossible. In its dark mysterious depths savage shadows flit and dart about, I hear snarling, gnashing of teeth when a ghoulish figure with a fierce looking Mohawk and studded dog collar steps into the light. Gnarled with muscles he flexed one huge bicep, as it swelled I saw **Fear** tattooed across its crown. The display had its desired affect; all the men took a step back as a collective gasp escaped the crowd. Seth's voice boomed from the speakers.

"In the Pit of Emotions each of you will wrestle with a host of feelings." Seth grinned showing his teeth, pointing he said, "these men represent the physical embodiment of what you encounter everyday of your lives. You just met Fear. But what about Hate?" Seth let the question hang in the air as the men looked from one to the other. "Hate is just as crippling." With those words another ghoulish man stepped from the shadows, this one just as ominous and hideous as the first. Bald, thick necked, shimmering with sweat he turned his back to us; the tattoo 'Hate' looked as if it were weaved into the muscle and sinew. Next came SHAME, and PRIDE, each one just as ferocious and freighting as the others. They began jeering us, taunting us, challenging the bravest of our group. I was just taking another step back when one of the men leapt, his fists already flailing as he sailed through the air into the pit. He must have been a General, or a President, I can't think of any other personality type that would have had the courage. What transpired next was the most heinous barbaric beating I have ever witnessed. There was choking, ball biting, wiener pulling, a ball gag finally silenced his screams of terror and pain. Then the whip came out. That's when I lost my bladder, a long stream arcing onto the man in front of me. I was embarrassed and ashamed until I felt a warm sensation on my backside, turning I noticed all the men had been afflicted by this same frailty. I looked amongst the men observing most had a peculiar gleam in their eyes. Without a word two joined hands and leapt joyously into the pit. Next to me I heard one man begin mumbling, "I've been a bad boy, a very bad boy." He stepped forward, letting himself go limp he tumbled in. There was mayhem and carnage; a sea of writhing flesh, I heard a panicked scream, "Noooo." Then from the darkness, "Yes, yes, harder you bastard, harder." I'm not a particularly brave man but I couldn't stand by and watch any longer. I picked up a rock, took aim catching Fear just behind the ear. He stumbled around for a second before collapsing in a heap. I picked up two more rocks, but these weren't throwing rocks, holding them in the palm of each hand I smacked them together. No, these were skull bashing rocks; screaming I leapt into the abyss.

That is that last thing I remember clearly. I awoke battered and bruised but functioning. I looked about me, some men were tending to the wounded, others reclined as they ponderously smoked a cigarette, yet amazingly all were smiling. They had faced their emotions head on, they had looked them straight in the eye and said, is that all you got, give me more. These were the bravest of men, these I have to say were Real Men.

The rising sun flashed in the eastern sky, its thin shards of light leaping over the horizon. Champaign cocktails in hand we formed a line to the communal shower, afterward we were issued bowties and a clean thong.

The breakfast tables had been set with large bone handled knives and formidable looking long tined forks, all in harmony with the rustic surroundings. At the head table sat Fang, dressed with bowtie he had a regal bearing, the only concession to this attire was the war paint around his eyes and cheeks, and of course, his feathered bonnet. Stoic and resolute he raised his glass in toast, in unison we did in return.

Seth stood glass raised; "Men, whatever your endeavor, to wage battle with your emotions was necessary. As you know, emotions can overwhelm you. You wade in headstrong, thinking you are going to bend them to your will, what you have learned is sometimes you must submit. Losing can be a painful lesson. The men looked from one to the other nodding their heads.

What did this mean? I wondered. Was this something only executives and CEO's could grasp? Are we supposed to give into fear and hate, pride and shame and whatever other boogeymen were down there? Is that what this was about, teaching us defeat?

Seth looked to Fang then back, as if reading my mind he said, "This exercise wasn't to teach you how to lose, it was a lesson in how to survive. At times surviving the battle is all you can hope for, because it is not who wins the battle that is the victor, it's who wins the war."

I shook my head in wonderment, how utterly profound. I looked about me and knew these brave men were the future, our future. In business or politics these men would be there to shape our nation, our world. Fang locked eyes with me, a sage curl to his lips. Humbled I hung my head in homage.

The scene reminded me of a Harry Potter movie with hundreds of people seated at tables that stretch into eternity. To the sound of trumpets lithe shapely women, who, remarkably reminded me of Grace, carried in meat-laden platters. The men behaved as if they discovered a new species, ogling and harassing them until Seth called things to order.

“After we dine there will be a well deserved rest.” As Seth spoke he gestured with his hand. “The lodge has been prepared, the sleeping arrangement is communal. You are no longer mere brothers, the blood coursing through your veins is wild, untamed. You have gone back to your roots, you are what you were born to be, a pack of wolves. You fought as a pack, and like a pack of wolves you gather at daylight and eat the kill, just as you will be doing now. After, you will retreat to your den until dusk.

The crowd erupted in unrestrained yipping and howling. The feast had begun, some men casting aside their knives and forks opting to tear at the meat with their hands and teeth. It was freighting yet wonderful to see the men drawing out the animal from within. They were acting on shear instincts, their carnivorous nature satiated only by flesh.

The lodge was groomed for our stay, the entrance carved through the stone wall looked very much like an opening to a cave. To enter we had to get down on all fours and scamper in, much to the delight of most as they continued their howling and yapping. The windows were blackened to keep out the sun, the floor had been covered with earth and straw. In the dim I saw men curl onto their sides nearly passing out from fatigue. Others began grooming and licking themselves and those around them. I closed my eyes, I felt a soft tongue stroking the hair of my back, next a cold nose thrust between my legs rooting and sniffing about. It was then I knew the transformation was complete. I belonged here, at one with my kind, I was now a **Man-Wolf**.

(to be continued...)

ARTSY PARTSY

Ian Aye, the self-confessed radical artist has once more caused controversy with his latest installation, “Peter Pan Handling.”

The piece is apparently a dangerously satirical treatment of the death of imagination due to paranoid fears of a Jungian derivative shared past. Critics have labelled Aye as a degenerate and are calling for him to be jailed for thought-minus crimes. Supporters hail him for being brave in broaching difficult issues and making people think deeply about utensils as easy symbols by which we compromise so many aspects of society.

The installation is a twelve-foot high frying pan, labelled non-stick, with contents of breakfast sticking to its surface, all of which is attached to a glass ceiling. The full contents of the breakfast are traditionally English and standard continental mixed up and adhering to the surface of the pan.

“It’s actually a panegyric and not a simple, dysfunctional non-stick frying pan.” The artist said from his London hideaway. “As a panegyric, the motif is one of simple, yet satirical, praise of an icon of shared childlike imagination that is dead in this dismally material modernity.” He added in between draughts of non-exotic coffee.

There’s the additional element of editing that belies the simplicity of the image. The contents of the two easily recognised English and continental breakfasts are clearly arranged to represent a face: there is one egg and a grilled tomato as the eyes; a sausage nose; a croissant mouth; and two bacon rashers making up what is supposed to be a double chin. Debate as to why the eyes are not the same covers the notion that the tomato eye is bruised or suffering from some animal experimentation for cosmetics, however, this opinion hasn’t been denied or confirmed by the artist.

The art world is pondering the significance of the Jungian four psychical elements that can become conscious at any time in the overall image of the piece. Each facial constituent included is supposed to show intuition, sensation, feeling, and thinking, though which facial element refers directly to each psychical element is still being debated.

FEELING BAD NEWS

More and more people are finding themselves victims of a flu-related illness dubbed ‘The Frank Sinatra’ virus.

The virulent virus has a frustrating pattern of receding and returning, causing sufferers to coin the term, ‘Cole Green Mucus is Back’ as they find themselves feeling better then much worse from one day to the next. Heavy sufferers are dogged by repetitive and tiring crooning, with some complaining of attacks of ‘Hacking’s Back In Town’. A particularly embarrassing and distressing strain is called ‘Glands, Sneeze and Oops A Daisy’ as the virus causes severe vomiting and diarrhoea.

“I feel like I’m a member of the Crap Pack.” said one poor sufferer.

Answers to Evolutions: a) To Win Hands Down. - b) False Eyelashes. - c) Claptrap

CHAIR OF LEANING



This is the infamous Buddhist seat of Thornaby on Tees, UK. It was created by the casual social and political commentators of the Stockton and Thornaby area with a view to enhancing the spirituality of lunch breaks for the factory workers in the nearby conglomerate offices.

It's long since been mooted that a clearing of the spirit will make Jack a dull boy but a very efficient automaton, so this social installation has been welcomed by the owners and their management lackeys as it will give their owned operatives less excuse for being anything less than one hundred percent accurate, first time and without thought for themselves.

"Instead of sitting on their laurels, this seat will compel them to sit on their assiduous drive to be a better mechanism in the heart and soul of corporate profiteering," said someone who observes the behaviours of employees when representing the firm outside of its building.

The seat is an ideal way of relaxing whilst paying great attention to posture and discipline of mind over matter when confronted with absurdity. All of which will serve them well in serving the customer

well, as well as the shareholders, last but not least!

THE TUMBLER

A fellow was recovering in hospital (private because gambling is a self-indulgent sin) after being severely shaken when he accidentally mind-melded with a pair of dice at his local casino in Norwich.

The paramedic attending the scene said that he was a lucky man as his pupils had taken on the look of snake eyes. The unfortunate victim said that he felt his mind was like double-six, rolling and tumbling causing severe nausea. Fred Bet, a keen Star Trek fan, had fought at Monte Cassino yet admitted that he'd experienced nothing like it as he spun around and ended up hard against the wall. "It was totally illogical and not fun gambling as we know it."

TRAVEL COSTS

A fellow called Hannibal Rivulets had to curtail his latest trek to freedom due to the exorbitant excess baggage charges on his elephants. He is undaunted, however, and has vowed to retrace his journey across the mountain border using mice.

QUEER HONOURS LIST

A British vacuum cleaner has become the first - but not the last I'll be bound - inorganic recipient of the APE award from Her. The Psyon 12B ball-blow gadget was put forward for the award because of its services to advanced sucking up. The device even deals with difficult sticky philosophical dirt due to its intense vacuum chamber.

WHICH WAY?

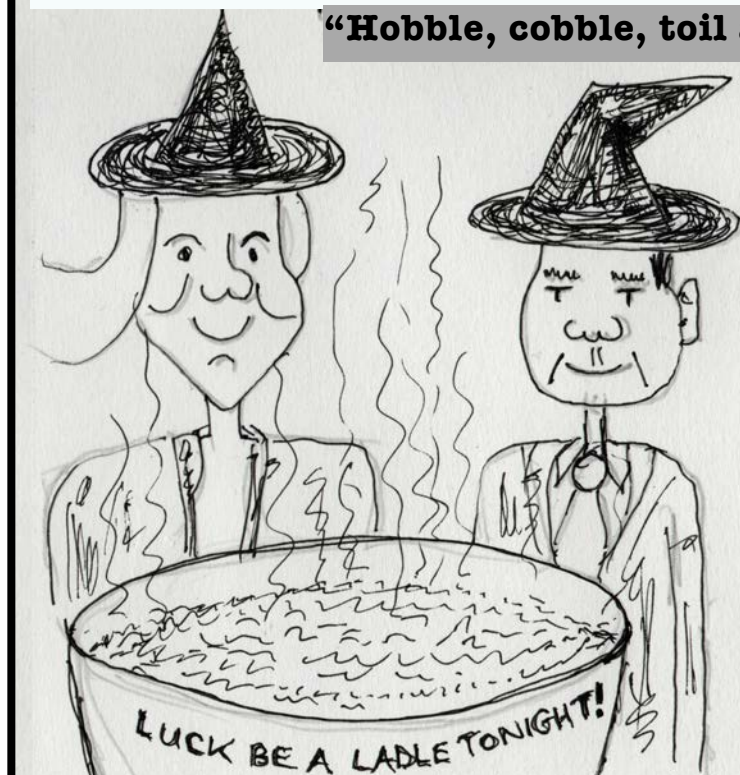
The director of an employment agency, and friend of a prominent politician, has disappeared off the face of the Earth. The coincidence of her disappearance as she was going to be indicted for fraud, has been put down to her practising the dark arts: there has been a national cull of black cats, one of which was thought to be the entrepreneur's familiar.

MACBETH ONLINE BETTING

"Hobble, cobble, toil and treble."

Don't forget, gambling can, unlike speculation and hedge funds, lead to spiralling money troubles.

We don't want any tragedies, so when the comedy stops, you stop and exeunt the stage: "Out damned spot betting!" his old lady said, wisely.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

THIS MONTH: Hiatuses...

LET THERE BE LIGHT

The use of miner's helmets is being mooted as a way to save money for a rainy day.

The lights will be powered by dynamo, given the likelihood that those wearing them will be able to run fast, thereby illuminating their escape route, when they are fleeing an assailant previously hidden by the darkness.

"We are going back to the dark ages. Our councils, because they accept austerity measures given to them by millionaires in government and billionaires pressuring governments, are happy that proles will be in the dark, now literally as well as metaphorically. It's called joined up ideological dictatorship, apparently." An ad hoc pundit said unprompted.

ALPHABETTY SPAGHETTI

Scientists believe that eating your words can improve your health.

Multi-syllabic words with fibrous semantic constitution are particularly important in fighting verbal, even intellectual constipation.

You need to get your five-a-day ideas words, along with significant amounts of adjectives. However, superlatives and cliched hyperbole are not good for you. Too much of these fatuous remarks can cause oblique cases. Some heart-of-the-matter specialists say that too much sweet and sugary trite verses can cause type-two diatribes. Plenty of pasta participles can also cause problems for those wanting to live in the present. Too much punctuation can also be clause for concern for those with weighty narratives.

ONE RING TO RULE, LIBERALLY

A suppository spoke yesterday after emerging from a four and half year spell inside, right inside, a Tory government.

No-one fully believed them, the LibDems, when they postured about 'sticking it right up the Tories', however, no-one wanted to believe their scoring 'point' meant 'it' as their principle and political identity, which they, he, duly inserted right up the political right. The job was done so well, no-one saw them again until now, when they seemingly want to be seen as a separate political device: claims made by them that the last government's legislation and ethos could have been worse ring more hollow than the Liberty Bell on a cold day.

One thing we can count on thanks to this suppository and his ilk, is that the next five months are going to be depressing: Punch hitting Judy; Judy hitting the crocodile; the crocodile hitting the sausages; and the sausages hitting the public sector/public purse.

Unfortunately, too many members of the audience are shouting, whether on TV, radio, newspapers,

blogs, twitters, twatters, LinkedIn sausages: "That's the way to do it!"

DON'T BE TOO SURE

A passing man of the cloth has created a storm in the tea cups of the local religious groups. Rev. Trevor Endisnigh has posited that the long held belief that the rich will have more trouble getting into the money market in the sky than a camel threading itself through a needle may be wrong after all. He pointed out the skills that the rich are developing and how dextrous and shape-shifting they are, will see them easily make the promised land ahead of the camel.

"The dromedary hasn't evolved sufficiently but the rich are metamorphosing themselves into the guardians of Christianity and caring, so in theological terms they are the ones who will achieve the proper state of being to enable them to a free pass through the pearly gates. Their ability to evolve laws and protocols to accommodate their behaviours is explained as their skill and entrepreneurialism to exploit and fit themselves and big businesses into loopholes. This in terms of theology will see them as the chosen ones, as they are the ones that will choose the criteria on which judgements of them will be made. They are effectively evolving a strategy that bypasses any traditional God entity they don't recognise anyway, and will afford them power over their entry into the celestial version of Threadneedle Street." The Right Reverend Endisnigh said.

OFF THEIR HEADLINES

Expert research scientists have discovered that misleading and too-big-for-their-story-content headlines are bad for our health.

The experts in font control and its deleterious effects say that big, bold black headlines can cause severe states of alarm, induce profound worry and socially threatening anxieties that affect the health of the nation.

Often in studies it is found that too many headlines, sometimes the biggest and blackest, then carry a story much less serious and/or informative than first posited. There are even some, more usually medical news stories that speak of incredibly tenuous links to cancer that actually contradict their initial weight in headline print.

Ironically, there are some scientists in semantic effect on physical development who propose the idea or fact that such alarmist and ultimately unfulfilled headlines are linked to paranoid cancers. These bold, pseudo headlines' effects are registered in the hypothalamus and have acute detrimental influences on sufferers' moods, decision making and previous love of puppetry.

Some headline trauma cases have shown recently developed physically manifested aversion to such as The Clangers, Thunderbirds, The Wombles and even Fingerbobs.

HUMANLY SPORTS PAGES

TALKING TEAM

Reg Presently has been given an agreed career redirection impetus after only eight minutes in the job at Dontgiveashit plc Investment/Privet Hedge Fund Unlimited City.

The club's owner Buck Kwik, told our financial editor that Mr Presently gave an unsatisfactory team talk. "Even though it was his first team talk, he failed to use enough positive clichés, so we/I thought his position untenable." Said the CEO of the club and other chains of Laundry outlets.

PHYSICAL MASS

The football pundits must be taking the Mickey now. The latest theory for accepting blatant cheating through diving in the proximity of a challenge for the ball, positing that the miscreant is only avoiding serious injury by leaping like a salmon on a promise. This absurdity is extended to explain the ridiculously unfair behaviour as a right to take advantage of a situation that already notionally condones making the most of established opportunity to perpetrate winning penalties by going down despite the gravity of any challenge or its actual impact to hinder progress to the touchline or corner flag, the direction the ball is heading in usually when the hapless and somewhat ignorant goalkeeper or defender falls in with the stupid situational valuation of any challenge that anywhere else on the pitch would not result in even a free kick.

There's a growing ethos of cheating that is adding to the cynical political idea that life is unfair so get used to it. In certain easily recognisable situations and locations on the football field non-physical exchanges will result in a penalty merely because the ignorance and lack of proper analysis of behaviour that makes the game a very poor spectacle and an even worse example to youngsters as a regression from any semblance of a just and morally consistent society. This tawdry and sordid attitude to playing games is all too easily accepted and explained away as 'that's the way it is' by pundits too cowed by their complicity in promoting the games as modern and by association the best that's been.

IT'S NO PUNDITRY

"It's going to be a little, little game today. I looked at a picture of the Earth taken from space and considered the tactical battle both managers would undertake today. However, I couldn't see the football ground, let alone the players, managers, fans, sponsors, black-marketeers, betting punters or pundits etc. If the participants could go into the match with this cosmic image in their heads, I am sure it'll be a great contest." Said Martin Keystone-Copper, the ex-Arsenal defender.

IT'S ONLY A GAME OF PHYSICS

The latest sporting absurdity is how pundits are using the term 'unbelievable.'

In the very near future, the word will become thoroughly exhausted: in the last football show, anyone could hear just how ridiculous the overuse of the word had become. In listening to the whole gamut of sporting punditry and commentary, one wonders how they can go further with the word and still mean something recognisable as proper appreciation of the action. In a world of superlatives, is unbelievable the ultimate or does it just sound like it is?

The use of the term also shows a lack of expectation to perform well of the modern athlete, competitor, exponent or mere participant in sporting events, that has something wholly plausible described as unbelievable, for want of a better lexicon.

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

At the Burlington Bertie Showjumping Trials recently, a horse, nicknamed Leon, failed to take part in the event. It is widely believed that the nag had smuggled in and watched Animal Farm in his stable.

"One knows one should always blinker one's horses." A disgruntled would-be rider opined.

The horse showed distinct levels of taciturnity and, as the judges were too quick to point out, the communication between horse and rider had broken down.

An equine psychologist said that the animal was displaying signs of rebellion.

"What I cannot explain fully is the horse's attitude to a place wherein he is treated so much better than anywhere else. The fact that he is used for the entertainment of human beings, and a vehicle for their self-aggrandisement is not good enough reason to become so negative," said the eminent head boffin.

Some of the crowd, normally so reserved, like their seats, shouted, albeit very politely and very well enunciated, "Go to Russia, if you like it so much!" and "Think yourself lucky you are not employed in coarse racing."

The horse has been sent for re-training at the centre for excellence near a glue factory in Wigan.

SLIPPERY SLOPE TECHNO-LOGIC

There was controversy at the downhill tournament in Birmingham when the winner, Horst Buckle, was found to be using goggles that were 4D.

Apparently, due to this technology, the competitor can experience the event in such a way as to make it virtually error free as it enhances sensation and removes any of the human anxieties that hamper ultimate performance.

Buckle is appealing, but not to the right people.

HUMANLY SPORTS PAGES

SCORELESS STREAK

A caucasian stalker passed unseen during an African Cup of Nations game. The Bavarian, Hans Frei, even took the opportunity to sing some swing music numbers whilst making his unmolested way across the pitch and from end to end. The match didn't stop, nor did anyone try to interrupt the nude interloper's antics. Asked about the non-incident, Humphrey Dumpty, a football official said, "We didn't flinch or see anything untoward as we, like the crowd, had been watching bollocks all night."

NEVER GIVE SUCCOUR AN EVEN BREAK

Rich Bonded, the wizard of Walthamstow was docked a frame when his advertising hoarding fell onto the white ball during his latest match with Fred Bare, the struggling but determined ex-runner-up. Bonded, a very much sought after figure for advertisers due to his continuing success in getting to later stages in tournaments, said that his board had worked itself loose from his waistcoat. "As I leaned over for the shot, it just fell off and crushed the white. I should have used the spider."

Fred Bare had previously run into trouble himself when his delusions of success based on past glories put out the lights at The Cathedral Social Club recently.

Snooker is having its problems with unusual and dubious behaviour as only last month, Heddy Master was disqualified when he wore clown's shoes in order to give him an advantage when leaning over the table. In fact, the fellow's shoes were so big he could actually lay across the table and still have his shoe touch the floor, in keeping with the letter of the rules of the game.

HORSESHIT RACING

In The ONS Manufacturing Stakes at Leopardstown Doesn't ChangeItsSpots course, the second favourite, Constructionoutput fell at the fourth quarter.

However, Unemployment Falls, the favourite, rose to the occasion and beat the other co-favourite, GDP by 0.3%. The full result was:

- 1st, by a 0.3% margin, Unemployment Falls
- 2nd, carrying £2.2 billion overweight, GDP
- 3rd, Public Debt, carrying an indeterminate weight
- 4th, Immigration, the dark horse, carrying the UKIP jockey
- 5th, Millie Edband, wearing blinkers, took a turn to the right and lost ground

Tax Evasion was pulled up two fences short of the finish, and just avoided a clash with Tax Avoidance, the other conglomerate-owned horse.

Non-Runners: Fairness II - the horse owned by a co-operative; Compassion the First - the white elephant which no-one believes is a horse; Justice 4all - the horse that was scratched a day before the race.

Oh, just another point, during the meeting the bookmakers, owners and politicians made a substantial killing, so no surprises there.

GOOOOAAAAAAL!

At the latest football tournament, a celebrant was injured and the first match in the group stages was held up for two hours.

The localised international incident came when the centre-forward of Medina AFC scored his first goal in the new year, after several hours without bothering the net of any opposition. He finally converted a penalty and the festivities began. When he was finally brought down from the roof of the stand by a cherry-picker, his teammates mobbed him and subjected him to some X-rated touching. A couple of clerics were called in with censers aplenty. Also, the goalscorer's parents were flown in by helicopter, as well as the fellow's schoolteachers, who wanted to share this special moment with their star pupil.

The ceremony went well until, amidst a fervour, significantly fuelled by the drinking of the local brew, the crowd spilled into the goalmouth and formed a kind of mob. In their heightened state of excitement at seeing their footballing hero propel the ball accurately into the centre of the net obligingly vacated by a debutant goalkeeper, the crowd stampeded and the head cleric was trampled underfoot. The mishap was noticed only when the crowd, with their hero's body on their shoulders, tripped over the prone and unmoving body of the cleric.

Luckily for the man of god, the helicopter was already on its way carrying the goalscorer's parents and it was handily utilised to transport him to the local hospital where he was said to be shaken but not stirred from God's mission. The helicopter was a sign from God, the recuperating cleric said. He also quipped: I hope I'm not in the country the next time the fellow scores again.

Back at the match, once the revelry had subsided, and the players had redressed themselves, the away team, Gozo Athletic, scored twice in the next two minutes and held on for a valuable three points. The Medina goalscorer had another three golden chances but spurned each one. It was later revealed that during his celebrations, he had removed his boots and had put them back on but on the wrong feet.

The club's psychiatrist has taken him under his wing and is subjecting him to Net Association Theory, so if or when the fellow scores again, he will be much more realistic and calm about what he has achieved.