

The Inconsequential

Issue One

There's always time for levity

Free and independent; unless you consider genetics, nature, nurture and brainwashing etc.

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Mr Adrian Clark is an excellent to the cinema or even for a quick worker. His manager says so, his drink. He's just too busy, or too tired. colleagues say so, his family say so He very rarely buys flowers, unless and his wife says so. Therefore, it's a really special occasion. must be true. And it is. He is never However, on Helen's birthday or at late and has not taken a single day off Christmas, he always buys her work with sickness in the two years chocolates. Not her favourites - he's that he has been employed at the Bank. not too sure what her favourites are - His monthly work reviews serve to but Helen doesn't mind. It's the reinforce everyone's opinion of his thought that counts and somehow it attitude and aptitude for his job. A seems more endearing to Helen that man admired by all who know of him. Mr Adrian Clark tries, but just fails to It is said that if you can't get along get it right. with Mr Adrian Clark, then it is you At work, however, Mr Clark can't who has the problem and not he. fail. 100% productivity; 0% error Every day he is only too willing to help rate. Eight hours of the day filled with colleagues who may be having eight hours worth of work and not one difficulties with their tasks, staying mistake. Yes, Mr Clark is very behind long after he should have popular with his manager and his finished work for the day. Mrs Clark workmates and has had his has got used to not expecting him enthusiasm recognised several times home at the appointed time and is not in the form of a 'Cheers' award. A £5 altogether happy about it, but she shopping voucher, a card praising his understands. She understands that contribution and a small, circular because he is so conscientious, so badge to wear proudly on his lapel, personable, so reasonable, he feels it branding him a genuine Company his duty to help out where he can, and man. A man who looks forward to anyway, if he were not the person he each working day and the opportunity is, she wouldn't have fallen in love to play his part, how ever small, in the with him, would she? advancement of his team, his Does he feel the same way about her? department and the Company. Mrs Clark is sure that he does! This is how it is. Although he doesn't always show it. Today, however, would be different. He never seems to have time to take Mrs Clark - Helen - to a restaurant or

Welcome to the first of, we hope, many issues of a new, thought-provoking publication. Each month, we aim to provide an antidote to the poisonous, stifling atmosphere of sterility, rigidity and clinical cynicism that pervades our daily existence. Our intentions are simple enough. We're going to look at anything and everything, inconsequential or weighty, good or bad, and have our say about it!

We'll get things off our chest in the "Rant" column, comment on the issues of the day through those morally attuned "Ethics Girls" and take a swipe at the utter banality of TV with "Soap Bubbles". Throw in the monthly serialisation of our short story, spoof sports pages, pointless puzzle corner, a nostalgia trip, letters, cartoons and the odd

quirky two-liner, and you should find something to keep your mind off the job! In doing all of this, if we manage to raise a highbrow, or even a less lofty, discussion, then at least we'll have succeeded in shifting the focus to less pressing, but more fulfilling matters. Above all else, however, the keyword is humour. We want to caress your titters and see the ripples grow. We long to watch you whetting your snickers and see you crack up, but, ultimately, if you can take our point and only smile, then we'll have achieved our goal.

So, please come with us on our little voyage of recovery. If we all shout into the void together, at least we'll hear each other!

Letters

*Dear Sirs,
Having read an advance copy, I was thrilled to see your article about my grandfather. (See p8) You may be interested to know we still cherish his flat cap and, on family occasions, use it as a swimming pool for the kids.*

Joey Butterfingers

Having seen an advanced copy of the first issue of

your most splendid publication, I felt I must write and congratulate you on its professional appearance and superbly comic articles. I know enough of both editors to know that each of your 694 readers are in for an unmissable treat in the coming months. It truly is what the first /second / third/ fourth(delete as applicable) week of each

*month was missing!
On a more poignant note. After a lifetime of being told that, wherever men and women gathered to talk about the serious issues of the day, there was no place for me, I was deeply touched to see your most personal welcome displayed in a position of high prominence just below the masthead.*

Your Stars

Love Don't go looking for love this month and it won't come looking for you.

Work Your colleagues will see you in new light, but only if the bulb in the toilets is replaced.

Home Get out and about in the coming weeks - it's safer, percentage-wise.

When was the last time you visited a library? Why do I ask I hear you say; at least I hope it's you I hear, otherwise the voices are back, and I'm worried about what they'll tell me to do next. One doesn't know for sure if the big G'll get in touch and, if so-called evidence - media and such tittle-tattlers- is anything to go by, then I could be persuaded to go on a rampage of destructive behaviour: Perish the thought!
Ah, Yes, libraries, those thin, eye-pencil drawn seams down the fattened calves of our nostalgia; what role are they playing in our development?
Does it matter that they are dwindling or having to become 'multi-media centres' in order to suggest they are fit enough to survive at all? Ironically, they generally have good sections on generic Darwinism, which amounts to a daily intake of not so good bacteria? But then, this

is a fundamental aspect of freedom; the principle of allowing freedom to those voices that would signal our own downfall. Does this pub logic suggest that our inquiring nature, questioning would inevitably lead to our extinction as a specie? Can we, as a thinking organism evolve into survivors when a good deal of thought leads to conclusions that point to our very extinction?
Relax in a paradox bath and consider that we live in an age wherein we are living longer due to advances in science yet we still believe life is too short to think long and hard about. Live now, ask questions later -if you get the time-: This could be a mantra for our age.
The best thing about some Libraries is that they are confident enough in their day a week and half-day Saturday.

I meandered longingly as a processor/ That floats on stock markets over pies and bills/ All at once I came upon a factory of golden artificial lights/ And once therein I genuflected with resigned soulless spleen/ Before a lifeless myriad of bollocks on a screen// My mind did tarry a mile away/ And whilst loitering there did oft say/ Is this all there is?/ Is this all there is?// But from this death I was awake/ Twas another spectre that boldly spoke/ About this and that and philosophy/ Tall tales of how grand life could be/ If chainless true that hour be free/ E'en to think the smallest alternately/ for independent thought to spring/ Like freshest water's refreshment bring/ And to disregard the merest farthing/ As those moptop sages sang:"Money can't buy you love."// All this revelatory exercise, a joy of sorts did deliver/ And for some moments my soul did shiver/ And my heart quake for possibility's sake/ Yet all this shattered in an instant as machines droned on/ And translated me there into an automaton.// Deep in the blood slowing in my art and veins/ A twitching that meant I could still feel pains/ Convincing me of my humble humanity/ And pulsing resiliently against unimaginative insanity.

What the?



Who the?



Me!?
How the?



SPONTANEOUS COM-BUS-TION

I regard myself as a tolerant man, not prone to irrational outbursts, with an understanding nature, positive outlook and extremely patient manner. Non-smoker, GSOH, WLTM woman, 28...sorry, wrong column.

As I was saying, I'm a reasonable, fair-minded person with a relaxed attitude, but, if there's one subject that winds my crank, it's Public Transport.

Spending 50 minutes of every working day in the enforced company of 30 or 40 souls you wouldn't normally seek out is not so bad. After all, meeting new people could lead to all sorts of possibilities. However, meeting them in a rectangular tin can that smells of wet socks and dry farts is definitely not conducive to a lasting friendship.

Even before the odour strips your nasal sensors, the first dubious pleasure is being greeted by the Neanderthal grunts and stiletto looks of the driver. Welcomed aboard with a cursory glance and disdainful sneer sets the tone. You then have to wade through mounds of used bus tickets, half-eaten Big Macs and tissues with stains of dubious origin to get to the one remaining seat. Invariably next to the town loon (25 stone with a persistent itch and no inhibitions) you spend the entire trip listening to the tinny beat and rasping hiss emanating from his MP3 player.

The journey itself is far from uneventful. Near misses and colourful expletives are standard and that's just from passengers pushing past each other to get off. A driver with two lead feet, lurching from stop to stop, approaching each at slightly less than the speed of sound and then stopping within two feet does nothing to aid the digestion of your morning Weetabix. It does free up some seats, however, as everyone ends up sitting on the knee of the person in front!

Thankfully, every journey has its terminus and the opportunity to alight is seized upon gratefully, though even this can be fraught with danger. Assuming Neanderthal Man hears the bell, you still have to negotiate the mass of bodies preventing your escape. If you can heave, slide, sashay and rub your way to the doors without becoming the unwitting party to a paternity suit, you're doing well. Of course, you still have to endure a parting snarl from the driver, who, having waited the regulation 3 seconds at the stop, had closed the doors and set off again ten seconds earlier. Although, slamming on the

brakes as he did, has just catapulted you to the windscreen in time to tumble over the empty cola bottle on the step and out into the street.

All in all, an experience not to be missed...unfortunately - though I'm not entirely sure it's worth the £8.50 charge.

Now, where's that bike!

Mavis: What a splendid gesture, Lil! I don't think we've had a donation of that size in quite some time.

Lil: What's that, Mavis? Oh, the cake! You're more than welcome. I'm always ready to support a worthy cause.

Mavis: You know, as head of the local WI committee, I shouldn't really single anyone out, but it was a far more generous gesture than some have made!

Lil: When I heard you needed donations, I didn't hesitate. I worked all day to make it, but I like to think it was worth it.

Mavis: It certainly was! Beautifully iced, too! You know, you're exactly the type of person we're looking for here at the WI. There's a vacancy come up on the subcommittee. They don't have to do a great deal, but they carry a little weight. It's the honour and prestige of being a member more than anything. I don't suppose you'd be interested...

Lil: Why, Mavis, it is an honour. I'd be delighted!

Shirley: Excuse me, Mavis, but do you think that's fair? There are many people, no less worthy, who've done sterling work over a longer time that would be thrilled to be offered that post.

Mavis: But...it's such a magnificent cake, and look at that icing. Enough for everyone! Given in the right spirit and just when we needed it to.

Gladys: I'm sorry, Mavis, but I agree with Shirley. We can't give that seat on the subcommittee to someone solely because they've given us the largest donation.

Mavis: Oh, very well! I suppose you're right. Sorry, Lil, I've been outvoted! We can't let you on the subcommittee, but thanks for the cake. It's much appreciated!

Lil: Fine! Well, I'm sorry, too! And you've had the cake, I'm afraid. There's an opening down at the golf club. I'm taking it down there instead!

Mavis: Dear me, ladies, that was unfortunate. Still, we'll just have to make do with more fairies and sponge fingers!



Members of the Soap cast relax on the washing machine and in suspended animation in the lounge before an episode.

THOSE DAFT SOAP SUDS

Down at *THE VITREOUS ENAMEL*, landlady and would-be owner, Olive Lamp, and her closest friend, Vera were wringing their hands in despair. They are both rubbing the polish on anything that can shine in an attempt to take their minds off the darkness enveloping them.



Vera brings up the subject of Olive's daughter, Sunlight who has just returned from a successful course at RADA. However, Sunlight has fallen under the greasy charm of one of the notorious Bleach Boys, a twin set of unethical thugs that aim to boss the area with a velvet shotgun. Vera would rather lose Sunlight to the stage than to a villain, but love is blind they say, and lust is even less insightful and Sunlight is at the emotional laundrette waiting for her smalls to be twisted in another turbulent cycle.

After four hours of record-breaking wailing, Olive sits at the box and watches the balls go jingle-jangle. One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, and the last little cosmic testicle makes its indifferent way down the tube and, lo and behold, Olive realises the improbable – she's won the lottery, and with the first ticket she's bought in years. She stopped when deciding to save up to send Sunlight to RADA. Now, after such sacrifice, her half-arsed prayers had been inexplicably answered by a god she barely believed in. The pub would be hers now, and no mistake. Her whoops of delight traumatised the parrot, whose only words thereafter would be: "Pieces of eight." And "You've gotta be in it to smell it."

Meanwhile in Frew Saga's luxury suite, he and a henchman gloat over the fact that he holds all the aces as he intends to buy the pub and evict Olive and her family. Saga is a self-made industrialist who dragged himself from the dirt and cleaned up in the Dot Cotton boom. "Dosh for old rope."



Vera calls out for her son, Tarlu, but Vera reminds her that he is out at *The Tub* – a local, infamous nightclub playing chess and indulging his other passion of watching paint dry. She laments her plight, weeping profusely, bubbles forming in her eyes, getting herself into a right lather. She walked up and down, up and down, until the brasses were clean and sparkly. Vera got a little worried when Olive began to incant: "Out damned spot." But Vera calmed Olive with one of her home-spun homilies. "Rub those hands any harder and you'll lose your lifeline."

Frew Saga, upon hearing the news, was heard to exclaim "BEXLEY HEATH; the lucky cow!" and in a more philosophical mood he bit the head off another of his prize whippets. "The cosmos is an irritating sud. I'll have to think of another way of making that woman pay for washing her hands of me." His henchman, Dope-on-a-Rope to his numerous detractors, was showered with Saga's wrath until he could take no more, so he decided to remind Saga of his ownership of the brewery and wholesale suppliers that served Olive Lamp's pub. Between gritted teeth, Saga began a somewhat cliched laugh: "SWEET AS A CASHEW."

POLE-SITTING CHAMPION

Peter “Vaseline” Throb, 36, of Prestatyn, cracked the World Pole-Sitting record today by a full 3 hours, having squatted atop a 40 foot quivering rod for an astonishing 2 days, 2 hours and 38 minutes. Speaking after being lowered from the pole by a Sea King helicopter - “an accident waiting to happen,” said one of the organisers later - Mr Throb squeaked, “It was something I’ve always wanted to do after watching Dale Winton on TV.”

Curiously, Mr Throb and the previous record holder, Simon Staines, had never heard of one another before this event, but have since become firm friends. Despite appearances to the contrary, both men are happily married and intend to stay that way, though Peter’s wife, Thelma, will, perhaps, have the last word. “I’m thrilled that he’s taken the record, but I don’t want to see him sitting on anything cylindrical again”.

TABLE FOOTBALL

“One of the greatest days of my career.” said Martin Wholenutt after winning through to the final of the Table Football Championships in Cockfosters yesterday.

Martin, second striker from the left on the leading rod, scored the winning goal, but acknowledged the part his three fellow strikers played in the victory. “Smithy took some heavy hits throughout the game, all of which sent him reeling, but Clarky and Wilko’s movement off the ball drew our opponent’s attention long enough to allow me to knock in the winner.”

Martin, needless to say, is looking forward to the final, but there were worries over his fitness as the match ended. “I splintered the left side of my chest early on and my head was spinning as the final whistle blew, but rest assured, a quick sanding and I’ll be starting alongside my team-mates in the final.”

Latest News: The Patagonian Tiddlywinks Open was called off after it was discovered that most of the qualifiers were drunk and that the British team’s discs were two millimetres smaller than the rest.

'Outta me box' : A Goalkeeper's Tale

Watching a game the other day, I was startled to observe how the 'keeper didn't touch the ball with his hands at any point in the game. He regularly came out of his box to kick either a backpass or a so-called through-ball back upfield. It got me to thinking...

In the old days a goalie had to be half-baked to even try and stop the ball, it were more like a meteor than a simple bladder type thing and when the centre-forward let go we'd take our life in our hands, even though we had some really hard-wearing woollen gloves on. There were no better relief than a bloke would dribble his way into the net, rounding you with ease as a gust o' wind got into his shorts and carried him up and over your outstretched arms. All you could do was watch and in the pictured case, pretend to be a bird of some grace, landing on the ball as it nestled in the net like one of your most treasured eggs. There were no such thing as today's offside nonsense; some strikers used to park themselves in the box and bring sandwiches waiting for the play to reach. Me dad told me that his dad, being somewhat shy - he turned down a move to Darlington because he was afraid of the crowds- never left his six-yard box in a twelve-year long career. His teammates once tried to entice him out with a box of cigars, but he sent a dog to fetch 'em for him. He let in a goal in that match because of the smoke in his eyes.

There were one match when me dad, a goalkeeper of ill-repute -tho' all us ten kids still loved 'im despite mother running off with a cricketer for the cut of his creams- in the act of gathering a modest shot, got a whippet caught in the left leg of his shorts, but he didn't realise until late into the second-half, when it was too late for the thin, little beggar. Me dad'd kept a clean sheet up to then, but he certainly didn't when the police turned up at our door next morning. The dog was only a prize-winning racer, owned by the Chief Constable! Me dad was never quite the same as he took to wearing bicycle-clips just above his knees to avoid such a repeat. Needless to say these metal objects hampered his agility and even stopped the blood in his legs on too many occasions, as goal after goal went through his numb legs. Not only did he lose command of his area but he'd lose control of his legs and resembled Bambi on a bad day. He also got cold sweats when being carried past the dog track.

