



Travelogue No 25

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More memorable stories for your enjoyment, taken from real life situations, interviews and every day occurrences. All subjects considered 'fair game' !!!

Bungling Cops Lead To Misery In The Highlands

Police raided a 79-year-old widow's Highland cottage after mistaking her tomato plants for a cannabis factory, it was reported in the Scottish newspapers.

Northern Constabulary officers burst into Lulu Matheson's property with sniffer dogs and took samples of the plants for analysis. Lulu Matheson, who has lived in the property in Shieldaig for 53 years, said she was badly shaken up by the encounter.

Mrs Matheson told UK's Daily Mail: "I got a terrible fright and I couldn't understand what they were doing here because I knew we had nothing more than tomatoes in the window. I'm embarrassed about what the neighbours must be thinking."

Her 47-year-old son Gus, a former driver, was looking out of the window when he saw police cars stop outside. He said: "I wondered what on earth was going on. I opened the door and they more or less barged past, saying that I was growing cannabis on the windowsills. I started laughing because I knew they were tomato plants but it wasn't so funny when they frisked me and then started tearing the house apart."

Mr Matheson said he was held in the bedroom while officers searched the furniture and under the mattress. He also said that the police impounded the family's pet dogs. They even 'arrested' Zac, our black Labrador, and Moby, our Jack Russell, putting them in the back of one of the cop cars," Mr Matheson added.

"And I just couldn't believe it when they brought snif-

fer dogs all the way from Alness, which is about two hours away." He went on: "Despite leaving with their tails between their legs, the police didn't even bother to apologise."

Mr Matheson, a keen gardener, grows tomatoes in the south-facing bedroom window. He said: "We always enjoy having a juicy home-grown tomato with our dinner and I've had fine crops this year."

Mr Matheson is now making a formal complaint to Northern Constabulary. A police spokesman said: "We can confirm that, acting on information, we attended at an address in the Shieldaig area. No drugs were found as a result of the search."

Spot The Difference



Ok, for all you would-be Bobbies (or Boobies) which is the legal veggie and which is the happy chappie's magic Woodbine ???? Get it wrong and you are certainly destined for Highland Constabulary duty.

Water Level Continues To Rise At Lakeside



Lake height in April 2006



Lake height on 18/10/08



Lake height on 18/11/08



Time For The Small Man To Act



At a time when banks all around us are failing, insurance companies become untrustworthy and credit card companies try to sell even more credit, it is always the little man who gets the raw deal.

For example, illness on holiday can be covered by an insurance policy. Should you get sick, have an accident or just miss your flight, you can obtain cover for these unfortunate incidents. Yes, it will cost you a healthy premium and the document will engage you in much scrutiny deciphering the small print. Policies promising so much are encapsulated with numerous pages of exclusions which are designed to thwart even the most deserved claim.

An instance of cardiac problems abroad lead immediately to questions of payment methods, despite the victim struggling to remain conscious long enough to make it to the Intensive Care Unit. Waving an Insurance Company Healthcare card at the pursuing cashier and mumbling 'they will deal with it' carries little favour. As you're about to croak your last, bits of plastic are no use - cash is the only antidote. And then you will need to make a healthy down payment in advance of any treatment.

As you cope with the stress of injections, i/v drips, beeping machines and continual inspections, the question of the insurance claim hangs over you like the Sword of Damocles. Far from expectations of peace and quiet, the man from the insurance agents handling your claim rings up to ask how you are and to point out various items of small print contained in your policy. Just a few questions, they say, to which you attempt to answer in the hope the blood pressure machine doesn't explode.

Thinking about the minutiae of health policies whilst wondering if you will ever see the daylight again, has a poor effect on one's recovery. Perversely, the agent seems only intent on bumping you off with a series of impossible questions. No joy with the cashier either - she needs more advance payments on what is starting to become a crippling bill. So, eventually, you leave the ICU and head for the recovery rooms. Very nice, good views, lovely staff and restful. Then the phone goes again. The Insurance man. 'How are you today', he asks. 'Well you should know, you seem to have all the answers', as the blood pressure shoots up again. 'We need some evidence of your utilities bills, just to verify where you actually live' the voice on the phone says. 'I'm attached to medical things here, I'm not in an office and I'm 6,000 miles away'. 'Can you get the documents to us as soon as possible, please'. Click.

Apart from the fact that these faceless inquisitors are thousands of miles away and only work Mon-Fri, and by

paying the premium you are actually paying their wages, they only seem intent on investigating to the greatest degree any flaws in your 'alleged' illness. After all, they are paid a commission for money saved from spurious claims, so they have to be very thorough. Strange though how most of the so-called friendly voices have foreign accents.

The moral of this story is that we are all bound by rules and regulation to a stage where some of those rules go beyond fair play. Sure, there are rascals about in every walk of life. You only have to remember the Societe General debacle and the collapse of Northern Rock, followed by countless rescue packages for greedy corporate entities around the world - all paid for by the little man who has to pay his taxes. It really isn't fair, and when we have a genuine claim for an incident beyond our control, we are treated like criminals and our affairs are scrutinized by faceless suits specifically hired to undermine our way of life.

Anybody with whom you have a contract, be it a mortgage firm, a bank, an insurance company or a credit card supplier, you have rights. Effectively, by paying a premium or signing a contract, you become part of that firm's business. The Data Protection Act allows for individuals to ask questions and obtain information about what that firm holds on the individual. You can ask for Company reports, Director's remuneration, Annual statements, lists of major shareholders, lists of subsidiary companies and a whole host of information.

It is your right. You are entitled to know in detail about the companies who are taking your money and what they are doing with it. Yes, it will cost them money to provide you with the information, and you might not be in the slightest bit interested, but that is your right. Find out and make a decision as to their veracity, their future plans and the bad investments they have made. At the end of the day, you are their Client and you can ask awkward questions too. If one person asks, it's a start, if ten ask it's a nuisance, but if thousands ask then they will suddenly realise that the little man has rights.

As for health insurance, they only pester you if you make a claim. Despite paying your annual premium, nobody rings up to see if you are well at other times during the year. Perhaps they will if they are continually bombarded with requests for information by their customers. The customer, the client and the little man have rights. ACT NOW !!!!!



Welcome

Save a little money each month, and at the end of the year, you will be surprised at how little you have. Ernest Haskins

Signs Of The Times



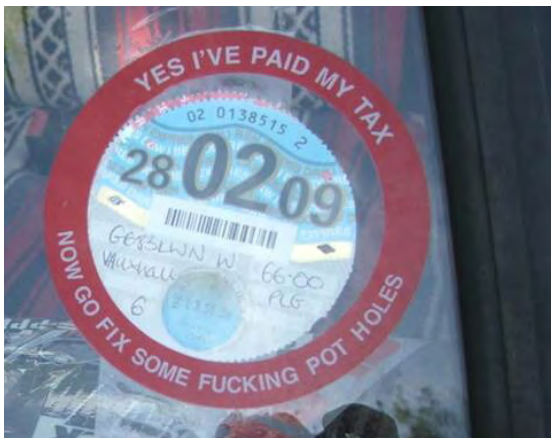
Some Hare Pie and a Fruity Tart please, Patron



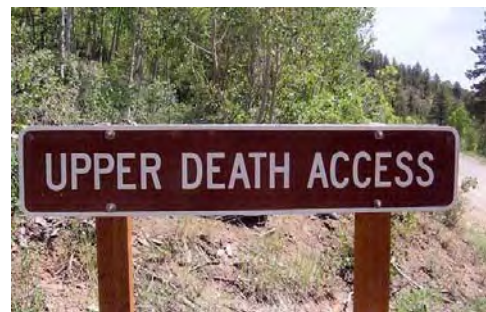
Get them started at an early age !!



From Here



Quite Right - Well Said !!!



..... To Here

Here Is One We Caught Earlier



This huge freshwater fish, known locally as Pla Delamet weighed in at 4.1 kilos, or 9 lbs. Caught in our holding pond, it is a relation of the Piranha and is an excellent eater. Bring on the chips !!!!

New Words and Phrases for 2008/9

Salad Dodger : description of an overweight person.

Swamp Donkey: an extremely unattractive person.

Seagull Manager: a Manager who flies in, makes a lot of noise, craps on everything and then leaves.

Aeroplane Blond: One who has bleached or dyed her hair, but still has a black box.

Greyhound: a very short skirt, only an inch from the hare.

Mystery Bus: the bus that arrives when you are in the toilet after your 10th pint and whisks away all the unattractive people, so that when you return the pub is full of stunners.

Testiculating: waving your arms about and talking bollocks.

Cricketers In Trouble Again

Anger At 'All White' Slogan For Cricket Match



A New Zealand cricket association has apologised for using the line "It's all white here" in a marketing campaign for a Test match involving the West Indies.

Otago cricket chief executive Ross Dykes said the slogan for the Dunedin Test was not intended to be racist but referred to the cricketers' clothing. "We just wanted a catchy phrase to help sell the game," he told the Otago Daily Times. "It was all based around the association of the colour with cricket."

Dykes emailed the West Indies team and board and said he would be "mortified" if anyone thought the slogan was intended to be a slur. "I respect the opinions of others who may well think that it is insensitive," he said. "To those people I apologise."

We Must Not Say India Is A 'Third World Country'



Even though it is:

"An off-the-cuff remark by Australian batsman Matthew Hayden labelling India a "Third World" country appears to have dented national pride and provoked an angry response on the sub-continent. In response, Australia has been labelled "no more than a village" and described as being 100 years behind India.

On his return from India last week, where Australia lost 2-nil and was heavily criticised for slow over rates, Hayden told reporters that some of the blame rested with opposition batsmen and officials. "Often we find ourselves with hands on hips waiting for someone to either face up or someone in the sight-board to move away; all the little frustrations that happen in Third World countries and the heat as well."

The comment was widely picked up in the Indian press and on cable TV and triggered a furious response from proud Indians.

Reality is reality and if you have ever been to India, you will know what "third world" means.

Apparently, one in five people in the world are Chinese. And there are five people in my family, so it must be one of them. Its either my Mum or my Dad. Or my older brother Colin, or my younger brother Ho Cha Chu. But I think its Colin.

Tommy Cooper

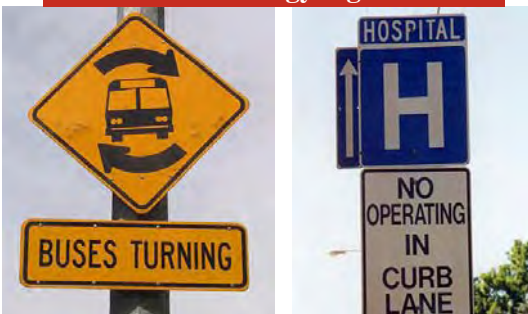
In Italy for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed - they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, five hundred years of democracy and peace and what did they produce. The cuckoo clock !!!

Orson Welles

When the white missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible, and we had the land. They said, 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them again, we had the Bible and they had the land.

Bishop Desmond Tutu

More Dodgy Signs



News from the recent M & W CC Annual General Meeting

John Hughes was chosen to take over from Peter Furber as **Chairman** of the Club. John, whose son James is one of the clubs brightest talents, has been involved with youth development at the club for the best part of a decade, and has also been responsible for managing the Denbighshire Colts in recent summers. He was looking forward to being able to concentrate on purely cricketing matters in the forthcoming season.

Chris Hemmings (**Vice-chair**), Darren Bettis (**Secretary**), Mike Warrington (**Treasurer**) and Simon Hughes (**Membership**) were also elected into new roles on the Club's Committee with Derek Pritchard (**Fixture-sec**) opting to continue in that role.

Nick Husband is to continue as club-captain with Mike Forgrave his vice. Darren Bettis agreed to take responsibility for 2nd team with young wicket-keeper/bat Owen Ward his deputy. Anthony Morris agreed to take responsibility for the Sunday XI.



Warm Greetings From Here



Happy Christmas To All



With best wishes for a felicitous festive season. Just imagine Gordon Bumble-dum as the fairy at the top of your tree, so remember to shove it right up to the hilt. Don't expect Santa too soon, there are an additional 1.8 million people in the Country since the Commies came to power - and that's only the ones they admit to. With millions more picaninnies and pikeys to visit, the old buzzard might not get there until next year !!!

My thanks to all the avid readers of the Travelogues, hopefully there will be more to follow thanks to the dedication and skill of the specialists in the Bangkok Pattaya Hospital. My thanks, also, to Herbie for the cartoon on the right - it just looked right for this issue.

The Correspondent et al.



"CHRISTMAS IS JUST TWO FUCKING DEER."