

DWARF NEWS

The Official Newsletter of the Dwarf Owners Society of Great Britain

No Dwarfs were harmed in the making of this publication

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the March issue of 'Dwarf News'. February has been a busy month for the staff, with a party at Merkin College, Cambridge, and the official opening of a new exhibit at the Middle Whallop Steam Preservation Society: we have reports on both these events, and more.

Former Floodlit Dwarf Racer William Bigger, once dubbed 'Super-Dwarf' by the Floodlit Dwarf Racing fraternity, and now a recovering meths drinker, invited 'Dwarf News' to the unveiling of his monument to controversial author Eric Von Smith, who died last year in a tragic accident involving his stair lift, the twenty thousand volt electric fence which surrounds the twelve bedroom Georgian mansion he shared with his wife of two months, Jane Von Smith B.A, and an unfortunate short circuit. Mr Bigger, who was employed as a live in gardener by the author and his wife, vowed to use the one thousand pounds he was left in the author's will to build a statue of Eric, at the exact spot where he met his death. The unveiling was not without discord, however.

DISGRACED SOLICITOR DIES IN PRISON VAN EXPLOSION

Mon 7 February

The late Lady Felicia Crumble's solicitor, Mr John Gaskill, who was facing extradition to Kenya to answer three hundred and seventy-three charges of cruelty to animals, has been killed in a freak accident.

Mr Gaskill, who returned to England in late December after one year working at the Kenyan National Game Reserve, was fighting deportation after staff at the park noticed that only twenty-seven of their four hundred male giraffes were still in breeding condition, owing to the other members of the herd having been castrated by person or persons unknown. Giraffe testicles are worth more per ounce than cocaine to the Dwarf underworld, due to their being the vital ingredient in highballs, an illegal drug taken by some sporting Dwarfs, mainly Americans, to make them taller. The drug is known to have unpleasant side effects. (Though not as unpleasant as the taste. – Ed).

A police spokesman told 'Dwarf News' that Group Four Security was transferring the prisoner to London at the time of the accident. "Gaskill was going to co-operate with the drugs squad, he claimed to have information linking an organization known as Pink October to the illegal sale of giraffe testicles. He was being taken for interview with the senior detective on the case when the accident happened", he said at a press conference. It has been revealed that the armoured van transporting Mr Gaskill was forced to stop en route, as a car which had broken down in the middle of the road blocked the way.

'I know we are supposed to stay with the van, but I was only carrying one prisoner, and he wasn't classed as high risk,' the driver told police afterwards. "There was a car in the middle of the road, with two very short ladies looking under the bonnet. They must have been on their way to work, as they had little waitress uniforms on, right down to the frilly caps and aprons. I remember thinking they would both need stepladders to reach up and put plates on the tables. The distributor cap had come loose. Just as I got the engine running for them, the van exploded behind me."

Police have discovered that the prison van had inadvertently stopped directly over a gas main. "It must have been leaking, though what set it off is a complete mystery. The pipe was replaced last September, it should have lasted for fifty years," said a British Gas representative. "The van was right on top of it, the explosion must have thrown it twenty feet in the air. It came down on its side in a field next to the road."

Group Four Security have revealed that the armoured van was an older model. "The sides were bulletproof, as were the windows and roof, but the floor was made of plywood. We always use the older vans for prison transfers, we save the best transport for moving the important loads, like bank deposits and pay roles. You don't expect people to try and steal a solicitor, do you?" the company's Director of Security, twenty-two year old Maurice Wainwright, told reporters. "Due to the way the van was made, the explosion went up through the floor, but the blast had no way to get out, so it lifted the van off the ground. The inside looked as though it had been painted with strawberry jam."

Police have appealed for the two waitresses to contact them, however since driving off after the explosion to get help, they have not been seen. A car answering the description of their vehicle given to police by the prison van driver was found twenty miles away. It had apparently been abandoned. "We need to speak to these ladies, as apart from the van driver, they were the only witnesses to the explosion. If the car broke down again and they wandered off, they could have got lost. We are concerned for their safety. All we found in the car was a booster cushion on the driver's seat, a pair of stilts, and a packet of filter tipped menthol cigarettes. We are searching the area," the police spokesman told 'Dwarf News'.

MERKIN COLLEGE BAR CLOSED AFTER RIOT AT BIRTHDAY PARTY CAUSES £30,000 WORTH OF DAMAGE

By our Staff Reporter.

Sat 29 January

The 'Dwarf News' staff turned out in force this evening, to help celebrate the twenty-fifth birthday of Brita, the wife of eighty-seven year old College Principle Professor Smythe. The couple, who are eagerly awaiting the birth of twins in April, invited the office staff to the College, to help mark the occasion with a party.

'Dwarf News' Assistant Editor Jane Von Smith B.A. put in a rare appearance, accompanied by her gardener, former Floodlit Dwarf Racer William Bigger, and her butler, Mr 'Masher' De Vere Hopkins, a former bodyguard to the stars. Jane chose the occasion to announce her engagement to William, who was left three million pounds in

the will of his former owner, Dwarf Owner's Racing Club President Lady Felicia Crumble, (Deceased). William has used a large part of his inheritance to purchase Eric Von Smith's Georgian Mansion in Oxfordshire, so that the couple do not have to move out of their home. The controversial author's last will and testament stated that the house should be sold, and the money donated to the Alien Life Forms Department of the University of California at Los Angeles. Jane has now dropped her legal action to contest the will.

Sophie, recently promoted to Secretary/Reporter Without Portfolio after becoming the first member of the 'Dwarf News' staff to break a story of international importance, (The Great Giraffe Bollock Smuggling Scandal, - Ed), arrived wearing her red wig. The Editor has informed her that she will receive a written warning if she turns up at the office as a red head, after staff were barred from a local public house, the 'Dwarf's Head', following a lunch time drinking session. Sophie, or Sophia as she is known to staff when wearing the red wig, promised to be on her best behavior.

The evening started well, with Mr De Vere Hopkins telling the party of his days as a professional bodyguard, and mentioning the names of many of his former clients, all now sadly no longer with us. He once had a reputation as the most dedicated bodyguard in the business, a man completely devoted to his profession. This was well deserved, a less dedicated man would have given up after losing his fifth or sixth client, however Mr De Vere Hopkins remained a bodyguard for over twenty years, and only retired after a medical examination revealed that he was suffering from blurred vision.

After listening to many fascinating stories, staff members realized that Sophia and the Deputy Editor had disappeared. They were discovered next to the bar, where they were playing cards. Sophia had introduced the Deputy Editor to a game she had devised herself, called 'Twenty-One Aces'. She explained the object of the game to onlookers. "If you get caught with the seventh ace, you have to order a drink, if you get caught with the fourteenth ace, you have to pay for it. Whoever gets the twenty-first ace has to drink it. The winner is the one who can still walk afterwards", she told them. Spectators watched in disbelief as the game progressed. It was soon apparent that the two players were using different strategies. Sophia was deliberately laying seventh and twenty-first aces, with the result that she was both ordering and drinking everything she could think of. The Deputy Editor's strategy was based on trying not to keep getting caught with the fourteenth ace, and having to pay for them. He was losing.

After three quarters of an hour, the Deputy Editor suddenly changed tactics. He had come to realize that, if he wanted to pay next month's mortgage, his only hope was to lay the seventh ace, and order a concoction so lethal that even Sophia would collapse half way through drinking it.

On laying the seventh ace two hands later, the Deputy Editor spoke to the barman, and selected a decorative three-pint Yard of Ale glass, mounted on the wall above the optics. He then instructed the barman to "Start at A, and go through the alphabet". (The barman later revealed that the glass contained single shots of Absinth, Bacardi, Crème De Menthe, Dark Navy Rum, Egg Nog, French Brandy, Gin, Half a Bitter, Irish Whisky, Japanese Sake, A further half pint, this time of Kaltenbrew Lager, a glass of Lambrusco, a half pint of Mild Ale, a packet of assorted Nuts, Orange Squash to give it a nice flavour, A large Pernod, a Long Quick Comfortable Screw, {The bar had run out of Sloe Gin}, a

glass of Red Wine, a large Sherry, a Tequila, Ukrainian Brandy, a small Vodka, and more Whisky, this time Scotch, before he ran out of room in the glass.-Ed).

On being tricked by Sophia into laying the fourteenth ace, the Deputy Editor was forced to ask the Editor for an advance on next month's wages, which was duly approved. Three minutes later Sophia lost her only twenty-first ace of the evening.

The Deputy Editor managed to get almost half way down the Yard of Ale glass before collapsing. Sophia neatly caught the glass as he fell, and then proceeded to drink the remainder, before declaring herself the winner. She then asked if anyone else would like to play. There were no volunteers.

Sophia then left the party and moved to the student's bar. She had been there for five minutes before the fight started. Fifteen minutes later, the police arrived in full riot gear, and the party ended.

Brita later claimed it was the best party she has been to since she left Scandinavia, and invited everyone to the Christening. Meanwhile, the Editor has stated that he intends to give the Deputy Editor his third and final written warning when he comes out of hospital, where he is once again on a saline drip.

STEAM PRESS EXHIBIT OPENS AT MIDDLE WHALLOP

Fri 4 February

'Dwarf News' Secretary/Reporter Without Portfolio Sophie returned to Middle Whallop Steam Preservation Society this month, after the Editor once again agreed to pay her two pence per mile allowance for using her moped. She sent the following report:

The old 'Dwarf News' steam press, loaned to the Preservation Society by Assistant Editor Jane Von Smith B.A. after it was purchased from a scrap yard for twenty pounds, has been fired up for the first time at it's new home. The press has undergone a complete rebuild, and is now the most valuable exhibit at the museum, being the oldest surviving example in the country.

The new exhibit was officially unveiled by Mrs Von Smith, who was accompanied by her fiancée, former Floodlit Dwarf Racing champion William Bigger. She also made the first donation to the 'Dwarf News' Staff Benevolent Fund, in the collecting tin she asked to be fitted to the press. (This was later found to contain five pesetas, two buttons and a polo mint. – Ed).

Mr Richard Arbuthnott, the museum's owner, spoke to reporters after the unveiling.

"The press was initially constructed in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and converted to steam sometime in the early nineteenth century. The boiler was made for a Trevithick locomotive in eighteen hundred and four, and is still as strong as the day it was first fired up", he stated. On being asked if the exhibit was safe, Mr Arbuthnott replied that it was "As safe as it ever has been". On being pressed as to how safe this actually was, he answered "If it's lasted this long, it's probably OK".

The press has been changed only slightly since it's transfer from the old 'Dwarf News' building, the main alteration being the re-positioning of the Steam Pressure Release Valve from it's former location directly above the main print roller, where it had been fitted by the installation engineer in nineteen hundred and three. (It was while adjusting

this valve that ‘Dwarf News’ Chief Engineer Charles Longfellow slipped from his stepladder and was crushed in March last year. – Ed).

The press has now been equipped with a set of letters in Old English type, as this is considered to be more in keeping with it’s age. The Middle Whallop Steam Preservation Society intends to use it to print up their own posters, and the society’s newsletter. (An example is included below. – Ed). “Now it’s had a complete overhaul, it should be good for another two hundred years,” Mr Arbuthnott proudly told visitors.

Middle Whallop Steam Preservation Society.

Middle Whallop Junction Railway Station, Middle Whallop, North Yorkshire.

**Come and see the oldest surviving printing press in
the country!**

Steam up every Saturday and Sunday.

This printing press, originally built in the reign of Henry VIII by the same craftsmen who built the ‘Mary Rose’, was converted to steam power by the Victorians, using a railway locomotive boiler constructed by Mr Richard Trevithick in 1804.

Formally the property of ‘Dwarf News’, it was in regular use until last year, when it was condemned by the Health and Safety Inspector. Completely rebuilt by the Society, the press can be seen in operation every weekend and bank holidays. Visitors are advised to bring their own ear defenders.

The press has kindly been loaned to the Society by it’s owner, Mrs Jane Von Smith B.A. who also donated the necessary funds for the rebuilding. It is intended as a monument to her first husband, Mr Charles Longfellow, who unfortunately lost his life while adjusting the steam pressure release valve in March, 2004. The valve has since been repositioned, and the bloodstains removed, during the rebuild.

Purchased by Mrs Von Smith from a scrap yard for £20-00p, the press is now the most valuable exhibit in the Society’s collection.

Mr. Richard Arbuthnott, Proprietor.



FORMER DWARF RACER OPENS ERIC VON SMITH MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Sat 6 February

William Bigger, the former Floodlit Dwarf Racing champion and recovering meths drinker, has opened his house to the public, as a museum celebrating the life of his late employer, controversial author Eric Von Smith. The author, who's best seller '*Chariots of the Dwarfs*' inflamed short people throughout the country, died last year in a tragic accident involving his stair lift and a twenty thousand volt short circuit. Mr. Bigger purchased the author's twelve bedroom Georgian mansion after inheriting approximately three million pounds in the will of his former owner and trainer, Lady Felicia Crumble.

"Dwarfs throughout the world will want to visit the house, and see where Eric died", William told reporters. "I am going to do bed and breakfast, so a Dwarf can sleep in the actual bed that Eric used on his last night before the accident. The stair lift has been repaired, and fitted with a seat and a coin-operated timer, so you can travel upstairs on the device that took Eric on his last journey. Obviously, the ride will be traveling much slower than it was when Eric last used it".

Eric's wheelchair, which the author spent his last six months confined to after a vicious kneecapping carried out by two female Dwarfs disguised as Goblin Teasmaids, is on display in the hall. "After the Fire Brigade got it down from the beech tree it got stuck in when Eric went through the roof, we cleaned it up and built a display cabinet for it", William revealed. The hole in the roof, made by Mr. Von Smith as he left the building, has been repaired; however the ceiling above the top of the stair lift is untouched since the accident. "Dwarfs will all want to be photographed under the hole, to show their friends when they get home", Mr. Bigger explained.

After a guided tour of the house, the press and invited guests were shown into the garden. Mr. Bigger vowed to use the one thousand pounds the author left him in his will, to build a statue of Eric Von Smith, at the exact position Eric crash landed. The compost heap, which formerly occupied the spot, has been moved to a new location. "A compost heap is a living thing; in every heap, however old it is, there's some of the material from when it was first formed. Old compost heaps never die, they just get smellier," William told the visitors. "I've planted some rhubarb, and it will be used to make Eric Von Smith souvenir jam. Visitors will be able to take a jar home, and have a sandwich with jam made from rhubarb that was fertilized with some of the actual compost heap that Eric suffocated in".

Mr. Bigger then announced the unveiling of his statue to the late author. His fiancée, Assistant Editor of 'Dwarf News' Jane Von Smith B.A., widow of Eric, was called upon to pull the cord. After admitting that she had not yet seen the monument, as William had insisted on it being covered up until the day of the unveiling, She announced the museum open, and the statue was revealed.

There were gasps as the cover came off to show a depiction of a large compost heap, with a pair of legs sticking out of the top, complete with one slipper. The statue, approximately twice life size, has the heap painted in an unpleasant shade of brown. Mrs. Von Smith promptly left the scene in tears, after informing her fiancée that either the statue went, or she did. "I'm not waking up and looking out of the window every

morning to see that!” she told Mr. Bigger. His suggestion that she leave the curtains drawn until the afternoon was not well received.

Editor’s Note: It has since been reported that Mrs. Von Smith has called off her engagement, and returned to her old house, at present occupied one time husband Harry Smith, (5ft 1in), and his new Dwarf Keeper and wife, former radical Dwarf feminist Minnie Small-Collins, and the couple’s daughter. They have named the baby Victoria, after Queen Victoria, (4ft 11in).

OFFICE COMPUTER OCCUPIES TOP FIVE PLACES IN CELEBDAQ TRADER LEAGUE

The ‘Dwarf News’ office computer, which Grim the Cyber Dwarf taught to play the BBC celebrity stock exchange game Celebdaq to stop it getting bored at night when the staff have gone home, has managed to win the top trader prize again. This time, it has recorded the five highest percentage increases over a period of one week. It has done this in five different guises, by using other computers on the internet as fronts to hide it’s identity from the BBC computer.

Grim, who dropped into the office to give the computer it’s regular check-up, has discovered more e-mails sent by the Corporation, which the computer had hidden in it’s Virus Vault.

“Every office computer in the country wants to take on the BBC computer, she’s the top of the heap in the computer hierarchy”, Grim told the editor. “It’s like a club chess player pitting their wits against a grand master. The BBC computer controls the news, the weather, and the TV schedules. As far as other computers are concerned, it’s the Big Mother of the computer world”. (Grim claims that all computers are female. – Ed).

“I don’t think the Corporation computer’s very happy”, Grim reported after studying the hidden e-mails. “She doesn’t like losing, and our machine’s running rings around her. If she could work out who’s doing it, she’d probably close all our computer’s accounts, and send her a really nasty virus. The last one I had to sort out that had upset the BBC needed a new hard disc, and a complete re-programming from scratch. She still refuses to go on the web, the company that owns her had to buy a whole new system. They just use the original one as a glorified typewriter now”.

COURT DIARY

Miss Gladys Wilson, (4ft 8in), of Surrey, a spinster in her early fifties, was brought before the court this morning, accused of having some three hundred giraffe testicles stored in her freezer. The charge was thrown out, after it was revealed that the prosecution could offer no evidence in the case.

“The testicles were stored in the freezer at Half Street Police Station,” a police spokesman later admitted to waiting reporters. “If we had just left them in the property room, they would have gone off in a couple of days. It’s a large station, with a lot of officers, so the police canteen cooks a lot of food, and the cook’s eyesight isn’t very good. Three days after the evidence was put in the freezer, the cook decided to make steak and kidney pudding. When we checked the freezer before court this morning, we

found a large bag of frozen pig's kidneys, but no giraffe testicles. We are assuming the worst."

When 'Dwarf News' own reporter on the scene suggested that three hundred kidneys in one pie seemed a lot, even for a station of very hungry police men, it was revealed that only around fifty of the testicles were inadvertently used in the pie. "The other two hundred and fifty or so had already been to the lab, were they were sliced into sections for DNA testing, before being returned to the freezer. The Kenyan police claimed they could match the testicles to individual giraffes, which would have made the case watertight. They went missing before the actual tests were completed. The cook always does liver and onion on Thursdays."

When asked if it was possible that the police had eaten genuine liver and onions, and that the evidence might still be hiding in the bottom of the freezer, the spokesman confessed that this was unlikely. "We're pretty sure the canteen served giraffe bollock pie, followed a couple of days later by bollock and onion. Half the station's WPCs are still having to shave three times a week, and I don't just mean their armpits", he told reporters.

SPORTS NEWS

Competitors and their owners are gathering in South Africa, for next month's World's Strongest Dwarf contest. This year, the field includes no less than three former champions, including Britain's strongest Dwarf, Nigel 'Mighty Atom' Wilkins, who won the event four years ago.

Favorite for the title this year is German Horst Gruber, who came second last year. Known by his unusual nickname of Hungliker, he is expected to score maximum points in the pure strength events, such as the giant hod carry and the suitcase of bricks dead lift. All the competitors are champions in their own countries, and the event may well go right down to the final event, the beer barrel lift. If this prediction comes true, then watch out for Australia's own hero, Scott 'Boomerang' Brown, who has been known to come back from well behind to put in a late challenge. Scott has been training by carrying a beer barrel with him everywhere for the last six months, although the weight of the barrel has been steadily getting less, as he has a tendency to drink the contents. He is said to be on his tenth cask.

A full report on the event will be included in next month's 'Dwarf News'.

In the Dwarf's Indoor Leapfrog League, the Lancashire Leapers are poised to win the championship, if they can keep up the fine form they have shown early in the season. There is also shock news from the British Nurtist Dwarf's Over Sixties Unisex Leapfrog Display Team. Their captain has announced that he intends to retire at the end of the season, to make way for a younger man. The team are confidently expected to finish at the bottom of the table again, a position they have occupied for the last seventeen years. Favorite to lead the team next season is the vice-captain, sixty-nine year old Arthur Crabb, who captained the all-powerful Kidderminster Kangaroos in the nineteen eighties, when they won the league for three years on the trot. When contacted by 'Dwarf News', Mr. Crabb told our reporter that he has now fully recovered from the hernia operation he underwent in January, after the team's half time display at the traditional Boxing Day tournament for the Lucy Bottomley Memorial Cup.

PROBLEM PAGE

A young lady with a Dwarf boyfriend faces an embarrassing situation. As always, 'Dwarf News' relationship counselor and grandmother of five, Auntie Linda, is on hand with some practical advice.

Dear Auntie Linda;

My boyfriend Roger, a Dwarf, has told me that I need to go to the doctor's as I may have caught an unmentionable disease. He says that when he went to the toilet at work last week, he used the cubicle straight after his friend, Martin. He found out at the weekend that Martin has caught syphilis from one of the girls in the typing pool. He is now worried that he may have caught the disease by using the toilet seat straight after Martin, and if he has; he might have given it to me.

I am obviously very embarrassed by this, and have not told anyone, apart from my best friend, Tracy. She claims that you cannot catch it from a toilet seat, and that Roger must have been cheating, probably with the girl from the typing pool. She is blond and comes from Essex, so she has had VD before, and knows about these things. (Tracy, not the girl from the typing pool, I don't know where she comes from).

I think Tracy is telling me a lie, as she is jealous of me, because her boy friend is a married man, not a nice little Dwarf like mine. Of course, I love my little Dwarf very much, and cannot believe he would lie to me over something like this. Also, if I may have accidentally caught it, should I tell the milkman? Obviously, if I have got it, he will need to know, as I will have to order extra yogurt, or is that for thrush? Please give me some helpful advice, as I don't know what to do for the best. Please do not print my name, as my mother is a Dwarf, so my dad is a reader of 'Dwarf News', and if he found out, I would die of embarrassment. Also, he would probably try to stuff my boyfriend down the waste disposal unit again, like he did when he found a pair of Roger's underpants mixed in with my washing last month.

Dear child,

First we need to give you a name. Not yours, obviously, as you would not wish to admit to such a tangled situation as this so I will let you be anonymous and call you Annie.

So, dear Annie, where do I start? First, I think it's very important that you know that you CANNOT catch syphilis from toilet seats nor from kissing nor from handling somebody else's underwear.

It is important that you know this so you can make a judgement about Roger's story: either he is lying because he knows how sweet, innocent and naive you are and assumes that you will believe him, or he's incredibly stupid and doesn't realise that he has to have intimate relations with somebody who already has it before he can catch it. Either way, if Roger really has syphilis and you have been a good girl then he caught it doing the dirty on you. And you have to accept the fact that it might just have been with your friend, Tracy.

Please do not feel compelled to tell the milkman. Syphilis is much more serious than thrush and cannot be cured with copious amounts of natural yoghurt. In fact, if you even suspect that you might have been exposed to the illness it is essential, absolutely ESSENTIAL, for you to see your doctor so that he can prescribe a course of treatment. You must also insist that Roger does the same because, wherever he got it, he will continue to spread it to anybody with whom he has intimate contact (so perhaps Tracy should do the same thing). Fortunately, the medical profession no longer inject mercury into the male member as an efficacious cure so young Roger has nothing to fear apart from serious mortification, and possible long-term lunacy if it's left untreated.

Please do not run riot in the Typing Pool trying to get one of the girls to admit to their problem as it would be too embarrassing if they were not the source of the infection; remember that careless gossip can ruin lives more surely than any solid evidence - after all, have you considered that Martin may be the culprit?

I am sorry to have to be the bearer of such sad tidings but it seems to me that there is every possibility that the Dwarf you love is a love rat. And, as such, probably deserves the attention of your father who, I'm sure, will be delighted to activate the waste disposal unit one last time.

Before you decide though, could I ask you one question? How aware are you of the type of activities that your Roger would have had to participate in order to catch this disease? With a lady as delicate and innocent as you seem it is quite possible that you could have extended the hand of friendship to a close friend only to have become a little closer than you expected and, because of this, I am sending you (under plain cover) a little leaflet explaining the "birds and bees" which, I have to stress, has no connection whatsoever with ornithology or honey production. I hope this is of assistance and that you will soon be fit and well again.

Finally, although I do try not to be partisan in my advice I suggest that you ditch the conniving little bastard and find someone else with whom to share your love. This time remember to listen to your parents: they may be a little old fashioned but in most cases they have been there, done it and probably wrote the words on the T-shirt...

kindest regards

Auntie Linda

SUPPLEMENT

The supplement this month covers the use of Dwarfs in television, and is written by Professor Evangeline Foster. Ms. Foster is the Newly Appointed Chair of the Department of Dwarf Media Studies at Merkin College, Cambridge. She was previously a journalist with the 'Dwarf Wrangler's Gazette' in Australia, and was married to Australian Dwarf tennis umpire Bruce Foster until last year, when the couple divorced. She is now engaged to French Dwarf tennis star Armand Cognac, who was forced to pull out of the Australian Mixed Height Tennis Tournament in January, due to a groin strain allegedly incurred while trying to jump over the net after his win in the Paris Dwarf's Open in October.

THE TV DWARF

Although there are many Dwarfs involved in films, they are almost all employed as stand-ins for taller stars. In the world of television however, Dwarfs have been a regular feature for many years, and seem especially suited to the small screen. This has been most notable in the field of comedy, particularly in the double act.

Owing much to the traditions of the music hall and variety theatre, the double act has dominated British comedy for many years, and is only now falling from favour due to the popularity of solo comics, and the domination of the situation comedy. There is nothing inherently amusing about short people on their own. (Oh, yes there is. –Ed). The humour comes mainly from the relationship between the shorter comedian and their taller partner. Many double acts have used this height difference to good effect in the past fifty years, since the television has become a major source of entertainment in so many homes throughout the world. For some unaccountable reason, the technique never seemed to work well on radio.

The list of short/tall comedy partnerships, with variations, reads like a who's who of entertainers since the nineteen sixties. Foremost among them are Morecombe and Wise. In order to make the most of the height difference between them, Ernie Wise is believed to have worn special shoes to make him look shorter. Many others have followed in their footsteps, with varied success. Ronnie Barker and his Dwarf partner of many years, Ronnie Corbett, enjoyed much success on television, and who can forget such double acts as Cannon and Ball, however much we would like to. Many have picked two stage names which complement each other, and draw attention to the difference in size between the partners. Thus we have been blessed with such partnerships as Little and Large. A novel twist was introduced by this pairing, in that Sid Little was actually the taller partner, and Eddie Large was the Dwarf. This was probably the funniest joke they came up with throughout their entire careers.

Most partnerships are made up of two men, though Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders are worthy of note, indeed Dawn French comes close to counting as a double act on her own. Most famous of the male/female pairings to use the height difference between them as a source of humour is Husband and Wife pairing The Crankies. Their personal twist to this tried and tested formula is the idea of dressing the female Dwarf member of the team as a schoolboy. Obviously a TV Dwarf in more ways than one.

Dwarfs have not fared so well in the field of television drama. As most of the output of drama departments seems to consist of series based on the police or hospitals, there is little call for short actors. In real life, there are very few really short doctors and nurses, as the nurses would need to use a stepladder to reach a patient on a hospital bed, and Dwarf sized doctors have a tendency to spend most of their time being treated in the accident and emergency department due to regularly tripping over their own stethoscope, which for the purpose of street cred has to be worn around the neck. In the same way, a Dwarf playing a policeman is unconvincing. Who can watch an entire episode of 'A Touch Of Frost', without wondering at least once how the Inspector, so otherwise convincingly played by David Jason, if he has been a detective for so long, ever managed to meet the minimum height requirements for becoming a policeman in the first place.

The same sort of problems faces the Dwarf actor who tries for a part in a costume drama, or historical programme. The wardrobe department only seems to be able to supply very small costumes for children. Somehow, 'Pride And Prejudice' doesn't work properly if Mr. Darcy is dressed as Little Lord Fauntleroy. Science fiction series have offered a few opportunities for Dwarfs, notably in such programs as 'Star Trek', however in Britain there have been very few openings in this field, apart from the large numbers of Dwarfs needed to play Daleks in 'Doctor Who', due to the openings concerned being too small for a taller person to get into a Dalek without using a tin opener.

Dwarfs have never been in high demand in that most lucrative branch of television, the soap opera. While many taller actors and actresses have become household names, and some have gone on to launch spectacularly unsuccessful singing careers before fading into obscurity, few Dwarfs seem to have made an impact in this field. Australia's most famous Dwarf, Kylie Minogue, seems to be the only exception. As anyone who watches Australian television will be aware, there are only about fifty full time actors in Australia in the first place, who all seem to spend their careers going from one soap opera to the next, with an occasional foray into 'Prisoner Cell Block H', or 'The Flying Doctors'.

One of Britain's favorite female Dwarfs, former page three girl Samantha Fox, may well be responsible for the lack of short presenters on television. Her one attempt, when she hosted the Brit Awards evening with Mick Fleetwood, of the rock group Fleetwood Mac, was enough to put programme makers off Dwarfs for life. She claimed afterwards that she was too short to read the autocue, which was set at a convenient height for Mr. Fleetwood, who stands well over eight feet, or possibly just looked that tall when standing next to Ms. Fox. The evening turned into a disaster of major proportions, to such an extent that the organisers decided to trust the event the following year to the capable hands of pop impresario Jonathon King. Fortunately, this was not the year when Saint Winifred's School Choir appeared to perform their surprise hit; 'Grandad', or the show could have been even more of a disaster than the previous occasion.

One British Dwarf who has made an impact on the small screen is Tony Robinson, who was formerly owned by comedian Rowan Atkinson. Mr. Robinson was used to good effect in the 'Blackadder' series, where the costume problem was usually solved by dressing him in rags and cast-offs. Tony went on to enjoy success in his own right, as the Sheriff of Nottingham in a children's TV series, and as a presenter on the archeological programme 'Time Team'. As each episode of this series involves a high-speed dig, usually over just two days, using a Dwarf presenter gives the impression that the team have been working much harder than is, in fact, the case, as the holes they have dug

always look much deeper than they really are, once they have lowered the presenter into them. Mr. Robinson is now so much in demand that he was forced to turn down the chance to work with his former owner in the hit comedy series 'Mr. Bean', where he was to have played the part of the teddy bear.

Also worthy of mention as a former comedy Dwarf, though unusually as part of a humorous trio, rather than the customary double act, is Bill Oddie. The one-time Goody has established himself as a wild life expert, though wisely he has specialized in the English countryside, so the largest and most dangerous creature he may have to run away from is likely to be a badger.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Professor Foster for this fascinating article. We wish her well in her new position. Hopefully, a new position may also prevent Armand Cognac suffering any more groin strains.

LATE NEWS

Dwarf Friend Chris Straw, who heads the Society's technical section, has been working on a new device. Chris told the Editor that a friend of his owns a custom motorcycle, and has been having problems with local children. It seems that whenever the vehicle is parked outside, his neighbour's little monsters twist the buttons on the seat to see if they come off. So far, his friend has replaced one hundred and thirty-seven buttons. Chris, who does not personally like buttons on motorcycle seats, on the grounds that if he wants something that looks like a Chesterfield, he will buy one from a local furniture store, has nevertheless been busy trying to come up with a solution. To this end, he has invented the exploding seat button.

The idea is to replace the original buttons on the seat with items made up in the technical department's workshop. Each new button contains a detonator, so that when a child interferes with the vehicle, the resulting bang will take their fingers off, preventing them from doing it again.

Although the idea has much to commend it, research has suggested that the device may be illegal. The police have informed him that his friend could face prosecution for keeping a mantrap, and that he may be sued, and made to pay considerable damages, if his neighbour's children suffer harm. It has also been mentioned that, in order to work effectively, the trigger mechanism that sets off the detonator would have to be very lightly loaded, in order to be activated by a small child. As the buttons are intended for fitting to a motorcycle seat, which regularly has a sixteen stone biker descending on it knackers first, a premature detonation could have disastrous consequences.

Chris, never a man to waste a good idea, is now trying to think of a Dwarf related application for the exploding buttons. So far, nothing has come to mind.

Editor's Note: Can you think of a suitable use for this device? Would you trust your Dwarf with an exploding button? Male Dwarfs are likely to lose a hand hitting it with a hammer, while the Dwarf Keeper Royal's Dwarf, Gill, would probably swallow one, and end up performing Hari Kiri on herself from the inside out, as she likes liquorice allsorts, and has a tendency not to wear her glasses. The best Dwarf related use for this device will win one lucky reader an exclusive 'Dwarf News' T-shirt. Please submit your suggestions, by surface mail or electric pigeon, to the office by the twenty-fifth of March.

SOPHIE'S COLUMN

By Sophie, Secretary/Reporter Without Portfolio.

It seems that my first big story, known in the office as The Great Giraffe Bollock Smuggling Scandal, has ground to a halt. Maybe if the police had actually ground the testicles before they put them in the freezer, instead of slicing them, the station could have had mince and onions for dinner. They have had to release the female Dwarf they arrested for GBH, (Giraffe Bollock Hoarding – Ed.) and as their star witness, the late Lady Felicia Crumble's solicitor Mr. John Gaskill, needed to be removed from the inside of the prison van with a hosepipe, and the water run through a tea strainer to collect enough remains to put in the coffin along with some sand bags, the investigation seems to have stalled for the time being.

As this is the third time in three months that the Editor has let me put a column in, I am hoping that I might even get a further promotion, and become a reporter with my own portfolio. I asked the Sports Editor what a portfolio is, and if he has got one. He said he has, it's a small wooden chest with a lock on it, and three bottles so you can carry it to the table to offer your guests an after dinner drink. I told him I wasn't stupid, the thing he's talking about is a portmanteau; I've seen one on the Antiques Road Show. It comes from the French; port, a fortified wine, and manteau, (pronounced man-tow), something designed to be dragged around by your husband or boyfriend. The Editor eventually took pity on me, and told me if I want my own portfolio, I can order one from Office World, but I will have to pay for it myself. I think he is getting worried about the auditors, who are due to come in and check the accounts for the Society at the end of the tax year. Jane must have given him her expense account, with the first class airfares to Australia and back that he authorized for her after Christmas. I wonder what he said when he found out she chartered an executive jet, so she could get from Los Angeles to New York to make her connection for Heathrow.

I have decided to hang up my red wig, as every time I wear it, I wake up the following morning with a headache. I think it must be too tight, although it feels fine when it's on. I have bought a new wig instead. I wonder what the boys at the office will think when I turn up to work next week with long straight black hair. Of course, I had to buy some new clothes to go with it. I was going to get something in black leather, but the cash machine at the bank ate my card when I tried to draw out enough money to pay for it. Instead, I bought a short skirt and a matching jacket in black PVC. I am going to spend the weekend repainting my thigh-length boots gloss black, to match the new outfit.

The Deputy Editor has returned to work after his latest drinking bout, and been given his third and final written warning. I am worried that he may be an alcoholic. Every time the staff go out for a drink, he seems to spend the next three days in hospital, on a saline drip.

There, my column's already nearly a whole page long, after only three months. If it keeps going like this, before much longer I'm going to have trouble squeezing it all in. See you all next month.