When Gordon Brown met with his US counterpart for his only White House meeting with Barack Obama, he was denied an official dinner or Rose Garden press conference, and was received as though he were the head of a Third World country. He brought with him several thoughtful gifts including “a pen holder fashioned from the timber of HMS Gannet, a sister ship of the Resolute that also served for a time on anti-slavery missions off Africa”. And what did Brown receive in return? A collection of 25 DVDs, including Toy Story and the Wizard of Oz, which couldn’t even be played in Britain. When asked by The Sunday Telegraph why Brown had been treated so badly, a senior State Department official in charge of protocol sneered: “There’s nothing special about Britain. You’re just the same as the other 190 countries in the world. You shouldn’t expect special treatment.” Personality-wise Obama and Brown had little in common, and there was a distinct lack of chemistry between the two. As much as Brown tried to woo Obama, the US president oozed thinly veiled contempt towards the Labour leader, which culminated in his refusal to meet with him for one-to-one talks on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly last September.

Common sense and political necessity dictates that President Obama should seek to build up a close relationship with David Cameron, not least with significant shared interests in the war in Afghanistan, the wider War on Terror, and the looming Iranian nuclear threat. Washington needs the Special Relationship to work just as much as London does. But common sense does not always rule in the Obama White House.

It is important never to underestimate the extent to which this US administration is capable of riling America’s allies, from removing a bust of Sir Winston Churchill from the Oval Office within days of taking office to the president playing golf on the day of the funeral of the Polish president, tragically killed in a plane crash. Or siding with Argentina’s calls for UN-brokered negotiations over the sovereignty of the Falklands, and throwing key allies Poland and the Czech Republic under the Russian bus. Or siding with Marxists in Honduras, and humiliating the Prime Minister of Israel. The list is endless.

In fact, the Obama team has done more to offend America’s friends than all post-war American administrations put together. Throw into the mix some strong anti-British and anti-foreign sentiment among some Democrats on Capitol Hill in the wake of the BP Gulf oil spill, and you have the potential for another diplomatic incident.

President Obama and his advisers must tread carefully and recognise that it is not in their interests to alienate the new Prime Minister, not least at a time when US and British troops are fighting shoulder to shoulder on the battlefields of Afghanistan. America has no greater friend than Great Britain and the British people, and his welcome for Mr Cameron should reflect that.
Pancake power
Brenda and Steve took their six-year-old son to the doctor.

With some hesitation, they explained that although their little angel appeared to be in good health, they were concerned about his rather small penis.

After examining the child, the doctor confidently declared, “Just feed him pancakes. That should solve the problem.”

The next morning when the boy arrived at breakfast, there was a large stack of warm pancakes in the middle of the table.

“Gee, Mom,” he exclaimed. “For me?”

“Yes, that’s right, as if by magic, a jobsworth member of the Stasi from the local council (official title "Enforcement Officer") appeared and asked for Mr Bonnard’s name, address and date of birth. He then slapped Mr Bonnard with a £50 fine for littering.

Mr Bonnard paid up, for if he didn’t he faced a £2500 fine.

A nice little earner for the Council.
A Doctor was addressing a large audience in Tampa, Florida.

“The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here, years ago. Red meat is awful. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. Chinese food is loaded with MSG. High fat diets can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the long-term harm caused by the germs in our drinking water.

However, there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and we all have eaten, or will eat it. Can anyone here tell me what food it is that causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?”

After several seconds of quiet, a 75-year-old man in the front row raised his hand, and softly said,

“Wedding Cake.”

Miranda Kerr has been crowned Queen of the Victoria’s Secret angels after this stunning video ad for cotton lingerie. The Australian beauty’s ad for Victoria’s Secret’s cotton lingerie line is getting record traffic on the net.

Stock For Autumn

We have many new and interesting items for our esteemed customers this Autumn. As regular voyeur, Tony Pritchard, puts it, ‘It certainly gives me a new lease of life, and I’ve only tried out half the products available yet.’

www.fantasyhouse.co.uk

New Signage For Crown Royal

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The 'green' tourist attraction is designed to bring an element of fun to the centre of the capital, as well as creating a new public space for drunken tramps to evacuate their bowels. Different parts of the maze are named after areas of the West End, each with an interactive display that will be covered in urine and, the organisers say, perhaps even a little bit of sick. The West End Partnership insisted the maze was a quirky way to discover the rich diversity of the area, while pleading with tourists to carry either a large kitchen knife or an HK5 machine pistol.

A spokesman said: "At some point you may be lucky enough to come across 'Big Dutchy'. He'll be doing what he thinks is breakdancing. Do not give him any money.

And, until we can track him down, there is also a good chance you'll come face to face with 'Robbie Razors'. His nickname is nothing to do with a fondness for shaving - he actually has quite a heavy beard - it's because he will cut you to pieces.

"Meanwhile, if you somehow make it to the centre of the maze then you'll probably encounter an old man called George. He used to be a journalist on the Daily Express but now spends most of his time having noisy, one-sided arguments with his dog about how Britain is controlled by a giant homosexual, or peeing in his own face. Enjoy."

He added: "If you are worried about getting lost then just ask for 'Malky from Easterhouse' and he'll lead you to safety - though he will want paying in Kestrel Super Lager or shiny buttons. But whatever you do, don't get lost."

Bill McKay, former head of cardiac surgery at Peterborough Royal Infirmary, said he hoped to pick up where he left off, attempting to perform a quadruple bypass on a 52 year-old bank manager by going in via his rectum. The government wants to scrap retirement and slash Britain's soaring pension bill by ensuring that thousands of tax payers are killed every day by a new army of mentally incapable old people making catastrophic decisions.

Dr McKay, who insists he killed less than 60 people in his last year at work, said: "Is that you Margaret? Come here I want to open up your chest and look for my keys. What you have to remember is that heart surgery can be done by anyone at any time and at any age. It's a bit like gutting a fish, except I use a hacksaw and a giant novelty spoon. Will I get a parking space for my giraffe?"

Roy Hobbs, an 87 year-old former bus driver from Exeter, said: "I do miss drivin' the old number 18. Before them upstairs told me to leave, my favourite thing was hearin' all them cars bouncin' off the side of me bus as I pulled out into the fast lane on the M5. Them upstairs said I wasn't supposed to use the M5, but it was nice and straight with none o' them corners. Don't like corners."

Meanwhile Alex Ferguson, an 89 year-old football manager from Cheshire, said: "Fuckin' basturts can get tae fuck. Where's ma custard creams?"

Dr McKay added: "Margaret, there's wee all over the floor. It wasn't me though, it was that dreadful Mr Attlee. Naughty prime minister! Back in your box!"
**Eastern Delights - July Notes**

July has been a quiet month despite a visit by Steve ‘The Doc’ Doherty, a recent recruit to the ranks of the Wombats. A fifteen day break in Thailand for the man from Quantas, followed by ten days in the Philippines. It was a pretty hectic time in Pattaya and the Lakeside Old Lags put in a good effort in the tour guide department. Sunday lunch at the Chill Bar is excellent, and then it was around a few interesting cultural centres. The Winchester Club provided a huge, out-of-focus screen to watch the British GP for anyone able to squint and those who couldn’t, were entertained by a bevy of small hippos!!

Another visitor to the Pattaya area was Les and Tao Powell. Les, ex publican of the Commercial in Wrexham, now resident at Buriram was with his brother-in-law, Brian and his family. We met up at Pattaya Bowling for a noisy gathering and some pretty awful bowling. The weather had turned and much needed rain fell in the region. Les returned to Isaan land the following morning to sell fertiliser to the local farmers, good timing with the rains.

Eat and I joined up with David and Goy Marriott for lunch. This was a French style bistro called Levantini whose owner, Jacques Srimali, runs in The Village complex, off Chaiyapruk and Sukhumvit. Very pleasant with good cuisine and nice friendly ambiance. Yet another of the decent restaurants to be found in the Pattaya region.

Whilst in Bangkok earlier, we both went to Chesa which I had visited with Big Dick and friends. A fine establishment indeed. July’s special was ‘As much as you can eat’ Fondue. Yes, folks, after garlic snails and mussels, I moved comfortably on to the Bourguignon - beef tenderloin. After three reloads, I gave up to the amusement of the staff. Partner, Renee, accepted my apology for eating so much beef, saying, ‘Well, we win some and we lose some’. Absolutely first class.

No great plans for August except another visit to lunch in Bangkok with long time ex-pat Paul Mason, who has been on leave to Uk to sort out probate matters. More details and pictures in the next edition of Travelogue 59.

**Put Out To Pasture**

Groups of Americans were travelling by tour bus through Holland. As they stopped at a cheese farm, a young guide led them through the process of cheese making, explaining that goat’s milk was used.

She showed the group a lovely hillside where many goats were grazing. “These,” she explained, “are the older goats put out to pasture when they no longer produce.”

She then asked, “What do you do in America with your old goats?”

A sprightly old gentleman answered, “They send us on bus tours!”

**Man’s Best Friend**

A New Zealand man remained in stable condition today after his dog jumped on a loaded rifle and accidentally shot him in the backside. The Northern Advocate said the 40-year-old man from Te Kopuru, about 13km south-east of Dargaville, in far-northern New Zealand, was injured while on a pig-shooting trip with three other men on Saturday.

The man was sitting in the back seat of a 4WD vehicle when the dog jumped on the loaded .22 rifle, which was also on the back seat. The gun fired and a bullet lodged in the man’s left buttock.

Acting St John Northland operations manager Mark Going said Dargaville paramedics were called to treat the man about 3.50pm on Saturday. They were told the gun had fired through the seat and lodged a bullet in the man’s left buttock. Mr Going said the man was not bleeding too badly but was in extreme pain.”
Thai Ladyboys try out cricket - in high heels, mini-skirts and bikinis.

A performing act of Thai ladyboys have decided to take up cricket - after watching the game in their dressing room while on tour in England.

A troupe of Thai ladyboys touring the country are learning to play cricket. The 'maidens', who sport some fine legs and make up the Lady Boys of Bangkok, have been bowled over by the sport - taking googlies, yorkers, and full tosses in their stride. While their attire of brightly-coloured, tasselled mini-dresses and silver high heels may not be entirely appropriate, the band members have certainly taken to it straight away. And the cabaret performers were invited to try their hand at the sport, which is largely unknown in their native Thailand, at a Cheshire cricket club while they are in Manchester for a show.

Angkooarat Rawangnam from Nakhon Ratchasima, 29, said: “We got hooked on watching this strange game of cricket on the TV. We had no idea about all the different names for the types of balls and reasons that the batsmen are out. But the great thing is that it goes on for days, so we can follow the scoring okay as the runs mount up.”

Bandmate Akkarapol from Khon Kaen, also 29, added: “We asked if we could have a go at the cricket and some nice people said they would teach us how to play. "I thought it was a bit like baseball but I soon found out that I was wrong. "I had no idea the ball is so hard - it's really dangerous.

“You would not find me at this position they call silly mid-off, right by the batsman.”

One thing to note: - their teacher at the Cheshire Club obviously still has a thing or two to learn about cricket. Check the picture above - there's no way that batsman is out.
B. Hussein Obama was touted as America’s foreign relations saviour, the deity who would repair America’s image with the rest of the world. How has Obama done with the middle east? Not so good. He has bowed and scraped in front of the Saudi King, not been able to control Iran and Ahmadinejad, upset Israel, bowed almost to the floor for the Japanese Emperor, and allowed the North Korean dwarf to push him around. How has B. Hussein Obama done with our greatest ally, Great Britain?

* In February 2009 Obama sent back to England a bust of Winston Churchill that had been on display in the oval office since 9/11. This unannounced move blindsided the British.
* In March 2009, Obama disrespected Prime Minister Gordon Brown by not meeting him at the airport, for his first state visit with Obama. Obama could not be bothered to attend the press conference that the State Department arranged.
* During Prime Minister Brown’s visit, Obama gave him a gift, a set of American DVD’s that won’t play on British DVD players. Never mind the fact that Prime Minister Brown is semi blind. Just to add insult to injury, Mrs. Obama gave Brown’s children some toy helicopters from a DC gift shop, made in China, no doubt. Classless.
* Brown gave two symbolic gifts and one that expressed national pride. Brown came bearing a pen holder carved from the timbers of the sister ship of that which gave the wood to create the famous “Resolute Desk,” the desk that has been in America’s charge since 1880. He also gave Obama the framed commission for that famous ship, the HMS Resolute. His third gift was a seven-volume biography of one of England’s greatest leaders, Winston Churchill. Classy.
* During this same visit, one of Brown’s aids tried to interact with one of Obama’s staff and they were informed that Britain was no different than any other country and would be treated as such.
* When the Brits call, no one in the White House answers. The Obama administration ignores the diplomatic calls designed to reaffirm international policy between the two countries.
* April 2009 Michelle ‘I hate America’ Obama violated protocol when in England by putting her hand on the queen’s back. The British were appalled by the Obama’s behaviour.
* May 2009 Captain Obama left the Queen out of the D-Day ceremonies, demonstrating his contempt for the British and white people, but mostly white people, given his willingness to bow to middle east leaders and suck up to North Korea and Japan. Note that this incident occurred about the same time as Obama’s bowing to the Saudi King, showing more deference to Islam than to a democracy.

June 2009, the British press began to openly ask why Obama hates Britain. Even the New York Times worried that, “on a more basic level, there is a sense that the Obama administration is ignoring the needs and counsel of long time allies.”

B. Hussein Obama has once again shown his upturned nose to England, this time by failing to support their stance over the Falkland Islands. Obama’s silence on the issue of British sovereignty over the Falklands has empowered Argentina and left England twisting in the wind. Dear Leader has also cancelled a conference with Britain, celebrating sixty years of intelligence sharing together. Captain Fantastic cannot believe America needs the relationship with Britain.

Obama can get tough with the British and the French. He can push the Germans around, a little, but they push back. However, Obama turns to mush dealing with dictators like the dwarf in North Korea, gets all starry eyed over tin pot dictators and just melts at the feet of Islamic thugs. It is as if our weak leader takes his frustrations out on the nations that don’t give him trouble, to make up for the fact that nut jobs like Ahmadinejad own him.

American View by Bill Turner of The Cypress Times
The US of A is to start charging UK travellers nearly £10 to apply for permission to enter the Country.

From September 8, people will have to pay 14 dollars (£9) to use the compulsory Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (Esta). Of the fee, 10 dollars will apparently go to a fund to promote US tourism with four dollars covering administration. The Esta form takes up to 72 hours to be approved and gives air passengers prior approval for entry to the US. It is currently free to obtain, and lasts for two years. People who already have a valid form will not have to pay until their current one expires. Martin Lewis, creator of MoneySavingExpert.com, has urged anyone even considering a trip to the US to apply for a form now in order to avoid the charge.

He said: "The security authorisation lasts for two years, so do it now and it'll be free if you travel in that time. Yet leave it for a month and you'll have to pay for it.

He added: "It is rather strange that this fee is mainly going to promote US tourism. You would have thought keeping it cheaper to get in would help more - after all, it's free for most Americans to come here."

The Esta scheme was introduced in January 2009 but made mandatory from January 2010. It applies to 35 countries with US "visa waiver" status, and replaced the green I-94 card which passengers used to fill in on their flight to the US. An estimated four million Britons visit the US each year.

FACTOID

People killed in accident on oil rig leased by British company BP, resulting in four presidential visits, a $1.6bn clean-up and the establishment of $20bn compensation fund in two months

People killed in accident at Bhopal plant owned by American company Union Carbide, resulting in 0 presidential visits, no clean-up and $470m compensation in 25 years.

Congratulations to Homes in Havering, which manages the flats for Havering council, who have come up with a remarkably daft policy.

They have banned children from playing in paddling pools in their flats.

For why?

Drowning risk?

No!

Fire risk!

Yes, that's right, fire risk!

The housing association said the pools might get in the way of fire engines arriving to tackle a blaze.

Errrm...it's a paddling pool, i.e. a flimsy, plastic, inflatable object that a several tonne truck could drive around, or indeed drive over!

Oh, hang on a minute, wouldn't it also contain some water?

Isn't water used to put out fires?

For good measure, the kids who live there are not allowed to skate, or play ball games either. One wonders why so many kids hang around the streets looking bored out of their brains!

Graham Hart, a senior officer at nearby Hornchurch fire station, was not that impressed with the ban. Fire engines are rarely driven onto grassy areas, and he noted that the pools with water could "come in handy".