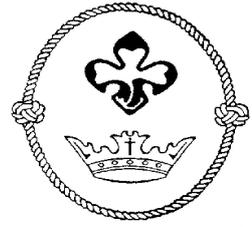




Postscript



362: 5th Week, Hilary 2005

Oh, No!



The Winter Walking quotes return to haunt you on page 7...

Plus:

Revenge Is Sweet

OUSGG takes on the Internet con-men

Controversy!

An article provokes debate!

Postscript



Issue 362 – Second of Hilary
2005

An OUSGG publication

Editor: Alistair Green (St Hugh's)

Distributor: Mark Hawkins
(Queen's)

Chair: Gail Hedley (Magdalen) and
the Anarchic Collective.

Chair-elect: J. Roger Cotes
(Somerville)

Treasurer: Sam Snelson (Wadham)

Secretary and Annual Dinner
organiser: Catherine Blake
(St Anne's)

N'n'N organiser: Jacqui Bradley (St
Hugh's)

Internet Officer: Sarah Berman
(Queen's)

Membership: Jonathan Harvey
(Brookes University)

SSAGO Rep.: Melody James (St
Peter's)

Scout & Guide Liaison: Katherine
Butler (Queen's)

Quartermaster: Michael Ramsden
(St Peter's)

Old Members' Rep.: Chris Seward
(ex-Jesus)

Senior Member: Gavin Williams
(St Peter's).

All correspondence and articles to
postscript@ousgg.org.uk or by post /
pidge to Alistair Green, St Hugh's
College, Oxford. **Deadline for issue
363: Friday Seventh Week (4th March).**
Or else!

Any items received will be presumed to
be for publication unless otherwise
notified. The editor reserves the right to
modify contributions.

Views expressed in *Postscript* are those
of their authors, and might not
correspond to those of OUSGG or
associated bodies.

Printed and published in Oxford.

© Oxford University Scout and Guide
Group 2005. All rights reserved.

Editorial

In 1995, chemists reported the discovery of two new natural products, named *coniochaetone A* and *B*, with anti-fungal properties. These molecules were discovered in a mould which grows on lemming dung.

Let's just stop and think about that for a moment. It means that one day, ten years ago, a chemist must have been walking in the Arctic circle and come across some decomposing rodent faeces. Intrigued, he or she then picked the turd up, took it back to the lab, painstakingly separated it out into all of its constituent compounds and obtained a proton nuclear magnetic resonance spectrum for each one in order to determine its structure. Then they put a drop of each compound onto a fungus and waited to see what would happen.

What has this got to do with Scouting, I hear you ask? Not a lot. But what has it got to do with OUSGG? Plenty. Because it proves that faffing can actually turn out to be quite useful in the long run. So, come to OUSGG every week and spend your Monday night doing something apparently futile, pointless and – let's face it – often rather silly. You never know; it might just get you a First.

Alistair Green (St. Hugh's) – Editor

A Letter to the Editor

Sir,

I write in reference to the article "The Enemy At The Gates" – penned by Mr Philip Egbert-Flumpy Alderton-Smythe, and included in *Postscript* issue 361 – about the Scout Association's position on atheism and membership.

I recently congratulated Mr Alderton-Smythe on his repeated attempts to raise such issues in *Postscript*, and he noted that his efforts to provoke debate were largely unsuccessful. I feel obliged therefore, to put forward an alternative view point on this issue, if not to provoke the debate further, then at least to ensure that other members of OUSGG are not automatically labelled (perhaps through future Googling) with the same views.

Although I in no way consider myself an expert on this particular topic, and in fact may have this totally wrong, I hope to explain to Mr Flumpy why I at least can accept things the way they are, and aim to elicit his understanding, even if not his respect, for the Scout Association's position.

Whether people like it or not, the Scout Association is an organisation with a strong religious background and foundation:

"The Scout Movement is not a religious organisation, but does expect its Members to follow a religious faith and conform to its practices. A belief in the spiritual aspect of human beings and a belief in a spiritual power greater than ourselves is

Postscript 362 – Page 3

fundamental to Membership of the Scout Movement. Religious observances are part of the regular life of the Scout Group and the wider Movement.”¹

The central message of many religions is, as I understand it, not only to provide a moral framework for people to live under, but also to make sure that they understand that worshipping the deity is equally, if not more, important than behaving in a moral way. In fact, arguably, you could take on board all of the moral messages put forward by religions, but “end up in hell” (or otherwise miss the point) if you don’t get down to some basic worshipping as well.

Whatever the exact (and clearly not particularly tangible) consequences of not getting the worship thing right, the fundamental idea – as I understand it – is that you don’t want to be in this situation. It’s the worst thing that could possibly happen to you. Ever. In a million years. In fact, for eternity. Etc.

The point I’m trying to make here, is that in the eyes of those who believe (including, presumably, those who write the Scout Association’s Equal Opportunities policy), not believing in a god is about the worst thing that you could possibly do - worse than being a paedophile or financial fraudster etc.

Mr Egbert-Flumpy suggests that the Association is about development of young people, and just because someone happens to be a hard core atheist, this doesn’t stop them leading kids and helping them develop. To explain why this doesn’t fit with the Scout Association, I have thought of an analogy:

Say we have a candidate for a teaching job – geography – who is a great teacher in all respects and can teach the children about all aspects of the subject, plus look after a form, be head of department and run after-school sports clubs. Unfortunately, they are firmly of the belief that the world is flat. Would we let them teach? I would argue that we wouldn’t. Why not? Because kids believe teachers, and we’d run the risk of churning out kids with incorrect beliefs.

Now, if the government/parents/society wouldn’t risk turning out a bunch of kids who just believed that the world was flat (with the only real consequence being that they wouldn’t be much interested in travel by sea), imagine how people who think that to not believe in a god will result in some sort of eternal roasting of the soul would approach the risk of letting atheists run Scout Groups?

I can certainly see the point, whether or not I happen to agree with it myself. If I thought that my opinion mattered in the slightest, I might suggest that the Association could (on the whole) do more to make the religious link more prominent in it’s activities (to promote the very free thought and questioning that Mr Smythe proposes in his article). Fortunately, it’s got nothing to do with me, and I know it’s all there in the rules anyway.

I for one thought it was a shame when a really good District Scouter we had back home got busted out of the movement for declaring open atheism, but I do at least understand why. Religious organisations understand and accept that they may become “laughing stocks” through such policies – such has been the case since the dawn of time. I think the point is that they’re supposed to have the last (eternal) laugh, isn’t it?

So there you go... light the blue touch paper and retire, as they say. Other views on this are welcome, especially from those members of the group who know more about this sort of stuff than me. Does anyone know what the deal is these days on equal opportunities in related “sectors” (e.g. devil worshippers going to work for churches and that sort of thing)?

Chris Seward, CBE

Ex-Jesus

¹ <http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/library/hqdocs/eqopps/eo-rel-a.htm>

Thank You!!!

Says Natalie Jones

Over the past twelve months, Girlguiding UK has run a fund-raising scheme called “Walks for the World”. Those of you who were on Winter Walking™ may have heard me mention this a few times... Don’t worry, I’m not after money any more, so you can read the whole of this article without fear!

The idea of the scheme was to raise at least half a million pounds to be distributed 50-50 between local guiding and WAGGGS. This meant that less than £1 needed to be raised by each member through activities with a walking theme.

The practical work of WAGGGS helps to develop Guiding throughout the world. They help girls and young women around the world to fulfil their own potential and make a valuable contribution to their communities. For instance in the Ukraine a community project was set up to provide services to young, single, low-income mothers. It gave them access to free consultations with doctors, psychologists and lawyers and the opportunity to improve their situation. In Brazil, Guides worked on a project aimed at reducing malnutrition in under-privileged families by setting up community allotments and cultivating

**“All in all
OUSGG has
managed to
raise £52”**

orchards. In the Philippines, Girl Scouts have contributed to a variety of environmental campaigns, including tree planting and litter picking. Guides in South Africa have been educated about HIV/AIDS and how to protect themselves.

Since OUSGG is under the Guiding and Scouting umbrella, and we run a “walking” trip each year, I thought it would be good if the group took part.

I bided my time, and after large amounts of alcohol had been consumed (ahem, walks had been walked) I asked if you would be prepared to make a donation. The collection from the trip raised £15, with a further £12 coming in from Jo and Caroline’s refunds. Caroline had also been raising money making and selling home-made cards. Not quite sure what kind of walk this is, but the extra £25 was gratefully received! So all in all OUSGG has managed to raise £52 for the scheme. Thank you!!! We are meant to receive a certificate, which I was hoping to publish in *Postscript*. However, I suspect many of you will have graduated before it arrives. My Guide unit received theirs the other week - their fund-raising activity was in October!

You can breathe out now; I’ve nearly finished. I just wanted to say a big **THANK YOU** to everyone who contributed!

Words of Wisdom

Caroline: I know where we are; I just don’t know where we’re going!

Jacqui: They’re probably under me; most things were...

Michael: I could *possibly* acquire a couple of green tentacles...

Gillian: Shooting monkeys is more interesting.

Gillian: I was thinking we could use [the OUSGG dining service] for mating rituals too.

Hayley: It was the only way I could fit my anatomy round that lady.

Gillian: *You’re* the person responsible for freezing my monkey!

How Are You?

Jacqui Bradley and Hayley Thompson are philosophers. *If anything really exists, that is.*

We are British, so of course we always ask each other how we are.

‘Hello! How are you?’

‘Fine thanks, you?’

Does this seem familiar? When was the last time you answered, ‘I’m really happy, thanks’? Somehow, it’s always the other stuff that comes to mind. The bus was late. You have too much work and too little time. Your foot hurts. We think this should be changed! But how? Is it as easy as it sounds?

Happiness comes in many forms and has many causes, and obviously this will differ from person to person. But the general idea is the same. So we’re going to set you a few challenges. (And the fact that you’re not going to be assessed on it should be a cause for happiness in itself!)

What, or who, makes you happy? It doesn’t always have to be the big or obvious things. Here are a few of our ideas (although we’re not saying who thought of them!). Reading a book in the bath. A good walk. Chatting with friends. Knowing that you’ve met your targets and can go out with a clear conscience (sad but true). You get the idea, so make your own list.

When was the last time you felt happy? Can you even remember the last time you were happy? Were you even aware that you felt happy? It’s so easy to take it for granted when it’s there, and difficult to recall the feeling when it’s gone. Maybe we should try and be more aware of the times we feel happy and make the most of them. Perhaps we could even store them away to help us through the not so happy times. Next time that feeling strikes, make a note in your diary and we think you’ll be surprised how often it occurs.

There seems to be an unwritten rule that you should never admit to being happy, but why do we follow it? Sometimes it is inappropriate to show that you are happy – a grieving friend doesn’t want to know all about your fantastic weekend. On the other hand, when life doesn’t seem so good, it can sometimes help to know that other people are happy. Being reminded that happiness exists, and that it could be just round the next corner, can sometimes help.

So be daring and break the rules. Admit to your happiness and see what happens.²

Kit Order

After the incident in Milan last summer³, it would be fair to say that we are, as Phil put it, “the most fashionable student society in Oxford.” So it’s only fitting that we should have our very own stylish attire. If you’ve been harbouring the insatiable desire to own a T-shirt with everyone’s favourite panda on the back, or indeed an official OUSGG rugby shirt, then don’t miss this once-in-a-lifetime (well, OK, once-in-a-year) opportunity! Within the next few weeks, Gillian will be ordering some custom-made kit from Shirtworks, and an order form should appear in your email inbox soon.

² Just like the Slim Fast advertisements, we’ve been trying for a couple of weeks. It’s not always easy but it seems to be worth the effort. Feel free to remind us of this in June!

³ See *Postscript 359*, page 5 – Ed.

OUSGG's Newest Member?

Recruited by a reader who shall remain anonymous for his own safety.

With the vast quantities of spam emails sent nowadays, no doubt many of you will have received emails that read like the following:

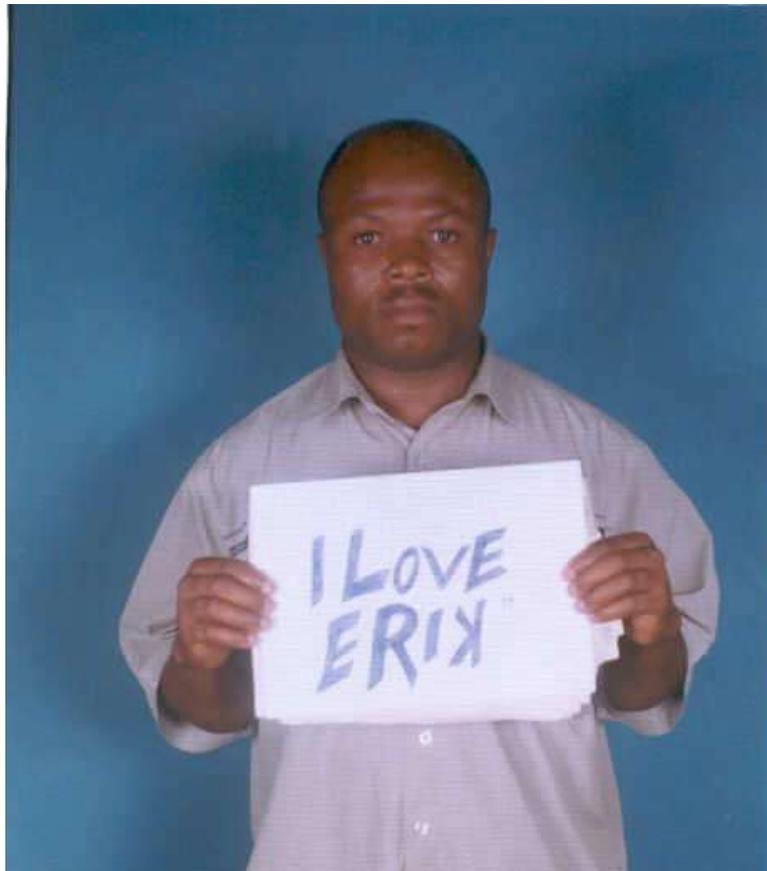
“Dear Sir/Madam;

I am the above named person from Malaysia but now undergoing medical treatment. I am married to Dr. George Newman who worked with Malaysia embassy in South Africa for nine years before he died in the year 2000...

...When my late husband was alive he deposited the sum of \$27.6 Million (twenty-seven Million six hundred thousand U.S. Dollars) with one finance/security company in Europe...”

Badly worded, poorly spelled and offering rewards beyond your wildest dreams in a “100% risky free deal”, all that is required of you is that the money be transferred into your account in order to bypass local regulations etc. You just need to pay a small fee to get things moving. And a slightly larger fee to obtain the right forms. And a yet larger one to bribe some officials. And, before you know it, you're looking at a hole where your bank account used to be. Of course, it is a scam. Or an ‘Advanced Fee Fraud’ (or ‘419’ scam after the Nigerian penal code containing it) to give it its proper title.

But as can be seen it is possible to flip the scam on its head. Using a false name, email address, fax number etc. and posing as a rich business man or priest, one can demand items of trust from the scammer or ‘mugu’. So here I present Lawrence Peterside, supposedly a lawyer in Amsterdam, showing his heartfelt feelings to our 31 year old mascot.



Anyway, I have to go now and explain to Lawrence why I didn't manage to get to Amsterdam over the weekend...

Winter Walking Exposed

All the quotes you thought you'd got away with...

- Andrew:** I like 'P's and 'H's.
- Alison:** I kept poo in the fridge. I was hoping my house mates wouldn't notice.
- Alison:** I can't eat the chocolate ones.
Sarah: Why?
Alison: They've got chocolate in!
- Andrew:** I'd quite like to try "Therapy".
Phil (explaining "Therapy"): The basic aim is to get six little pegs in your couch.
Alison: That sounds painful!
Phil: Couch, not crotch!
- Alison:** Blokes don't count!
- Sarah (to Gillian):** So, how charming do you think Mark is?
- Mark:** It depends how into physics you are.
- Andrew:** I quite like my legs.
- Keith (to Sarah):** Have you been "Barnsley'd"?
- Jenny:** Has anyone not been "Wooden spooned"?

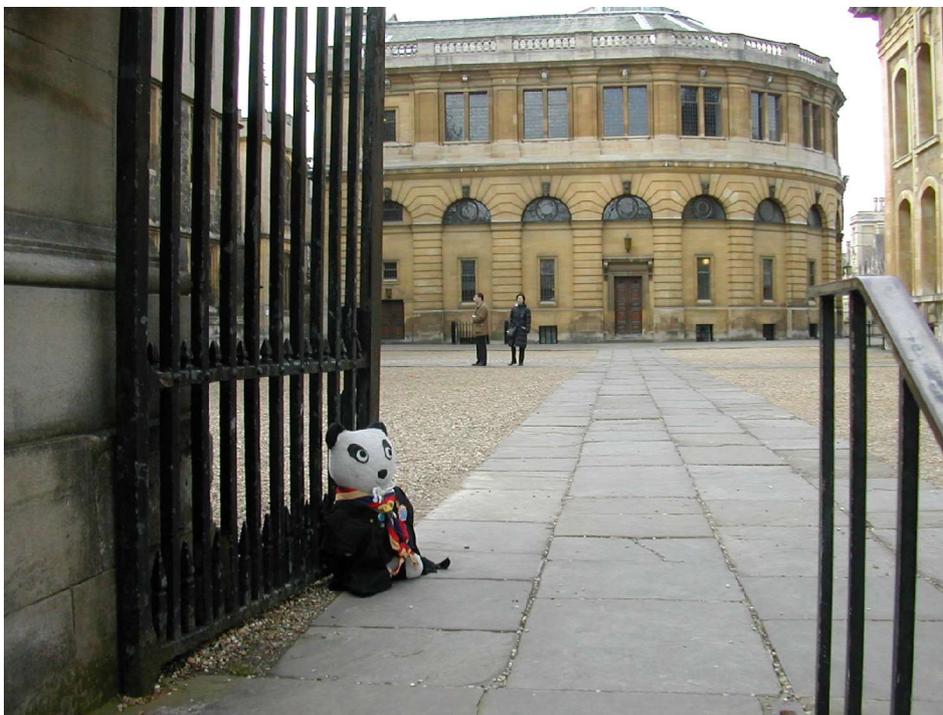


"Who, me?"

Out And About With EriK



EriK and Jacqui managed to find some time to go out in one of the few bits of nice weather recently, and EriK was quite happy to sit down and have his photo taken. The photo in the last issue was taken when EriK accompanied Jacqui to the Bod on Saturday morning and they stopped to look at the Sheldonian.



And Finally, The Winter Walking Quote Of The Year Award Goes To...

Jacqui (to Phil): “What would look pretty in our little bed?”