

Bye Bye BBC

By Saz

It may only be a few short weeks before the most important change to our online Lovely community takes place. As announced in the last issue of the GA, the forum is due to move off its current home at the BBC where we have settled since August last year.

Our time with the Beeb has been part of a love-hate relationship, with plenty of times when it has seemed that the Beeb was against us, but generally we've been lucky. With the BBC title linked to us, our "little" nation has gained a credibility worldwide. Regardless of 'How To Start Your Own Country' being broadcast on TV, it has undoubtedly been the BBC link that has helped boost us into something more. A good foundation for our country, on which we've built our community and friendships. How many times when explaining the nature of Lovely, either to friends, family or when recruiting strangers to citizenship has it all seemed that little bit more justified with the line "...it's on the BBC, the forum is there and everything...". Okay, maybe that's just me then, but it doesn't matter, because it's worked!

The BBC have put up with a whole lot of bother with us. Our forum has always been a far cry from the other messageboards. The community of any forum is strong, but ours was based (as much as possible) on a country, with politics and roleplay and industry and entertainment. Without understanding the nature of the forum, it would be hard to follow it all, and with so many rapid moving threads clogging up their servers and heated debates and arguments leading to reported posts and so much moderation, we have been hard work, there's no denying it. Even with all this trouble, the BBC has looked after us for free, and there have been problems, which they've worked to resolve. Lately they have been taking many steps to try and control and reduce the amount of problems on their boards, and this has left many angry and upset but none of it has been done out of spite. They have to try and control things to ensure that ALL their forums are stable for everyone, and if that means thread locking and moderation, then it's a step they have to take.

But enough of that, we now get to look to our future. Our Independence Day draws near, and what can we really expect it to entail? Just how much independence can we expect under the control of Leafstorm, the production company behind the HTSYOC series? Well the fact – and it is fact – that they are actively interested in the citizen views for the new forum is promising. They have followed Lovely since the very beginning, behind the scenes yet always involved. They've watched the forum, worked with King Danny, listened to our emails and reacted when they could, a case in point being the election, or the somewhat more mysterious flase conspiracy. Unfortunately they have not always been able to make the changes we've wanted. Whatever the reason, be it financial or time restrictions, we've had to accept that there is not total flexibility to each of our demands. This is the reason why the Government has been unable to act on the cries of citizens. Without the ability to make any changes to the forum whilst on the BBC, we have been limited. Now Leafstorm are asking for our opinions, seeking to work as best they can to meet our needs. They asked for a thread to be set up to gauge public opinion on what works in the current format, and what could be dropped without much fuss. The Government, led by PsychoticMike, held a couple of meetings in which citizens were

invited to air their opinions. The suggestions were heated, some felt overwhelmed by the frustrations of others. There will never be 100% agreement, but a selection of ideas which mirrored those given on the forum were collated and passed on to Leafstorm. What can we expect from all this? Will they really listen and make the changes we want. Time will tell exactly how much they can give us, but they're listening, they're trying. We can scream and shout for the heaven and the earth – and they will do their best to make our suggestions a reality. It's unlikely that each suggestion will be followed through; the same restrictions remain, there is no extra funding to hire anyone to code new programs, I doubt very much they checked down the back of the Leafstorm sofas and found a pile of money which they just decided to use on a forum for us. We could have been cut loose a long time ago, and although we would not have faded away, and could easily have survived on our own, as the refugee camp proves, we can only grow with the backing of others. Leafstorm may not be as well known as the BBC, but they care about us. A strange thing to say considering they're just a production company. But how many companies would ask the opinions of its 'customers' when there is no financial gain to be made from it? How many will follow our daily lives, take an interest in us, follow our movements, all behind the scenes? Their work has gone virtually unnoticed all this time, how many of us actually know how much they are involved in Lovely? Soon they'll be in the forefront of any arguments. They'll be completely responsible for all the trouble, they'll be the ones working against server trouble and moderation. We'll probably be shouting, waving our arms around, needing someone to blame. It won't be the faceless BBC then. We may not know their names, but they aren't strangers.

The changeover itself is due by the end of the month, it could take a little longer. Will it all go smoothly? Only way we'll find this out is to wait and see. Will the suggestions by citizens be listened to? They already are. It's whether they'll be able to make them into something workable that is the question, and even if they didn't make it all happen exactly as we'd hoped, they are trying. The move will be unsettling and the odd problem is inevitable, but we've survived a lot of bother in the past and this is the start of our future.

Whatever happens in the next few weeks, concentrate on the good that's happening, the hopes that will be made, the independence we'll gain, not just the minor blips that may occur. By working together to bring the best out of everything we can really make it on our own.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Letter to Leafstorm

This is the letter the PM emailed to Leafstorm Thursday morning.

To whom it may concern

Firstly, as citizens of Lovely we would like to thank all at Leafstorm for their efforts on How To Start Your Own Country. We greatly appreciate all your work on the Citizens Required website and your swift and friendly responses to all our troubles and complaints. Though there may have been, and probably will continue to be, a lot of heated disagreements, we all appreciate how much you have done for us. We can only express the hope you will continue to support Lovely, whatever happens to us.

Over the past few months server glitches and dubious moderation have caused a lot of discontent in Lovely. As a result we were all extremely pleased at hearing of your intention to move the message boards off the BBC. We feel that given a chance to influence the site and moderation we can make Lovely a much happier and more contented place.

The government have held a series of meetings and started various threads to find out

what people want from a new site. Of course it wasn't possible for everyone to be completely accommodated, but the following requests are endorsed by the vast majority of Lovelies. We have made an effort to keep things as simple as possible in terms of site administration, to limit both the workload for Leafstorm and confusion and mistrust amongst citizens.

The forum itself is wanted to have a certain level of similarity with the current forum, both in design and layout by most citizens. The simplicity, discussions lists (preferably with a delete button added), the ability to change name and the user IDs (to identify name changes) are the key features that it is felt should be retained. It is generally accepted that the default skin should be yellow, for the sake of familiarity. However several hoped that it would be possible to choose other skins for the forum.

The features most notably absent from the current BBC forums that citizens would like to see included on the new forum were polls (possibly in their own section to avoid clutter), personal messaging, hyperlinks, a "who's online" list, searching facilities and the ability to make words bold, italic and underlined. There have also been many requests for a greater availability of smilies, and for profile pages to be included.

Many citizens feel that some of the board sections have become obsolete, and that sections for "games", "meets" and a "FAQ" section would be far more significant.

Regarding the system of IOUs, the general consensus was that we would prefer not to keep them, but if we do, then an exchange system and fining would be liked to make them useful and interesting. There were thoughts as to using IOUs to add or change the skin they see, or to customise a profile page.

Regarding moderation, all citizens want clearly defined rules, for the moderated post to be edited not deleted, and include the reason for moderation, with an explanation via personal messaging for anything that was open to interpretation of the rules. Some citizens expressed a desire to be able to use swear words to curse, however it was generally accepted that all of the stronger words should be moderated.

A combination of both citizen- and independent moderators was the preferred option, with all citizen moderators to be elected every 6 months, and having only limited powers.

As Lovely is reasonably multi-national, the English only policy adopted by the BBC seems slightly out of place. However we understand that it leads to difficulties regarding moderation of all posts. Thus there was an idea that if two citizens could be found who are fluent in a certain language and are prepared to moderate posts in that language, it should be accepted on the forum.

Regarding the punitive system in Lovely, the overwhelming majority is strongly against a prison. Instead we suggest publicly announced (temporary) bans, recommended by citizen moderators and implemented by independents.

It is also hoped that there be regular updates to a list of groups that have received approval from either King Danny or the government at the time, in order to avoid confusion amongst any new citizens.

Some citizens also expressed a desire to know how long Leafstorm intend to run this new forum for, wanting reassurance that this will be a relatively permanent move. Once again many thanks for giving us the opportunity to contribute to the future of our fair country. We appreciate that this must be a daunting list of demands that you are faced with but Lovely is of great importance to the citizens so given half a chance they are very vocal about its future. Good luck with the forum designing, the citizens are excited and cannot wait to see their new home.

More Moderation

By Psychotic Mike

It is common knowledge that there has been an exceptionally high level of moderation recently, with some people being heavily targeted. Several have suffered pre-moderation at some point in the past few weeks. Two of these people, Revolutionary1 and myself, had several of our replacement accounts pre-moderated, and our main account entirely deleted from the database. It was not only persecution by the moderators that led to that however. Having read carefully through all the emails I've received from the BBC since, I am now convinced that there is someone reporting me. I was shocked by this, as I don't think that anyone in Lovely is so vicious as to regularly stalk another citizen and use account moderation to seemingly attempt to force anyone off the forum.

Why do I believe this though? Well most of us have received at least one moderation email from the BBC at some point, stating that a post we have made is considered either offensive or spam. However on all the accounts I've used, excluding the one with the PM logo, that have been blocked from the "dannywallace" section of BBCi, or deleted entirely, I have always received at least one moderation report from the BBC, with a new reason given: "banned user". As I have seen and heard of cases of offensive posts not moderated because the reason given wasn't precise enough about the nature of the post, this suggested that someone was reporting my posts giving the reason of "banned user". The moderated posts have been as innocent as "meh", "hiya", and turns at an elimination game, yet with "banned user" being the reason given.

I am both astounded and disappointed. Although I have disagreed with many citizens at some point on one issue or another, I have never been so distrusting of anyone to believe that they would use such an extreme. I don't believe anyone I have ever clashed with would choose to actively stalk anyone and encourage a truly excessive level of censorship upon anyone. I cannot even speculate as to who it is, because, as previously stated, I don't don't have such a low opinion of anyone in Lovely. I just want to ask that everyone thinks twice about reporting a post before doing so, as it has caused some of the most violent and passionate arguments on these boards. The new forums, which I am greatly looking forward, along with many others, provide a new opportunity, and a likelihood of greater communication and understanding both with moderators and other citizens.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Sweet FA

(That's Foreign affairs for those with dirty minds)

By Schaferlord

Iran

Good news for those prone to worry about the future of the world in concern of countries having nuclear weapons. Iran, which has just started a uranium enrichment program which could theoretically supply it with the material for nuclear warheads, has agreed to talk about the program and having Western powers watching it to be sure it is all above board. This willingness to talk is reliant on the Western powers deciding to withhold the threat of force. A not unreasonable request on the face of it but one which isn't going to be responded to easily considering Iran's previous statements concerning Israel and its radically different political and social values that make its decision making less

understandable to those in the western world. Still the International Atomic Energy Agency has drawn out a new proposal for Iran concerning it developing nuclear fuel and the prospect of a peaceful resolution is very much on the cards. Especially considering Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president, has addressed George Bush this week, the first direct communication between the leaders of the countries since Iran's 1979 revolution.

More Info available here

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4768865.stm

Indonesia

Bad news for the people of Java this week. Mount Merapi, one of the 129 known active volcanoes in Indonesia, looks likely to erupt at any moment. Poisonous fumes and lava have started to flow from the volcano and the vice president of Indonesia Jusuf Kalla has ordered for 50% of the population in the expected danger zone, including all children and elderly people, to be evacuated immediately. In 1930 the last major eruption of Mount Merapi resulted in the deaths of 1,300 people. So let's hope that with the added warning now deaths can be kept at a minimum.

More info available:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4767805.stm>

Africa

A problem for the Pan-African Parliament now as it is being forced to suspend its sessions due to lack of funds. The governing body of the African Union is a major component of Africa becoming independent from the wider world but doesn't look like it will continue this year as Libya, Nigeria, Algeria and Egypt, who together with South Africa pay 75% of the African Union's Budget, have not paid what they owe to it. The African Union's budget has been stretched for many years as it copes with African problems and funds projects to insure aid goes to countries that need it and a fairly extensive peacekeeping presence in southern Sudan following the previous civil war in the country.

More info available:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4764823.stm>

POLITICS

Government in Action

By Schaferlord

The Government of Lovely has been under a fair amount of fire recently for not doing enough. But now with the future of our country in the balance with the news that the forums are moving off from the BBC the government has jumped to the fore. Being instrumental in gathering and gauging public opinion and ideas to assist Leafstorm in making a forum that meets the needs of the people.

The putting up of threads and holding of meetings showed the government engaging with the populace and doing its work in the open where it could be seen. Even with the Prime Minister's main account banned by the BBC the government has come closer to the people than before. This step forward towards the people is the first time since two positions further government positions became open for election and more towards what people have wanted and longed for in Lovely politics.

With the government stepping up to bat at the point when Lovely needed direction and the

reassuring presence of a body that is in a position of authority and the clean slate offered by restarting anew on a new forum surely the future bodes well for the future of Lovely.

The Grand Schemes of the Electoral Commission

By TheMilkMan

Once again, the elections are coming, and this being the 2nd in the history of Lovely, HS has taken it upon himself to be the Electoral Commissioner for them and also, a few other schemes, such as:

"Registering political parties; Reviewing electoral law and procedures; Promoting public awareness of electoral and parliamentary matters. Providing information and advice on electoral matters to the government. Conducting and promoting research into electoral matters and publish relevant material. Administering the electoral roll and electoral boundaries where necessary. We are an independent body. Our mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process."

Due to the UK's elections falling in May, the thread has been up for a while, in wait for the time they can hold the elections, but even with this added time the response to HS' registry office has been quite low, with only 2 parties registering themselves via him, the FFF and UCSLP.

Two parties, which are yet to register with HS and the commission, are the LGP & the Monarchist [Independent] Part. Both of which were told their names were 'illegal' by the commission. The rulings of these decisions were made concerning the names of the two parties, which were 'illegal'.

HS has since then made 6 rules regarding the naming of parties, which can be found on the registration HQ –

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/dannywallace/F2399969?thread=2741660> - or the commissions website - <http://www.elections.uni.cc>.

Sketch

So the truth is out. The Government is little more than a puppet organisation with the true power in the hands of the mysterious organisation known only as "Leafstorm." Previously only talked about in private by men in rain coats meeting by night in parks in the soviet bloc. Even the king is under the sway of Leafstorm an organisation that is linked to the Catholic Church due to its connections with Jesus when he was dealing with stormy leaves on behalf of god. By sponsoring a charismatic if slightly crazy person in creating a small country with rapid growth potential (as shown by Lovely's impressive growth) Leafstorm is making a major step into more overtly influencing world affairs. In a step that is on a par to previous moves attributed to Leafstorm in the history of mankind including, the creation of Stonehenge to secure healthy income from Postcard sales. Asking Socrates profound questions to start his philosophising. Telling Napoleon he didn't need to eat his vegetables so that his growth would be stunted. Arranging the assassination of Sophie, the wife of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and starting the First World War. Fiddling with the milk supplies to Florida so that the populace would be unable to

stamp through the chads on the voting slip and thus let George W. Bush into the white house on a technicality. Thus Lovely a nation that its citizens believe to be a land of nice values, pleasantness and good vibrations could be a tool in some sinister and diabolical scheme by Leafstorm. That said, maybe Leafstorm's intentions are good, are we so prejudiced that we will judge an organisation purely on its shadowy nature and the way those who say too much mysteriously disappear? Maybe we should give Leafstorm the benefit of the doubt even if we do not trust them and pledge to them our firstborns. After all those former members of the KGB who aren't running Russia at the moment and who can be found in bars in Siberia giving cryptic warnings about the "Storm of Leaves" do reek of potato vodka. Still now that Leafstorm has found itself with a country rather than blackmailing and killing the administrations of other countries to get its way more is coming out about them. Time will tell if the world is in peril because of Leafstorm and once it does we will also be in peril unless we have migrated to the moon by that time.

OPINIONS PAGE

Making Moves

By Rob

They say that moving home is one of the most stressful things that can happen to anyone. All the upheaval, new unknown neighbours, will the new place suit you? Stressful indeed! What though, if the home you are living in just now has a strange problem where when you return home sometimes there is a note on the door warning of an error, no entry allowed, or that your house currently is too busy to allow you in. Sometimes when you do get in an unknown spirit seems to take the words you have said, erase them from the memories of the others in the house and make them magically disappear forever. Occasionally absorbing every word you utter and only releasing them if it decides that they're allowable. What if you felt your house was in danger of collapse? Then one day a benevolent uncle offers you a new home, you can specify some of the design and best of all, you can take all your friends and neighbours with you when you move. Thanks benevolent uncle, you've always been my favourite.

As you'll know it looks like Lovely is on the move. Leafstorm have offered to put us all up at their place, building us a shiny new country, complete with that lovely new country smell (Stilton?) They are even asking us where we would like the Fjords, mountain ranges and the duck pond. The politics behind this is liable to forever remain unknown, it doesn't really matter, the bottom line would appear to be all good news as I see it. We have suffered various problems recently with our country being sited on BBC property, some of them understandable, others not so easy to accept. Leafstorm have always been interested in Lovely, and I believe that the future is bright for us all.

It's a good start that they asked for our opinions on what we want in the new country, we have had a say in the design, a chance to tell them what features we want etc. Of course the final design is up to them but that is good, it means that we get to run around our new home looking in all the rooms and cupboards, trying out the appliances, pressing buttons and making tea. Suggestions have been invited via the boards, opinions sought, meetings held with invited citizens etc. which have resulted in lots of great ideas including features such as better links, more smilies, profile pages, personal messages and announcement threads to name just a few. Moderation has been a major issue in CR and suggestions have been put forward which should allow the place to run more smoothly, while still ensuring that offence is avoided. IOUs, OEDs, punishments for our naughtier citizens have all been discussed in great depth and the findings have all been offered to Leafstorm. We have given them the ingredients, now we must sit back and wonder at the delights they will cook up for us.

At the moment of writing this we do not know a date for the move although it is probably

going to be quite soon. The wonders of the internet make it possible to move a whole country instantly. Plate tectonics eat your heart out. No doubt it will be well coordinated and no one will get lost on the way. (don't dilly dally just in case though)

This is undoubtedly the biggest thing that has happened to the country since its birth and a very exciting time for us all. We are grateful to Leafstorm for taking us in and looking after us, I'm sure that it will be a very harmonious partnership. Thanks Leafstorm, you've always been my favourite uncle.

Our move away from the BBC!

By Lady Marie

Well I am sure we have all heard about the move away from the place that has been our home for all this time, and although I wish I knew everything about the proposed move I don't so am just going to give my opinion on it.

Here goes, ermmm well the first thing I thought when I heard about the move was WoOp no more server errors, slow servers or uncalled for removal of posts and account banning, which if you remember my rant from the last issue should make me very happy. But will it? The answer is I just don't know but it will hopefully be a step forward for us. I bet we all have our own little worries and concerns, I know I do. Firstly how user friendly will it be because I have seen mentioned a few times that the BBC site is so easy to use, and maybe we will lose that when we move. Also there are a lot of good things that we want to take with us, the main one being the discussions list. Simply because it is easy to find out who is online and where your friends are, and I like the yellow it has really grown on me but maybe this is one of the things that will go with us.

We have had some brilliant ideas put forward on the thread asking for suggestions on the proposed new site. I especially liked Rev's idea of the government having total accountability for themselves but a not so good opinion was that all accounts banned on the BBC site should be banned on the new one. Now personally I think this is a fairly unreasonable opinion given the fact that most of the accounts recently banned have been because of silly reasons. Having said that we are all entitled to have our own opinions just some are worth less than others (hahaha only joking but this is my way of saying I disagree) I hope we will move to our new home with a clean slate for everyone, and go on from there.

My biggest thought/worry whatever you want to call it is that not everyone will move over to the new boards and I am sure some people will be thinking right now "well that would not be a bad thing if so and so doesn't" well maybe so and I suppose part of me would agree with that but then how Lovely would we be if we took that attitude?. One thing I really do hope we get is better mod interaction. Just having an explanation for things would be nice, but having seen on other BBC sites that they get to post with their moderators I kinda feel like we are not as important to the Beeb as others and for that one reason alone I can't wait to move. Don't get me wrong, I have enjoyed my time here and am grateful that I got to meet all of you on that very site, I just think it is time we moved on and had a say in forging our future.

Final thought is this: I am looking forward to our new home and excited to see what it will be like, what features we will have there, which if any are carried over. So I say bring on the future may it be a long and posting filled one hehe.

Thanks for reading if you did that is and see you all soon.

Marie

Considerations

By Schaferlord

OK so the big move is due soon, leaving the fair ship BBC and off on to the also fair ship Leafstorm (note to self think of better analogies). Good time to think back on Lovely's past, present and look forward to its future I guess. So what am I going to spend the next however many words rambling on about going off on tangents every now and again like Indiana Jones goes off on adventures in-between his teaching of archaeology. How about the ambiguous nature of Lovely and how different folk view it differently.

Country or Community the great debate. Some people like the community aspect, getting to know people, meet them in real life make friends and not alienate people. Others like running about doing the country thing, starting and running political parties. Being in the police force. Rebelling against authority like the Rebels in star trek rebel against the Empire. I myself have grown more fond of just dossing about on the interweb with the fair folk of Lovely and meeting them after the fun had at Cheaster. That said others prefer the fact that the country is a country and not just another Internet Forum, I admit that this is why I came to Lovely and why most others came, it's a good gimmick for catching people up. Friction has occurred because of this in lovely's past, with the Law Lords occasionally stating that things in threads are illegal because they said so and thus annoying citizens who didn't care about the role playing "pretending to run a country" aspect of Lovely and didn't like being told what to do by people who seemed to take it all too seriously. Similarly, when Mike got banned HS taking his self appointed role as electoral commissioner very seriously and called for a vote of confidence because the BBC mods as is now fairly apparent have a different definition of competence than anyone else did a silly thing. Still I write for the paper on politics every fortnight, and have partaken in politics in Lovely for fun (before you judge me I am a politics student, I'm allowed to be odd like that, now judge me). So I don't dislike the role playing, it makes things interesting, what I dislike is that there are some hardliners who don't draw the line between country and community. Who don't appreciate that people might not have the same priorities on the site as they do. Lets all be more considerate willing to let people say things because they're in character, and say things because they choose not to participate with you in your game of pretending to be some crazy Baron who is going on a trip in a blimp across Lovely. So that's my considerations. I'll stop thinking now, before I hurt someone.

Less Action, More Talk!

By PirateAsTheArtist

Amid all this talk of "The future of Lovely" and the musings of all and sundry about where we are going next, this message board, that forum, etc. etc. etc., have we really lost sight of where we are now?

The Citizens Required message board, that central meeting place for all things Lovely, has been strangely quiet as Citizens emerge into the light of spring, even summer, from the dark days of sitting lit by the eerie glow of a computer screen all winter. Perhaps all that talk about disruption, new places, and the inevitable "Post-Cheaster Anticlimax" has all combined to cause some Citizens' enthusiasm to wane somewhat. Or maybe some have just started to get out more...

Looking at recent topics of conversation, it made me wonder whether some of the early spark of imagination that characterised the CR Message Board had started to fade a little. Maybe there are too many "lazy" threads that allow us to post something (anything!) just to

alleviate boredom. That in itself is ok, sometimes the brain is a bit too tired to deal with much more, and we just need a bit of mindless fun that isn't too taxing. But it is a shame that so many threads of old, such as Pirates Wanted, The Strip Club, The Country Manor, Victorian Lovely, Musical Instruments Played In An Unusual Manner, the political parties, rebels, various story threads etc., where people could really develop interesting ideas, have faded from view. Yes, some do remain, old ones pop up out of the blue and new ones appear from time to time, but not in the numbers they once did.

I would like to see a return to the more creative side of Lovely. It can be hard work to think of new ideas, especially after a busy day at work or school/college or wherever, but the sense of achievement from a series of good posts is infinitely more satisfying than that from just posting a smiley or a number. I personally could never see the attraction of all those "Elimination Game" threads, let alone the notorious "counting threads" that were apparently the reason given for some of the recent pre-moderation frenzy by the BBC moderators.

As ever, there is always hope: towards the end of this last week, although the boards have remained spookily quiet, there have been a few interesting threads emerging, but time will tell if this is an increasing trend, or whether they will survive to become "greats".

I call on everyone to do what they can to keep Lovely the vibrant and imaginative place it has been before, and could become again. We need a lively spark to keep people with us, and even more to attract new Citizens!

© PirateAsTheArtist 14th May 2006

SHORT FICTION

CHAIN STORY REDUX

By Rev

It's not the complete chain story, just a section starting from a good jumping in point, and ending where the original thread ended. I'm not sure what the story so far is. If you want to find out read the thread itself:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/dannywallace/F2307713?thread=792165>

Battered and beaten, Arcturius found himself dressed in an orange jumpsuit somewhere that smelled distinctly of goats. To his horror he discovered that the evil missing persons bureau had sent him to somewhere not a million miles from Cuba. Arcturius carefully took out his goat-hook, which he had craftily secreted about his person and promptly it started bleating loudly. "I should have made this out of metal instead of Goats" he cursed, but at least the smell was explained. Undeterred, he proceeded to hook it over the fence and haul himself over. As he ran off, escaping the guards, the thought crossed his mind that he might not be alone on this adventure and then he remembered about Horace, his faithful manservant, who had in-fact been with him the whole time without much acknowledgement. As Arcturius could run no further, it fell upon Horace to carry the torch. On through the driving rain he went, though he could barely see a foot in front of his face until he saw a foot in front of his face. He felt a sudden pain and awoke three hours later in the driving rain. "Damn" he said, "I've been out cold for three hours and the rain still hasn't let up. I blame global warming". He then thought about doing something interesting but didn't. Then he picked his nose. After that he farted a bit. Then he went back to picking his nose again. After all that he made his move. Horace leapt into action, teeth in a glass next to his bed which he'd bought at Tesco's. Horace started thinking about Tesco's. Then he thought about Morrisons. Then he thought about Safeways. Then he sank his gums into the chains binding him and luckily for him they were made out of bananas. Horace then

proceeded to the laboratory of Borman the mad scientist. Borman made Horace wear those stupid paper slipper things and a hair net before he could get into the laboratory. Then Borman laughed at Horace and revealed the hair net and paper slippers weren't necessary after all. Horace shook his fist at Borman in frustration. Borman laughed even harder. Then Horace stormed out in a huff, back into the driving rain where he discovered a terrible secret: It seems he had been here before. This was the very laboratory where he was created! This he knew because...

He lost that train of thought as a can of lager bounced off his head. Horace turned round to see Borman laughing even harder. Horace shook his fist at the mad scientist, moved out of can of lager range, and tried to remember what he was thinking about. It was all so clear. He now knew that his purpose in life was to destroy the fly in front of him. He stood on it. Horace looked round for something else to do and saw Borman the mad scientist behind him. Horace groaned. He didn't like Borman. Borman was a bit of a jerk. Horace watched Borman carefully. Borman just stood there not doing anything. Strange, thought Horace, normally something exciting happens to me every few minutes yet here I am not doing anything. "I agree with you there" said Borman. Horace wondered how Borman knew what he'd been thinking. Borman stayed silent this time. Horace shook his fist at Borman once more for good measure. Borman didn't respond. Then they played eye spy for a while but Borman was rubbish at it. Eventually they went back to the uncomfortable silence. All of a sudden Arcturius burst in.

"You fool, Horace," he cried, "you foolish, foolish fool. You forgot to disarm the bomb I made you wear for your own protection!"

And he was right, Horace had forgotten. All of a sudden Horace chewed the red wire. Then the blue wire. Then Arcturius ran like a Monkey, for he was in fact a monkey, yet no-one had noticed, through the window and into the driver's seat of the rolls-royce outside which he promptly drove into a swimming pool. "You stupid monkey!" cried Boarman, who was himself, part boar and knew what it was like to be treated like an animal. Horace had however disarmed the bomb at this point. Borman clapped in a sarcastic manner. Horace sighed and looked towards Arcturius and then at the huge fire place, then back at Arcturius, then at the fireplace again, then back at Arcturius, then at the fireplace again, then back at Arcturius, then at the fireplace again before finally coming to a solution.

They took Boar-man and began to spit-roast him on an open fire. Arcturius had a boar-man sandwich whilst Horace just chewed boar-mans ears and feet for a while. They decided that instead of wasting the rest of boar-man they'd give him to some starving needy children. So on the way to Ethiopia they stopped of in Sweden, where they forgot everything and went clogg chopping. They visited Sven Goran Errikson's Sweden home where they met Sven, he said "if you like a lot of chocolate on your biscuit play for us". Horace said "not on your nelly, Sven!". Sven was devastated. So much so that he exploded. Just like that. Arcticus took it upon himself to gather up bits of Sven, glue them back together and post it to Beckham. Beckham squashed all the bits together, put it on the bench and left it there, motionless. Thankfully nobody could tell the difference.

Arcticus and Horace then carried on their journey to Ethiopia when their plane crashed in The Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately Arcticus drowned cos no one loved him, but Horace was rescued by a giant sea turtle named Terrance. Terrance was on his way to Egypt and he offered to give Horace a lift from Stannah but Horace said he was perfectly capable of using stairs. Terrance was gay but that didn't stop uncle Phillip. Horace thought about things on his way to Egypt. He thought about Borman. He felt guilty about killing and eating him, even if he was a jerk. Then he realised... Borman had a twin called Borman! He decided to go find him and say sorry for eating his cheese. Borman and Borman went to the seaside one day and met Uncle Phillip. He was so pleased to see them that he

grabbed them from behind and traumatised them for life. Horace thought about that, he'd heard the story from the first Borman. He arrived in Egypt and met the second Borman, who was also a mad scientist like his dead twin. Horace said "here... have a FRIDAY SMILE"

AUTHORS

PirateAsTheArtist, Josh32k, Cap'n Long Jon Von Bon Jovi, Revolutionary1,
Lars Dudley, Bickiebeej, Krizang

In the next episode – The return of Arcturius

CULTURE & SOCIETY

Danny Wallace and the Centre of the Universe

By Saz

King. Cult leader... oops... wait, it's not a cult, it's a collective! Now he's even been to the centre of the World AND the universe.

The story of this 24 hour trip is now published as part of the "Quick Reads" series, in conjunction with World Book Day. Only 119 pages, in largish print, it really is a short read, but it is one packed with just the strange and the daft that we know and expect from Danny.

Reading through it I noticed countless links with Lovely, and wondered if it was something that led to the whole idea of starting a country. Danny became an Ambassador, countless small pointers on life in a small town, that everyone has their own "centre of the universe" be it friends, family or work. The unity of a small community, all friends, working together to survive each day. Being so drawn into Lovely myself I wondered if I was making up these links. Danny got his own public holiday (!) A small town of Wallace in Idaho will spend one day of its year celebrating Danny. A stranger, a tourist for a day, and yet they share the surreal and the strange. It's expected though, well, they did declare a manhole cover in their town as the centre of the universe... and there was that incident with the funeral for a stoplight. What else can be expected from a town with a brothel museum?

Although short, this book is filled with the surreal that encourages us that normal is subjective. The residents of Wallace, Idaho are not expected to be "strange", or "weird". They work, live, hunt. They don't seem like they should be eccentric, and yet their Prime Minister is a man who decided to give himself the title and it caught on. Ha, I'm sensing similarities, but this self titled man was not out for power or control or wanting to raise himself above others. He does guided tours of the town, drives tourists from the airport to the hotel, nothing flash. His title is just that, a title. He's just Rick to the citizens, his neighbours. Just another bloke. Another member of the community. Everyone essentially just "gets on" with one another in Wallace, because the nature of their small town dictates it. There's a bit Lovely could probably learn from.

So, to hear about the day in the life of our King, mixed with the comforting thought that we're really that mad for signing up to a country that doesn't exist (read about the beaver... I won't spoil it for you but I feel decidedly normal now...). It turns out that the day in Wallace, Idaho was a trip taken by Danny after Lovely began, instantly dismissing any

possibility that it helped inspire our nation. Bugger. I thought I was on to something then. But what's really worrying is not that this small town is just as weird as we all are, it's that I want to go visit it. Anyone else fancy a trip? :)

Danny Wallace and the Centre of the Universe, published by Ebury Press. RRP £2.99p. Available now.

You'll never believe it...

By Saz

Hold on to your seats, I'm about to say something that may shock and surprise you.

I, Saz, was wrong! It can happen, apparently. I know I know, who'd have thunk it. It's quite a scary prospect, but it seems when I wrote an article all those months ago about the disappearance of our Mr and Miss Lovely, that in fact my cynical ramblings of it all being a bit of a scam were unfounded. Our democratically elected Mr Lovely, Quentin, did actually return to the forum (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/dannywallace/F2307503?thread=1278817&skip=20&show=20#p33832972>)

Somehow, in the depths of the forum history, he had managed to find my thread where I'd ranted a bit that it was all possibly a fix, and that the winners had scarpered with the titles, but Quentin blew my conspiracy apart a mere 6 months after I set my doubts loose on Lovely. I had initially given both Emily and Quentin the benefit of the doubt with a holiday, or busy with promoting Lovely, or World Peace or Supermarket openings (I'm not really sure what the duties of the winners would be for the year), but if I'm honest, I had assumed the worst from the start.

But hurrah! I was wrong, Mr Lovely is out there, tending to his wife and garden and being incredibly busy with work, and I'd like to apologise as in no way did I intend to insinuate that to be a citizen you have to post regularly on the forum. In fact, I'm a strong supporter of the point that Lovely is more than just the forum (as the King himself has said), that it exists wherever we decide to take it. My conspiracy and doubt grew not from the fact that I thought everyone should be posting daily, or that Quentin wasn't worthy of the title as an "outsider". Curiosity got the better of me at the time, but I've now been shown the error of my ways, and Mr Lovely himself has even shown an interest in writing for this very paper. WoOp! Doesn't get much better, hope that past citizens drop by again to see what's going on after months (thus proving Lovely never dies, it lives on elsewhere), AND more writers for the paper. Good comes from everything it seems.

So there you have it. A GA exclusive, Saz was wrong. Life will never be the same again...

A message to Lovely

By Mr. Lovely

Hello Lovelies,

I know perhaps there are some of you out there who think I shouldn't have won the title of Mr Lovely. After all, I never posted on the forum before I won the title or many times after I won. Well that's about to change as I aim to start getting involved more with conversations and the like, whenever I get the chance.

I'd like to start by giving a long overdue speech. A big thank you to everyone who voted for me and made it possible for me to become Mr Lovely. I was up against some great candidates, Josh, James and the Wing Commander, all of whom I wish luck for their future endeavours both inside and out of the Lovely community.

Thanks goes to my former manager Simon Martin who entered me into the competition. Although I did not agree with him describing me as hunky, the rest of what he wrote was true. I'd also like to thank my wife Sarah for putting up with me and Fooey Lucas, who always has something comical to say whenever the situation needs comedy and sometimes when it doesn't.

While I have your attention could I ask everyone who lives in the south of the UK to adhere to the current hosepipe ban and encourage everyone to fit water butts to collect rain water. Also compost bins are brilliant for the garden and cut down on household waste.

I look forward to being a more active Mr Lovely and hope I one day get the opportunity to open some kind of village fair or attend a school colouring competition to give prizes out.

Yours,
Quentin (Mr Lovely)

I was a Part Time Poster

By ID06

Until very recently my internet access has been only via use of cyber cafes.

Luckily there were half a dozen of them within five minutes walk of my home. I spent a lot of time and money in them (averaging maybe 30 hours a week online) and so I found myself at the number one spot in the first ever Richlist.

But the trouble with using cybercafes is that they have an opening time and a closing time, (none of the half dozen were 24-hour, sadly) and so my presence on the message boards was dictated by whether or not my regular CC had bothered to open (on some Sundays it remained closed well into the afternoon). As time and threads progressed I found I was missing out on some now-legendary threads. The Strip Club action never got started until after I had logged off and gone home, I would just see the stains the next day, and miss out on all the fun. And what was the 2am Curse? I had no idea whatsoever. Then there was the Morning Club, for early risers, which again was eluding me. I felt like a Part-Time Poster. The Riot Squad would raid a thread in the early hours and I wouldn't know anything about it until the next day, long after a stapler had been thrown out of a window.

But now I have moved house, to a place with 24 hour internet access. Madamofmercury has moved back to Australia and has limited email access, so I'd stay up into the early hours swapping chatty emails with her to brighten her day. At the same time of course, I was able to explore the promised land of things that go "post" in the night. Unfortunately I had left it too late for the Riot Squad's confusionism, and the Strip Club is a mere shadow of its former self. The 2am Curse seems to be a gradual dwindling of numbers of posts as people drift off to bed, leaving Biffa alone in charge of the whole of Lovely. MoM has more time to swap emails at the end of her working day, so I soon switched from late nights to early mornings, arising at 5am and being the first Citizen on the Message Boards. This may or may not be a regular thing, as in a few weeks MoM will have internet access at home (when she moves) and I might not feel the need to be out of bed at 5am. But until then each day on the boards starts with just me for the first couple of hours, unless there

are any volunteers who wish to join me?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/dannywallace/F2262799>

Big Brother is watching

By Razerbug

As many of you may know, certain citizens are being watched, their every movement scrutinised. No, the BBC Mods aren't at it again... This time it's fun, this time. It's Lovely Big Brother!

<http://get-me.to/lovelybb>

Like no lovely game before it LBB has painted the early housemates in a whole new light!

Day 1 in the LBB house: Stokey christens the place by streaking through the house. Pasta finds Carpy's electric toothbrush although the whereabouts of her vibrator seem a mystery. Only some of the housemates have arrived with half of them apparently forgetting when the entry date was.

As night falls Pasta decides to sleep in the girl's room, after arranging all the beds in the boys room into one huge bed.

Citizen Love occupies this in protest to Pasta sleeping in the girl's room. Stokey falls asleep on the dinning room floor apparently exhausted from the running around naked.

Day 2 in the LBB house: Pasta and Carpy are the first ones up, both using the electric toothbrush it seems. Pasta is called in to see big brother when he is caught using a laptop "for work" he is cautioned about this and told BB will decide if he can keep it. Stokey spends more time naked. He enters the diary room like this and explains he slept with a fork stuck to his rear... This does not deter him from getting lubed up and going in the hot tub - however this leaves a horrible scum on the water and Biffa is not happy. He is even seen walking around with an axe as "cabin fever" sets in... Cit Love has spent the entire day asleep in the boys bedroom (which only Biffa slept in) and wasn't even disturbed when Pasta and Stokey used a fisherprice toy and a 100watt amp to blast her with baby toy noises. Big Brother is not sure how Pasta snuck a laptop AND 100w Marshal stack into the house, and is considering a cavity search.

Day 3 - in the Big Brother house. The day starts off slow but at least Tash is awake today - Pasta seems to have taken up residence in the girls bedroom although with lady Heather wandering around in nothing but a pillowcase or bikini.

Meanwhile Stokey has set up a tent in the garden... (tents, laptops, battle axes - where about their person do they put these things to get past the search?) In the chicken house some of them seem to be getting restless - in fact some of the housemates fear one who is looking at them funny.

Aside from some culinary magic (which seems to have upset Biffas digestion with sprout smells wafting around the house at various times) one of the most interesting sights have to be Stokey and Love sharing massive quantities of drink and skinny dipping in the hot tub followed by Tash's cold hands going somewhere on Stokey that made him joke - and Cit-Love apparently asking Richard Stokey back to the bedroom! Debauched behaviour in the house! Someone call the ministry

Day 4, In the Big Brother house: While the day had gone off fairly normally for the girls

who mostly stayed in bed because of the lack of water and the strange smell either emanating from the dinning room or Biffa. With Biffa and Stokey finding the lack of action boring, discussion turns again to the chickens and which one would end up in the oven!

In the garden, with no hot tub to work his whiles in, hatched upon a cunning plan to get some alone time with the young lady Heather, hammering together a shed from bits of old fencing material left over by the BB builders. Only as the last nail was hammered in did the pair realise they where stuck with no door and had to spend the night in there. At the end of the day however - the lack of water and smell both vanished as a new housemate explodes out of the toilet having been blocking up the water system! It was not, however the only new guest in the house. One of the chickens seems to be black, with an orange beak and two large red eyes... It's pecked its way into Pastas shed and peering in. It appears a foul fowl is in the house.

Day 5 In the big brother house. With the crow giving lady Heather a scare inside their self sealed shed, Pasta attempts to attack the foul fowl. The crow however sees its chance and as Schaf comes out into the garden it flies into the house.

With Schaf's arrival through the water works BB has closed off the bathroom while crews repair and clean - in it's place temporary outdoor facilities deploy from the ground, unfortunately smashing Pasta's shed. Big Brothers psychologist has had a bad day – she's very worried that Stokey's still sleeping outside, Schaf refuses to wear clothes, and Pasta is still wearing women's clothing leaving Lady Heather to demonstrate that she can even make bed sheets look good. Stranger still is Pastas ability to be in two places at one - it seems there is a clone of Pasta wandering around. As night draws in Pasta goes to bed in both the boys and girls bedroom Heather steals Pastas bed sheets and makes a cocoon out of those. While in the other room a naked Schaf cuddles up with Pumpkin who promises to show off her euphemism pouch... Now that has to be a euphemism!

And the antics continue! Join Big Brother and the rest of the citizens in the “audience zone” as we discuss the housemates where they can't hear us, suggest tasks and of course... vote on evictions.

Remember - Big Brother is watching, and this time, it's going to be Lovely!

ENTERTAINMENT

Sudoku

By Cpeachok

5	7			8	3	9		
	3	8	4		6	2		
							5	
4						3	8	
		3	6		5	7		
	2	5						4
	9							
		2	3		9	4	7	
		4	5	7			9	2

Puzzle 0006

Sudoku

Last issue's solution

By Cpeachok

7	3	6	2	4	9	5	1	8
9	5	1	3	7	8	4	2	6
2	4	8	5	1	6	3	7	9
6	7	9	4	5	1	8	3	2
1	8	5	6	3	2	9	4	7
4	2	3	8	9	7	6	5	1
5	9	2	1	6	3	7	8	4
3	1	7	9	8	4	2	6	5
8	6	4	7	2	5	1	9	3

Solution 0005

Poetry

By A N Other

Junkie

Your head is spinning, just looking at it.
Any longer, it could make you feel quite sick.
But you continue anyway.
Lower the needle.
Into the much trod marks.
Perhaps a shout or pained yell?
And then simple and pure elation.
Exhilaration, like nothing else. And wonder.
What if you never come down?

And then the needle runs off towards the centre of the disc.

Poetry

'Piece of cake, really' the teacher said,
Writing these poems straight from your head.
Putting pen to paper, thinking in verse,
Oh! How I wish I'd planned this first!
Now the deadline is looming, I'm behind.
Some manner of muse, I wish I'd find.
This is the plight of the forced amateur poet,
Writing a stanza, then choosing to throw it,
Counting the syllables off on your hand,
Finding things going not quite as you'd planned.

But we have to do it; there are 10 to be moved,
This one's down now, just nine more to prove!
Two Unrelated Encounters, Which Happened On The Same Day To Two
Different People

Encounter #1

A flash.
You could almost miss it.
A memory in their eyes, quick flash.
You knew them. Once they knew you too; eyes dash.
To the ground.
Strangers now.
Forever.

Encounter #2

Pressed.
Like two thumbs in a war.
Two bodies against each other, pressed.
Because city bus seats are too small in winter jackets; released.
Bus jolts you apart.
You knew each other.
For a second.

Untitled

By Lozz

Her cheeks compare to red roses,
My eyes see heaven in her,
Her breath like perfumes,
When her lips move, I hear nothing
My Sun,
My Goddess,
My Love

A Travel Diary

By the Curator of Lovely Records

I am not known as a particularly patient person. So much so in fact, that Mrs Curator has developed a military-style shopping strategy to keep me calm when we go grocery shopping in Tesco's. Initially, I helpfully go and get a few items from various aisles around the shop (being vigilant and taking my time) whilst Mrs C does the monotonous-but-essential weighing of Fruit and Veg.

Next, I go and get some other items from other aisles whilst Mrs C rattles around the rest of the store looking like she's in training for an appearance with Dale Winton on Supermarket Sweep. After engaging her extra-sensory powers to select the check-out queue that will move the quickest, we can vacate Tesco's within the hour and I haven't had

to throw any children into the freezers, nor kick any walking sticks out from underneath dodderly old men. Everyone's a winner.

Why am I telling you this? I hear you ask (with a hint of disdain too - shame on you!) I'm just giving you an insight into my life so that when I tell you that this travel diary involves me having to sit still, you'll have an understanding to why I had to promise in writing that I wouldn't kill anyone. I had to sit reasonably still on a coach.

All the way to France.

For 19 Hours.

If 19 hours sounds like a long time to have to effectively sit and be patient, then that's probably because it is. A bloody lifetime in truth.

Knowing me like only I do, there had to be a very VERY good incentive in order for me to agree to undertake such a laborious journey of biblical proportions. And Verily, I say unto thee. There was.

I was going Snowboarding for three days, and if you travel by coach you get an extra two days on the slopes for two nights accommodation compared with when you fly. This is because travelling by coach, you arrive into the resort at 9am after driving all through the night, and you go straight out skiing. If you fly, you then have to get a transfer coach to your resort before you can get on the piste.

It works out to be a much better way of getting value for money from what are usually fairly pricey jaunts.

And unto him came the reason for his epic voyage. And it was riches. As my two travelling companions and I settled into our seats for the journey, conversation turned towards planning our days out skiing.

In our party of three, there was one very good skier, one very good snowboarder and then there was me. Mr mediocre. I can slide down a Green or a Blue run quite happily, but take me near any Red Runs and the tracks left behind me look like those of an epileptic snow angel.

But fear not - I was told - my cohorts Si and Will assured me that they would take good care of me and that I would be sailing down a Red Run before the three days were up. Excellent news.

For anyone who has never been skiing, a quick guide to the terminology:

Green Runs - These are very wide, beginner standard runs that are overrun with people in ski school and are actually quite difficult to manoeuvre yourself down because of all the fallen-skiers around you

Blue Runs - These are slightly steeper and generally not as wide as a Green, although they are still considered to be beginners territory by most seasoned skiers.

Red Runs - Reds are the "intermediate" standard of run, and offer the opportunity to go for long, fast sessions. These are often the busiest runs because most skiers are at the "intermediate" stage (no matter what stories they tell you in the bar)

And finally, Black Runs - I like to refer to black runs by their more common moniker - "a cliff" - they are very steep, narrow runs that only experienced skiers would attempt. Or at least attempt without having to do any section of the run sliding down on their backsides.

Luckily for me, no black runs were ever entertained as an option. Not this time anyway.

We arrived at Valmeinier 1800 in the Valloire region of the French Alps at 09.30 after our long, long coach journey and immediately set about sorting out our lift passes and my board hire.

11.00 am and we were on the lift for our first run.

11.15 am and we'd stopped for our first lager. It's thirsty work this boarding lark.

By the close of day one, I was absolutely exhausted.

As we sat down for dinner with the rest of the hotel guests, I was beginning to feel the effects of a night of no sleep followed by a full day of falling over. I managed to play with my soup starter and promptly fell asleep at the table before the main course had been served.

The dawn of day two brought fresh enthusiasm borne through 14 hours of near-uninterrupted sleep. For me at least. Simon and Will had rolled back to the room at 1am, singing the praises of drinks made from Gin, Sugar and crushed mint leaf.

After the success of our previous day, it was decided that Simon - He of three seasons as a ski-rep and a very good snowboarder - would hire skis for the day, whilst Will - he with the ability to ski facing backwards - would hire a snowboard for the day.

I however, would persevere and practice on my original apparatus. For a while, and admittedly it was a very short while, I actually looked like the most experienced of the group.

Simon and Will soon got the hang of what they were doing and it wasn't long before it was me trying to keep pace with those two once again. It was whilst trying to keep up that I had my first proper "wipe-out" as those Gnarley youth dudes say. I misjudged a corner and rolled nipple over knickers down the side of the mountain and into waist deep powder. Imagine a child at the local Toby Carvery trying to climb out of a 6-foot deep ball pool and you'll have some idea of how I was doing.

As day two ended, all three of us were proud owners of some hefty bruises and two-thirds of us had a rather funny story to regale about a friend of theirs who fell off the side of the piste and flapped around like fish out of water.

Day three began with a twinge of sadness that it was our last day before having to face the return journey on the coach and was swiftly followed by a thumping headache as a result of tasting the aforementioned gin/sugar/mint cocktails. (They're bloody horrendous. I recommend them whole-heartedly)

As by now I'd remembered how to turn both left AND right on my board (harder than it might sound!) we decided that, as it was our last day, we would go further a field and put some really good, long runs together, hopefully culminating with me achieving my aim of a successful Red Run before the end of the day.

Well. That was the plan.

Sadly, it didn't quite go as planned.

To get to where we wanted to be took us an hour of slowly negotiating a very flat section of piste before we reached the bottom of the first chair lift. At the top of the chair lift, I dismounted with aplomb and set off down a Blue run that was about 4km long and would have been brilliant.

I say "would have been" because I never actually got any further than about 100 yards down from the top before I lost my balance and - not for the first time - fell over.

This fall was slightly different though.

There was no big spray of snow, or dramatic disappearing out of sight in deep powder.

There was, however, a rather prickly pain emanating from my right arm that seemed to envelop my entire nervous system in time with my heartbeat.

I took off my glove and pulled up my jacket sleeve to reveal an arm that Picasso would have been proud to paint. Hands aren't supposed to do what my hand was doing. And arms aren't meant to look like they've got two elbows.

So, Rather than have to endure another 19 hours sat on a coach, I was hooked up to a morphine drip and taken in a ambulance driven by Celebrity Crooner Willie Nelson to the local Hospital in St Michel and put into a room that was full of Japanese Ninjas in warrior dress.

An operation was arranged within an hour of me arriving to straighten it out and back to its former glory. I also think I met the Queen of England in the corridor on the way to theatre.

Apparently, Morphine often makes you hallucinate, but I don't think I did. Honest.

Needless to say my memories of the subsequent 24 hours are patchy, and are mainly limited to recollections of me speaking Spanish to the confused-looking nurses, who were French, and me trying to communicate with my French room-mate. Who could only speak French. No Spanish, or English. Not even the trusty English Loud worked.

Luckily for me it turns out that Esperanto isn't dead. It's just evolved into monocyclic grunts of censure involving anything American as we did manage to have a rather in-depth discussion about French foreign policy and the war on Iraq, mainly through Boo-ing when George W Bush appeared on the news.

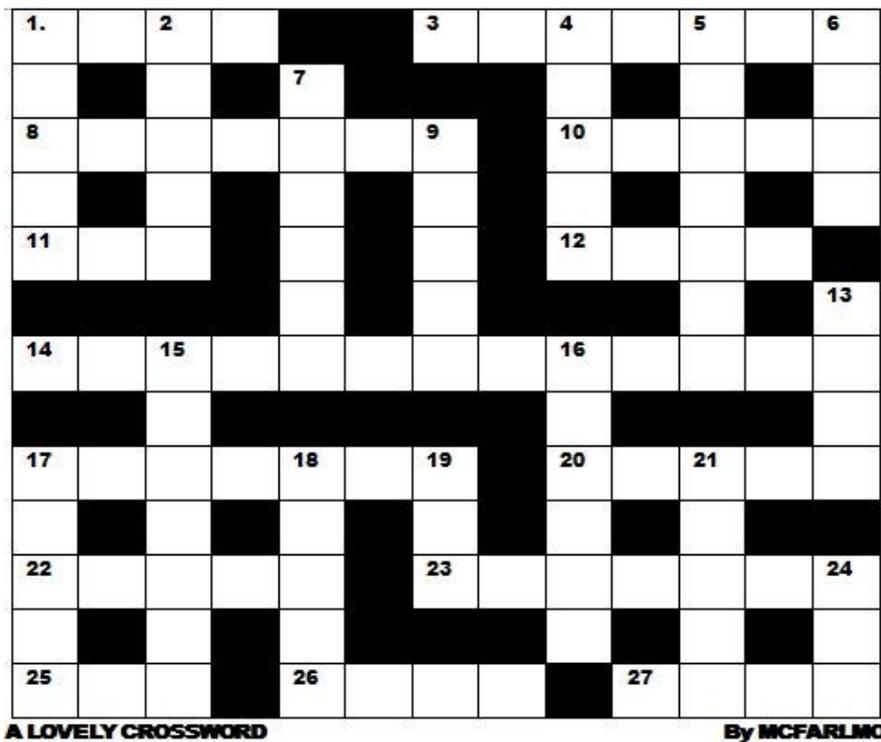
Three days later and I was discharged from L'Hopital. By now my GCSE French has all come flooding back, and I'm even able to inform the ancillary nurse that "The Cat is UNDER the table." And that "The post office is closed" both were news for which she was seemingly very grateful.

So, in a plaster cast reminiscent of one I once saw Harold from neighbours sport in 1992, I was allowed home, six days into my three day, erm, break. The news from the doctor in the UK was that I'd broken my radius and ulna in three places, and crushed sections of the bone at the point of the break. I'm healing well, and I've already booked myself in for a repeat trip next season. Although next time, I might try skis...

(Please none of you ever go anywhere near a piste again. ed.)

Crossword

By McMo



ACROSS

1. The Orient (4)
3. American band does this for minestrone? (7)
8. Alan – a northern writer (7)
10. Lovely conspiracy – (almost) not true (5)
11. Conflict (3)
12. Bob Dylan says its hard. I think it's wet (4)
14. Er. Actor, hearthrob (6,7)
17. Tallinn is the capital (7)
20. Things – mixed up mites (5)
22. Sven? Or Ivanisevic (5)
23. Was it foretold that there would be 4 sequels to this film (3,4)
25. She dances in the sand in Brazil (3)
26. Abominable snowman (4)
27. Between a walk and a canter (4)

DOWN

1. Bend your arm with this band (5)
2. Echolocation device (5)
4. Eat ice cream with this. (5)
5. Parla inglese? No - parla solo... (7)
6. Mr Dyke formerly of the BBC (4)
7. Using a needle (6)
9. Gin and a pick me up? (5)
13. Organs of vision (4)
15. Canadian province (7)
16. He wanted more (6)
17. Keen beaver? (5)
18. Female goat looking after kids (5)
19. He's always on the left (3)
25. Crazy person, make cause an allergy (3)

By our brand new correspondent A Sneaky Weasel

Delicatessen (1991)

In a starving, post-apocalyptic France, a local butcher keeps his customers supplied by his cannibalistic tendencies. But when his daughter falls in love with a circus performer, only an underground band of vegetarian freedom fighters can save her beloved from the meat cleaver.

Inventive, original and utterly hilarious (French language, English subtitles)
15

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0101700/>



Firefly (2002)

A band of thieves with morals flies around the universe doing jobs, legal or illegal, in order to put food on the table, fuel in the tanks and to keep one step ahead of the interfering alliance.

The cancelled series that sparked the blockbuster film Serenity. The fine blend of action, humour and tension makes this a sci-fi for those who don't do sci-fi ...and one for those who do...

...indeed.

12

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0303461/>



Windtalkers (2002)

In the brutal WW2 Battle of Saipan, two marines are assigned to protect Navajo American code-talkers. Trained to use a secret military code based upon their native language, it was the only code never to be broken by the Japanese and was key to winning the war in the Pacific. The marines have been ordered to protect the code at all costs, but how far will they go to stop the code falling into the enemy's hands? A tale of courage, friendship and survival on the battlefield. A well made and researched action film.

15

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0245562/>



Big Fish (2003)

William never really knew his father. All he had to go by was his tall tales and elaborate stories. But now as his father lies dying he uncovers a trail of evidence that allows him to piece together a true picture of the man behind the stories. A marvellous adventure film that's as big as life itself. An absolutely spellbinding film that's enjoyable for audiences young and old.

PG

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319061/>



Pride and Prejudice (2005)

When a wealthy bachelor takes up residence in a nearby mansion, the Bennets are abuzz. Amongst the man's sophisticated circle of friends, surely there will be no shortage of suitors for the Bennet sisters. But when Elizabeth meets up with the handsome and - it would seem - snobbish Mr. Darcy, what seems like a match made in heaven becomes divided by a battle of the sexes. A modern remake of the Jane Austen Classic. Definitely one for the ladies, but still good for a family night in.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0414387/>



A SNEAKY WEASELS HOT PICK:

Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back (2001)

When Jay and Silent Bob learn that a major motion picture is being based on their likenesses, they head for Hollywood to claim the big money that they deserve. But when they learn that they've been cut out of the cash the masters of mischief set out to sabotage the film at all costs. A completely irrelevant and irrational comedy that sums up modern humour spectacularly. Aimed at students and young adults this film is not for the easily offended and I find that it's even better when watched with a group of friends and an alcoholic beverage or two.

18

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0261392/>



LOVELY HOROSCOPES

By Mystic McMo

If it's your birthday this weekend – the planets say “go wild, wear your pants over your trousers, get strangers to write declarations of love on them and succumb to the urge to fill them with small plastic balls.” Unless of course you've done all that already. In which case, the planets have nothing to say except “Happy Birthday!”

Aries

Born between March 21st and April 19th

Aries are stubborn types who will not change their minds even when presented with good reasons or bribery to do so. Over the next week try changing your mind occasionally. Even if it's just over what to have for lunch.

Lucky vegetable - butternut squash

Lucky name – Angus

Taurus

Born between April 20th and May 20th

Well, Taurus, this fortnight you're in for some fun! Elves will invade your wardrobe, dress up in your clothes and impersonate you down the local pub causing embarrassment when you next try and have a quiet pint. Also a person with a name beginning with S will stand a little too close in the bus queue.

Left turns are strongly indicated.

Colour for the fortnight – Apple White

Gemini

Born between May 21st and June 20th

It's funny, this horoscope malarkey, sometimes an entire star sign has no real indications for a week or two. So as you were. Whatever you were doing, keep doing that. Unless it was illegal or neglecting your studies. Do your homework and tidy the house. Hopefully

next time the stars will send you a small puppy or a shiny ball to play with
Lucky numbers – evens
Lucky animals – furry ones

Cancer

Born between June 21st and July 22nd

For the first week everyone will hang on your every word. So make them count and avoid redundant comments like “it’s warm today” or “I like cheese, don’t you?” Tell people important facts and share your feelings because in the second week you will become invisible and inaudible. Literally. I cannot urge strongly enough however not to use this power for evil.

Lucky colour - transparent

Lucky word – Shhh

Leo

Born between July 23rd and August 22nd

Over the next two week you will have at least 24 cups of tea and 43 biscuits. Do you think that is wise?

Lucky item of furniture - Sofa

Crocodiles should provide no threat for the moment

Virgo

Born between August 23rd and September 22nd

Tidy your room. Make a list and tick some things off on it. You know it makes you happy. If at all possible attend at least one cultural event every other day. A very short person will annoy the crap out of you on Wednesday.

Mostly Sunny

Falling slowly

Libra

Born between September 23rd and October 23rd

For once, try not to keep a balance of those scales of yours. Lean right over and see things from another perspective. Beware large objects dropping from the sky. You can choose the way you live, my friend, but not the way you die. Apples may prove useful

Scorpio

Born between October 24th and November 22nd

Kick back and relax. The world is a wonderful place. Don’t let anything stress you. Except, of course, that huge black crow perched on the tree outside your house. He’s watching you and waiting...

Lucky paint finish - Eggshell

Lucky word - Pamphlet

Sagittarius

Born between November 23rd and December 21st

On both Thursday’s this fortnight you will experience an unnerving feeling of déjà vu. For most of the fortnight it will seem that everyone is telling you things twice For most of the

fortnight it will seem that everyone is telling you things twice
If you climb a ladder over the next two weeks get someone to hold the bottom of it, I can't be held responsible otherwise.
Lucky food – Miso soup
Lucky amphibian – Axolotl

Capricorn

Born between December 22nd and January 19th

The full moon will make your passionate side come to the fore. Just be careful where you let it show; at home with a partner – good. In the fishmongers with a halibut – less good. There is no reason whatsoever to eat celery.
Lucky plant – Giant Hogweed
Lucky colour - ochre

Aquarius

Born between January 20th and February 19th

When you answer the telephone this fortnight try saying “Ahoy Hoy” rather than “Hello”. It will make you smile. There is a man near to you who wants to tell you something. It may not be important though.
Geese mate for life
Lucky part of the body - Sternum
Watch out for open manhole covers

Pisces

Born between February 20th and March 20th

It's a full moon and you know what that does to you. Stay in, wear black and avoid silver bullets
Strangers will shun you and politicians will write amendments just for you. Try and stay in tune and by next fortnight you will have been absolved
Lucky number - 14.75
Lucky shape - Dodecahedron

SPORT

BACK PAGE NEWS

REDS SNATCH TROPHY FROM UNLUCKY TAGG

FA Cup final 2006

By Giddsey

Liverpool 3-3 Tagg (aet)
Liv win 3-1 on pens

Stevie Gerrard dashed the hopes and dreams of the Tagg squad as a 25yrd thunderbolt put pay to babs dreams of lifting the cup.

Tagg started brightly in the 1st half and looked good for the win as they gave the reds a lesson in football. Every move from the Tagg players was sweetly executed every pass pinpoint and every shot on target. Ray of the Tagg scored Taggs first. A sublime move started from the left by pompey Gaz. Pompey skinned 3 players and crossed far post for

Ray who smashed the ball into Carraghers path and the ball was dumped in the onion bag. 1-0 Tagg,(goal-Ray)

Taggs second came from a massive clearance from keeper Dudley. Lars pelted the ball 70ydrds onto Biffa's head. Biffa headed onto psychoRev, who played a slide rule pass into Jamie. Jamie followed a triple step over with a cheeky chip to Lampost who dummied the ball and babs followed up with a simple tap in. 2-0 Tagg

Tagg were in dreamland. 2-0 up and only minutes of the 1st half to go. Liverpool pulled one back late on. A mistake from Lampost let Cisse in. Taggs defence were blinded by Cisse's brightly coloured gay boots and ridiculous haircut. 2-1 Tagg.

Coach giddsey knew his team had the upper hand as they came out for the second half. A half time team talk inspired the lads to a good start to the second half, then disaster.

Cruising along, Marc was just too relaxed as he passed the ball into the path of Gerrard who doesn't miss from 6ydrds out. 2-2.

What a game, the Tagg faithfull sang their hearts out for the lads. As the red fans sang, the tagg crowd followed with a rousing anthem of "You'll never talk alone"

Spirits lifted, tagg took the game by the scruff of its neck. Nicknack, quiet all game came to life when a through pass from Marc landed at his feet. Nicknack then lifted the ball over Risses' head and smashed a goal in from 30ydrds. GOOOOOAAAALLL!!! 3-2 Tagg.

tagg were 3-2 up and there was only 3 added minutes to go when Gerrard ruined the party. A slack back pass from Mrs Mop let Stevie in and as we all know Gerrard has a clause in his contract, that he must always score Liverpools most important goals with seconds left. Gerrard scored, coach giddsey cried. 3-3 Tagg.

This was probably the greatest ever cup final played, and both teams looked weary in extra time. Babs went close as Reina kept Liverpool in it. psychoRev keep the reds out alongside Biffa, but the game was heading for the inevitable Penalties. The Lottery was upon us.

Full Time score AET:
Liverpool 3-3 Tagg

To penalties, coach giddsey had picked the 5 takers only to see the shoot out end in disaster as Reina saved two of taggs efforts. Biffa stepped up for the first and scuffed the shot.

Liverpool scored.

Babs took the second and scored with aplomb.

Dudley saved with a puma like action to deny the reds.

Taggs third was missed by the usually reliable Ray.

Liverpool needed one more to win.

They scored 😞

Final score:

Liverpool 3-3 Tagg aet
Liverpool win 3-1 on pens.

Unlucky lads, what a game.

I'd just like to say thanks to you all for being so dedicated to Tagg FC. This was our last game of the season and I think we did ourselves proud. The passion and loyalty shown to the club has been beyond my wildest dreams. What an adventure.

We finished 9th in the Premiership in our first season, were cup runners up, and UEFA cup football beckons next season.

Thanks lads for all your efforts and I'll see all who are going to Germany this summer soon.

We are Talk-A-Good-Game Football Club, and
"we are as good as you say we are"

Cheers lads, see ya in the bar.
End of season awards ceremony to come.
coach giddsey

Taggs last 2 games in the prem.

TAGG HEAP MORE MISERY ON THE ALBION

West Brom 0-1 Tagg

A low key performance from tagg lead to the 1-0 defeat of WBA.

Hardly any incidents to talk of apart from the 'special goal' scored by former keeper Loyal lampost'.

When a ball spins and bends like that, there's nothing even god could have done to stop it.

We won 1-0. End of.

good work boys.
see ya in the bar.
coach giddsey

TAGG PAINTED RAFA RED

Tagg 1-2 Liverpool.

'Unlucky' was how coach giddsey described his teams performance in this pre cursor to the FA cup Final.

Tagg dominated the first half and saw efforts from Biffa, NickNack and Ray go close. The opening goal came from Captain babs. A massive punt up field from Biffa, saw babs clean

through on goal. babs in Zidane stylee, chipped the ball over Reinas head. 1-0 Tagg.

Halftime came and Liverpool came out in the second half looking for revenge. A mistake from the usually safe hands of Lars gave Liverpool the equalizer. 1-1.

Then disaster. Liverpools second was an absolute fluke. Whilst pinging the ball to each other in a 25 pass move Tagg's new signing Marc stood on the ball and spooned it off of the refs face. Unluckily the ball landed at Gerrards feet, and Stevie didn't need asking, he just spanked the ball past Taggs bemused keeper.2-1 Liv.

Unlucky lads, we're concentrating on the final now. And remember next year were in the UEFA cup whatever happens.

See ya in the bar.

coach giddsey

Thanks to all Tagg players, past and present. We live on:

The Stadium Of Fright.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/dannywallace/F2307741?thread=2536073>

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

So, finally it seems we're moving. Long overdue in my opinion. Since November I've been entertaining ideas of autonomy, but I have neither the technical ability nor the PR powers to get beyond scribbles on bits of paper. Nice scribbles I'll grant you. Things taken straight out of Wells. Never mind. Someone competent has done it for me.

I'd like to thank the BBC first, for all their time and effort and server space and for putting up with us. We have been anything but gracious guests. I suggest, and you all know what that means by now, that we arrange something nice for them by way of a thank you. Any suggestions?

And then of course there's Leafstorm, heroes of the hour. Thanks goes to them as well, for reasons I'm not going to rehash. How about we show our gratitude by not getting all paranoid about the running and modding of this new forum? If we really need a buck to pass things to, let's elect a deity.

Shall we thank the King? Why not. Thank you Danny.

Now, on to business; we're moving house. I moved house two years ago. Packing the boxes I threw away more stuff than I knew I had. I went by the Yes No Maybe rule, where only Yes gets kept. I thought I'd done pretty well. When I finally got round to buying a cupboard to put it all in a year later I threw out just as much again. Had it multiplied? I have no idea. All I know is that most of the stuff that survived the second purge has been gathering dust ever since. Is there a point to this? Bear with me.

We have a great big forum with all manner of technical delights I've never bothered to learn the names of much less understand. And we like some of it and we dislike some of it and there are things we'd like added. We've sorted out what it is we want, we've submitted our request, whether we get it remains to be seen. Now the point I'm attempting to make is this: It doesn't really matter. Most of the stuff we think we need is in fact just decoration. It's nice, but not essential. Whatever happens to Lovely, whether we have prison or useless IOUs or democratic mayhem or all out war, there is always going to be Us. We are the important part. We're the only essential element. Everything else we can work around.

I know some people for whom this would be cause to worry. Well for once I'm not

worrying. I have every faith in the strength of this community. What started out as random strangers has become almost like family now, and there are new people turning up all the time. We have something amazing here. All we have to do is keep going. I like to think we are the generation that will change the world and solve all the problems. This is clearly self delusion. But people everywhere are trying to make things better, and succeeding. We are already doing that in many ways. I hope we can grow and expand and do it in many more. I know it doesn't make one bit of difference what the website looks like that we're doing it from.

So Yes to the move, Yes to progress for the sake of it, and please don't get lost.

Nathalie Van Dantzig
Editor

~ Next issue due out on Sunday 28th May 2006 ~