



# Hampshire Journalism at the **CUTTING EDGE**

G. C. Burnell MA  
i.e. pretty cutting journalism.

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# **HAMPSHIRE JOURNALISM AT THE CUTTING EDGE + 2 OTHER ESSAYS**

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## **THE 3 ESSAYS:**

1) HAMPSHIRE JOURNALISM AT THE CUTTING EDGE

2) BEING MORE REASONABLE IN BUSINESS

3) MEMOIRS OF BEING AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY

HAMPSHIRE JOURNALISM AT THE CUTTING EDGE

(This was written in 2017.)

## **RECEPTIONIST JOKE 1**

These days when you see new houses for sale – ordinary ones about £300000 (maybe). Then, a few at £450000 - £550000..... And it says (regarding the latter) – ‘Architect designed’.

So who designs the ‘ordinary’ £300000 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.

## **ON THE 'SANS CULOTTES' 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 Spencer's bosses at any rate – when I visited one of their stores recently there were

loads of posters advertising ‘big knickers’ in their 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.]

PS This provided the inspiration for my ‘no pants’ series of books.

See my website:

[www.AmoryPublishing.co.uk/Erotica](http://www.AmoryPublishing.co.uk/Erotica)

for details.

Note: (added in 2022). Regarding this article, it is particularly relevant that it was written in 2017. Between 2010 and 2017 the sans culottes craze was going full steam ahead, but it was very much reduced with the onset of the Me-Too movement in late 2017.

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

# **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.

Another SAMPLE bit of writing

## **ON THE NHS**

The NHS seems to have become, over the last few years, sort of ‘fundamentalist Christian’, in the sense that they suddenly have decided that it’s ‘right’ to try to make it very ‘plain’ and ‘upfront’ when it comes to side-effects of drugs, for example, on the drug notes which are often shown to patients.

Not only that, but from my own previous knowledge, doctors tend to be lousy mathematicians (and in particular, lousy statisticians) – I can recall that the people I knew (at school) who went in for doctoring just about all gave up mathematics at an early stage. For what they seem to be doing is forgetting the fundamental rule of statistics which is to take full account of other factors which might encroach on ‘the situation in hand’.

Probably quite a high percentage of ‘seri-

ous' tablets have quite a lot of quite serious possible side-effects. This has probably always been known. But they (the NHS) have suddenly decided that these should all be listed for the patients to see. The trouble is that this is apparently being done even when the risk is low (which was never done before, I don't think), and all this is doing is creating very great fear among patients. For example, I know someone who has a fairly serious disorder (but not that serious), who was told that he will probably have a heart attack in 10 years because of his medication. And I'm sure that all this is just basically 'very awful mathematics'.

The situation in mental health, for example, is even worse. I happen to know that some of the drugs they use to treat mental disorders are now thought to have quite horrendous side-effects. And patients are being given the drug notes, which show these, with the result that it almost seems as if you're 'committing suicide' by taking them.

Patients are told that they cause heart disease, and lots of other major illnesses.

But I'm sure that all this is basically just unbelievable incompetence on the part of the NHS. All that is actually known is that mental patients tend to die younger. As is well known, people who are comfortably off tend to live longer than those who are poorer – and mentally ill people tend to die sooner than 'ordinary' poor people – that is just a fact of life.

But there are all sorts of reasons for this. For example, a very high percentage of those who are diagnosed with a (serious) mental health problem not only become 'long term unemployed', but never work again (even if they are very young when it happens). That is obviously very unhealthy. A lot of them live on 'junk food'. And psychiatrists and their staff have encouraged mental patients to smoke – or they did until quite recently. Many mental patients more



or less chain smoke, at a time when that is now very rare.

Another thing is that mentally ill men are very often made more or less impotent by the drugs that they take. Whether this is deliberate or a coincidence no-one seems to know, but I have my suspicions that it is deliberate, because I also happen to know that quite a few mentally ill women are sterilised.

I'm sure this (either becoming impotent [men] or sterilised [women]) reduces the 'life affirming force' (called the self-actualizing tendency by famous psychologist Carl Rogers) in people which would probably reduce life expectancy.

Interestingly, someone told me (a male mental patient) that about every 3 years the psychiatric nurses go through a questionnaire with you to see if you have any of the side-effects that the drugs cause. There are about 100 questions. Just about

every possible side-effect is mentioned except whether the person has experienced impotency. Instead of this the question asked is whether the person can reach a climax. Now, just about any man can reach a climax, whether they are impotent or not.....

This means the NHS hides the fact that a high percentage of men with a mental health problem are made impotent by their medication.

[I know all these things because I had a drink problem, and went into hospital (a mental hospital) because of it. I have written about this elsewhere.]

## **WHAT ARE YOU GIRLS 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.

## **HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED**

When I was young I worked for an engineering company and therefore there were far more men than women working there. We used to have parties to go to about twice a month on a Saturday, but there were always about 5 times as many men as there were women.

But in the pubs there were lots of women, and these pubs were busy every night.

These days (in my home town anyway) in the pubs things have deteriorated so much. They are only busy on Friday and Saturday nights now, and then often only after 10. Nearly everyone stays indoors till then.

And though, for a couple of hours anyway, they are very busy, they are just like those parties when I worked for the engineering company – about 5 times as many men as there are women. Goodness knows what

all the young women do these days.

But my mother, who is in her eighties, has a careworker once a day, and a lot of them are young women. And they talk to my Mum about their relationships, and – what I was amazed to hear – it seems that nearly all of them meet their boyfriends online these days. So maybe that explains a lot.

One thing has changed for the better, though. These days quite a lot of young women go out on a Friday or Saturday night without any knickers on. You don't even have to be particularly observant to notice it. 3 or 4 times a night (typically) it will happen – girl in a short skirt will cross or uncross her legs 4 or 5 feet in front of you, and there she all is. She probably knows you have just seen what she's made of, but doesn't bat an eyelid.

That never ever happened to me in my twenties.

## **WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?**

What madness is it, that caused those tests for Alzheimer's disease to be invented and for the NHS (apparently) to encourage people to take them (whether one is likely to get the disease in 10 years). Surely that is the last thing any person in their right mind would want to know. To me, it is ridiculous that anyone should recommend people to have this test. The only winners are the insurance companies.

Actually, even for doctors to go to lengths to deliberately look for the early signs seems to me to be rank stupidity. (The author's father died of Alzheimer's disease.)

# **A CRITICISM OF WHAT SEEMS TO BE CURRENT PRACTICE IN EDUCATION – TEACHERS 'PLAYING THE PSYCHIATRIST'**

When I was a child, at school, I believe I am right in saying that teachers virtually never got involved in 'psychology' (I'm actually talking about 'psychological labelling'). Of course, some children were more badly behaved than others, some were more 'highly strung' than others, or more easily upset. That goes without saying. But I believe that teachers almost always deliberately steered clear of making 'medical interpretations'.

And I think that was a very good thing.

But I believe that things may have changed.

I have overheard locally (in a coffee shop



actually) teachers talking about children in their charge – the emotional/ mental side of it – using medical terminology and, for various reasons, I think that is very foolish.

Firstly, I think it is very unprofessional to be having discussions like this in coffee shops anyway – who knows who might be listening (people like me, for instance!)

Secondly, with almost certainly a very crowded curriculum regarding teacher training, I doubt whether it can be possible for trainee teachers to have more than a very few lectures on emotional/ mental/ medical subjects regarding children, and I just don't think this would be sufficient at all, to start 'playing the psychiatrist'.

But this is what these teachers, in this coffee shop, appeared to be doing.

Maybe they were mavericks and this was very much the exception.