



The INSPIRE

Integrated Spinal Rehabilitation Foundation



Winter 2008

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*With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year
Robert, Rose and Heather*



When One Door Closes

James Alexander



A little over nine years ago at the age of sixteen, my life took a dramatic turn when I became a paraplegic after breaking my back in a farming accident. In an instant I joined the 'does he take sugar?' brigade. Having lived all my life in Kingsnympton, I was, until that fateful day, an ordinary country lad, looking forward to embarking on my chosen career in farming. So, the prospect of not walking again was somewhat daunting!

After eight months of treatment at the Spinal Unit in Salisbury, I returned home to a wonderful, if somewhat embarrassing welcome (thanks Mum). Would I cope? And how would I cope? Would I be accepted as me, or would I be pitied? Was I destined to a life of sitting and doing nothing? The staff at the hospital were and still are very supportive and I was assured there was life beyond injury, but what? There had of course been some very black days and no doubt there would be more to come, but now it was up to me. It was not an easy transition from the security of hospital to home life. The facilities at the hospital had certainly met my needs, there had been so much fun and laughter as we were all more-or-less in the same boat, although some had suffered far worse injuries and their quality of life could never be as mine could. So, it was with a deep breath that I said goodbye to Act 1 and I entered my new life in Act 2.

I had learnt to drive whilst in hospital and after passing my test and obtaining my first hand controlled car, I

gained some independence. However the days were long, and I yearned to do something positive with my life. I had always been interested in sport. (Some would say it was the only thing I was good at!) I had played rugby for South Molton Colts and entered many cross country runs, these were obviously not an option. I had enjoyed short mat bowls and I returned to that and I tried my hand at wheelchair basket ball, but having accepted that I would spend my days in a wheelchair did not mean I wanted to spend my evenings with others in a similar situation, discussing the merits of pushing handles or not, or the pros and cons of large or small castors. I needed excitement and adventure!!

With my confidence growing behind the wheel my interest in motor sport was developing, but would I ever be able to participate? In April 1998 I decide to watch the Somerset Stages Rally on Exmoor - easier said than done - access was virtually impossible, in fact I stood more chance of being handcuffed to a ghost than seeing any action and the rain fell relentlessly. The words of comfort on returning home, a nice cup of tea, hot bath and an early night did nothing to make me want to repeat the experience, but what it did do was make me more determined to get behind the wheel.

Full of optimism, I applied to the RAC Motor Sport Association for a competition licence, only to be told that Paraplegia was not conducive to
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James and Helen making a splash at a rally

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rallying'; at that point it would seem it was only 'conducive to vegetating'. Disappointed? Yes. Angry? A little. Determined? More so. I applied again, another refusal. 'In our opinion it would not be possible for you to exit a car in an emergency in ten seconds'; my reaction, 'just watch me'.

It took a while to perfect the exercise but, let's face it, I had nothing else to do all day but practice throwing myself in and out of a car, much to my mother's consternation. 'Trying to keep fit' I assured her, I doubt she was convinced. Eventually, mission accomplished in nine seconds, I told myself they won't be able to stop me now and sent off another application. When the now familiar 'I am sorry' letter arrived some weeks later, frustration raged through me. How could I be judged by people who had never met me? And why should I be judged just because my legs don't work anymore? It never occurred to me to give up the fight and after numerous verbal and written protests I was offered an interview with the M.S.A Governing

Body in London. Success at last a chance to prove myself.

Up to this point I had thought it prudent not to share my plans with my Mother, somehow I didn't think she would greet with enthusiasm the prospect of her son and daughter (who had offered to be my co-driver) attempting to become the next Colin McRae* But the time had come to take the bull by the horns. The reaction was as I had expected, my sanity was questioned, followed by 'if you want a hobby what's wrong with stamp collecting etc etc'? Absolutely nothing wrong with any of her wise suggestions, but I wanted action, I wanted stickers on a car and trophies on the shelf.

The meeting in London was probably harder than any rally I have since undertaken but after much tutting and muttering the magical words were spoken, I would get my licence. We celebrated with corned beef sandwiches and cold coffee but the journey home was one of joy. The need now focused on buying a car and getting going.

The car quickly materialised. Adaptacar fitted the hand controls and electronic clutch in record time and it was all systems go, but go where? I suddenly realised that apart from fast driving I knew little about the sport. Helen and I hastily joined a local motor club, learnt a few of the ropes and headed off to Cornwall for our first 'outing' on a redundant air strip full of pot holes and scary bends. We finished last, but we finished. After several more tarmac events, one of which ended with us in a ditch, the car a heap, my Father on the brink of cardiac arrest and Mother gaining a few more wrinkles and grey hairs, we started gathering

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trophies and our sights were set on forest events up and down the country. Last year we entered several in North Wales and Yorkshire and this year the British Trial Rally Driver Association Championship, which has taken us as far north as Cumbria and several in Mid and North Wales. We had some very good results and some spectacular mishaps also, but we are in line for an award at the annual ceremony to be held in the Midlands at the end of the year. I would like to be able to compete more regularly but one of the lessons I learnt very early on is that it is a very expensive sport and unlike the 'big boys' sponsorship is not always forthcoming. However, some local businesses have supported me and to them again I offer my sincere thanks.

On reading this, you could be forgiven for thinking my life is one of fun and games. There is of course a serious side to life. I now work part time for Adaptacar where I hope that I am able to offer help and assurance to other disabled people in their quest for independence. I have many friends who have seen me through the bad times. Life dealt me a cruel blow, but I am not unique, it is happening to others as I write.

I would like to think that ongoing medical research and modern technology may mean that others in a similar situation might walk again. Realistically, I know this to be unlikely for me, therefore, I intend to live life to the full, pushing boundaries further, further perhaps until there are no boundaries between the able bodied and those who are not.

Some will say I am foolhardy,

perhaps they are right. Some will think me brave or courageous, perhaps they are right also, but of one thing I am sure, there is nothing that cannot be achieved with determination and a strong belief in ones self. I hope that through my efforts to reach my goals others will be inspired to search for their potential. I am always happy to talk to anyone about my experiences. My injury closed many doors, but opened many more and as for 'does he take sugar' I will leave you to answer that.

James Alexander 2003

*The reference to Colin McRae was made before his tragic and untimely death

The Great North Run Sunday 20th September 2009

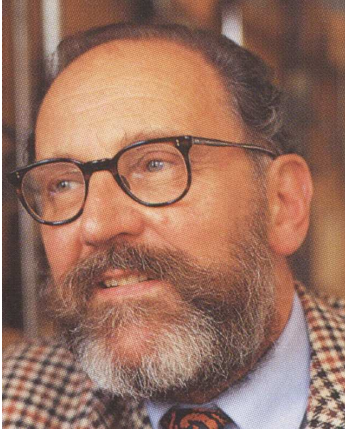
INSPIRE member, Roger Stainton, is intending to take part in the Great North Run next year in aid of INSPIRE. Roger has asked if anyone else would like to accompany him around the Newcastle ½ marathon route in September next year. How about getting together a team, no matter how small.

If you are interested give Robert Morgan a call on 01722-336262 Ext 2465, or email on inspire@freeuk.com.

Gerald Benney

21 April 1930 26 June 2008

By Appointment



I met Gerald eight years ago as the husband of Janet Benney, the inspiration and organiser of our charity polo match and lunch. A gentle man with charm, wit and humour, a great host and dear friend. He was very quiet about his achievements, one would never have guessed he was the one of the most outstanding silversmith's of the 20th century. His signature design the 'Benney Bark Finish' was not only beautiful but practical as it reduced the marks made when handling silver. It was Gerald's elegant designs which ensured the huge success of his industrial pioneering for Viners. His Chelsea pattern was launched in 1960 and by 1967 the design was sold world wide, as many as 4,000 sets weekly. In the seventies he bought about the

regeneration of enamels with much bigger areas of continuous colour on large pieces of silver. His work was collected by companies, institutions, Statesman and Royalty . The first British Craftsman in any field to hold 4 Royal Warrants simultaneously, a massive testament to his work.

He created many ecclesiastical pieces, which will live on in his name in St Paul's Cathedral, Coventry, Litchfield, Chichester, Dublin and the New London Synagogue. Almost shy, yet hugely pleased when you admired a piece of his silver, his career was without parallel.

He was an admirer of beauty in all forms and continued to paint and sketch until his death last June. His memorial service was held at Southwark Cathedral, Janet asked that the collection be donated to the INSPIRE Foundation. Richard Chatres, The Bishop of London, Grant MacDonald, Prime Warden of the Goldsmith's and Paul Benney, Gerald's eldest son, gave addresses.

In Cathedral and Church, Synagogue and Palace; Stately Home and Suburban Villa, Gerald Benney has left an eloquent legacy of beauty to delight us. I think of work like the thistle vase in the Goldsmith's collection in which respect for the metal; technical excellence in the enamelling and a transfiguration of nature are all combined.

Richard Chatres, Bishop of London



Walking on Water

An autobiography by Geoff Holt



Geoff in calmer waters in the dinghy he completed his personal Everest

This is an autobiography of a young man, who became a tetraplegic at 18 and then in 2007 when he was 41 sailed around the coast of Great Britain in a dinghy. He completed his *Personal Everest* in 109 days having sailed 1,445 miles and visited 51 destinations during one of the worst summers in history. Whatever life has thrown at Geoff, he appears to have come back with a riposte demanding an even greater challenge.

Walking on Water charts Geoff's life from the beginning. We have to go back to the start of his life, or at least his early years to understand what made him what he is today. He had to endure personal difficulties before his accident, which, it could be argued, gave him a more solid foundation to face the many varied and socially unacceptable obstacles which he encountered following his accident.

Although I can think of many safer challenges to attempt as a 'personal Everest', there was no doubt about it, Geoff was destined to undertake this remarkable adventure. If you sail you will know how fickle the wind and sea can be even in the calmest of conditions. Now put yourself in Geoff's position and you might just start to question your sanity. This challenge very nearly didn't happen because an over-enthusiastic press boat came too close and caused the dinghy to capsize throwing Geoff into the sea. But this was just another obstacle and after some reflection, Geoff supported by his dedicated family and crew, set off again.

The book is cleverly put together with alternating chapters telling us about his life before the Challenge, and the Challenge itself including the planning, the funding, the selection of support crew both on sea and on land and the continual questioning whether the project was realisable and realistic.

I believe the book to be brutally honest especially about personal relationships and, it soon becomes clear, as you progress through the book, just what makes Geoff tick. He is a very brave and determined man.

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If you would like to buy this book *Walking on Water* is published in paperback by Seafarer Books.

It can be ordered online at
www.walkingonwater.info
or from all leading bookshops,
priced £9.95.
ISBN 978-1-57409-276-9

Beautifully written and honest
Dame Ellen MacArthur

We are humans — we push at limits... This is the story that will excite admiration from all sailors, disabled or otherwise
Sir Robin Knox-Johnston

Tables Sales

The results of table sales we have held in the foyer of the hospital in October and November this year have been as follows:

16th October. We made £351.56 of which £158.06 came from the sale of donated goods and the balance of £193.50 came from the sale of Christmas cards and Salisbury prints.

23rd October. We made £225.95 of which £160.70 came from the sale of donated goods and the balance of £65.25 came from the sale of Christmas cards.

20th November. We made £292.45 of which £147.95 came from the sale of donated goods and the balance of £144.50 came from the sale of Christmas cards, Salisbury prints and cookbooks

As a result of this sale, we have sold the last of the successful cookbook compiled by Nessie Owen née Cumberlege.

26th November. We made £273.15 of which £152.40 came from the sale of donated goods and the balance of £120.75 came from the sale of Christmas cards and Salisbury prints

To all of you who contributed either by donating goods or your time to help at the table, thank you very much. You do make a difference.



A Couple of Recipes

Nessie Owen



SALMON, PRAWN AND COCONUT CURRY

Mrs Simmy Wiggin, London

A very heart warming supper dish, which can be prepared in advance up to the point of cooking the fish. You will receive lots of culinary compliments!

Serves 4-6

400ml tin coconut milk

1-2 tablespoons yellow (or red) Thai curry paste

350ml fish stock (fish stock cube will do mixed with water)

3 tablespoons fish sauce

1 tablespoon palm sugar or caster sugar

1 tablespoon ginger syrup

3 lemongrass stalks, cut into three and bruised with the flat of the knife

3 lime leaves, de-stalked and cut into strips

1/2 teaspoon turmeric

1kg pumpkin (or butternut squash), peeled and cut into bite sized chunks

500g salmon fillet, preferably organic and cut into large bite size chunks

3 - 5 (uncooked and peeled) king prawns per person

1 packet of baby spinach

Juice of 1/2 to 1 lime, to taste

Coriander, to serve

Skim the thick creamy top off the tin of coconut milk and put it, over medium heat, into a large saucepan with the curry paste. Let it sizzle, then beat milk and paste together until combined. Still beating gently, add the rest of the coconut milk, fish stock, fish sauce, sugar, ginger syrup, lemongrass, lime leaves and turmeric. Bring to a boil and then add the pumpkin. Cook on a fast simmer until the pumpkin is tender, about 15 mins.

You can do all this ahead of time and keep it in the fridge for a day or two – in fact the flavours tend to develop and are much more delicious when left overnight.

Heat the pumpkin sauce until simmering robustly and add the salmon and prawns. When they have cooked through, which shouldn't take more than 3-4 mins, stir the spinach through it.

Squeeze in half the lime and add more if you feel it needs it. Take the pan off the heat and sprinkle over the coriander.

Serve with plain Thai or Basmati rice.



SPICED SQUASH SOUP

Mary Woollett, Horticulturist, Vernham Dean

Serves 4

This also works very well with leftover pumpkin from Hallowe'en. Excellent for warming the cockles on Bonfire Night!

- 1 large butternut squash
- 2" piece of fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 small onion
- 1 hot fresh red chilli
- 2 teaspoons whole coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon whole cumin seeds
- 2 limes
- 1 bunch fresh coriander
- 2 pints chicken stock
- 1 small carton coconut cream

Wrap the squash in foil and bake for 1½ hours at 150°.

While squash is baking. Prepare the rest of the soup. Chop the ginger, garlic and onion finely and soften in oil over a medium heat.

In a small dry pan heat the coriander and cumin seeds until they just begin to smoke. Then grind finely in a pestle and mortar. Add the ground spices to the softened onion.

Add the zest and juice of the limes and the chopped stalks of the coriander. Then add the chicken stock and simmer gently.

When the squash is soft, scoop out into the soup and add the coriander leaves.

Blend the soup until smooth and bring back to the boil. Stir in the coconut cream and serve.

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Send us an email to inspire@freeuk.com to request the
newsletter on line**



Post card from the seaside



Strange as it may seem the Olympian theme from my last postcard still lingers in this one because at the time of writing I am thoroughly engrossed in watching (on the Internet) the 38th Chess Olympiad, which is currently being held in Dresden. This year the event has a record number of national teams and participating federations, but, no matter its popularity, whenever it appears on the calendar it always brings back memories of my teenage years in Chichester when the game first took a hold on me.

Back in the mid-sixties the city had a flourishing club with a membership that exceeded those of its nearest rivals at Bognor, Rustington and Worthing. Over in East Sussex the Brighton club dominated together with Hastings, a club that has the kudos of an annual Congress famed throughout the chess world, and satellite towns such as Newhaven and Seaford, along with Eastbourne, provided the competition. Not too much has changed over the years in that particular neck of the woods, but it is interesting to compare then with now, especially as I am surveying the scene from an outpost in Dorset.

Down here in Bournemouth we are, effectively and literally, in a league of our own and it is a league in which teams from Southbourne, Wimborne, Ringwood and Poole all compete, whilst a separate league bearing the county's name caters for the likes of Weymouth, Dorchester and Bridport. If there is a direct, though somewhat architectural, comparison to be made with Chichester it has to be the very Victorian Wareham with its Town Cross and compass layout of the four main streets. Yet Wareham has no chess club and to my knowledge this particular small country town, unlike the neighbouring village of Lytchett Matravers, never has had one.

It is also true to say that Dorset chess 'Goes West' primarily when seeking out opposition for county matches and Jamborees, with Cornwall, Devon and Somerset featuring, although Wiltshire and Hampshire are also given a rightful berth as well. More importantly, what this expansion and my memories of forty years ago tell me about my favourite pastime is that it is still far from parochial and the all embracing nature of the game sees it survive and flourish on different stages and levels whether it be in Sussex, Dorset or Dresden.

Incidentally, the England team in this year's Olympiad is made up of five Grandmasters that include Stuart Conquest, the reigning British Champion, who used to compete against Chichester in the Hastings side of the mid-eighties, Michael Adams, a regular opponent in the Cornwall county team a few years later, and the youngest member of the squad is an 18 year-old named David Howell from Seaford in Sussex.

Alan Dommett (C6/7)



The Editorial

First of all, I have two apologies to make.

At the AGM in 2007 the subject of increasing the Annual Subscription from £3 to £5 was raised by a member. I explained that three or four years previously the Board of Trustees had tasked me to look into this matter and make recommendations.

I looked at the previous 12 months of subscriptions and discovered that most members when renewing their subscription, would round-up to eg £5, £10 or even £30. I concluded from that exercise that since the income from subscriptions did not form a significant part of the overall income I recommended to the Board that we should not increase the subscription.

Ralph Crossley asked me to include this answer in the December issue, ie Christmas 2007, but I forgot! Mea culpa and for which I apologise.

And to my second apology.

In my address to the AGM which was included in the last issue, I made the statement that INSPIRE was the oldest registered Spinal Injuries Charity. This is incorrect; what I should have said was that "INSPIRE is the second oldest national charity". The oldest as far as I can work out is the International Spinal Research Trust by 6½ years. I apologise for this error.

Now having got that out of the way let's concentrate on this Issue.

I am very grateful to James Alexander for allowing us to publish an article which he wrote in 2003 for his local village Newsletter. Actually, it was his mother, Diane, who, having invited both Mo and me to her husband's 60th birthday lunch, thought I would enjoy reading it. I did and I commend it to you.

Also in this Issue Heather has written a eulogy in memory of Professor Gerald Benney. He was in every sense of the word a 'gentleman' who was probably one of this Country's unsung heroes. Heather has described perfectly and I am very grateful and honoured that his widow, Janet, should choose INSPIRE to benefit from a collection taken during his memorial service in Southwark Cathedral.

And finally, I would like to thank Karen Hitchlock for giving us permission to reproduce her photograph which we have used not only as a Christmas Card but is also the cover photograph of this issue.

All that remains for me to say is I hope you all have a very happy Christmas and a safe New Year



What's Happening? Projects under review



The following projects are under review and will be considered by the Scientific Committee at a meeting in December.

Central Nervous System (CNS) reorganisation after spinal cord injury: its relationship to pain and response to mental imagery

Funds applied for: £76,100

Location of project: Pain Research Institute, Liverpool

Below level pain (phantom pain) in the Spinal Cord Injured (SCI) is common, often severe and difficult to treat with conventional medicines. The causes of this pain are complex, with experiments showing changes in electrical activity in all areas of the brain, related to the loss of normal sensation and movement. The relationship between below level pain and changes in brain activity has not been established in humans with spinal cord injury. The development of specialised brain scans known as functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) allows us to investigate this relationship in a non-invasive, non-radiation manner. Using fMRI, it has been shown in previous research that people with phantom pain can be helped by teaching them to “move” and “feel” their phantom limb, and that this pain reduction is linked to a normalisation of brain activity. In a more recent pilot study (funded by INPIRE) it was found that changes in brain activity were more extensive in people with spinal cord injury (SCI) and below level pain compared to those with SCI and no pain and healthy controls. It was also found that, when participants with below level pain were taught to practice regular imagined movement and sensation in the paralysed, painful areas, it was possible for this imagination to relieve the pain and reduce the abnormal patterns of activity. In effect, using the brain's own powers to heal itself. The pilot study has helped to refine the technique, show that fMRI can measure brain changes in the spinally injured and take note of the comments of those who participated.

This application intends to expand on these promising results by studying a larger group of participants (a total of 20 in each of the 3 groups [SCI with pain, SCI without pain and healthy controls] including those from the pilot). All participants will be scanned at the outset of the study, and brain activation in response to tasks such as blowing a kiss, moving the fingers, imagining movement of the toes will be measured. The two SCI groups will then undergo the therapy, which will consist of 6 x one hour sessions with the therapist plus

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a CD for home practice. The group with pain will learn a simple relaxation technique plus imagining normal movement and sensation in the paralysed or painful limbs. At the end of therapy the SCI participants will be re-scanned. A careful record will be kept of pain scores throughout the study. At six months all participants will be interviewed and asked to keep a final diary so the long term effect of the intervention can be measured.

It is hoped that this study will benefit the wider SCI community in two ways. First, if the clinical therapy is successful, a CD of the therapy would be available for general distribution, plus training for health care professionals involved in the care of people with SCI. Secondly, the information from the brain scans will help researchers and clinicians to learn more about the effect of SCI on the function of the brain, and the mechanisms behind this most distressing pain condition. Moreover, the brain imaging results, showing the extent of activation in the motor cortex of the brain may be useful to those seeking to improve mobility after spinal injury.

What are the views of people with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), healthcare professionals and researchers about the current and future use of FES?'

Funds applied for: £29,602

Location of Project: Southampton University

For nearly half a century Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) has been used in the treatment and management of physical problems encountered by people with SCI. Applications have encompassed bladder and bowel control, pain, movement, tissue viability and musculoskeletal and cardio-respiratory function. Although there appears to be a growing body of research developing and evaluating these techniques, it is generally found they have only been used by a small fraction of the SCI community.

While techniques have evolved to be more effective and technically sophisticated, they have often undergone phases of great popularity followed by periods of rejection. Popularity has often been associated with highly active research groups and faded with loss of funding of research or a failure to achieve technology or clinical transfer. In order to address issues related to problems with transferability and application to clinical practice, it is important to ensure that future developments in FES are patient-led and fulfil the needs of people with spinal cord injury. Developments encompass research, technology development, clinical and service provision and commercialisation.

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Unless each of these is driven by the needs of the SCI community then the money and time invested may be wasted. It could be argued, that to continue without this knowledge is an unethical use of public funds and the time and energy of people with SCI.

Although the first stage of the programme of research has provided an important insight into some of the key issues regarding the current and future use of FES, this qualitative approach involved in-depth methods that gather the views of a relatively small group of people. Therefore, the second stage of this research is to use the themes identified in the qualitative study to develop a series of questionnaires that will explore the extent to which the wider SCI community hold these views. This will involve carrying out an international study with a much large sample of people.

The effect of Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) rowing on cardiovascular structure and function after spinal cord injury

Funds applied for: £53,867

Location of project: Brunel University

“Hybrid” FES exercise systems that stimulate the paralysed muscles of the lower limbs simultaneously with voluntary contractions of the upper limb musculature were developed to increase the cardiovascular (heart and the body’s blood transporting network or arteries, veins and smaller vessels) workload in SCI subjects. “Hybrid” exercise has been described for FES cycling plus hand cranking and more recently we have demonstrated significant improvements in aerobic capacity in individuals with paraplegia using the “hybrid” exercise of FES rowing. However, it is unknown if these improvements in cardiovascular function reflect improvements in cardiac function, vascular function, peripheral muscle adaptation or some combination of these parameters.



Barnsie and her ‘Fan Club’

Following a broadcast to all fans in the hospital to go for central cleaning and debugging, Chris Barnes, one of the secretaries in the Spinal Unit, found her office being the focal point for the fans in the unit. It was she who coined the phrase “My fan club”!

Thankfully, Glenda who shares the office with Barnsie had the day-off!



Brain Teasers

1. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in 3 years. Which room is safest for him?
2. A woman shoots her husband. Then she holds him under water for over 5 minutes. Finally, she hangs him. But 5 minutes later they both go out together and enjoy a wonderful dinner together. How can this be?
3. What is black when you buy it, red when you use it, and grey when you throw it away?
4. Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Monday, Wednesday, or Friday?
5. This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual though. Study it, and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

Answers below

1. The third. Lions that haven't eaten in three years are dead.
2. The woman is a photographer. She shot a picture of her husband, developed it, and hung it up to dry.
3. Coal
4. Sure you can: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow!
5. The letter "e" - the most common letter in the English language - is missing from the entire paragraph! This one was hard. If you got this one - give yourself a pat on the back.



A Letter from America



Seemingly, by the insistence of the big department stores, the Christmas season in the USA inevitably starts much too early for traditionalists like the elders of the Gardner Clan. Conversely, since my daughter Janice, unlike myself, is married to a natural born American, she has been shopping vigorously for gifts since high summer (June, July etc). Fortunately, because the family is geographically dispersed between Florida, Texas and Connecticut she does not need to hide the goodies away from the future beneficiaries. Things purchased and 'installed' in our own residence have over the years been hidden away from human view and more than once have not all seen the light on Christmas Day.

This year there will be twelve of us to house and, given the propensity of my troops (even in lesser numbers) to consider that suitcases do not need to make it as far as their respective bedrooms, Julie and I are drawing up a few house rules to make ten days of possible impending chaos a little less like the aftermath of a winter hurricane. By the way, we have been extraordinarily fortunate in escaping any wind or water damage

which hurricanes bring all too regularly to Florida residents.

Early each morning I open up the Telegraph on my computer to read about which side of the pond is doing worse than the other. The big item of current contention over here is the abysmal state of the 'big three' of the automobile industry. The Federal Government is split as to whether it should give these giants an immediate large dose of cash *possibly followed by even more cash demands* or to force them to file for bankruptcy and to reorganize in a more competitive posture vis-à-vis in-country foreign companies (p.s. I love my Nissan built Infiniti – 30 mpg around town). Of course, the rapid fall in the price of petrol is now making so called urgent plans to get into alternative energy sources, such as wind power, non-competitive.

We hope, firstly, that all you 'Inspire-ites' will have a great Christmas, secondly that 2009 will prove a little less turbulent year than this current one and lastly that each of you find happiness with friends and families. Best wishes and keep safe

.Jack & Julie G.



This is the fairy tale that should have been read to us when we were little.

Once upon a time in a land far away a beautiful, independent, self-assured Princess happened upon a frog as she sat contemplating ecological issues, on the shores of an unpolluted pond in a verdant meadow near her castle.

The frog hopped into the Princess' lap and said "Elegant lady, I was once a handsome prince, until an evil witch cast a spell upon me. One kiss from you, however and I will turn back into the dapper young prince that I am and then my sweet we can marry and set up housekeeping in your castle with my Mother and where you can prepare my meals, clean my clothes, bear my children and forever feel grateful and happy doing so"

That night as the Princess dined sumptuously on lightly sautéed frogs legs, seasoned in white wine and onion cream sauce, she chuckled and thought to herself I don't think so!!

How to make yourself instantly smarter, or it feels like it

Actual call centre conversations !!

Customer: I've been ringing 0800 2100 for two days and can't get through to enquiries, can you help?'

Operator: 'Where did you get that number from, sir?'

Customer: 'It was on the door to the Travel Centre'.

Operator: Sir, they are our opening hours'.

.....

Tech Support: 'I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop'.

Customer: OK'.

Tech Support: 'Did you get a pop-up menu?'

Customer: 'No'.

Tech Support: OK. Right-Click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?'

Customer: 'No'.

Tech Support: OK, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?'

Customer: Sure. You told me to write 'click' and I wrote 'click'.

Tech Support: 'OK. In the bottom left hand side of the screen, can you see the 'OK' button displayed?'

Customer: 'Wow. How can you see my screen from there?'

Acknowledgements & Notices

In addition to thanking the Trusts, groups and individuals listed below, who have donated £25 or more to INSPIRE, we would also like to thank other members and friends, too numerous to list, who have supported us since our last newsletter went out in September 2008. In addition many others donate once a month and their annual total exceeds £25. Finally, there also many who gave or pledged to give either before or on the day of our Charity Polo over £5,500. To you all, thank you very much indeed.

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In Memoriam

We have received donations in memory of Adrian Hounsome and Professor Gerald Benney

Deaths

Mrs Irene Horner. On behalf of the Trustees and members our condolences go out to the family.



THE INSPIRE FOUNDATION

INSPIRE - INTeGrated SPInal REHAbilitation.
Registered Charity No 296284



OBJECT

To promote research into, and the development of, electronic, mechanical and medical aids to assist the mobility and enablement of people suffering spinal cord paralysis and its associated effects and to communicate the useful results of such research.

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* Denotes Spinal Cord Injured

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INSPIRE: Spinal Treatment Centre, Salisbury District Hospital, SALISBURY, SP2 8BJ
Telephone: 01722-336262 Ext 2465; Fax: 01722-415230
E-mail: inspire@freeuk.com; Website: <http://www.inspire-foundation.org.uk>

Adoration of the Magi Gentile da Fabriano (c1370—1427)

Another of the INSPIRE Christmas Cards

