



KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Dog days

It's that time of year again, the time when the air heats up, when you can fry eggs on the pavement and only insane canines and the English go out in the midday sun. There's 40 days of it, from early July to mid August, a time of evil when wine turns sour, the sea boils and dogs go bonkers. Chickens are heading in a similar direction to the nearest barbecue where they can do their undercooked best to poison everyone. So if the local hounds are going mad and the air is filled with the smell of burning meat, it's time for the weird to turn pro.

It's the time of year for madness, when the heat fries the brain and the supposedly sane decide to do something reckless. Don't forget that it was in July that the American colonies decided they'd had enough of being British and, having dumped tea in Boston Harbour, made the switch to coffee and declared independence. And every Fourth of July you can stare helplessly at your local burger bar and wonder where it all went wrong.

The French chose 14 July to get fed up with their king, storm the Bastille and go on to do the only sensible thing and decapitate their monarchy in a very literal sense of the word. Back in 1998 they celebrated this two days early by winning the World Cup. This year they'll be letting off fireworks and watching the 57th Miss Universe Pageant live from Vietnam, which doesn't seem the same somehow.

Then again, it's better than the alternative of celebrating the fact that Big Brother started imprisoning people on Channel 4 on that day in 2000 and no one has stormed that particular prison to release the inmates. I wonder why?

Meanwhile, in surreal Britain, July marks the ritual national humiliation of Wimbledon: a fortnight of rain, failure, overpriced strawberries and Sue Barker, not necessarily in that order. But it's not just bad news, at least not for teenage boys, because on July 16 2003 the Australian Cancer Council announced that frequent masturbation doesn't make you go blind, but could help prevent prostate cancer.

Baby boomers tell all

A new website is collecting stories about the lives of baby boomers through personal recollections and photographs. Boomoirs.com aims to become an eyewitness reference for the generation of people born from the end of World War Two through to 1964.

Creator Erin Fogarty said she wants her site to record the raw history of the time. Stories can be any size, from a simple anecdote with a photograph and a small

caption, right through to life histories.

If you'd like to know more and fancy submitting a contribution, visit www.boomoirs.com.

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Ghosts and soldiers

Paul Baker, a City of London guide, has been leading guided tours around the Barnet area since 2004. Here he explains why the walks always generate a faithful following.

I love doing local tours. A particular pleasure is that many of those attending the walks have a deep, often life-long knowledge of the area. They give me insights and anecdotes, which I can then feed into future walks.

There are eight walks in the repertoire, including the historical heart of High Barnet and the unspoilt Georgian village of Monken Hadley. There are also tours of Barnet pubs and churches, and a stroll through the too-little-known village of East Barnet.

Perhaps the two most popular tours are the Battle of Barnet, and Barnet ghosts. The Battle of Barnet, mentioned by Shakespeare, took place on

Easter Sunday 1471. It was a pivotal moment in the Wars of the Roses, when Warwick the kingmaker was killed.

The important thing is to make the walks informative, but fun. The battlefield tour is for adults and children, and has been done for school groups too. In May this year, I led a re-enactment by 20 children from Monken Hadley: rather fewer than the 23,000 or so who took part in the real battle!

The ghost walk is subtitled 'Things That Go Bump in High Barnet!' Those who have been on the tour frequently say that they will never look at Barnet in the same way again. Hardly surprising after tales of witchcraft, murder, executions, medieval knights, the ghostly dead of the Battle of Barnet, topped off with a tour of a churchyard by torch-light. The tour is extremely popular with children, especially at Hallowe'en, when everyone, adults and children, is invited



Paul Baker. Photo by Claire

to dress up in costume.

I also lead tours further afield, such as Spitalfields and Smithfield. But my heart lies on my own doorstep. I'm currently planning and researching a tour of Finchley and Church End for 2009. Watch this space!

To find out more, phone 020 8440 6805, or e-mail pbaker54@hotmail.com.

Making history at Christ's College

By Angie Tudor

A year in the planning, *Making History* - Christ's College's stage show to mark the end of its 150th year as a school ñ paid off its vast investment of time and effort in style when it finally opened to the public before the half term holiday.

Specially written by Benet Catty, a professional playwright and director who attended the school in the 1990s, *Making History* set the surprisingly varied history of the school, originally conceived as a "school for the middle class" by Thomas Reeder White (impressive Taylor Flanagan-Clark), alongside some of the major events in the world. Two screens either side of the stage showed images and specially-edited films about the scenes we were seeing, from classic Hollywood clips to scenes of 1980s civil unrest.

Talented performers

Fergus Oakley and Lucas Rudden brought wit and pace to their scene as the Wright Brothers; Roy Appiah sent tingles down the spine with his recreation of Martin Luther King's



Rehearsals under way for *Making History*. Photo by John Lawrence

"I have a dream" speech and Theo Antoniou-Phillips made an imposing Lloyd George.

In the sections on the school's own history, Theo Andresier was an hilariously pompous former headmaster;

Charlie Mays a lively rugby player (who would later found the Barbarians) and Teige Gibbons an amusingly anxious school boy whose bottom was about to learn the meaning of school discipline, 1870s-style.

Powerful finale

The finale, in which the vast company of 40 present-day students assembled on the stage to talk to us about the school they now attend while we watched images of their lives (*Big Brother*, the death of Diana and all), gave a stirring, even moving, insight into the lives of the current generation.

Smartly written, pacily staged and exceptionally accomplished, *Making History* surely sets the benchmark for what a school can do if it puts its mind to it and is a huge testament to the imagination of Benet Catty and the talent of his cast. The school should be applauded for daring to try something so ambitious; and cheered for achieving it so triumphantly.



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