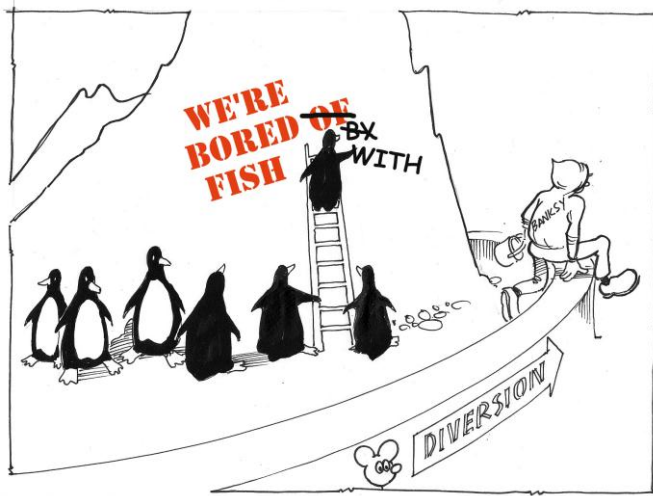


SOME of the LETTERS – the POLITICS and WIT of PAUL DUNWELL



Banksy's illiteracy

Sir: While I commend Banksy for his creativity (profile, 23 September), isn't the main problem with graffiti not just that it usually involves vandalism but that it all-too-painfully demonstrates the artists' illiteracy? To paint in six-foot-high letters "We're bored of fish" on the penguin enclosure wall sadly reflects a problem with prepositions that, for pedants, must detract from its entertainment value. That is unless our little flippered friends have mastered the art of wielding paintbrushes themselves and have their own literacy issues.

PAUL DUNWELL

Out-of-date British laws

I would like to contribute to the debate over long-overdue changes to British laws ("Tell us which laws to scrap, urges Clegg", 1 July). In Hereford's Cathedral Close it remains illegal to shoot a Welshman with a longbow on Sunday. In Chester that's perfectly OK within the city walls during the hours of darkness any night of the week, and Henry IV seemed to make enduring provision for the decapitation of not only Welshmen but anyone who shows them sympathy. Meanwhile any Scotsman carrying a bow and arrow in York is fair game. Obviously this is all monstrously discriminatory, especially against those who can only get Sundays off, those who work nights, and those who don't live within easy commuting distance of Hereford, Chester or York.

Paul Dunwell

'The Independent'

26th September 2006

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-education-system-417554.html

'The Independent'

5th July 2010

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-war-and-sanctions-2018426.html

Hot Topics: Archaeology Live! 2013 – tickets now on sale Richard III found – the full story 10 TIPS to get into archaeology

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The end to 'bad laws'?; Quirky collections; Museum of Leathercraft; re-branding towns and boroughs

October 20, 2010 By [CA](#) Filed Under: [Chris Catling](#)

Plans to 'de-regulate' Britain

'Help us repeal bad laws,' said Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg on 1 July, asking the public for feedback on unnecessary legislation the British people would like to see scrapped. One response, published in the *Independent* on 5 July 2010, was so witty, it deserves a wider audience. 'In Hereford's Cathedral Close it remains illegal to shoot a Welshman with a longbow on Sunday', wrote Paul Dunwell, of Alton in Hampshire, who went on to point out that 'In Chester that's perfectly OK within the city walls during the hours of darkness any night of the week, and Henry IV seemed to make enduring provision for the decapitation of not only Welshmen but anyone who shows them sympathy'. Meanwhile, he warns, 'any Scotsman carrying a bow and arrow in York is fair game'.



Such laws, Paul points out, are 'monstrously discriminatory, especially against those who cannot get Sundays off, those who work nights, and those who don't live within easy commuting distance of Hereford, Chester or York'.

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VOTING IS NOW CLOSED FOR THE CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY AWARDS!



Lead letter – Libya

Those who rush to criticize the UN's mandate in Libya would do well to realize that there is revolution in the air throughout the region. The UN has thrown down the gauntlet before all the other oppressive regimes which might flinch from allowing orderly transitions to democracy. Now every dictatorship knows that peaceful rebellions cannot be ruthlessly stamped out.

The Mediterranean is all that is between Europe and a whole string of dodgy dictatorships on its southern and eastern shorelines, so isolationist policies are increasingly imprudent. The alternative to having the UN help to unseat those dictatorships is for al-Qa'ida to do it.

*Paul Dunwell
Alton, Hampshire*

No alternative to UN response

Unattributed Editorial (for which I received an apology; rectified online)

Those who rush to criticise the UN's mandate in Libya should realise that there is revolution in the air throughout the region.

The UN has thrown down the gauntlet before the oppressive regimes which might flinch from allowing orderly transitions to democracy. Now every dictatorship knows peaceful rebellions cannot be ruthlessly stamped out. The Mediterranean is all that is between Europe and a whole string of dodgy dictatorships on its southern and eastern shorelines, so isolationist policies are increasingly imprudent.

The alternative to having the UN help to unseat those dictatorships is for al Qaeda to do it.

Paul Dunwell, Alton, Hampshire

Dying of the light

Sir: RIP Ronnie Barker. Only now, in death, can his fellow comedians hold four candles to him.

PAUL DUNWELL

'The Independent'

22nd March 2011

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-libya-2248847.html

'The Independent'

23rd March 2011

www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/letters/no-alternative-to-un-response-15123304.html

'The Independent'

6th October 2005

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/questioning-of-multiculturalism-panders-to-right-wing-509734.html

US Oil-spill

Can anyone explain to me why President Obama is deliberately damaging BP's stock? Until there is a full investigation into what happened on the Deepwater Horizon, BP shouldn't be accused of being entirely responsible – and neither should they accept all the blame. What makes the Deepwater Horizon disaster different from the Exxon Valdez disaster is that, in the latter, there were no foreign scapegoats.

This time around, the contenders for culpability include companies which are ostensibly American. Transocean were the rig's owners and operators (though they have migrated to Switzerland via the Caymans). Halliburton were the oilfield services company.

In this context President Obama seems to be acting in a manner which is bullying, irresponsible and prejudicial to a proper inquiry, and conveniently ignores the likelihood that this is yet another home-grown monumental environmental disaster for which the Americans have nobody to blame but themselves.

The British Government may be reluctant to confront the US so early in its term of office but, even setting aside British commercial interests, it should still be calling for a little measured circumspection in the interests of justice and fairness.

Paul Dunwell

Where were you?

So the American Oval Office thinks that BP boss Tony Hayward should explain why he spent a day sailing around the Solent with his teenage son rather than fighting oil on the beaches around the Gulf of Mexico.

Fair enough. Perhaps, while they're waiting for Tony Hayward to justify his absence as an individual, the USA would like to explain where they were, as a nation, between 3 September 1939 and 8 December 1941.

Paul Dunwell

Olympic victory confirms that Blair's Britain is on a roll

Sir: In the last week we've seen the biggest fleet the world has ever known assembled off our shores in a gesture of friendship and respect. We've seen our musicians put on, at a moment's notice, the biggest televisual and philanthropic event the world has ever seen. We've got a prime minister who is not only chairing the EU but also the G8. And we've won the Olympics.

None of these things is a chance occurrence. For them to all be occurring simultaneously is indicative that this

'The Independent'

11th June 2010

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-perspectives-on-recycling-1997232.html

'The Independent'

21st June 2010

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-lib-dems-future-2006137.html

'The Independent'

7th July 2005

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-olympic-victory-understanding-africa-and-others-497838.html

country is on a roll. Perhaps now is the time that The Independent should give belated admiration to the man who's at the helm; a man that so many have been quick to knock and who has visibly aged in our service.

PAUL DUNWELL

Ofsted must try harder

Sir: So Ofsted is now telling us that the 39 per cent of schools which are classed as "satisfactory" by their own criteria are, in fact, "not good enough" (report, 18 October). In other words, the term "satisfactory" in the context in which Ofsted uses it means, er, "unsatisfactory". I'm not sure whether we should be worrying about the schools, or about Ofsted.

Paul Dunwell

Run away

Sir: On Saturday 27 July you reported two events: The best- looking naked German sunbathers run for cover (page 12). Meanwhile a 15-pound vulture with a 9-foot wingspan snatches food from German beer garden (page 24). Coincidence? I think not.

PAUL DUNWELL
Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire

Spanish snub

The Spanish government instructed its queen to snub ours because, yet again, they're going ape over Gibraltar. Nobody expects a Spanish acquisition. But Her Majesty's Government should remember this party-pooing when the Spanish (or the EU on their behalf) come cap-in-hand during the next few weeks asking us to bail them out.

Paul Dunwell
Alton, Hampshire

Mass graves in Iraq

Sir: If we Brits had watched our head of state kill hundreds of thousands of our own people over two decades, having pregnant women and babies shot in the head then burying them in mass graves on the moors as a matter of routine, would we really give a toss whether another nation which invaded us to unseat that head of state was going to benefit from exploiting our resources?

'The Independent'

19th October 2007

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-eu-referendum-397252.html

'The Independent'

29th July 2002

<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-1693541.html>

'The Independent'

23rd May 2012

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-politics-of-poverty-7769596.html

'The Independent'

15th October 2004

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/bbc-blair-and-others-543775.html

I'm sickened by a British media and public who cannot see the wood for the trees. Whose side are they on?

PAUL DUNWELL

Violent student demonstrations

While our PM is over in China lecturing their government on democracy in front of an impeccably-behaved and articulate student audience, back here we're being treated to scenes of intolerable and dangerous antisocial behaviour enacted by students who have abused their democratic right to demonstrate.

This shameful behaviour, which will be watched with glee by China's leaders, is by thugs who bemoan any rise in tuition fees but who frequently, when buttonholed by the media, appear to be too inarticulate to justify the nation's further investment in their education.

Paul Dunwell

British debt

So it would be a disaster if families started paying off their debt would it? Surely the money, once returned to the banks, could be given instead to the companies that need it but currently can't get it.

Paul Dunwell, Alton, Hampshire

Good idea but...

While I am sure that those in child protection will welcome the sharing of hospital records in order to identify those who repeatedly need treatment as a consequence of abuse (27 December), we should recognise that for some children this may be a death sentence. Adults simply won't take an unlucky few to hospital because of the increased risk of discovery. And there will, almost certainly, be resultant fatalities. Just for once, it would be in the public interest for such initiatives to be run without an announcement.

Paul Dunwell
Alton, Hampshire

'The Independent'

12th November 2010

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-perspectives-on-the-countryside-2131714.html

'The Independent'

7th October 2011

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-perspectives-on-drones-2366681.html

'The Independent'

31st December 2012

www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/letters-arent-we-already-over-the-cliff-8434264.html

Debased examinations

So, after the perennial nonsense of printing more exam certificates than ever before, in what seems to be akin to the printing of money for the purposes of quantitative easing, the British Government is now intending to introduce an English Baccalaureate – awarding it to pupils getting seven supposedly-worth-having GCSEs at 16. The problem with this is, of course, that there is a perfectly-good International Baccalaureate already in circulation and it's a plausible alternative to A-levels at 18. That bona fide Baccalaureate has increasingly gained credence and converts over the past decade, not only in schools but in universities and as a worth-having qualification recognised around the world.

Let's hope that the Department for Education is capable of coming up with a new name to avoid confusion. If they really have to fiddle with the nomenclature instead of doing something of real value they could go back to using the term "School Certificate", from the middle of the last century. But what we don't need to do is taint another decent qualification.

Over the last quarter of a century we have gradually seen the majority of people pass most of their exams at 16 and 18. But it is difficult to see how they do so when around a quarter of those going into secondary schools are functionally illiterate. Do they rally at 16, 18, 21 or 22? So we have to endure the perpetual equivalent of the Emperor's new clothes.

Perhaps what we should be doing is having a public inquiry into educational standards.

Paul Dunwell
Alton, Hampshire

We need American common sense

Half the problem with our police force, sad to say, is that they're too used to beating up the wrong guy. We've seen that with the kettling of well-behaved protesters. But when the police are confronted with a crowd who are arriving in lines of cars to empty a warehouse after smashing the doors in, as I understand happened near to the O2 arena, and where a gang of 40 were involved, they suddenly become all risk-averse.

Humbling as it might be, if it takes an American to show how to apply a bit of common sense then let's get him in.

Paul Dunwell, Alton, Hampshire

'The Independent'

27th August 2011

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-gcse-results-2344720.html

'The Independent'

16th August 2011

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-perspectives-on-seeking-lawenforcement-advice-from-the-us-2338131.html

Lazy police round up the usual suspects

So 77 per cent of those rioters aged 18 and over who've appeared before the courts already had a conviction or caution? This is brandished as proof of a problem with the criminal-justice system.

An alternative reading of the statistics could, of course, be not that these rioters – being known to the police – were the easiest for the police to identify. Certainly only a small proportion of the tens of thousands of rioters across the UK have been caught. And nobody would blame the police for collaring those that they immediately recognised.

The lazy way out is to arrest those whom you recognise, even if they've just pinched a packet of chewing-gum. It's much harder to catch those who, for example, queued up in a long line of cars to empty a warehouse in North Greenwich, East London, of everything from 60-inch 3D widescreen televisions to hairdryers – apparently entirely untroubled by police.

Paul Dunwell
Alton, Hampshire

The Pope inadvertently advocates Shariah law

Benedict XVI may have inadvertently opened a whole new can of worms in his apology to the Irish for decades of abuse by Catholic clergy. His letter makes specific reference to clerics answering to "properly constituted tribunals" as well as to God.

This smacks of the same sort of religious court as is advocated by those Muslims who want to see Shariah law operating in parallel to British justice. Whatever the religious dispositions of Irish people, the authorities must remain committed to secular courts.

The only sensible way to deal with this history of abuse is for the Catholic Church to disclose fully to the police and authorities all reported and suspected instances of abuse and to then show a genuine commitment to helping the secular courts to mount prosecutions under existing statutes. Otherwise the Pope's initiative could give every other religion and sect – the Jedi and Satanists included – the right to set up what they believe to be their own "properly constituted tribunals".

Paul Dunwell

'The Independent'
8th September 2011

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-as-middle-classes-suffer-the-rich-demand-a-tax-cut-2350936.html

'The Independent'
22nd March 2010

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-nhs-summary-care-records-1925297.html

Nothing wrong with a good horseburger

So horsemeat is going into burgers? But, actually, horsemeat is very good – and better for us than what is traditionally put into burgers. It's leaner than beef. Surely, then, we should be eating it.

I lived in Switzerland for years, and good horsemeat, which is commonly sold there, as it is in France, is wonderful stuff. It's like beef but sweeter. It's not hard to buy horse from high-street butchers here in Britain, either, though they tend to not sell it openly. They'll get it for you if you ask for it.

In an era when it's easy enough to buy zebra meat, and goodness knows what else, perhaps we should start being rational. Horses are not bred for their meat and they live longer and better lives than most livestock. Eating them is simply a sensible way to dispose of carcasses when their useful lives are over.

Paul Dunwell

Unlucky year

Bearing in mind that most Britons don't want this year to end and that there is a time-honoured method of avoiding the number 13, could I propose that we refer to next year not as 2013 but as 2012a?

Paul Dunwell

Alton, Hampshire

Pupils on teacher interview panels

So the NAS/UWT is going to discuss the role of children on interview panels after a teacher failed to get a job when a child labelled them "Humpty Dumpty"?

Does the public really believe that the rest of the interview panel was so swayed by what a child said that they excluded the teacher on that basis, rather than the candidate's failure to make the most convincing case?

Paul Dunwell

'The Independent'

16th January 2013

www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/letters-what-about-atheists-rights-8454668.html

'The Independent'

3rd October 2012

www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/letters-a-season-of-futile-politics-8194679.html

'The Independent'

8th April 2010

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-the-babyboomers-1938493.html

Harriet Harman and the banking crisis

It should trouble all of us that Harriet Harman announces that RBS's Sir Fred Goodwin is not going to get his pension because "it may be enforceable in a court of law but it is not in the court of public opinion" (report, 2 March).

Public opinion does not make the law. If it did, we'd have had the death penalty reinstated decades ago. Harriet Harman has a duty to uphold the law, which is likely to find in Sir Fred's favour on this occasion, whether she likes it or not. She makes a mistake to prejudge legal proceedings or to presume to tell the judiciary what the outcome of their deliberations must be. It seems to me singularly stupid of her to believe otherwise.

And, for many onlookers, this criminally naive outburst may switch the public's attention from the incompetence of a banker who has at least quit his job to the incompetence of a politician who has likewise outstayed her welcome but hasn't.

Paul Dunwell

Tony Blair and the Koran

Sir: What sort of godless society do we live in that Tony Blair should receive such a lambasting because he admits to considering his responsibilities to his faith?

Here is a man who was seen reading the Koran in the aftermath of 9/11 and who has apparently read it three times. One can interpret this as an attempt by a 21st-century crusader to know his enemy. Or as evidence that we have a compassionate leader who makes every effort to think outside the box.

Personally I'd rather have a Prime Minister who believes in something, and who is not so mealy-mouthed that he daren't admit it. The world is full of leaders who don't believe that they are answerable for their actions to anyone.

PAUL DUNWELL

Thick undergraduates

It is reported that one in four young car drivers don't know that they should be insured. Yet the state appears to believe that one in two of the same age-group should go to university. I suspect that if we delved deeper we'd find that many of those entering higher education don't know what day of the week it is either. Perhaps the way out is for some enterprising university to offer a degree course. A doctorate in Paying Insurance Premiums and

'The Independent'

3rd March 2009

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-pedigree-dogs-1635917.html

'The Independent'

6th March 2006

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-underwater-spies-468826.html

'The Independent'

27th August 2009

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-war-in-afghanistan-1777565.html

Knowing What Day It Is has a certain resonance.

Paul Dunwell

Survival value of being a good mate

I was bemused by Steve Connor's airing of the debate over the perseverance of altruism, which arguably ought to get those demonstrating it killed, and how this almost exclusively human behaviour appears to undermine Darwin's theories regarding the survival of the fittest ("War, what is it good for? It made us less selfish", 5 June). It seems to me that the explanation for the survival and replication of this trait is simple.

Imagine that you are going into battle. With whom would you rather stand shoulder-to-shoulder, and for whom would you tend to gratuitously intervene if the situation involved significant personal risk? Would it be (a) the selfish prat who had never gone out of his way to help you or return a favour, and whose wife you fancied, or (b) the bloke who was always round your place fixing wheels on your chariot, loaning you a cupful of money when you needed it, and who'd do the same for you whatever the cost?

Paul Dunwell

Political rhetoric

Sir: So over the weekend Arnold Schwarzenegger "was assailed again and again by ordinary voters who accused him of wrapping a highly partisan Republican agenda in deceptive pseudo-populist language" ("The Governor loses the populist touch", 8 November). Well, at least the Californian educational system is working.

PAUL DUNWELL

The honour of Formula One

May I just voice my own concern at the running of a Formula One grand prix in Bahrain, a country run by an oppressive regime? But, just a minute, where was the last one run? China. So no compromise there, then. And a good thing that we're not relying on Bahrain to bail the world out.

Paul Dunwell

Opting out of bailing out the bankers

When governments are falling over themselves to rescue financial institutions with our money, I propose that all taxpayers are given an extra form to be completed with our returns which gives us the option to ensure that

'The Independent'

10th June 2009

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-labours-founding-principles-1701052.html

'The Independent'

10th November 2005

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-chinese-human-rights-514635.html

'The Independent'

23rd April 2012

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-nato-risks-leaving-behind-a-perilous-afghanistan-7669087.html

'The Independent'

18th September 2008

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-the-next-financial-bubble-934134.html

banks which have refused to help us as individuals, or indeed our businesses when we've gone through bumpy times, are entirely deprived of our individual assistance.

This measure would surely help focus the minds of those bank managers who are perennially bloody-minded, showing absolutely no understanding of unsalaried entrepreneurs and those others whose needs don't stack up to a whole hill of beans, bank managers who by and large couldn't hack it on their own but think we now have a duty to subsidise their living to the tune of hundreds of pounds each.

Paul Dunwell

Scary Spice

Just when it seemed like there couldn't be any more bad news for the British public we have yet another bodyblow.

Now there's going to be a Spice Girls musical (report, 21 January). I'm holding on to the forlorn hope that Vauxhall prevent the show from going ahead on the grounds that the proposed title, Viva Forever, infringes a trademark.

PAUL DUNWELL

Paedophile hunt

Q One obvious thought strikes me: Why has nobody sat down with the surviving girl(s) and shown them photos of all politicians serving at that time - to see if any faces ring a bell?

Paul Dunwell, UK

A The two surviving girls will be witnesses if Dutroux comes to trial so it is difficult to interview them as they have generally refused to discuss details of their incarceration. The other problem is that Dutroux kept his victims almost permanently anaesthetized. His drug of choice was rohypnol the date rape drug that he administered as soon as they were abducted and kept topping up. Consequently their memories are hazy.

Besides the police did start to do that with the X witnesses but their bosses have now dismissed all the progress they made as useless. The authorities do have the names of those who are identified by victims. So do I. We cannot publish them because we don't have the proof and could therefore be sued for libel especially as the Procureur General has dismissed the allegations as nonsense or fantasy. But the evidence against 3 of them is quite strong according to the police to whom I spoke - but they of-course are not allowed to continue with the investigation.

'The Independent'

23rd January 2010

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-gps-patient-care-1876427.html

BBC News

26th April 2002

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/correspondent_europe/1953293.stm

Olenka Frenkiel

Briefly... Fuelling hysteria

Sir: Am I the only person who believes that machines have suddenly become self-aware, as foreseen in Terminator? Witness the mass hysteria about "contaminated fuel" experienced by cars all over the country. But isn't it fascinating that they're using this self-awareness to exhibit a very human failing, hypochondria, rather than turning on their makers?

PAUL DUNWELL

Lead letter. Heathrow's Terminal 5

Sir: BA told us what a marvellous building they have at Heathrow's Terminal 5. What a pity that the lessons of recent history haven't been learned. I refer to the Millennium Dome, another landmark building which likewise proved to be a showcase for every kind of British ineptitude.

The whole world must be waiting to see what sort of hash we make of the Olympics. Perhaps, between now and then, we could start to build structures around systems that work, not the other way around.

Paul Dunwell

Birds are smarter than we take them for

Sir: So normally migratory birds are staying here for the winter (report, 19 November). But why rush to assume that they're motivated by unusually warm weather or extra insects? My theory is that they are simply staying home to avoid contracting bird flu. While humans are taking unnecessary breaks in venues where the pandemic is brewing, like golfing holidays in Thailand, birds have more sense than to go gratuitously globe-trotting.

PAUL DUNWELL

Susan's got substance

Sir: Britain's Got Talent contender Susan Boyle will perform useful social and commercial functions if she leads a charge of those whose talent is recognised in spite of very ordinary looks. This nation is already providing livings for far too many photogenic but vacuous "celebrities". The triumph of substance over style may now also be reflected in the commercial world as consumers, eager to rise to the challenges of the recession, switch their allegiance from products and services which are all hype to cheaper alternatives that outperform their glossily marketed counterparts.

The Independent'

2nd March 2007

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-honeybees-438447.html

'The Independent'

29th March 2008

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-heathrow-terminal-5-802395.html

'The Independent'

21st November 2005

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-asylum-policy-516212.html

The Independent'

21st April 2009

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-turkey-is-key-for-the-eus-energyhungry-states-1671616.html

Paul Dunwell

Psychopaths and webcam broadcasts

Sir: The decision by NBC to show the Virginia Tech footage is setting a dangerous precedent. From now on any unhinged psychopath can be pretty sure that if nobody listened to them in life then, assuming they can kill enough people and use a webcam, they can make themselves heard by a global audience after death.

PAUL DUNWELL

Blair's WMD error

Sir: So, according to Robin Cook, Tony Blair must be the only person in the UK who believes that the intelligence on Iraqi WMDs was correct. At least, if Tony Blair was mistaken, it was in erring on the side of caution. Which is what he's paid and entrusted to do.

PAUL DUNWELL

How to make the Gaza relief appeal impartial

If the BBC really insists they should remain impartial about Gaza, I suggest they run two appeals in tandem. One for the Palestinian victims of the conflict, and one for the Israeli victims. Then the viewers can decide. Hopefully, the results will be published as a useful guide to what this nation, which the BBC supposedly represents, feels. Alternatively, the BBC can start to rediscover its moral fortitude, just as they have done over the Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand affair. Oops, I forgot. They didn't, did they?

Paul Dunwell

Hazel Blears and obfuscation

It is a wonderful irony, if indeed Hazel Blears's message was that, "The government has failed to get its message across", that she has, er, failed to get her message across. Nevertheless, she deserves full marks for obfuscation.

Paul Dunwell

The Independent'

21st April 2007

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-class-prejudice-445580.html

'The Independent'

26th January 2004

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/atkin-s-diet-suicide-bombs-and-others-574401.html

'The Independent'

26th January 2009

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-bbc-and-gaza-1515890.html

'The Independent'

7th May 2009

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letter-s-aid-for-afghanistan-1680342.html

Short is lucky not to be in Iraq

Sir: With all due respect to Clare Short, whose good intentions nobody could doubt, she should count herself lucky that she's not serving in the Iraqi cabinet. Having the temerity to publicly undermine and insult her boss would be signing her own death warrant. It is this, far more than the issue ...

Old-style obedience

Sir: So Frances Crook (letter, 17 May) thinks that we need to find incentives for children to attend school? Whatever happened to the idea of obedience? We need to stop sugar-coating the supposedly unpalatable, and start expecting kids to do what they are told. That includes attending school,

Air security tested

Sir: Just a week ago, when I was about to board a London-bound BA flight from Zurich, my body-scan triggered an alarm. What followed is food for thought.

After a brief frisking, the security officer ran a hand-held device over my boots - and nothing else. They triggered this alarm so, announcing the boots were to blame (presumably a steel shank in their soles), he told me to go on my way.

Convinced that, although I presented no risk myself, he needed to be a little more alert to the possibilities of terrorist deviousness, I asked him if it wouldn't have been safer to examine them. A little ruffled, he then had me take my boots off on the air- side of the ...

Let's have CCTV in the classroom

The instance of teachers walking out at Darwen Vale High School in Lancashire because pupils are running amok should not be seen as an isolated incident (report, 7 April). This sort of adolescent anarchy prevails all over the country.

There are solutions. In Switzerland I worked in a college which specialised in dealing with unruly students, where every classroom had CCTV that was relayed to a bank of screens in the principal's office. Students (and teachers) knew absolutely that they were being watched and recorded, and the result was sobering.

'The Independent'

12th March 2003

www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-1751681.html

'The Independent'

20th May 2002

www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-1687679.html

'The Independent'

26th December 2001

www.questia.com/library/1P2-5209866/letter-air-security-tested

'The Independent'

11th April 2011

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-the-av-referendum-2265987.html

This was before the internet was as sophisticated a tool as it is now, but in the 21st century we have a system that can and ought to allow every parent, every probation officer and social worker, every educational psychologist and police officer to watch what's going on in real time within any classroom in the country.

This would probably do more for educational standards than the ludicrously prescriptive National Curriculum with all its cod accountability, because it would force teachers and pupils, headteachers and governors, parents and politicians to be genuinely answerable for what goes on in Britain's classrooms.

Paul Dunwell
Alton, Hampshire

Deporting Philip Lawrence's killer to Italy

Sir: So the wife of the murdered headmaster Philip Lawrence wants his killer to be sent back to Italy because she thinks her rights as a widow override the murderer's? What about the rights of the Italian public? By birth, he's Italian, but it was this country that raised a killer, moulded him from the age of five. Why should this man's presence in the UK really make a difference to Mrs Lawrence? Does he pose a real threat to her? I doubt it

Also, does this mean that the UK can look forward to every other country in the world returning British killers and paedophiles, and anyone else we'd rather disown, to our shores as soon as they've served their sentences overseas? Or do we expect some peculiarly unilateral system to operate, one in which we can shift all our responsibilities on to other countries?

Might I suggest that we revert to the best practice of the 19th century? But, instead of putting manacled convicts on ships and sending them to Australia and the US, let's send them to Italy instead. I see that easyJet flies to Turin, and it's probably cheaper now in actual terms (if we fly them out mid-week and book early) to export our felons to Europe than it was two centuries ago to send them under canvas to the Antipodes.

Paul Dunwell

How to use a Lambretta to kill moles

THERE was a vividly varied response to the question of ridding a garden of moles (Independent, 19 September). I have learnt to expect no less from readers of this newspaper. The difficulty lay in discovering a method that had proved infallible. A suggestion put up by one reader would be slapped down by the next, who offered a different one, only to be shot down in flames by the experiences of the third, and so on.

Paul Dunwell-Schwyster wrote from Switzerland recalling a 'sobering demonstration' by his father of the effect that a Lambretta SX 200 can have on moles. 'You park the scooter beside the freshest run and rev up the

'The Independent'

23rd August 2007

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-a-killers-human-rights-462842.html

'The Independent'

17th October 1992

www.independent.co.uk/life-style/house-and-home/gardening/underground-stays-mr-mole-and-digs-himself-another-hole-creosote-lambrettas-leeks-buttermilk----all-novel-ideas-for-banishing-the-burrowing-pest-but-anna-pavord-regrets-none-seems-infallible-1557960.html

engine while in neutral. It's not even necessary to give it full throttle to achieve the desired effect.'

Whether it was the noise or the fumes that did the trick, he does not say.

RECOGNITION at LAST:

Plans to 'de-regulate' Britain

'Help us repeal bad laws,' said Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg on 1 July, asking the public for feedback on unnecessary legislation the British people would like to see scrapped. One response, published in the *Independent* on 5 July 2010, was so witty, it deserves a wider audience. 'In Hereford's Cathedral Close it remains illegal to shoot a Welshman with a longbow on Sunday', wrote Paul Dunwell, of Alton in Hampshire, who went on to point out that 'In Chester that's perfectly OK within the city walls during the hours of darkness any night of the week, and Henry IV seemed to make enduring provision for the decapitation of not only Welshmen but anyone who shows them sympathy'. Meanwhile, he warns, 'any Scotsman carrying a bow and arrow in York is fair game'.

Such laws, Paul points out, are 'monstrously discriminatory, especially against those who cannot get Sundays off, those who work nights, and those who don't live within easy commuting distance of Hereford, Chester or York'.

'Current Archaeology'
2010

www.archaeology.co.uk/blog/chris-catling/the-end-to-bad-laws-quirky-collections-museum-of-leathercraft-re-branding-towns-and-boroughs.htm

REPLIES to MY LETTERS from IMBECILES:

Innocents caught up in power politics

Sir: Your highlighted letter from Paul Dunwell, in particular taking your newspaper to task for not lauding our dear leader as much as he would like ("Olympic victory confirms that Blair's Britain is on a roll", 7 July), appears to have been overtaken by events that have vindicated your policies.

Perhaps we should together remind him that in addition to those tens of thousands already dead and dying in Iraq and Afghanistan, should be added those in London today, innocents caught up in the power politics of Bush and Blair, who collectively refused to listen to the public when it mattered most?

We may have won the Olympics but we are losing the war.

PETER WING
MANUDEN, ESSEX

'The Independent'

8th July 2005

www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-defeat-the-enemy-497931.html

Sir: Paul Dunwell (letter, 15 October) argues that the Iraqi people are (or ought to be) grateful for the invasion of Iraq, stating that "we Brits" would be happy for an invading force to exploit our resources in return for removing a dictator.

Would we Brits still be happy if the invading forces imprisoned our sons, brothers and fathers, abused, tortured and raped them and send souvenir photos to the folks back home? What if the invading forces hadn't thought beyond the initial invasion, and allowed the country to descend into anarchy?

Speak for yourself, Mr Dunwell.

KENNETH McCARTNEY
Edinburgh

Sir: Would I sicken Paul Dunwell even further if I said that I found the "finding" of the mass graves, just as Mr Blair is under growing pressure to apologise, a little too much for coincidence. It's hardly as if nobody knew about their existence, so how come after nearly 18 months of occupation they are only being "discovered", now just when Messrs Blair and Bush are on the ropes?

PATRICIA WILSON
New Barnet, Hertfordshire

Fear of anarchy in the classroom

Paul Dunwell's vision of an Orwellian future in which schools are under constant surveillance is among the most disturbing attitudes to education I have seen (Letters, 11 April). The notion of having headteachers and external authority figures monitor every move made by teachers and pupils betrays a deep-seated and unhealthy suspicion of children and young people.

This ludicrous concept appears to be the product of a belief that anarchy and chaos are rife in the majority of British schools. In reality, this is far from the truth, and it is entirely wrong to presume that the scenes witnessed at Darwen Vale High School are prevalent elsewhere. A Big Brother-style surveillance system could only result in a generation of children brought up to live in fear of authority, and the real causes of misconduct in schools would remain unaddressed.

Instead, there must be a focus on training teachers who are capable of dealing with any incidents as serious as those recently brought to light in Lancashire and, more importantly, who understand the importance of building a mutually trusting and respectful relationship with all students to ensure that such incidents never occur. Teacher walkouts are a desperate reaction to a desperate situation, but CCTV is not the way forward.

'The Independent'
18th October 2004
www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/geldof-iraq-and-others-544029.html

'The Independent'
18th October 2004
www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/geldof-iraq-and-others-544029.html

'The Independent'
14th April 2011
www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-perspectives-on-the-burka-2267391.html

Richard Bracknall (Aged 15) Saltburn-by-the-Sea, North Yorkshire