



KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Dumbing up, dumbing down

Welcome to September, welcome to surreality, welcome to the end of the silly season as abnormal service is resumed. Politicians are back from the Costa del Living and Brown Gordon is desperately hoping that something will turn up before everything turns down. But at times like these we have to get our priorities right and as the weird turn pro I'm pro enough to wallow in the strange world of the Morning Mule.

Mule World is a tabloid theme park for the demented. In Mule World success equals failure, life equals death and the world beyond the privet hedge is mad, bad and very dangerous. And this August was a classic, one that should go down in the history of cheap journalism.

It was A level results time, over 93% of candidates passed and more got A grades than ever before. Put out more flags? Celebrate success? Be proud at how today's teens achieve so much? Not in Mule World. In Mule World it's time to complain. Time for a headline saying 'Exams too easy as more people get A grades'. Come GCSE time and it's more of the same. Why? Maybe in Mule World the idea that some kid might work their butt off is too much to take.

Mule World is where the suggestion that Brown Gordon sticks a 50% tax rate on anyone who earns over £100,000 has the same effect as dropping a bomb on the croquet lawn. The screams can be heard across the suburbs as The Mule proclaims the destruction of middle England. In the real world hardly anyone earns that kind of money, but then Mule World isn't real.

Mule World is secondrate celebrity central where Peaches Geldof is a talented artist rather than a freeloading ingredient in a fruit salad and Paris Hilton is an actress. No wonder half the world wants to be in Big Brother and the other half wants to napalm the house.

In Mule World it is forever the boring, pre-rock'n'roll bit of the 1950s, where net curtains twitch and middle class angst is just a headline away. To survive the madness of Mule World you need lots of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. And the only surprising thing about Morning Mule's claim that '25% of teenagers take drugs' is that it's only 25%.



Rudi Vis, Sir Steve Redgrave and a fellow altformat campaigner. Photograph by Daphne Chamberlain

Problems with print

Finchley & Golders Green MP Rudi Vis met Sir Steve Redgrave before the Olympic Games to discuss the sportsman's campaign to make life easier at school for children with print disabilities, including children with dyslexia and low vision.

The five-time Olympic gold medallist, who is dyslexic, pointed out that 70% of all information given out at school comes as printed text and that visual and print-impaired students need access to the curriculum in alternative formats, known as altformat. These include MP3 audio, large print, Braille or the DAISY electronic format. Of the 70% materials in printed text, only 4% is cur-

rently available in alternative formats.

Sir Steve said: "I feel very strongly about the importance of altformat. I've seen research from America, which shows that if students with literacy problems are exposed to learning materials as combined audio and text, their test scores can increase by almost 40%. This is staggering and it's time everyone knew about it."

Rudi said: "I recognise that our local schools have competing priorities for their resources, so I would be happy to discuss the issue with any headteacher or special educational needs co-ordinator who wants to get in touch."

The campaign, which is supported by the main dyslexic and blindness organisations around the world, can be visited at www.altformat.org.

Write a local limerick for Lupus

By Diana Cormack

A competition has been launched to write a limerick about East Finchley. The objective is to raise money for the charity Lupus UK so there's an entry fee of £1.

Lupus is a chronic disease where the body's immune system, which is designed to protect against infection, mistakenly attacks the body's own tissues and organs. Organised by Sippy Azizollah, the competition challenges you to find a local theme. It could be about something you've seen, something you'd like to do or just about East Finchley itself. The choice is yours.

Limericks are part of the National Curriculum, so local schools will be invited to participate. You could even compose a joint family entry. Putting modesty aside, here is one for starters:

*THE ARCHER's the paper for you,
Devoted to news in N2.
We tell you what's on,
What's come and what's gone:
A sort of community glue.*

Please seal your limerick, along with your name and phone number/address plus the entry fee, in an envelope and pop it into the limerick letterbox at 2 Destino, the flower and gift shop at 128 High Road. The closing date is Monday 6 October. The prizes for the best three will be £20, £10 and £5 and the winners will be published in our November edition.

Budgens backs the festival

Supermarket Budgens helped to raise more than £800 at the East Finchley Community Festival in June and has just announced that it will support the event again in 2009. Budgens contributed all the food for the Festival Food tent, with all money going to the Finchley Community Development Trust.

Budgens of East Finchley is now independently owned and looks to support important local events such as the festival.

Owner Shalil Bhattessa said: "We recognise the Finchley

Community Development Trust and its activities as a major contribution to the community here in East Finchley. We were delighted to support them with this major local event as a way of thanking our many

customers for their support over the years."

Grateful Trust chairman Roger Chapman said it was crucial for the festival and the trust to receive sponsorship and help from local businesses.



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