



Nigel Scott In Brief

Nigel Scott

**Victims of a mad world**

NIGEL SCOTT IT was the ultimate irony that the mass murderer who brought terror to a US school th... [more »](#)

**Embracing change**

THE WORLD is changing and those of us of a certain age continue to struggle against the tide.... [more »](#)

**Animal crackers**

I'M looking forward immensely to the death of our goldfish. It's a bit cruel, I suppose, an... [more »](#)

**Bowled over!**

IT'S not often that life gives you a second chance. About a decade ago I walked away from the Yo... [more »](#)

**Waste of time**

THAT nicely turned out chap David Cameron would be proud, I think, of Mrs S. ... [more »](#)

**Smokers: Give us all a break**

IT'S a filthy habit, smoking. But it's one that has its definite advantages in the workplace... [more »](#)

**Corinne Bailey Rae out of line**

ROD McPHEE NOTES FROM THE CITY A CELEBRATED Leeds act of international renown, one which never ... [more »](#)

**Smokers: Give us all a break**

**IT'S a filthy habit, smoking. But it's one that has its definite advantages in the workplace.**

A recent survey has revealed what all of us non-smokers have suspected all along. The survey, conducted by TipTopJob.com (the sort of business you'd never hear of were it not for them producing deliberately headline-grabbing surveys), reckons that a staggering 10 hours per employee, per month, is lost due to staff taking multiple cigarette breaks. It adds that the non-smokers among us are, to coin a phrase, fuming.

The company's research found that 74 per cent of non-smokers do NOT take the same amount of breaks that smokers do in a day.

Unfair

It says non-smokers feel it's unfair that their smoking counterparts work over a day a month less – and that they are left to "man" (sorry in these days of political correctness that should be "person") the phones whilst smokers leave the office in twos or groups to enjoy their cigarettes.

Some colleagues believe it actually causes disruption and distraction to people's daily work plan. The people at TipTopJob.com – it doesn't say whether any of them are smokers – are now urging companies to treat all their staff the same.

They are suggesting introducing shorter lunch breaks for smokers to take into account their other breaks.

It sounds like a brilliant idea to me.

But there are alternatives which I reckon would be even better.

Addiction takes many forms – and who's to say that nicotine junkies are the only people whose cravings should be pandered to?

Rather than clamping down on lovers of the weed why don't we urge companies to embrace some other break options for those of us whose passions lie elsewhere.

For instance, I don't see why those of us who like a drink should be discriminated against.

If companies can provide special rooms for those addicted to the weed, why can't they be made to put in bars for those of us who like the odd tipple?

Surely someone, somewhere, should be able to argue that preventing us from boozing in the workplace is an abuse of our human rights.

As far as I know judges are quite fond of a drink or two. It ought not to be difficult, therefore, to find one who'd be willing to rule in our favour.

But it doesn't end there.

Maybe those of us who are reality TV addicts – surely the saddest of the sad – should also be catered for on an equal footing with smokers.

Companies should be encouraged to open TV rooms to let staff nip out for a quick mid-morning update.

Does all this sound silly?

It's about as silly, surely, as letting people off lengthy periods of work just because they're addicted to a poison to which others rightly object to being exposed.

Hours

Corinne Dauncey, of TipTopJob.com (there, they've had more than enough gratuitous mentions now), says: "It's unfair that non-smokers are working longer hours than their smoking colleagues.

Employers should take action to ensure that all employees work their allotted daily hours."

And now here's something I didn't know.

According to her, Nottingham City Council has recently taken drastic action to try to resolve the problem by enforcing a rule that staff who smoke, and who take regular breaks, have to work longer hours.

She says: "If that's not an incentive to give up cigarettes, I don't know what is."

Quite right, too.

Put that in your pipe and smoke it, those of you who must.

Junked by slack parents

CHILDREN are using the journey to and from school to fill up on "a secret mountain of junk food", despite a drive to improve pupils' diets, research found this week.

Apparently nearly one in three primary school children stop off to buy fizzy drinks, crisps and chocolate on the way to school or while travelling home at the end of the day. And more than half of secondary school pupils are spending extra cash on treats which amount to the equivalent of 20 blocks of butter and 11 bags of sugar over a year.

The research came from the School Food Trust, which was set up by ministers to drive improvements to school meals in England.

One member whinged: "Too often this is happening because the meal they are getting at school is simply not filling them up and the hungry child is topping up with sugary and fatty foods."

It's pathetic.

Truth

The sad, simple truth is that a lot of kids ignore proper food when it is put before them at school because they are being conditioned to eat rubbish by a combination of clever advertising and slack parenting.

The buck, generally, stops at home. But the government remains only too happy to point the finger elsewhere because that won't cost it votes.

When £70,000 is cheap at the price

I SHOULD have realised by now that it pays to take care when you are writing about people...in case they get to know.

You may recall that last week I suggested that Mr John Wilton-Davies, 44, of Devon would be best scrapping his mid-life crisis plan of walking unaided to the South Pole in favour of the more traditional "fling with a young girl" option.

Imagine my surprise during the week when he took time out from his preparations to drop me a line via e-mail.

"Nigel Scott suggested that it would take less time and bother for me to have a fling with an attractive young girl, rather than walk to the South Pole," he writes.

"He may be right, but I'm sure he'd agree that, at £70,000, walking to the Pole is probably a lot cheaper in the long run."

Thanks, John, but I reckon I'd best steer clear of a comment.

I don't want to risk upsetting the feminist lobby just yet...

Struggle for some bricks in the wall

LATELY, I've begun to feel I have quite a bit in common with rock star Roger Waters.

A quarter of a century ago he penned The Wall, a semi-autobiographical tale of grief and desperation which marked a watershed in the career of Pink Floyd.

Currently I am planning my own sequel – The Wall II — which will detail the grief and desperation I have had from a local builders merchants ever since one of their drivers decided to remove a few bricks from the wall outside my home – by driving his van into it.

This happened in May.

One of his colleagues popped round to look at the damage.

"He does stuff like this all the time," he told me with a grin on his face. "He even brought down some power lines once."

Grinned

I grinned along with him.

"If you're going to get your wall knocked down, it might as well be by someone from a builders," I reasoned. "At least they'll fix it."

You'd think, wouldn't you?

Three months on, and a dozen or so phone calls later, nothing had happened.

At the start of this week, the demolished bit was still lying pathetically by the road side awaiting the hands of a workman.

And then I came up with my masterstroke.

Having threatened the firm with action via the small claims court, and still achieving no satisfaction, I decided to do what every self-respecting bloke would do – I set my wife on them.

Having done the equivalent of lighting the blue touch paper – ie, giving Mrs S the firm's number – I stood back at a safe distance to await the explosion.

And, would you believe it, within two days of her first phone call the work was done.

Who said Girl Power died out with the Spice Girls?

If I get any more grief from bikers I know to whom I'm going to direct them.

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