

It's 9.13 on 7th April 2014, the drawing board is empty, I'm 70 next birthday, I am reasonably settled in life, and the day is mine. Mine to do what I want to do.

In life we are often pulled by the tide. We learn to walk and talk and, encouraged by our parents, we improve our abilities. Told that we must use our childhood to get the best out of school, then the best job, then to save, buy a house, raise children, be a good parent, grandparent.

With all of these aims to work at it is hardly surprising that we are still working towards them when the grim reaper taps us on the shoulder. We have been too busy to ask ourselves why we do what we do.

Today, 7th April 2014, I am comfortable in stating that I feel I have done all that can reasonably be asked of me. Today is my day, the day that I start asking myself those questions.

From early childhood I realised that I was no more than average. I had the advantage of being a member of a good sized family alongside the disadvantage of stretched finances. Good health but few friends.

This background taught me that success for me would be determined by the effort that I put in.

The first lesson that I can remember learning at school was in the little shop that the teacher had fashioned at the back of the classroom. I was given one coin and told to buy an item from the shop. To my surprise, having handed over the one coin, I was given the item and 3 coins, why?

My tiny brain almost exploded. It did not make sense to me. I wanted to return and spend all 3 coins, get 3 more items and 9 coins. In this way I would be able to amass all of the contents of the shop and its money. As I was never allowed to give the correct money for the item that I wanted to purchase I remained unable to understand the concept.

Looking back on my life I can see that the shop experience has affected all of my learning. I now always look for the concept, and believe that the concept must be understood and accepted by all participants if we are to go forward without arguments or fights.

"OK," you say, "but how does this relate to me?" It relates to every part of all of our lives.

We often just accept, and go along with, what all the others do. We are so caught up with life we have no time to learn the concepts let alone question them. We spend our lives paddling without knowing, or understanding, where we are heading and more importantly what will happen when we get there.

Talking of 'paddling' I am reminded of a pot on my Mum's mantelpiece. It was a small cauldron which had a poem scratched into the pottery. The poem read:-

Love your enemies,
Trust but few,
and always paddle
your own canoe.

In turn the poem reminds me of a visit I made to a police station. I was waiting to give a lift to a person who was being released on bail.

I noticed a youth come in and I watched him as he reported in at the desk. (I think that he was on probation and had to report in on a weekly basis).

Having reported in, the lad asked the officer to arrange a car to take him home as he had no money. The officer refused and told the boy to walk. The boy then asked to use the phone to contact his mum.

Having been given the use of the phone he pleaded with his mum to come and collect him. From what I gather she was too busy and left the boy to sort it out for himself.

After further heated discussions with the policeman he came and sat down beside me. After a while we got talking. He explained his position to me as he saw it. Nobody was willing to help him.

I asked him if he would like to hear about a pot on my mum's mantelpiece. With a 'yes' reply I told him how I used to pull myself up to eye level of the mantelpiece to see the pot, and how I would ask my mum to read out the poem to me. I then recited the poem.

He looked at me through blind eyes. "yeah?" he said "and".

I asked if he understood that, when he asked for a car, he was actually asking the police to paddle for him, and that later he was asking his mum to paddle for him.

We then talked about what he wanted to have as a job, what he wanted to achieve in life, what he was good at, and so on. With his replies in mind I asked him who was going to do the paddling to get him where he wanted to go.

We carried on talking for some time. I then asked him if he would like some advice. He replied, "Yes".

My advice was for him to repeat the poem to himself and then decide if he was going to go through life asking others to do his paddling or whether he was going to do his own. At this point he stated that he now wanted to do his own paddling. I suggested that he could walk home, and with every step say to himself, "I am going to paddle my own canoe. I am going to get to where I want to be under my own steam".

He then told me that nobody had ever put it to him in such a way, that it made sense and that he would always remember me. I gave him my card and told him that, if he ever wanted to talk he was free to give me a ring.

We shook hands and he walked out from the station. I wish him well with his paddling and hope that the direction in which he chooses to paddle is a good one.

I would like to think that he would wish me well in my choice of what I do today and the associated paddling that I will need to do.

Should you decide to travel this book with me it might be helpful to know me a little better. For that reason may I give the following as a brief but honest outline of my background.

I grew up as the youngest of seven children. It was only later that I found out that Dad led a somewhat dual life which raised the total to nine (or possibly ten).

I had 4 known sisters between myself and my next eldest brother. My mother did not agree with children playing in the street. This together with very limited family funds meant that I had few friends up to the time that I joined the Boys' Brigade at the age of 12.

I served in the company for 6-years as a boy and then, until I was about to get married, as an officer. I missed only 1-Sunday and 1-Tuesday during my first 6-years (due to chicken pox).

In my third year I was made aware of the Duke of Edinburgh's award. 'Skip' (the Company Captain) pointed out on parade that one of us boys in the front row might, if they worked hard, gain the bronze, silver, and gold awards and be invited to Buckingham Palace to have the gold awarded presented. Skip explained that to achieve these awards we would have to stick at it and work hard. I learned the art of 'stickability' and gained those awards.

I remember my mum asking me if I had made arrangements for the car to take her, Skip, and myself to the palace. I told her that I now felt that gaining the award was sufficient and that I was not really interested in going to the palace. Then.....I saw her face. I realised that it was not just for me. I only gained the award with the help and backing of others.

I arranged the car and we went. Although she never showed it mum was proud. Skip was as proud or more. I heard him at a later Bible class telling all present that he, a simple Baker's Roundsman, had been to the house of the reigning monarch.

Skip was by no means ordinary. I was once the only boy that wanted to take the citizens badge. He put himself out to cycle to my house on a tandem to collect me and take me to his house for the lesson. After the class he would cycle me back and then return home on his own. There are not many cards in the pack like him.

Wherever you are Skip please understand the respect I have for you. I will never forget you or what you have done for boys like me. Since then I have recognised other 'special' people.

My working life started as a Craft Apprentice with AEI (an engineering company). I wanted to become a Design Draughtsman. Mr Bert Stack was the man in charge of Craft Apprenticeships. At my interview he spotted my Boys' Brigade badge and asked me to recite the motto. I did and was taken on.

After the next year's intake, when we happened to pass each other, he stopped me and told me that one of that year's intake was wearing a BB badge. Mr Stack then said that he immediately took him on. I was very proud of the impression that I must have made.

Some months later Mr Stack asked my manager to tell me to report to his office. My work mates thought that I was in for a rollicking. I reported to Mr Stack's Secretary, and was shown in to see Mr Stack. He sat me down and gave me an envelope to read its contents. The letter stated that Mr Stack was being awarded the British Empire Medal. He wanted me to know but made it clear that I was to tell no one else. I have never understood why he selected me and allowed me that honour.

I married Dorothy Cook in 1968. She and I attended Downham Methodist Church and for years ran the Boys' Brigade Company of that church.

At this point I must tell you a story.

Having moved from my church, where the Boys' Brigade Company was well staffed, to Dorothy's church (where the Boys' Brigade was short on staff) I found out that the Company Captain was about to leave. I was asked to take over as Captain and did.

One of the Church Circuit Ministers had a habit of flicking the back of Dorothy's hair and calling her 'the flower of the circuit'. He, however, was not too happy to be treated so informally. This annoyed me so much that when he did it the next time I poked him in the chest with my forefinger and told him to stop. I also informed him that, if he uttered as much as a single word, I would put him on his back. I was so incensed that my eyes must have glowed red at the time. He did not utter another word and the behaviour ceased.

A couple of months later I heard that Minister deliver a report at a circuit meeting. I found myself in agreement with his views. I decided that, having made it quite clear when I considered him wrong, it was incumbent on me to tell him when I felt he was correct. So I did.

During my first week in charge of the Boy's Brigade Company I found out that the boys had been told that the company was closing, there were no company funds and the annual camp (the highlight of the year) had not been arranged.

The Sunday after I took over, the visiting minister that I confronted regarding the hair flicking, came into the Boys' Brigade room and discussed our situation.

The following day Dorothy and I were driving to the other side of London to try to purchase some essential equipment for camp. When I turned off from our planned route Dorothy queried it. I said that I wanted to visit Skip to enquire how I could apply for a grant towards a marquee.

Skip said that I was too late as the meeting was planned for that evening and applications for grants must be in 14 days prior to the meeting. He suggested that I visit another person who was on that committee. I changed course to visit him straight away.

When I explained the situation to him he promised to raise the matter for us, but said that we were unlikely to be given a grant, but asked us to phone him at 10.30 that night anyway for the answer.

We were fortunate to be allowed to buy the camping equipment that we were after and on our return home we made the call.

He relayed his surprise that everybody, unusually, seemed to have time that evening to talk to him. He put our case to each of those that he met. The meeting was split on the issue but was persuaded in favour of giving us a maximum grant at the request of the Chairman. No prizes for guessing that the Chairman was the hair flicking Minister mentioned above. Coincidence after coincidence brings me to the conclusion that there is a Force out there, we only have to listen to hear it.

Perhaps speaking out in honesty and fairness to let people know how you feel can be good for all concerned.

The annual camp took place. The Company continued successfully up to the closing of that church.

Story ended.

My career as a draughtsman continued until I was 30 except for a small interlude erecting cranes hundreds of feet above the London Docks.

My career erecting cranes was a temporary affair with the explicit aim of saving a deposit for a house. The wages were not high (only 50p per hour) but with an 88 hour week gave us the opportunity to save.

Each Friday evening would see me visiting Dorothy to sort out our savings. Apart from paying mum for my board and keep at home and a gallon of petrol for our motor bike the whole of my wages would be deposited into the tin, plus Dorothy's fares to and from college. (She walked to and from college to help us save).

In seven months we saved 10% of the house price. Towards the end of the seven months we got married and moved into a rented flat as a temporary measure waiting for a mortgage offer.

The man who got me the job erecting cranes tried to get me to use my van to collect large items from the local train station and to then deliver them to the site of the crane building. He thought that this would speed up the job and increase his position in the company. I was not happy in doing regular pick-ups as it invalidated my insurance. When I refused to do more than the occasional pick-up he wanted me to leave and, to that end, made life difficult for me so that I would quit..

He gave me a 2-man job to do on my own. This required me to climb 12 m up the inside of a leg of the crane to put a bolt up through the crane deck and wedge a spanner onto it. I would then have to return to the ground, climb up the outside of the crane leg to put a spring, washers, and nut onto the bolt. The bolt was then to be tightened. I then had to repeat these actions until all 5600 bolts were in place.

I carried on in the best way that I could day after day. Each day he would come and ask me how I was doing (hoping that I would refuse to carry on with the work). As I needed the job to get the mortgage I just said, "Fine" and carried on (a mixture of stickability and bloody mindedness).

With that job done he gave me another difficult job. This one was to bolt 1metre by 3metre steel plates onto the side of the crane. The plates needed three men to lift each one and then another to bolt it into position. To do the job on my own I raised each plate by levering it up inch by inch and inserting timber underneath. Each day he asked the question and was given the same reply.

The day I returned from honeymoon I was given the bad news of a possible move for me (requiring me to work up in Scotland). When the day came when I was told to go to Scotland I refused. He laughed and said that I would not now be able to get the mortgage. I smiled and replied that it came through the day before.

I left and returned to my drawing office career (which lasted until I was almost 30).

One day Dorothy and I took a bunch of Boys' Brigade lads to Lewisham Fire Station as part of their work towards the Fireman's Badge. It was during that visit I had an overwhelming feeling that I **should** become a fireman. I could not say from where or whom this came, but the message was clear. I applied and joined a few weeks later. I made a promise to myself to serve the people of London to the best of my ability.

I will summarise my 16 year fire service career very briefly as a full account could fill several books and Court time. In fact I will not use my own words but a page from the Disciplinary Tribunal that sacked me.

The page I will use is that of the Brigade's character witness referring to my service. This witness was the Station Commander of Lee Green Fire Station. This man, on a number of occasions, asked for me to visit his office. During these visits he would offer me a coffee and then proceed to ask my opinion on a number of matters relating to the running of the station.

If the Brigade's choice of witness was made in an effort to destroy my character and/or credibility, or integrity, they chose the wrong man.

Chairman of disciplinary committee: Please pay attention to the clerk.

THE CLERK: A.D.O. Bradshaw, you have been called to give evidence in connection with a charge brought under the Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 1985 against Leading Fireman Burrows. You are now on duty and, as a member of the Brigade, it is your duty to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and you must understand that if knowingly make a false or misleading statement you will render yourself liable to disciplinary action.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you understand?

A. Yes, sir, I do.

MR EMMERSON: (Council for the Brigade) What is your full rank?

A: Assistant Divisional Officer.

Q. And you are stationed where?

A. I was Station Commander at Lee Green Fire Station.

Q. And how long have you known Leading Fireman Burrows?

A. It was for approximately six months, from July, 1988 until Leading Fireman Burrows was transferred to New Cross in February 1989.

Q. What can you tell us about Leading Fireman Burrows?

A. I have some notes here; can I refer to these, please?

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly, yes.

Mr EMMERSON: Please go on.

A. This is a brief history of Leading Fireman Burrows' career in the London Fire Brigade. He enrolled on 6th January 1975, and has served at Woodside, Bromley, Brixton, Southwark, Lee Green and of course New Cross fire stations.

He is a qualified Brigade driver of heavy goods vehicles. He was promoted to Leading Fireman on 23rd February 1981, and he has performed some temporary promotion in the rank of Leading Firefighter and Sub-Officer at various locations, including Croydon, Forest Hill and Bromley fire station branches.

He has passed leading fireman and Sub-Officer written and practical examinations, Station Officers written examination, and both the graduate and member examinations of the Institute of Fire Engineers.

He listens with attention to lectures on all subjects and he displays interest in the subsequent round of discussion and questions, making relevant points, and asking pointed questions when the need arose.

His performance on the fire ground was good. He displayed leadership and initiative when called for and can be relied upon to carry out any task which he is set. Also his performance at drills was good, both as a participant and as the officer in charge. He readily carries out instructions, pays attention to detail and offers encouragement and constructive comment during drill and in subsequent de-briefs.

He is always neat and tidy in appearance. I have no reason to doubt his loyalty and trustworthiness.

He reacts well to discipline on the fire ground, at drills and at all other times around the station. He readily accepts and proceeds in accordance with decisions even decisions which he may not agree with and which go against suggestions he may have made.

I have always found he treats both officers and colleagues with respect and courtesy at all times.

To my knowledge there are no current notices on file (?) on his personal record and also to my knowledge he has no meritorious awards.

I would like to end by saying I have always considered Leading Fireman Burrows a mature and capable individual who did his job well.

MR EMERSON: Thank you. I have no further questions

NOTE:- At this point I must explain that whilst at school I befriended a lad who was being bullied. He was the Station Officer in charge at Old Kent Road Fire Station when I was sent there for a while. During my stay he received a request from headquarters to prepare a plan of the station. When I realised he was unable to carry out such a task I offered to prepare one for him (after all, I had worked on the drawing board for many years). He accepted my offer, I did the job, and he then submitted it as his own work to gain personal advantage.

Thinking that he was able to do such work senior officers asked him to prepare further drawings. On receipt of these requests he had little option but to ask me to do the work for him. For better or worse I did the work and he continued to be credited for it.

Back to the disciplinary paperwork:-

Cross examined by MR BLOOMFIELD (My Barrister)

MR BLOOMFIELD: The only thing I want to ask you Mr Bradshaw is, are you aware that before he joined the London Fire Brigade, Mr Burrows was a Design Draughtsman?

A. Yes, Sir, I am.

Q. Are you aware that whilst he has been employed by the Brigade he has, free of charge, out of his own pocket, designed plans and modifications for three fire stations, Southwark, Clapham and West Norwood?

A. No, Sir, I was not aware of that.

Questioned by the tribunal:

CLLR. FITZGERALD: ADO Bradshaw, you are the **Brigade's** witness?

A. Yes.

Q. And I think you will agree that your written report which you have just read to us was a glowing one?

A. It is fairly good.

Q. Could you just remind us what you said about the examinations that Leading Fireman Burrows has passed?

A. Yes, Sir. He has passed the Leading Firefighters and Sub-Officers written and practical examinations, the Station Officers written examinations, and both the examinations for graduate and Membership of the Institute of Fire Engineers

Q. Speaking objectively, would you consider that somebody with as good a character record as you have read out and having the qualifications that you also read out to us would have been a good candidate for promotion from Leading Fireman to a higher rank?

A. Yes, Sir, he has certainly got all the qualifications for promotion right up to Station Officer.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Note:- The above, whilst accurate, is not the full picture. There is no higher qualification for firefighters. The Chief Officer of the time is believed to have passed the Station Officers (and therefore allowed to be credited as a graduate of the Institute) He had not passed the examinations for Membership of the Institute.

Back to the hearing again:-

The tribunal awarded me a dishonourable discharge (I was sacked).

The problem started when I made formal allegations against principal officers for abuse of authority/neglect of duty. These allegations should have been forwarded to another Brigade for investigation. When the Brigade failed to do this I made representations to my MP who wrote to the Brigade on the matter. Their reply included a claim that my behaviour was strident and irrational. I was also interviewed at my station on the subject of being irrational. I therefore booked sick and asked to see the medical officer to check that I was fit to carry out operational duties. They ignored my request to see the medical officer and 'asked' me to ride in charge of an appliance. When I refused they suspended me, charged me and finally dismissed me for disobeying a lawful 'order'.

I believe that ADO Bradshaw's statement as a character witness speaks for itself.

Clearly, for me to carry out my duties as an operational fire fighting officer I have to make rational decisions. For me to continue to issue orders to my team after my MP is told that I am irrational is unworkable. I was duty bound to ask the medical officer to check me out.

By removing myself from operational duties until my rational was clarified gave the Brigade a choice.

Choice 1 If the medical officer decided that I was rational the Brigade would then have to provide a full answer as to why they did not comply with my request to investigate those Senior Officers.

Choice 2 If the medical officer decided that I was irrational I would then be left on paid sick leave until I was declared rational and then provide my MP with the answer.

A lose/lose choice for them. The only solution was to manipulate a situation to sack me, thus leaving the most senior officers to rule without being accountable to the discipline regulations that they were using to remove me.

It must be understood that no fire brigade would be likely to employ a firefighter who had been sacked by another brigade.

In preparation for life after the Brigade my wife and I spent our spare time building up a Stationery, Printing and Planning business. The running of this business was passed to another company, under a management agreement, for a period of up to two years whilst I was on suspension.

On return from holiday on the 28th July 1990 I was met with the letter from the Brigade informing me that I had been sacked as of the 6th July. Two days later I received another letter, from the management company, stating that they were entering into voluntary liquidation. They helped themselves to £13,000 of my stock, transferred all of my valued customers to another shop in which they were involved and left.

I was then in a position of being responsible for providing for my family of six, paying the mortgage on our house, and the rent on the shop that we were leasing, all without a job, stock and customers.

I therefore advised my mortgage company of the position and informed them that I would pay as much as I was able during the coming year. They offered me a 12 month payment holiday which I refused as I wanted to try to keep up the payments. During the following 12 months we managed to pay 10 of the 12 months payments. Their response was to threaten to take the house from us. The reason? The options they had offered were to pay nothing for the twelve months or all 12 payments. Us paying 10 months did not fit the bill. We solved the problem by going without for a time to scrape up the extra two payments.

I came to the conclusion that what does not kill you makes you stronger.

My life, thus far, has been quite eventful. These events have not killed me so perhaps I am now the stronger.

Most of my fire fighting friends considered me unwise in fighting for what I believed to be right. They are entitled to their opinions & they might well be right, but I felt compelled to stand up and fight for what I believed to be a just cause.

I love playing football especially when the odds are against me. Victory is then much sweeter. It would be silly only playing when you are sure to win. The same logic applies when you fight for a cause.

My nature is to speak up even if I find myself unsupported.

My choice is to be honest even if it may attract criticism or isolation.

Writing this book gives the reader the opportunity to give credibility to my thought or support the belief that I am indeed irrational.

It was my choice to speak up against the actions of those senior officers knowing that it would be likely that I would have to pay for it with the loss of my job.

Before taking the action that brought about my dismissal I asked my wife for her views. I will always be grateful that she backed me up, and I will always strive to repay for the hardship that she, and our children, suffered as a result of my actions.

I was an also-ran at school up to the age of around 12. The financial circumstances at home meant that I was one of the worst dressed boys in my class. In my junior school I was never chosen to run an errand for the teacher. Only once was I picked out to do a job for her (It was to clean out the inkwells). It was only years later it dawned on me that she considered that it would not matter if I spilled ink on my clothes because they were already tatty.

I found that I was never given good marks for work that relied on the teacher's view. I did far better with finite subjects where the answer was either right or wrong. Maths I did well, in composition and other written work I was way down the list. At the age of 12 that changed. Each morning the teacher would write 10 simple words on the board. On the Friday we have a spelling test on these words. With less than 15 correct out of 20 correctly spelled we would be rewarded with six strokes of the cane. The first week half the class were caned (including me). The second week only two boys (I was not one).

Mr Whitehorn (my teacher) had a habit of sitting on the corner of my desk and speaking to the class over my head. At the end of the year he pointed to one boy and announced that they had done well by climbing from 10th in the class to 8th. Another had slipped from 6th to 12th. He then chose to point out that the boy that had done best was not the one in 1st place (as he had only climbed two places) but the boy in 22nd place as he had risen from 32nd place. It took a minute or two to realise that I was that boy. The six strokes of the cane had had an effect.

The next year I was top of the class and remained there for the rest of my school days by a widening gap. From then on I excelled at the finite subjects. My best one was Technical Drawing.

I find it hard to believe but only two weeks after starting the new subject of technical drawing the teacher gave me half the class. He would, after checking I knew how to do it, ask the class to prepare a drawing. He would then provide help to those that needed it in two rows with me doing the same in the other two rows.

It is with this background I have found myself always seeking to find the basic rules that govern each of the problems that face me. Find the rules, apply them, and solve the problem.

At about the same time that I faced the spelling chapter I experienced my introduction to the maths lessons of Mr Pazyk (pronounced pash ook). Mr Pazyk was a refugee from Poland, leaving his country of birth when Mr Hitler invaded it.

Mr Pazyk had his own unique method of teaching. His lessons would each follow the same pattern. Reciting the times tables, then some mental arithmetic problems and finally talking about an everyday event of a mathematical nature, and a discussion as to how to solve the problem; then using the solution to solve more difficult problems. This enabled us to understand the usefulness and logics of maths. It made sense and we saw maths as useful.

It was then that I engaged in a little dishonesty. At the start of my first lesson he asked us in turn to stand up and announce our name. When I stood up and said 'Graham Burrows' he stopped me and asked if I had a brother 'Colin'. When I said yes he told me that Colin was one of his best pupils and that he hoped I would be Colin's equal.

When it came to the mental arithmetic he called out something like 6 plus 8 divide 2 squared plus 9 equals.....? I decided, irrespective of whether I knew the answer, that I would immediately put my hand up. Because of Colin's reputation I guessed that I would not be chosen to give the answer. This lasted for a week or so until on one occasion mine was the only hand raised. He paused and then asked me to tell the class the answer. I was found out!

My reward was a machine gun slapping of my buttock with a stick. These rewards were administered in as friendly a way as possible with the aim of keeping the individual, and class, as attentive as possible. After that my maths improved in leaps and bounds.

Mr Pazyk & Mr Whitehorn have taught me more than Maths and Spelling. By being a pupil of theirs I came to understand myself much better. I became aware that I am basically lazy. Knowing this I had to make rules for myself that would overcome this inherent laziness.

Few people I know would agree with me that I am a lazy person, but I know that I am. In order to overcome this laziness I set myself realistic achievable targets. Each time I meet a target I reinforce my belief that I can achieve. After so many years of reaching targets I can set myself ever more demanding new ones.

When I became a fireman I decided that I would study for promotion for 1-hour each day. Each day meant **every** day. That included Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. This was how a pleb like me was able to pass all of the Fire Brigade promotion exams both written and practical plus Graduate and Membership of the Institute in six years.

It was only recently that I was told about the experiment with a group of mice and their pecking order. Numbered 1 to 10 with number one being the one at the top of the pecking order. In the experiment the number 10 mouse, who was constantly being bullied, was removed and put in a cage on its own. After a time that mouse got used to not being bullied. With 10 removed 9 became the one that was always bullied. After a while number 9 was removed and put in with number 10. Number 10, who was now used to not being bullied, now became No. 1 in the new group with No. 9 being his No. 2.

After a further while No. 8 was removed and placed into the second group. He then became No. 3, with 9 being 2 and 10 being 1.

This carried on until the second group was made up of all 10 mice but with the pecking order completely reversed.

To me it seems that by setting ourselves targets and achieving them we become more capable. The reverse must therefore also be true. If we do not set ourselves targets we become less capable and end up being dominated by others.

I never found it easy to stick at things. Perhaps I owe the credit to Skip when he set me the challenge of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, or to Mr Whitehorn with the challenge on spelling, or the Fire Brigade when they removed my means of supporting my family.

Whoever it was, "Thank you very much".

It must also be remembered that, with regard to my spelling and maths, failure was not an acceptable option as it involved physical punishment. Later targets were self imposed with failure a result that I alone was not prepared to accept.

Are we prepared to let others set all of our targets or do we gain control by setting ourselves targets. We have to decide for ourselves the direction and the effort to take our canoe to where we wish to be.

I remember helping my future father in law sort out jumble in the storeroom at our church. I told him that his daughter and I were going to save and buy a house. The look on his face left me in no doubt that he considered it an impossible dream, possibly because he had been unable to do that for himself. With much determination (as explained earlier) we did get our house. Some three years later Dorothy's parents managed to do the same.

During my years attending the fire service college I was aware that I was older than the average student. The others, having left school more recently than myself, seemed more receptive to retaining new information.

The learning method chosen by the other students was to quiz each other each week on the growing mountain of information being fed down our throats. I found myself drowning in the new information. I needed to understand the information in order to file it in the correct place so that I could easily retrieve it when required.

I reverted to the method practised by Mr Pazyk. First of all to ask as many questions as necessary until you really understand what is being said. Then it is possible to store the information (along with other known related facts) so that it could be retrieved easily.

Although the tutor was happy to help by answering my never ending questions, the other students found them a distraction and often told me to 'shut the f___ up' and other such well known phrases and sayings.

I felt that the masses of information being fed to us would stay on the desk top in our minds until we were able to file it away on the disk drive of our minds. Unfortunately, just like a computer, as the amount left on the desktop increases the speed of the computer reduces. But if the desktop contains only that which is necessary the speed of the computer is kept at its optimum.

The result was that, by the third week, most students' minds were visibly sinking, and unable to take in more data.

I do not claim to be intelligent - quite the opposite! I had just used the tool that Mr Pazyk had given me. Simplify the problem until you understand it, then file it away in its proper place for easy retrieval.

I now invite you to take a trip inside my head to take a look at things in the way that I see them.

I would like to warn you that you may not like what you see. If so then show me a different view.

Cards 1

Ever played a friendly family game of cards at Christmas?

Do you use Smarties for counters or perhaps matches, buttons, or pennies?

In our family we generally play 'Newmarket' and we play for buttons. The game is very simple and can be picked up in a few minutes. This enables people of all abilities to play, adults, children and even the old (like me).

The whole family enjoy the game. Whether it be for the chance of winning, just taking part, or the helping of those that are less capable. Inevitably some players accumulate winnings whilst others struggle to win enough to stay in the game.

If a player runs out of 'buttons' another player generally loans or gives them some just to keep them in the game. Sometimes the loan is paid back other times not. Interest is never considered.

Sometimes, when a player runs out of buttons they decide not to continue in the game. In some families those that run out of buttons just leave the game. Those who lose and leave the game often become disgruntled and spend their time making a nuisance of themselves.

Being a nuisance could be just turning up the volume of the television. In more extreme cases a loser might actually stop the game from continuing by mixing up all the cards and buttons.

It is always best to ensure that the object of the game is clear before we start. Are we playing for fun, to better our knowledge, or to become more wealthy?

If we decide to join the game can we leave at any time without paying a penalty?

If we join and cannot leave, can other players change the rules and force us to accept those new rules?

If we need to borrow buttons will we be obliged to pay interest and if so at what rate?

Can the membership rules be increased to a point where they exceed any winnings that a player might reasonably expect to gain?

Such a game can only lead to disaster.

Today is Sunday 12th July 2015

In the next few days Greece has to make decisions that will affect not only Greece, but the whole of the EEC (formally The Common Market).

I see the current situation with the EEC no different from a family game of Newmarket.

All those that joined fell for the sales talk that they would be better off by joining. Most joined to gain new customers and become richer, but failed to understand the principal that for any player to be better off another player had to be worse off.

There is no difference between the EEC and a game of Newmarket.

Cards 2

In Newmarket there will inevitably be winners and losers. It is impossible for all of the players to be winners or all of them to be losers.

Those that find themselves lacking in currency need to borrow, if they wish to stay in the game. If they decide to leave the game should they be made to pay a penalty?

If they borrow is it sufficient just to pay back what they borrowed, or must they be made to pay interest as well?

Where would that extra money (interest) come from?

If we are brutally honest, did we join for the fun of the game, or to increase our trade and our profits, and become richer?

We were led, by our Government, to believe both our trading and therefore our profits would increase.

Why did we not take on board that for us to profit others would have to lose?

Is it possible for us all to renegotiate our terms of membership?.....NO

We must understand that those that find themselves forced out will become disgruntled and may well kick the card table to end the game.

More worryingly, if one member drops out and the game continues, one of the remaining members will become the bottom of the pile, find that they are the runt of the litter, and suffer the same fate as the previous runt. (Just like the group of mice.)

If the game is to continue in relative peace the proceeds of winning has to be given to the losers. The game can only continue if this concept is accepted. To allow winners to retain their position of dominance requires others to remain dominated.

If we cannot take this concept on, then what is the point of playing?

For those that are dominant to be left in a position where they can dictate the living conditions for the losers can only end in trouble. We either learn to play in a way that is good for all or the game will inevitably come to an end.

For Greece to make a profit, to enable it to pay off its loans, someone else has to make a loss. It is a fundamental fact that to have a winner there has to be a loser.

BUILDER

Suppose you were having an extension built onto your home. Half way through the build you lose confidence in the builder and his ability to do the job to your satisfaction. You decide to replace the old builder with a new one.

Would you employ the old builder to keep an eye on the new builder to ensure the job was done properly?

I cannot imagine that you, or anybody else, would even dream of such a thing.

If the first builder was not competent to do the job what on earth would make you think that they would be competent to check another builder's work?

In addition, employing two builders is more expensive in wage terms.

Thirdly, much time would be wasted with arguments between the builders. The arguments would probably be about methods, materials, costs, job responsibilities, the tools that would be needed, and who would be in charge of the various aspects of the job.

One of the builders may well suggest that certain aspects of the job could be contracted out (so that were things to go wrong others could be held responsible).

Much time would probably be wasted dismantling the work of the first builder in order to adopt a different approach. Time might also be spent trying to persuade you to give the job back to the first builder.

I'm sure that you can imagine the situation and the interaction between the two builders and yourself.

There must be a better way of ensuring that the builder satisfactorily completes the work that you employed and paid them for. Perhaps a written contract before work starts would help. The contract would make it clear what was going to be done, for what fee and in what time scale. Failure to achieve a satisfactory build might well be rewarded with fines.

It would certainly be an advantage that all those on site worked together as a team without any unsavoury arguments, no slagging off others, no time off sick, no backhanders or bribes, and no paid visits to other sites to see how other builders work.

The contract would also include a set price that could not be increased by the builder without the agreement of the client. **All very sensible.**

Then why do we allow our parliament to carry on in the way that it does?

We employ one party to do a job and the other (that we have previously rejected) to keep it in check. We employ both at the same time, pay both to bicker, argue, dismantle the work of the previous party, employ sub-contractors who they can blame when things go wrong etc. etc.

All of our political parties demand, by way of the party whip, the allegiance of their members to party policy (even when they go against the wishes of the people that voted them in).

Would it not be better to employ our MP's under a contract for the job and fine them if they fail to represent the wishes of the electorate?

Perhaps all MP's should work independently from a political party, or should be people who are achievers who now wish to put back into the system that has looked after them?

In the first case it would mean employing two builders at once, each of whom would need to be paid. Both of them would spend a lot of their time slagging off the other, and putting forward alternative

ways of solving problems that arose.

PLUMBER

Suppose you employed a plumber to fit a new bathroom suite. He gave you a price, did the job and was paid the agreed fee. The next morning you wake to find the house flooded by a leak caused by his work the previous day.

I would think that you would be likely to contact the plumber straight away to inform him of the situation and demand that they return to put things right. The chances are that he would hot tail it round to you to sort the problem out as quickly as possible.

Let's say the plumber does fix the problem. The question is.....would you pay extra for fixing the problem?

If the leak was the plumbers fault I am pretty sure you would not.

So after the next election, when the politician's promises are not fulfilled, why can you not call them back to put things right? **And for no additional fee.**

Why have different rules for MP's than any other person that we pay to do a job for us?

Additionally most MP's consider it acceptable, once elected, to vote themselves a pay increase.

Surely MP's upping their own wages after being given the job is no different from that of a builder or plumber upping the price part way through their job.

From a far corner of my memory I recall only one MP who refused to accept a pay rise until it had been ratified as OK by the next election.

Why have MP's been allowed to oversee the privatisation of publicly owned services then to profit by becoming part of that private company? The essence of our law requires that matters must not only be correct but manifestly seen to be correct.

Why do Chief Executive Officers get a fat pension when they have been sacked?

Why do the banks reward themselves year on year even when they fail?

It seems to me that those in the more powerful positions enjoy a freedom from the accountability to which the less powerful are forced to adhere.

At this point I am reminded of the Fire Brigade Disciplinary Code. The lower ranks, such as mine was, are punished by those that are responsible for implementing the code but refuse to adhere to that code.

One would think that the Home Office could have made the officers pass my allegations to another Brigade as the Regulations require. Having been found guilty, an individual disciplined has the option to appeal to the Home Secretary. In my case they refused to have a hand in making my Brigade comply as it would compromise any appeal that they might have to make in the case.

In other words the soldiers can be disciplined but not so the chiefs.

If a Chief Officer breaks the discipline code they cannot be disciplined as they are only responsible to the Home Office who would also be responsible for the appeal should the Chief Officer be found guilty. And that they cannot be.

The police have a complaints board, not so a Fire Brigade. Oooops!

Loft 1

Suppose you employ a builder to build a rear extension onto your home. You agree a contract to carry out the work. A week into the contract you find that the builder has started a loft conversion.

You confront the builder and remind him of the contract to build a rear extension. He agrees that he **was** going to build the rear extension but tells you that the Builders' Federation that he belongs to has instructed him to ignore your wishes and do a loft conversion and, if he ignores their instructions, he will be removed from the job.

Would you be upset? **Of course you would.** Probably much more than upset, you would be livid. You would be likely to seek the help of the courts.

Would you be upset if the courts were under the control of the same federation that instructed your builder? **Of course you would.**

What if every other builder available also belonged to the same federation?

It is likely that most people would find such a system unacceptable. It is likely that most people in such a situation would try to break the ties between the builder, the federation, and the courts.

But would they if they knew that such an action was a criminal offence which carried a death penalty?

People living in such a situation would be likely to feel that all of their options have been taken away. How could they risk trying to bring about change? How could they take such a risk with that sort of penalty? How, when they have a family to support?

It would be rubbing salt into the wound if that federation still claimed that their system was the best in the world and provided their customers with options that were envied across the world.

Let's stop there for a while and consider. As on the previous page we have seen that prior to an election the prospective MP's promise that they will honestly represent us (carry out our wishes) if elected. But then if elected they are required to comply with the instructions issued by the Whips of their political party irrespective of our wishes. If they defy the whip they are deselected.

Once elected, they have the power to increase their own wages, go on fact finding visits at your expense, change the rules of the courts, appoint the judges of those courts, and change the penalties imposed by those courts. Clearly for our representatives to have such power is unacceptable.

They also claim to be part of a system that provides you with a democracy that the whole world considers to be the best. How do we change this situation? By voting at an Election?

NO, because they would be giving up the power that they have worked so long to obtain. Any other method is classified as treason requiring removal from society by being hung by the neck until dead.

YES, The Death Penalty is still in force for Treason.

Take a moment to look up 'treason' in your dictionary.

Loft 2

During my working life I have always tried to ensure that I only work for one master. When I worked for a company I did what I was employed to do and was paid in return. The company was my master because it paid my wages. I worked for the good of the company. The company was my master and I served it.

When I earned a living drawing plans for extensions I always considered my master was the person wanting the extension to their house. Even when a builder introduced me to a client I insisted that it would be the wishes of the owner, not the builder, who would determine the design.

When I joined the London Fire Brigade the situation changed slightly. Did I join to serve the London Fire Brigade or did I join to serve the people of London?

As mentioned earlier, I remember taking a group of Boy's Brigade lads to Lewisham Fire Station. Whilst the boys were being shown around I was speaking to a fireman at the back of the appliance bay when I was literally hit in the brain by the fact that I was going to be a fire fighter. I made a promise to myself that I would serve the **people of London** to the best of my ability.

You may not agree with my views on who my master should be, but that was the decision that I made and, rightly or wrongly, I have always made it so.

Throughout my career in the Brigade my decisions and subsequent actions were taken to serve the people of London to the best of my ability. When very senior officers of the brigade issued instructions that I felt were illegal and were not in the interest of the people of London I raised my concerns in the appropriate manner. Those senior officers victimised me which resulted in me asking for those officers to be investigated for 'abuse of authority' and 'neglect of duty'. The Discipline Regulations require any such allegation to be handed over to another Brigade for investigation.

The very officers that I accused had me interrogated continuously for six and a half hours. This included officers standing over me, poking me in the chest, shouting and spitting over me and demanding that I retract my allegations. I refused and some months later the grievance that I raised was heard and found in my favour. Despite this my allegations were never handed to another Brigade. The Brigade manufactured a situation, disciplined me and dismissed me from the service. It is essential that we know who the master is and who we are there to serve.

May I repeat that my family paid for my actions with the loss of my career, the resulting hardship and the many tears shed says much for their loyalty and belief in their Dad? My never ending gratitude goes out to them.

The downside of my actions is the scars that the senior officers have left me with. The upside is the knowledge that I have gained the strength that I now know that I have. What fails to kill you makes you stronger.

Getting back to MP's:-

Perhaps political parties should be done away with. Perhaps we could have a situation where all MP's are independent and there to represent their masters (those that elected them).

MP's as a whole would vote for a Prime Minister. That PM would then represent the views of parliament as a whole (not just those from a section of MP's). Just imagine having a parliament where all MP's work together for the good of the country. No more arguments between parties, only discussions on the subject in hand and the best way forward.

At present it could be that the best person to fill the post of Home Secretary may be from one party but the best for Chancellor be from another. Independent MP's could give us the best of both worlds.

Loft 3

The present system generally allows one party to rule. The leader of that party, on their own, appoints the ministers. Those ministers make most of the important decisions of Government.

The question is, will those ministers feel obliged to go along with the views of the PM when they know that the PM has the power to remove them from office?

Does this system give too much power to too few people?

The present system does all that it can to stop the propagation of independent candidates. The system cannot therefore be changed from within.

Should we strive to end the system by any other means? Remember the risks. It would seem that the system is designed to protect the system.

We seem to have an in-built fear that those that seek to change are dangerous and need to be side lined or removed. This view has been brought to the fore following the election of Mr Corbin as leader of the Labour Party. Any and every part of his life is now under scrutiny by the powers that be to discredit to prevent any change to the system

Knowing that I have a limited mind (a small hard drive in computer terms) I need to clear the desktop and concentrate on one problem at a time.

Perhaps our MP's, if they were independent, could concentrate better on the problem at hand better if they did not have to reserve 50% RAM and ROM already allocated to party politics.

Mr Pazyk would claim that half of our MP's using half of their brains to solve this Nation's problems cannot be better than:-

100% of the brains of 100% of our MPs seeking solutions to current problems.

100% of the brains of only 50% (with the opposition left with little power) is not an efficient use of the available.

Would we employ two builders and only use one?

There simply has to be change.

Cave

We live in a world where we are faced with a massive amount of news from all around the world on a daily basis. This news can reach within minutes of happening or even as it is happening.

We watch the television as the twin towers collapse, at the front line of a war, or as men walk on the moon or in space.

A mere 150 years ago the average person would only be aware of what was happening in their own neighbourhood. Few people travelled outside their own town or city. Only the few that were rich could travel.

In today's world the vast majority travel abroad, own phones that can communicate instantly across the planet at an affordable cost. Our horizons are being broadened exponentially.

Is it surprising that our education system has no time to teach us to understand all this new information? With no time to truly understand we are expected to just accept the news without any real understanding of its meaning or implications.

From the days of the pretend shop at the back of my class, to being forced to learn to spell, to pretending to have the answers for Mr Pazyk, I have come to rely on simplification as a means to understanding and learning.

Some time ago I adopted a scenario of four cavemen playing cards each Friday night in an effort to understand some things better.

The Caveman Scenario.

Once upon a time there were four hard working cavemen. Monday to Friday they would spend their time doing family things. Hunting to feed their family, shaping and tidying their caves, and teaching their children to hunt and be good hard working cavemen for when they grew up to have their own cave family.

With the work side up to date they would get together, each Friday night, to have a little caveman leisure time playing cards.

On the way to the game they would make a kill for a meat 'sandwich', collect some fruit and some nuts and some dried leaves to roll up and smoke. These items would be consumed during the course of the evening.

Whatever the game, whether playing for valuables or worthless pebbles there would be losers and there would be winners. It was not, and cannot be, a situation where all could be winners at the same time or losers at the same time. For one to be a winner there had to be another that was a loser. This is exactly the situation, mentioned earlier, regarding the EEC and Greece.

Suppose one of the players put a proposal to another saying that his path to the game took him past a large herd of dinosaur but no fruit trees whilst the other passed many fruit trees but no dinosaurs. Each could collect twice as much of the item that they passed on their way to the game. Then, at the game, swap goods with the other. This was the start of civilisation.

Suppose after a game in which he was a big winner, one of the cavemen decided to buy his commodities from another card table instead of putting in the work of collecting them. The first week the difference would not be noticed. But if it happened week after week there would be less and less counters on the table. To continue with the game, the 'money' would have to be cut into smaller pieces. This is what we now call inflation. Inflation is where each piece of 'money' is worth less than

before.

13AB

The caveman scenario can be used to help us understand other matters that affect our lives.

Cavemen paid no tax. They taught their children how to hunt, provide shelter, make tools, etc. It was only in spare time that they played cards each Friday.

Imagine there was a man eating tiger living nearby. How could they stay safe whilst they concentrated on the game of cards? They could co-opt another caveman to keep watch. Perhaps they could give him a portion of the proceeds of their hunting. I think that the lookout could be likened to the Ministry of Defence.

The cavemen might also have employed the help of a particularly good hunter to teach their children the best way of hunting. He had the job title of Minister for Education. The list can be as long as your imagination is deep.

With all these ministries it could become necessary to have a ministry to rule all of the other ministries, and a leader for that ministry. (He would be the Prime Minister).

Instead of paying each of the cavemen that provided you with a service the governing body would do that for you. They would invent various taxes which each of the cave dwellers would pay and with the proceeds pay each of the cavemen that supplied the services.

But here comes the difference.

Instead of the each caveman being able to decide which service he wanted and how much to pay, the prime minister and his prime ministry would decide such matters for him.

'Fair enough' you might say. But wait a minute. What if the Governing ministry decided that those looking out for the man-eating tigers were to be supplied with heat seeking missiles or atomic hand grenades? They could enlist an army that could police other card tables whenever a fight broke out. (the Afghanistan card table, the Syrian card table, the Irish card table etc.).

Food for thought.

Come to think of it, there was a time that 'Tax' consisted of paying 10% of earnings or crops at the end of each year. Now it's around 25% direct tax on earnings, tax on everything that is bought or sold. Tax on inheritance, interest, and profits. Tax to put your car on the road. Tax to cross bridges; use toll roads; meals in restaurants; holidays; beers and other drinks.

It's now the people that we cavemen hire to do a job for us who decide which job they will do and how much tax they will charge to provide it. We are now back to the builder deciding what they will build for us and how much they will charge for it. We seem to have no say in the matter.

For a caveman card table to continue to work successfully there must be a balance between the 'money' leaving the table and the 'money' joining the table.....A balance of trade. An imbalance of trade generally leads to trouble, generally in the form of war. Evident now like a global rash.

Up until recently those with the money and the weapons were the ones that were victorious. However, there comes a time where the losers reach the bottom of the pile. A place where they have little else to lose. A time where they feel their lives are not worth living.

It is only a short distance to the point where the down trodden are prepared to turn themselves into human bombs. When that point is reached the down trodden become unbeatable. You may have the atomic bomb, missiles, tanks and limitless technology but these weapons will never beat the down trodden that are prepared to accept death rather than continue to suffer. Rich countries beware.

Back to the card game.

In the event that one of the cavemen runs out of 'money' and borrows some from one of the others, should they pay interest on that loan?

Suppose you think that they should. Then we must consider a situation where a business makes a living out of lending to whoever needs a loan. With the return of the loan money, plus the interest, bigger and bigger loans can be made to more and more cavemen. Eventually they will be able to live on the interest without working. (As now advertised on TV for 2000+% interest). Minimum payments only pay the interest and not the loan. We can see from this that those with money attract more money whilst those without money fall behind and spend their lives supporting the ones with the money.

Lets look at it another way. Suppose you earn enough to buy two loaves of bread each week but only need to eat one. You may well put the other loaf into a cupboard to use at a later date. Would you expect the loaf to grow whilst being stored in the cupboard? You clearly would not. But you would like it to keep its value. Why then do we expect our money to grow but not the loaf?

Why should our money grow? Perhaps we have been taken in by the sales talk of the bank. You know, the people that offer you interest of 1% yet charge 20% on your money that they then loan to somebody else.

As a society we would find it difficult to manage without banks of one kind or another. We have little option in that regard. We can, though, be wary that there is a never ending list of people that try to persuade us to buy from them. The things that they sell come in two varieties:-

Essentials & Non Essentials.

We have to have the essentials, as it says on the tin, they are essential.

But non essentials we can make do without. If we borrow to buy non essentials we place ourselves at the mercy of those bank-type people.

These days it has become essential to have a Bank Account as it becomes harder and harder to pay tax, rates, insurance and most other things without one. Banks are then able to make a living out of loaning **our** money out. Perhaps it is time that banks were run for the benefit of all.

So we reach the crossroads. In one direction we can have a society where we each paddle our own canoe and only reach those places that our paddling warrants, or a society that promotes a few owning the boats that others paddle for them.

My youngest son was saving up to buy a nice house in the area in which we live. His savings could not keep up with the rising prices in our area. He chose to use all of the means available to purchase a small house in a less desirable area and rent it out whilst continuing to save. The result is that the house that he has bought is rising in value, and his savings are now greater as they now include the rent from his small house. Money attracts money whilst debt attracts yet more debt.

It would seem right that, in a fair world, we can only get out of the bread cupboard that which we put into the bread cupboard. The way things are at present some people (including my son and myself) can get out more than we put in. Is it time to put things right?

An uneven playing field always ends up with people that have reached the bottom of the pile taking radical action. No society wants that. Civil rights in America and South Africa, the French Revolution

are but a few examples.

14

INTELLIGENT LIFE

Humans take a year to learn to walk, another to speak, 15 years to get a job, get married and start their future life keeping up with fashion, a newish car and phone and paying off a mortgage.

A porpoise can swim immediately it is born, communicate shortly after, a year or two to reach adulthood. Needs no house, clothing, fashion or purchases of any kind. Porpoises have no overpowering need to own. They do not farm, prepare or cook their food. If they find something on the sea bed that they can play with they do. When they have had enough they leave it for others. They have no need to own, be better off than others, they even have built in sonar.

So what exactly is intelligent life? Is it being intelligent, inventing rules to live by that require us to own, to rule over others and gather the intelligence to 'build' sonar and other clever devices?

Our four cavemen played games for social pleasure **after** doing the essentials of providing food, shelter and teaching skills to their children. The balance between work and leisure is critical. So who is the intelligent one?

These days it is impossible to go anywhere without seeing people playing games, or just chatting, on their phones. Are we all spending too much time watching television, keeping up with fashion, spending time in the gym, golf course, outings, and shopping?

Children now leave school wishing to become singing or acting stars, footballers on massive wages, property developers, lottery winners. These seem the only way in which the individual can see their way clear to becoming that which the seller tells us we deserve to be.

The bankers get enormous bonuses (or golden handshakes when they fail) whilst farmers are paid less for their milk that it costs to produce it.

It seems clear that things will continue to decline until we reward those in productive jobs properly instead of rewarding heavily those that do not actually produce. Those that make the tea are essential; those that spend their lives stirring the tea are not.

I wonder how many of the few people likely to read this work would know what S.E.T stood for. Well I am going to tell you. In the 1960 there was a Prime Minister named Harold Wilson. He was one of my heroes for a number of reasons:-

1. He brought about the Open University which enables people of any age to study in their own time irrespective of age and ability. Many years later Tony Blair said that the three most important things were education, education, and education. Blair spoke it, Wilson provided it.
2. He brought about a competition for the design and manufacturer of a computer. This resulted in Britain leading the world in computer design. (Computers were very new in those days).
3. He invented Selective Employment Tax (S.E.T.), which was a tax that employers had to pay for each of their workers. A sum would be returned to them. This sum returned would be less than the tax taken for those working in a service industry and more than the tax taken for those in manufacturing. The net result was that our exports rose and imports fell.

During his spell as Prime Minister our trade figures went from the worst on record to the best on record.

In these days where it is hard to find items in the shops that have been produced in this country, our industries have generally disappeared, failed or been purchased by foreign companies. Society now encourages us to spend time on leisure that bears no relationship to the production of the essentials

that we need for a stable economy.

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In the days of Harold Wilson the trade figures (Imports, exports and invisible earnings) were shown monthly on television. These figures indicated in simple terms if the country was in profit or loss. In recent years the British government has not deemed it necessary to publish these figures in the same open manner. We are left to trundle on blindly.

Society expects each household to live within the budget that their income allows. Councils, companies, societies, charities and governments are similarly expected to do the same. All members of whichever group should work to that goal. As citizens of a country we should be provided with details of our imports and exports in order that we can all work to keep our country solvent. Unfortunately sometimes governments hold these facts back as they would be evidence of a failure on their behalf.

We know that our savings gain little or no interest. We hope that our savings will buy tomorrow what they can buy today. Unfortunately they don't. Prices increase week by week while the value of our saving falls leaving little doubt as to the state that we are in.

Vast bonuses for bankers and massive wages are paid to well known footballers and entertainers whilst our ordinary working population struggle to make ends meet. Even the unemployed expect to own the latest 'i' this or 'i' that.

The re-emergence of food banks, and the growing number of unemployed who choose to continue on benefits because the little extra that they would gain by working would not cover things like the cost of travelling to and from work, speaks volumes. Many claim benefits and, at the same time, work for cash payments. Clearly there are problems that need solving.

Can our present political system provide the answers? Probably not.

Little story.

Once upon a time there was an MP (Gerald Nabarro) who decided that, once appointed, his first job was to ensure that he would be voted in again when the time came. He decided on a plan. He announced that the Government were going to double road tax. Job done. In one calculated move he had made sure that he would be re-elected at the next general election.

Q. Why?

A. If they did double the road tax then he was seen as the honest MP, and if they did not it was because he had told you. Heads he wins, tails he wins.

MPs can only go so far in putting things right. Cut too deeply and be voted out, or cut just a little and stand a chance of being re-elected.

For years I have seen governments and local authorities put jobs out to the private sector not because it saves money but in the knowledge that the private company can be fined for failing to fulfil the contract.

I can remember national government imposing fines on local governments for failing to carry out tasks or meet targets that they have been set. I can also remember councillors in Liverpool being fined for implementing the wishes of those that elected them.

Delegating the building of hospitals, fire stations, police stations and others to the private sector only solves a problem for a short while as, after an initial period which is free from rent, rents must be paid. The buildings we once owned are replaced by new ones we then pay rent on.

If, during the rent free period, finances are still stretched, think what they will be like when rents become due!

So what should our Government do?

As this may be a problem that seems too big and complicated to solve, Mr Pazylyk would find a much more basic problem to look at in the first instance.

So, a young married couple find themselves in financial trouble. Month after month their overdraft gets bigger. They wisely decide to visit the local Citizens' Advice Centre. What advice are they likely to be given?

The advisor is likely to get them to list their total income, and its source, and also provide a list of their expenditure.

That done, ways would be sought to increase the income or reduce the spending.

Income may be increased by working more hours or by taking on an extra job.

Expenditure might be reduced in a number of ways. Some big, like having one car instead of two. A smaller house or car, or perhaps less, or even no, holidays. Small savings could include buying store brand food items instead of the well-known brands.

Whatever happens it is essential that expenses must be no more than income. (The character of Mr Macawber created by Charles Dickens explained that **income of ten shillings, expenditure of ten shillings and sixpence equals misery, but income of ten shillings and expenditure of nine shillings and sixpence equals bliss.**)

Other ways of reducing expenditure could be accomplished by avoiding paying other people:-
Doing their own window cleaning; cleaning their own car; doing their own decorating; their own nails; making their own packed lunch instead of visiting the Sandwich Bar; or exercising at home instead of at the local Gym.

Payments circulating between members of the same family do not create a problem. A problem is only caused when a payment leaves the family. Like cavemen buying from another card table.

The same solutions as those given at the Citizens' Advice Centre should be used to help a nation in financial trouble.

The overall aim would be to limit the expenditure for the nation so that it is no greater than the income for that nation. This means producing goods that we need instead of importing them, making do with our own brand rather than the well known brand, and doing our own repairs. It matters not if buying from abroad is cheaper as it brings about inflation (see caveman principal). Buying from own own table does not.

Skip would explain to us boys, prior to camp, that in our first camping holiday we were unlikely to know how to pitch a tent or cook. We would be dependant on others; later we would be more able and contribute about the same as we got out. He would then say that he hopes that some of us would stay on, become officers and put in more than we got out. Just like the camping scenario, we must learn this in the greater community. During our adult life we should put in more than we take out. In our early and latter years we may well need to take out more then we put in. Overall we cannot take out more than **is** put in.

Note:- There is a clear difference between:- you can only get out what **you** put in.
&
you can only get out what **is** put in.

You can get out more than you put in, but that depends on others putting in more than they get out.

For any of our citizens to spend their whole life on benefits is unacceptable.

For the unemployed to consider government pays out benefits is not the full story. The benefits comes from our neighbours (Our government simply pay it out).

Perhaps a record of the DNA of both parents should be part of the birth certificate. Both parents would then be responsible for the cost of bringing up that child. They may well need help at various points but that help must be repaid in order that the funds will be there for others that follow.

Can our society continue to help those that do not put in but insist on their right to take out? The answer is a clear **NO**. This must be the most essential part of the education of our young.

A memory has just surfaced from the back of my mind.

During one of our annual Boy's Brigade camps one of the lads asked me if he could sit in the front of our mini bus on the next trip out. Other boys who were present when he asked seized the moment and asked if they could. Clearly there was only room for one of them in the front, who should I choose. I searched for a way that I could make a choice that was fair.

My mad way of thinking came up with an idea. Putting this into action I asked the boy that had made the request first, 'Are you in the book?' I asked. 'In the book?' he replied. 'What book?' I turned to one of the other officers and asked for his opinion, as a stalling tactic, to give my idea a little time to solidify.

A few seconds later, with the plan settled, I told the boy that he was unfortunately not in the book. One of the other boys then asked if his name was in the book. This questioning then spread like wild fire. Each being told if they were, or were not, in the book.

Then, one of the boys that had been told that he was not in the book, asked what he had to do to get into the book.

The other officers, initially confused by this new game of mine, started to see a commonality between the ins and the outs. They then felt able to add a little clue here and there until one or two boys cottoned on to the link between behaviour and being in the book.

Once they got the idea it was then possible to include them in deciding if an individual was in or out. The result was an increasing desire, for those that still did not understand, to understand.

After a while the general behaviour improved because they now understood that good behaviour resulted in benefits.

I have always found that people who seek to learn will learn more quickly than when they see the benefits that come about as a result of learning. If there are no benefits in learning then why bother to learn. Why bother to work if you can claim benefits and play computer all day. Why study to be a doctor if you can get more money selling drugs or conning the elderly via the internet.

I also remember watching a T.V. programme 'This Is Your Life'. You may remember it. The presenter would catch the unsuspecting person, inform them that they were going to be the subject of the next programme, and be whisked off to the studio. In the programme they would meet people that they have known and be reacquainted with events of their life.

I was always interested to find that each and every one of them had, in the past, been influenced greatly by an individual. Someone who had lit the light in their brain and made them want to learn. Some of them met that person during their youth, others much later in life. Whenever it was the 'want' to learn always seemed to be the ingredient that turned an average person into a special person.

Often a school teacher would be that person. Other times it would be a friend, a work mate or a nurse. Without doubt we need school teachers of that ilk, but we need people to make that difference to people that become irritants to our society. Those that commit crimes, those that choose not to work, those that want beauty treatment paid for by the NHS, those that believe that their crimes are victimless.

The jail system

Most of us that abide by the law make our own way in the world. We pay for the food we eat, rent or mortgage, and bills for rates, gas, electric, & water etc. We work in order to get the money to pay these bills. We earn a living by working. This is called earning a living. We can continue to work for a living by abiding by the law.

At times in our lives we need a little help to pay these bills with the money that we earn. This may be by using a credit card, which we pay back later, or from our family or friends.

Some decide not to earn a living by legal means but to break the law to obtain the money to live.

Our system is designed to punish those that break the law. We do this by capturing the offenders and often putting them in jail. The odd thing is that, when they are in jail, they neither have to earn a living or break the law for a living. They get it for free.

No rent, no mortgage, free heating, free food, free laundry, free education, etc. All of the things that the law abiding work their socks off to have. Why?

We go further by allowing those that have broken the law to vote, have equal rights, leisure time, and much more. We even allow them access to drugs if they are addicted to them. The drugs are given to them at no charge. The people that supply the drugs are not charged with 'supplying'. Were they to be outside they would need to buy those drugs and those that supplied them would be breaking the law, prosecuted and jailed.....Seems crazy to me.

There are now many people that commit trivial crimes in order to be jailed where they will be given all the comforts that they are unable to afford in the outside world.

The cost of such a system is not just the buildings and its upkeep, the staff and their wages. The system for maintaining this also involves legal aid, probation officers, police, courts (and their upkeep) and the mountain of paperwork, printing, office workers and their wages etc. etc. The list is almost endless.

Clearly there is a problem. How do we fix it?

Once upon a time I had a shop. The house directly across the road from my shop had a big blank wall which was often given the graffiti treatment. After many complaints to the police I was asked by the police if I would allow them to install a video camera in my shop in the hope of capturing video evidence of the culprits. Each morning the police would attend to change the tape. Finally, after 2-months, new graffiti appeared. We were all hopeful of putting an end to the problem. The police picked up the tape only to find that the camera did not work in the dark.

Had the camera actually provided suitable evidence the police, courts, probation officers etc, etc. would all have been involved with all of the associated costs.

I offered to provide and install a more suitable camera. My offer was rejected on the basis that any evidence collected by me could not be used in court. If evidence obtained by myself was admissible police could use it to identify the culprit(s), visit their address to show it to the parents. The culprit(s) could then be made to clean off the graffiti at their own expense. A far cheaper option than the current one.

We could go one further and, for a repeat of the crime, padlock a crash helmet to the culprit. This helmet would be sign written with, 'I graffiti other peoples property', and could stay on the culprit's head for say 14 days (24 hours a day). I guarantee there would be no further instances.

Punishments

A lion that has just gorged himself on his recent kill is unable to run fast enough to catch another kill because he cannot run fast enough when full, there is no point because he is full, and he has no way of keeping the new kill available and suitable for eating later.

Our way of living allows a person that drastically overeats, to a point that they are unable to rise from their bed, to continue to eat and make their situation worse. This can be done by the use of home delivery food ordered by phone, or a helper that keeps feeding them despite the situation.

Our system requires the local council to fund the cost of providing aid for personal and house cleaning, operations, unemployment and or sickness payments etc.

Were the individual's plight not aided by a helper, state assistance, or delivered meals, they would only be able to continue to the point that they ran out of money and, therefore, would be forced to work to earn the money to carry on the over indulgence.

The 'punishment' must be designed to stop the crime.

Putting a criminal in a jail where they would be provided with the fruits provided by the labours of others only supports the crime.

Providing for those that choose not to work only encourages the situation.

Unemployment help given to those that have the ability to work should be removed by the provision of an employment opportunity. To allow unemployment to continue puts an unacceptable burden on those that do work.

The cost of our NHS is now rising out of all proportion. Perhaps free medical aid should only be provided to those that have not caused their problem. Injuries caused by excessive drinking are self-inflicted and those costs should be met by those who caused them.

This could mean driving accidents being covered by the vehicle insurance. Those that suffer injuries sustained whilst taking part in dangerous sports and hobbies could be otherwise insured.

Surely we must adopt methods that encourage people to be good self supporting citizens and to isolate those that refuse to be useful members of the herd.

The method used by the horse whisperer comes to mind. Horses are herd animals and dislike being ostracised. The horse whisperer therefore uses the method of walking towards the horse wherever it goes within a small paddock. After some time the trainer stops and faces away from the horse. The horse will then approach the trainer, because they wish to be part of the herd. The trainer continues to turn away from the horse. In order to be part of the trainers herd the horse has to accept touch, then a blanket, later a saddle etc. increasing slowly to the point where it can be ridden and become fully submissive.

This is the basis of this type of training. No more riding a bucking bronco.

Our punishment system needs to be modernised to suit the modern criminal.

One of the purposes of our education system should be to teach students how to be good citizens. If pupils fail at the education stage their chances of getting on the wrong side of the Law increases.

People in jail have shown that they have made the choice to break the law and not be good citizens. Does our jail system teach them to make good choices?, does it punish?, does it reward?

I believe that jail punishes by removing freedom. But it does reward by removing the need to earn a living. What it does not do is to teach reasonable behaviour.

What changes could be made to the system to teach such behaviour?

Should we provide heating for the cell? Should we provide free laundry? Recreational facilities? Why not install a bicycle that would reward the prisoner with credits that relates to the effort put in. These credits could be used to buy lighting, heating, and food. A normal eight hour working day (on the cycle) might just teach them that to get something out you need to put something in.

If the prisoner has children on the outside perhaps the credits for the first six hours on the bike could be said to be a contribution to providing for those children. I wonder how many prisoners consider that, whilst they are incarcerated, others are providing support for their family whilst they serve time.

Perhaps prisoners could call in favours from friends and family to provide food, laundry and sundries. These items would not be supplied direct but simply paid for by the family or friends. Prisoners serving for unsavoury deeds would be unlikely to be helped. Other prisoners (like the one that shot the man that was burgling his home) would probably receive many donations. Even I would travel to the jail and willingly pay for him to have a good meal.

The methods used to punish law breakers should include education on the implications of crime. Who the winners and losers are, and who should pay for the crime. All done with the aim of reducing the crime rate.

Any change to the prison/punishment system must aim to bring an increased understanding all round. Prisoners would be exposed to what earning a living is all about. As a result the law abiding public would need to contribute less.

We must also consider that some commit crime purely because they see no other way of obtaining an acceptable living. No citizen should face such a dilemma.

In Britain today we have in excess of 80,000 prisoners each of which costs us thousands of pounds per week to keep them there. We cannot afford it. The system has to change.

I am not suggesting that the above is the answer. I am being a little flippant but only to broaden the search for an answer that we clearly need to find.

It is also somewhat weird that many of the people that run the justice system are paid vastly more than the majority of people that pay for it. This includes MP's, Lawyers, Barristers, Judges and Ministers. The ones at the sharp end (Wardens and Prison Officers) are rewarded more modestly.

I recently learned that a senior Solicitor in my local solicitors' practice charges around £1,000 per hour. A junior Solicitor around £400 per hour. This leads me on to my next subject.

WAGES

I recall working as a draughtsman at the time of the Miners' Strike. Our Prime Minister was carrying out a policy that involved wage restraint. The company that I worked for at that time employed a consultant to re-classify our job description to enable them to increase our wages. No change in the actual work that we did, only a change in the description.

Managers in many industries could have employed such tactics to get around the rules set by Government. Miss Smith could leave her present company to work for a similar company across the street. Same work, same hours, but more pay. Having found a way to up her wages she could then return across the road to her old job. A sneaky way around the wage restraint policy.

Miners did not have the same options. Virtually all miners worked for the Coal board and for a set wage. The wage restraint which restricted their wages, but not others, was therefore unfair and, many believe, designed for political purposes.

It is generally thought that Mrs Thatcher considered the unions to have too much power and that she manipulated the situation to remove most of that power. I am not a supporter of that sort of policy as it spawns inequality.

The situation that we are now in shows similar traits. While bankers and senior managers are paid vast sums others have to suffer minimum wage and no contract employment. While some are forced into using food banks, MP's are allowed to claim expenses for the costs of having a second home.

I wonder how many low paid workers that have to live away from home to keep their job would like to enjoy expenses for a second home.

If this nation is to live in harmony we must come up with solutions that reduce the tensions that now exist. We cannot allow those with wealth to avoid taxes and to be allowed nice benefits whilst those that earn little pay through the nose, without benefits.

How can this be achieved?

I remember watching skaters competing in the world championships. After the first skater finishes the judges agree on a certain mark for the performance (say 7 points). The second skater is then judged against the first. Were they better or worse? Should they be given 7.1 or 6.9?

Why not judge various trades and jobs against each other? The wage for each job could take into account, length of training, danger, unsociable hours, responsibility etc. All trades and professions could have representatives to discuss and agree the wage that each job deserved.

The term 'Trade Union' may give the wrong impression. So let me give an example. Without trying to undermine Mrs Thatcher's undoubted good intentions I would have liked to ask her if she considered 'The Bar' to be a Trade Union. As such they wielded just as much power as the Miners' Union but were not subjected to the same crushing force and the removal of their jobs and union funds.

Should we allow Barristers to raise their wages out of all proportion whilst other trades have their negotiating powers reduced by bringing in new laws that require workers to reach certain voting targets before they can legally strike? It sounds a little one-sided to me.

Harold Wilson tried to avoid confrontation by convincing Miners to limit their own powers with secret ballots etc. Perhaps consultation is better than confrontation.

19a

Unless there is a tool to provide all citizens and industries with the knowledge of what the country needs in order to succeed we will inevitably miss the boat whilst other countries that have such a tool will get in first and have control over those industries.

This, of course, requires that all citizens and industries accept that they are part of the body of the country in which they live. Citizens that live here but feel that their allegiance belongs elsewhere is unacceptable. People that come to a country to work and export their earnings to the country of their birth effectively export the wealth of the host nation.

It is, of course, possible to avoid the need for a system such as I have outlined. We could have a system of government that is imposed upon its citizens (China comes to mind). Such a system can bring about dramatic rises in productivity, wealth and power. All well and good but it also results with intolerance of any view or actions that are contrary to those of the Government. I have in mind tanks driving over a demonstrator. Those presently demonstrating in Hong Kong may well face a similar fate.

Here I must remind you of the benefits of Harold Wilson's initiatives. His policies in regard to S.E.T. encouraging development in the field of I.T, and education via Open University contributed greatly to the growth we all experienced in the 1960's.

XYZ

Pensions

At this time retirement age and pensions are a cause of concern to many. Let's just look at the case of Firemen. I have personal experience in this matter.

During my fire service career events caused me to look a little deeper into the pension scheme that I was paying into. My research started with reading The Fireman's Pension Scheme (legislation which was written in 1947). Why 1947 I ask myself?

The first part of the Act requires any funds that an individual has in any other pension scheme to be transferred into the fireman's pension scheme when they become fire fighters. Why 1947 and why a requirement to transfer any existing funds?

Well, the war having ended in 1945, by 1947 there were thousands of men leaving our armed forces with money in their pension scheme. The then government wanted to find jobs for these servicemen and did by encouraging them to join the Police or Fire Brigades. As it happened, many from the Navy became Firemen (that is why the Fireman's salute is the same as the Navy's).

The transfer of servicemen, and their pension money, was quite useful for the Government as, in addition to avoiding transferring out the servicemen's pension contributions, the Government would continue to receive further contributions for another 25 - 30 years.

Hardly surprising that 30 years later they resisted increasing firemen's pay as any increase would be reflected in the pension pay outs they were about to make. Hence the Fireman's Strike of 1978.

Go forward another 30 years and the whole cycle is repeated with the strikes that firemen had around 2008.

These are facts, but I would like to show why I came to research the situation.

Shortly after the 1978 strike Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister. One of her acts to give workers more power over their pension funds was to give workers the right to be told how much they had paid into their pension fund and how much they would get, if they opted out, to invest into a private scheme.

Unfortunately she forgot, or was unaware, that the contributions that firemen had been paying in for 30 years had already been spent by Government.

When I took up her offer and asked how much I had paid in, and how much I would get if I opted out, I was told that I had paid in around £5000 and that I would get that sum out **minus a percentage**. I then asked what that percentage would be and was told it depended on how many others opted out. In other words, if I was the only person opting out I would get my contributions back, but if more opted out the deduction would rise accordingly.

It was around this time that Mr Maxwell, the owner of The Daily Mirror, stole and spent the Pension Fund of his workers. He committed suicide shortly after he was found out.

Mr Maxwell, you were not the first to steal the pension contributions of your workers, our Government beat you to it.

Here I must interpolate.

Not only did I write in to request the pension information for my own case, I did it for a substantial number of fellow firemen. I found this quite easy to do as I had purchased a computer and printer for my business. Each enquiry was a copy of my enquiry but with the name and address altered.

My computer was an ITT Apple 2020 with a total memory of 48K (RAM plus ROM) and no hard drive. The cost of that second hand computer was £500.00 at a time that a fireman's wage was around £50.00 per week. Bearing this in mind it was hardly surprising that few firemen had access to a personal computer.

A fireman's wage was sufficiently low to merit rate rebates, free milk for their school children, and grants towards school uniforms. A time that a fireman's contribution to society carried little merit.

Perhaps the Brigade saw me as a troublemaker that the Brigade could do better without.

I understand that it is said that one should not bite the hand that feeds them, but the Brigade did little to feed my family. This was clear at the time of the first Fireman's strike.

During that strike, although striking firemen could legally claim help to support their wife and children (not themselves), many social security departments refused to provide that help. I personally was removed by police from Bromley Social Services offices and told that they had been instructed not to provide any support to the families of firemen.

I returned home and told my wife of the events at Social Services. For the first time in our marriage I felt that my ability to provide for my family had been taken from me. I went up to my bedroom so that my children would be spared seeing me shed tears of desperation.

The next day I asked Dorothy to keep the children downstairs whilst I got on the phone to find some way of earning money to keep the family afloat. Some two hours later I was able to find a company that were prepared to give me two week's work updating some production drawings relating to a bobbing boat contract that they had. My work was appreciated and extended to about three and a half years.

Brigade orders require fire fighters to obtain the brigade's permission to undertake any secondary employment. At the end of the fireman's strike of 1978 the terms of settlement included a clause that outlawed any action being taken against people for any action they may have taken as a result of the strike. In plain English this meant officers. Fortunately it also included my actions in accepting any sub-contract drafting work as a result of the strike. I was therefore legitimately able to have my own business and in that way become less dependent on gaining brigade promotion.

Many institutions are happy, and often seek, a situation where the 'Indians' jump when told to by the Chief. An 'Indian' who feels free to raise questions is not often tolerated.

As a general rule shit always goes downwards. I found that also applied to if you replace the word shit with accountability. Officers require those beneath them to be accountable but have palpitations when the lower ranks require it of them. I am sure that my fire service career was cut short for that reason.

The fire brigade pension that I receive is only around 25% of that which I would have been entitled to had I not been removed from the service. Fortunately the investments that I have made since being dismissed from the service have served me well and leave me comfortable.

20a

Firemen, just like many others that work for local authorities, have quite good pension schemes. When I started in the London Fire Brigade I paid around 5% of my earnings into the pension scheme. After 25 years of service (aged 55) I would be entitled to 50% of my final pay for the rest of my life. Few pensions would be able to match these figures.

By the time I left my contribution was around 13.5% of my earnings but with no increase in my actual pension. Bearing in mind the numbers employed in the fire service, police, local authorities, prison service, etc. this is clearly unsustainable.

Is it reasonable that all of these people can retire at 55 and collect their pension for so many years? Is there any other option?

The following story says a lot for my inability to keep my mouth shut when necessary:-

As you have already read my qualifications and service record in the brigade would be hard to beat. Despite that, it became quite apparent, for whatever reason, senior officers had taken steps to prevent me from being promoted. I will admit that this became a chip on my shoulder for some time but I came to terms with it deciding that I would have the personal satisfaction of doing my job to the best of my ability.

On one occasion, when I attended divisional headquarters for a promotion interview, I was told that the interviews would be delayed due to senior officers attending a serious fire. Instead of sitting in the waiting room I wandered around. Out of interest I spoke with the secretary to one of the divisional officers about her typewriter (I had an interest due to having a shop that sold such things).

When the interview finally took place I remember being asked by that Divisional Officer, who was responsible for buying the typewriter, what I thought about support services. Not sure what he was referring to I asked 'In which way'. He elaborated by asking if I thought the Brigade needed more or less of these support people. I replied saying that we certainly did not need more. I saw his pen hand drop to his notepad and scribe hard lines through my name (I think).

It was clear that we were not of one mind. With a scowl he then asked, 'Why'. Well, as I was no longer in with a chance of passing the interview, I told him, "Take that report you gave your secretary last week. It took her a whole day to type it on the typewriter that you authorised and then another day to retype if after you made amendments. Had you purchased a computer instead, it would have taken the same to time type it but only a few minutes to make the changes. She would then have almost a full day to do other work and been in a better frame of mind whilst doing it. Suffice to say, I was not promoted. Do I regret it? Hell No.

Now I come to think of it, that officer did try to get his own back at a later date. I was on duty when we ran out of typewriter ribbons. I offered to bring one in for the next day and provide an invoice. Some days later that same officer left a message for me to contact him on my return to duty. In front of everybody he accused me of presenting a bill for 50% more than the usual price paid by the brigade. I put him right by explaining that there was a switch on the typewriter allowing the triple height ribbon that I had supplied to be used. My ribbon did three times as much for 50% more cost. He was totally unaware that the typewriters that he had authorised had that ability.

Getting back to the pensions issue.

Why not train operational fire fighters, to do a support service job when they are no longer physically able to perform on the fire ground. Such a change would save 15 years of pension payments and bring in 15 years more in contributions for each fire fighter. In addition, support services would be provided by people who understand how the Brigade functions. The same system could be set up for others like the police, our armed forces and civil servants.

The result would save the treasury Billions which could be spent on education, health, and the war against the pollution of our planet.

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Although I was the highest qualified Leading Fireman in the London Fire Brigade I never received any further promotion during the remaining 11 years of my career.

During the whole of my service career I was only ever given two extended periods of temporary promotion. Brigade rules require any temporary promotion to be given firstly to those on the promotion panel, then to those most qualified then on the recommendation of the officer in charge. Both times I was given it followed me initiating the grievance procedure, and taken away as soon as the grievance was concluded.

I agreed to withdraw the first grievance to save the Brigade embarrassment. The second was found, by the Brigade's Personnel Officer, in my favour. He found that the Area Commander had not carried out tasks in the manner expected of him and apologised on his behalf. He also stated that should I wish to make allegations against that officer he would have those allegations investigated in line with the laid down procedures. I sent those allegations forward for him to do so.

On the second occasion that I was given temporary promotion I was met by a Senior Officer when I drove into the Station yard on the first day of the temporary promotion. He told me that as I had been given temporary promotion I should drop the grievance. I stated that if I was given temporary promotion for any other reason than merit I did not want it. If on the other hand, it was on merit, he should not make such a suggestion.

The temporary promotion lasted for around seven weeks. It ended a day or two after my grievance was heard in my favour. My Station Officer during that stay was a man of integrity. His name was Ray Hoare, a born again Christian, respected by his men as a man of integrity.

I feel compelled to tell you of an event that took place there late one evening. On return from a fire I sat at the typewriter completing the fire report paperwork. Ray told me that he did not feel that the men were 'with him' in the same way that those at his previous station. I stopped typewriting, turned to him and told him that his men would walk through a brick wall for him. He asked if I really thought so, I replied that I did not think so, but I knew so. After a while he asked me if I was doing things in a different way for him than I did elsewhere. I asked him why but he seemed reluctant to explain. When I persisted he told me that he had been warned that I was a troublemaker. He went further and confided that he had been ordered to monitor my performance on a day to day basis and forward reports to division.

I returned to my typing duties. A few minutes later he engaged me in conversation once more. He stated that he was very happy with my performance, and said that he had observed that I had formed a good relationship with the men, that he could not ask for a better performance and would continue to make favourable reports. After a further pause he remarked that being the Station Officer he would be expected to council his men but there was I providing that service to him. He continued to give me good reports despite being ordered to HQ and given a dressing down for so doing. He was (is) a man of integrity and I thank him for being so.

I must state that I would love the brigade to challenge me regarding the truthfulness of these matters. I have copies of all of the documents that verify these writings.

When the temporary promotion was taken from me I sent a memo to the Divisional Commander (the same one that was found wanting) asking why the temporary promotion had been taken from me given to a person less qualified than myself as this was not in accordance with the laid down procedures. He replied that his actions were correct.

My fire brigade career was later ended by that Area Commander and the Brigade's Personnel Officer with the Backing of the Chief Officer (the same one who was removed drunk from County Hall after

putting his hand up a female Councillor's skirt). This can be verified by the crew of the Fireboat that was ordered to collect that Chief Officer from the riverside adjacent to County Hall.

Swing

Over the years I have spent many hours pushing my children and grandchildren on a swing. I know, only too well, that when I stop pushing I hear them calling out "higher" or "don't stop".

There have been times that I have longed for a swing that carries on swinging on its own. Sadly that swing has yet to be available. In the world that we live in the swing always comes to rest. However hard you push the swing gravity will eventually bring it to rest. This result is inevitable in this world that we live in. When we stop pushing each swing is less than the previous one. In the end there is no swinging motion left.

The twang of a guitar string, the waves in a lake and the echo of a voice in a canyon work in the same way. It's nature. It's the way of the world. It will always be the same. Nature will always win.

Over the years I have witnessed many forces being applied. But, no matter who they are and how hard they push, matters always find their natural place of rest. It's an act of war between man and nature, but nature always wins.

An elastic band that is stretched and released will do the same. It is nature, it is the world we live in, and the force that we must acknowledge as the master. We can pull it in the direction that we want it to be in but nature will always bring it back to equilibrium.

We may wage war to force our way and hope that we bring about a change that we hope will be permanent. History indicates that this is highly unlikely.

We may find a land that we previously did not know existed, inhabit it, enslave some of its inhabitants, deny others equality but it did not work in America, or South Africa.

We may occupy land that belonged to others and build settlements on it. We may indulge in business in various other countries and, on religious grounds, send back profits to facilitate well armed 'defence forces' to retain the occupation and settlements on foreign land. We must understand that when those that have been occupied are marginalised to the point that they are prepared to turn themselves into human bombs that position cannot last.

The armed forces of the world's most powerful countries have been forced to retreat from countries by old men with sticks and stones hiding in the hills of Afghanistan.

Those that considered India to be one of their colonies were forced to climb down by a man who simply refused to eat until his country was granted independence.

Segregation beaten by the forces of will and determination.

The forces of nature will always win over the will of mere mortals.

We may drop an atom bomb and contaminate an area but, over time, its effects will be reduced by nature. The effects of a war will fade, just like the effects of pushing that swing. We must however understand that the harder we push the swing the longer it will take to come to rest.

There is only one way to bring about a state of rest quicker and that is to reduce the push on the swing, the pull on the elastic band, or the use of war.

National Health Service.

On the news today we were told of the woman who produced her own baby after receiving a womb transplant. Surgeons claimed this as a marvellous step forward as it could help up to 12000 people a year.

Think of the figures involved. 12000 women having an expensive operation for a womb transplant, expensive anti rejection drugs, and hospital care. Was the NHS designed to provide this sort of service?

If the NHS was designed to do this how was it also designed to provide abortions for those that have just been careless?

Was the NHS put in place to repair bodies that have been damaged by their owners who derive thrills from endangering their bodies?

Was the NHS put in place to insert bags into boobs to make them look bigger? Still worse remove the bags when the recipient changes their mind.

In the Fire Brigade we would be charged with a breach of Discipline were we to sustain, what they call, self-imposed injuries.

Of course a professional that gains prestige, promotion, and additional work and money from inventing new procedures is happy for those procedures to be taken on board by the NHS. We must take on board that the invention of new procedures brings notoriety, more money and promotion.

It seems that boundaries must be built to separate that which is necessary for health from those that are optional. The scope of the NHS may be pushed in a direction that suits some but beware the swing will always come to rest.

Looking at other species shows them to have a natural ability to adapt and cope with chemicals and changes in the environment evolving over the course of time. Humans seem to think that they can do better by the use of their skills and ability. It must be noted that the evolving solution comes about and solves the problem once. The NHS system has to be repeated for each and every patient with that problem. There has to come a time that this approach becomes unsustainable.

The NHS is on a path to self destruction. Only a clear cut dividing health from vanity, and an ability to allow natural selection to occupy its rightful space will see its survival.

Nature has the ability to adapt to survive. The NHS needs that ability to survive.

Welfare 1

I like watching TV programmes showing wild life in various countries and their living conditions. Creatures that live in the sea, others in hot, cold, wet or dry weather conditions. To see how individuals and packs survive and how they adopt and accept codes of behaviour.

- Elephants with their lead female who teaches others where and when to find water and food.
- Lions where only the strongest male mates and ensures that his seed is that which dictates the future of the pride.
- The elder female of a group who is no longer able to hunt but fed by the group in payment for looking after the young while their mothers hunt.
- The ants, bees, hyenas, whales, dolphins and others that become more powerful by working together for the common good under self made rules that are accepted by the group.

These are examples of good welfare (for the well being of all).

- Knowledge of the whereabouts of food and water, or how to grow food, is passed on.
- Healthy reproduction.
- Credit and reward is given to anybody that works for the good of the group.
- We recognise and work as a group when necessary.

Therefore:-

- We must not withhold education.
- We must recognise when help to the individual is harmful to the group.
- We must recognise when to stop helping those that, for various reasons do not contribute.
- We must recognise the benefits of working as a group.

Is it for the good of our group that members can send earning of our group to support members of other groups (this can be immigrants sending money back to families abroad and companies manipulation of figures to allow profits to be allocated abroad to avoid this country's taxes).

Is it for the good of our group that mothers and fathers of babies can pass the responsibility for feeding and housing their offspring to the other members of the group?

At this stage I have reached the conclusion that the 'Welfare State' and 'The National Health' should support where that support provides a benefit to the whole community. The things that only benefit individuals should be paid for by those individuals.

Perhaps those that drive should carry additional insurance that provides coverage for the additional injury risk that driving brings.

Perhaps the DNA of both father and mother of a child should be recorded on the birth certificate. In this way support may then be obtained from the parents to support the child. Should the parents be unemployed they can have their benefits withheld. In this way the Welfare and National Health will not be required to provide the support that parents might reasonably be expected to provide.

CAPITALISM V COMMUNISM.

I was listening to a programme the other day that explained the difference between capitalism and communism. They put it that capitalism relied on constant and continuing manufacturing. The need for the manufactured goods had to be constant and continuous. Communism only supplies the essential.

The Japanese perfected manufacturing. They made things that would last a predetermined time and need replacing within a short time. Built in obsolescence became the norm. As time passed even this did not satisfy the need to produce, sell and make a profit. A new tactic was required.

The answer came in the form of fashion and now almost rules sales. A visit to the local primary school playground to hear the children quizzing each other on who has the latest phone or computer, who is on level 5 or level six.. What car their parents have, pocket money, holidays.

Capitalism is now embedded deep in peoples mind. The question now is not if an item needs to be replaced but whether it is in or out of fashion. All well and good but there is a down side.

We seem to be so convinced that this is the way to go that we try to persuade other nations to follow (thus expanding our markets). It may be that such a fast change to their way of life instead of a more natural progression that they would otherwise have, is the most common cause of wars and of vast numbers of people seeking a 'better' country to live in.

By producing an ever increasing volume of goods we are using up resources faster and faster. This inevitably causes global warming.

Scientists now estimate that it is will only take a few decades, at the present rate, to warm the planet to a point that it cannot recover. If we carry on in this way we might find that we are not the intelligent life that we previously thought we were.

Perhaps the dolphins of this world are actually more intelligent than humans. Perhaps the red Indians of north America were. They had no mortgages, rent, credit cards and paid no interest. They believed the land could not be owned but was merely lent to use so that, in turn, it could be passed onto the next generation and in good condition. They killed only the one bison that they needed at that moment, leaving the others for a later date and for others if they needed one.

The intelligent 'white men' came along and killed thousands more then the 'less intelligent Indians' and claimed to own their land, then killed off thousands of bison to make money and be rich. Who were the rich? Those that allowed the herd to maintain its numbers or those that gained a few dollars by slaughtering the herd and in so doing lost their source of food?

Could humans ever be that stupid again? **Yes**, by killing off the planet which accommodates us.

Perhaps we are so stupid that we think that we can gather enough technology to allow us to leave a dying planet in time to reach another planet that we can also kill off with misuse.

Are we so stupid that we value money above this beautiful planet that we have been loaned?

I am reminded of a reading from the Bible:-
 To him who has ears, let him hear
 To him that has eyes, let him see.

I'm only a simple pleb. What do I know? Good luck. Have a nice day.

COMMUNISM

COMMUNISM

In today's world anyone who speaks up for Communism must accept that their views are likely to be dismissed, or at least viewed with scepticism. Why? Possibly because we have seen the iron curtain demolished and the USSR turn to capitalism.

We choose not to see that in Russia during the 1960's their Government was building flats at a phenomenal rate so that all of its citizens could enjoy the benefits of low rent housing. There was a job for everybody. Their health service was carrying out procedures that were available to all. The downside was that the people of Russia were not allowed to leave the country.

Just imagining, for a moment, that you lived in Russia at that time. Whilst you were assured of work and a flat to live in you would also be aware that the peoples of the 'west' were able to buy their own house, travel abroad and access the non essentials that capitalisation produce.

It is easy to see why those living under communism chose change.

Capitalisation brings about changes. Instead of a flat provided by government we end up with mortgages that we are lucky to pay off by the time we retire. Ever increasing rents in the private sector, and jobs that can be removed for lack of profit leaving welfare to pay the bill.

This week, one of the only remaining steel production works in Britain is being mothballed. 1700 jobs disappear, families are left in despair with no way of paying the mortgage on the house that is now not saleable.

Capitalism allows people to run businesses. When those businesses make money the owners take the profit. When they fail the state has to provide the support by way of unemployment, welfare, and the like.

In communism, profits go to the nation's coffers, the same coffers that the benefits come from when there is no profit.

At this point I had a break in my writings, to support a grand daughter in a diving competition, and run off a copy of this to show it to a very good friend for his opinion.

His main comment was that I had mixed two topics, my personal situation and my views, that might better be kept separate.

Writer I am not. Good writer I certainly am not. But I do believe that the best communication occurs when one speaks without first censoring what you are about to say.

I could just keep my head down, say little, and just carry on life like the vast majority of people. I could be one of those that just moan about things.

I say what I honestly think in order to communicate. To have real friends and relationships you absolutely need to have honest communications.

I have been shaped by the people and the events that I have known. One without the other is like a body without legs to support it.

The events that I have experience have been included to give substance to my views and the questions that I raise. In writing this I bear my soul and stand the chance of being ridiculed. So what, I can take it.

Just because I cannot see a time when we will make the changes that we need to make to put things right does not mean that I do not need to voice my concerns. That would be as silly as only being prepared to play a game if we were certain of winning it.

Would we be prepared to live without the freedom to buy whatever we want and can afford?

Would our politicians be prepared to be held to a contract?

Would we be prepared to live in a society that has no armies?

Our planet is littered with the remnants of advanced civilisations that have fallen apart. Will we be but another or will we make the adjustments to our way of life?

The actions that I took in the Fire Brigade resulted in the loss of my chosen career. A small price to pay in comparison with those that have lost their life for speaking up or taking action..

Like:- Martin Luther King, Mahatma Ghandi, Abraham Lincoln, Conscientious Objectors, Alan Henning (who was beheaded whilst providing humanitarian aid) to name but a few.

Others have just been considered to be troublemakers and/or a bit weird.

How do we have an effect? How do we make a difference? We need to do something soon even if only to admit that we have a problem.

In defiance of the advice from my friend I would like to include one more of my personal experiences. During my fire service career I was interviewed by a senior officer who was advising me not to air my views. To support his views he explained that he felt he could gain three more levels of promotion. With those he would then be able to speak up more effectively than me.

My answer was to point out that he may never gain those promotions but, if he did he would either have enough time to get yet another promotion or not enough time for his words to have an effect.

Whichever was the case, he would never have spoken up. For better or worse I spoke up.

Drones

Drones.

At this point I would like to take 5 and write about a news item of this week (12th September 2015).

I seem to remember an incident of many years ago where a man was killed on Waterloo Bridge. The killer was thought to have used an umbrella to inject poison into the back of a leg of his victim.

Another incident from not so long ago involved a Russian receiving a lethal dose of radioactive material thought to have been ingested whilst drinking a cup of tea.

In both cases the Russian authorities were blamed for the murders. The acts were considered as outrageous and illegal. Most of all, people were outraged by the fact that foreign powers had carried out these deeds in our country.

The new item of this week that aroused concerns in my mind was our government authorising the RAF sending a drone aeroplane to the skies above Syria to deliver an explosive device explicitly to kill two of our own citizens who had joined the 'I S' group. Our Government claimed that, before they authorised the attack, they had checked that such an act would be lawful.

It occurred to me that 'the powers that be' in this Country have a somewhat flexible attitude as to what is lawful. To kill someone in another country was OK, if we did it, but wrong if the Russians did it.

Considering the legality aspect:-

If an individual was arrested in this country for actually committing a bombing act they would be given a trial and, if found guilty, a prison sentence. Yet, in this case, our Government claims that it is legal to execute men in another country, without a trial, for conspiring to commit a bombing act. Prison for actually committing a bombing but death for planning a bombing?????

If we wish others to consider our nation to be one of justice we must be consistent in both our actions and our interpretation of the Law.

If we were more consistent we may not have invaded Afghanistan. (That campaign cost Britain Billions of £'s, the live of hundreds of our soldiers, and thousands of Afghanistan lives).

We also took action against the Syrian dictatorship. The result of this is presently causing massive problems for the EEC.

Thousands of Syrians now flee their country for various reasons. Would they now be fleeing their country if we had not interfered with their internal affairs? Yes they were living in an unfair dictatorship for many years. But then what about the Spain of old or the China of now? Perhaps without our interference Syria would have progressed into a democracy just like Spain did. Granted it would have been slower but without the war. We give the swing a hard push and wonder why it continues to swing and bump into innocent passers by.

The fact is that we now have vast numbers of refugees seeking to live within the EEC.

The interpretation of Lawful should have been examined before nations took action against the Syrian dictator. Had that been the case we might not now have the problem of Syrian refugees, the prospect of a confrontation with Russia and the need for the EEC to define the difference between Political Asylum and economic emigration.

Evolve 1

As a fully qualified wrinkly I find myself with plenty of time to watch TV. As a bit of fun we have replaced the standard T.V. in our front room with a projector connected to a standard TV receiver. This set up enables us to watch DVD's, Blue rays as well as the normal TV programmes on a 120 inch screen. Our grandchildren approve of the set up as they can now plug their games consoles in. The large screen image makes the games seem almost real. Instead of crowding round a small screen they can sit comfortably anywhere in the room using their wireless controllers.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not bragging or playing one-upmanship because the cost of such a set up is no more than that of a good size normal TV.

As a bit of tongue in cheek humour I bought a set of white Christmas lights, divided them up into four short lengths and installed them behind strips of perforated steel down the four corners of the room. These are connected to the mains by a dimmer switch. You should see their faces when I turn up with ice creams half way through one of their games. It's just like the cinema they say.

With such a large screen and time on my hands I love to watch natural history programmes. You would not believe how realistic these programmes are when watched in this way.

Having watched films of numerous expeditions from remote places I have been amazed to learn of the species of animals, insects and birds that have 'evolved' to suit the conditions in which they live.

Spiders that live in total darkness, birds that are happy to wade through hot waters with high levels of sulphur, rats that have developed a resistance to poisons. The list is endless.

Their changes may be in the form of colour, shape or habit. It may include learning how to use rocks to break shells to gain access to the tasty nut, or the use of a stick to extract honey from a nest.

But the changes that I find most interesting are those in micro biology. Where the flu virus can change and evolve to overcome barriers that they face. All by themselves they evolve to beat the vaccinations that brilliant scientists invent to control or eliminate them.

Of all the species on this earth humans are thought to be the most intelligent. They are the only ones that use highly sophisticated laboratories, computers and hospitals. The only ones that can defy gravity and leave this planet. The only ones that can transplant living organs. The only ones that have identified DNA, and the periodic table. The only ones that have harnessed X-rays, atomic power, and found the Higgs-Boson Particle. The only ones that explore the galaxy.

All species bar humans evolve naturally to suit the changing world. Humans use technology whilst all other species evolve naturally. Does it matter which method we use? Well, one has no detrimental implications for our planet, the other does. The use of pesticides, hormones and fertilisers, explosives, atomic reactors, excessive fuel burners and the like leave effects that will last thousands of years. Yet we all know that those that fail to evolve to suit that changing world die off whilst those that do live on. It would make sense that we choose a more natural method rather than the technical method. Sooner or later we will have to, before the effects on our planet become irreversible.

The ability to find or grow food is essential to survive. Those who spend their lives writing computer programmes, installing bathrooms or selling insurance (to name but a few) can only survive whilst others provide the food. At present we value footballers and singers more highly than farmers.

Our society spends millions manipulating nature by encouraging women to work whilst fertile only for them to need the assistance of medical miracles to have children later in life..

If there were only to be one survivor in the war between nature and the intelligence of humans it would be nature every time.

Evolve 2

I remember a saying that my mum often used. 'You have got to eat a peck of dirt before you die'. Since I first learnt of this saying I have realised the size of a 'peck'. It is pretty damned big and I do not suggest you aim to meet this target. This saying suggested that by being exposed to dirt, a bug, or a virus our bodies build up a resistance to it.

The point I am trying to make is that the sterile environment that we seem to be heading for may make our immune system weaker or even redundant.

In a History lesson I remember being told that some of the kings and noblemen of old included a small dose of arsenic in their diet. This dose was gradually increased over a long period to the point that the body became used to it. In this way they were able to withstand an attempted assassination using that poison. I suppose such a method is a valid alternative to the modern day vaccination.

I also remember the harvest hymn 'wheat and tares together sown'. A method that allowed the weeds to grow and only separated from the required crop when harvested.

I am of the opinion that when a body is faced with a problem it will try to overcome that problem. Different bodies will try slightly different methods. The most effective are more likely to survive and become the norm whereas the less effective are less likely to survive and not become the norm. This seems the essence of natural selection.

If we adopt a method where the solution comes from an outside source such as medicine we become reliant on that outside source being available from that time onwards. Natural selection provides a lasting cure.

Now for the giant leap.

Can this be likened to a much bigger body such as an entire nation?

In the case where a tyrant abuses a nation, should that nation find it's own solution to the problem or rely on intervention from an outside force? Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Syria come to mind. In each of these cases outside forced have been used as the cure. Unfortunately these cures always come with a downside (side effects).

Our most recent case is Syria. Outside forces try to provide the medicine and the refugees are the side effect. This side effect, taken to extreme, could result in whole nations choosing to take up residence in any country of their choice. Such an option seems to be totally unsustainable. Therefore the medicine (outside intervention) should be avoided at all costs.

Is it possible that the best way forward is for the powers within the oppressed body to fight the problem from within. This method will take longer but will provide a longer lasting solution.

Then why do we persist in interfering in other nations affairs? Could those that choose to interfere do so for the wrong reasons? Money? Oil? Trade? Profit? Or for a misplaced do-gooder attitude?

Solution 2

How would Mr Pazyk solve the problem?

He would identify the situation, reduce it down to its simplest form, find a solution and then apply it to the larger problem to test its validity.

Let's say that we identify the problem as:-

Finding a way that all of the nations of the world can live together in peace without wars, global warming, inequality and unfairness. (Problems come no bigger than that).

Perhaps we can substitute a game of cards, or the four cavemen scenario, in place of the world.

In the game of cards, are we playing to become richer than the others or to enjoy the game? At present we seem to be playing to become richer and more powerful than the other players. Perhaps we should change our objective to that of enjoying the game of life? We should also accept that others may seek the same or alternative goals.

How about if all those wishing to just enjoy the game agree certain rules? Let's try this one.

Perhaps a group of nations, or a single nation, could decide that problems such as wars, poverty and tyrants are caused by greed and the need for power, and that a new policy should be adopted to avoid these problems. Perhaps a game where we have no winners and no losers. Where no nation gets richer or poorer. A balance of trade.

The policy to be adopted could be a three-year one.

The first year imports and exports can be made with any nation using the same 3-year policy. The second year efforts will be made to put right any imbalance in trade. The third year no imports will be allowed until any remaining imbalance is rectified.

This simple solution would avoid any nation becoming insolvent (like the Greece situation).

It would also make it pointless for a nation to raise productivity, and have a trading surplus, in order to become richer, and in doing so make others poorer. As a by product this would also reduce, or halt, global warming. Each country would end up with a standard of living proportional to the effort and work ethics of their peoples.

At this time we can see that countries that enjoy a trade surplus find themselves with money to spare. This is then invested in, for example, property and the essential services of those with a trading deficit allowing the richer nation to cream off the poorer nation from that point on.

I remember an ex Prime Minister (Harold Macmillan) saying that Britain was selling off 'The Family Silver'. He was referring to the British Government raising much needed funds by selling off British Gas and British Rail, privatising water and postal services, and using private money to build hospitals, police stations and schools.

We now bleed the nation's blood to foreign investment. This blood letting is allowed to flow by regulators with little power.

In but a few years we will be paying rent for the schools, hospitals, fire stations and police stations once owned by the nation but now by foreign investors.

A balance of trade is a must not an aim, and in the end will be the solution.

Solution 3

As Citizens we need to enjoy life. We need to approach life like the Christmas game of cards. Not to become the richest. Not to live off the interest of lending our money to those less fortunate than ourselves.

As citizens we need to put our efforts into the essentials of life: the provision of food, clothing, housing. We cannot allow ourselves to play cards every night of the week. The enjoyment of the card game must be limited to the time left after the essentials of life are provided.

Education must have at its main aim the knowledge of how to live as members of a community.

We only go forward if we paddle. To leave others to paddle for us is unacceptable.

Each one of us, irrespective of the level of our intelligence, old or young, fit or impaired, must play our part and do our bit.

It grieves me that our youth enter the world of adults without having practical lessons on how to budget, how to be useful citizens, or how to abide by acceptable agreed rules.

Divided we fall, together we can go forward.

We need to banish party politics, and demand a Government where each and all members of parliament work together to adopt a workable policy that will allow all of the players to enjoy the game.

We cannot allow the person who owns the paddle to sit in the boat and travel without paddling.

No 'old boy's club', no class system, no haves and have nots.

The rules must be that we all paddle in the same agreed direction.

Enough of this, I must get on with cutting the grass.

Conclusion

In order to solve a problem it is essential to gather the facts. So let's list some of the facts that we know:-

- The population of the world is growing
- Some nations suffer droughts, adverse weather conditions, etc that make it difficult to feed their peoples.

We therefore have to find a way of ensuring that we produce enough to feed the world's population and that the population does not rise to a point that exceeds our ability to feed it.

- Our planet circles the sun.
- The sun provides us with heat, light, energy, the seasons and a rhythm cycle.
- Our Earth needs an atmosphere that provides protection from that same Sun.

Therefore we have an obligation to adopt policies that will ensure we retain Earth's ability to provide us with living conditions for as long as physically possible.

Current life styles encourage us to buy, buy, buy, sell, sell, sell, win, win, win, and produce, produce, produce. All in the attempt to become better off, in fashion, and to keep up with the 'Jones's. By continually spending we end up needing insurance to help pay towards our burial, an education for our grandchildren or even a replacement for the washing machine we have just bought. Why not spend less so that we can afford what we need without supporting the insurance firms.

We fail to understand that for every winner there is a loser. We need to work towards a situation where there are no losers knowing that it will also mean no winners, as it is the only way to bring lasting stability, peace and balance.

A winner in a lottery requires countless thousands of others to buy a ticket, many in the hope that they can find a way out of debt.

Inequality brings about war which in turn brings deaths, hardships, injuries, and mass migration. Inequality comes in many forms.

- Sometimes by a dictatorship or bad government.
- Sometimes when MP's are provided with a second home near their work while their constituents who work away from home have to pay for bed and breakfast out of meagre earnings.
- When a footballer receives a weekly wage 10 times the annual wage of most workers.
- When highly paid senior Fire Brigade officers fail to allow disciplinary allegations against themselves yet use those same procedures to sack their accuser.
- When small farmers are bullied by large supermarkets by paying them less than their running costs. (It is essential that all wages reflect the needs of the community, danger, length of training and other limitations, like age.)
- When one country can use their sophisticated weapons against others but deplore their victims using their only weapon (blowing themselves up) in return.

Can we continue to enjoy global holidays that burn millions of tonnes of fuels in cars, aeroplanes and ships? Can we continue to build short term obsolescence into our products?

Would we vote for people that placed limits on holidays abroad, how long we should keep our cars, imports of food and goods from far off lands and how often we can buy new clothes?

What if that were the only way we could limit global warming to enable this planet to remain within the limits that humans need to survive.

The facts are that, on our present course, our planet will be beyond recovery by the end of this century. Is it not time that calculations are made to establish the rules that we must abide by to live in harmony with our neighbours and our world.

Our Members of Parliament have a problem. In order to be re-elected they have to put forward policies that we are prepared to accept.

In some ways we are like drug addicts who have enjoyed injecting ourselves with the drugs of gas guzzling cars, ever changing fashions, and holidays wherever we want. We do not see that we have to change. It is only when an addict reaches rock bottom that they accept that things must change.

So it is likely that we too will continue with the injections right up to the point that we understand that life as we know it will end without change before we actually accept the cure and cease taking the drugs.

Will we bring peace by bombing other countries?

Will we trust that our representatives will tell us the truth and do the right thing?

Will we be the ones that work to change the course that we are on or leave it to others?

Perhaps the answer has been staring us in the face all along, just as it was for me when I pulled myself up to see the pot on my Mum's mantle piece?

Love your enemies – trust but few – and always paddle – your own canoe.

Today is Tuesday 16th April 2019.

Yesterday evening, on the television, I watched the fire sweep through the roof of the Motre Dame in Paris. Having served in the London Fire Service for some 16 years I understand the trauma that the fires cause.

Since leaving the fire service I have spent my working life designing houses to serve those that will live there. More often though, the house is already there but needs to be modified to better serve the occupants.

Yesterday the fire, today London is being brought to a standstill by demonstrators, 'revolution' seeking significant changes to our much bigger house. The demonstrators have realised that, without drastic change, there will be no house for our children to live in.

Unlike a building that can be rebuilt our planet can reach the point of no return.

The demonstrators all want our government to change direction. They also understand that, even if our government did change, the problem would not be solved. That change would need to spread to include all governments.

The changes that are essential to save our planet will be painful. More painful than many have the capacity to understand. The truth is that we have no option. We, or those that follow, will suffer pain. There is no other outcome.

The changes can be made now by choice, or later when there is no longer a choice.

The longer we continue to inflict injuries to our planet the more difficult the recovery will be. With insufficient, or no, action we will inevitably reach the point where our beautiful earth can no longer continue to provide for life as we know it.

Where do we go from here?

To help a client with alterations to their home requires two elements. Firstly the client must set their needs and secondly that they trust me to provide the solution.

I venture to suggest that in our present form of democracy we do not set the agenda and do not trust MP's to carry it out. Will they follow our instructions or those of the political party that aids their appointment?

History shows that even when we instruct them, in say a referendum, they cannot be trusted to carry out our instructions.

My maths teacher came from Poland shortly after the second world war. He taught us a method of solving difficult problems:-

First of all simplify the problem, find a solution then, step by step, increase the difficulty of the problem. If it doesn't work then modify the solution and try it again. Repeat this until you have a solution that works every time. BUT this demands honesty.

Lets take a current problem that our Government finds it too difficult to decide. The EEC

The EEC was started as a common market and by using import tariffs became quite successful.

Other nations wanted to join. Why? Because they saw the possibilities of increased sales. They were not looking at the whole picture, they were not being honest. It did bring increased sales and profits to some but lower sales and losses to others.

O.K. Lets simplify the problem.

At Christmas our family play a game of cards (Newmarket). All family members play, young, old, clever and those that are less clever. We bet matchsticks, Smarties, or buttons. We play for fun. When one player runs out of matchsticks they are lent some from another who is winning. We do not play to become winners and create losers, we play to enjoy the game.

Not so in the game of the EEC. To have winners you have to have losers. For every Germany winning you have to have a Greece that is losing. If Greece leaves the game the next one up becomes the loser.

For any game to have peace there must be no winners and no losers. To achieve this each player must have a balance of trade. Imports that equal exports. This remains true for any size of game.

With this rule there can be peace and no need to have ever increasing trade with the damage that it brings to our planet.

It also means no cheap imports, and no cheap labour to staff our hospitals or drive our buses.

It means unemployment money is a temporary help not a long time choice. It means pensions for those that still live in the country that supplies it. No more working in a country and sending money to support those living elsewhere. No more running a business in this country and taking the profits to another (for avoidance of paying taxes).

No more telling workers to 'get on your bike' to work whilst those in privileged positions (MP's for example) have a second house and expenses on the firm.

Feel free to drop me a line on my web site.

Today is 1st May 2020. Tomorrow is my birthday. (76th)

We are now 4-months into the Coronavirus.

The majority of nations are now in deep wigoos. Vast numbers dying, economies in ruins, hungry families, lock down, social separation.

In some countries families, who have no money, leave their dead relative on the roadside to rot. Funerals without families being able to attend. Our doctors, nurses and care workers struggling to cope without sufficient protective equipment.

Our country is in a mess.

The world is in a mess.

When I began writing in 2014 there was a part of me that suggested that I was on the wrong track. That I was exaggerating the situation. Not now. It is good practice to think the unthinkable.

There is now considerable doubt as to whether we can continue to travel the world at our leisure. Holidays in the sun, flying to places of interest irrespective of the effect that millions of plane hours have on our planets climate. Cruises in luxury with unlimited booze and food. Fine dining as standard. Membership of gyms and clubs when we can exercise at home alone, or with friends, for free. Unlimited tele. and computer games when the interaction from a game of cards brings greater rewards at no cost.

This virus and the lockdown brings home how important simple personal interactions are.

It is easy now to say that we should have closed our borders earlier. Such action would clearly have saved thousands of lives, as demonstrated by countries ruled affectively by dictators, but would such action have been acceptable in our situation.

In the event that each nation stands alone within it's own borders, those borders could have been closed at a moments notice. People abroad would have to remain where they are until the virus was under control (just like they did in the cruise ships. Instant access to the world is all well and good but it has it's downside.

Years ago the hippies tried to get along being self sufficient, they lived in the woods in communes. Much more recently we had 'Revolution' trying to change the way we live. We have all seen the young girl Greta Thunberg asking us how we dare to ruin the planet for the next generation.

Where the hippies, Revolution, and Greta failed to succeed Covid 19 will succeed.

We have learned to appreciate the nurses, doctors and care workers (many of which earn little more than minimum wage) through this virus. Perhaps it is time that all members of our society are respected for what they do and paid accordingly. Ask yourself if a footballer is worth more than a nurses that risk their life to save another. Our habit of paying footballers, lawyers and others obscene amounts has to end.

We have learnt, through living through this pandemic, that we can do so many things on line without burning the fossil fuels.

Within 3-weeks of the lock down many parts of India were able to view the Himalayas from their homes for the first time in 30 years.

It's time we woke up and smelt the roses.

THE WORLD NEED BALANCE

There is a chair that balances even on uneven ground. It was deigned for a person to sit on when they milked the cow.

It's called the milking stool, it has three legs, and does not wobble on uneven ground. It only failed when one of it's legs was allowed to grow much bigger than the others.

What can we learn from this?

What three legs do we need to have a well balanced life?

First leg **Health**

To be healthy we need food. We may hunt for it, grow it, or buy it. All three of these options require work.

Second leg is therefore **Work**

The third leg is **Leisure**

Although we need to work, to eat (or earn a living) it has to be limited because too much work is not good for your health.

With a little thought we can easily strike a balance with these legs.

As individuals we can choose to allow one leg to be bigger and stronger than the others. It may not produce comfort but it can be stable. For the best balance the legs will need to be of a similar length.

As an example, We may choose to work a little harder than necessary to allow our older years. (this is like a pension, buying a house, or stocks and shares).

We could choose to work our way through a bucket list in our youth or prior to leaving this world. But beware not to take out more than you can be sure of putting back in.

Examples:-

Extreme sports, drug taking, or even having a large family.

Allowing your leisure to have its head by doing extreme sports could result in damage to health and a heavy burden on our NHS (with others paying the bill). Your longer leisure

leg requires others to have a longer working leg.

Excessive work (longer working leg) may results in your children having less leisure with you.

Expensive leisure holidays can result in credit card problems requiring more work and less health.

During our life time we will all experience wobbles with our stool. However, overall, we must strive for a balance over the length of our innings and set the scene for the next batsman. The next batsman being our children and grandchildren.

As Greta implied, how dare we enjoy a style of living that denies our children the same.