

The  
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from  
**William Shepherd**



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# What People Do All Day

Posted: 2005-12-24

Have you ever wondered what people do all day?

Well-meaning people often ask me what I do? Sometimes my response is: 'I will tell you what I did yesterday.'

Another is: 'I work for myself. Some days I do what I want. Some days I do what is necessary. Some days I do something important. Some days I get nothing useful done.'

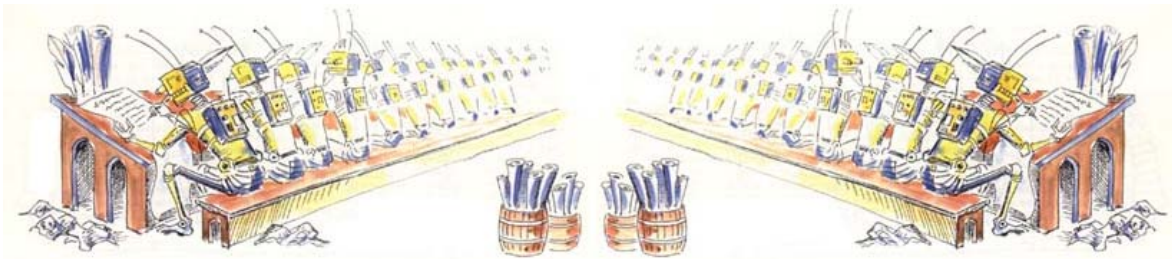


I wake up in the morning and ask myself what I am going to do today. Before going to sleep in the evening I ask myself what I did all day. I make value judgements ranging from 'not a lot' and 'nothing harmful' to 'some good work.'

I like the idea of '*A Good Day's Work for A Good Day's Pay.*' But pulling this off is not easy...and the definition of pay, work and good are not as obvious as you might think.

A third response is to put myself in a box. 'I am an economist, a publisher, a journalist...' I can wear many hats. But hats and labels just sidestep the question and conceal more than they reveal. Do you know what an economist does all day?

When in mischievous mood I might respond: 'I am retired. My retirement started a quarter of a century ago when I was 35.' Do you know what a retired person does? Do they just watch the wheels going round and round? How many categories of idlers are there? The idle rich...the idle old...the idle young...the idle poor... what do idlers and loafers and scroungers really do all day?



And what of the busy people? Is being busy their business? Who are they being busy for? What does your high street bank manager do? Who is she handing out money to? I think it's time to ask the question.

So let's all be whistleblowers. I will go first. Your turn next.

## bill shepherd weblog thirty two

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Wednesday 1st February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-02

Mein dongle ist kaput. Today the exotic little creature refused to crank up at the Cardigan Internet Café. We did intelligent things for a while before reluctantly concluding that the systems were working fine and it was the USB dongle wot was broke. 'Tis said that if it ain't broke don't fix it. There is a corollary. If it is broke don't try to fix it. You can't. Nothing to be done except send it to a landfill site. Only nostalgia stopped me ditching it there and then. I would try it on my *Apple Mac Mini* when I got home. But to no avail. Events, dear boy! Events! The loss of my memory stick...my Alzheimer Moment...was definitely not on-message for today.

Since getting my own internet connection at home...howbeit a rather poor dial-up one... I tend not to use the *Cardigan Library's* free internet. Instead when I hit town I park the car up the hill where it's free, walk into town and stop off at the *Internet Café* on the floor beneath the library. They are my local printer. Weblogs and anything else for hard-copying get converted to Adobe pdf format and copied over onto the dongle. Today there were 20 pages of *Innovation Dynamics* documents ready to go. Oy vey! After the weekend. I almost paid £14.99 for a 128Mb replacement but my stock of rewritable CDs can do the data transfer job just as well.

In the *Anderson Room* at *Cambridge University Library*...catalogued as Mss/6871/p59 reverse...there is a letter dated 5th April 1887 to the *Bishop of London* from *Lord Acton*. Bishop Mandell Creighton was taken to task for two critical failures in his *History of the Papacy*. He had been too indulgent towards the more secular activities of the *Renaissance Popes* by failing to recognise the contaminating effect of power politics upon the papal office and he had neglected to make any judgements...a serious crime in Lord Acton's eyes.

Here is what Lord Acton had to say: '...I cannot accept your canon that we are to judge Pope and King unlike other men, with a favourable presumption that they did no wrong. If there is any presumption it is the other way, against holders of power as power increases. Historic responsibility has to make up for want of legal responsibility. Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.'

And he goes on to remark that '...great men are always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when they superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it. That is the point at which the negation of Catholicism and the negation of liberalism meet and keep high festival...'

Pretty strong stuff that includes the oft-quoted dictum on the corruption by power. But just as important are the notion of historic responsibility as distinct from legal responsibility and the suggestion that this might apply to the exercise of influence as well as authority. Quite a lot of wisdom in so few words.

The travelling scholar formerly known as William Shepherd has announced a new identity: *William of Salisbury*. On my return to England with the hurricane of '87 I wandered the land looking for a home and settled on *Salisbury*. I then spent two years in *Canterbury* before moving to *Rye*. Should I try for *Salisbury* again? In 1950 its *Labour Party* candidate went by the name of John Papworth. He lost, was offered a safe seat next time around but refused. Why? 'How can I represent them. I don't know anyone there.' How quaint.

Anton Pinschhof: 'Let me tell you of an amazing mathematical observation that any fool can make...and I distinguish fools from idiots. The foregone conclusion to all the meetings since the beginning of time that ever worried about the effects of the use and abuse of power in all its forms is that if any form of power accumulates somewhere, anywhere, then somebody must surely turn up to wield it. If that person is not an idiot to start with he will become one sooner or later. If not he will be thrown out and replaced by a more likely idiot.'

Thrown in as an aside: 'Idiots in Greek were those forbidden to vote. They were outside the polity. Those who wield our power today are by definition outside the polity because they work against it and are not so much elected as selected by the mathematical probability that if that person got there nobody else got there first.'

Last night I watched *Mr & Mrs Smith* with Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. Afterwards it was too early for bed so I began browsing absent-mindedly while checking my weblinks. Eventually I clicked myself through to Walter Schwarz's article about organic city produce in Havana and from there to the *Resurgence* archives.

En route I chanced across the company I had wished into being twenty-eight weblogs ago. The *Phone Coop* does one month broadband contracts. They hit you with a £30 connection fee and insist that you stay at least a month. But after that it's £18.99 per month with 30-day notice for cancellation. Had I known this at the end of November for nine pounds a week I would have installed *Phone Coop Broadband*. Strange that the *Phone Coop* doesn't show up in switches and searches. Echoes of *Google* in China?

# bill shepherd weblog thirty three

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Thursday 2nd February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-03

Woke up. Got out of bed. Ran a comb across my head...*Day in The Life* by Lennon & McCartney. At my desk by six after completing my start of the winter's day routines. Turn up the storage heater...on low during the night. Switch on the table lamp over by the bookcase. Start up the electric oil heater to put some fast warmth into the place. Water on for coffee. Get dressed...or not...quite a few weblogs are composed by dressing gown.

This routine is so automatic that often I have no recollection of what I did. The brain's task...apart from the Aldous Huxley reducing valve function of keeping waking consciousness on full alert...seems to be to turn us into robots. Routine life gets organised away into delegated unconscious programmes...soft wiring. This is why it is interesting that whales can't sleep and breathe at the same time. The hard wiring's something else.

It had been another cold night. We have now had several in a row with frost on the ground every morning when dawn casts her weak light upon the affairs of men. Car windows have been frosted over which means ten minutes of scraping before setting off. But by midday the sun has done the job. No bill afterwards either.

My time in *Llangolman* is running out. My daughter is back next week. My coach heads east on Saturday week. And I leave for *Purton* at midday tomorrow returning on Sunday. Today is my last pressure-free homeday...so I feel the pressure to use it efficiently. I have been avoiding the *Magpie Sagas*. And I promised to take our *Kergroaz-Vraz Institute Project* out of the middle drawer before heading for home.

Today my four-weekly *Working Tax Credit* of £ 277 hits my *Nationwide* account. It can be quite a struggle for ownworkers to get into the state benefit system. It is geared up for jobs and mortgage people. But once in the system your money arrives with rarely a glitch. You can set your clock by the *Queen's Pence*. It is a shame that means testing...and an obsession with fraud busting...spoils it. My housing benefit for instance gets turned on and off every time someone somewhere in the district council decides to recalculate my entitlements.

New means tests happen without warning...and the letter always gets sent to my boat instead of to my PO Box because the council's computers can't cope with a contact address as well as a residential address. 'But we sent you a letter.' 'No. Your computer sent me a letter. And it sent it to the wrong address again. So I never got it.' The conversation is scheduled for ten days time as January's money never arrived. The main reason there are so many 'No DSS' signs on estate agents boards is because housing benefit can suddenly stop. The attitude of the landlord is 'once bitten twice shy'. The *Diary of A Scrounger* will have more to say about this.

The latest moves on the *Magpie Sagas* went off recorded delivery from *Cardigan Post Office* in mid-afternoon. Returning home there was an e-mail from John Papworth. 'What has moved people to make things better all through history, even if they have often taken a wrong road and succeeded only in making them worse, is the sweep of the power of some moral persuasion. Where is ours? This brings us back to the human condition. Our present arrangements and policies demean us. What do we need to aim for that might ennoble us? What arrangements can we project that will impel us to seek the best in ourselves rather than wallow in the worst?'

My first reaction was to agree but then I thought about it. We have seen explosions in population, technology, schooling and knowledge...and new money tricks like double Dutch book-keeping. 'Over the top!' 'Up and at 'em!' and 'How terrible the world!' seem rather old hat...part of a vanished world of barricades, mass movements and grand revolutionary theories. Tomorrow's reality is of disparate scales...and no theory of cause and effect.

So I wrote back and disagreed. For people on the social justice scene the moral case is given. What they want is some competence from the good guys and the impression that they have got the diagnosis and the prognosis right. They want to meet people who are on the right track. They want their own facts and experience of local realities to coalesce into a coherent analysis...something that actually rings true.

Most of all they want to believe there are some people acting together to organise for success...which means the demise of the *War Party* and the rise of the *Peace Parties*. Make Love not War. They want to find that what they do on their local action fronts fits in with the strategies being put in place on the global ideas front. Perhaps this is a little nerdy but the zeitgeist of the age just 'is' and doesn't judge. Moral persuasions are part of the old 'isms'. The disparate scales of 21st century reality call for a technical approach to political strategies.

Over in the *Dark Continent South Africa's ANC* is scrapping its black empowerment programme 'to boost foreign investment' while Kenya's former anti-corruption tsar John Githongo has claimed his first scalp. The close friend and political ally of President Mwai Kibaki, David Mwiraria, has quit his job as *Finance Minister* over the *Anglo Leasing* scandal. Just as well my daughter never applied for her *Kenyan* passport.

# bill shepherd weblog thirty four

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Friday 3rd February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-04

*Vanilla Sky* with Tom Cruise, Penelope Cruz and Cameron Diaz is a strange film. It might be quite good but it wasn't easy to tell as it threw in some life extension and schizophrenia alongside some run-of-the-mill time slips and flashbacks. To add to the confusion Tom Cruise acted out dream states in between the odd glimpse of reality and was living two lives 150 years apart. As it was not too easy to figure out who did what to whom my poor simple mind was confused most of the time. The film wasn't good enough to be worth seeing again but I suppose I could call a friend and ask her to explain it to me.

I was up early to get my weblog written before setting out for Purton. I dropped off my rented DVD at *Glandy Cross* and by midday was on my way. My route took me past *Carmarthen*, *Swansea* and *Cardiff* and over the *Severn Bridge* to a service station on the M4 half an hour west of *Purton* where I rested up for an hour before driving the final leg to *Purton Farmhouse*.

Richard St George and Yolanda Pot from the *Schumacher Society* were in conference with John Papworth when I arrived shortly before five. I joined them and put in a plug for Part IV of Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*...a campaign I kicked off last year with the *American Schumacher Society*. Meanwhile John was plugging the human scale and persuaded Richard to provide a human scale link on the Schumacher website.

I had a more complicated agenda and promised Yolanda I would be in touch in our mutual capacities as webmasters. The *Kohr Online* webpages are a good place for us to go to work. But the Cliff's Edge Signalling Company website is the only place where visitors can download Schumacher's essays on Organisation and Ownership...the subject matter for the fourth part of Schumacher's classic book...so links to these webpages from the Schumacher Society website would make sense.

With the business of the day over, John took the opportunity to give Richard and Yolanda a background briefing on the *Thirty Years War* between *Fourth World Review* and *Resurgence*. John insisted it was not personal but concerned fundamental disagreements about the direction of the *Alternative Movement*. In private John tends towards hyperbole by claiming that Satish Kumar has single-handedly done more damage to radical politics than anyone else on the planet by taking *Resurgence* down the spiritualist road instead of sticking to the original brief of people reclaiming the power to control local affairs.

The rest of us listened politely and mumbled some well-meaning platitudes about how nice it would be if everybody made up and became good friends as this was the fortieth anniversary of the launching of *Resurgence* in 1966. But I don't think there's much chance of friendship and fraternity breaking out in the foreseeable future.

After the Schumacher delegation had left John served dinner and then dragged me off to *The Angel* for a drink and a few games of three card brag. This is a simple game where each player has three lives. Once you have lost your third life you drop out until just two players are left to play a final round that decides who wins the kitty.

At the start each player puts in a small stake of £1.50. If you come out as the winner just once in an evening you can reckon to go home a few quid in. I made it to three out of the eight finals and had some really good hands on the way. But I lost by a whisker in each of my finals. John was eliminated first in three of the rounds but made it to one final...and won it. So he went home with a broad grin on his face and his pockets jingling while I lost nine pounds.

One of the peculiarities of three card brag is that the way to win is to avoid losing. You get nothing for having the best of the seven hands around the table. But you lose a life if you have the worst one. Triples are magic as everybody else loses a life. But flushes, runs and pairs are good and even something like a King or a Queen high is usually enough to keep you ahead of at least one other player.

If you get a really bad hand you can throw in your cards and take the three from the kitty...one of them always face up. But otherwise if you have a run or a pair of twos or even an Ace high it pays for you to call...or knock as they call it at *The Angel*. This ends the round once everybody else has had their turn. A good weak hand like ten high is normally better than somebody else's hand so you keep your life. This avoiding coming last strategy is new to me.

Unlike poker or bridge...or snap...you don't need to give your full attention to the cards...and no great feats of memory are required. So conversation goes on and everyone comes away from the table feeling pretty good. I have never come across this game before although when Heidi was here in Purton with me on my last visit four weeks ago she mentioned that it reminded her a little of canasta.

## bill shepherd weblog thirty five

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Saturday 4th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-05

I finished the weekend's *Three Card Brag* tournament only £6 down after sweeping the board and winning £7.50 in one of last night's regional finals at *The Angel*...second table on the right just along from the round table in the window. The biggest prize of the evening came in the final game of all when there were nine of us around the table playing for a kitty of £13.50.

I got up at six thirty to write my Friday weblog only to discover that John Papworth had locked his computer behind a password since my previous visit. If I had known I would have wheedled it out of him the night before. Never mind. It gave me the chance to read a long supplement from *The Independent* about the global oil situation...not good...and England's energy future...more promising.

After breakfast I drove John cross-country to the *Gloucestershire* border and came back with a heavy sack of stone-milled organic flour in the boot of the Peugeot 106. Over the door of the *Old Mill* were the words: By Appointment to *His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall*. Prince Charles' *Highgrove Estate* is just a stone's throw away. Until a year ago the mill had been with the same family since the *Norman Conquest* of 1066.

It was hard to believe that we were just a few miles from a motorway. It felt like rural Wales. Narrow roads, old county signposts... *Malmsbury* and *Purton*, *Charlton* and *Mynet*. Ladies out for their Saturday morning canter. We missed the county border sign hid among the bushes and drove into an idyllic Cotswold Village before turning back.

John told me that he once timed a trip to *London*. It took him just an hour and three quarters to get to his meeting from the time the taxi picked him up at the door to take him to *Swindon Station* for the train to *Paddington*. No wonder television executives and single mothers with aspirations to be successful novelists choose to live in this part of the world.

John is a serious bread-maker. Claude Aubisson from the *Canton of Vaud* once explained that good bread needs good flour. His *Swiss Patisserie* was on *Cinque Ports Street* in Rye. This seemed rather obvious so I was surprised that he found it so hard getting his flour supplies. John expected his morning haul to keep him going for three months.

The *Radcon Planning Group* meeting was brief, focused and productive. These meetings can easily get bogged down...it only takes one to ruin it. I treated the assembled company to a short five minute summary of the *Ten-Year Plan* that we have been mulling over. It's important to have a sense of continuity so everybody feels part of something that's going somewhere. I started with the *Real Nations Charter* and the *Real Communities Charter* from *radcon I* and said that *radcon II* focused on the former while the job of *radcon III* is to put flesh on the bones of the latter. Call it creative history if you like. But what's new?

As for where we are headed. I took us back to the *First Assembly of the Fourth World* and the organisational structures some of us wanted to set up 25 years ago. The *Middlebury Institute* in Vermont is our model. Out of the September conference we want to see a second institute...with the working title of the *Edward Goldsmith Institute for Human Scale Ecology*. John will be talking with Teddy and Zac on Tuesday and wants a one-page memo from me by Monday evening. We have pencilled in New Zealand where Teddy spends significant chunks of his time each year.

Eventually we hope to see as many as a dozen members of this *Resurgence Group of Institutes* around the world...the *Dele Oguntimoju RGI Institute* for the study of cantonisation in Nigeria and so on. They would be a confederation of working institutes. Local People Challenging Global Power. No reason why these action centres and research bureaux can't be embryonic ecosteries too. This is where the *Kergroaz-Vraz Soil and Food Institute* enters the picture. It was time to move beyond *Small is Beautiful* and *The Breakdown of Nations* to *radcon I's Common Sense* and *radcon III's Village Democracy*. These should be our *Radical Handbooks* as we move from theory to practice.

*Fourth World Review* would fit into this broader context as the voice of the *RGI*...and would lend itself to a rotating editorship. We had a go at this briefly in the old days of *Fourth World News*. Teddy's *Human Scale Ecology* group puts out the Christmas issue, the January issue comes from the *Jos Plateau* in Nigeria, Thomas Naylor edits the February issue from the *Green Mountains of Vermont* and so on.

Meanwhile over in the *Dark Continent* President Ellen Johnston-Sirleaf of *Liberia* has sacked the whole of her *Finance Ministry*. They may reapply for their jobs...but anyone involved in graft was told in no uncertain terms to 'disappear'. I like it. Mind you many of them were never there in the first place. Ghost workers they call them. *Nikalai Gogol (1809-1852)* preferred the term *Dead Souls*. Something here for the rest of Africa?

# bill shepherd weblog thirty six

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Sunday 5th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-06

All was quiet in the *Papworth Mansion* as I crept noisily along the creaky corridor and down to the computer room at six thirty. By the time my host emerged for breakfast at eight thirty my work was done and *The Idea of the Resurgence Group of Institutes* was strutting about in the public domain looking for converts. I left Purton after breakfast and was home in *Llangolman* by one o'clock. First thing tomorrow the car has to go into the garage in *Crymch*. The exhaust is fading fast...or worse still the head gasket is getting ready to blow.

I stopped off at *Glandy Cross* for milk. Ten minutes later I staggered out £8 poorer with a *WWII* film...Head in the Clouds...and the *Sunday Telegraph* under my arm and red wine and a loaf of bread for company. No these last two items were not for Holy Communion. We had earlier given half a thought to entering that hotbed of *Anglo-Catholic Fundamentalism* in Swindon but decided against it. Men choristers wear surplices. Women choristers do not...lest they get ideas above their station and clamour for admission to the *Church of England*. God forbid! And let him forbid women in particular! It can't be easy being Rowan Williams.

Some day one member of our *Resurgence Group* will be in *South America*. Here is what I wrote to Constanza: 'I like where you are heading with *Pensart*. You'll be doing a lot of commuting between *Mexico City* and *Bogotá* by the sound of it. You might care to think about the 10-year future in terms of the idea of the university embedded in the universities in *Catholic Medieval Europe*...with particularly attention to how the medieval university model should be scaled for the modern world. Perhaps you should start an institute for their study. This institute should be bilingual from the outset in English and Spanish.

*Bogotá* is as good a place as any. Donate one of *Pensart's* five rooms at *Gimnasio Jose Joaquim Casas*...or start from a bench under a cherry tree in the garden. The institute's sacred works will include the writings of great medievalists like Erasmus and Aquinas as well as more recent thinkers like Cardinal Newman. His 19th Century essay on *The Idea of The University* had a major impact on thinking about schools and universities. And *The Idea of a Christian Society* by that Anglo-Catholic Yankee T.S. Eliot is well worth a read. If your father were starting out today I think he would be doing what you are doing with *Pensart*. So the *Jaime Leal Institute* would be a fitting legacy.

Kohr's *Idea of The Academic Inn* will also have a vital part to play in any future infrastructure for learning. It is available in English on the *Academic Inn* website. I would be honoured to be invited to be the first scholar in residence at the *Bogota Academic Inn*. We should be thinking in terms of a six month term of office from 1st April 2007 to 30th September 2007 and work towards making this happen.

It might also be worth talking to Toni Pinschof about taking on the next stint from 1st October to 31st March 2008. Job sharing...the subject of a proposal for *Swedish Euro MPs* five years ago. We are gearing up to ask for money for a *Kergroaz-Vraz Institute* in Bretagne which would complement what you will be doing in *Colombia*. But more on that another day. It will come out in the weblogs anyway as I need to do some work on the funding proposal for the *Goldsmith Foundation* next week. We are coming at them from all directions.

I have been in print off and on for 25 years. So I have become pretty blasé about the whole thing. Editors have been known to mess around with my purple prose. But despite this I can always recognise my own writing when I see it. Until now. Above my name and address in the latest issue of *Fourth World Review* is a letter headlined 'War!'. 'I took it from an e-mail,' exclaimed the editor quite aghast at the implications of this erroneous attribution. 'Don't doubt it for one moment, old chap!' saith I. 'But the e-mail wasn't from me!'

So unprecedented is this that I have dreamt up a theory, a motive and a suspect. Kurt Vonnegut sent the letter under an assumed name. Mine. I am the victim of identity theft. Judge for yourself. Here is what I am told I wrote: 'A brilliant piece by Kirkpatrick Sale. My own view is identical save in one respect. He gives the present US system 15 years - I give it 4. It does seem that Bush & Co are all set to act in some way against Iran within the current presidency. I monitor all Bush's speeches and he is quite relentless on this point. He refuses to rule out military action - and keeps on saying so. We shall see. More strength to your elbow!'

That last sentence...the strong elbow bit...could have been me. But 'monitor all Bush's speeches'? Excuse me. I can waste my time on better things. However Old Man Vonnegut at 84 has time on his hands. Listen to what he's been saying to a *Sunday Telegraph* reporter: 'Civilisation will come to an end when we run out of fossil fuels. I would guess that would be in the next five years. Human beings are pretty hardy so they will probably go on for a bit. But within a hundred years the last one will be gone.' Five. Four. Forty five minutes. Mere technicalities. I rest my case. Who can I sue? Do all old men in a hurry preach 'Armageddon in my lifetime!'

# bill shepherd weblog thirty seven

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Monday 6th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-07

A group of ex-oil men calling themselves the [Early Peakers](#) argue that oil reserves are nowhere near as big as the industry has been claiming. The group is predicting several more Shell-style announcements on overstated oil reserves in 2006. But at least George Dubya Bush has finally come out of denial and admitted in his *State of The Union* address to the *US Congress* that America was addicted to oil and had to get into rehab fast.

Nothing was further from my mind as I aroused myself sluggishly from my slumbers at eight o'clock. By the time I had breakfasted and showered I was almost ready to face Monday. I hate Mondays. At least there was no weblog clamouring for my attention. But old habits die hard. So I took a few minutes to cut my Saturday weblog down to size by removing all mention of the [Welsh](#) rugby debacle.

Monday ran true to form. Disasters come in threes. First I put diesel in my petrol tank. I just about got away with it as I realised after a litre so was able to dilute it with twenty five litres of green 97 octane petrol. Next I left my car keys in the *Internet Caf *. Finally I took the car through the car wash and lost my daughter's radio aerial. I also got it in the neck from the fellow behind me for nicking his wash. I thought car washes were like washing machines and gave you a pre-wash as well as a main wash. Not true. The car was washed twice.

Reform of the *United Nations* is a slow process so it will be years before Germany, Brazil, India or Japan will get even close to permanent power. But at least Kofi Annan is calling for the dispersal of international power and taking issue with the *UN Security Council's* five-nation power centre. 'Do not underestimate the slow erosion of the *UN's* authority and legitimacy that stems from the perception that it has a very narrow power base with just five countries calling the shots,' he pleaded last week in a speech in London.

I have never understood why the *American Social Justice Movement* doesn't get each of America's fifty states to join the *UN General Assembly*...and take turns sitting in the Security Council's permanent US seat. Job sharing. And since what's good for the goose is good for the gander China's provinces could follow suit...with the Europeans in their wake. How about it Frau Merkel? Start by suggesting that the *UN Security Council* apologise to Germany for the fire bombing of [Dresden](#) by four of its five permanent members. As holocausts go this must rank as the fastest massacre in European history...135 000 people killed in one night.

Will my inbox ever look like my sent messages folder...with not a junk mail in sight? Here is today's sent message to Toni Pinschof: 'John has written off to Jon Cracknell for some Goldsmith money so the scene is set for the *Kergroaz-Vraz* funding application. My gamble is that the *Kergroaz-Vraz Institute* (food & soil) will make more sense as part of a bigger plan to set up the *Middlebury Institute* in Vermont (secession), the *Edward Goldsmith Institute* in New Zealand (human scale ecology) and the *Dele Oguntimaju Institute* in Nigeria (cantonisation). One of perhaps a dozen founding members of the *Resurgence Group of Human Scale Institutes*.

For five minutes this afternoon Steve Wright had Zac Goldsmith as his guest on [BBC Radio Two](#). Listen to what he had to say. It's a good way to find your way around the *BBC* website. Zac was on at the start of the last half hour. You can download and listen to anything broadcast in the past week. Zac remarked that he hated *Question Time*. 'It's a bluffers' programme,' he said. 'How can anyone be an expert on everything? Most people in the audience knew more about education than I do'. What a refreshing change to hear 'I don't know!'

I see David Cameron is casting his pretty blue eyes upon the [Royal Prerogative](#). My article on the subject is just outside the Top Ten Google returns at [Number 11](#). But that's pretty damn good out of 163 000. Someone in Google must like me. Zac and Charles for King! Job sharing. Toni and I will look after the *Treasury*. More *Job Sharing*. *A Mint in Every Market Town*. Convert *Whitehall* into a *Hostel for the Homeless*.

I have an unerring knack of popping up in the wrong place. One day it will cost me dear when the *Stupidity Services* put two and two together to make 13. I was at *Purton House* picking up *Tempe* and chatting to Mrs Barker. *Tempe* has two collar tags...one with Doug Barker's phone number and the other John Papworth's. A day later and I would have bumped into the bailiffs busily removing a thousand pounds of organic produce. Douglas Barker is withholding some income tax as a protest against the Iraq War. They're going for him. Today he hit the national news. At least it will take the pressure off John Papworth. Now the Purton branch of the British Legion will have to divide their fire.

On a scale of one to ten where ten is the good news the Peugeot 106 exhaust weighed in at around a four today. The head gasket is fine but the exhaust pipe has snapped a few inches from the engine's exhaust manifold. Welding it back together would have been one possibility. But I am far from home without the right contacts. So tomorrow the garage in Cardigan will replace the entire five-metre stretch. Another £ 72 down the tube.

# bill shepherd weblog thirty eight

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Tuesday 7th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-08

On a scale of one to ten the exhaust pipe replacement project went from four to two...while the cost shot up from £72 to £125. My daughter's *Peugeot 106* has attitude. It was imported from *Ludwigshaven* three years ago. One of its more endearing features...at least in *Germany*...is having the steering wheel on the right and not the left. The English side in other words. To cut a long story short the car is a mongrel. The exhaust pipe fitted snugly enough at the engine end. But the old exhaust pipe had been modified at the other end. The new part did not fit. Out of time. My daughter is back tomorrow. A new exhaust box was rushed in.

I was at my desk a little after four this morning. My timing was excellent. I finished my two page piece on the *Resurgence Group of Human Scale Institutes* just after eight, sent it on its way and arrived at the garage on the stroke of nine. More creative history. But we all need something to believe in. Besides I tell a good story.

I was at a loose end for much of the day waiting for car parts to arrive and exhausts to be fitted. I killed some of the time at the cinema watching *The March of The Penguins*. There must be a better way. Why does Nature make everything so hard? Here were these poor mal-nourished [Emperor Penguins](#) trudging seventy miles from feeding grounds to mating grounds. How about a moving pavement? Strange this earthly life of ours...and it applies to sheep and emperor penguins too. Nothingness stretching into eternity at either end and a brief flash of colour and conscious awareness in between. Could be a wind-up I suppose. Pity Jesus doesn't laugh more.

The last people in the world to give much thought to such esoteric matters are the middle classes. They've been underrated by historians with their 'great men' and 'mass movement' theories of history. I lay some of the blame at [Karl Marx](#) door. He was always undermining them by his dismissive reference to the petit bourgeoisie. As a class they may well present a serious obstacle to the vanguard's onward and upwarding. But this works both ways. Once the ideas and values of the middle class shift then society as a whole moves. Today's heresies are tomorrows orthodoxies. And it's the middle class who decide what is when. Women in particular can be regarded as the custodians of a society's values.

Sociologically the lower class can be viewed as an aspiring (or failed) middle class who want their children to be middle class. What the world thinks of as the upper class is really only upper middle class anyway...although few of those in it realise it and even less dare admit it. Democratic political parties like *Thatcher's (and Cameron's) Tories* or *Blair's New Labour* base any electoral success on these assumptions. Besides from a purely practical point of view the only secure democratic source of funding is the middle class. The poor have no money. That is why they are poor.

This discussion came up in my conversation with *Mexico City* last week when I told Constanza that she was right to focus [Pensart](#) on the *Mexican* and *Colombian* middle class. I explained that by this I meant ordinary people with aspirations and the divine spark to know that 'this is not all there is'. Outside the developed world the middle class is often self-taught. They follow their instincts and learn by discovery rather than authority. As a teacher my aim was to provoke students into thinking for themselves. A contradiction perhaps but notice that I was careful to avoid the word teach. However I often found it necessary to point out that thinking for yourself did not mean thinking by yourself.

My inbox was edging towards four hundred so I took advantage of the fast *Cardigan Library* computers to delete most of the messages and start dealing with what was left. The *Radcon Planning Group* got priority. Stella Grimes our *Honorary Treasurer* had some questions and Adam Crosland had been slaving away over the weekend on a poster. You can take a look at it over on the [radcon weblog](#). Let me know what you think.

I'm not sure how it all started but Tom Greco and Toni Pinschof were mixed up in it somewhere. Anyway between the two of them they had come across a monograph entitled *Usury & The Church of England* by the Rev. Henry Swabey of 29 High Street, Maxey, Peterborough, England. This was just the kind of manuscript for the cesc website so I got drafted in to track it down and do whatever massaging was necessary before posting it onto the web. The only known copy was in Idaho with Michael Aldana. There is now another one on my hard drive awaiting the next time I do websites. That is 'not yet' so the project got parked. But Michael wants to see action. What to do? I'm thinking that [weblogging](#) is the way to go. Watch this space.

Over the weekend I resolved to get myself some commercial storage in Cambridge. I'm tired of having my stuff all over the place. The *Big Green Box Company* next to the *Park and Ride* out by the *Cambridge Science Park* is my first choice. So today I called them up for some prices. Ouch! One hundred pound a month...twelve hundred a year...for 10' x 8' x 8' of secure self storage. Perhaps I should go for sponsorship? Or cut a window in the side and sleep there. Perhaps I can give the *Big Green Box* to the *DSS* as my address?

# bill shepherd weblog thirty nine

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Wednesday 8th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-09

My daughter has returned to *Llangolman* after several weeks in *Sweden* sandwiched between meditation retreats at *Gaia House* in *Totnes*. I spent the afternoon cleaning the house, packing away my computer and moving out of her bedroom. All my Welsh worldly goods are now in two travelling bags, one rucksack and the *Dell* shoulder case that once contained a fully functioning laptop computer...until the key board converted itself into a random symbol generator at a repair cost of £120.

Today the *Guardian's* Environment editor John Vidal had a breathless article on Sweden's plans to be the world's first oil-free economy. The story is certainly a good one and Sweden's population of nine million may indeed be 'taking the biggest energy step of any advance western country by trying to wean itself off oil completely within 15 years without building a new generation of nuclear power stations'. But...and there is always a but where the nuclear industry is involved...*Sweden* voted in various referendums to get rid of nuclear energy by the year 2000. The Government has been dragging its feet for 20 years. The latest, absolute final, watch my lips deadline expired seven years ago. So the subtext of the announcement is that the *Swedish Government* has given the *Swedish Nuclear Industry* another 15 year lease of death. Am I being too cynical?

The nuclear industry is at the hub of a global axis of evil and like Carthage it must be destroyed...completely and utterly...razed to the ground...no ifs and buts. I pray that *Sweden* sticks to its *Bofors* guns. But I fear *Brussels* will find ways and means to meddle.

I place more hope in the rapid expansion of interest-free banking in Sweden. *JAK...Jord Arbeta Kapital...* has seen another year of steady growth. Yet still only one third of one percent of the Swedish population are members. More significantly the *Debt Usury Fractional Banking Industry* is making inroads into *JAK's* customer base. *JAK* monthly payments look higher because they have a policy of 'eftersparandet'...after saving. Eftersparandet means that you build up a new fund at the same time as you are paying off the old interest-free loan.

The end result is that instead of being loan-free and penniless after making your final loan repayment you can be footloose and fancy-free because you have your very own personal capital base. The lie peddlers from the usury banks are deceitfully fooling some *JAK* customers by persuading them to switch to 'cheaper' loans. I have no doubt that *JAK* will figure out a way to respond...a legal challenge of mis-selling perhaps?

In my *JAK* loan application last month I explained that I needed seventy five thousand kronor to set myself up in *Lund*. I see it more as a cash flow loan since rents and deposits are needed up-front and it always take a month or two to get into the system and find ways to sing for your supper when moving to a strange country.

Unless I can find a continuous stream of benefactors I have to pay rent or moor my boat somewhere...and that is no longer free. Apartment rents in *Lund* are half the price of *Cambridge*. In England the *Housing Benefit* regulations keep rents artificially high...to the benefit of the rich. Placing a floor on rents distorts the supply and demand mechanism...and is one of the causes of the rapidly rising inequality that has been accelerating under *New Labour*. The middle classes then pay into the general tax pool...rich people and big corporations pay lobbyists and tax lawyers to make sure they never pay a penny...and this passes up the credit food chain from the poor to the super rich.

Anyway the way I figure it is that once I have a half-price apartment in *Lund* I will be back on the *Scholars Network* and able to swap my place for a working desk in *Cambridge* whenever I feel so inclined. If the gods are in their heaven then there is no reason why my *Arizona* accommodation should not come the same way.

Why Sweden? I am just twenty credits away from my *Filosofie Kandidat Examen (filkand)*. One term will do it. In 1999 I brought myself within striking distance by picking up twenty credits in *Economic History* and another five credits from a course in *Sustainable Development in the Baltic*. This pushed me over the hundred credit mark. When my mother died in September 1999 I decided to abandon Stockholm and return to England. But then Connie's road accident and subsequent death kept me there...even though I was part of the way through some research into *Swedish IT Firms* and *Large Organisations* at *Stockholm University's School of Business*.

In my *JAK* loan application I said my 20 credits would come from the *Department of Economic History* at *Lund University*. My research interest was the banking and financial arrangements of the *Hanseatic towns* in the *Middle Ages*. This is part of a broader interest into the real history of european banking and the relationship between banking and innovation. I have a hunch that the introduction of double-entry book-keeping into what became known as central banking was a sufficient condition to explain the accelerated expansion of trading and manufacturing that modern day historians label as the industrial revolution. There will be articles and a book coming out of my research at *Lund*.

# bill shepherd weblog forty

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Thursday 9th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-10

The daffodils are on their way. Suddenly there are shoots above ground everywhere you look. No blooms yet so if you wander lonely as a cloud that floats on high o'er vale and hill you won't stumble across a host of golden daffodils. But a nice little hint that Spring...and *St David's Day*...are on their way. Seasons is one of the delightful things about living in this country. My official private winter stretches from *Guy Fawkes Day* to the end of February. So once again it looks like I will make it through.

Last year *Making Poverty History* pushed Seattle style anti-globalisation demonstrations off the front pages of the mainstream media. But in Genoa memories live on. The Olympic torch landed in Italy two months ago on its way to the *Winter Olympics* north of Turin. Here are some of the incidents along the way.

In Rome sponsor *Coca-Cola* was targeted. In Genoa there were remonstrations between the police and protest groups and the dowsing of the Olympic flame for twenty minutes. In Bologna protesters forced the police to provide an escort for the torchbearer. In Trento the flame was grabbed from Elenora Berlanda and held aloft. In Milano a chain was held across the road and the torchbearer and entourage pelted with snow balls. Typical of the tone of the banners was this one: Olympics of Peace or Games of War?

Meanwhile the *Church of England* was holding yet another synod. It began its deliberations by commemorating its role in the abolition of slavery in 1807 and pledging its members to continue campaigning against modern slavery. So far so good. But there were one or two problems. For starters William Wilberforce had brought bills before parliament for twenty successive years before legislation to abolish the slave trade was passed. One of the reasons for the long delay was that the bishops in the *House of Lords* with biblical authority had voted repeatedly against the abolition of the slave trade.

Then there was the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* who had the unfortunate habit of branding its slaves on the chest with the word *society* to show who they belonged to. Profits from the slave trade were part of the bedrock of England's industrial development. No one who was involved in running the country's business, financing it or benefiting from its products had clean hands.

I motored into Cardigan and wrote my weblog directly onto the blog site for the first time. I will be doing this for a few days and tidying up when settled. I took a cursory glance at the emails that had triggered mobile phone message alerts.

John Papworth was reporting that Edward Goldsmith and his nephew Zac had signed up for our September conference. Teddy will give the Friday morning keynote address and Zac will get his revenge on Jonathon Dimbleby by chairing the *Radcon Any Questions* at the Thursday evening public meeting. That should bring in the crowds. I told John to strike while the iron was hot and bring out the big guns to get Kirkpatrick Sale, Tracy Worcester and Angela Bates to join Deli Oguntomoju on the panel.

To the delight of scientists and historians the vanished minutes of the *Royal Society* were found gathering dust in a cupboard when auctioneers were carrying out a routine evaluation the other day. Filled with crabby italics and acerbic asides, the five hundred yellowing and stained pages are the hand-written minutes of the *Royal Society* between 1661 and 1682 as recorded by Robert Hooke, one of the society's original fellow and curator of experiments.

Lisa Jardine has written a number of excellent biographies of great 17th century figures including one on Hooke. She moved straight into campaigning mode: 'This is the last bit of the jigsaw for the society's archives, which is otherwise intact from 1660. There are Hooke enthusiasts out there and some are very wealthy and the calamity would be if the manuscript were to end up in one of their private collections where the broader community would be unable to study it.' Nice thought but with the going rate somewhere in excess of a million pounds I fear she is whistling in the wind.

In 1833 when *Parliament* voted compensation to former slave owners...rather than to the slaves themselves...the *Church of England* received nearly £ 9000 (half a million in today's money) for the loss of slave labour on its Codrington plantation in Barbados. The Bishop of Exeter and his business associates did even better. They came away with £ 13000. At least Rowan Williams kept his nerve and told the *General Synod* to acknowledge its 'corporate and ancestral guilt' and apologise. I wonder who will be apologising to whom for what 175 years hence?

# bill shepherd weblog forty one

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Friday 10th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-13

I am delighted that my daughter has succeeded in giving up smoking while away in work and personal retreat at *Gaia House*...not for the first time but she now understands the nature of her addiction and I think it will stick. I have never smoked and never got myself addicted to nicotine. I am very fortunate. But ironically, given David Cameron's trial by media on his youthful drug-taking, I am less suitable for public office as a result. So much for the humbug of tabloid patriotism and their hypocrisy as they snort their way through the late editions.

The idea of *Animal Liberation Fronts* is relatively new to western consciousness. A hundred years ago heaven was animal-free and the churches of Jesus were wrestling with the 'do they-don't they' of animal souls. Reincarnation was once on the agenda too until a synod dropped it from the export version of their neo-judaic religion a millennium and a half ago. How can I go forward when I don't know which way I'm facing?' as the great 20th Century Troubadour John Lennon of Liverpool put it.

In 1898 more than a century after Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp and Josiah Wedgwood had set up the *Society to Abolish the Slave Trade* the idea of freeing people was still in vogue. And with good cause. Because when Heinrich Dreser invented a new substance there was no *Huntingdon Life Sciences* to test it for him. There must be no bars to the progress of science and so he tested it on the Bayer workforce. They said it made them feel *heroisch*.

The heroin drug brand has prospered in the past hundred years and its raw material opium now constitutes virtually all of Afghanistan's recordable exports. Everyone is involved...from warlords to the resurgent *Taliban* to members of the puppet government. Since the two ugly sisters of international lawlessness invaded officially in 2001 Afghanistan has accounted for 87% of world trade in opium.

Writing about the heroin business in *The Guardian*, Simon Jenkins...my next favourite columnist after Matthew Parris (and Alistair Cooke who died last year)...wrote: 'Iraq since its occupation has yet to produce as much oil as it did under Saddam Hussein. The US cannot find petrol even for Iraq's cars. By contrast Afghanistan's opium output is breaking all records'. This year's crop will beat the 1999 record of 4500 tonnes. Britain's *Department for International Development* is 'in the lead' on Kabul's drugs policy. The policy has enriched tens of thousands of Afghans tax-free. The victims are on Glasgow housing estates.

When the *Taliban* were in charge things were different. The regime stopped virtually all poppy cultivation in 2001. Output that year was negligible. Simon Jenkins again: 'The Taliban's Mullah Amir Mohammed Haqqani pleaded at the time for western aid for distressed farmers, whose income from substituted wheat and vegetables was a quarter that from poppies. But he declared that 'whether we get assistance or not, poppy growing will never be allowed again in our country'. There is no evidence that this ascetic policy was not sincere'.

Indeed the policy of the *Taliban* was effective. The price of opium in dealers' warehouses promptly rose tenfold. Had Afghan supply collapsed, production would have shifted elsewhere, assuming demand remained high. But had demand been attacked at just that moment there was a brief window of opportunity to curb the heroin pandemic. There was talk of legalising an Afghan crop for medicinal morphine as with crops in Turkey and India. Instead British and US policy towards Afghan opium after the 2001 invasion was totally cynical.

As part of their dodgy deal with the warlords the imperial invaders turned a blind eye to the 2002 replanting. The market for unregulated global products are near perfect so the prospect of rocketing profits brought 28 of 32 provinces in Afghanistan under cultivation and refining factories were set up. Europe was soon swamped with cheap heroin. A Glasgow 11-year-old could buy it for £10 a packet. The policy was deliberate.

Meanwhile across the world the Cinderella of international statesmanship Bolivia's Evo Morales is pursuing the policy that the Ugly Sisters refused the Afghans. He is saying 'No to zero coca, but yes to zero cocaine.' He is fortunate that the *Neocons* have no policy for South America. Support Evo Morales and buy his sweater.

My daughter made salad...and salad her way is heaven itself and bears very little resemblance to the collection of vegetables that I throw together. I contributed an elixir distilled from the down-trodden grape vines of Southern France. We achieved that elusive delight...quality time and a meeting of informed minds before a roaring wood fire. Professor Leopold Kohr would have been proud of us. We made our own *Academic Inn*.

Britain's prison population halved after the Kaiser War and stayed at 10 000 until the start of the Hitler War. After that internment became a habit for the English ruling class. The number incarcerated has risen steadily ever since and now stands at 80 000. Throwing open the gates of our prisons will be one of the first things to do after the revolution.

# bill shepherd weblog forty two

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Saturday 11th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-13

There is a growing global trend for recently retired politicians to set themselves up in business as statesmen on call. The rot began in 1982 when the *Nobel Laureate* Henry Kissinger linked up with the disgraced Thatcher *Defence Minister* Peter Carrington to form *Kissinger Associates*. Since then these groups have slithered into the public-private domain of the *Military Industrial Government Complex* like a plague of poisonous snakes.

One recent arrival is George Robertson a small-town *Scottish Labour Party* politician on the make ever since he giving up a £ 140 000 tax-free term as *Secretary-General of NATO* two years ago. 'I am not a lobbyist,' he declared. God forbid the thought! He merely suggested to his old pal the trade minister Ian Pearson that it would be nice if some active government support was arranged for the international ventures of his paymasters *Cable and Wireless*.

I would like a few million pounds of tax payers' money too. Perhaps I should call up my old *Churchill College* neighbour Gordon Campbell at the *British Nuclear Death Industry* to see what he can organise? He played scrum-half for the college when I was keeping goal for the all-conquering *Churchill College* soccer team. What I enjoyed most was playing midfield for the second team alongside Johnny Kingsley Watson. But then the first choice goalkeeper Norman Wilson won his way into the university side so I doubled up with the first team...as well as turning out for the rugby team. Fixture clashes were fewer than I would have expected with hindsight. Perhaps they were so desperate for players that they adjusted fixtures to my sporting schedules.

Cricket was my best sport. I did trials for *Kent Young Amateurs* in 1964 and *Cambridge University* in 1966. When available I opened the batting for *Christ's Hospital's* old boys with John Edmonds...who headed up one of the country's largest unions many years later. Doug Smith and Geoff Shelley also formed part of Douglas Gowan's *Old Blues Cricket Team*. But my finest hour was the day that I opened the batting for *Churchill College* against the full might of the professionals of *Essex County Cricket Club*. I am probably the only person to have ever carried his bat against Essex. But it was not altogether unrelated to the rapidity with which everyone else departed the crease.

The whole thing was a cock-up. Essex turned up with an almost full-strength *First Eleven* instead of a *Second Eleven* following some misunderstanding over the standard of Cambridge college sides. Ken Boyce was seriously quick. Our skipper Jim Fitzgerald won the toss and put us in. We made fifty two runs and I got thirty of them after a charmed life that left me battered but unbowed ten wickets later. Essex won by eight wickets.

When I returned to my old college 15 years ago and had dinner at high table with my old *Director of Studies* Dick Tizard he remarked that all he could remember about me was that I was always playing something or other for the college. I feigned shock and horror at the unfairness of it all and reminded him that in my day there were only two prizes awarded to *Cambridge University* engineering students. One of them went to the nerd who came top in exams each year. The other was awarded by the *Cambridge University Engineering Society* to the winner of their annual *Engineering Essay Competition*. I won that one in 1966. And it wasn't just a paper.

Three finalists were chosen by the committee. In 1966 there was a *de facto* committee of one Chris Singleton...my rally navigator and the best man at my wedding. Nonetheless we still had to endure our *Big Brother Moment*. The essay was just a start. We had to present it in the *Engineering Department's* lecture hall on *The Fenway* before the assembled dignitaries of the *CUES* whereupon a vote was taken and the prize awarded. Think *Eurovision Song Contest*. It is the only democratic vote I have ever won...and ever likely to win...in my life. My essay on *The Practicability of A Fixed Channel Link* has pride of place at the head of my bibliography as my first published article. Search the archives of the *Cambridge University Engineering Society* for confirmation.

At the peak of their earning power John Major and Margaret Thatcher are reported to have earned more than a million pounds a year after leaving Number Ten. Major is on the board of the US-based *Carlyle Group* currently reaping huge profits from the privatisation of *QinetiQ* the UK government's defence and security technology agency. Appropriately John Cleese once played its head of department. The *Carlyle Group* operates as a merchant bank using its political connections to 'generate extraordinary returns'. Here are five others to cultivate or shun depending on your political persuasion as *Peace Parties* or *War Party* activists: *Stonebridge International*, *The Scowcroft Group*, *The Cohen Group*, *Hills & Company* and *The Albright Group*.

My boat is moored a few yards from the Rye Harbour Road. There was a large sign on the railings facing oncoming traffic when I clambered onboard at eight in the evening. It had not been there when I left Rye for Llangolman ten weeks ago. I feared it would read 'Boat For Sale' so was much relieved to discover that instead it read 'Danger Lorries Turning'. Is it possible that work has started on the Rye Harbour Road Cycle Path?

## bill shepherd weblog forty three

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Sunday 12th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-13

Seamless move back to Rye. Got my *Apple Mac Mini* up and running on *Vemara* in a couple of minutes this morning. But it may be too good to last. I bumped into Peter Butler at the supermarket. Steve's electricity was cut off the other day. Steve's boat runs off meter one while my boat is hooked onto meter two. But it is illogical and unless you know this, because of the positions of the four boats running off the four meters, you would assume I was hooked up to number one. So paranoia suggests a failed attempt to turn off my power.

*Vemara* is a 30-foot gaff-cutter. In Connie's will it passes to me. But there is a caveat. If I sell the boat two thirds of the proceeds go to Connie's son David...in line with the general disbursement of liquid assets...one third to me and two thirds to David. However Connie was anxious that David should not get his hands on any bequests until he was 25...she had started with 30 but was persuaded that 25 was more reasonable. Also Connie did not trust her ex-husband as far as she could throw him. So David's share of her estate was entrusted to me until his 25th birthday on 16th October 2011. So far so good. Now for the complications.

My principal concern was to avoid disruption to my *Academic Inn Books*' publishing business as Connie owned between a third and a quarter of the business. My thinking was that in the event of Connie's death I would set up her ownership in a *Connie Lindqvist Trust*. I figured that as both owner and artistic executor I could call the shots and dictate the purpose and conditions of the trust. Here's the exact wording: 'I give and bequeath into the sole custody of my partner William Norris Shepherd all possessions of possible artistic value. In particular I give and bequeath all framed and unframed artwork, paintings, sketches and the like and any interests or copyrights of any sort that I might have or might some day have relating to my work as an artist into his safe keeping to administer entirely at his own discretion as the sole executor of my artistic estate or to preserve or dispose of as he may see fit'. That seemed about as tight as we could make it.

At no time in her life did Connie earn more than £ 6000 a year. But she kept up a life insurance. This was designed to clear her estate. But there were two things going on at the time she died. Firstly she was with *Equitable Life*. The insurance yielded £ 8000 and not £ 12000. Secondly we were setting up to buy Connie a house in Rye. Connie's house purchase would be a 'buy to rent' deal. The mortgage application was to include a three year lease signed by *REB Limited* one of my two UK companies.

In July 2002 we took on the *Good Yacht Guide*. From a financial point of view this meant we could boost Connie's income to whatever we needed it to be and focus our attention on ensuring that we had the cash flow to meet her monthly mortgage payments. We were also in the middle of moving Connie's bank and credit card debts over to me when she died to cut back her monthly payments when applying for her mortgage.

Connie died in November 2002. Her last loan repayment was due in February 2003. By the summer of 2003 she would have been debt-free with just a mortgage in her name. Her income would service the loan and provide her with a private income of five thousand a year. Connie would have been in seventh heaven. Instead she went there by another route...and a few months early...leaving me to pick up the pieces of both lives while firing on only one of my four cylinders. Frankly it has been a nightmare that I would not wish on anyone else.

I was quite comfortable to sit it out until the end of 2004 because then David would be 18 and his parental guardian would be out of the picture. I indicated as such to the executor and the solicitors he brought in to look after the estate. A note of discord had entered at this point. I objected. It seemed insulting to Connie bringing in lawyers at £ 100 an hour to pick over bones that had slaved away for 35 years at under £ 5 an hour.

Come the spring of 2005 I started agitating but found myself talking...Shirley Valentine fashion...to a brick wall. My letters were ignored. So in August 2005 I got in touch with Brian Walker...an old friend from primary school days...who works with his wife from chambers on Sevenoaks High Street. *Vance Harris* can ignore lesser mortals but will get struck off if they refuse to respond to *Walker & Walker*. This cunning plan maintains the legal profession's closed shop. Painfully...like pulling teeth...answers started to dribble through.

By the end of October *Walker & Walker* had dragged some accounts out of *Vance Harris*. These showed that Mr Roud who runs *Brede Moorings* had been playing both ends against the middle by taking mooring fees from myself and *Vance Harris*. Back in the summer Mr Roud set up a piece of theatre to order me off the moorings. I smelt a rat and refused to budge. He figured I should quit while he was £1000 ahead. So far Brian Walker has managed to keep his costs down to £400. But my daughter does two days a week at the *Citizens Advice Bureau* in Cardigan and is advising me to look into legal aid. Perhaps Cherie Booth will represent me?

## bill shepherd weblog forty four

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Monday 13th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-14

It is three years since Connie died. Yet I seem no nearer gaining legal title to my inheritance. Perhaps it is time to lift the curse laid upon me around the time of my daughter's birth in *Nairobi Hospital* on 8th January 1973. I have the email address of the Indian guru who informed my daughter of this interesting fact.

Meanwhile *The Vemara Saga* moves forward at a duck's pace with worrying echoes of Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. Two weeks ago I instructed Brian Walker to agree the date at which ownership formally passed from the *Connie Lindqvist Estate* to myself. Once this has been agreed we can finalise matters with Mr Roud and the double entry book-keeping he employs for collecting his mooring fees. Can this be so hard?

*The Provident Accident Claim Saga* is a complicating factor. There are two separate issues. The first is settlement of the claim from the accident itself. The second involves a judgement call on whether to link the accident on 27th March 2001 with Connie's death from a massive brain haemorrhage on 7th November 2002.

On 25th January 2002 ten months before Connie's death I wrote to the company handling the claim to say that we were happy for Connie to undergo examination by their Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon. The examination duly took place and copies of the report were submitted to Mark Turner, Team Leader (MIB) at the Technical Claims Department of *Provident Insurance plc.* at P.O. Box 498, Crown Street, Halifax, Yorkshire HX1 1FF.

There is a three-year statute of limitation involved in hit-and-run accidents in the vain hope that the driver might be overcome by guilt and walk into his local police station and confess to his crime. So we told the insurers that we would be keeping our powder dry and postponing any decision on the use of the accelerated procedure being pushed at us until we could form some reasonable assessment of its implications.

On 5th February 2003 the file on Connie's Claim for Compensation was passed to the executor of her estate: 'Attached please find, in chronological order, the relevant correspondence between ourselves and *Provident Insurance* (ref: MIB/651643(01)429) concerning Connie's claim for compensation following her accident on 27th March 2001. As far as *Walker & Walker* have been able to ascertain *Vance Harris* did nothing.

The February the Fifth letter included a second paragraph that went like this: 'The use of professional 'ambulance chasers' was also being investigated following a recommendation from Mr. Stuart Osmer (Tel: 01424 882306), one of Connie's pottery customers. This resulted in a letter from Martin Langan of *Copley, Clark & Bennett* in Sutton, Surrey...see attached.' *Walker & Walker* asked *Vance Harris* to reply specifically to the reasoning deployed in their decision not to pursue this option. No response has so far been forthcoming.

As if this was not enough trial and tribulation for one year in August 2005 the *Magpie Sagas Project* stalled when its author and her boyfriend removed *Academic Inn Books'* stocks of the third and fourth books in the four-book series. Books sold over the past 3 years have not been paid for and Ms. Fiddimore is refusing a stock take. *Frankfurt Book Fair*, *AIB's* China marketing plans, the *Magpie Sagas* talking book and last year's planned private share placement have been postponed pending settlement of this dispute. The first procedural step was taken last week to bring the matter within the orbit of the legal system by sending a £ 400 bill for the books and a demand for a return of the stolen books with the threat of a further bill for £18 000.

The final twist to my *annus horribilis* came in September 2005 when Heidi and I began to plan a *Connie Lindqvist Retrospective* for Christmas 2005. We checked out local galleries and small exhibition halls in Rye and placed an early notice in *Rye's Own* for 10th December 2005 in the *Community Centre* on Conduit Hall in Rye.

But then to my amazement...I am getting naive in my dotage...first Dot Sharp at *David Sharp Ceramics* and then Cynthia Wall, an old trusted friend, refused to hand over the artwork that had been placed in their safe keeping 18 months previously. How do we know it belongs to you? Brian Walker is seeking to cobble together something convincing with the signatures of the executor of the *Connie Lindqvist Estate* Dr Tom Price and Keith McDonald of *Vance Harris* prominently displayed. I am still waiting. We cancelled the exhibition.

Over in the *Dark Continent* South African jet airliners are failing to give Tony Blair a rousing take off. As the place is crawling with military aircraft able to fly our cherished leader to the *Houses of Parliament* perhaps he needed a stopover in Kenya after John Githongo claimed two more scalps. While making poverty history he should take a look at Lake Victoria while it's still there. There is no truth in the rumour that Uganda is in breach of its treaty with Egypt despite the amount of water removed from Lake Victoria to feed the voracious appetite of the Nalubaale Dam turbines being 55% above the treaty's 'agreed curve'.

## bill shepherd weblog forty five

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

**Tuesday 14th February 2006**

*Posted: 2006-02-16*

Disaster has struck. My monitor has given up the ghost. The timing was interesting. At the end of 2004 I started working on a long essay against global warming...or rather against the conventional wisdom surrounding the hype about global warming. I got up at four this morning intent on revisiting my last draft and spending a day or two preparing my long essay for restricted distribution.

It was at this point that my monitor refused to crank up. It has now gone to the skip. I spent the day vainly trying to locate a ten pound replacement to tide me over for a couple of weeks until I have the money to splash out £109 at *KC Computers* in St. Leonard's on the flat screen I have had my eye on since I bought my *Apple Mac Mini* in May last year. To add insult to injury Tony, the owner of *PC Hut* on Ferry Road where I pay ten pounds for five hours on the net...had to choose this week to take his annual holiday. *The Internet Cafe* is closed until next Monday.

I purchased a train ticket from Rye to Bexhill and back and got the most out of it by breaking my journey in Hastings for a free internet hour at the Public Library and in St. Leonard's to buy a replacement for my 128 Mb *USB dongle*. My circuit then takes me along Bohemia Road to *Lidl's* for restocking and then laden with shopping bags down the road into Hastings City Centre. At Rother District Council's offices there were promises that all the calculations ever made about my housing benefit would be posted to me next day so I could scrutinise and plead for more.

*World Soccer* has gone the way of the *Global Olympics* over the past generation. The minimum wage was in force when I was growing up. Nowadays soccer is all about branding, television revenues and transfer fees with some modern slavery thrown in for good measure. Soccer Players are the gladiators of our times. You notice the change in the obituary of a player from my youth like Johnny Haynes of *Fulham* and *England* when they calculate the money he would have made were he playing today.

Of the profitability measures of yesteryear only stadium capacity and admission numbers still influence the bottom line. Top of the rich club lists in 2004-5 was *Real Madrid* with revenues of £176 million followed by *Manchester United* on £168 million, *Milan* on £160 million, *Juventus* on £157 million and *Chelsea* on £150 million. There are fifteen other clubs pulling in more than £50 million...seven of them British (*Liverpool*, *Arsenal*, *Newcastle*, *Tottenham*, *Celtic*, *Manchester City* and *Everton*).

## bill shepherd weblog forty six

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Wednesday 15th February 2006

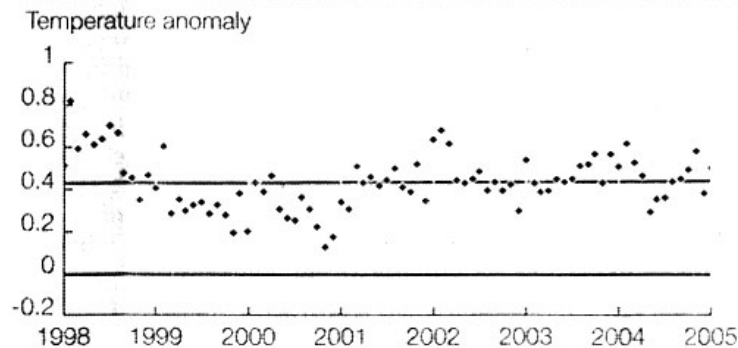
Posted: 2006-02-16

Connie used to plan her life around her summer cruises in *Vemara*. When her son David got to school age she had to modify this annual scheme but the principle remained intact. This made it easy for her to slot back into the old routine after she divorced and her son was living with his father. Dad looked after the school runs during term time and David stayed with Connie on her boat in Rye or Boulogne at weekends...or flew out to exotic places like Gotland, Brittany or the Channel Islands to join *Vemara* in the summer holidays.

Up until last year my daughter planned her annual life around summer music festivals. She was running a stall selling Indian silks. A friend of mine who was seventy earlier this year suffers from rheumatism. He plans in terms of the winter months...November, December, January and February. The last place he wants to be during the English winter is in England. This year he has been living in Vietnam. Other winters he has been in New Zealand. He seeks out warmer climes in the winter but for the rest of the year he likes to be in England.

Heidi works part-time for *East Sussex County Council*. She plans in terms and school holidays. In term time her life revolves around *Rye Harbour*. But with her schooling duties taking up just two days a week she has the flexibility to drive over to Robertsbridge and takes the train to Lewisham where she lived up until the end of 2004. Here she meets old friends, goes to the theatre, art galleries, restaurants etc. She has a couple of places she stays over. Half term and the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays are opportunities to get away and do something adventurous. Before Christmas Heidi was working on her project with villagers in Lwala on the shores of *Lake Victoria* for ten days.

Temperatures on *Planet Earth* have been static over the past eight years according to [Professor Bob Carter](#).



When two people become a couple one of the first problems to deal with are conflicting calendars. Our problem is conflicting planning paradigms. This is something else. I do indicative planning...[see weblog for 29/1](#). My paradigm does not mesh easily with Heidi's. To me the answer is obvious. Heidi should give up her two-day a week job and set herself up as an ownworker. The *Good Yacht Guide* has looked promising. Heidi also thinks the answer is obvious. I should behave like a normal person, get myself an apartment in Rye and reorganise myself into her paradigm. Unfortunately this to me is the wrong solution to the wrong problem...and would breed new conflicts.

This morning we agreed we had reached an impasse and were just making each other's lives a misery and decided to break up. I think there are a couple of other things going on...one of which is the mismatching of our material situation. Heidi has a house while I have had little interest in acquisition over the past twenty years. Been there, done it...and given it all away to my ex-wife. This has changed now I have a chance of winning Heidi's hand. Anyway the die is cast...at least until the next text exchange.

So the day started with the break-up of my marriage...long before the wedding...and then got worse. The curse was working itself out. In mid-afternoon matters were brought to a head with Mr. Roud when he turned off the electricity to the boat. There was an altercation. He told me to get myself and the boat off his moorings. I refused and told him there was something called due process and he had better follow it...adding that freezing a tenant whose rent and electricity was paid up until the end of the year not only constituted harassment but also attempted manslaughter.

At [Ryesingers](#) practice in the evening I was welcomed back like the long-lost prodigal son...a nice change after having been called everything under the sun earlier in the day. It was not worth lighting the coal stove when I got back to *Vemara* at ten so I got into my pyjamas, put on my dressing gown and crept into my sleeping bag. The boat looks nice by candlelight. It was a cold night outside.

# bill shepherd weblog forty seven

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Thursday 16th February 2006

It was a cold night but I kept warm enough. Besides I have company...a mouse. This is not the first time. But the first time I have had a clean mouse onboard. No sign of his droppings anywhere. Connie was the official mouse catcher aboard *Vemara*. I never had a clue what to do. On one occasion Connie had caught a mouse by his tail in one of the overhead nets. She had a carving knife in her hand and was using this to trap the tail against the side of the cabin. It was three o'clock in the morning. 'I can hold him! You kill him!' she whispered at me. Goodness knows why she was whispering. Perhaps she wanted to catch the mouse unawares and thought it best if he did not know our plans. Connie was a country girl. I'm a townie. She could do things like this. I didn't know where to start. But I can follow orders. So following instructions I went to fetch a saucepan. Then I did something wrong and he got away. We got him a few nights later...in a mousetrap. We had been recommended all sorts of exotic bait like chocolate...and had tried them all. But in the end it was cheese that worked best.

After booking a rental car from *Practical Car Rental* in Fairlight for the next *Radcon Planning Committee* meeting in a couple of weeks time and leaving a message about a computer monitor for sale in the *Friday Ad* I started into town for the Ashford train. I got a lift from the moorings with Seb Cole who features in one of the more dramatic episodes of *Creaky Tales*. As the train was pulling into *Ashford International* Heidi called in a new *Good Yacht Guide* order. She was on her way to London and asked me to get approval for the credit card payment.

I was in Ashford all day, spending seven pounds for two hours of internet access and also doing an hour at the library typing up letters for posting *recorded delivery* to Mr and Mrs Roud. The rest of the day was spent at *Starbucks*, planning *weblogs* 45 to 50. The alternative movement has trouble with *Starbucks*. The problem is their development strategy. They smother a limited geographic area with *Starbuck Coffee Houses*, eliminate the competition by increasing market share in total while reducing market share per coffee outlet. Then once everyone else has gone bust they send in the accountants to rationalise their monopoly coffee shops operation. *Wal-Mart* operates in much the same way. But they are ideal for people like me who want to hire a desk or an armchair for a couple of hours. The rate is £1.45 and for that you get an enormous mug of excellent *Fairtrade* coffee.

A new innovation in the Ashford *Starbucks* was Poetry Reading on the first Saturday of each month at 7pm. The 3rd edition of *Starbuck's Poems to Drink Coffee By* was lying on one of the tables. Here are some of the titles: Because of Love; Footfall to Heaven; The Wall; Under the Bonnet; A Musical Dream; A Moment; Scales: Obsession; Kent Rain; Hands; New Life; Dragonfly and Ode to Bureaucracy. It made me think of Nicholas Albery and the big hit of his *Institute of Social Inventions: A Poem For The Day*.

Nicholas was an amazing person who died tragically in a car accident a few months before he was due to join us for the first *Radical Consultation* in September 2001. He had agreed to chair the *Radcon Any Questions* public meeting that opened the conference on the Thursday evening. His achievements are legendary and there is a webpage devoted to them on the [www.cesc.net](http://www.cesc.net) website...just put "Nicholas Albery" into the search engine. I had another reminder when my daughter and I were having a farewell drink with Ellie Clegg the night before I left Llangolman. It turned out that Ellie had been there in *Frestonia* in those heady days when this area in West Kensington made its unilateral declaration of independence. Nicholas Albery was the driving force behind this creative alternative political stunt.

I had a call from my daughter as I arrived at Rye Station. 'What's going on?' It seems she had received calls from a car rental firm and from somebody selling a computer monitor. After a few moments thought I realised that the diversion must still be on my mobile phone. Sure enough my incoming calls were being diverted to the Llangolman landline answering machine if I failed to answer them. I altered the settings and arranged to pick up the computer monitor from Bexhill the following day. It was after dark when I got back to the boat...I have put a lock on the cabin door now. Tonight I lit the fire. But with no radio or CD Player there was little to do so I went to bed at nine and read for a while by candlelight...a John Grisham from *Rye Library*.

A road sign outside the *Yarm Preparatory School* up in the wilds of the Anglo-Scotch border country has been causing much amusement as it read *Grammer School Lane*. Eventually it was replaced by a new sign that read *Grammar School Lane*. Head teacher Gillian Taylor remarked that if the council wanted any help in spelling she was sure the children could help. The council blamed the sign manufacturer *Select Marketing*: 'Our order for the sign was correct.' So that's alright then. Craig Atkinson the marketing director of the sign makers put out an official statement: 'This has never happened before. We apologise to all concerned and are putting procedures in place to make sure it doesn't happen again.' Procedures? Like what? Schooling? Lynn Truss the author of *Eats Shoots & Leaves* will be delighted by the furore.

# bill shepherd weblog forty eight

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Friday 17th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-21

As a result of my move across country I am lagging behind with my weblogs In a word I am scrambling. Nonetheless my memory of Friday is of text messages. They came with this flavour. 'I have read back through your text messages and find myself bewildered...' When men bond they tell each other that when a woman is upset the wise man takes it seriously. Even women will be pleased to hear this. But they will not like the next bit because we men also say that a wise man will take no notice of what the woman says is wrong. This the men must figure out for themselves.

There is a government consultation document doing the rounds about a land tax...a sort of *Henry George Lite*. But not that light. It will raise a billion pounds a year for *Her Majesty's Treasury*. The tax would be levied on the rise in value of a piece of land once it receives planning permission. The money raised would fund new infrastructure. This way there will be schools and shops for the residents when they move into their new houses. Glad tidings indeed.

You win some. You lose some. A day's train ride away in Luxembourg the *European Court for Everlasting Integration* has told *Her Majesty's Companies House* that *Limited Liability Corporations* can offset European losses against British profits. Ouch! No comment from the first or second lords of the *Treasury* on how much this will cost the long-suffering English tax-payers. Maybe not a lot. *Marks & Spencer* who won the case don't contribute much to our national coffers. Most multinationals figured out long ago to book their profits in foreign tax haven.

I was on the move all day starting with a one-hour session at *Rye Library*. Next a stop-over at *Hastings Library en route* to Bexhill where I worked diligently and politely with several council officials to establish the fact that £3.95 per week was a little low for my local reference rent. The last time I looked it was £79. Unfortunately this minor adjustment meant that the pittance I receive for my mooring fees and harbour dues of £16.82 per week could no longer be paid. My housing benefit entitlement was zero. At times like this one thinks of dolls and pins. It does not take much to switch on the paranoia. But Mr Ridge rang me back just as he promised. And he apologised nicely, assured me that it was just an arithmetic error and was quite certain that *Rother District Council* would get back to me with a reassessment of their reassessment. When they do I will reassess my paranoia alert level.

That sorted I took a taxi out to the far flung suburbs of Bexhill to collect the computer monitor I had purchased over the telephone through the good services of the *Friday Ad*. Monitor, speakers, taxi and train fare came to £30 so I can now state with confidence and precision that second-hand monitors in Wales are half the price of monitors in England.

In Spain they call them *bin Ladens* because everyone knows that these € 500 banknotes exist but they are rarely seen. There are € 185 billion in circulation. Next comes €181 billion of fifty euro notes. A briefcase filled with € 500 notes is six times as valuable as one filled with \$ 100 bills so the five hundred euro bills are increasingly the currency of choice for drug-traffickers and stupidity service operatives. There are now € 565 billion euro-notes in circulation and € 17 billions-worth of coins. This compares with \$ 700 billions-worth of dollar denominated notes and coins...half of them outside the United States.

This accounts for about a twentieth of the dollars and euros sloshing around the globe. The rest is written into the bank accounts of the most favoured clients of the commercial banks by the central bankers' double Dutch book-keeping and the debt-usury money system they dis-manage.

Give the banks a euro of your hard-gotten gains and they will deposit twelve euros in other specially privileged accounts. It is called *fractional banking*. This is how the *Capital Adequacy Ratio* works. The French once wielded this financial tool to manage their money supply. The British and the Americans prefer to control dis-patronage directly. After the revolution banking will become a department of the *Institute of Chartered Accountants* and a *Freedom of Money Creation and Destruction Information Act* will ensure that ordinary people know who gives money to whom.

Richard Douthwaite has written a *Schumacher Briefing* entitled *The Ecology of Money*. 'Young journalists,' he tells us, 'are taught to ensure they answer six questions in every story they write: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?' He suggests we get in the habit of asking these same questions of every type of money we encounter: commercially produced money; people-produced money and government-produced money.

George Bernard Shaw never allowed his detractors to get away with false dichotomies. Pubic Property vs. Private Property was one straw man he was particularly fond of demolishing. There are three categories of property: personal possessions, private property and common wealth. [Professor R.H. Tawney](#) took this further and discriminated between working property and idle property. A similar analysis is called for as far as our money systems are concerned. Perhaps then Socialism would become what Shaw always insisted it should be...equal money.

# bill shepherd weblog forty nine

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Saturday 18th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-19

I spent the day in Ashford doing chores like checking out prices for *Camping Gaz* heaters and battery radios at *Argos*. Since losing my electricity I have actually got used to living without noise so showed only passing interest in replacing the tiny battery radio that we always used to have aboard *Vemara* for weather forecasts.

In our trip to Gotland in the summer of 1998 on our *Linnaeus Journeys Project* we discovered that *Calor Gas* suppliers became extinct once we got to the far side of the Kiel Canal. So we went over to *Camping Gaz* in the Baltic. The result is two full *Camping Gaz* containers under the port bunk. It seems a shame not to use them.

My Ashford routine starts with an hour of *Kent County Council* free computer time as the public library is en route between the railway station to the town centre. Upstairs in the reference library they have two computers capable of taking my *USB dongle*...you get to know about these things. Number 20 and 21.

During the previous week...since our *Valentine Row* in fact...Heidi and I had been conducting quite a classy text exchange...the lady has a good mind. One of the problems with texting is that unlike e-mail there is no record of the text messages...or rather most people keep just a temporary record until their storage space runs out. This is changing as the increasingly abundant forms of electronic communication get themselves hooked up together. Alan and Malcolm for instance who are serious working businessmen can send and receive almost anything almost anywhere.

But for the time being neither Heidi nor I are in this league. We also have a tendency to mix e-mail, text and hand-written letters...and open and respond to them somewhat erratically. Anyway I spent my library hour in the morning transcribing our text exchange and adding in the e-mails. To my surprise when I went back to the library again on my way back to the station at four the system let me on for a second one-hour session so I was able to complete the transcription leaving me with just the editing to do.

I love book stores and there is a good *Ottakars* in Ashford. But I dare not go too often as every title is tempting. Not only could I buy a lot of books but I'll waste a lot of time dipping into titles that tickle a momentary fancy. That's the way it is with e-mails too. If you get say 40 - 100 e-mails a day it's like being given 40 -100 books. You are tempted to open all of them.

But if you do you blow 3 - 4 hours reading them. You're forced to answer some out of politeness. You can lose half a day. It is the bookstore syndrome but at least with bookstores you have an option. You don't have to go daily. With e-mail you don't have a choice. It's thrown in your lap/face. You must look at every title to see if it might be urgent/important.

Much of the time you can tell from the titles. Most e-mails from friends/family are interesting or funny so you just sit there and read and the clock runs. With newspapers you can skip most stories after a four second glance at the headline. No such speed/luck with e-mail. In self-defense, I now don't open most e-mail no matter who they're from if the subject doesn't tell me what it is and if the subject isn't really necessary to read.

Most businessmen have a love/hate relationship with their e-mail but cannot avoid using it in today's business world. Instead they have strategies like ducking non-urgents e-mails until they pile up as thousands of unopened e-mails which they then delete. If you want your e-mail opened it's best to identify you and the subject clearly. E-mail is a part time useful tool but if it is not identified and understood the downside can be a tyrant and a half-day time-killer.

The blabbermouth aspect of e-mail is another annoyance. We have good people saying good things but they can't shut off their mouth. They use 8 pages of copy when 1-2 would suffice if they'd cut the waffle. Excess verbiage is carelessness. People must edit down for the printed word but for e-mail there's no space limit. As with everything in life if there are no limits people will go to excess. E-mail is like a relative who comes to see you daily and though you love her she never stops talking and drives you crazy. You don't know how to handle her. You can't shut her out, but don't enjoy a talk torrent.

E-mail's worst aspect is that government invented it...for military use at the start...and allowed it to go public, knowing it enables them to tap into everyone's conversations. E-mail is the least private form of communication on the planet. It should be used very sparingly out of respect for your precious time and privacy.

Between bookshops, chores and computers...and a side trip to *Lidl's* to spend £1.52 on eight cans of dessert rice at 19p a can...I settled down in *Starbucks* and did things...although for the life on me I can no longer recall what things these might have been...although reading *The Times* was among them. But I have no doubt that I was gainfully employed.

## bill shepherd weblog fifty

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Sunday 19th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-20

The main business of today was a full dress rehearsal for *Gilbert & Sullivan's Iolanthe* in the afternoon so I stayed on the boat all morning. It was bitterly cold so I cranked up my coal-burning stove, drank coffee and lived better than any king.

After finishing my editing of the *Valentine Dialogue* ready for the re-opening of *PC Hut* I investigated the true nature of kingship by browsing through a book of the letters of Henry VIII borrowed from *Ashford Library*. He was quite besotted with Anne Boleyn. Indeed his determination to marry her seems to have been his principal concern. I came away feeling sorry for Cardinal Wolsey who had the unenviable task of translating this obsession into a foreign policy that would benefit rather than harm the interests he represented in the never-ending balancing of dynastic power that passed for diplomacy in those days.

*Ryesingers* are putting on their annual performance of *Gilbert & Sullivan* at the end of next week. This year it is *Iolanthe*. I spoke to Lesley Brownbill when I got back to Rye at the weekend to offer my services. 'Of course you can learn the tenor part in two weeks!' Of course. And so I have been drafted in to strengthen the *House of Peers*. We peers of the realm strutted around in our hunting 'n shooting garb... well-wrapped against the inclement weather inside the *Rye Community Centre*.

Not so the poor fairies who spent the afternoon tripping hither and thither in the freezing cold. There is heating in the hall but someone somewhere had forgotten to instruct the person that mattered to switch it on. No shortage of witty repartee. *Iolanthe* should have stayed at the bottom of the stream with the frogs; if you think that it's love that makes the world go round then you've never been in a freezing cold rehearsal hall in the middle of winter etc. Everybody survived. Hardy bunch the British.

A meeting was scheduled with *Walker & Walker* at noon the following day so I spent the evening preparing myself. The first thing was a note to myself outlining my priorities. Next a letter to my daughter outlining my plans. Finally a series of small briefing papers for my solicitor Brian Walker. The key part of the plan is a quasi-public meeting a week before Easter for the *Friends of Connie Lindqvist*.

I hope to get one of the rooms in *Rye Town Hall*. I drafted out an agenda for this *Valhalla meeting*. After spelling out my obligations under the terms of Connie's will I would brief them on the two trusts being set up and the two publishing projects scheduled for Christmas 2006. The meeting would then be open for discussion and end with invitations to sign up to help make the various projects happen.

Heidi and I have been trying to patch things up between us but have now given up the unequal struggle. Here are the some of the things that Heidi e-mailed during the final sad day of our relationship. Part of me is not sure of what I want but I know I don't want to jerk you around and at present I have not the energy to crank up the feelings and the relationship after all that's been said only to be back at the same point as before. I am not sure we can settle our fundamental differences...or I just don't love enough to risk the journey. I appreciate that you are wanting to make it work somehow but while I do fear a break up what I fear more is our repetitive arguments which eventually result in the bottom line that our idea of conduct in a relationship is very different.

Both of us have thought that several times we made enough concessions to make it work and yet here we are again. My way makes you unhappy which creates stress on both sides and your way...to get enmeshed as you wish...makes me feel unhappy which also creates stress on both sides. The things said can't be washed under the carpet. They mean something to each of us and not talking and not saying how we feel would create problems.

I just can't see a way forward...at least not at the moment...a quick patch up isn't going to work for my part. From what you said I understand that if I can't give you what or how you want it is the end so you feel free as a single person to look for another woman who can be in a partnership as you want. I understand that too as you have a lot to offer. You ask what you can do? I would not ask for you to change what you need and what you need to do as in the end the unhappiness would surface anyway and one should not change a partner but be able to accept where they are at. While we accept certain things about each other there are fundamental characteristics that press our buttons and love is just not enough to overcome, I feel. Breaking up is hard to do. But now for quite a different subject.

Prince Charles has his private journals are all over the tabloids this week. Far from harming his reputation they will do it a power of good. On Tony Blair: 'He is a most enjoyable person to talk to. He gives the impression of listening to what one says, which I find astonishing.' Just so!

# bill shepherd weblog fifty one

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Monday 20th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-22

It was an absolutely filthy day...the wind howling through the rigging and me shivering in my shoes. I took the 0950 train to Sevenoaks. So much for water shortages in the south-east. The fields were flooded after a downpour the previous night. Every river and ditch that I could see from the train had overflowed its banks.

I was with Brian Walker from noon until half past one and then took the train back to Rye...with a stopover in Ashford. I gleaned some kindling on my way home from the double glazing firm on the Old Winchelsea Road. Old windows burn well. A *Lidl's* dinner in the evening...sweet & sour chicken with rice...and then a *Schumacher Briefing*. On this evening's agenda was Richard Douthwaite's *Ecology of Money*. Heidi called at ten and we had a forty five minute discussion about the proposed trusts following my meeting with the solicitors.

I used my time at *Ashford Library* to draft the minutes of the meeting. I always like to get minutes done as early as possible while the meeting is fresh in the minds of all the participants...and to make sure everyone knows what is expected of them. Here are some edited extracts.

It was decided that *Vance Harris* would be asked in writing (with telephone follow-up) to hand over all relevant documents including medical reports and explain the failure to pursue the claim. Brian would talk with some personal liabilities experts establish the size range of any pay-out and any statutes of limitation with the next steps to be agreed at next meeting once these facts have been established.

My main task will be to call a meeting of *Friends of Connie Lindqvist* for Friday 7/4 or Monday 10/4 in Rye Town Hall with the following agenda: Introductions; Will; Problems arising; Trusts; Exhibitions; Publications; Questions. Apart from that I was charged with the task of sounding out the trustees. Here is what the minutes had to say about the two trusts.

*David Hutchings Trust* document to be drafted for next meeting. Opening Date: 16th April 2006; Closing Date: 16th October 2011; Trust Purpose: *to be determined at next meeting*; Trust Beneficiary: David Martin Hutchings; Trust Assets: *Vemara*; *Accident Claim*; *Good Yacht Guide*; Trust Income: Retained except for *Good Yacht Guide* business expenses...i.e. net profit to the DMH Trust; *Vemara's* expenses...Harbour Dues, Mooring Fees and Maintenance Costs; Trust Manager costs; Professional Fees.

*Connie Lindqvist Trust* document to be drafted for next meeting. Opening Date: 16th April 2006; Closing Date: None; Trust Purpose: *to be determined at next meeting*; Trust Beneficiary: *to be determined at next meeting*; Trust Assets: *Rye Maritime Heritage Partnership Assets*; *Connie Lindqvist's* shareholdings in certain *Academic Inn Books* publishing partnerships; Trust Income: *to be determined at next meeting*.

As for *Vemara* Brian Walker was instructed to agree a date with *Vance Harris* for the transfer of ownership from the *Connie Lindqvist Estate* to myself so that we can settle up with Roud and transfer ownership to the *David Martin Hutchings Trust* on 16th April 2006...six and a half years before his 25th birthday. We set the date for the next meeting as Monday 6th March 2006 at 12 noon in Sevenoaks noting that I would be travelling up from Wiltshire.

I decided to spend a few hours putting together the week of texts and e-mails with Heidi into a document labelled *A Valentine's Day Dialogue*. Here is the epilogue. In a relationship the first commitment should not be to material things like careers, houses, social standing, money etc but to the person. 'Yes. You are the person I want to share my life with'. For me everything else is so ephemeral and transient. From this affirmation everything else flows. It is not possible to be really happy alone. Of course one makes the best of it. We all do. But having one special person in your life is something of a very different and higher quality. Family ties are not a substitute for this.

My time in Sweden is intended to serve at least three quite separate purposes. Firstly it gets me away from Rye and gives me a deadline to wind up everything to do with *Connie's Estate* which has been bedevilling my existence...and my relationship with Heidi... for the past two years. Secondly it allows me to finish my *fil. kand* Swedish degree in *Business, Development & Financial Economics* which is vital for the next stage of my academic career.

Thirdly it is the most sensible route back onto the 'scholars residential circuit'. Once I have an apartment in a (top) university town anywhere around the *North Atlantic* I will have the freedom to live wherever I wish by exchanging my place with another academic moving in for the six months period normal for such exchanges. Lund is one of Sweden's three ancient universities and rents there are half what they are in Cambridge. But this is almost entirely due to the exchange rate which I am predicting will change dramatically over the next 12 months...see <http://williamfranklin.blog.co.uk>. So there is a window of opportunity.

## bill shepherd weblog fifty two

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Tuesday 21st February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-23

Still freezing. I was up with the light at seven fifteen and got rained on walking into town. Thawed out at *Jempsons Coffee House* reading the newspapers over a cup of coffee before going across to *PC Hut* to sign up for five hours of computer time.

The *Isle of Man* is seeking to attract entrepreneurs with new rules that would mean no resident would have to pay more than £100 000 in income tax. As the highest rate on income tax is 18% this will be attractive to anyone earning more than half a million pounds a year. The island already offers a zero corporate tax rate for businesses involved in e-commerce, space technology and insurance. From 5th April 2006 this will apply to all other industries except financial services which will continue to pay a ten percent corporate rate. No wonder that Brussels wants to harmonise tax regimes across Europe.

The policy I have always wanted to see on income tax is the one that ignores the tax rate but sticks with *Isle of Man* style percentages. If I were *King of England* I would wield my *Royal Prerogative* to force the government of the day to remove 90% of the working population from the income tax net within the life of one parliament. Income tax was supposed to be a temporary tax when introduced by Lloyd George to finance his trench warfare with the Kaiser.

I suggested to the owner of *PC Hut* that he should ask someone who wanted to use his computers to look after the shop so he could get away. I wondered whether to offer my services but decided not to. Tony Payne's second tenant had been booted out making two bad experiences in six months. So the apartment above *PC Hut* is vacant. I offered to rent it for March and April money up front. He said he would talk to his wife Alex and come back to me. But unbeknown to me my relationship was not the only one on the rocks. Tony was ordered out of the family home and needs the apartment for himself. When not mending computers Tony draws... under the pencil name of Tony Coven.



I changed my e-mail signature on leaving Llangolman from 2-3 days response to 1-2 weeks. I am now at the outside limit so I checked through my five hundred e-mails deleting at speed and hoping that I didn't delete anything important. There were a few needing a response...Helen Dew in New Zealand for instance who was wondering whether I was still expecting her to send me the back files from *Fourth World Review* to post onto the website. I was.

I spent an hour or so with my friend John Pierce at his house on South Undercliff and then returned to the boat, lit the fire and put in some time on the *Gilbert & Sullivan*. Sunday's Dress Rehearsal had shown me the places where I was exposed to the full glare of the audience...and the places where I could lurk in the shadows at the back of the stage. Very helpful. This tells you which words you really must learn...and which parts you can get away with by offering up standard *Gilbert & Sullivan* harmonies.

The final run-through of *Iolanthe* at the *Rye Community Centre* in the evening went well. A warm hall in sharp contrast to Sunday. Just the final practice of the musical and choral details in the *Methodist Hall*...our normal choir practice location...tomorrow evening and then we are live for the first of our two performances on Friday evening.

# bill shepherd weblog fifty three

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Wednesday 22nd February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-23

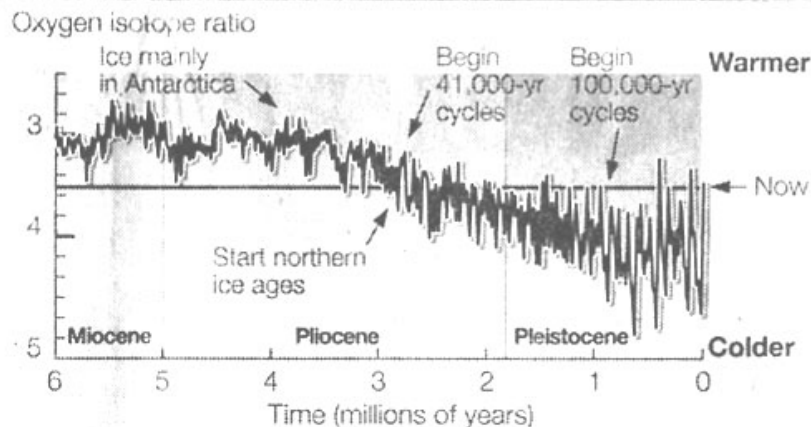
I stayed on the boat until nine fifteen and then walked into town to collect my post from P.O. Box 36...a monthly statement from *Adams of Rye*...my February payment of £40 had been duly registered...£80 to go. At the library the business of the day was to send a letter to Connie's cousin Ilona Price inviting her to be a trustee of the *David Martin Hutchings Trust*. Here is the text. 'I would like to invite you to be one of four trustees for the *David Martin Hutchings Trust*. I am charged with two obligations under the terms of Connie's will: Fiduciary responsibility for David's beneficiary assets from the *Connie Lindqvist Estate* and Executor of Connie's artistic and literary estate. I am now setting up the necessary legal structures to permit me to meet these obligations.

My target date for the completion of these arrangements is 16th April 2006. I met on Monday 20th February 2006 with *Walker & Walker* at their offices in Sevenoaks. Brian Walker has agreed to prepare draft documents for two trusts: *David Martin Hutchings Trust*; *Connie Lindqvist Trust*. The current proposal is for me to settle the following assets on David's trust: *m/s Vemara*; *Provident Accident Claim*; *Good Yacht Guide Business*. Attached please find a copy of the minutes of my 20/2-2006 meeting. I would welcome involvement of trustees in (1) development of the trust purpose (2) specification of the terms and conditions for the trust (3) negotiating details of the terms and conditions of settlement. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss matters further at this time.'

A little after midday I returned to the moorings on the *Rye Harbour Road* and lit the fire. Outside a gang of men and machines were feverishly demolishing my sloe bushes and white hawthorn trees...new source of berries for my sloe gin required for next Christmas. Nobody seems to know what or why this is happening but the assumption is that it is the preparatory work for hammering in pilings on our side of the river...the other side was piled last year.

All this frantic work is part of a big spend inflicted on the public purse by the private insurance companies who have persuaded the politicians that the country will be flooded by global warming sea-level rises so the realm must be protected by hundreds of public works all around the country. Future generations will find that this was one of the biggest scams of the century.

Last time I looked...about a year ago...there was no scientific evidence of changes in sea levels. There is a lot of noisy chatter about the *Arctic* but the *Antarctic* has nearly all the unmelted water so is the only area needing careful watching...and here the evidence goes both ways suggesting just the normal fluctuations in local weather systems. Then there is the temperature curve for the last six million years...see below. This shows a three-million year period when it was several degrees warmer than today followed by a three-million year cooling trend accompanied by an increase in the magnitude of the pervasive higher frequency cold and warm climate cycles.



When people talk about the world being run by computers they are right. But they are quite wrong about the details. Computers run the world by falsely modelling the future. Academics in their ivory towers invent new fears which they then impose upon an increasingly gullible public by producing computer models that forecast dire consequences from their self-fulfilling theories. There should be a warning on all academic research. CAUTION: This research is based on computer modelling.

In the evening we had our last practice before the big event at the weekend. It went well. If you haven't bought your tickets yet for the *Ryesingers* performance of *Iolanthe* by *Gilbert & Sullivan*, do so immediately. To bed by ten.

## bill shepherd weblog fifty four

[http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk/2006/02/24/thursday\\_23rd\\_february~589738](http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk/2006/02/24/thursday_23rd_february~589738)

### Thursday 23rd February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-24

The main action of the day was on *Brede Moorings*. It began at 1.30pm when a note was delivered to me by hand. 'Notice to Remove Vessel Mr W. Shepherd 16/02/06: You are required to remove the vessel *Vemara* which you claim as yours from River Brede Moorings immediately. You are not permitted to take electricity or use any facility in this boat yard. Signed MJ Roud. Note the backdating of the note.

I scribbled all over the note and sent it back by first class post at 3.30pm. Here is what I had to say: 'You must show that *Vemara's* owner(s) are in breach of their moorings contract if you wish to refuse the services you have contracted to provide. I do not believe this to be the case. However I understand that if (as you claim) you can obtain new tenants for *Vemara's* moorings at twice the £125 per quarter of *Vemara* that you should wish to do so.

My solicitor is in the final stages of agreeing an official date for the transfer of ownership to myself from the *Connie Lindqvist Estate* and arrangements are also in hand to then pass ownership from myself to a third party...our target date for completion is 16th April 2006. My calculations show that at least six months excess of mooring fees and electricity for *Vemara* have been paid cumulatively by various parties. The sum owing to these parties were *Vemara* to move to another mooring is estimated at £400 and is accumulating at the rate of over £20 per day until electricity is restored. I sent a copy to my solicitor and instructed him to fire a legal broadside.

I wrote a paper on *The Jewish Question* back in the mid-1980s when I was hanging out with a Texan artist in Cambridge Massachusetts. Bob Stuart and I put together this character *Lard Heep* and ran out a few cartoon strips. We based the character on real life so gave him typical redneck attitudes...and these included the whole conspiracy *Elders of Zion* anti-semitic repertoire. We had a few laughs and enjoyed working together for a few months.

Then I left the States. Bob was set to come to Europe a few months later but kept putting it off and in the end he went back to *San Antonio* instead. During the year after I left Massachusetts...when I was based in Canterbury...we corresponded and *Lard Heep* came up from time to time. But in the end he never went anywhere...at least not yet. But I still have the *Bob Stuart Papers* with a pretty pink ribbon around them in my archives. They are interesting. Bob's father was a headmaster who was hounded out during the *McCarthy Era* so his son grew up a serious dissident.

In Cambridge during the summer of 1966 I had dated Edna Weisberg a young student from Tel Aviv and met her twice in Israel in the next few years. My first visit was shortly after the end of the *Yom Kippur Six Day War* in 1967. Edna's brother was high enough in the military to organise a tour of the *Golan Heights* just days after the Israelis had captured them from the Syrians. The second meeting was on my way back to England from Johannesburg after my second trans-African safari. I arrived unannounced the day before her wedding sending her family into quite a frenzy...fearing a replay of *The Graduate*.

Also one of perhaps half a dozen loves of my life was Rachel Kowalczyk a Polish Jewish woman from St Louis Missouri who worked with Marilyn Ferguson in Los Angeles. I was in my mid-thirties and vulnerable at the leading cusp of my male mid-life crisis. Rachel was in Boston and on the rebound. On the afternoon we met I just happened to have the grandson of the Chancellor of MIT ...and President Kennedy's former scientific advisor...with me. He was my son's best friend at *Cambridge Friends School*. She fell for someone she thought I was but wasn't. And I fell head over heels in love. We spent a few happy weeks in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara...and a few not quite so happy ones at *Solviva Gardens* on Martha's Vineyard before reality broke through, the relationship collapsed and I scurried back East...and then to England...to lick my wounds.

Bob Stuart entered my life at the end of my Rachel Kowalczyk escapade after I had done a fair amount of research into Judaism, Zionism...and anti-semitism. In *The Jewish Question* one of my conclusions was that despite the *Holocaust* anti-semitism had never gone away...and would rise again in my lifetime...before 2020. I thought that the most likely place was the United States of America. Now I am not so sure. The largest Jewish community in Europe is in France. The number of people emigrating to Israel from France increased by 27% last year after a rise of 12% the previous year. France is now there in the frame with the USA.

I would make one other observation. No latter-day Nazis could have devised a better final solution than to gather the whole of *World Jewry* together in one small state on the eastern rim of the Mediterranean Sea. Here they are a sitting duck for any whacko American white supremacists in the mid-west who get themselves some funding and find a Nicholas Cage to buy them a nuclear device, a *GPS* and a workable plan. The Jews should have stuck to the idea of Judaism as a religion and kept clear of the idea of a state. Kirkpatrick Sale has suggested they abandon the *State of Israel* and retreat back into their diaspora. I would be seriously scared living in Tel Aviv. The city is indefensible.

# bill shepherd weblog fifty five

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

## Friday 24th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-25

I may be on the brink of a major breakthrough. Tony Payne at *PCHut* has half a laptop. So together with my half a laptop...the one that collapsed on me a year ago...perhaps...Eureka! On disconnecting the random symbol generator...previously flaunting its latent power behind the false identity of a keyboard...we got an external keyboard to start working properly. Voila. My daughter doesn't know it yet but she will be over the moon if this works because I will then have a *Dell PC laptop* and an *Apple Mac Mini* at my disposal and I won't be needing both.

I had another idea about working space in Rye and asked Malcolm Wallace whether I could pay his mooring fees and electricity bills for the next two months and work on *Gulliver* during the day. *Gulliver* has splendid lines, two masts and a classic wooden boat feel about her. She has been moored on *The Strand* for the past several years. Malcolm thought about it but decided that he and Claire had too many trips planned to Eastbourne and points west over the next few months to want to navigate around onboard encumbrances. Tant pis!

My immediate cash flow problem was solved in classic style by selling five copies of *Rye From the Waters Edge* by John Seymour and Connie Lindqvist to *Martello Books*. This book has been a nice little earner since its publication ten years ago and is expected to show a first edition profit of eight thousand pounds. Sales began to slow last year but before that I could reckon on £66 a month from *Martello* for ten copies and about the same each quarter from *Meads Books*. The books retail at £9.95 and the bookshops give it a 50% mark-up. My plan has been to have several of these micro-publishing properties. It may happen...once the ownership issues around *Connie's Estate* have been sorted.

I have been working on the question of settlement. The way trusts work is that a Settlor...me...puts money or assets or properties into the trust. Trustees are then appointed...usually four...and charged with carrying out the trust purpose in accordance with the terms and conditions of the trust. The trust is usually given a secretary who manages the affairs of the trust and the trust documents specify the beneficiaries of the trust income. Where the trust is destined to be wound up on a particular date there are also beneficiaries for the assets of the trust. These need not be the same as the income beneficiaries. So far so good.

In our ten years in partnership together Connie worked with me on nine projects. The plan is for her share of the three Rye-related projects to be placed in the *Connie Lindqvist Trust*. This means *Rye From the Water's Edge* and *The Maritime History of Rye*...completed just before Connie's death and poised for a Christmas 2006 publication. Shares in the partnership were allocated to John Seymour (25%), Connie (25%), *Academic Inn Books* (25%) and *William Franklin & Sons Limited* (25%).

John Seymour died last year shortly after his 90th birthday and he told me when last I met him that his literary executor would be his daughter Jane. I will need to talk to her about how we deal with John's share. As I have the controlling interest in *Academic Inn Books* and *William Franklin & Sons Limited* I should be able to reach agreement with myself...but an agreement is still needed. Finally there is the work Connie and I did for the *Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association*. This could be set up in the *Connie Lindqvist Trust* in such a way as to provide a small income for the association. The magazines we produced for *RHBOA* between 2000 and 2002 get a lot of downloads from the *cesc* website.

I spent an unusual afternoon watching Jennie Bayntun splashing paint onto canvases over at *Rock Channel Quay*. Her son Martin has been going around Europe over the past few years buying up properties and converting them into young person hostels. Mum got taken on as *Vice President for Interior Design* a year ago and has been off to Italy and Estonia on company business in the past few months. This latest acquisition was a little closer to home in New Cross and the budget was tight. So, game as ever, off Jennie went to *B & Q*. Her *Jackson Pollocks* were quite good. And the Buttercup Meadow would also have passed muster before she ploughed it over. As for the rest. Colourful. Unusual. And innovative. What her boss will think is another matter.

I was treated to a toasted sandwich after helping her to clear up and then rushed off to get made up for *Iolanthe*. Lesley Brownbill...our sternest critic...was pleased with our performance. Her biggest complaint was that the chorus disappeared while the audience were clamouring for a few more curtain calls. We never thought about them. We were just relieved on the first night to have made it through to the end.

A Mr Stephen Gough and his girlfriend Melanie Roberts have arrived at John O'Groats after taking nine months to walk the 874 mile stretch from Land's End. Their trek irritated and shocked a few people, amused many more and achieved...well...they got some exercise and more fresh air than most of us will experience when we are out for a saunter. Perhaps nude rambling will catch on.

## bill shepherd weblog fifty six

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Saturday 25th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-26

We received 26 millimetres of rainfall in Rye in the whole of January...compared to a normal level of seventy. This made it the driest January since 1997...and the previous fifteen months the driest in the south-east since 1976. But last Sunday the heavens opened and more rain fell in a 24-hour period than in the whole of January. In this time the gods dumped thirty nine millimetres onto our ancient town. This was followed by a week of almost incessant rain.

It was bitterly cold on Friday night with the easterly wind howling straight into the cockpit when I got back to the boat after *Ryesingers'* performance of *Gilbert & Sullivan's Iolanthe*. It seemed rather extravagant to light the fire so I decided to do a hardiness test on myself. Woolly hat, pyjamas, dressing gown, sleeping bag, eiderdown...out they came...the more togs the better. In the morning I was reminded of a forgotten age before central heating when windows were single-glazed and the frost made lovely patterns on the window panes. Back in 1956 I would watch my breath from beneath the blankets before bracing myself for the rush into my short trousers and long woollen socks.

A couple of years ago my son was visiting from Västerås in Sweden. He takes after his Uncle John and doesn't believe in arriving early at airports. So the timely departure I insisted upon was treated with some disdain. This story is for Nicholas John. This morning when a recovery van was sent out to help a broken down lorry on the London to Cambridge motorway it burst into flames. This is the motorway that feeds traffic into *Stanstead Airport*.

The fire brigade declared that the gas cylinders onboard the recovery van constituted a serious public hazard and brought East Anglia to a grinding halt by closing down both carriageways of the M11. There was an eight-mile tailback and hundreds of people missed their flights from Stanstead. Of course this had to be the day that the *Stanstead Express* was suspended for track maintenance. Murphy, always watchful, knows a good chance when he sees one. The replacement buses were caught up in the traffic jam. The road was finally deemed safe for traffic on Sunday morning. This could only happen in England. On the continent all maintenance and accident clear-up activity is geared to getting the motorway reopened as quickly as possible. Goodness knows what objectives the *Highway Agency* works to but it is nothing as obvious as this.

Here in Rye a few years ago we started to notice American tourists walking around swigging at bottles of mineral water. We thought they were crazy. Tap water is 10 000 times cheaper. Now everybody does it...and it is even crazier. The bottled water industry produces as much greenhouse gas as the electricity consumption of 20 000 homes. Twenty billion bottles a year find their way onto supermarket shelves in the UK...and a quarter of these plastic bottles are parachuted in from south-east France six hundred miles away...before finding their way into our landfill sites.

The bottled water industry seeks to justify itself by proclaiming that their bottles are using 30% less plastic than ten years ago. Big deal. The only dim light on the horizon is the promise from a company calling itself *Belu* of a biodegradable bottle made from corn that composts in ten weeks. Well that's alright then.

It was just as well that I tested my resilience under electricity-free conditions because when I returned from the Saturday night party after our second and final performance of *Iolanthe* the stove refused to fire up...something that happens perhaps 1 in 20 times. It didn't help that I ran out of firelighters. I was annoyed with myself about this because earlier in the day I had decided that I was living dangerously with arctic blizzards on their way and the wind swinging round to north so bought myself another 25kg sack of coal for £7.25p.

Goodness knows where my supplies of *Maxibrite* originate. Back in the days of the *British Miners Strike* there was much talk about the street children of Bogotá being rounded up and sent to work down the Colombian coal mines. But I have heard very little about this since. Comments please.

Now I am back in Rye I am taking my free *East Sussex County Council* computer hour every day (except Thursdays and Sundays) I leave to walk into town at eight and after collecting my post I take coffee at *Jempsons Coffee House* on Cinque Ports Street before making my way up to the library which nestles next to Rye Church at the top of Lion Street. The church opens its doors at nine and the library at nine thirty so most days I spend a quiet ten minutes or so in the Church. The ladies who run the place are getting to know me...and ignore my presence. I listen in to their conversations. Today the talk was of a trip to see the bluebells in Herstmonceaux. An annual pilgrimage. And coming up in a week or so's time.

All this rain has done wonders for our local reservoirs. *Darwell* is up from 68% to 70% full. *Powdermill* is up from 80% to 95%. And even *Bewl Water* in Lamberhurst...the one the water companies always talk about when putting up their prices or imposing yet another hosepipe ban...is up from 37% to 42%.

## bill shepherd weblog fifty seven

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Sunday 26th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-27

It was still bitterly cold as I walked into town when the supermarket opened at ten to buy supplies of candles and firelighters. The event of the day was to be Clive and Sally's soiree at midday at 22 Church Square. These are quite the best parties I get invited to here in Rye. As a bookseller Clive Ogden gathers together an eclectic mix from among the local intelligentsia visiting *Meads Books*. His events are always well-attended and are guaranteed to provide interesting conversation...not otherwise a notable feature of small-town England.

Among the regulars are William and Fiona Neilson. Indeed we first met at the end of 1996 when I was campaigning as a *Referendum Party* candidate for the *197 Westminster Parliament*. My success was measured not so much in the two and a half percent of the vote as in the fact that I inadvertently opened up the *West Oldham and Royton constituency* on the outskirts of Manchester for subsequent inroads by Nick Griffin and his *New Model British National Party*. The tenth anniversary of attending these soirees is coming up in a year or so. William has worked in the pharmaceutical business for as long as I have known him. This year the business card announced that he was Managing Director of *Talentmark*...leaders in Healthcare Recruitment.

William told us that a lot of his work as a head-hunter...they get four months-worth of the first year salary for their services...involves finding skilled professionals for India's pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. One of the ironies of this little corner of globalisation is that the abundance of cheap labour and highly qualified graduates that India produces is of no interest because the global drug barons use robots and intelligent machine tools to produce their product. India is moving into the forefront globally at doing this. I have been wondering for a while what the Indians would come up with to take them beyond their call centres and brain drains...computer experts have been sailing away to a life of luxury in Silicon Valley while sending their remittances back home for over a decade now. Funny Old World.

When the party started winding down shortly after three I went with Heidi to a new coffee place in town and then to a concert at St Mary' Church at 4pm. A Girls' Choir from a Catholic Seminary in Minnesota were passing through town and singing for their supper. Strangely lifeless performance. Technically excellent but lacking in heart. I couldn't quite put my finger on the problem. The choir master was a musicologist rather than a musician by profession and this probably didn't help. There were several pieces by modern American composers which were uniformly awful. But singing Mozart's *Ave Verum* unaccompanied only makes sense if you incorporate the keyboard parts into the choral arrangement. You need the harmonies. Even the attempt at a negro spiritual and the old *Shaker* standard *It's A Gift to Be Single* fell rather flat. I didn't think it was possible to arrange away the rhythms as this takes some doing. But this girls' choir from Minnesota managed it.

It takes about eight hundred million dollars to develop a new drug. The industry has been spending to stop *The Constant Gardener* from winning any film industry awards. On the face of it this seems rather over the top even for such a secretive industry as pharmaceuticals. Heidi was quite bemused when William Nielsen told us this...and then took the drug companies' side. It seems there is no truth in the rumour that the drug companies are prone to dirty tricks and roam around the world depriving developing countries of their natural resources by patenting any plant that looks interesting. But eight hundred million dollars? What are they so frightened about? Methinks they do protest too much! I must check out what Zac Goldsmith's *Ecologist* has done by ways of exposes on the legal drug barons.

*World Soccer* has gone the way of the *Global Olympics* over the past generation. The minimum wage was in force when I was growing up. Nowadays soccer is all about branding, television revenues and transfer fees with some modern slavery thrown in for good measure. Soccer Players are the gladiators of our times. You notice the change in the obituary of a player from my youth like Johnny Haynes of *Fulham* and *England* when they calculate the money he would have made were he playing today.

Of the profitability measures of yesteryear only stadium capacity and admission numbers still influence the bottom line. Top of the rich club lists in 2004-5 was *Real Madrid* with revenues of £176 million followed by *Manchester United* on £168 million, *Milan* on £160 million, *Juventus* on £157 million and *Chelsea* on £150 million. There are fifteen other clubs pulling in more than £50 million...seven of them British (*Liverpool*, *Arsenal*, *Newcastle*, *Tottenham*, *Celtic*, *Manchester City* and *Everton*).

The fire came alight first time without a problem when I returned to the boat shortly before six. Strange the odd days when it refuses to come alive...to do with pressure differentials I am told. So a toasty warm evening onboard *Vemara* that allowed me to finish Elizabeth Lord's *Flower Girl*...a compelling East End saga set at the turn of the last century in 1904.

## bill shepherd weblog fifty eight

at <http://williamshepherd.blog.co.uk>

### Monday 27th February 2006

Posted: 2006-02-28

Over on the other side of the pond January broke the high temperature records. Chicago was basking in temperatures as high as fifty degrees Fahrenheit. The warmth and humidity set off thunderstorms and tornados across many mid-west states while winter cereal crops suffered. These conditions spread north to Alaska and Canada and the organisers of the thousand mile *Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race* were forced to shorten it because of lack of snow. Then on 12th February a surge of Arctic air flooded much of the US and set off a massive snow storm. New York was hit particularly hard and broke its snowfall record with 27 inches of snow in Central Park. A week later many places in the States registered their coldest monthly temperatures on record.

Meanwhile over on this side of the pond *E.ON* a German energy company that owns *PowerGen* was caught red-handed rigging an opinion poll in the *Oldham Advertiser*. The company is so desperate to get some free carbon credits by building a wind farm on moorland near Oldham that it told its employees to act entirely independently and simultaneously by sending a hundred emails in an hour and a half flat to the *Oldham Advertiser* in support of the scheme. Rumbled they dissembled. 'We unreservedly apologise. Our renewable team wanted to support the project because they believe in it but they used an inappropriate way to do it.' Just so.

A *Hedge Fund* is a device used by wealthy individuals and institutions to invest cash. Yet another senior investment banker has joined the stampede away from corporate banking into the hedge fund sector. The latest exile is Charles Kirwan-Taylor, chairman of US Corporate Broking at *Credit Suisse*. These funds are restricted by law to a hundred investors per fund so they set a high minimum investment. We are told that their freedom to invest aggressively at high risk is what makes them attractive to the rich and wealthy. Complete and utter nonsense. These toffs trade at low risk on inside information...otherwise known as tip-offs. Up against the wall with the lot of them. Chuck plans to focus on European equities.

*AEA Technology* is one of the ever-increasing privatised arms of the *UK Atomic Energy Authority*. Last week the firm was fined £400 000 by Justice Norman Jones at *Leeds Crown Court* for failing to fit a shield plug to a two and a half ton flask carrying part of decommissioned cancer treatment equipment the 130 miles from *Cookridge Hospital* along the A65 through Skipton, Settle and Newby Bridge to Windscale. The flask was blasting out 129 million *Cobalt-60* gamma rays per second throughout its journey. This is between 100 and 1000 times the 'normal' very high dose risk level. Anyone standing close by would have felt sick inside ten minutes, have a fifty percent chance of dying after an hour and would be brown bread for certain after two hours.

Adrundhati Roy declared to the *World Social Forum* in Mumbai on 16th January 2004 that we must consider ourselves at war. I think she is right. But for the first time it might be lies instead of truth that is the first casualty of war...at least it could be. Mahatma Gandhi always insisted that *satyagraha* was a key part of his strategy for ridding the *Green Villages of India* of the *British Raj*.

The *Peace Parties* must always speak truth to power. Let the *War Party* tie themselves into knots with their convoluted apologies that are not apologies. Being economical with the *actualité* is what government does...the previous statement being a typical example. Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King would agree with this approach. So would Tom Robbins, one of the four useful things to come out of Seattle...*Boeing*, *Microsoft* and *Starbucks* are the others. Here is Tom Robbins' hero, Switters (sometimes with the *CIA*), in *Fierce Invalids Home From Hot Climates* (*Random House, New York, 2000, ISBN 1-84243-029-9*):

The Devil grows fat on our lies; the more you lie to him, the better he likes it. It's an investment in his firm, it increases the value of his stock by fostering the practice of lying. Only truth can hurt the Devil. That's why honesty has been banished from almost every existing institution: corporate, religious and governmental. Truth can be dangerously liberating. Did I mention that the Devil's other name is *El Controlador*? He who controls. His other name is *El Manipulado*. Mayflower Cabot Fitzgerald's response was that both manipulation and control are 'sometimes requisite in order to secure and insure stability and if that smacks to you of the satanic, then I suggest you think of it as using the Devil to further the aims of God'.

In *After Many a Summer* Aldous Huxley had this to say on that subject: 'The people who make wars, the people who reduce their fellows to slavery, the people who kill and torture and tell lies in the name of their sacred causes, the really evil people, in a word - these are never the publicans and the sinners. No, they're the virtuous respectable men, who have the finest feelings, the best brains, the noblest ideals'. He expanded on this statement in his book length essay *'Ends & Means'* (*Chatto & Windus, 1966, 344 pages, ISBN 0-70110-799-5*). *Amazon.co.uk* lists it as fiction. We live in interesting times.

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## Tuesday 28th February 2006

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In his Schumacher Briefing *The Ecology of Money* Richard Douthwaite sets out six questions to ask of any money you come across: Who? Why? How? When? What? Where? He then adds a seventh...How well does this particular type of money work? And an eighth .Is this money compatible with sustainability? Seven is asked from the viewpoint of the three theoretical functions of money as: (a) a means of exchange; (b) a store of value; and (c) a unit of account.

When appraising Central Banking's Debt-Usury money that we all use, Douthwaite completely misses the mark. The real problem is the distortion of democratic economic choice by the dispatronage inherent in the commercial banks' money creation and destruction procedures. These result in 'one pound one vote' in local, national and global markets. Those with no money...like the poor and future generations...have no vote for products and services. Commercial banking dispatronage also fails to discriminate fairly and ethically between real people and the many other limited and unlimited liability institutions flaunting themselves as 'legal persons' to gain financial advantage over real individuals of flesh and blood.

There is another problem Douthwaite seems to be blissfully ignorant about and that is the double-Dutch book-keeping introduced into the operating rules of all central banks. These banks were set up for the specific purpose of solving the centuries old problem of financing war. Their money creation points two ways...and only one of them targets the commercial banking system.

On the second criterion...money as a store of value...Douthwaite does slightly better and gets it half right as bank interest creates inflation as Margrit Kennedy has demonstrated. Here's Douthwaite: 'if a central bank ever ensures that the store of value function is maintained perfectly too little money gets into circulation to provide easy trading conditions. This causes profits to decline, investment to fall and the rate of unemployment to rise.' John Maynard Keynes wrote a weighty tome...somewhat arrogantly called a General Theory which it isn't about this. His concept of effective demand could have been stated in a couple of sentences...but of course you don't become a peer of the realm for that.

On the third criterion Douthwaite is pretty sound when he writes about 'a more fundamental and serious problem with the modern [central bank debt usury] money as a unit of account.' As this money has no fixed guaranteed relationship to anything real...this was finally removed when the Major Powers took themselves off the gold standard...it can and does lead to 'a gross misuse of resources'. By way of example Douthwaite homes in on one particular tool in the business economist's bag of tricks: cost-benefit analysis. Here is Douthwaite.

In Finland in 1999 two alternative ways of meeting an increased demand for electricity were being compared. The first was to build another nuclear power plant. The second was to employ people to turn waste wood left in the forest after timber extraction into wood chips to be burnt in combined heat and power plants.

The costs and benefits of these alternative solutions naturally occur at different times in the future. For example, the nuclear plant would require very heavy spending in the ten years of construction. For 30 years after that however the operating costs would be very low and the benefits in terms of power produced high. But after closure the benefits would stop while the costs of dismantling would continue for over a hundred years and the costs of safe waste storage for centuries. The wood waste alternative would involve less capital investment and give a more rapid start to the flow of benefits but because of the wages of the workers involved it would have much higher annual operating costs for as long as power was produced.

Analysts attempt to compare such projects by calculating for each cost and benefit the sum of money which, if invested today, would grow to be equivalent to the estimated amount of the cost or benefit in the year in which it occurs. These sums are known as the 'present net value' of the benefits or costs. The analyst adds up all the present values of the costs of a project and deduct them from the total of the present values of all the benefits. The project that has the greatest surplus of benefits over costs is the one they recommend for adoption.'

Douthwaite then cites the important 1973 article in *Science* 181 pages 630-4 by the mathematician Colin Clark *The Economics of Over-exploitation* where he demonstrates that this neat economical tool shows it is economically preferable to kill every blue whale left in the ocean as fast as possible rather than to wait for the population of the species to recover to the point at which it could sustain an annual catch.

Douthwaite also mentions the horror scenario for the Nuclear Lies Industry that it is not that hard to demonstrate that dismantling a nuclear power plant and disposing of its waste consumes more energy than it produces over its full lifetime. Cost Benefit analysis is completely incapable of illuminating such possibilities.