

Travelogue No 31

Love is a device invented by Bank Managers to make us overdrawn.

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What A Load Of Dummies

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It was billed as the latest police tactic to combat crime and now the idea has taken off nationwide. Police figures show that forces across the country have spent more than £20,000 on the flat-pack PCs.

West Midlands police said it had ordered 80 cardboard constables at a cost of just over £10,000. In Derbyshire, £6,650 was spent over the past two years on a "substantial number" of cut-outs.

"The theory is that it creates the impression at first glance of a capable guardian being on site, which hopefully also reduces the perception of fear of crime," said a Derbyshire police spokesman. A survey using the Freedom of Information Act revealed that 13 forces in England and Wales have used cardboard officers.

Essex police said it spent £760 on eight cut-outs. They have been deployed in petrol stations, to deter drivers from speeding away without paying for their fuel, and also in shops to discourage shoplifting. The force would not reveal precisely where the cut-outs have been placed because "to release locations is likely to jeopardise the success of the trials". Rank-and-file officers, however, questioned the wisdom of spending police funds on fake officers.

Simon Reed, vice-chairman of the Police Federation, said: "While I appreciate that money may be tight for policing, this does seem a drastic solution to avoid paying any salary and pension costs. "Ultimately it will be for local residents to decide if cardboard police officers work for their community and are good use of their taxes." Several forces admitted to having suffered the theft of cut-outs. Three went missing from filling stations in Derbyshire in the past two years, while two were stolen in Cleveland. Humberside reported the theft of one cardboard officer, which disappeared from a Tesco supermarket in Grimsby last November.

I'll Sleep Easier Knowing The Old Bill's About



Christ, things must be getting bad. Apparently one of these fine, upstanding young chaps is actually a 'policeman'. May I remind enthusiasts of this blog of the recent situation in the Grampians. Errr, check the story, page 4, Travelogue 29, for full details. Mind you, the dummy on the right is more likely to make an arrest than the dipstick on the left. God Bless The Plodd.

A spokesman for West Midlands police, which had the highest spending on cut-outs, said that some of the money would be reclaimed from shops which benefited from the scheme, but could not say how much had been recouped so far. South Wales police created life-size replicas of two of its serving officers, community support officer Helen Ely and neighbourhood constable Dale Weaver.

Surrey produced cardboard replicas of an entire neighbourhood policing team to reassure residents and increase awareness of crime-prevention measures.

Commercially-produced promotional cut-outs can cost from £12 and £30 each.



© Dave Brown



Show Us Your Lunchbox



Authoritarian British teachers scanning children's lunchboxes and censoring families for anything they see there that they dislike -- even if there is no evidence of harm. There is actually some evidence that chocolate is beneficial to health but Britain's many mini-Hitlers just KNOW what is good and bad. Evidence be damned!

Lydia has contacted us to express her anger at being "named and shamed" because of what she put in her child's lunch box. She, horror of horrors, packed her son off to school today with chocolate spread sandwiches and received a telling off from the teacher in return. "It is our school's policy to encourage healthy eating," said the letter her son brought home. "We would prefer it if your son would bring in a nutritious, healthy sandwich for his lunch." Lydia is not happy, for two reasons. One is that today is her son's birthday and the chocolate spread was a "special treat." Two is that she considers peanut butter a "healthy nutritious" option, but her son isn't allowed it because of what she calls the "nut obsession" (all nut products are banned at her son's school). And he has told her that he is sick of cheese and tuna!

There is clearly a big problem with packed lunches. Even if you make them healthy, it's hard to make them interesting. But should treats be banned, and should teachers be getting involved with what a parent packs in her child's lunch each day? The whole issue, bizarrely, is reminiscent of a thread on *mumsnet* recently. It was from a mother whose child had his jam sandwiches banned! She wasn't too thrilled either.

So, have we gone healthy eating mad, is this actually sensible advice, or is it, as Lydia grumpily points out "teachers just flexing their muscles and showing us that in school, they're the boss" !!!

Communist Council Destroy Very Essence Of British Celebration

England's biggest St George's Day parade is facing the axe after councillors said many of those attending it were racist. For the last decade up to 15,000 have assembled in the town of West Bromwich under the slogan 'Forever England, For Everyone'. Children and parents from all over the country parade through the Black Country town waving St George flags and marching to rousing anthems such as Jerusalem.



Organisers say one of the aims is to reclaim the Saint George Cross from Right-wingers and make it a source of pride for all.

But last night the local council, Labour-controlled Sandwell, voted to withdraw its support for the parade. Funds will go to support a Party in the Park instead. It leaves parade organisers with what they say is the impossible task of raising 10,000 pounds to cover their costs with only a few weeks to go. In a letter to the organisers, one councillor, Yvonne Davies, said the parade created an 'unhealthy atmosphere' and inspired young boys to be racist. She wrote: 'It is not only the parade which is the problem, but

the tribal excitement it creates.'

The West Bromwich St George's Day parade started in 1998 and began as a fairly modest affair with 5,000 turning up. Now three times that attend the two-mile parade in April. Fire Service and Scout Association bands have played, the British Legion lends its support and each year ex-servicemen attend. A volunteer dresses up as St George and rides with the marchers, children paint their faces with the St George Cross and there are activities such as medieval jousting. There have been some problems - last year organisers had to clamp down on drinking in the street and a band with hard-Right roots joined in without their permission. Councillor Davies wrote in her letter: 'I am sure most are very respectful and law-abiding, however some are distasteful in the extreme and wish to divide and separate people from each other.' At a meeting of Sandwell council cabinet last night, her colleagues sided with her and decided against backing the parade. Instead there will be the Party in the Park, a concert in the Town Hall and St George Flags will be flown on all of the council's buildings.

Trevor Collins of the Stone Cross Saint George Association, which organises the parade, said: 'To suggest the parade is racist is ridiculous and offensive. When you see the kids and everyone out having fun, it's really a beautiful sight. It doesn't matter if you're black, white, green, brown or whatever, everyone's welcome. 'The council's decision means we have to foot the bills for insurance and security. We've got to come up with 10,000 pounds in two months which seems impossible.'

Another organiser Mark Cowles said the parades had raised 7,000 pounds for charity. He added that, as well as losing out on council support, they had probably missed the deadline for applying for road closures. 'All we wanted to do was organise a fun, family-friendly day for everyone that celebrates being English,' he said. *Ed: It is quite astonishing the lengths to which the left wing will go to deplete the very fabric of British society. A Communist plot to eradicate the middle English stoicism and replace it with Marxist dogma. Don't be kidded, they are out there. Be alert and use the system to defeat their ultimate objectives before it's too late.*



This Month's Ad Award



Butler's Ringpiece : *Descriptive of something nipping clean.* "What can you see Holmes ??" I expostulated, as the great detective peered into his microscope. (I need not remind you of how in the past, he had solved the mystery of the Pope's cap when he found gibbon's tooth marks on the cardinal's walking stick.) "I'm examining the handle of this dagger of unusual oriental design in the hope of finding a speck of tobacco, only available from one shop in London, or a hair from a rare species of Patagonian chinchilla," he replied. "However, I fear our murderer has wiped it as clean as a butler's ringpiece."

For a long time, I thought coq au vin meant love in a lorry.

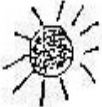
Victoria Wood



Letter To Quantas

dear Captain
My name is Nicola im 8
years. old, this is my first
flight but im not scared. I
like to watch the clouds go
by. My mum says the crew is
nice. I think your plane is
good. thanks for a nice flight
dont fycK up the landing

 LUV Nicola
XX XX

Hands like cow's tits : Descriptive of one who is dextrously inept. An alternative to butterfingers. *'I'm terribly sorry, Mrs Stoa, but I accidentally cut through a major blood vessel near your husband's heart and he didn't survive the surgery. I'm afraid I was on the pop last night and I've got hands like cow's tits. The nurse will show you out. Good day.'*

Melted Welly : A poetic term describing a lady's bodily treasure. *'Spatula was powerless to resist. His eyes burnt into hers like mamellated chalcedony. His muscular arms enfolded her body as she felt herself being swept away on a noctilucent cloud of passion. 'Am I the first?' whispered Dartanyan. 'Sort of' she vouchsafed in return, her voice quivering with unrequited passion. 'I've not let the other two have a shot on me melted welly yet.'*

Lunchbox Lancer : Medieval term for a cocoa shunter. *'Fear not the French, for their knights are without heart, and their King without wisdom. But keep thine backs to the wall, for amongst their number thou shalt find more than a few lunchbox lancers, I can tell you.'*

Tara's Tits : Nothing, sod all. From the notorious It-Girl Tara Palmer Tomkinson's distinct lack of bikini filler. *'We have spent three months searching the secret bunkers and military bases of Iraq in search of chemical warheads and weapons of mass destruction, but thus far I must report to the Security Council that we have found Tara's tits.'*



UK Border Agency Fails Miserably



As many as nine out of ten failed asylum seekers are being allowed to stay in Britain despite having no right to remain, a report from a Government watchdog has revealed. The backlog of illegal immigrants awaiting deportation is growing fast as the UK Border Agency fails to keep pace with the number of rejected applicants. The number of unprocessed cases is also growing. And Government rules stating that all successful asylum seekers must have their cases reviewed after five years - to see if their country is now safe enough to return to - have descended into farce, because the Border Agency has no way of tracking those living in Britain and no plans for a review.

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Grayling called the report, from the National Audit Office, a 'shocking indictment of the shambles that is our immigration and asylum system'. Meanwhile, the Commons Public Accounts Committee, to which the NAO reports, claimed the Agency was 'struggling to cope.'

Last year, the Home Office introduced the 'New Asylum Model' in a bid to streamline Britain's chaotic asylum system, by assigning each case to a single civil servant from start to finish. Today's report acknowledges that the £800million-a-year system is now 'better organised than before', but highlights grave problems which in many cases are getting worse. A surge in the number of asylum claims saw the backlog of undecided cases more than double in a year, to almost 9,000. The NAO tracked more than 25,000 claims lodged from January 2007 to February 2008, of which almost 14,000 were refused. But of 10,719 cases processed in the seven regions around the UK, only 918 - less than 10 per cent - had actually been deported by the following August. The rate was higher for 3,000 false claimants who were fast-tracked in detention. Including these claims, the overall removal rate was just one in four.

A severe shortage of detention spaces is making removals harder, the report warned, with much of the available capacity taken up by foreign criminals who have completed their sentences and are awaiting deportation. The NAO also highlighted glaring inefficiencies. Seventy per cent of planned deportations - where security staff accompany deportees on flights home - are cancelled, often due to lack of proper coordination, leading to 'additional work and costs'.

The Agency often has to buy emergency travel documents from foreign governments to deport failed asylum seekers, but 13,000 of these have been wasted because individuals absconded, or because the papers expired. Since 2005, Britain has granted asylum for five years only - after which cases should be reviewed in the hope that some immigrants will be able to return home.

But astonishingly the Border Agency 'has no process' to track refugees living in Britain and 'no plans in place to review these cases'. There are 8,000 due for review next year. The Agency's chief executive, Lin Homer, confirmed there was 'no requirement' for asylum seekers to tell officials when they move house. Sir Andrew Green, of Migration Watch, said: 'This is a shameful performance for the expenditure of hundreds of millions of pounds. It is no surprise that asylum seekers, many of them bogus, are queuing up in Calais.'

Hotel tea is when you have to mix together a plastic envelope containing too much sugar, a small plastic pot of something which is not milk but has curdled anyway, and a thin brown packet seemingly containing the ashes of a cremated mole.
Frank Muir

I want to be young and wild, and then I want to be middle-aged and rich, and then I want to be old and annoy people by pretending I'm deaf. *Baldrick*

