

HAMPSHIRE JOURNALISM AT THE CUTTING EDGE

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Published by Beta Publishing

16 City Business Centre, Suite 62, Hyde Street, Winchester SO23 7TA

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Introduction

These are articles written mainly during the 2010s, as I spent a lot of time travelling round my own county (Hampshire), busing from town to town and visiting local coffee shops most days.

[I was generally sipping cold drinks, which I made last at least an hour - rather than coffee, which would have gone cold after about 10 minutes.]

You know - My game was cricket, and when your team went in to bat, you always put the man with the most 'clout' in first.

These first two articles are about something that ended up taking a lot of my spare money – about £80 nearly every fortnight, for several years. (So obviously it was one of the most important things in my life.) And I believe these articles have quite a bit of 'clout' too. So that's two reasons for putting them in first.

DISCOVERING A 'POUND IN A PINT GLASS FOR A DANCE' PLACE

My mother showed me an advert she had seen in the local paper – one of the pubs in my

hometown (the Swan) had ‘exotic dancers’ on a Tuesday and a Sunday.

I later found out that ‘exotic dancers’ was another term for strippers really, probably preferred by the girls themselves. At the time I didn’t quite know what it meant – I thought it possible they might take everything off, but wasn’t sure.

After a few weeks I decided to go along to the Swan at one of these sessions – it was a Sunday afternoon and by this time the Tuesday evenings had already been cancelled.

Again, as with Raymond’s Revue Bar, I was very pleasantly surprised by the experience. The girls (there were four of them each week)

were all very attractive, and they did indeed take everything off.

Sometimes they didn't have much to take off. When one girl stripped off her dress to reveal she had nothing further to take off, I was amused to hear the bloke by the side of me say "I think they ought to wear knickers!"

The girls would come round and talk to you individually, while they were dancing, even when they were naked, and I found that a great turn-on. I even had one quite long conversation with a girl – and her without a stitch on!

They would take it in turns to do a dance to a pop record, about every 10 minutes. You put a pound in a pint glass the girl carried round before each dance.

Again I was very surprised at the relative lack of response, and lack of enthusiasm really, at all this.

I got the impression that a lot of people thought it was a bit 'overpriced' – that to pay a pound for each and every dance was a bit much. One or two people said just that.

Hardly any of the regulars seemed to be interested. And you wouldn't call it an 'upmarket' pub at all. Quite a high percentage of them (the men), I would say, consider themselves sort of 'Jack the lad' type personalities, boasting about their ability to drink gallons on occasion etc etc. But when it came down to it almost all of them 'retired' to the other bar when the real action began.

A few watched for a brief period of maybe 20 minutes before 'retiring', but I can't remember very many watching for an extended period.

There were quite a few people in the bar where the girls were dancing, I'm not saying it was quiet, but most, I think, came from a few miles away – the sessions had been advertised in the local paper.

But even they didn't stay all that long. I think I was virtually the only one who would come at 2 (when it started) and stay till it finished at 6. Typically, the others would be there maybe an hour and a half. I couldn't imagine what they had to do that was so much more enticing than what was on offer at the Swan.

I only went to about 3 or 4 of these performances. When I went along after that I found they had been cancelled.

I never did get to find out why. One of the bar staff told me it was because one of the customers had been rude to one of the girls and the landlord hadn't taken strong enough action (i.e. evicted him), and the girls had refused to come back.

It sounded reasonable and I accepted it at the time. But I had been at the last performance and hadn't seen any trouble.

I now think it more likely that the landlord had suddenly realised that people were talking behind his back, perhaps – that whereas he had been very well liked – he was a very sociable sort of person – now a sizeable

proportion of the customers were 'looking down on him' for putting on shows like this and his reputation had suffered, rather than been enhanced. (Just as I had been looked down on when I admitted having been to a strip club by the regulars at my local.)

In fact it wasn't too long after that that the landlord and his wife sold up and moved elsewhere. They hadn't been there that long and there were rumours that they'd put a lot of money into the pub, and I'm sure they had originally intended to stay much longer.

It may well have been because they felt they still hadn't been 'forgiven' for having these strippers. Of course all this is speculation on my part, but I wouldn't be surprised if that's what actually happened.

.....(continuing)

I can understand very religious people being negative about these things – but the negativity about it seems to affect over 90% of men these days, not just the religious.

But this denial (that men are interested in seeing naked women) – which I'm describing as being sex-phobic (analogous to being aggression-phobic as I have written about elsewhere) I don't think is very good for people at all.

To me, most men in particular, even quite young men, seem not so 'emotionally alive' – haven't got so much 'life force' as I remember men of the same age, back 35 or so years ago. And I wouldn't be at all surprised if the

epidemic I've called 'sex-phobic' is largely responsible for that.

ABOUT THE NEXT ARTICLE

After The Swan stopped having exotic dancers, I found out about some other places that did the same thing – most were in London, but a few were outside London. I went to some of these. And the following article relates to these experiences.

AN APPRECIATION OF THESE 'POUND IN A PINT GLASS FOR A DANCE' PLACES

I want to say something about these striptease places where they use the payment system of 'a pound in a pint glass for a dance' method.

Although quite a lot of large towns have strip clubs of one sort or another, nearly all of them don't use this 'pound in a pint glass for a dance' method. Many of them do have girls dancing 'on stage' (which to see, you probably have to pay an entry fee of something like £10) – but in nearly all cases this dancing on stage isn't nude.

To see the girls nude you (nearly always) have to have a 'private dance' with one of them, which will normally cost £20 - £30. Here you will be taken to a 'private area' where the girl will do a strip, especially for you.

However, as you have seen, the girls will also be nude for the stage dances at the strip pubs where they use the payment system of 'a pound in a pint glass for a dance'.

At virtually all these strip pubs 'private dances' are also available – in fact during the time you are there, you will be approached by the girls, from time to time, wanting to give you a 'private dance'.

Let us compare the two things – the 'private dances' and the stage dances.

First: the stage dances:

Often there is a pole, so it is 'pole dancing'. The girl will usually be nude (or effectively nude) for about half the duration of the dance. Especially if it is relatively quiet there is often the opportunity to sit near the front, by the stage – quite close to the girl, within just a few feet.

The time between each dance does vary, it can be about every 7 minutes or so, or in other places every quarter of an hour.

About the 'private dances'

With these you are obviously very close to the girl, in fact sometimes there is some touching (at some places it is allowed, at others it isn't). Usually the girl is generous and gives

you quite a bit of 'nude time' – in fact sometimes she will be nude (or effectively nude) for almost all the duration of the dance, if you are lucky.

What I haven't mentioned is that sometimes one of the girls will sit with you and chat, sometimes for a relatively long time – and this can be very pleasurable.

* The strip pubs (in London) are usually open from about 1pm to midnight, I believe – obviously they tend to be busier in the evenings.

* To give you some idea of cost – if I didn't have any Private dances, I could be there for several hours for a total cost of about £80 – that included my train fare (about £25 then), a few pints of lager, and 30 or 40 stage dances.

The above 2 articles are from my book '*Mainly About Conquering Sexual Repression*' – look up 'Chris Burnell' on Amazon / Books, and you will find the book.

What follows is an article that is 'slightly' related to the last two articles (though much shorter) – again, going back a few years.

ANOTHER SLIGHTLY RELATED EXPERIENCE

I had what could be described as a 'solitary' job , and I just didn't find myself among a group where I was invited to birthday parties, weddings, stag dos etc – this was for most of my late 20s, 30s and even my early 40s.

But during a lot of this time strippagrams were very popular. As I said, I just didn't get invited

to men's birthday parties or stag dos – the sort of event where they tended to have strippagrams.

But I was rather clever.

I found that if I went round 4 or 5 'likely' pubs between, say, 6.30 and 8 on a Friday or Saturday night, having half a pint in each, I would 'get wind of where they were having a strippagram.' There was nearly always one pub at least where it was happening.

And though the chances were I hadn't been invited to the birthday party or stag do that had booked the strippagram, if you were there in the pub when it happened, they never chucked you out. So over many years I got to see very many strippagrams. The girl didn't always get naked, though. Sometimes she

did and sometimes she didn't. I believe it was an extra charge for her to 'get naked', and not everyone was willing to pay that extra charge – but at least half the time she would. And I usually managed to get in a good position.

Discover where to find the things mentioned in the last 3 articles (strip clubs and pubs, and Strippagrams, and other things like it, at our 'sister website' Slightly-Naughty-Plays.co.uk (which also includes 'Slightly Naughty Entertainment').

Receptionist Joke 1

These days when you see new houses for sale – ordinary ones about £300,000 (maybe). Then, a few at £550,000 - £650,000..... And

it says (regarding the latter) – ‘Architect designed’.

So who designs the ‘ordinary’ £300,000 ones?
Is it the flippin receptionist?

Receptionist Joke 2

It seems the receptionists run all the hotels these days. They certainly make all the major decisions. Like:

Are we fully booked or not? If not – how much to charge? It can be anything from £30 to £120 – for the ‘less expensive’ ones (the same hotel can go from one extreme to the other from one week to the next). (This week’s figure is seemingly chosen at random, or

perhaps what mood she is in – or come to that, whether she likes you or not.)

And when the manager pops in at 11, she tells him “It’s alright, I’ve got everything in hand.”

Manager Joke 1

It has never been like this before. 30 years ago, managers did do some work, but never the flipping typing. These days they always do – it takes up 80% of their time (and it would have taken a typist about 20 minutes!).

** I’m talking mainly about emails, of course.*

About Dentists

I will talk about two things related to them.

First – X-rays

For my first 40 years (approximately) I had a dentist who virtually never gave me X-rays (I can't even remember one time, actually).

But since then (after my previous dentist closed down) I have had a dentist who insists on giving me X-rays almost every year. I have complained several times that I don't like having X-rays, but they take no notice. And I have read that the X-ray guns that they use are lethal.

There is certainly very well documented

evidence that people who have quite a few X-rays given by their dentist are several (perhaps many) times more likely to develop mouth cancer than those who don't.

So why on earth do dentists apparently have to give people quite a lot of X-rays (over years, of course) these days, when they managed quite well without them when I was young. To me this seems a mark of total incompetence.

The second thing - “braces”

A fairly high proportion of people will have repetitive, soul destroying jobs as adults, which will leave them – soul destroyed.

Therefore for these people, their childhood (and possibly retirement if they live that long), will be the best years of their lives. So anyone

who inflicts damage on them during these “purple years” is doubly guilty.

But think of dentists putting braces on the teeth of so many children during their adolescent years, decimating their attractiveness. It is absolutely disgusting, in my opinion.

The Royal Grammar School (Newcastle)

I worked for a while in Newcastle, and in conversations was made aware of the local ‘anecdotes’ of the area. One of these was about the very famous Royal Grammar School in Newcastle, which has a terrific

academic reputation, and is renowned for sending many pupils to Oxbridge.

And one thing I found out – a lot of local people still joke about it - was that there was a very unusual thing about it, particularly regarding P.E.

It had a swimming pool, and presumably this swimming pool was surrounded by fences, because the boys going swimming in it had to be nude – no swimming trunks were allowed.

It was unusual in those days – these days it would be unheard of, I should think. (I expect the Royal Grammar School has long since discontinued the practice.)

Surely, even though, as I said, presumably there were fences surrounding the pool, quite

a few people would have got 'a bit of a view', apart from the boys themselves. Certainly quite a few male teachers, some of whom might have been a bit gay. Surely there were some female teachers too – perhaps some of them got 'a bit of a thrill' sometimes – or the cleaners, or caretakers etc.

Does anyone know of anywhere where this still happens? Or girls' schools even?

There is one thing (anyway) in Christianity that I do agree with

(St Paul basically said – ‘Give up childish things.’)

But – flipping heck – have you heard even the top people’s humour – and the films they see? Literally ‘Why did the chicken cross the road?’ – the exact same jokes that 5 year olds used to tell – then they (the top people) laugh like mad. And their favourite films are children’s films too. And if a 20 something bloke is chatting up a woman he might say: “What is your favourite Disney actor.” (Yes, I’ve heard that uttered – it’s not imagination.)

Another crazy thing

People did use to tell jokes sometimes (quite often actually). Some quite good ones too. And there was a skill to it. You would admire someone who told jokes well. These days it appears to have become a forgotten skill. Jokes are still sometimes ‘shared’ – but usually this just means someone shows someone else a joke (as a text message) on their mobile phone. This is just a caricature. You might just as well take a joke book along to the pub and say “Turn to page 111, there’s a good joke there!”

On headlines (in the papers)

(That you would never have got 30 years ago.)

e.g. ‘Emily Thornberry’s chubby little fingers clawed in and out’ (Daily Mail)

Emily Thornberry is Shadow Foreign Secretary and is noted for being an exceptionally good public speaker. Now, it has always been the case that certain politicians have been hated by sections of the press, but so far as I can recall the attacks did not seem to be so puerile and obnoxious as this.

Is this what parents are like these days?

When I was a very young boy (3-4 years old), I can remember being taken ‘down town’ (which for me, meant Hounslow High Street), very frequently, by my Mum.

This involved a very exciting ride on a Trolley bus to get there, and back. I can’t remember too much about the shopping my Mum would do. But the highlight of the trip was always a visit to Rossi’s, an Italian café, and I would usually have a Knickerbocker Glory, which was my favourite. Or sometimes an Ice Cream Float (a fizzy drink with ice cream inside). I also remember often having Welsh Rabbit (cheese on toast) or poached egg on toast. These days only fairly wealthy families

would be able to afford these sort of treats for the children frequently, I should think – when even a cup of coffee in a coffee shop costs nearly £4. Of course, I cannot remember (if I ever knew) how much these particular items of food and drink cost in Rossi's, but I do know that my Dad was only a clerk in an insurance firm, and my Mum didn't work. (And we owned our own house, by the way.) Both my parents were then about 30.

I contrast that with what I see now, in front of me, as I sit in a modern coffee shop (a Costa), now that I am of retirement age.

In front of me is a young boy, also about 3 or 4 years old, with both his parents. The young boy has been given a very small, boring bottle of water, whilst his parents are sipping quite luxurious looking drinks, that look very much

like Knickerbocker Glories to me. And the boy was given, I think, an egg sandwich, whilst the parents have large sausage rolls.

They are not there that long, but half way through their meal, the boy, having finished his little bottle of water and sandwich, is wandering round the table with his coat on, obviously itching to get home.

This for him wasn't the amazing highlight of the day (as my experience was, and that I would remember 65 years later).

What is happening to parents these days?

Presenters on the TV

I really wouldn't like to be a young bloke who has ambitions of being a TV presenter, these days.

Have you noticed how, more and more, there is a preponderance of women presenters on the TV, especially on the BBC (but on other stations too). More and more, the men are shunted to the back of the queue.

Blimey, even in men's football matches, there sometimes seem to be more women presenters and interviewers, than men. (This is something I find particularly amazing.)

And when interviewing an expert in a particular field, it is far more often a woman than a man. Similarly when they are

interviewing someone doing a particular job – even when everyone knows that men doing that job far outnumber the women (for instance bricklaying or mechanical engineering), it is very often a woman.

Why are men punished 100 times more severely than women for equivalent ‘sexual harassment’?

There is a report today (in one of the national papers – sometime in November 2023), that a 28 year old woman was spared jail (in fact, received only a very small fine) for groping a man’s crotch and genitals.

Apparently she had been ‘chatting him up’, had then moved onto leaning against him and touching his face and arm, and then suddenly groped his crotch and genitals. The man, who was with friends, was ‘frozen in shock’.

She was arrested and it ended up in court. But there, instead of being dealt with severely, she was told to pay £150 compensation and £172 towards costs.

The judge summed up the case: He told her – “The offence on that evening was not predatory – it was basically, as we see it, a drunken joke that goes wrong.”

Really? The judges don’t say that sort of thing when men do something equivalent, do they?

If a man did something equivalent to that to a woman he would receive a hundred times the punishment – he probably would be put in jail for a few years.

Why the discrepancy?

What are you women complaining about?

Women complain about a lack of ‘equality’, but in many respects they really lord it over the men.

It may be true that on average, men probably earn more than women.

But think of this:

Back in my twenties I went out with a nurse for a while. And during that time, she invited me to a party at the nurses home. I went, and one of my (male) friends came with me.

And (because in those days nearly all nurses were women – I am not sure if they still are) – at this party there were just us two men – we were the only male contingent – and there were about 25 women. It was great.

But – this is no word of a lie – that was the only time in my life that anything like that happened. And it was very common for things to be more or less the other way round.

And these days especially, any young woman, in a town like my home town, has the chance of that sort of opportunity (only the

reverse, if you see what I mean) – not just once in their life, but every single weekend.

It's true. There are pubs in my home town – pubs for younger people – where you can guarantee that there will be about 10 times as many men as women – and there are no pubs at all where there are almost as many women as men.

So, if they want to, they can experience exactly the same thing (from their point of view) every Friday and Saturday night that I experienced just the once – they can be one of just a few girls in a group of maybe 40 or so men.

Being an ex-member of a Hampshire church (about 20 or so years ago)

For quite a few years I was an evangelical or 'born again' Christian. I was converted when I first went to university, aged 18.

And I must say that at the time I thought it was wonderful to meet people – fellow students, who seemed to have such a vivid and real knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, such as I never had believed was possible. Being told that you could know and love Jesus Christ as if he was your best friend. And that heaven really existed – and that I was going there (providing I didn't 'backslide', which I was

taught that some Christians did. But I was sure that wouldn't be me).

At first I hardly noticed that there was a downside – which was that those who didn't believe were equally certainly bound for hell, unless they changed too. This, unfortunately, probably included a lot of people I knew back home.

But I was too busy feeling happy about my new world to feel really bad about that at first. After all, I had the opportunity to try to convert them to Christianity later – I was sure they would be interested when they saw the change in me. I was a bit sad that they weren't at first, though.

Two or three years later I became interested in counselling and applied psychology

(psychotherapy etc). I became interested in Encounter groups and primal therapy. I went to some Encounter groups. I read about transactional analysis in the books '*Games People Play*' by Eric Berne and '*I'm OK You're OK*' by Dr Thomas Harris. I was impressed.

I'm OK You're OK was a very good title. In one phrase it encapsulated such a lot about the new lifestyle I was reading about. I didn't realise at the time just how much. It also didn't occur to me to contrast this with what it meant to be a Christian. I realise now that for a keen evangelical Christian, the relationship with a non-Christian, at root, can only be the most extreme form of I'm OK You're not OK – I'm going to heaven and you're going to hell (unless you change).

Dr Harris, in his book I'm OK You're OK, suggests that I'm not OK You're OK is the first tentative decision humans make based on their experiences during the first year of life. Then, by the end of the second year it is either confirmed or it gives way to position 2 or 3 – I'm not OK You're not OK or I'm OK You're not OK. Then, Dr Harris says, once finalised, the child stays in his chosen state and it governs everything he does. It stays with him the rest of his life, unless he later consciously changes it to the fourth position I'm OK You're OK – which is what Dr Harris recommends, and just how to do that is what his book is all about.

I would suggest that something else that could happen is that whatever mode a person is in, if that person gets religious – specifically if they become a 'born again' or evangelical

Christian, then at a deep subconscious level they change to the I'm OK You're not OK position, at least when they are relating to non-Christians. From what Dr Harris says, the I'm OK You're not OK state is very destructive.

Because the basic viewpoint of the evangelical Christian towards a non-Christian is this most extreme form of I'm OK You're not OK, I believe evangelical Christianity is basically a very destructive religion. Enough said!

** It is nearly 30 years since I was involved with the church. So in quite a lot of respects I possibly don't really know 'what goes on' these days, like I used to. But I have a feeling that vicars and people don't go on about 'hell' nearly as much as they used to – maybe even*

hardly ever. I think these days they tend to use other expressions like 'being cut off from God'.

Coffee shop (Business) meetings (1)

It seems to be the in thing to hold business meetings, and other types of meetings, in coffee shops (or sometimes pubs). I'm a frequent visitor to coffee shops, as I don't have a full time job anymore – usually in towns fairly near my home town. And I've overheard many meetings that, frankly, I would have thought should have been confidential. (Actually a couple of them are described in this book.)

Interviews, appraisals, discussions about marketing strategy – anything goes. I have been a manager at a large organisation myself, and I would have said that all this is a mark of considerable incompetence.

Coffee shop (Business) meetings (2)

As I have been going to a couple of coffee shops a day, for some time, I am a good person to write about this. And I've witnessed countless interviews or appraisals, and lots of meetings about 'company progress' – that sort of thing. The way you can always tell it's a business meeting is that at least 1 of the participants will have a notebook and will be

scribbling away for much of the time. Often, if the coffee shop is quite busy, there will be 2 or 3 of these meetings going on at the same time, in different parts of the coffee shop.

Sometimes maybe a couple of managers 'commandeer' a table and they will be sat there all morning, or even practically all day I think, as one after another interviewees arrive, are bought a coffee, and have their interview.

ADDED IN 2023

Why libraries (apart from reference libraries) are evil

How would Tesco (in the UK) or Walmart (in the USA) like it if the government opened a store in every city and town, offering the same things, but giving everything away free?

It is because of libraries that books are so ridiculously cheap.

It is because of libraries that most authors earn far less than the minimum wage (unless they have another job).

[Probably in Shakespeare's day, a book was more expensive than a house!]

About UK car manufacturers

I suppose UK car manufacturers can be pleased with themselves that over the last 20 years or so, there have been great improvements in the emissions figures of the cars they sell in the UK. However, as someone who was involved in the motor industry about 35 years ago, I know that it was 'standard practice' that manufacturers exported outdated cars (outdated in the UK), for instance to developing countries.

So is this still happening?

Climate change is a global issue and there is little point in greatly improving the emission figures of cars sold in the UK if manufacturers are still exporting hundreds of thousands of high emissions vehicles every year to less wealthy countries.

Furthermore, there are not going to be any new petrol or diesel engine cars sold in the UK after 2030. But I see that they are still going to be exporting petrol and diesel cars.

The mind boggles at the stupidity and hypocrisy of this.

About Opticians

Not only do dentists give you about 10 times as many X-rays as are necessary (see earlier in this section), but opticians have now started to as well. In just about all the main chains of opticians (I think), an X-ray is included when you have an eye test. This is usually at least every two years.

They tell you they take a picture ‘behind the eyes’ to detect possible disease. This is, of course, an X-ray. When I complained to an assistant in my opticians that I didn’t like having too many X-rays, she said that it wasn’t an X-ray – that there was in fact ‘a hole in the eye’ so they could take a picture without it being an X-ray. This is garbage, I’m sure – something a 5 year old might say, I would have thought. Whether the

management told the assistants to give this explanation I'm not really sure.

The Brontes were actually highly anti-religious

Quite a few years ago I worked out that the Brontes were in fact highly anti-religious – their apparent ‘religiosity’ was just play-acting. So they were actually incredibly isolated – the people with whom they had a ‘real affinity with’ (anti-religious people) hated them because they were apparently so religious, and the only people who wanted to be their friends – religious people, were in fact people they couldn't stand. So they were actually very alone. That probably is what killed them at such young ages.

For Example:

In Charlotte Bronte's '*Jane Eyre*':

It's quite a few years since I read it but the gist of my reasoning was:

Every time Jane Eyre comes across / is introduced to a new character in the book, we are told (somehow) if he or she is a Christian. If he (or she) is a Christian there is a reference to a 'bell' (or a metaphor to a bell, or bell ringing), within a few lines (in the text). This brings to mind the phrase 'For whom the bell tolls' – a symbol of death. What Charlotte Bronte is saying is that 'A Christian is a dead person'.

And in "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall" by Anne Bronte:

The leading female protagonist Helen was seeing her husband falling apart through alcoholism, and was ‘going on at him’ with such extreme ‘religiosity’, that this was clearly meant to be ‘satire’. The author, Anne Bronte, didn’t really have these views at all. What she was really saying was “what a load of bollocks this is”. In other words, she, like her sister Charlotte Bronte, was actually highly anti-religious.

PS I’m quite sure Charlotte Bronte and Anne Bronte didn’t believe in their wildest dreams that these ‘secrets’ would remain secrets for nearly 200 years.

Note: By all means check these things yourself – it is very easy to do if you know what you’re looking for. (That is, unless the cretins at the relevant Publishing Houses haven’t

changed the text – to make it fit in with ‘modern views’ (or whatever the reasoning is) – as they have done with many famous books over the last 10-15 years, I believe. In that case, you’ll have to find copies of these books that are 15 years old, or so.)

Everyone’s scared stiff

Everyone, going about their daily lives, is now shit-scared of offending anyone else, especially someone ‘representing an organisation’, because they know that organisations will take drastic / draconian action if they do. This is causing practically everyone in the country (except possibly the criminal fraternity), to be absolute wimps.

Almost every shop / bank / doctors surgery / government building etc has notices displayed saying “We have a zero-tolerance attitude towards abuse of our staff.”

Some people may welcome this stance, but effectively it often means that any slight rudeness, even if provoked, will be met with utterly severe / draconian retaliatory action if the organisation is in a position to be able to do so.

For example, if it happens in a bank, the bank will probably close your account, which could have a devastating effect on some people – effectively leaving them a ‘non-person’ in certain respects.

Many other organisations also have enormous powers to do very great damage to

people if they take it into their head to do so – which these days, a high percentage of them will, if ‘their feathers are ruffled’, even in a slight way.

This whole situation has to be utterly changed – we have to have a paradigm shift in a completely new direction. Otherwise we as a nation will become a laughing stock, populated almost entirely, as I said, by complete wimps.

Now it's the women doing this

This morning I read (in something like a social media post) that Ulrika Johnson had complained about ‘older men’ dating teens.

Personally I think Ms Johnson may be a bit behind the times. That certainly used to happen quite frequently 20 or 30 years ago. But these days my experience is that it is mostly the other way round.

As I have written elsewhere, in most pubs (and nightclubs) these days, the women are vastly outnumbered by the men, and the women seem to be taking full advantage of this 'inequality of opportunity'.

For I have noticed a few women in my hometown who are 'getting on a bit' (i.e. now in their fifties), who I have come across quite a few times over the last 20 years or so, 'going about their business', and getting older – I have noticed them recently in pubs and nightclubs getting very amorous with young

men probably in their twenties – and very often a different young man in their twenties each week.

Harvey Weinstein

The Me-Too era started with the conviction of Harvey Weinstein, who was a well-known film producer, for a few (maybe 2) rapes. He was sentenced to 23 years in prison (initially), which as he is 71 years old and in poor health, will probably be the rest of his life. [He was later convicted of an additional rape and sentenced to an additional 16 years.]

I didn't follow the trial very closely, but from what I did see it really seemed to me that he was guilty of no more and no less than

‘participating’ in casting couch ‘happenings’. This was when a (usually young) woman was expected to sleep with the ‘casting director’ before being offered a major part in a film – that might earn her millions.

After the trial, quite a lot of celebrities (actresses) came forward and said “‘Me-Too’ – this happened to me as well.” [The well-known celebrities mainly said that they had been sexually harassed by Harvey Weinstein – not raped.] And hence the Me-Too movement was born.

I’m not at all saying that casting couch happenings are OK. But it was an open secret that they happened. In fact not really a secret at all. Many jokes were made about it. I can recall that there were jokes shared about it when I was a kid (and that’s going back a long

time). It has probably been going on since about the time of Charlie Chaplin's early films, to be frank!

Thousands of films are made every year, so in the last 100 years probably hundreds of thousands of films have been made. And casting couch happenings may well have happened in a significant percentage of these.

Harvey Weinstein was a very well-known film producer, but he obviously would have been involved in only a very tiny fraction of these.

And I cannot help but think that he was made a scapegoat for this. Does he really deserve to be in prison for longer than most murderers? I don't think so.

Harvey Weinstein may well have been a serious perpetrator of ‘casting couch happenings’ in recent years, with his era being the last couple of decades, but there have undoubtedly been hundreds of other perpetrators over the last 100 years or so. Unfortunately for Weinstein, attitudes concerning ‘sexual harassment’ have really changed dramatically over the last 40 odd years.

For example, David Niven, who was a famous actor a few decades ago (and he was British) [1910 – 1983] boasted in his autobiography, called ‘*The Moon’s a balloon*’, that he did the following:

By his swimming pool there were the women’s changing room and the men’s changing room (which were conjoined). And

he would invite a number of young women over (mainly actresses I think), to swim in his pool. And he had had a hole made between the men's changing room and the women's changing room, and he would invite some fellow male actors round to sit in the men's changing room, drink whisky, and take it in turns to look through the hole in the wall!

His autobiography, published when he was quite old, I believe (so in the 1970's I think) was a best seller, and I don't remember virtually anyone making a fuss about it then. Everyone thought it was a great laugh, in fact. (Maybe some vicars weren't too impressed.)

The problem with being famous

In some respects I feel sorry for quite a lot of famous people. In many ways they're just not free to enjoy the pleasures that 'ordinary' people can.

Think of some types of famous people – C.E.O.s of very big companies, managers of Premiership football clubs, A-listed movie stars.....

(I'm thinking mainly of men.)

Suppose they are now middle-aged (or even older). And now suppose they are among that group of people we might say are 'highly sexed'.

They are probably married to a woman who is also middle-aged (or maybe divorced even).

It must be incredibly difficult for them to get their ‘additional sexual thrills’ that they probably need – that the rest of us can do quite easily.

Particularly if they are so famous that they can easily be recognised, they can’t go to strip clubs, they can’t go on a nudist beach, they can’t go to a prostitute even (remember what happened to Wayne Rooney).

As I said, people like this have to go to ‘incredible lengths’ to get their ‘sexual thrills’, which, if they are highly sexed, they probably need.

And sometimes they get through a lot of money going to these ‘incredible lengths’,

and sometimes even, they are bordering on the illegal.

And if it happens that they get found out doing whatever they do, it is all on the front pages of the newspapers the next day.

And their wonderful career could well be over (it has happened quite a few times, that I can think of).

What's this then? – Dumbing Down for Property Moguls?

I was walking down the High Street of my hometown this morning, and I passed a shop that was empty (not at all unusual these days, I'm afraid). And on the window was a big

estate agent's poster which said (in large letters) – LARGE SHOP – RENT ME.

What's all this then? When I was involved in property – Commercial property, that is, the thing that mattered was how many square feet it was. You didn't say "Large shop" or "Small shop", you said "Shop – 2,500 square feet (or whatever). And anyone who was interested in buying or renting a shop knew how many square feet they needed. [And even the price was often given as a cost per square foot – so you could compare like with like.]

SOME SLIGHTLY NAUGHTY ARTICLES

Isn't sex the most important thing?

Freud said that our main 'drive' was our sex drive. Another way of saying that is that 'everything comes down to sex'. Yet another way is 'sex is the most important thing'.

From when I was very young (still a minor, actually), my favourite bits in novels were always the 'naughty bits'. I can still remember reading E. M. Forster's *The African Queen* at the back of the class in the English lesson (our English teacher actually dished out some books that were quite 'near the

knuckle’, considering we were only 13 or 14) – and reading all about the heroine (who was very ‘churchy’ and had got (Humphrey Bogart) off the booze) – enjoying, several times, taking her knickers off and jumping into the sea naked – the climax of it being that the leading male character (Humphrey Bogart in the film) eventually got to screw the arse off of her [that wasn’t in the film, I don’t think, by the way].

As I was saying, in the novels it was always ‘the naughty bits’ that were the best bits.

But likewise in films (and plays). Admittedly, if it wasn’t actually a porn film, the naughty bit (or bits) would usually be a fairly small part of the film (timewise) – perhaps quite a short scene (or two).

But it was still the best bit, as far as I was concerned. I can still remember dashing home to watch some drama (when I was 16 or 17) when I'd heard there was a nude scene in it. And in those days it was quite frequent, even on BBC 1 or ITV (there weren't loads of channels anyway).

And it was quite common in the theatre too. There would often be a nude scene. And you were often reading about some famous actress who 'got her kit off' for a nude scene in a play, perhaps in the West End – examples being Helen Mirren, Jenny Agutter, Felicity Kendal and Lynda Bellingham. They always said 'it was for art's sake'.

None of that happens anymore, does it?

In mainstream films and plays you never see the girl's fanny anymore, hardly ever her bum – maybe you see her tits a bit more frequently. And sometimes you do see men showing their cocks and bums (especially bums) – that isn't quite so rare. [It was the other way round 30 years ago – it was far more common to see nude women than nude men.]

But all this is a great shame. I wish they would go back to (quite frequently) showing the girls' tits, bums and pussies, if only for a short time, as they always used to. That was always the best bit (as in the novels too).

After all, our main drive is our sex drive, as Freud pointed out.

A tour of the country

One year several years ago (well, it was 2017 actually) I went on a bit of a tour of the country (lasting almost the whole year altogether), spending weeks in a Hotel at one place, before moving on to the next, etc. I must have stayed in over 15 places, for instance Torquay and Bristol in the South West, Bournemouth and Reading in the South, Nottingham in the Midlands, and even York in the North.

And I was pleased to discover that the ‘no-pants’ craze was happening just about everywhere, especially in the nightclubs.

For some reason the only place it didn’t seem to be happening was Bristol – the girls seemed to still be wearing knickers there.

I even spent a few weeks in Scotland, mainly near Fife. And I was very pleased to see that the girls there were into the 'no-pants' craze. Of course, some of the men were wearing kilts, and as we all know about them – the men wearing kilts have been into the 'no-pants' craze for centuries (I believe).

So it was both the men, and now the women – without any underwear.

One experience I remember, which was a bit comical, was in Paignton. I was in a pub which opened late on Fridays and Saturdays, and it was quite busy. I had noticed there 6 or 7 young women at least who were knickerless – they were just the ones I noticed, there were probably more. And I had seen one of these girls 'showing everything' several times. She was a very attractive, tall girl, with very dark

hair, and she was wearing a denim skirt. And towards the end of the evening I saw her dancing with some bloke (it wasn't a nightclub, it was a pub – but there was some dancing).

And I was watching these two dance, and then he grabbed her, and he obviously was going to lift her in the air (probably turning her upside down or something like that). And I saw her remonstrating to him with her arms, and then she urgently said something to him – and then he put her down.

And it was clear to me that she must have said to him – “Don't do that – I've got no panties on.”

And I must admit I found that very comical.

About a current craze

Sometimes it seems as if most of the national papers are being run by Mary Whitehouse's granddaughter, or something like that – because they seem to have such 'Victorian' or puritanical attitudes. For instance, they were so fed up about the success of 'Fifty Shades Of Grey' that virtually all the columnists 'got together' (so it seemed) and decided that the best way to attack it was to call it 'Mummy's porn'.

And now, regarding this 'sans culottes' craze which is running rampant: very little is mentioned about it at all (directly). But presumably thinking that to continually recommend 'the reverse' could have some effect, there are quite a few articles recommending 'big knickers' – with as much

flesh covered up as possible. And it certainly seems to have caught on with Marks and Spencers' bosses at any rate – when I visited some of their stores recently (during my many trips around my county and beyond), in each of them there were loads of posters advertising 'big knickers' in the Ladies department. [BUT (even more recently) M & S seem to have more or less given up on knickers altogether – in their lingerie department there were hardly any – though there were loads of bras.]

* *Mary Whitehouse was a prominent anti-porn campaigner back in about the 1970's.*

A fairly typical night in Wetherspoons (recently)

Quite recently, I was in Wetherspoons (the town shall remain nameless), and there was a young woman near me who had her skirt literally up round her waist, and she had no panties on. So she was showing everything - depending on what angle you were to her. She was with a group of friends, some men and some women.

As it happened, I was not at the best angle to see all that much really, so I changed chairs to get a better view.

I enjoyed this better view for several minutes, but then a couple of men from the group (one of whom might have been her boyfriend),

pulled their chairs up by me (sitting between me and the young woman, spoiling my view in the process), and they proceeded to lecture me – why what I did was wrong.

I said “Yeah, but you can’t blame me for having a bit of a look, can you? – I’m not gay, you know.”

One of the men said “Yeah, but you shouldn’t actually change chairs to do so, should you?”

And so it went on.

These are the days

(This article was written in about 2016 – in fact most of the non-fiction articles about the ‘no-pants’ craze were written in the last decade.)

In the towns that I visit (I visit most of the towns in my county – and a bit beyond), on a sunny day in the summer, there are such a lot of ‘sights to behold’, whilst this ‘no-pants’ craze carries on.

For instance, sitting outside a café or coffee shop for the morning or afternoon, when the town centre is busy (like on a Saturday) you can almost guarantee to see at least a dozen bare bums of attractive young women (and sometimes the other side too), who are following the fashion of going pantieless, and perhaps wearing light, summer frocks. Just

like when I used to go sailing, it is best if there is a bit of a breeze.

(I have rarely missed a Saturday in the summer months doing this, for the past 8 years – since roughly when the ‘no-pants’ craze started, except when it’s pouring with rain.)

Sex on the trains – another ‘no-pants’ story

Quite frequently I go to London, by train (buying a ticket that includes the Underground).

Very often, if I am on an Underground train between, say, 6.30pm and 9pm on a Friday or Saturday, I find myself sitting opposite a young woman who is showing her pussy (she is following the current fashion of wearing no panties).

(Probably on the way to a ‘young peoples’ pub’ or even a party maybe, and wearing such a short dress that she leaves nothing to the imagination, even if she tries to keep her legs together.)

I must admit that I enjoy these experiences immensely, and often stay on the train for longer than I had originally intended. (When you buy a ticket to London, including the Underground, you can use the Underground as much as you like, there are no restrictions, so this is possible.)

The most amazing experience I had relating to this was on a 'normal' train – not an Underground train. It was on a journey from Reading to Ealing Broadway (about a three quarters of an hour journey). Throughout the whole of it, there was a young woman sitting opposite her mother, and she had quite a short skirt, had no panties on, and was sitting with her legs wide apart. All the time she was talking to her mother, animatedly, about some bland subject (I cannot now remember what the subject was). I was sitting behind the mother, and to the left, and had an excellent view.

Playfully lifting up a skirt

It is true that if I had the choice of sitting near a group of men, or a group of attractive young women (in a pub), I would choose to sit near the women – and ‘see what gives’, and sometimes, quite often actually, something did.

It was frequently the case that just a few, or even maybe only one, out of a group of young women would be knickerless. And often the girls would be joking about this. If I was near enough, I could even hear their banter (about it). And quite frequently one of the girls would playfully lift up the skirt of the knickerless one (as a bit of a joke), so that for a few seconds there was, shall we say, a great view. Of course, I enjoyed this tremendously. It was far better than watching TV (indoors).

How (in 2010), I found out about the ‘no-pants’ craze, and how I knew that the coppers already knew all about it

I was in one of my favourite pubs, and I was near enough to a group of girls to be able to overhear their conversation.

One of the women (must have been mid-twenties, I should think), was recounting getting drunk the previous weekend.

She had been to a nightclub, with at least one of the women in the group, and she was saying how she got ‘absolutely paralytic’. She said that after the nightclub closed, she was outside the nightclub, ‘rolling around on the

ground'. She recounted how she had almost got arrested. And then she came out with:

“And I had no knickers on.”

I almost choked on my lager. Suffice to say that I started going to nightclubs (again). Sure enough, I discovered that it had become a ‘fashion’ for young women to go out weekends without any panties on - and it remained so for quite a few years.

An aside. Right from the start of my adulthood, until I was nearly middle-aged, I had been ‘quite religious’, and at the church I went to, the vicar was always going on about ‘fornication’, ‘fornication’, ‘fornication’ – preaching that the Christian way was ‘no sex before marriage’.

And I wasn't that much of a rebel in those days. I hadn't totally abstained though – I had 'strayed'. But I was certainly only in 'single figures' – if you see what I mean.

But after I overheard this conversation in the pub, with the young woman saying that she had been knickerless the previous weekend, I started to frequent nightclubs again (very regularly)

That really was a revelation.

I discovered that she very much wasn't alone in this; and most of the girls really didn't seem to mind what the men saw.

There were (at a rough guess) about 300 clubbers at the nightclub on a typical Friday or Saturday. Possibly a third of the women

were wearing skirts or dresses (very often quite short).

Admittedly I didn't see much on the dancefloor – when the women were standing up (dancing), their skirts or dresses were long enough to cover their 'privates'.

But when they were having a break from dancing, and sitting down on the plush seating that was all about, it was a different story. As I said, the women really didn't seem to care what the men saw.* (Which was indeed 'quite a lot', to say the least.) And if you saw anything, you far more often saw fanny than knickers!

You really didn't know where to look!

In fact if you count ‘seeing’ (without necessarily ‘doing anything about it’), it was very much ‘double figures’ every flippin night (every Friday and Saturday – and quite a lot of Thursdays too) for very nearly a decade – in quite a few towns (mainly) in Hampshire.

PS I suppose it wasn’t that surprising that the women ‘didn’t seem to mind what the men saw’. A few years previous to this, I had been taking a bus quite often in the late afternoon – just when the schoolkids came out of school. Often there was a group of 13 or 14 year olds sitting at the back of the bus (a mixed group of boys and girls), talking quite loudly, and one of the main things they were talking about was sharing naked pictures of each other. [Obviously, a few years on, it didn’t make that much difference ‘what the men saw’ – if for

years they had been sharing naked pictures of each other anyway!]

* *See my Erotica books, which are mainly about the ‘no-pants’ craze – look up ‘Chris Burnell’ on Amazon / Books.*

Some things have changed for the better

Some things have changed for the better in the last 60 years – at least they put proper toilet paper in the public toilets these days. When I was growing up, in the 60s, the Council used to put piles of old newspapers in the cubicles, instead. (That probably caused quite a few deaths, actually.)

The healing power of ‘live’ music

Written in about 2012

I suppose the story starts about 4 years ago. I thought that as Shakespeare was regarded as easily our greatest writer, it was foolish not to make some attempt to find out what he had said – he surely would have put some of his secrets of “living” into his writing. However, I hadn't concentrated that hard in English literature lessons at school and I didn't feel like suddenly becoming a literature student and seriously studying a lot of his plays.

So I did the next best thing: As I suspected, in the “*Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*” there were a lot of “quotations” by Shakespeare

(actually mostly extracts from his plays) – there were many more pages devoted to Shakespeare than for any other person. I thought that even just reading these out of context (of the rest of the play) could well produce dividends. So I spent half an hour a day for about a week reading through these, in the library.

One of the main things, I thought, was that Shakespeare seemed to think that music had a magical property – that it could really have a “good effect” on us. There were quite a few quotations where music, or something related to music, was mentioned (just about always in a positive way) – and I remember getting that distinct impression.

There may have been other reasons as well, but about this time I started to buy quite a few

music CDs, mostly from the top 100 album chart. I was regularly buying the “Now That's What I Call Music” compilation CD, and would buy the CD by an artist if I liked their track on this. Over a few months I built up a bit of a collection.

Now, a lot of people will say, quite rightly I suppose, that you don't need Shakespeare to tell you that music is “good”. That it is quite self-evident. And most people work it out for themselves. I accept all that of course. It's just that in my case, it was reading those Shakespeare comments about music that was the catalyst – if you want to put it like that. And at that time I did change my “behaviour pattern” - from buying CDs just occasionally, to getting them very regularly, perhaps 2 or 3 a week, for quite a few months. And I was playing them for 2 or 3 hours a day,

hoping for this “magic effect” to hit me.

But to be honest I was a bit disappointed. They didn't seem to help lift a depression which was attacking me a bit. In fact, after a while I bought CDs more occasionally again.

[Changing the subject]

My mother owns a caravan in Selsea, West Sussex, and about 3 times a year I would go with her there for 4 or 5 days – my brother would drive us as I don't have a car (neither does my mother).

The caravan is on a very large site (Bunn Leisure), which is divided into 3 sections, and each section has club facilities – a large clubhouse and bar, for instance. Every weekend evening (and every night during the

high season) they have entertainment at these clubhouses. This is very often a band. In fact at the largest of the three clubhouses they have entertainment every night for most of the season.

Most evenings when we were down there we would go into the bar and sometimes the clubhouse for a drink, but we usually didn't see much of the band because my mother goes back to the caravan about 9 to have her usual early night (also she usually found the band's music a bit loud for her taste). And for a long time I didn't feel like continuing drinking alone (on these occasions), so I went back to the caravan then too.

But in April 2009, when we went for the first time of the year, for 2 evenings running – a Saturday and a Sunday – I did stay to watch

the bands – their complete performance.

The first was a group which had been famous when I was a youth, back in the early 70s – Mungo Jerry. Mungo Jerry himself, the band's singer, looked much younger than he must in fact be – his most famous hit, “*In the summertime*”, came out in 1970. I remembered quite a few of their songs, and had a really enjoyable evening. (There was a support group of 2 girl singers called *Honey*, who were also very good – they sang a lot of hits of the last 15 years or so.)

Then on the Sunday, having enjoyed the previous evening so much, I went to the other clubhouse (the Embassy) where they had another group. It was called *Now 90s* – obviously it played hits from the 90s. Again a very enjoyable evening.

But the best part was to come. After this weekend, I found that a stress-related ailment* I had been suffering from had dramatically improved.

Of course, I thought it must have been because I had seen those 3 groups over the weekend. However, we had to go home on the Monday. But I resolved to come back down to the caravan as often as possible over the next few months, and see as much “live” music as I could.

It was fortunate that the nature of my work meant that I could do it wherever I pleased; and my mother agreed that I could use the caravan every other week (for 4 or 5 days) during May and June anyway.

In one of the clubhouses (though not the nearest one to our caravan – it involved a short bus journey) – they had live musical entertainment practically every night of the week, so I was confident that I could devote a lot of time to that, and see if that initial beneficial effect was a coincidence or not. The stress-related ailment had greatly improved, but wasn't completely better. I wanted to see if seeing lots of live music would get it completely better.

Anyway, I continued going to Selsea for 4 or 5 days every 2 or 3 weeks throughout the season, and also when I was back in Basingstoke I saw quite a bit of live music, at “*The Anvil*” (and also in pubs). And my stress-related ailment continued to improve. This article is mainly about the “healing effect” of listening to live music. I am talking about

“emotional healing” here of course, or to put it another way “healing from stress-related ailments”.

Now, when we think of what we can see / hear at theatres / entertainment complexes / concert halls it seems to me there are 3 “biggies” - we can watch a play, we can listen to music or we can see a comedian (and of course some plays are comedies and there is even musical comedy).

And I've said how our greatest thinker, Shakespeare, praised music to the skies and wrote a lot about the “good effect” music can have on us. (And I've given one example of the “healing effect” of music in my own life.)

But when we come to the other 2 “biggies” - watching a play or seeing a comedian,

although Shakespeare didn't directly “praise those things to the skies” in his writing, as he did with music, he was actually intimately involved with both of them. That is, he wrote plays (some of which were comedies), he was even fond of having characters who were comedians (e.g. Feste in Twelfth Night), and he even put “bits of comedy” in his more serious plays (e.g. King Henry IV part 1). And he was an actor too.

So you could say his being intimately involved with these two other “biggies” is (indirectly) even greater praise than the way he praised music (directly) in his writing.

So (after thinking these things through) I then had another hypothesis to test. That watching plays, or seeing comedians, may have just as great “emotional healing power” as listening

to live music.

[And incidentally, just as I believe seeing bands play “live” has greater “healing power” than listening to CDs, I was quite expecting to find that watching a play has greater power than watching television, and seeing a comedian live has much more power than looking at a DVD of that comedian.]

And so my next task was to start seeing plays and comedy performances (as well as continuing to see the live music).

So I began seeing plays – at *Chichester Festival Theatre* when I was staying at Selsea, and usually at the *Haymarket*, the *Mayflower theatre* or the *Salisbury Playhouse* when back home (and also saw comedy performances). And I was pleased to discover that I felt so

much better after I had done so – as far as I was concerned my hypothesis that “emotional healing” would also result from seeing plays and watching comedy has been proved true.

** This ‘stress related ailment’ was actually a slight recurrence of a voice problem, which I had originally had many years previously – I had been almost unable to speak.*