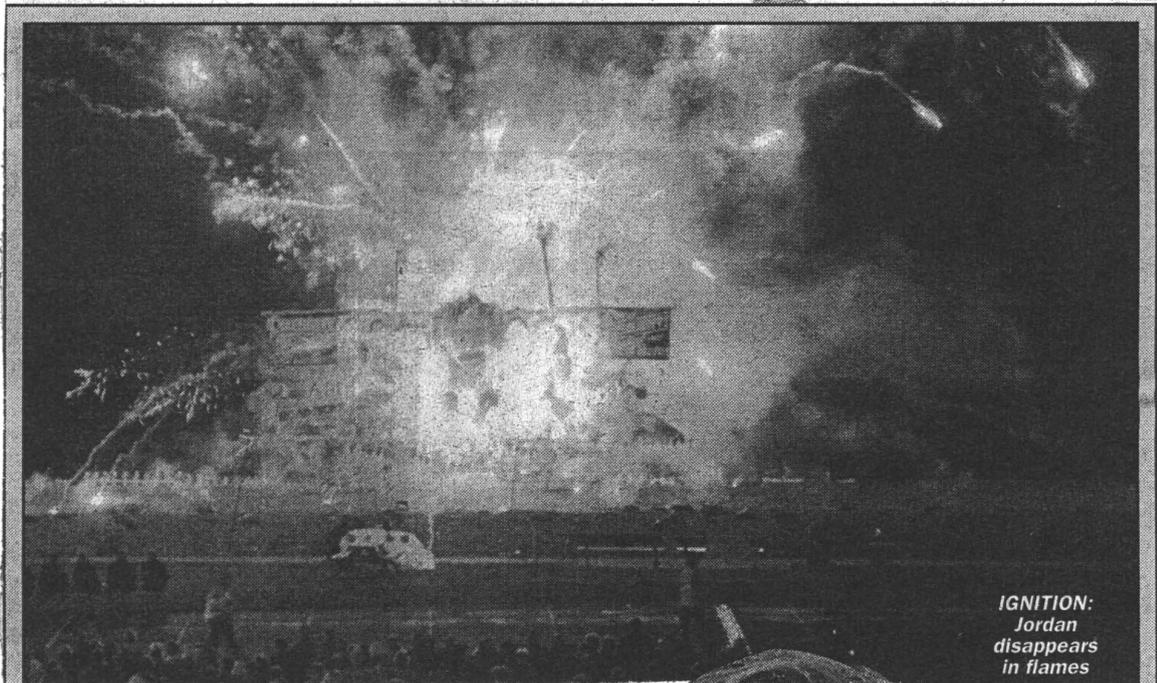


A Very Merry  
Christmas  
to all our  
Readers!



IGNITION:  
Jordan  
disappears  
in flames



JORDAN'S "sizzling, sexy" autobiography was rejected by several publishers before it pitched up at the offices of former Sun man John Blake. He published it and it has just been voted the nation's favourite autobiography, ahead of Nelson Mandela's, proving that where there's muck there's brass.

# FOLKLORE FRONTIERS No.48



IT'S INFORMATIVE,  
INTERESTING, AMUSING—  
IT SURE IS SOMETHING,  
HONEY!

GROOVY!



The magazine  
everyone's talking  
about!



FOLKLORE FRONTIERS is an independent magazine covering various aspects of folklore, particularly urban belief tales, ancient and modern traditions and lore, plus contemporary culture. It is edited and published by Paul Screeton. Address is 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, TS25 2AT. Subscription for three issues is £6 payable to P. Screeton (NOT Folklore Frontiers) We can now be contacted at Pauline.screeton@ntlworld.co.uk If you subscription expires with this issue and "X" will appear on the line below.

THE DIARY . . . . . THE DIARY . . . . . THE DIARY

### THROUGH A SCANNER DARKLY

I HAVE belatedly noticed that in FF45:4, the last paragraph of the article on the Diana and Hewitt lustfest was incomplete, thus losing the piece's punchline, an almost throwaway reference to her children's paternity. Here's what it should have read -- quoting from "Stick It Up Your PUNTER! THE UNCUT STORY OF THE SUN NEWSPAPER" by Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie, William Heinemann Limited, 1990 -- "In 1989 the Sun had got hold of a mobile phone conversation between Diana and a former lover, James Gilby. The call, which had been intercepted by a man later described as a 'radio ham' using a frequency scanner, featured Diana and Gilby engaging in a lot of heavy breathing. At one point she asked him whether he was masturbating. She also expressed a desire to avoid getting pregnant (by Gilby) and even seemed to cast doubt on the legitimacy of her children. Gilby, for his part, talked about erotic dreams he had been enjoying of late, which he described to her at length."

### SIX-DAY LICENCES

IN the mid-Sixties, I learned of how the Fox and Hounds, one of two pubs in the village of Carlton-in-Cleveland, North Yorkshire, had only a six-day licence as a previous owner, local vicar Canon Kyle, objected to parishioners drinking on a Sunday. A colleague on a rival paper got wind of my plans to try to sell the story to a national newspaper and tipped off his newsdesk. Consequently the Northern Echo ran the story, upsetting villagers and when I called with a pal we were ushered into the pub kitchen in case regulars lynched us as we'd previously been courting opinions. I mention this tale from my days of junior journalism as another such pub anachronism has been in the news.

Pub regulars in Enville, south Staffordshire, which had no Sunday drinking for 300 years celebrated their first Sabbath pin in October. The Cat Inn was reputed to be the only pub in England not to open on a Sunday. It was shut on the Sabbath as the result of a decree by a local landowner who wanted to ensure his workers were clear-headed for the week ahead. New owners Guy and Michelle Ayres applied to the Enville and Stalybridge Estate to revoke the ban and were successful. Now they are able to open at noon and serve locally-brewed ales and traditional roasts. "It's very exciting, history in the making," said Mrs Ayres. "Other places don't open on a Sunday but

that's through choice. We're the only one in England that hasn't been allowed. The landowners have started to move with the times." (Metro, 25/10/04) However, an alternative reason for the Sunday ban was given as being that the landlady saw labourers urinating in the street. (The Times, 25/10/04)

### OVER THE RAINBOW

ANOTHER Sixties memory was of the same pal and getting a pas-out from a coffee bar to sink half-a-dozen swift pints of Black Velvet each in the Marine Hotel between spots by rock groups at The Rainbow.

Cut to Adam Edwards' pub column and recollections of the "apocryphal tale" of motor-cycling wagers. "That bet was to scorch from the Ace Cafe at Stonebridge Park on the western section of the North Circular Road to the roundabout at Hangar Lane. Then the 'greaser' raced back to the Ace before a given 45 single had finished playing on its jukebox." (D. Telegraph Weekend, 23/10/04)

Back in the mid-Sixties I recall the Northern Daily Mail (Hartlepool) chief reporter getting into trouble with the police for staging such a re-enactment burn-up from Seaton Carew's Rainbow up Station Lane, along Brenda Road and back along Tees Road to the cafe.

### SOME CONTENTS COMMENTS

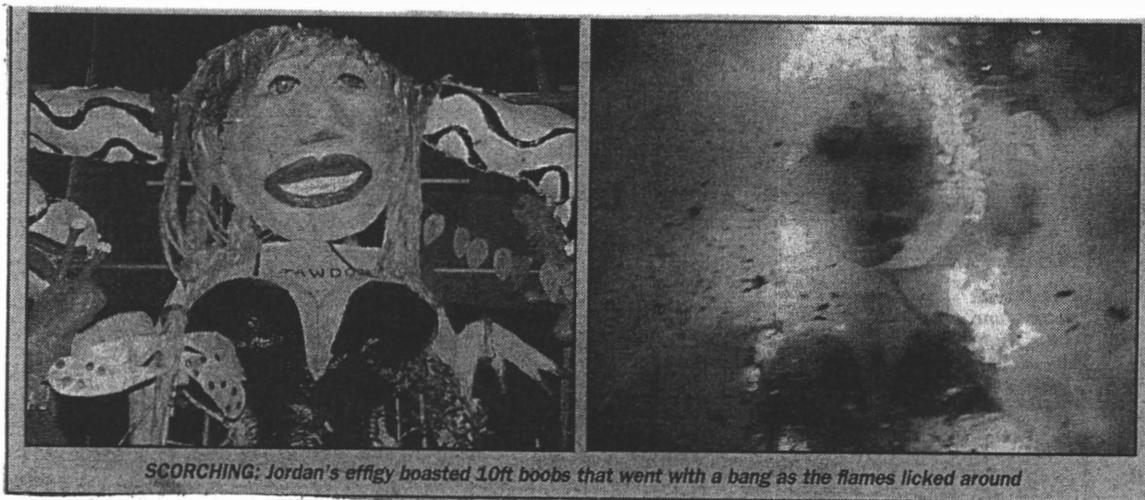
CAVIES. I had been collecting references to the earing of exotic fauna with the intention of eventually writing up the subject. Press reports of an extra-large guinea pig specially bred in its native Peru to provide a nutritious low-fat meal seemed a timely spur to show how FF is at the cutting edge of journalism. (Sunday Telegraph, 24/10/04)

BREASTS. A piece on page 14 among a collection of contemporary legends dismisses staring at big boobs is equal to an aerobic workout. Advising men to ogle sexy breasts if they want to live longer, Dr Karen Weatherby discovered that "just ten minutes of staring at a well-endowed female is roughly equivalent to a 30-minute aerobic workout." (D. Sport 12/6/00; FF38:1-3)

RUDE PLACENAMES. Following my introduction of dubious names for locations such as Brown Willy (FF46:6), I can now go global (see page 14) thanks to a red-top tabloid. (D. Sport, 27/10/04)

# FIRECRACKER! Jordan -- Wicker Woman

By Paul Screeton



SCORCHING: Jordan's effigy boasted 10ft boobs that went with a bang as the flames licked around

ONE can only conclude that when 30,000 people turn out to cheer as a 30-foot effigy of topless totty Jordan is burned that Guy Fawkes' role in bonfire folklore is truly eclipsed.

Seeking a direct descent from prehistoric and Celtic pagan fire rituals and human sacrifice falls foul of the fact that there is no trace of late autumn or early winter bonfires in mediaeval or Tudor England (which is not to say midsummer rites could not be continuous).

A Commons bill proposing a perpetual anniversary thanksgiving for the foiled Gunpowder Plot met with unanimous approval and was grafted to the reformed religion. That Jordan (the Hastings effigy spelled "JAWDON") was chosen follows the bonfire societies of the South-East burning various caricatures; Pope Paul V being a favourite (as Catholic leader at the time of the plot in 1605), but in past Lewes, for instance, has built 20-foot explosives-filled effigies of Nigel Lawson, Bill Clinton and Margaret Thatcher and burned them. (1)

But why Jordan? One obvious answer -- well, two actually -- being her dubious celebrity. Also her propinquity. A banner was raised above the red-hot stunna's head which read "I'm a resident -- Get Me Out of Here!" This being a reference to her move to nearby Maresfield and her role as contestant on the reality show "I'm A Celebrity -- Get Me Out of Here!" I trust it was not as folklore guru Ronald Hutton was told by a girl (her hair, coat and gloves alight at the time) at the Ottery St Mary tar barrel ceremony that the purpose was to chase evil spirits from her community at the beginning of 1990's winter." (2)

In 2004, as the flames lit the East Sussex sky and Jordan's right breast sagged down before collapsing completely, onlooker Joanne Butler, 25, from Tunbridge Wells in Kent, said: "It was great fun. The effigy was really lifelike, although I'm not sure the 10-foot high boobs were as big as the real thing. Anyway they soon deflated and collapsed, which made everyone smile." (3)

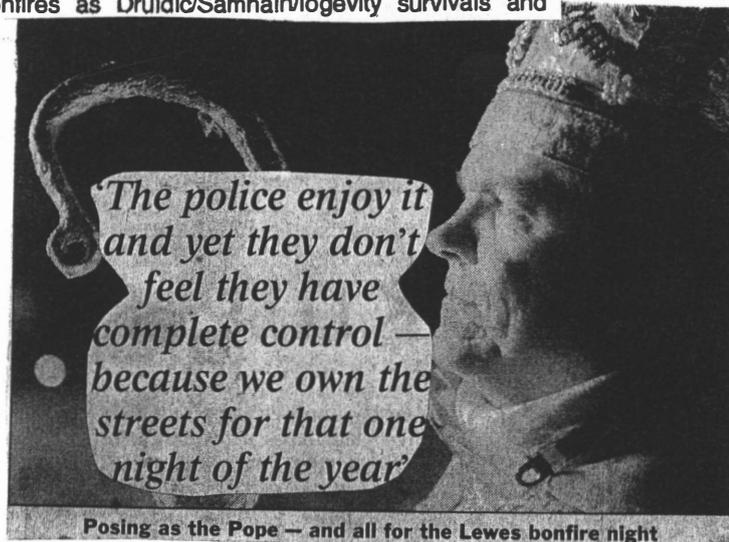
The charred remains of Jordan were later ignominiously scraped off the beach front and removed in bags, but the bounteous beauty can bask in the afterglow of knowing her cremation raised thousands for charity.

Back with continuity, Hastings' bonfire was only revived in 1996 after a 40-year break, before which it stretched back to 1605. Doubter that I am, I had gone so far as to borrow a book from our local library to

check whether the Daily Sport reporter had correctly attributed Jordan's conflagration to commemorating the anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, but apparently its being held around the conflict's date of October 14 was correct. The Times added: "It features a procession of 1,066 torchbearers and a bonfire on the beach. Enemies of bonfire get burnt, too: traffic wardens and BSE-ridden beefburgers have been recent victims." (1)

Enemy of bonfire or not, burning Jordan is preferable to the fiercely sectarian olden days and spectacular struggles between the constabulary and the anarchic bonfire gangs. From drunken pyromaniacs demanding money with menaces from passers-by, events today are family-friendly affairs and fun.

Although for reasons already noted I dismiss the continuity theory, Ward Rutherford sees today's bonfires as Druidic/Samhain/logeivity survivals and



Posing as the Pope -- and all for the Lewes bonfire night

drags in banshees from prehistoric barrows in the form of beautiful temptresses in search of mortal lovers. (4) Perhaps burning Jordan was to protect us from the modern equivalent of the belief in spirits of the dead -- D-list deadbeat celebs.

#### References:

- (1) Naish, John. "Watch out, all you enemies of bonfire" The Times Weekend. 2002? 2003?
- (2) Hutton, Ronald "The Stations of the Sun" Oxford University Press 1996
- (3) White, Richard "Burn baby burn!" Dally Sport 19/10/04
- (4) Rutherford, Ward "Druids Among the Fireworks" Quicksilver Messenger issue 1 1975?

# Moss loss skip toss (and return of the Philistine art gallery cleaner)

By Paul Screeton

HARDLY was the ink dry on page FF46:5 than another example of modern art catastrophe occurred. A neon creation made for Kate Moss by Tracey Emin was found dumped in a skip. The unique £100,000 tubing spelled out the words "Moss Kin". Supermodel Kate, 30, had never collected the work, which was kept in storage for three years in the basement of a specialist artist used by Emin. The dumping was blamed on a misunderstanding with removal men helping him move house from Spitalfields, east London. In a live internet chat before her birthday, Emin, 40, urged Moss to collect the tubing. "When are you going to pick your neon up? Are you coming to my birthday?" A spokesman for decisive Kate's model agency Storm said: "Kate hadn't decided where she was going to put it in her house so Tracey was keeping hold of it. It was thrown out by mistake and it was something Kate wanted." (D. Mirror, May ?, 2004)

Then in an almost too good to be true instance, the uncultured art gallery cleaner struck again with an unnamed Tate opponent of the Israelites becoming a national heroine by disposing of a bag of rubbish without realising it was an exhibit by the German-born artist Gustav Metzger called 'Recreation of the First Public Demonstration of Auto Destructive Art'. Columnist Frank Johnson suspected, not unnaturally, that Tate Britain might have made the story up to "annoy some of us". Publicity stunt, yes. Annoy? Johnson went on: "But a Tate Britain spokesman was surprisingly forgiving of the cleaner. Since the bag of rubbish was not roped off, he said: 'How was she to know what it was supposed to be?'" (D. Telegraph, 28/8/04)

Another example of artistic endeavour being misunderstood occurred when Tom Bloor's subway art was mistaken for flyposting and torn down. "They are as daft as a brush. When I saw my work in tatters I was horrified. It took me most of the next day to put it back up again," said Bloor. The 31-year-old spent nine hours pasting almost 400 photocopied sheets of pop art wallpaper on the walls of the Fletchers Walk subway in Birmingham city centre. He had been granted council permission for the project, part of the Clash visual arts event organised by Fused magazine, and this just 24 hours after receiving £2m. to promote inner-city culture. But a passer-by complained to town hall bosses and cleaners were sent to scrub the wallpaper off overnight. A council spokesman said: "We can only apologise sincerely to the artist for the breakdown in communication." (Metro, 29/7/04)

As previously noted, I applauded the Momart warehouse retributive blaze and now learn that spoonbender par excellence Uri Geller salvaged material from the site in binbags and commissioned his protege, Stuart Semple, to create 'Burn Baby Burn' as tribute allegedly valued at £100,000. (Sunday Telegraph, 18/7/04)

Meanwhile, an artist received a £30,000 grant of taxpayers' money to brighten up a health centre in Bristol. He spent the money digging up an oak tree and replanting it upside down. (D. Express via Sunday Telegraph, 22/8/04)

Getting even crazier and proving the Art Establishment is equally barmy, a South African museum was exhibiting paintings by Dutch masters facing the wall. The curator said it was to force visitors to "reconsider their preconceptions of art". Obviously nothing racial. (The Guardian via Sunday Telegraph, 8/8/04)

However, a backlash may be developing if rogue graffiti artists' efforts catch on. They kidnapped a fibreglass cow from the international art exhibition Cow Parade and threatened to 'sacrifice' it unless the sculptures were declared 'non-art'. They sent a video to a newspaper showing the cow flanked by two masked figures in black holding power drills to its head. A sign in the background read 'Stockholm's Militant Graffiti Artists'. A Stockholm Modern Art Museum spokesperson said: "We are very upset about the whole incident." (Metro, 20/8/04) Unfortunately I have no knowledge whether officialdom complied with the liberators' demands.

Lastly, if not totally convinced yet that the world has gone mad, consider these lunacies:

\* Gallery 39 in Swindon owner Kevin Money was offering 25% off any purchases to anyone baring all. Artwork for sale included a gay image of an erect penis in the window which attracted jeers from local yobs. Other residents branded the works "disgusting" and "filthy". (D. Sport, 27/9/04)

\* Birmingham again, as a group of artists received £15,000 in taxpayers' money to go on a pub crawl. The group, along with 30 members of the public, were to visit five traditional boozers in the city, courtesy of the Arts Council. (Metro, 13/9/04)

\* An art student from Sweden arranged 300 different pieces of fruit and veg to look like penises, testicles, vaginas and breasts -- and received an A in her thesis. (D. Sport, 5/11/04)

\* See also Jamie Oliver clipping on Page 14 (D. Sport, 1/10/04)

SO how should Charles Saatchi's seeming cooling towards conceptual art be viewed? Drinks all round? For he's a jolly good fellow? He claims to be having a passionate affair with painting and is to have a trial separation from Emin and Hirst. Such a Damascene change to tastefulness looks unlikely. Close associates say he has been badly wounded by attacks on his promotion of "shock art" and gimmickry. If so he deserved all he got. If he is sincere and not just looking for another way of boosting his investment portfolio then we should acclaim him. (The Times, D. Telegraph, 2/10/04)

# When railway pioneers met faery mischief

By Paul Screeton

IT WAS appropriate that Great North of England Railway named a Class 91 electric locomotive after novelist Robert Louis Stevenson. He was, however, also an accomplished poet and it was equally fitting that revolutionary rail photographer Colin T. Gifford named the two volumes of his best steam era portfolios after phrases in the last line of Stevenson's poem "From A Railway Carriage." I'll give four lines of his verse as a taster, particularly as I will be considering the machinations of faeryfolk and wizardry.

*"Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches ...  
... And here is a mill, and there a river:  
Each a glimpse and gone forever!"*

The art of interpreting the landscape in terms of numinosity has several names: from the clinical geomancy to sinister psychogeography and my favourite, Hermetic topography, coined by geomant Bill Porter of Loughton, Essex.

Traditional Australian aborigines still believe each stone and tree has its own spirit and they journey along invisible "song lines." We modern Britons have all but lost contact with a landscape which was once enchanted. Occasionally tales surface of deeds which remind us that presences still guard the sacredness of scenery.

One who chose to alter the landscape was visionary George Stephenson, a hard-headed railway pioneer whose surveying led him to drive his line through a reputed fairy hill in County Durham, at Middridge, but he found himself facing an engineering problem blamed upon supernatural intervention. The sides of the cutting through the hill were supposedly being pushed down by the indignant elementals and he faced a plea for extra money from the contractors to complete this section. Whether he believed the problem to be supernatural or technical, Stephenson was left no option but to approach the Quaker backers and put the case for additional finance. (1)

Another railway line to Darlington was constructed shortly afterwards to transport ore from Merrybent mine on Gatherley Moor, apparently rich in copper deposits. Unfortunately the venture proved commercially non-viable and certain persons held the fairies which were said to inhabit Diddersley Hill responsible. (2)

Another example of mysterious forces hindering a railway scheme focuses upon a guardian or heirloom skull known as Dicky O'Tunstead. A long catalogue of misfortune associated with the skull included farm beasts sickening, crops failing and strange sounds, yet when well treated it was believed to bring good fortune. However, the skull was blamed for railway bridges built across the Peak Forest farmland collapsing in 1862 and causing the line to be rerouted. The bridge that eventually became permanent came to be known as Dicky's Bridge. As for the skull -- actually female and possibly prehistoric -- in 1985 it was buried by the wife of the farm's present owner in the garden. (3)

When the Victorians forged northwards with what we now know as the West Coast Main Line, they cut through the Neolithic stone circle called Kemp Howe by Shap quarry. There are many accounts of woe befalling those who desecrate ancient monuments and

I was not surprised to learn of problems at this Cumbrian location, even so long after engineers chose to bury half the terminating site of an avenue of sacred megaliths. Discussing Virgin's present locofleet and future plans, journalist David Brown asked if there were any upgrade current problems. As Jackie Townsend, Virgin Trains' Operations Manager West Coast, confided, "current" was the operative word: "We do have a mystery problem -- our very own 'X file' if you like! There is a disconfiguration problem on the W.C.M.L. near Harrison's Sidings, Shap, which means we suffer loss of power often in the afternoon. The locos have been tested and the overhead wires have been tested and so far we have not found the source of the power loss. So we'll keep on looking!" (4)

As for prehistoric stone circles, one theory among many to explain their origin and specific siting is Terence Meaden's novel notion that Stone Age engineers built them where they saw a wind vortex in motion. This is not the place to argue the pros and cons of corn circles, but two rail associations with cereology are worth a mention.

Noel Ingram was trainspotting at the bridge over the East Coast Main Line at Swayfield, Lincs., on June 7, 1962, when "I was enjoying the countryside between trains when there was a sudden roaring in a crop field to the left of the (railway line). A sudden whirlwind whipped up the crop skyward and then stopped as suddenly as it had begun -- leaving a ring of flattened crop! I was too startled to use the camera hanging around my neck." This bizarre event appears to be given in an extended caption recording the passing at 6.40pm that day of Class A4 No. 60015 Quicksilver on the Tees-Tyne Pullman (which by my memory and reckoning should have been in London by 2.30pm). (5) Quicksilver is another name for mercury and Patrick Harpur has suggested corn circles are created by the god Mercury. (6)

Also among the rich lore which has attached to corn circles is the occasional occurrence of a low-frequency sound which in folklore goes by the moniker "hummadruz." It existed before the Industrial Revolution but among many explanations from the pragmatic to the esoteric, one researcher's prime candidate was submarine communications at around 76Hz/sec in frequency. (7) The "hum" was apparently common in York at the time the local engine shed was host to a squadron of Deltic class diesel locos, which by a maritime connection were powered by twin Napier engines of a type used in motor-torpedo boats. York motive power depot was believed to be the culprit.

#### References:

- (1) Screeton, Paul. "Two Middridge fairy tales" Mail, Hartlepool ? March, 1977
- (2) Turnbull, Noel. "Strange ladies" Northern Echo Dec. 6 1976
- (3) Billingsley, John. "Stony Gaze" Capall Bann 1998
- (4) Traction October 1999
- (5) The Crop Watcher Issue 2 1990 (monitored from Steam World September 1990)
- (6) Harpur, Patrick. "Mercurius in the cornfields" The Cereologist No. 1 1990
- (7) Hill, Ronald. "Hums, stones and circles" The Cereologist No. 17 1996

# The Zoo and The Chef

By Paul Screeton

THE REAL WORLD of practicality, Bambified sentimentality and sheer dubiousness of extent and context, that's the killing fields that are zoos' pastures of plenty.

Rare beasts roasted by curators, exotic fayre feasted upon by students and televised celebrities tucking into endangered species. As the menu is unveiled, decide what seems tasty or stomach-churning\* more importantly ethics involved and this being a folklore magazine, what is fact and what most likely fiction.

The more we travel abroad and sample unfamiliar foreign food, the wider the spectrum of available gastronomic delights. The supply and demand economics have reached natural history establishments, but the federation of British Zoos denies the practice of overbreeding for the table is widespread. Chester Zoo marketing manager, Chris Vere said the zoo had sold bisons for breeding. But he added: "If someone had an animal from us and slaughtered it, that would be a breach of trust." But a bison farmer in Wiltshire revealed that one of four beasts bought from a British zoo was immediately sent for slaughter. She said: "What else would zoos do with excess offspring."

And Christine Baskerville, of exotic meat supplier Barrow Boar, confirmed her first stock of boars were bought from a zoo. She said: "The original boar from the zoo probably went for sausages." (The Sport, 8/5/98)

It is reckoned that in Holland and Belgium 500 zoo bears are slaughtered to be scoffed by Germans (D. Star, 7/2/94) and there was outrage when Bengal tiger was eaten on "World Super Deluxe Rare Cuisine" in Japan (The Times, Sun 11/7/98).

In the 19th century, the search for new proteins for the British table initiated the Acclimatisation Society, whose inaugural dinner was held on July 12, 1862, though much then unfamiliar is now obtainable at London's finest restaurants (Weekend Guardian, 27/4/91). Yet earlier, it was necessity which drove people to consume the exotic, particularly memorably whenever the subject crops up and the siege of Paris in 1870/71 is quoted. On the 99th day of the German action, the Voisin Restaurant had a menu of elephant, kangaroo, bear and antelope supplied from the local zoo. Gastro ome Julian Street asked in one of the earliest food newsletters if this "was all a gallant jest?" Not so. "An Englishman in Paris", by journalist Albert D. Vandam, wrote at length on soaring prices at the time and gave the menu for the famous dinner (International Herald Tribune, 7, 1980)

During the second world war the animal anatomist and illustrator L. R. Brightwell, an active Fellow of the



"Don't you ever feel like some nice fish and chips for a change?"

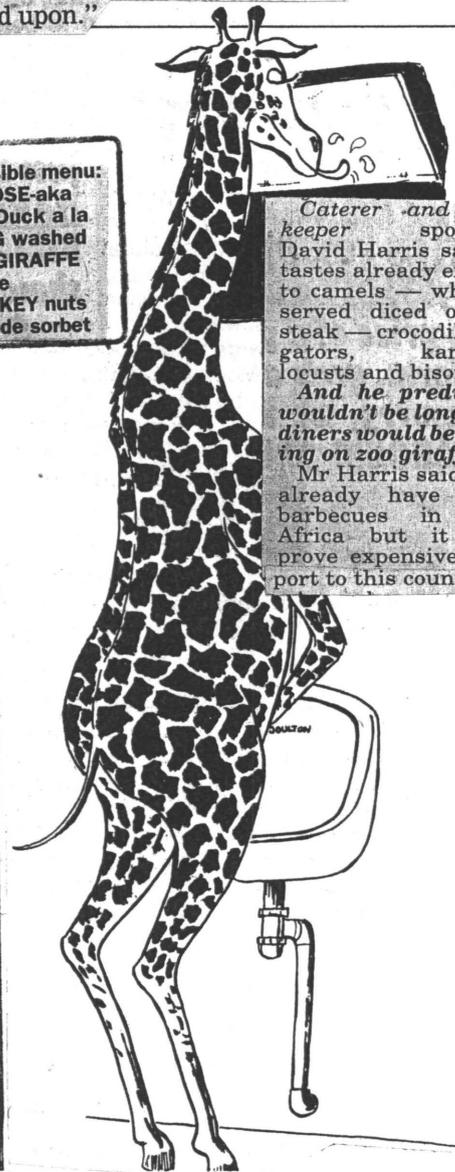
Women readers may feel that the real heroine of Frank Buckland's career was Hannah Papes, whom he married in 1863 and added to his existing ménage of "pets, monkeys and stranger animals". For their household arrangements were unconventional, as his Journal reveals: "B. called; cooked a viper for luncheon". "Had some elephant-trunk soup." "A plentiful supply of roast giraffe appeared when the giraffe-house at the Gardens was burned; the meat was white and tasted like veal." "Other deceased animals were occasionally experimented upon."

●HERE'S a possible menu:  
Starter: MOOSE-aka  
Main Course: Duck a la ORANG-UTANG washed down with a GIRAFFE of wine  
Dessert: MONKEY nuts and LEMUR-nade sorbet

Caterer and Hotel-keeper spokesman David Harris said Brit tastes already extended to camels — which are served diced or as a steak — crocodiles, alligators, kangaroos, locusts and bison.

And he predicted it wouldn't be long before diners would be chomping on zoo giraffes.

Mr Harris said: "They already have giraffe barbecues in South Africa but it would prove expensive to import to this country."



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of the  
steaming  
Turban!



Zoological Society, is believed to have supplemented his meagre wartime meat ration by eating elephant, giraffe, crocodile, porpoise and coypu in the interests of science as much as appetite (Sunday Telegraph, 6/7/03, 13/7/03).

Now moving towards the possibly edibly apocryphal. When there was a food crisis in Russia, Moscow Zoo keepers found only a pile of bones and entrails of an incredibly rare Bukhara deer (Sun, The Sport, 4/10/92)

The Snake Farm zoo in Bangkok, Thailand, was shut down when the owner was accused of selling his endangered species to a restaurant; police having found 40 bear paws and chunks of exotic deer in the fridge.

A rare okapi died of fright after a Wagner opera was staged near its zoo and the corpse sent to Copenhagen University, Denmark, for stuffing, but was eaten by students (Sun, D. Star, 8/10/94)

Two Cologne, Germany, zookeepers were suspended for eating five Tibetan chickens and two Cameroonian sheep (Sunday Telegraph, 13/10/02)

Three professors divided up and fried in butter a giant 40lb mushroom that was too big to be stored as a specimen in the plant and fungi collection at Purdue University, Indiana, U.S.A. (D. Star, 3/3/93)

Unfortunately I cannot lay my hands on a reference I know lies somewhere in my files of natural sciences scions gormandising on mammoth flesh.

Anyway, regular readers will be aware of my contempt for Charles Darwin and his creation myth. Having read of the myriad crimes against exotic animal life perpetrated by those who should know better, guess what Darwin and the crew of The Beagle did to the 30 giant tortoises they took on board during the Pacific voyage? They ate them and pitched the bones into the briny. The four remaining juveniles (including Darwin's own pet, which both would doubtless grow up to look more and more like one another in a bizarre example of convergent 'evolution') were too young to differentiate. The sickly scientist then had to turn to the less easy to catch and observe finches to make his vulgar case.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Kilts off for the lassies

By Paul Screeton

*King Bruce of Scotland flung himself down  
In a lonely mood to think;  
'Tis true he was a monarch and wore a crown,  
But his heart was beginning to sink. (1)*

AFTER historical accuracy controversy over the film King Arthur, a new "kilts and sporrans" epic has met with criticism. A short critique of Scottish Loveknot has the narrator proclaiming that "the director has

been taking liberties with historical accuracy" at a critical moment observing "that's a Macdonald tartan, not a Bruce. I'll be sticking with Monarch of the Glen" and "there's no Battle of Bannockburn, no talking to a spider." (2)

Ah, Bruce, ah spider."

Robert the Bruce and the legendary arachnid which inspired him in his darkest hour.

With a budget of £1.2m, Scottish Loveknot is the most expensive pornographic film made in the United Kingdom. (3) It won Best Film award at Barcelona's Erotic Festival, though not Best Actor (Steve Hopper played Robert the Bruce) or Best Actress (Jody "it's more mainstream ... not just putting a cock in your mouth" Moore is Lady of the Loch). Still, from the brief excerpts TV viewers saw it was more declaration of lust than (the missing) Declaration of Arbroath.

*"... The spider up there defied  
He conquered, and why shouldn't I?"*

*And Bruce of Scotland braced his mind,  
And gossips tell the tale  
That he tried once more as he tried before,  
And that time did not fail.*

*Pay goodly heed, all ye who read,  
And beware of saying, I CAN'T.  
'Tis a cowardly word, and apt to lead  
To Idleness, Folly, and Want.*

*Whenever you find your heart despair  
of doing some goodly thing;  
Con over this strain, try bravely again,  
And remember the spider and king. (4)*



BRUCE STATUE  
STIRLING

Helpfully, Ban This Filth informed Starkey and Schama fans that Bruce died on June 7, 1329, of leprosy, in case they thought from Scottish Loveknot exploits it to be gonorrhoea.

## References:

- (1) "King Bruce and the Spider" by Eliza Cook
- (2) Ban This Filth October 26, 2004 Channel 4
- (3) Private Media Group 2004
- (4) Eliza Cook was a busy writer, both of prose and verse, who was born in 1818 and died in 1889. She was not in any sense a remarkable poet, and the following verses owe their interest as much to the legend they relate as to the manner of its telling. But the poem has a simple vigour and a direct appeal. The story has long been a favourite one to illustrate the wisdom of never giving in to failure.

Poem introduction in Harmsworth's Children's Encyclopedia section 11 circa 1914

See also: Robert the Bruce -- Essex-Man by Mick Goss and Robert the Bruce -- Hart-Man by Paul Screeton both Folklore Frontiers No. 25 1995



# DID YOU MISS?

**GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY.** Talk about inco-  
cistency! John McCrickard (Rail Express,  
September 2003) fumes that "for the last 40 years  
newspapers, TV and film have glorified the robbery  
with sickening rapture" and then "if you get the chance,  
check out ..." 1988's *fil Buster*. Actually, it was *Buster*  
Edwards who allegedly coshed Driver Jack Mills on  
August 8, 1963, who died in 1970. McCrickard claims  
Mills "never returned to work." Wrong. Mills was  
awarded compensation of £250 by the Post Office and  
returned to work on less onerous duties. (The Times,  
6/8/88) Mills died of leukemia and pneumonia and the  
coroner felt impelled to emphasise that it had nothing  
to do with the coshing. Yet the belief persists that it did.  
Also worth mentioning is that the robbers did not carry  
guns yet received savage sentences and Ronald Biggs  
still languishes in jail.

**PAUL NOT DEAD.** During a lengthy profile of Paul  
McCartney, Alan Franks asks if there is any truth in the  
rumour that he and his wife Heather are planning to  
settle in America. "He rolls his eyes and goes into a  
long lament about the way rumours like this circulate  
and pick up strength until they acquire the status of a  
received truth, no matter how forcefully they are  
denied. he gives the sobering example of how his first  
wife was continually referred to as 'the photography  
heiress Linda Eastman,' when there was in fact no  
connection between the family and that of George  
Eastman, the founder of Eastman Kodak. . . . But no, for  
the fiftieth time, I am not dead (a reference to the 1969  
rumour that Paul had died and it was a stand-in on the  
Abbey Road cover), and no, we are not moving to  
America." (Times Magazine, 6/11/04) (FF31:1,7-8)

**BLACKED COPYBOOK.** Recalling respected London  
book editor Diana Athil and her Sixties involvement  
with the nascent black power, Patrick French remem-  
bered how "countercultural ambassador" John Michell  
produced a Souvenir Programme for the Official Lyn-  
ching of Michael Abdul Malik, describing him as a  
"gentle mystic" and "architect of the Holy City", whereas  
most activists at the time considered him to be a crook.  
Malik served time in prison for inciting racial hatred and  
suggested the Queen should have a black baby (his  
own father was a white Portugeuse). Malik had  
demanded a human sacrifice and was subsequently  
convicted of Gail Benson's killing and hanged in the  
Royal Gaol of Port Spain. I mention all this because I  
heard a rumour that upon learning of the Queen's  
signing of Malik's death warrant, Michell took a knife to  
a copy of his own *The Old Stones of Land's End*, by  
whose permission it is respectfully dedicated to His  
Royal Highness Charles, Prince of Wales and Duke of  
Cornwall, and slashed frenziedly at it. Michell  
subsequently told me there was no truth whatsoever in  
the tale. French has written an introduction to the  
reissue by Granta of *Make Believe* by Athil, who  
perceptively noted: "Everyone in this story was at some  
time or another at least a little mad." (Telegraph  
Magazine, 13/11/04)

**SPRINGTIME WITH HITLER.** Another wartime  
theatrical show with the same twist. Instead of the

pensioner awakening during *The Sound of Music* to  
see a group of nuns and assuming she'd died and  
gone to Heaven, a Jewish New York diamond king  
went to see *The Producers* (the plot being to produce a  
play so nauseously audience alienating that it would  
close promptly). He'd had a hard day, was with invited  
guests, the theatre was hot, he fell asleep, awoke to  
see Nazi stormtroopers proclaiming and singing "Don't  
be stupid, be a smarty, come and join the Nazi party!"  
The dozing diamond merchant hadn't got the plot and  
stomped out, according to its Oscar-winning writer Mel  
Brooks, the Jew who made the Nazi party funny.  
(Sunday Telegraph Magazine, 24/10/04)

**NEANDERTHALS.** A first-class academic ding-dong is  
in full spate over doubts pertaining to Prof. Reiner  
Protsch von Zieten's carbon-dating techniques over the  
past 30 years (the large Havana-smoking, Porsche-  
loving boffin is also being investigated by police over  
280 chimpanzee skulls he tried to sell from his  
university to American buyers). German and British  
anthropologists who sent finds for testing at Oxford,  
where they were all found to be recent, called it a  
"dating disaster" and that Neanderthals once lived in  
northern Europe is untrue. Prehistory is, once again,  
being rewritten. (Sunday Telegraph, 22/8/04)

**SEEING AIDS ...** Closing a correspondence on hearing  
aids, Dr James Le Fanu wrote that A.M. Baldwin  
reported the "probably apocryphal" tale of a man who  
used to advertise a "guaranteed hearing aid" in the  
national press for a mere 2s 6d, which consisted of a  
piece of string with a knot at one end. When charged  
with fraud he defended himself on the grounds that his  
device worked: "You stick the knot in your ear and the  
end of the string in your top pocket. Now everybody  
can SEE you are deaf -- so they shout!" (Sunday  
Telegraph, 10/8/03)

**SPIDERS' LEGS.** Interviewing pop anthropologist  
Desmond Morris about his new book, *The Naked  
Woman: A Study of the female Body*, Kieran Meeke  
elicited this response to his question of why women  
have an irrational fear of spiders: "That is very strange.  
I was studying this in children and women are more  
afraid of spiders. If you ask them why, they say it's a  
nasty, hairy thing. And hairy is the word they use. In  
fact, it's the spider's legs they are referring to and it  
coincides with puberty. It's because young girls are  
disturbed by the growing hair on their body, whereas  
young boys expect to have hair because men have  
beards and moustaches and hair on their body. When  
boys develop hair, they feel they are becoming manly,  
while girls find it disturbing. I have no proof, I'm just  
looking for an explanation of why they have double  
the fear of spiders." (Metro, 14/9/04)

**HARTLEPOOL MONKEY-HANGING.** The Hartlepool  
by-election created by Peter Mandelson's elevation to  
the Brussels gravy train caused upsets to Labour and  
Tory parties alike. Previewing the contest, David Chart  
noted: "The three main parties are desperate to avoid  
the fate of the proverbial Hartlepool monkey --  
shipwrecked there during the Napoleonic wars and  
hanged by suspicious townsfolk as a French spy ....  
The fate of the French monkey shows that  
Euro-scepticism runs deep there." (The Times, 31/7/04)

# NEWSLINES

## CRAPPUCCINO

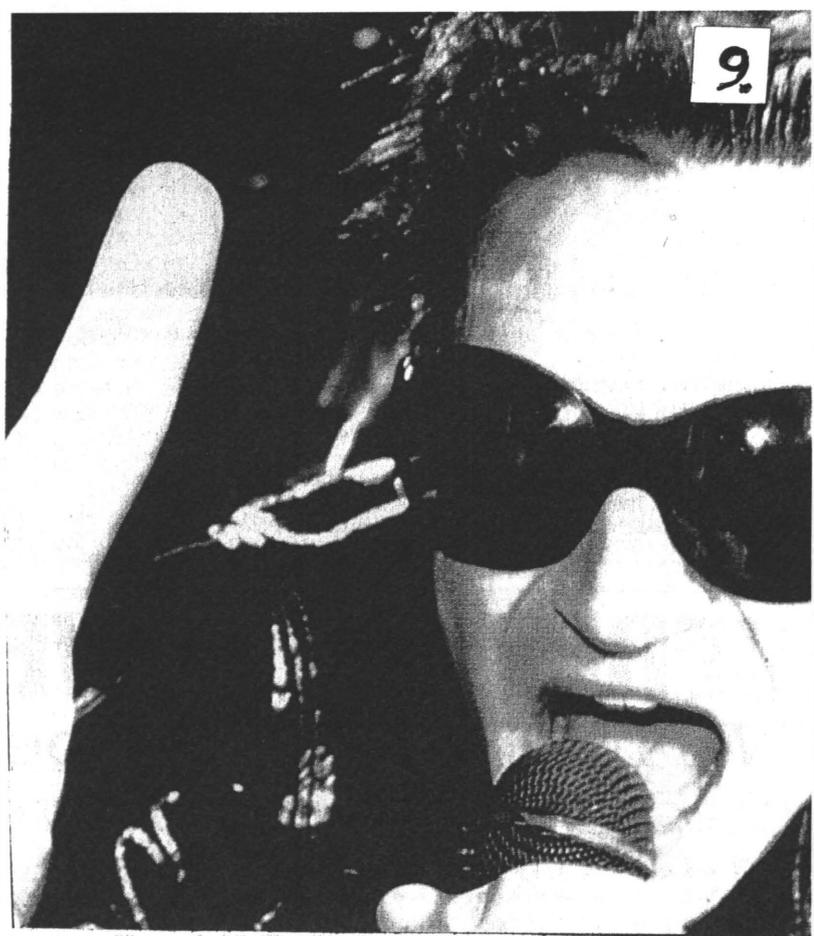
"MANY regarded the story as an urban myth," wrote David Harding (Metro, 14/10/04). The story being that Indonesian Kopi Luwak, the world's costliest coffee at £12 per ounce, got its distinctive taste because the coffee beans had been eaten, digested and excreted by a local cat, the civet, which also ate rats and voles. The coffee has gained a fashionable reputation and curiosity value in Britain, but was not impressive for a group given a blind tasting after the beans were given a thorough cleaning and preparation. (Sunday Telegraph, 17/10/04) To test the myth's status, Professor Massimo Massone, a food scientist at the University of Guelph in Canada, travelled to Ethiopia, where the process was rumoured to be the same, and after a fortnight searching he found proof outside the town of Abdela. He spotted a fresh pile of droppings, poked around in it and found a coffee bean. "For me it was an epiphany," he said. "A coffee bean has been through the gastrointestinal tract of an animal." Using an electron microscope he found surface exfoliation caused by the cat's gastric acids and proteins had been partly broken down as a result. The coffee's unusual taste, he confirmed, was a direct result of its passage through the digestive tract. ⇄ As a postscript, methods for hardening conkers include pickling in vinegar, baking in a slow oven, over-wintering in a warm cupboard, painting with varnish or glue, injecting with resin, and being passed through a pig. (D. Telegraph, 2/10/04)

## MAMMOTH TUSK TASK

COMPILING the exotic food piece, I was sure I had a reference to scientists eating mammoth meat but was unable to locate it. Nevertheless, a mammoth tale emerged on cue with bagpipe maker Tim Gellaitry, 44, from Stirling, using ivory from the tusks of 20,000-year-old mammoths on his instruments because today's elephants are protected and the ivory illegal. Tim gets the ivory from frozen mammoth "graveyards" in Siberia and uses the ivory for mounts on bagpipes costing at least £3,500. (D. Sport, 2/12/04)

## U 2 CAN BE PARANOID

LIKE a hardened hack, even if he suspected the tale was apocryphal, Andrew Perry wasn't going to let hypebole get in the way of a good story. No, sir! In his anecdotal he would tell his grandchildren how rock group U2's manager Paul McGuinness explained at a music industry playback in London for the band's new L.P. How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb the difficulty these days to convene the band's production team to discuss their next album. The CD of the week review rambles on: "Once everyone was assembled this time, he said, Brian Eno, who was particularly stressed by this problem, told the office receptionist in no uncertain terms that there should be no interruptions. Five minutes later, the receptionist peeked in -- an urgent call for Bono. Apoplectic, Eno rose to throttle her. 'But sir,' she remonstrated, 'it's the Pope!'" (D. Telegraph arts+books, 20/11/04) Apparently much of the album was inspired by the loss of his father and his reflections on their relationship and he reckons his new voice has been inherited from Bob, who died last year. "It has definitely come from another place," said Bono.



"I really shouldn't have this voice ... I drink and smoke and do all the wrong things. But when people first heard the new album they said to me, 'Where was this voice years ago?' I really do think the old man left it to me." (D. Sport, 23/11/04) Also Bono has claimed to be racked by insecurity despite the album notching up fastest ever sales. "Somewhere there's a little voice telling you you're no good and no one will be interested." (D. Sport, 6/12/04)

## FANNY STORY

THE shape of a woman's underbeard shows whether she is passionate or a prude, according to Japanese scientist Kosai Jumon, who has spent 50 years examining fanny topiary. The 70-year-old anthropologist said: "The classic triangle shape shows she would be able to endure a lot, but also have an unbridled wanton side to her character. That means she would be a good wife during the day and a whore at night." (People's Friend, Christmas Special, 2004)

## DARWIN REFUTED

HUMANS may be programmed to die early to prolong the species. Ageing in baker's yeast -- and possibly humans -- is genetically programmed to happen prematurely to clear the way for a new improved generation, said Dr Valter Longo of California. The claim, which refutes Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest, is seen as being nature's version of Logan's Run, the film in which no one was allowed to live beyond 30 years. (Metro, 28/9/04)

## SAY IT LOUD SAY IT PROUD

A BUSINESSWOMAN in Los Angeles paid around £20,000 for the car registration plate 1MA S1UT (D. Sport, 2/11/04)

# UPDATE

**GLOBAL WARMING (FF46:3).** It's the Sun wots to blame! Well, maybe. A study by Swiss and German scientists suggests increased radiation from the Sun is responsible for recent global climate changes. Dr Sami Solanki, who led the research, said: "The Sun has been at its strongest over the past 60 years and may now be affecting global temperatures." Note the word "may" and Solanki admits they do not know what is causing the Sun to burn brighter or how long the cycle could last. It is, they say, "the impact of more intense sunshine on the ozone layer and on cloud cover which could be affecting the climate." Note the word "could" and Dr Gareth Jones, of the Met Office, said the findings were inconclusive because other potential climate factors had not been incorporated such as greenhouses gases, aerosols and volcanoes. Conservationist Dr David Bellamy responded: "Global warming -- at least the modern nightmare version -- is a myth. I am sure of it and so are a growing number of scientists. But what is really worrying is that the world's politicians and policy-makers are not. Instead, they have an unshakeable faith in what has, unfortunately, become one of the central credos of the environmental movement: humans burn fossil fuels, which release increased levels of carbon dioxide -- the principal so-called greenhouse gas -- into the atmosphere, causing the atmosphere to heat up. They say this is global warming: I say this is poppycock." (Sunday Telegraph, 18/7/04)

**WHILE** our old friend cold fusion is taken out of media storage by Robert Matthews, who notes many experiments have produced energy gains of 20 to 30%, many have not -- and no one knows why. And "even those who believe in the reality of cold fusion cannot explain how it works." Scientists, dontcha just love 'em? And even Matthews notes that despite its flaky image (and one investigator's observation that "there seems to be a scientific McCarthyism that puts a chilling effect on anyone who gets into this field,") "If the scientific community's prejudices against energy from cold fusion prove misplaced, that chilling effect could take on an altogether more literal quality for us all." (Sunday Telegraph, 18/7/04)

**MEANWHILE**, if new findings by U.S. researchers that air-polluting volatile organic compounds produced by trees grew by 17% between the 1980s and 1990s prove correct, it could shatter the long-held belief that planting trees is good for the environment. Worst were newly-planted trees such as sweetgum and pines, said the team from Princeton University, New Jersey. (Metro, 14/10/04)

**TATTOO BLUNDERS (FF33:15, passim)** On ITV1's Frank Skinner Show (28/10/04), Irish pop singer Brian McFadden discussed his tattoo of estranged wife Kerry's name, joking "I'm going to have 'Vote John' tattooed above it." Beth Evans, 32, of Pontardawe, Swansea, endured ten agonising hours having the pictures of Westlife inked into her skin -- thankfully before McFadden quit the boy band (D. Sport, 12/10/04) Back on TV, The Great British Spelling Test featured a woman who sought a tattoo to reflect her grandfather's sacrifice in World War I and ended up with a poppy surrounded by 'LEST WE FORET' (19/10/04)

**HYGIENE (FF41:10, passim).** Chicago researchers, winners of the IgNobel prize for unusual scientific studies, found that food hitting the floor can be infested with micro-organisms in five seconds, and that women are more likely than men to eat food that's been on the deck. (The Times body&soul, 9/10/04) Meanwhile, lab analysis of a random sample of water from a public swimming pool in France uncovered microscopic traces of the following: eight types of faeces, 142 urine samples, six traces of semen, DNA from more than 200 types of saliva, 20 different types of blood and four types of nasal waste. (Zoo, issue 31, 2004) While another of the inexpensive competing lowest-common-denominator lads' mags informed readers that "there are 49 germs per square inch on a toilet seat." (Nuts, 27Aug-2Sept, 2004)

**DRINKING URINE (FF43:4-5, passim)** It's an ancient quote and he's sadly pissed away. Humorist Peter Cook recalled: "I once needed a drink so badly that I tried drinking my own urine, hoping it would get me plastered. It didn't work." (loaded food supplement with April 1995 issue) What is supposed to work is a dried food for survival rations that troops can eat after peeing on it, the idea being to reduce the amount of water soldiers need to carry, according to a report in New Scientist magazine. (D. Sport, 22/7/04) The Pentagon's invention was mentioned by Bill Borrows, writing: "Attempting the same with a Pot Noodle is not advised by this column." (D. Mirror, 7/8/04) Not drinking urine, but dabbing it on your face to get rid of zits is suggested by ex-HearSay singer Kym Marsh, who said: "It's a bit disgusting but somebody once told me urine is good for getting rid of spots. The trick is to put a little cotton bud in your urine and dab it on your face. But you can only do it before bed. I tried it once when I was really desperate and it worked." (D. Sport, 7/7/04)

**MARSBARIANNE FAITHFULL (FF19:3-7, passim)** During an hour-long documentary about the women in Mick Jagger's life, the Redlands drugs bust elicited biographer David Dalton's comment: "Mick is supposedly eating a Mars Bar out of her pussy. It's, you know, a preposterous idea. I mean, if you've ever taken acid that's too technical. That's cops' idea of what a rock 'n' roll party is all about." The narrator observed: "Mick was not charged but her association with Mick, a fur rug and a mythical chocolate bar stay with her forever." (Mick's Girls, Channel Five, 7/7/04)

**JAMES HEWITT (FF45:4; FF46:9)** Remember Prince Harry being taunted by a member of the paparazzi in the early hours as he left a nightclub. Smirking snappa's jest about A-level aid. Discussing provocation of Harry, columnist Adam Nicolson wrote: "It wasn't easy for him at Eton. To get a B and a D in your A-levels is not thought particularly cool there nowadays and I know that he was, on occasions, made to react with anger and hurt simply by whispering, at the bottom of some Wall Game pile-up, the one word: 'Hewitt.'" Was the scribe alluding to dubious parentage or the cad's shagging Princess Diana? (D. Telegraph, 23/10/04)

# OLDIES

## BUT GOODIES

MEPs debating the export of bulls' semen at the European Parliament were baffled when the English translator spoke of "frozen sailors" until they realised he meant frozen SEMEN. (D. Sport, 3/2/04)

A BURGLAR who raided a bed shop in Hamburg, Germany, was caught when staff found him asleep on a comfy mattress. (D. Sport, 8/12/04)

JERRY BRADFORD, 37, was shot by a puppy as he tried to put down its siblings. He was holding it under an arm as he picked up one of the litter of seven to shoot it. But the wriggling pooch put its paw on the trigger and shot him in the wrist. After being taken to hospital in Pensacola, Florida, he faces trial for cruelty to animals. (Sunday Mirror, 31/10/04) He had shot three and it was the fourth which wounded him. The other puppies were rescued. (D. Mirror, 1/11/04)

THE MAGAZINE Northern Earth (No. 99, 2004) has learned of a direction sign in Derbyshire Royal Infirmary which reads 'Family Planning -- Please use rear entrance.' FF likewise would be happy if, unlikely as it may be, such were to be confirmed.

NAME CHANGING is a regular feature in the entertainment business -- sometimes for obvious reasons. Marti Caine was once Lynda Crapper, Jane Wyman was Sarah Jane Faulks and Diana Dors was Diana Fluck. According to showbiz folklore the latter caused serious problems for a vicar in her home town of Swindon who was delighted when the rising starlet agreed to return to open his fete. Miss Fluck had not long changed her name to Miss Dors, and anxious to make her feel at home, the vicar decided to call her by her old name -- though he was scrupulous in remembering to include the all-important L. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began when the great moment arrived, "I am going to ask you to welcome a very special person here this afternoon. She is known to the world as Diana Dors. She is better known to us, of course, as Diana Clunt." (Dr Robin Smith, The Encyclopaedia of Sexual Trivia, Robson Books, 1990) (FF16:7)

BRENDA GATLAND put an advert in her local paper: "Sex kitten seeks rampant lion." Among the replies Brenda, from New South Wales, Australia, had one from husband John, plus a nude photo. (D. Sport 8/12/04)

A BUNGLING ROBBER who stole homing pigeons from a loft in Lyon, France, watched in disappointment as they all flew home as he opened the carrier they had been packed into. (D. Sport, 22/9/04)

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## UPDATE (cont.)

RUDE PLACENAMES (FF45:8, 12; FF46:6) In addition to the anal names map on page 14, it was definitely a case of great minds thinking alike,

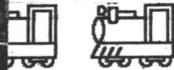
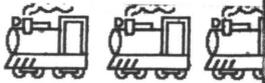
having composed on the PC but not printed the latest take on unsavoury place namings, residents of the Austrian village of Fucking were reportedly refusing to change the name despite Brits nicking the signs. Village spokesman Siegfried Hoespl said: "Everyone here knows what it means in English. But for us Fucking is Fucking -- and its going to stay Fucking even though the signs keep getting stolen. He said the name came from a Herr Fuck and his family who settled in the area 100 years ago, with "ing" being an old word for "village" or "settlement." Local newspaper editor Menhardt Buzasa, who has been covering the Fucking saga for years, said that in recent years there had been an increase in the number of signs stolen, but not necessarily by British tourists. "Fucking is a universal word. Germans use it as much as the British," he said. (D. Sport, 9/6/04)

Meanwhile, a chapel had to change its name after pranksters kept fooling around with the name Little Dicker. The jokers altered letters, exposed themselves and posed for pictures which have been winging around the internet and between camera mobile telephones. The church in East Sussex has been renamed the Golden Cross chapel. The nearby village of Fulking has had to live with similar difficulties while the signs on the River Uck a few miles away have had to be redesigned to stop extra letters being written in. (D. Telegraph, D. Mirror, 11/9/04) Even a book on this topic has been published. Dominic Greyer took his camera on an odyssey in search of the dottiest signposts and recorded such as Pant, Dull, Pity Me and Netherthong. (Far From Dull and Other Places, Sort Of Books, 2004)

LOCAL OUTRAGE (FF47:11). From Newslines to Update in one bound. From Bodmin and Bognor to Wigan and Liverpool. Sue Nelson, assistant chief executive of Wigan-based Keep Britain Tidy, called the town "the arse end of the world" only to be suspended. The council predictably called the light-hearted comments "regrettable" and Ms Nelson was said to be "really, really sorry." (D. Mirror, 14/10/04) I really can't bring myself to more than mention in passing that an article in The Spectator maligned Scousers to the extent Michael Howard sent errant editor Boris Johnson to pay penance and look a bigger buffoon than ever. (too numerous, 10/04)

BRITNEY SPEARS (FF39:3) Brit's latest marriage on 18/9/04 is a sham according to papers drawn up by her lawyers, though she says: "In a real sense, a spiritual sense, we are married. I believe you also marry in your heart, and that means more than a piece of paper." (heat, October 2 - 8, 2004) Her dress sense, too, gets dodgier, lately seen in a kinky top bearing the words "Delicious Sin" and showing a graphic picture of a busty woman playing with herself, having wings and halo, with cards and a pint of beer in front of her crotch. (D. Sport, 7/10/04)

PIGEONS AS FOOD (FF27:11) "This pizza place down the road turned out to use street pigeons instead of chicken. Now we all cook for ourselves." Anna, 3rd year, Leeds (The Times, 2/10/04)



**ANORAKNOPHOBIA** (FF 25:6-1passim) "Who would have thought a history of birdwatching could prove so intriguing?" *I just knew what would follow.* "To cultural sophisticates it's long been a joke, a form of 'organic trainspotting', though closer observation reveals that the dowdy flock of birdwatchers contains a range of colourful types, including the Duke of Edinburgh, Jarvis Cocker, Eric Morecambe and Van Morrison." Having so hastily sunk to cliché, book reviewer Will Cohu could not be expected to add that politician Kenneth Clarke went on overseas holidays with wife doing the 'organic' variety, while earlier at school he had run the 'inorganic' version to secure permits and lead his society members around steam age loco depots. Noting that a twitcher's "tart's tick" indicates a trivial sighting that a woman might make, "birding remains a pastime for the males of the species." (D. Telegraph, 9/10/04)

Reviewing the same book, *A Bird in the Bush: A Social History of Birdwatching* by Stephen Moss (Aurum), Jonathan Bate also manages a trainspotter's swipe and mentions women: "Perhaps because Moss gives an undue amount of attention to the modern phenomenon of twitching -- which I'm afraid I regard as more akin to trainspotting than ecology -- he suggests that women are a marginalised minority in the world of birding." (Sunday Telegraph, 8/8/04)

And perhaps I'm not entirely unblameworthy in the chauvinism arena. Recently, overlooking Thornaby Traction Maintenance Depot on Teesside were a man, woman and boy. I circled them to ask the man the identity of a locomotive, only for the woman to pre-empt her hubby with "66133", as if in chastisement to me for assuming only the males were number-crunching enthusiasts. *That'll learn me!*

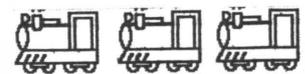
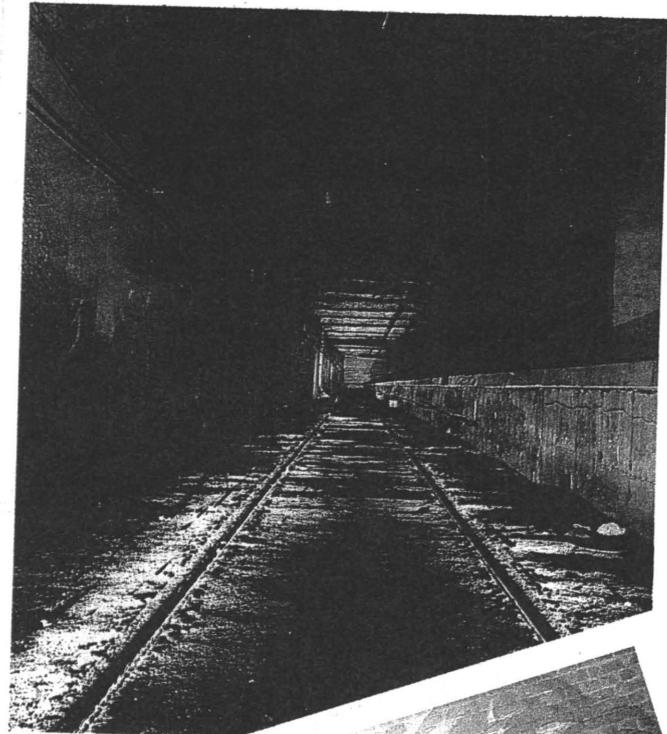
Meanwhile, whenever people deprecated my hobby, I've pointed out it's an -ology. The word is not common, but an article I read recently was entitled "Ferro-equinology in the 1950s London Midland Region". Rail expert as I am, even I was unaware of the term's origin until Douglas Dowling informed me and fellow enthusiasts: "The mysterious long word in the title of this nostalgic article of reminiscences -- the Study of the Iron Horse -- was coined by the late H. C. Casserley who was (and still is) a boyhood hero. The word appeared in his book *Locomotive Cavalcade 1920-1951*." (Steam Days, November, 2004)

Not mentioning an anorak but a hot drink container, Matthew Parris took a switchback ride high in the Andes' thin and biting air where oxygen supply is routine "... and saw my first Peruvian trainspotter. He was with his son, both swathed in blankets, noting the numbers of the carriages on a grubby notepad. And, yes, he did have a Thermos." I bet Parris couldn't think of a suitable closing paragraph and made that up. Shame on you. (The Times, 4/9/04)

Online book retailer Tesco.com surveyed specialist books and found birdwatching out of favour while "synchronised swimming has taken over from trainspotting as the favourite anorak hobby." (D. Mirror, 21/8/04)

A style tribes bit of nonsense on film bores claims "The Buffy" is the barfly of the art-house circuit -- "the trainspotter of the multiplex . . ." (The Times Magazine, 16/10/04)

Lastly, doubtless during his talk railfans will get a derogatory mention, as historian Clive Woodall gets £150 a time for after-dinner speeches in Epping, Essex, on the anorak. Clive, 64, said: "It's not as boring as it seems." (Sun, 21/2/04)



**BOX TUNNEL** (FF33:6-11) Rory Lushman wrote at length on this wartime and Cold War bolthole for the U.K. elite and since then an abortive attempt at entering the complex and a public exhibition have come to FF's notice. Firstly the foray where three men stupidly risked their lives looking into the mystery in a "search for a supposedly secret military bunker accessible from inside Box Tunnel." Robert Thompson, Keith Mariner and Azal Ali, all of Bristol, walked 3/4 of a mile into the main-line tunnel, near Bath, last September, before being caught. A train driver raised the alarm and in the ensuing search, 14 services were delayed, resulting in delay attribution costs of £48,000. The trio believed there was a secret Ministry of Defence munitions base and had brought tools to break into it. All three received community rehabilitation orders. (The Railway Magazine, March, 2004) A reader's letter followed detailing the true whereabouts of the bunker, codenamed "Burlington", and ammunition depot rail-served via the original parallel tunnel. (The Railway Magazine, May, 2004) This tunnel into the heart of the hill is described by Alan Franks reviewing and exhibition on the bunker, here called "Turnstile", whose surreal murals include a missionary being boiled by cannibals. (The Times Magazine, 27/3/04)

# PROTO-LEGENDS

I ONCE put forward as a proto-legend the manager who cut the songs from *The Sound of Music* as he deemed it too long for his cinemagoers. Choosing his five favourite films, Bruce Campbell, who plays the "King hasn't left the building" Elvis Presley in *Bubba Ho-Tep*, selected the Julie Andrews epic, saying: "If you took out all the music it would still work as a really good story. It's probably one of the most beautifully photographed films yet made."

AS EVEN Healey & Glanvill missed the next -- somewhat familiar -- tale, I'll place it here: A friend of a friend lost Lucky the budgie last week. Having been set free in the front room for "a bit of exercise", the bird became entangled in the net curtains. The FOAF's elderly mother tried to cut it free with a larger pair of scissors. Unfortunately, she cut its feet off. In a considerable amount of distress, Lucky then flew around the room for 20 minutes and, due to an inability to land, subsequently died of exhaustion. (Bill Borrows column, *D. Mirror*, 16/10/04)

BEFORE moving on, Borrows -- same column -- set readers a "mission improbable" to discover why female porn stars bother having white bits. The answer, it transpires, is quite surprising. Kaytie (not my spelling -- Borrows) from Buckinghamshire informed him: "It's because we're supposed to be like the girls next door."

NEXT two from the archives with a connection. A wine bar owned miffed that a *Which?* guide gave him a bad rating and review claimed Newcastle's *Lazers*, in Grey Street, was the city's only true wine bar and did not sell draught beers. Derek Sewell added: "I'll tell you how much one of my rivals knows about wine -- not much! I have it on good authority that a customer complained that a red wine was just a touch too cold. They put it in the microwave oven to warm it up. Have you ever heard of such a thing?" (*Sunday Sun*, 3/11/85)

SORE LOSERS in an inter-pub quiz claimed the team from The Oak, Gloucester, steamed open the sealed envelope containing the questions -- in the pub microwave. Landlord and team member Bill Whitmore said: "We have a microwave but I didn't know you could open an envelope with one. What if it burst into flames -- that would be a bit of a give-away!" (*Sun*, 12/11/86)

AS the German economy collapses, citizens who can't afford to keep a dog or cat are opting for alternative pets -- ants. Martin Sebesta, owner of The Ant Store in Berlin, says ants are easier to care for than regular pets because they don't eat much, don't smell and make no noise. (*D. Sport*, 18/6/04)

TWELVE security guards wrestled a three-year-old boy to the ground at an airport in Chile after he started playing with his water pistol. Airport bosses admitted they over-reacted but say staff are extra-tense these days. (*D. Sport*, 20/7/04)

PICKPOCKET victim Les Rooble, 44, was so angry at having his wallet lifted on the New York underground that he filled his pocket with dog vomit and walked around the network planning to give

thieves a nasty surprise (*D. Sport*, 4/6/04) And cops were called in when a wedding video showed the bridegroom's father pinching money from the jacket of the bride's dad in New York. (*D. Sport*, 2/9/04)

ONE of my all-time favourites in this area is the burglar who was so fascinated by a store's model railway layout that staff opening in the morning found the felon still engrossed in the toy. (FF39:14) The following have echoes:

a) Burglar Armando Ortiz tore his trousers breaking into a sewing machine factory in Santiago, Chile. He was caught when he stayed on the premises to sew them up. (*D. Sport*, 30/7/04)

b) A burglar was caught in San Francisco after his 73-year-old victim insisted on showing him her family photo album. He was so bored he fell asleep and she called the police. (*Sunday Telegraph*, 1/8/04)

A SIGN outside a church in Melbourne, Australia, warns: "No parking. Offenders will be baptised." (*D. Sport*, 9/8/04)

MOTOR-MAD priest Robert Arnold carried out a funeral service for a Porsche that was written off in a crash. The car was crushed into a cube and buried in the back garden of the tearful owner's home in Phoenix, Arizona, USA. (*D. Sport*, 3/2/04)

COPIES of a new national rail timetable have been stocked among fiction paperback at W H Smith in London's Waterloo station. (*Sunday Mirror*, 13/6/04)

AN air hostess on a small Russian airline was fired for giving a passenger a blow-job just before take-off. She told the angry pilot the passenger was a nervous flyer and she thought this would calm his nerves. (*D. Sport*, 20/4/04)

THREE rough courtbailiffs in Siberia were stripped of their powers and jailed for five years after pinning down Viktor Chev, 47, and chopping off his feet with an axe. They told him that a man with massive tax arrears and debts should not be able to run from his responsibilities. (*Zoo*, issue 31, 2004)

A JUDGE in Ohio, USA, punished a 20-year-old female for stripping at a college ball, leading to complaints from dozens of parents. She was ordered to attend her classes naked for a week, collecting her clothes from the office on the way out. (*D. Sport*, 3/2/04)

JOBLESS New Yorker Jon Bakerman, 20, was so upset when his girlfriend finished with him, he covered his penis in superglue and placed it in her hand, declaring "We'll be together forever". Paramedics took more than three hours to release the organ, but ripped off half of his skin. (*Zoo*, issue 31, 2004)

AN UNNAMED US teen computer nerd made a mint from hacking into his school's computer and changing students exam grades. The student, from a high school in Newport Beach, California, allegedly charged hundreds of dollars per student to change bad marks to pass grades. (*D. Sport*, 18/6/04)

# THE REAL A\*SE-ENDS OF THE WORLD!



BUM'S RUSH: Sue

■ by NEIL GOODWIN

**ANTI-LITTER campaigner Sue Nelson has been demoted after branding Wigan the "arse-end of the world".**

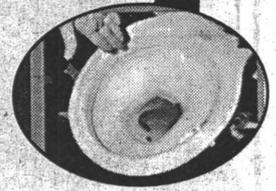
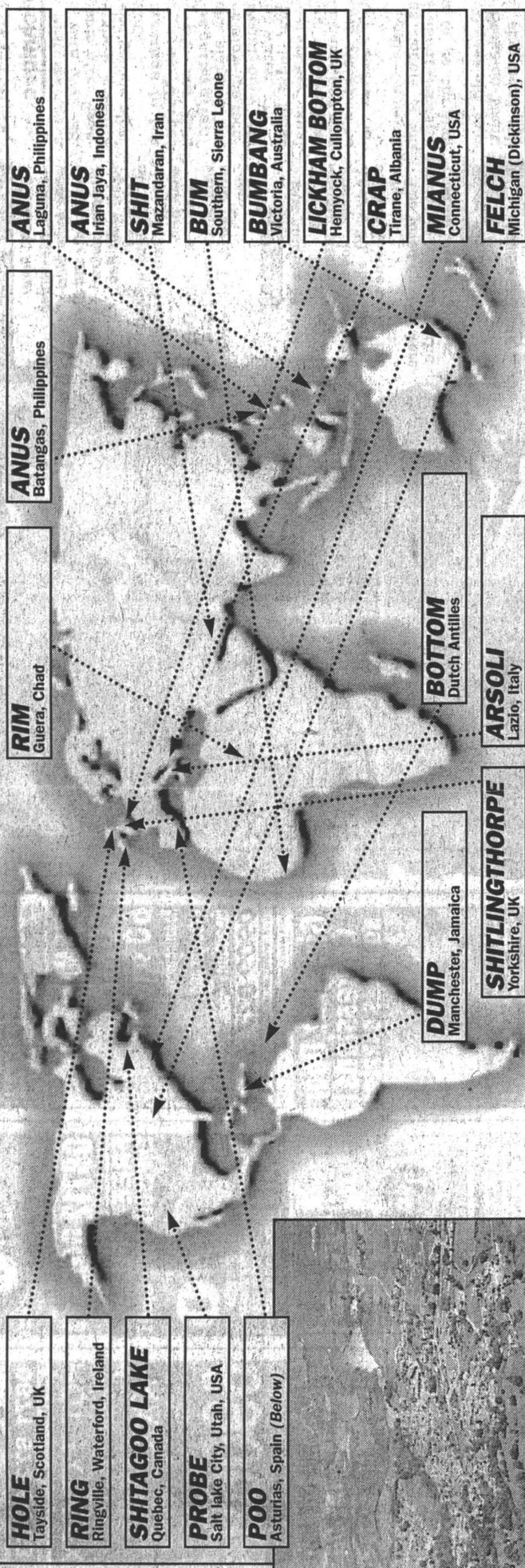
The Keep Britain Tidy bigwig made the shock remark as a joke while addressing a conference audience.

But top brass at the charity group removed Sue from the public eye after furious Wiganites sent her bog-rolls in the post.

But there are plenty of other places around the world which deserve the "arse-end" tag and here's a handy *Daily Sport* guide to Anus, Bumbang, Poo, Shit and the like...



SLATED: Wigan



## Jamie loo art display axed

A CONTROVERSIAL art display showing images of celebrity chef Jamie Oliver next to a picture of a turd in a toilet bowl has been removed from a top store after complaints.

The display by Manchester artist Adrian Luty was called *Taste The Difference: Be Good To Yourself*.

It shows eight images of Jamie plus another of the used toilet bowl, with the legend: *Even if he served up this you'd buy it.*

It was on view in a window of the Manchester branch of Debenhams.

Luty, 37, from Whalley Range, Manchester, came to prominence with controversial art featuring Madonna, Kylie and Posh and Becks.

A spokeswoman for Debenhams said: "We have had a number of complaints and we have had it removed."



'According to Alan Titchmarsh it's time to give the date palms a mulching'

### METRO FACTFILE

Something clearly got lost in translation when the 1965 film version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical *The Sound Of Music* was released in South Korea. One cinema manager decided it was too long so he shortened the 174-minute Julie Andrews classic for his patrons - simply by cutting out all the songs.

10/11/61

# Reviews

## STONEHENGE: CELEBRATION AND SUBVERSION by Andy Worthington

(Alternative Albion, an imprint of Heart of Albion Press, 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough, LE12 6UJ. £14.95 add £1.50 p&p)

FOR many years it was my great luck to have editors who indulged me, my hobbies and hobbyhorses in print. With reference to the book here in question, I was allowed a full page to fulminate against all manner of authority over Stonehenge festivals and exclusion issue. Based on my friend John Michell's Stonehenge, Its History, Meaning, Festival, Unlawful Management, Police Riot '85 & Future Prospects and pagged to the 1987 offer of 500 free tickets to celebrate the summer solstice, I got away with such accusatory and intemperate language as: "Attempts by these Bus People to rerach Stonehenge in preparation for their 12th festival were met by police resistance. The events of June 1 saw violence on a horrific scale with the police being alarmingly brutal", "It unnerves me to think the police can be arbiters of what sector of society conforms to respectability", "Paul Devereux ... described the police operation as 'hysterical and sinister'" and "The fabric of public order is sufficiently fragile (viz. Broadwater Farm) without Stonehenge becoming of all places a riot flashpoint." (Mail, Hartlepool, 18/6/87)

As stated, it was Michell's prescient and perfectly-timed pamphlet which illuminated a sorry state of social division. Worthington's noble book is a worthy successor. He too covers all the aspects: who owns Stonehenge? and the custodianship fluctuations; the Druid revival and early public gatherings; the archaeological debate; the earth mysterians' input; free festival through to rave scene; paganism and alternative venues.

As a child I visited Stonehenge in, I think, 1957 and the seeds of an interest in prehistory were sown which led to me reviving The Ley Hunter magazine in 1969 and editing it until 1976. Many persons mentioned in Worthington's book became subscribers and several were welcome contributors of articles. These included pagan priestess Doreen Valiente, whom I cheekily sent some pseudo-pornographic magazines with a loose witchcraft theme and which she humorously reviewed, and Chief of the Ovates, Bards and Druids Ross Nichols, who wrote regular articles and in addition to his many aspects as listed by Worthington, was at one time a journalist, being a sub-editor on the Middlesbrough Evening Gazette. I was pilloried by archaeologist Glyn Daniel, as editor of Antiquity, whose fulmination was not as savage as his ire over Stonehenge gatherings where "we boil with such rage that the platen of the typewriter is endangered" and ley hunters also came in for stick during the diatribe: "Traditions can easily be fabricated, and so we shall find Salisbury Plain at the Summer Solstice full of rival bands -- Druids, Moonies, Loonies, Boobies, Straight Trackers, Bent Trackers, Geomantics, Pyramidiots, Atlanteans -- the lot."

Daniel was a one-off; I'm pleased I was alive to watch his drunken appearance on the TV quiz Animal, Vegetable Mineral? Stonehenge and its importance is a big subject, but in literature its the richness of the cast of characters and their offbeat lives which enlivens the narrative. There is the deeply disturbing death of Phil

Russell (aka Wally Hope), festival organiser who was sectioned and pumped full of drugs which destroyed him and after his death concerned investigators felt inhibited, threatened and were burgled.

The judiciary, politicians, journalists, quangos, police and so on receive a mixed press here though the tone is generally fair. This aspect impresses me as does the range of scholarship across a wide spectrum of subject matter (errors are hard to spot -- William Deedes was editor of The Daily Telegraph not The Times).

Almost 150 black and white illustrations also help tell the story and put faces to names.

Being a product of the Sixties counter-culture myself, I salute an honest, fastidious and heartfelt contribution to pointing towards a freer, glorious Albion.

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FORTEAN TIMES. News-stand. £3.40. No. 190. Halloween spooky issue with Amityville revisited; psychical stress of a U.S. "poltergeist girl."; Welsh ghostbuster Rev Aelwyn Roberts; polts as Dictionary of the Damned subject; horror writer and director Clive Barker interviewed. Also poet Chatterton's suicide challenged; Roswell spotlighted; my clipped headline "NEW TRAINS BARRED BY SHAKESPEARE" from The Railway Magazine used (it referred to new coaching stock being too wide for the gauge through Shakespeare Cliff tunnel near Dover). No. 191. UnCon special with presentations written up on prediction of Christ-like alien-human hybrid baby, new Kaspar Hauser theory and link between a Mussolini influencer and modern terrorism.

NORTHERN EARTH. Q. £6 for 4. Cheques payable to Northern Earth Group at 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorkshire, HX7 5NP. No. 100. Congratulations on its centenary. In fact, I should have a complete run, having first contributed to No. 4 in 1980. This issue includes Rose Heaword rightly championing Alfred Watkins as a pioneer of an interdisciplinary method based on topography; rightly also calling him an "old and valued companion" who "writes so well." Also Sig Lonegren argues that dowsing is a spiritual and not a scientific tool and answers criticism of why diviners get different results; problems of assigning enigmas.

MAGONIA. Q. £7. Cheques payable to J. Rimmer at John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB. No. 86. Michael McHugh analyses three SF films which separately reflect human postwar fears of being nuked, becoming zombie-like suburban clones and the age-gap anxieties created by affluence and social mobility; David Sivier compares the contemporary abduction phenomenon with parallels in its predecessors in mediaeval times, early modern spirituality and magical beliefs.

TOUCHSTONE. Magazine of Surrey Earth Mysteries Group. £2 for 4. Cheques payable to Jimmy Goddard at 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2PX. No. 66. Field trip to Waltham Abbey area and some interesting stones and legends; West Somerset wells; Wye Valley leys around Trellech; Society of Ley Hunters' moot report.

AMSKAYA. Newsletter of the STAR Fellowship. Same price/address as Touchstone. No. 60. Tunguska expedition latest; various filmed UFOs; Martians' hostility.

# TAKING THE MYTH?

**EXPERTS** from around the globe are gathering in Italy for the World Sceptics Congress, where they will discuss the "truth" of urban legends.

At last there will be definitive rebuttals of such well-known "facts" as albino alligators infesting New York's sewers.

With the explosion of the Internet, urban legends are spreading further and faster than ever.

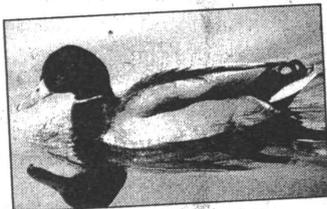
Here **CAROLINE IGGULDEN** puts forward a few the boffins may like to ponder over their pasta.

IF you've had too much to drink and are pulled over by the cops, sucking on a copper penny will cause a chemical reaction that will fool the breathalyser.

This must have been invented by a drunk - there is no evidence for it.

**A DUCK'S** quack doesn't echo. This "fact" often crops up on e-mail trivia lists though it is plainly quackers.

A **WOMAN** shoplifter steals a frozen chicken and conceals it up her dress. She is then caught and faints from the cold. Variations on this chilling tale have circulated for 30 years.



A **DRUNKEN** groom on a rowdy stag night suffocates to death between the huge boobs of a stripper provided by his mates as a saucy treat. This is a total myth... although we reckon Jordan might help it come true one day.

ONCE a store in Japan mixed up Western traditions and had a Christmas window display showing Santa nailed to a cross. This story has been doing the rounds for over 30 years but has never been traced back to an actual incident.

AN Iranian woman was reported to have given birth to a frog. This story was reported on the BBC website last month. It gave a local newspaper's claim that a gynaecologist had confirmed the frog was born after growing in a cyst in the woman's womb for six months.

This is the most recent version of a classic. For centuries folk have been fascinated with sick stories of women giving birth to creatures including snakes.

AN American fried chicken chain nearly went out of business when a story spread that it was owned by the Ku Klux Klan who put something in the batter to make black men impotent. It was false and probably started by a rival business.



**MCDONALD'S** have been dogged by stomach-churning myths. The most persistent is that they add ground-up worms to their food.

A McDonald's spokesman said: "We couldn't afford to. Hamburger meat is a dollar-and-a-half a pound and night crawlers six dollars."

A **TERRIFYING** tale swept America that teenagers were driving around at night without lights, following the first motorist who flashed them and killing them in a gang initiation rite.

The FBI probed the story and traced it to the case of a deranged driver who had murdered a cop who flashed him.

**YOU** may have heard a whisper about the 100 miles per gallon wonder car. Why is this brilliant vehicle not available to buy? Because money-hungry petrol

bosses stop it. Sadly, the car is mythical and the legend is founded in mistrust of big business.

HERE'S a post-September 11 myth: A supermarket customer is queueing behind a man of Arab origin who finds himself a Pound short at the checkout.

The customer offers him the £1 and as they leave the store the man takes his generous friend aside, whispering: "Do not be in central London this Saturday." A classic example of an urban legend feeding on public paranoia.

**HEARD** the one about the family who befriended an abandoned cat on holiday in Thailand and took it home to England? Later they went out to dinner leaving puss with their pet poodle - only to arrive home later to find the cat with the dead poodle in its mouth. Turns out the cat was in fact an enormous Thai water rat... Yeah, right.

A **MAN** gets a paper cut on his lip after carelessly licking an envelope. A few days later the cut swells up and he goes to hospital where the doctor makes a cut and out crawls a cockroach. The envelope glue was supposedly infested with cockroach eggs.

But cockroaches incubate eggs inside their bodies. They cannot survive outside.

**EXECS** were left petrified as e-mails zapped around the globe claiming a ring of criminal doctors were drug-ging travelling businessmen and stealing organs.

According to the warning, victims would go for a quiet drink and wake in the morning in a bath of ice - minus their kidneys. It's never happened.

**STAR** Wars fans were delighted when an e-mail campaign urged people to state "Jedi" as their religion on official forms. It said that if it was registered against 10,000 names it would become a fully recognised and official religion.

It all started as a prank in New Zealand.

A few weeks before their 2001 census the e-mail rumour spread so quickly that now five per cent of New Zealanders are listed as Jedi. It has not become an official religion.

A **DOCTOR** driving home stops

in the rain to pick up a young female hitch-hiker. She is in a distressed state and asks to be urgently taken to an address near where the doctor lives. He drives there as quickly as he can but on pulling up he turns around to find the girl has vanished.

He knocks on the door and starts to tell his story to the old man who answers. "Yes, I know," the old man says wearily, "This happens every year around now. The girl was my daughter. She was murdered by a motorist who picked her up 20 years ago."

Versions of this ghostly story date back to the days of horse and cart.

**OGLING** women's boobs makes men live longer. A US medical journal had found that ten minutes' staring at a woman's cleavage was as beneficial as an aerobic workout. Sorry, lads, it's wishful thinking.



**PARENTS** across America were terrified when an e-mail warning was circulated that rattlesnakes were often be found nesting in children's ball ponds. Apparently the cool, dark conditions made the pits an ideal nesting place. This is the latest breed of "leisure terror". Earlier versions included claims that razor blades were stuck in swimming pool waterslides.

**COSMETIC** companies were mad at an e-mail listing brands of lipstick which contained lead. It was nonsense, of course.

**NASA** were said to have carried out sex experiments in space. A writer claimed he found a document giving details of the tests, including the claim sex in the missionary position is impossible in space.

**NASA** rubbished the claims. Mind you, no astronauts have said they had sex in space.

**RUMOURS** circulated that England star Wayne Rooney had been caught in a Liverpool brothel with a granny.

Hang on a minute, this is no urban legend... it really did happen.

