



Nigel Scott In Brief

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Victims of a mad world

NIGEL SCOTT IT was the ultimate irony that the mass murderer who brought terror to a US school th...
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Embracing change

THE WORLD is changing and those of us of a certain age continue to struggle against the tide....
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Animal crackers

I'M looking forward immensely to the death of our goldfish. It's a bit cruel, I suppose, an...
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Bowled over!

IT'S not often that life gives you a second chance. About a decade ago I walked away from the Yo...
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Waste of time

THAT nicely turned out chap David Cameron would be proud, I think, of Mrs S. ...
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Smokers: Give us all a break

IT'S a filthy habit, smoking. But it's one that has its definite advantages in the workplace...
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Corinne Bailey Rae out of line

ROD McPHEE NOTES FROM THE CITY A CELEBRATED Leeds act of international renown, one which never ...
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In response...

HELL hath no fury, it would seem, like a biking community criticised.

When I dashed off a quick whinge about bikers to fill a little space on this page before departing on holiday recently little could I have anticipated the reaction. I suppose that's what you get for moaning about groups who are fiercely protective of their own.

When attacked they tend to defend themselves with vigour.

What has disappointed me, however, is how many complainants seem to think that I would actually consider opening the car door on a passing biker or that, in some way, I am encouraging others to do the same.

What rot. You can think a lot of things without actually meaning them.

Control their vehicle

For instance, there are a lot of idiotic car drivers out there who motor around holding mobile phones to their ears while trying to control their vehicle.

Every time I see one I wish I was driving James Bond's Aston Martin DB5 so I could rip up their tyres with its revolving tyre shredder.

No, bikers, that doesn't mean that I am going to do it or that I am encouraging any secret agents who happen to be out there to do so.

Equally, I get fed up with those lorry drivers who seek, hopelessly, to overtake their counterparts on dual carriageways only to find that they haven't the power and end up blocking both lanes of the road.

I reckon a heat seeking missile, in this instance, would be a suitable way of clearing a way through but, guess what, I'm not actually going to do it.

I found it quite flattering that Motor Cycle News took the trouble to ring me last week to take up the cudgels on behalf of their readership.

One of their senior writers gave me a right grilling down the phone – the sort you'd normally hear Jeremy Paxman launching at corrupt politicians.

It seems he, too, had fallen into the trap of believing that I would actually commit murder rather than let a biker pass me on the inside.

I'd find it all very amusing if it wasn't for the fact that one numbskull actually left an abusive and threatening telephone message on my answering machine.

After insulting my "big fat head" (as if I hadn't realised the sad truth long ago – after all the picture is at the top of the page) he left me with the words: "If I ever see you out on the roads, pal".

I wonder what the grand inquisitor at Motor Cycle News would make of that threat?

The bottom line, ladies and gentlemen, is that I may have been a little too liberal in my criticism. I don't think ill of all bikers, just those who ride badly.

And I certainly don't reserve all my anger for the two-wheeled community. There are plenty of people on four or more wheels who deserve our collective wrath.

I'm not ashamed,

either, to admit there have been occasions when I have driven badly, or done stupid things while behind the wheel. Just ask my wife.

Let him without sin, someone once said, cast the first stone.

When I threw mine, I didn't quite anticipate the amount of rocks coming back my way.

Still, there's nothing like a healthy debate.

And it's been great for sales of the YEP.

It seems bikers have been buying copies just to burn them.



EXTREME: Walking to the South Pole alone

Put a smile on Leeds fans' faces

IS Ken Bates' constant mouthing off against anyone in football who seems to cross him intended as a diversionary tactic from the current poor performance of Leeds United?

It seems to me that Mr Bates would be well-advised to stop fooling around with tit-for-tat playground taunts aimed at Cardiff and Chelsea and turn his attention fully to the less than fantastic

start to the season down at Elland Road. The Championship has hardly started, yet already the current Leeds team looks well short of the class needed to get back into the Premier League. Not only that but the fans seem to be voting with their feet – and less brass through the turnstiles means less, or even no, brass to be spent on new players. Youngsters like Simon Walton – potentially a bright new star in the making – have been flogged off while ageing journeymen remain the backbone of the first team. Bates rightly deserves credit for saving the club from financial meltdown but, as he well knows, football is a fast-moving business. At the moment the loudest noises we're hearing from the football club are not the chants of happy fans celebrating victories but the rants of their chairman. There has much pre-season talk of a promotion campaign but talk is cheap – and cheap is not what the club's loyal supporters need right now. Come on Mr Bates: concentrate on the real priority – getting a once proud club back to where it belongs.

A funny sort of fling

A BRITISH business consultant announced this week that he was preparing to become only the eighth man in history to walk to the South Pole alone and unsupported. John Wilton-Davies aims to set off on the expedition in November and has already spent an estimated £70,000 on training and equipment. The 44-year-old, from Devon, will have to tackle freezing temperatures which average around minus-20 to minus-25 and at times even plunge to 40 below zero. He said: "I'm 44 and married with two young children, so I guess it's mid-life crisis time. " I reckon he'd have saved a lot of time and bother – and probably had much more fun – if he'd chosen a more traditional form of mid-life crisis such as having a madcap fling with a beautiful young girl. Not that I'd know, in case you're wondering.

Flying high

A QUICK namecheck, if I may, for Ken Cothliff – Leeds-based organiser-in-chief of the annual extravaganza that is the Yorkshire Air Show. It always amazes me how much time and energy dedicated people are prepared to invest in their passions and Ken is the perfect example. I know rain affected last Saturday's show but the following day the weather held fair to provide a splendid family day out. Ken was at the midst of it all, as you might expect, patrolling the VIP area in his flight suit and taking time to pay due respect to the Spitfire veterans who turned up to celebrate, with the crowds, the 70th anniversary of Britain's best loved and most famous fighter plane. Anyone who could have any doubt that Ken is not a aircraft fanatic through and through should listen out for the ringtone on his mobile phone. I'm fairly certain I heard the theme tune from 633 Squadron.

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