

ROWING

In the World Indoor Rowing Championships in Llanelli today, the Men's Single-Handed Umiak event ended in farce when not one of the eight competitors finished the race. All participants crossed the start line, five times in three notable instances, but none could pass the winning post. The race was called off when it became clear the credibility of the sport's organisers, the Indoor Rowing Association, was becoming seriously jeopardised.

This incident comes just two days after the Men's Coxless Fours was cancelled due to extremely bad taste. A huge question mark, not to mention at least two smaller exclamation marks, must now hang over the future of the Championships. Mr Angus McCoatup, the Association's Director said last night: "Holding a rowing event indoors was an ambitious, some might say, audacious, project. Perhaps we could have learned from the mistakes made by the Indoor Sailing Club when all but one of their events were cancelled due to the exceptionally calm conditions."

FOOTBALL

In interview recently, Doug Pork-Scratchings, nicknamed acorn-balls due to his low, autumnal gonads, was questioned about the case of his missing left boots.

"So someone robbed all your left boots. Why do you think they did it?"

"Dunno."

Didn't you read the ransom type note pinned to your shorts?

"Naw, the boss read it to me in the dressing-room, but I weren't listening."

"Well it said the burglar had stolen things the team didn't use and given them to the local Boys' team as they are short of stuff. A regular Robin Hood, eh Doug?"

"Dunno, I dint know he were wearing one."

"What'll you do now that you've no left boots?"

"The boss said to use the golden boot I won last year."

In the match with Automobiles plc United, Doug burst two balls and fractured an opponent's leg. When questioned about these unusual occurrences - using his left foot three times in a match - Doug was quoted saying, "I was curious."

CRICKET LATEST

The second test match was mutually called off after only two days, when both captains agreed that their players were just too tired to go a full five days after playing four days of the first test last month.

The TCP has announced the introduction of a new 20-20 tournament where players from each side will be asked to identify licence-plates to see which side has the best eyesight in all conditions. The side finishing last will get a free eye test.

Latest from The Existential Dominoes tourney in Ulan Bator

R D Haha has laid his fourth consecutive double-blank. The serenity of the man is boundless.

Last year's tournament held in Toulouse, France was criticised by all but one man, as it was said no one likes Toulouse. Jimmy Last was the only one that said anything complimentary as he was once quoted as saying: "Losing is only a word to describe the absence of winning."

Latest:

Stewie McKnight, the famous horse-whisperer was today being held by the constabularies after it was alleged that he was telling horses at the DMZ Handicap at Peterborough to throw races.

The Inconsequential

There's always time for levity

Issue 2

Regular Features:

THE MAN THAT LOOKED UP

Pages two & nine

Fifth Column

Page four

Those Daft Soap Suds

Page five

Those Ethics Girls

Get tough on adultery

Pages six & seven

Poo Corner

Page eight

Sharkey gets willful

Page nine

Humanly Sports pages

Eleven & twelve

Front cover and page ten:
A Cornish Catastrophe

Ah yes, this April day with birds singing as if for the mere joy of it, with the naked sun a dazzling white globe bleaching the milky blue sky, with the morning mist shielding the pastel drawn hills, with the masts of the small sailboats shimmering in the distance as they rocked on the softly rippling river. Today, as at 8.45 a.m. on every other weekday for the past two years, Mr Adrian Clark strode purposefully across the arched, iron bridge that led him to his workplace. The beauty around him invisible as he stared at the pavement ahead, his mind set on service standards, workload, productivity and effectiveness.

"If I can only do one hundred and five percent today, that'll push the team's average to over ninety five," he thought. "We'll be back on track to make-" Suddenly, a splash, quickly followed by another. Mr Clark glanced over the rail to the river below. As his eyes scanned the surface, he noticed a small, circular patch of water begin to bubble, then fizz, then boil. As he watched more intently, a salmon leapt fully two feet into the air, light scintillating along its body as the scales reflected the sun like crystals of ice on a December dawn, then twisting deftly, plunged headfirst back into the glistening depths.

Mr Clark stopped walking.

A look of stunned bewilderment masked his face as if he was trying to comprehend what he had just seen. Like a child that had witnessed their first snow fall or experienced their first magical Christmas morn, he stood enraptured, not wanting to turn away, not

able to move lest it should happen again and he miss it.

"Adrian, are you all right?" Veronica's chirruping voice sliced through the fresh morning. "Come on, Adrian, no time to stand around. There's work to be done!" she continued half joking. Mr Clark roused at his manager's presence and, without taking his eyes from the water, began to explain, "I've just seen a beau..."

"I'll meet you in there," she interrupted and walked off. "I've one or two ideas for increasing productivity that I want to discuss with you." Her voice was fading to insignificance. "Hurry now! Don't be late!"

Mr Clark raised his eyes slowly, reluctantly at first, from the spot upon which they had fixed, and gazed out through the hurrying people around him, beyond the rushing, rasping vehicles, at the vastness of the sure and steady river. He saw with new eyes the gleaming, glistening, star-studded surface and marvelled. Dark figures hustled and dashed past him, either on foot or secreted inside their sound-proofed, four-wheeled coffins-for-the-living, hurtling blindly to their temporary resting place, but Mr Clark was oblivious to them. He knew only the grey-blue ribbon below him, meandering slowly, calmly and in its own good time, eventually to be welcomed by the cossetting mists in the distance.

Closing his eyes, but holding this image in his mind, he tilted back his head, took a long, deep breath of dewy, ozone-filled air and smiled as the Spring-sharp morning permeated his lungs, stripping away two years of staleness in an instant.

(continues on page Nine)

The reader of our first issue may recall our report on the new World Pole-Sitting record that was achieved by Mr Peter Throb at the expense of his close friend, Mr Simon Staines, the previous title holder.

It seems that Mr Staines has been involved in an even less exciting, but marginally more newsworthy incident since our article appeared.

Reports state that Mr Staines was awoken last Friday at two in the morning by muffled groans emanating from his living-room. On investigation, Mr Staines discovered a would-be burglar lying semi-conscious on the floor still holding the trophy awarded to Simon for attaining the previous pole-sitting record - a six foot solid stainless steel replica of the pole used in the feat complete with detachable chair. It appears that the chair had toppled from its mounting as the intruder, who was only four feet eight inches tall, had picked it up. It struck him a glancing blow on the temple rendering him senseless and making it easy for Mr Staines to subdue him. This he did by sitting on his chest until the police arrived to arrest him.

It was only later that Simon discovered, by a remarkable co-incidence, that the villain he'd been sitting on was, in fact, Polish.

We tried to contact Mr Throb for his reaction to the news, but he was unavailable for comment. His wife, Thelma, told us that he was now scouring the area looking for a four feet ten inch East European.

NOT AS ADVERTISED

It's funny how what we see in ads is never the actual, bald, real-world truth.

Footballers are now marketed as well as cars: the latest model(s) is(are) the best, the sleekest, the most skilled geniuses on the planet, well, when they take these 'skills' onto the green, green grass of Koln, what we see are sputtering, sluggish, and mostly mediocre specimens

of millionaires: if only the ball was a well-known crisp canister and the pitch a car park or a hovel midden-patch in darkest Brazil! That canister swirls magically from genius to genius, and is deposited to the nearest millimetre of its target; meanwhile on a real-world stretch of grass, the ball is sent to all parts of the sky and a five-metre pass becomes about impossible for the same wonderful foot that has a crisp canister on a boolean string. Whether or not in an advertising studio or a stage in some backwater urban squalor, Charlie Caroli routines are commonplace, on a pitch marked out for the purpose, these geniuses become very unfunny clowns whose boots seem oversized as they buffet the ball about aimlessly and inaccurately. Also their propensity for falling down in ever increasingly farcical ways adds to the irony of their inadvertent entertainment potential.

There is a darker irony in this issue as the level of advertising of the genius of these millionaires should logically raise the watching public's expectations of what should be displayed, yet to accept, as they seem to do, what is actually perpetrated on the real fields of dreams, fans and general watchers must have a greater suspension of disbelief than most dyed-in-the-wool theatre goers. To accept that a touted genius cannot on most occasions propel the ball anywhere near an intended target, is an act of blind faith, and evidence of the triumph of marketing.

As one famous advert has been spewing out recently, "(Football) the power of dreams." Indeed! Yer 'avin' a larf?

Late news flash:

An unnamed footballer was taken to outpatients in Manchester today, after being taken ill with an attack of the cliches. "At the end of the day he'll be 110%," a doctor said. (It's contagious)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

This Month: My Glasses

You know, I had them when I left for work this morning because I wore them to read my Jeffrey Archer on the bus and I'm sure I had them at lunchtime because I would've needed them to finish my 'What were you thinking?' letter to his publishers. Anyway, I've looked all over the office and can't find them, but if they turn up, I'll let you know next month. Thanks for asking, though, I appreciate it.

All Buttled Out



Mind if I retire now, sir?

(After all I am 113) If you need me I'll be in Holland momentarily, after that you can use the equipment laid out on the occasional table in the drawing-room. There's a clean glass and a newly dusted board. Don't worry about the faded 'f'. Good-bye again, sir.

CORNISH CATASTROPHE

An uneasy calm had returned to the streets of a Cornish village today following a tragic incident late yesterday afternoon. (see cover photograph)

Mrs Gloria Thickpasty, 61, was just yards from her doctor's surgery in the hamlet of Molehole when she was approached by her friend of 30 years, Mr Frank Penwalligan. It was reported that after talking for a few minutes, Mr Penwalligan turned to leave and patted Mrs Thickpasty on the back. Tragically, Mrs Thickpasty exploded on impact and was later pronounced dead on arrival at Cornwall's three main hospitals where she had been taken in a fleet of four ambulances. Mr Penwalligan, who was covered in Gloria, but otherwise miraculously unhurt, told reporters this morning that his friend had suffered from Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) for some months. Allowing herself to be influenced by the persuasive argument of television advertising, she had recently taken a preparatory IBS medication. However, this seemed to be having the opposite effect and, in the last few days, she was becoming more and more bloated.

Mrs Thickpasty was about to visit her doctor, Arthur Decko, when the fatal accident occurred. When asked earlier today if he could have saved his patient, Dr Decko said, "It's unlikely. I was advising Mrs Thickpasty on the correct diet, but I've seen at least three tins of beans in her shopping bag on more than one occasion. Some people seem unable to help even themselves. I just thank the Lord that she didn't go off in a packed waiting room!"

Home Office statistics show that Mrs Thickpasty is the seventh pensioner to explode in the last six months, although only three have been attributed to IBS. A spokesperson urged everyone to remain calm, eat sensibly and visit their doctor at the first signs of flatulence.

We're Glad They Said That!

A famous football manager: "Our players are 13% fitter than they were four years ago."

Car advertisement: 'Metallic paint and wheels optional extras.'

Wife of a dictator: "I've been accused of having 2000 pairs of shoes. In fact I have 1060."

Political commentator: "It (a Trident missile) will mature the global sustainment solution."

Little EDITORIAL "Never mind the quantity feel the wit."

So, Issue two; the second polite "ahem" cast into the vastness we loosely call a universe. Unlike TV it is hard to repeat the unsung triumph of issue one. Whatever happened to issue one: this is not a rhetorical question, what really did happen to at least four copies of the first of the bag-breaking mag? Just a word to the X-File agent that 'disappeared' the four copies: If you like it that much just put in a subscription, or better still, in the interests of the proliferation of free speech, read it, laugh however many times you think medically prudent, then replace the copies so others can be unimpressed by them. Let's hope that whoever took the copies sniggered at least once and took this voice in the spirit it is intended.

In the paraphrased words of the great man himself: 'Go on, We shouldn't go on. We'll go on'.

In this issue you will find those regulars that we hope will become your favourites, along with the one-off, snack-type tidbits. Mr Clark's day-of-days develops further and those Ethics Girls are once more engaging their substantial ethical brawn, this time considering the issue of being profligate with our affections.

Olive Lamp's many splendoured life as hub of the soap wheel of misfortune, where anything and nothing regularly happens, moves on ever so slightly.

There's no puzzle in this issue as Andy Nutt was not available due to his obsessive compilation of the world's largest Sudoku; last measurement was eight-and-a-half metres square, and that's before he puts the nines in!

There's also more from Sharkey, the friendly Great White, as his consciousness deepens and gives rise to willful behaviour.

Then there's the sports section that will keep you informed of the cutting-edge developments in all sorts of areas of recreational professionalism and smatterings of amateur dilettantism.

Once again, no primates were injured, mistreated or insulted in the production of this magazine.

Letters

Dear Sirs

Your article on libraries was most entertaining and particularly insightful. It brought back childhood memories of my local library in the village of Loose Chippings.

It would open one morning and two afternoons a week whether anyone wanted it to or not and was content to do so. It was also one of the first libraries in

the country to provide a 24 hour emergency helpline for Irritable Bowel Syndrome sufferers [see page 10] thanks largely to a mix-up in the Yellow Pages.

Sadly, it couldn't last and the building was converted to a McDonalds in the late 80's, but the memories remain...

Yours
Lady Penelope Black

Dear Sirs

Delighted as I was that you chose to print my letter in your first issue, my joy was somewhat tempered by the omission of my name and address. I trust you will rectify the matter in your second effusion and fight the march of censorship.

Name & address withheld

STARS

Love: Love will prove elusive this month, especially if you're short, thin and wear glasses.

Work: Your manager will recognise and reward your efforts; your colleagues will admire and respect you; and even the security guards will acknowledge your existence. Yeah, right!

Home: The need to address family issues is highlighted this month, so if I were you I'd spend it in the pub

"To understand God's thoughts we must study statistics, for these are the measure of his purpose."

We might forgive Florence Nightingale for saying that. After all, she was witness to the horrors of the Crimean War and used to sniff ether for a large part of the day. I suspect Benjamin Disraeli's famous quote to be nearer the mark: There are three kinds of lies; lies, damned lies and statistics.

Rarely in our lives can we have been subjected to such a statistical onslaught than at present. Statistics are everywhere: from telling us how many misplaced passes the latest superstar footballer has made, to the number of service return winners our British number 3 (186 in the world) has hit from the baseline. They tell us how we've voted before the votes have been counted and how much the latest blockbuster has made in the first week. They can even tell us how many of us read which newspapers and which television programmes we're watching.

However, the area with the greatest rise in statistical usage (84% higher in the last 12 months, so I'm told) must be television advertising. And this brings me to my point. Oh! There is one, I hear you yawn. Well, yes there is. What on Earth makes advertisers think we'll rush out immediately and buy their product just because they've stuck a percentage in there? I'll tell you: a smattering of scientific naivety and a huge dollop of gullibility. They be-

lieve we'll fall for anything that looks like it's been tested and approved by a bloke wearing a white coat and glasses.

Hence, we're bombarded by adverts telling us that a mascara can lift our eyelashes by 67%, or our children can be 12% more alert in the mornings if they eat a certain cereal. Use this regeneration cream and you'll look 15 years younger, use that shampoo and conditioner and your hair will be 85% shinier. It's all b*****ks. At best it's misleading and at worst it's a cynical manipulation of a necessarily ignorant viewing public.

Let's take these examples, though there are many, many more.

If my eyelashes were lifted 67% higher, I wouldn't be able to close my eyelids. I don't get much sleep now, but with eyelids on my forehead it would be impossible.

I don't have young children, but I suspect having them 12% more alert would make early mornings even more unbearable. I might be tempted to buy a cereal that could make them 12% more unconscious. Mogadon balls, for example. You'd get a lot more peace and quiet and, mums, you'd get a lot more housework done in a far shorter time. You'd catch Trisha AND Jeremy Kyle.

Looking 15 years younger might be a Godsend for a 40-year-old, but what happens if that cream falls into the hands of someone in their 20's? They'd have to go back to school and go through puberty all over again. It doesn't even work on the skin. It just fills in the cracks to make it look

smoother and smudges when you try to wash it off (so I've been told). You may as well use Poly-filla. At least it's permanent, doesn't shrink and you can paint over it when it's dry!

Then there's your hair. If it's dazzling radiance you're after, try taping a light bulb to your head. "Head and Shoulders, Jen?" "No, Mazda 40 watt, Trace!"

There are two final, but important points to consider when looking at statistics in advertising: firstly, the missing comparator and secondly, the validity and accuracy of the measuring devices.

It's fine saying something's 12% more alert or 85% shinier (actually it isn't, but for the sake of argument let's say it is), but 12% more alert than what? 85% shinier than what? 67% higher than what? If advertisers are going to use comparative expressions, they need to tell

us the item or state to which they're comparing their product. Otherwise, their percentages are meaningless.

Finally, the measuring devices. Who decides that a child is 12% more alert and how can they measure that anyway? Apparently, the children's mothers were asked how much more alert their child was after eating the cereal. Very scientific! How did they settle on 12%? Perhaps their eyelids were 2 millimetres higher than usual, but surely, that could have been due to the 67% lash lift! The final word should go to Vic Reeves who was attributed as saying: "72% of statistics are made up on the spot." I suspect that there's more than a grain of truth in that!

SHARKEY THE GREAT WHITE



Sharkey had been blessed with consciousness for a few weeks and was beginning to come to terms with sensibilities. "Why do I keep moving, onward ever onward; why do I never rest; Now I'm able to contemplate, why can't I stay still for a while?" Sharkey then wilfully slowed to a standstill but was taken by surprise as he plummeted while taking in water at a rate of knots through his gills. Through another act of will - or was it an instinctive self-preservation impulse? - Sharkey dragged

himself up and broke the surface. Gasping for air, he determined himself to work this part of his nature through. "I must evolve so that I do not need to be constantly on the move; perhaps I could learn to close my gills."

So, having been through the consequences of his first significant act of will, Sharkey moved forward, philosophically speaking, and his face took on all the appearance of a smile. He even left the plankton unmolested.

THE MAN THAT LOOKED UP (from page two) of late starters hurried along ahead of him, but A body brushed against him. A hand held his none were near enough to have spoken. He arm and shook him and he heard a familiar voice looked around expecting to see the face of one of call his name: "Adrian?" Louder: "ADRIAN! his colleagues, but saw no-one. What are you playing at? It's five past nine!" He started off again, hesitantly, in the direction of No response. He three-storey redbrick building that he inhabited. "Are you okay?" The Voice continued. "You eyed the first-floor windows behind which his Mr Clark did not open his eyes, but took another fellow New Accounts team members were already deep breath and exhaled slowly, waited, then endeavouring to prove their effectiveness. A replied in a whisper, "Yes, I think it has." small dark strip in one of the windows caught his A short silence followed as if the Voice was attention. The vertical blinds that were normally expecting some sort of explanation, but none drawn and closed to shield the workforce from the came. distraction of the outside world were pulled slightly "You've never been late in your life!" The Voice to one side and there, peering out of the small added, then diminishing, continued, "You'd better gap, was the bird-like face of Veronica. She move yourself." looked at Mr Clark, then at her watch, then at Mr For a moment, Mr Clark felt a knot of anxiety Clark once more. tighten his stomach. He allowed his head to fall Mr Clark turned away quickly and would have forward and snapped open his eyes. A handful quickened his pace too, if at that moment, a strong gust of wind had not blown into his face

A philosophical sneeze

Wer mit Ungeheuern kampf, mag zuehn, dass er nicht dabei zum Ungeheuer wird. Und wenn du lande in einen Abgrund blickst, blickt der Abgrund auch in dich hinein. Friedrich Nietzsche (Translation: He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.)

Poo Corner

The Hand that takes the Money

How many souls have made colours with this hand?

Are there memories of those that held it, unmarked yet with thoughts of love immortal

Today, as on so many days presently you open it to strangers eager to cross it with silver - it needs only to grasp at the plastic - you give them a ticket marking their immediate future.

What tender limbs has this hand persuaded into pleasure?

How many brows has it tended unflinching at times when, it was your breast you sought to cover

from the pain of nakedness and now, with certain, distinct lines realised an essential element of you embedded for all to see.

Does this hand still talk with two-fingers when cornered?

and are there times when it turns in on itself, biting its flesh to bleeding point holding back from stamping unreasoned authority.

Just what will this hand hold, what wonders will it read, will it still tingle cupped for rainwater?

The Experiment (or Outdoor Ex)

Calculated risk, we kissed, shrinking Just what in heaven and earth, were we thinking

All we didn't know of each other Exploded in this cry for another Our litmus-paper tongues entwined, blue Our hearts hithertofore untried

Remembering nothing we wished untrue Urge to know, a dream therefore died We might as apathetic braves, persist In dried and trussed adventure's hide Though this event, unthought, unfelt, unmissable in opening metaphors, unhinged Sucking out all the marrow

Leaving a dry sound of science (from a blushing pink to asetic blue) as a hollow graph charted our course It unfolded between our filmic flesh And what should've taken us fervour than before Reduced passing passions to prunes, a walnut and a disfigured cherry All withered and no wonder. We should've tried it at home.

Let us now, together at last Allow the grass to resume its standing Sun-erect, unflattered by our grave bodies; You rise, I raise myself once more, fulfilling our nature, upright after so many millennia having fallen from the tree again with the gravity of knowledge

This is something we can still share in, This unease in such untraying times.

Will you recall this datum when next you wear such a beautiful long white coat?

Anxiety

Incendiary glances just miss showers of arrows have me a quiver bullets agape, winking off my head and rounds of ratatatcher have me ducking

Why did I, a chicken, cross no-man's land when meteors tear at my meagre surface; I'm over the top, at war with myself entrenched in inflammatory dreams

The hot-iron sears on my shoulder other barbs inject their warm serum into my poisoned flesh and the scalding touch of an unwitting Samari-tan takes away so much of me on recoil

Those Daft Soap Suds

Karaoke night at THE VITREOUS ENAMEL, to celebrate Olive Lamp's good fortune. The assembled miscreants are merrily warbling away; the latest of which is the local vicar - always on hand in case there's a marriage afoot, following 'love at first fight' - is grinding out an old Punk favourite "I'm gonna rip out yer 'eart and send it back on Valentine's Day." Meanwhile, Sunlight, helping her mum out behind the bar, is flitting and mooning over Phil 'Dettol' Emin - one of the Bleach twins. However, Olive knows better...



Phil Emin was at that moment dragging his latest paramour across the carpet, and they were attached at the mouth as though they were trying to devour one another. The signs had no ambiguity, even for the lovelorn Sunlight. She went dull before running out to the back room, foam already forming in her previously sparkling eyes. "C'est la vie." Olive said philosophically as she followed Sunlight out, picking up a large towel and her book of commiseration clichés she'd bought recently from Dick Enzer's Old Furyosity Shop.

Over in a corner of the pub, just out of gunshot of the karaoke, Jock E Millstone was throwing what could be the final dart in his Paternity match with M T Mescrotum. The lads were playing for the privilege of paying child support for Marge Yamac's little bundle of joy; the existence of whom the two participants no idea of until tonight. Neither knew that little Oedipus was in fact the issue of a night of poisson and chips, Pat and one Jack Ladd had endured just ten long months ago underneath that very dartboard.

Olive's mopping up duties for Sunlight, who's sun had set - she looked like night - were abruptly interrupted by a panicking Gill O'Beer. "Olive, love, sorry to butt in but we're out of pork-scratchings." Olive, although feeling great sadness for Sunlight, was taken further aback. "We've never been out of pork-scratchings in this pub since the war; how can it be? 'Ave yer looked in the stockroom?" Gill blurted out that she had, but all she'd found was Dougie Emin doing the beast with two backs with the Pork-Scratchings delivery woman.



As Olive left Sunlight to sob herself into insensibility, she and Gill were surprised just outside the gens - and not for the first time. As if by magic, up popped Dope on a Rope. "Yeah, and you won't be getting any, anymore." "How would you know you little git." "Frew Saga owns all of the outlets that serve this pub, so you'd better get used to 'aving no pork-scratchings, and no booze as soon as you run out of what you've got now." He tried to laugh like a villain but his hernia prevented such behaviour, so he merely sniggered maniacally.



Just then, Olive overheard Sunlight, among her gut-wrenching sobs, exclaim: "I hope it's not his."

THOSE ETHICS GIRLS

Mavis: More tea, Lil?
Lil: Don't mind if I do, Mave.
Mavis: Help yourself to cake. You too, Gladys, Sheila.
Lil: I won't have any more if you don't mind. I prefer making them to eating them. Besides, I'm watching my figure!
Gladys: Ah! Speaking of fatties...
Lil: Oh! Thanks, Gladys!
Gladys: Sorry, Lil. No offence! I was just going to say, I was speaking to Mrs Cresspot the other day. Her blimp of a husband, Don, has been up to his old tricks, apparently.
Mavis: Not again! Who's the unfortunate, misguided soul this time?
Gladys: His secretary, I believe.
Mavis: Oh, that's old news! He's been seeing her for two years or more to my knowledge.
Gladys: No, not that ginger woman. He's moved on to a younger model now. Just started not so long ago. Early twenties, wavy, golden hair and long, brown legs. Or was it the other way round?
Sheila: Very funny, Gladys. You can make a joke of it, but what about his poor wife? She has to accompany him to all those Council functions, putting on a sweet smile, all the time knowing what he'll be up to as soon as she's packed off home.
Mavis: The man's a walking cliché. Two Honda Civics to ferry him around and he thinks he's God's gift. He's only Manager of the Sports & Recreation Department for Heaven's sake. Very fitting, I must say!
Sheila: Not only that. He also sits on the Social Services Family Advisory Panel sitting in judgement on dysfunctional one-parent families and dispensing advice on how to maintain high moral standards!
Lil: You can't lay all the blame onto him, though, girls. It takes two to have an affair. What about the women involved? They know he's married and he is dishy in a potato-faced sort of a way.
Sheila: Now YOU'RE having a laugh, aren't you? The girls are young and easily swayed by his simple northern charm and bluff political rhetoric. Besides, they're only interested in the glamour of it all. No doubt he swears that they're the only one for him and grunts that his wife doesn't understand him.
Gladys: Now that's probably true - she's Belgian!
Sheila: Oh, you're on form tonight, Glad! I'll tell you this, girls. If my daughter got involved with such a hypocritical, two-timing no-neck, I'd be straight down to Social Services myself to have her adopted...

Mavis: She's nearly 24!
Sheila: I don't care! Then I'd be writing a stiff letter to whoever it is has the power to remove him from office and insist that they do so immediately!
Lil: Perhaps you could seek advice from the Family Avis. Whafy. Faneff.
Mavis: Have another cake, Lil. I insist!
Gladys: There's the door. I'll get it... Well, well! Speak of the Devil. Hi, Kylie. Your mam's in the front room.
Sheila: Hello, love. I haven't seen you for a while. How's the new flat? And what have you done to your hair!!
Kylie: Yeah, the flat's fine and as for the hair, well, blondes have more fun, so they say and believe me, it's right! Got myself a new job and a new fella! I would've been to see you before now, but I've been a bit busy, if you know what I mean.
Lil: Oh, we can just about remember what it's like. Hang on! This new bloke. Doesn't ride around in a Honda Civic and has a problem wearing ties, does he?
Kylie: Pardon? I...I'm sorry, Lil, I don't know what you mean.
Lil: Of course not, love. Sheila, did you want the number for Social Services, dear?
Sheila: Highly amusing, Lil! Kylie! What on Earth do you think you're doing? That man's twice your age and married!
Kylie: What are you on about, mam? I don't know what Lil's been putting in her cakes this time, but she's had one too many of them! Jamie's 25 and drives an Audi. He's a mechanic at that new garage in the High Street where I work. I just started as a receptionist last month.
Lil: Oh!
Kylie: Yes, "Oh!" In fact, Lil, it was you I came to see. That daughter of yours has stood me up. We were supposed to be going to the gym tonight, but her fella's found time in his busy schedule to fit her in, so she's off to meet him. She asked me to tell you that she'll be late in. Come to think of it, HE drives a Honda and looks ancient! Always wears open neck shirts, too!
Lil: I don't believe it! You're having me on!
Kylie: Go down and see for yourself. She'll be waiting there now. Just outside the Town Hall!
Sheila: I'll get your coat then, Lil. Oh! That telephone number. You'd better hang on to it, just in case. You never know, you may just need it!
Mavis: I'll make a fresh pot then, girls. Elephant's foot, anyone?