

BUSSWARRBLE #84

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Busswarble, an ersatz rave, is edited and published by Michael Hailstone, formerly known as Michael of Matala but now as Michael from Mountains, of 8 Durie Street, Lithgow, NSW 2790, Australia. Email: crux@dodo.com.au. This zine loathes tree-haters, global culture, globalisation and economic rationalism. Available for contribution, letter of comment or mention. Copyright © M. Hailstone and contributors 2004.

BACK TO THE GREENHOUSE

THE COSMIC CONSPIRACY

(Matalan Rave #18)

THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

I have copped some flak over the last ten years for speaking out agensst the ideology of doom and gloom. Indeed, if all leftwing politics has to offer nowadays is hopelessness, pessimism, doom and gloom together with an implied belief in the system it claims to seek to change, then it looks that I will have to forsake that ideology and seek more compatible and positive bedfellows.

I've already sed enough about the greenhouse effect in many places, and I don't want to keep going on about it. But, before I leave this subject, I would like to make it clear to you all where I stand on this rather complex issue.

For a start, I hate propaganda, and that is what the present hysterical media-hype about the greenhouse effect is: propaganda. Now you may say that such propaganda is good and needful, but that depends on what kind of propaganda we're getting. Basically we are getting two kinds of propaganda: one, this is all inevitable and is going to happen whether we like it or not. There are enough uppuffed self-styled experts who take such glee in smugly ramming that down our throats. The other is, that it's a major threat and we urgently need to do something about it. I have a lot more sympathy with this view but with some nasty misgivings.

In late 198 David sent me a news cutting of this kind. Okay, it tells of "the time for preventive action", but what a nightmarish doom laden hysterical tract it is, and what kind of preventive action will need to be taken? What terrible powers must be given to those about to lead the world in such "preventive action"?

This is right out of Herzog's novel *Heat*, with which I dealt in the last rave and elsewhere. Herzog seems to like writing thrillers based on such environmental worries. His *The Swarm*, which has been made into a film (starring Michael Caine), deals with the spared of the African bee in the Americas. Under the title on the cover of *Heat* is the blurb: ARTHYR HERZOG'S LATEST TERRIFYINGLY PROPHETIC BESTSELLER. It *is* terrifyingly prophetic, but how? See last rave.

Now I've been accused of claiming that everything's all right really and even called "rightwing" for my criticisms. Know that I do not at all think everything's all right. I have always been very pessimistic about the future, but I refuse to believe it's inevitable. I think we really have something to worry about and should definitely change our ways to something more harmonious with the natural order and stop doing things that are likely to change the climate or disrupt the Earth in any other way. But why this compulsion to believe the worst unsupported by science and reason? (But of course we're doomed; it's a matter of straightforward economics, isn't it? We can't stop ourselves from fouling our own nest.)

Sure, let's do what we can to lessen carbon-dioxide-emissions and plant lots of trees to restore the soil and further lower the carbon dioxide in the air. I'm all for it. But for Gaias sake let's keep cool and positive. I have no time at all for the kind of statement I read not long ago by one of our doom saying "experts" seriously saying that, although there is disagreement amongst scientists over how much or even whether the sea level is rising at present, no-one disputes that it will rise by some height by the middle of next century. Honestly, what kind of scientific reasoning is that?

Why do the scientists of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization keep making such dire forecasts? I'll say more about that when we wend back to the vulgar subject of money. In the meantime let me point out that there are other possible explanations for recent wether besides the greenhouse effect. *New Scientist* of 5th November 198 printed an article showing a lunar cycle, explaining both the phenomenally high tides of 1974 (for which the greenhouse-effect was not blamed by the "experts"; indeed John Gribbin thought that our flooding monsoonal rains then were a sign of the approaching ice age, the then climatic doom fad) and the American drought of the nineteen-eighties. There is an eighteen-year cycle, so I guess we can expect more high tides in 1992. (An ominous year, that.) That's interesting, as some unorthodox scientist reckons we're in for a global cooling, drought and high tides in the next decade. This ties in sinisterly with a report put out by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) back in 1976 about increasing global cold and famine. (See the conspiracy article in *Crux* #6 and *The Mentor* #44.) Whatever happened to that? Also there is the 11- or 22-year solar cycle and right now the Sun is most unusually active---even more so than in the great record peak of 1959, while its heat output had been dropping at least since 1978, while its output picked up as greater activity built up.

So I've had it 3' zo here with all this propaganda about the greenhouse effect. It's so *negative*. You know what I heard on the radio recently? A scien2sz from the CSIRO was talking about tree planting, which, I'm sure, we all agree is a good thing. He was talking about trying to restore the ravaged land, but of course he had to bring zhe greenhouse effect into it. No, he didn't say that we needed to plant trees to help offset the greenhouse effect. He sed that we should keep the greenhouse-effect in mind and take care *not to plant species in regions that will be climatically unsuitable for them in twenty or thirty years!* That's the kind of propaganda we're being *brainwashed* with.

There is the other kind of propaganda though, the more positive kind that warns us to do something about it like less waste, more efficiency, renewable energy sources, an end to deforestation, efforts to reduce carbon-dioxide-emissions and

above all an end to the obscenity of consumerism. A rational industry and economy that works to meet our needs, not to keep everybody busy doing work for its own sake, however useless. But we should be making those changes anyway regardless of the greenhouse effect. But nuclear power is not the answer. Have you noticed how the nuclear lobby has raised its ugly head lately, capitalizing on the greenhouse effect? Even in the wake of Chernobyl.

But how are we going to make those changes and save the Earth and ourselves? On our terms or theirs? Do we choose life or living death?

In a way we've been through this before. Back in the sixties they kept brainwashing us with horrible nightmarish technological futures. Indeed I remember worrying from at least as early as 1962 about whether control (which we probably already have but don't know it). They loved to depress us by telling us how *inevitable* that future was, how human beings would adapt to anything, no matter how inhuman, nightmarish and unnatural. Implicit was a real hatred of the natural world. But now that won't wash so well, so instead they brainwash us with the inevitability of the greenhouse effect and the destruction of the ozone. They've been scaring us for years with all kinds of horrors: nuclear war, cancer (and now especially skin cancer), an ice age, resource scarcity, hunger, and overpopulation. During the early eighties lots of folk (at least in fanzines) were getting very depressed over the outlook of nuclear war (as if it were something new) and especially the nuclear winter. Where is the nuclear winter now? Oddly forgotten. Most folk have phenomenally short memories.

AN EXPLANATORY WHINGE

FOR THOSE of you no doubt wondering what the hell is going on and what this is all about: well, lots of things are going wrong and I'm bloody fed up to the teeth with it all. For one thing, I can no longer get my stupid bloody printer to work, so I'm putting out a web version of *Busswarbles* #83 and 84, but only for a very few, only those of you decent and faithful enough to respond to the last warble. I've had it beyond belief with trying to be nice and tactful to cretins, only to get a kick in the teeth (albeit silent) for my pains.

You see, I'm fed up to the back teeth with all those cretins who get the shits (or "pissed off", as stupid bloody Marsden, who now holds the distinction of having joined the ranks of the "pissed off", has so eloquently put it) over nothing. Seems I can't even open my mouth or print a single word without causing offence. What an incredibly delicate and touchy lot most out there are.

I've run out of new ideas to put in *Busswarble* now, especially in this wasteland laughably called the world nowadays in what is laughably called the twenty-first century. In this utter joke of a country we have just elected a Nazi government to power, so God help us now. It brings to mind that poem about the Nazis:

First they came for the Jews, but I did not speak out,

Because I was not a Jew...

Then they came for the trade unionists, but I did not speak out,

Because I was not a trade unionist,

And then they came for me,

And there was no one left to speak out for me.

That's what this evil fascist globalist economic rationalist government is all about:
coming for selected targets.

I WANT TO LIE ON THE GRASS

6: □ Matala ••••

The first thing we did on our arrival in Matala was to go into the nearest *kafeneion* and buy some food, notably bread and honey, and here for the first time I tasted ouzo. Later outside we met some of the cave dwellers, one of them a Londoner who asked us whether we wanted to dwell in the caves and warned us that it was difficult to find an empty cave now. We walked across the beach to go see. □ □

Before we knew where we were, we had a cave up on the third level overlooking the bay and village. There was a weird-looking fellow dwelling there now, but he was moving out down to a cave on the beach level. He told us that the rock on the cliff-face would become very hot during the summer as would the place become intolerably crowded. He said that a very closely knit community dwelt here during the winter, but now with the summer beginning the summer-crowds were starting to arrive, and the atmosphere was becoming very clannish. Almost all the "permanent" crowd had now left for somewhere in Spain, leaving only a floating population staying for only a few days or weeks. The "permanent" crowd was planning to come back hither in September, when the summer-madness was over. He had no money himself, but he was staying on here to forward his friends' mail. The address? ---"The Caves", Matala. But the mail came and yode once a week. □ □ ••••

The weather now, although quite fine, was still rather cloudy and windy and considerably cooler than I had expected. Everybody took the day very quietly, many just sitting outside his or her cave. On the beach near the foot of the cliff was a large peace-symbol beautifully laid out in the sand with stones. □

In the cave on the level above mine dwelt a Greek Australian who came from Sydney---from somewhere like Coogee where I had never been. However it went out that one day over ten years ago he had paid a visit to my home-suburb of Mosman to visit an uncle who owned the shop on Mosman wharf. This was really a coincidence, for that was part of the world I knew as a boy, and I had so often been into that shop on the wharf...he owned it no longer however. □ □ ••••

His name was George and he had been here for six weeks now, shacking up with a girl on the fourth level. □ □ ••••

Somebody gave me the downrunning on the villages several cafes, one of them called "I Plaka" at the far end sold a cup of Nescafe with milk for apparently only three drachmas. So I yode over thither, my only visit there, and in there on the wall I saw a couple of pages from some American magazine like *National Geographic* carrying an article on the caves. According to this Ulysses was supposed to have called at Matala, and now in the twentieth century it was a little colony of cave dwelling Americans, (while the *people* article gave the impression that they were predominantly British with the underheadline: "Dozens of British teenagers are rushing off to Crete -- **to live in caves,**" printed in such a way as if living in caves were something extraordinary and weirdly eccentric).

Gordon asked me about my arrangement to meet my friend, and I decided to make a day trip tomorrow to Agia Galini and back, to see if Tom was there. I took the day quietly and had a potato omelette and rice pudding at a little cafe belonging to a certain Leon Spithakis in the village that evening. A long reddish candle bought in the village for five drachmas produced light in the cave.

My day trip to Agia Galini was not only abortive but a disaster. I had the idea that it was only fifteen to twenty kilometres away (actually it is thirty five) and I should have no trouble hitching thither and back in a day. So I set off walking along the road. That day saw the end of the cool wet spell, and now the sun blazed down mercilessly in all its force. As I was out in the sun almost all day and wearing only a light short sleeved shirt, I became very sunburnt on the face and long suffering nose and arms. I have a very fair skin, and, although I had been partly broken in during those twelve frustrating days in Italy, I had just been through a long cold English winter, and I just wasn't used to the sun, especially this type of sunshine, which I had not seen for eighteen months.

I walked all those five kilometres into Pitsidhia, by which time I badly needed a drink. Walking past a kind of tavern there, I looked about uncertainly, attracting attention from the locals sitting outside.

"Τι θελετε:" called one of them to me.

I walked back towards him and the bar, trying to make him understand that I wanted something to drink. I ended up buying a bottle of beer, pretty crappy beer, I might add, but that is all the beer there is in southern Crete.

I sat in the little tavern and the locals around me tried to make conversation with me, and I did my best, but my Greek was extremely limited and there was very little that I could say or understand. However I told them that I came from Australia, and, on being asked what part of Australia, I told them Sydney, then, on being requested, I pointed to it on a map of the world on the wall, and for the first time I saw the name of my hometown printed in Greek. I also told them that I was heading for Tymbaki and Agia Galini, and here I struck confusion with the Cretan dialect; they pronounced the *k* in "Tymbaki" like the *ch* in the English word "church" (in fact the Cretan *k* [or *κ* as it is written in the Greek alphabet] always has this sound before the vowels "e" and "i", and they pronounced *και* as "che" and *αυτοκινητο* ["aftokineto" in Athenian Greek] as "aftochinto").

After that I walked to the edge of the village and dithered about near a fork, wondering which road to take. Standing outside a schoolhouse, I could see that the poor Greek schoolchildren were subjected to a heavy bombardment of political propaganda, for I could see on the walls inside the doorway messages like ΖΗΤΩ Ο ΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ, although I have not yet been able to find out who or what "Stratos" is.* Eventually I asked a woman which road to take to Tymbaki, and she directed me onto the road heralded by a sign reading: "ΟΧΙ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΜΜΟΥΝΙΣΜΟΥ, ΝΑΙ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΕΘΝΟΣ", ("Communism

* It means the army.

no, nation yes", cf. *¡Cuba si! ¡Yanquis no!*). I walked along this stony road and came eventually to a sign telling me that I was nine kilometres from Matala and so many kilometres from some other place whose name meant nothing to me, but it gave no useful information on which road to take to Tymbaki. I continued straight on until I came to a trough where a man was watering his mule. I decided to ask this man the way, but when I approached him his mule almost bolted at the sight of me, and I felt rather embarrassed at causing him inconvenience. However finally I managed to approach him and ask him. He spoke a little German and showed me the way back to the sign and told me that the right hand fork (looking back towards Matala) led to Phaestos.

What was so infuriating that day was that almost all the traffic on that road was going in the opposite direction. In fact, only two vehicles passed me going the same way between Matala and Phaestos, one of them a motorcycle, the other a truck with which I'll deal in due course.

Eventually my weary trek led me to a little village where there was a cafe, so, once again badly needing a drink, I walked in and ordered a coffee and lemonade.

The cafe proprietor was a real old character. As I was the only customer and he soon perceived my difficulty with the language, he decided to give me a Greek lesson and dug out of a drawer a lexicon that, it seemed to me, he kept especially for foreign visitors like me. It was no longer a book, for it had fallen apart into its individual pages. He picked out the section that dealt with the personal pronouns, written first in Greek, and then followed by a roman transcription, then the English meaning, thus:

εγω = eghho = I

εση = essi = you

αυτος = aftos = he

αυτη = afti = she

αυτο = afto = it

and so on. He took me through them one by one, correcting my pronunciation, not that I could detect anything wrong with it myself, but he made me practise αυτος and αυτο several times before passing me. Eventually I dug out my own Greek book that I'd brought with me, looked up a word in the vocabulary and asked him in some kind of pidgin Greek, where he had acquired that lexicon. He replied Athens.

The lesson was interrupted by the arrival of the crew of the aforesaid truck. After they had had their drink I asked one of them if he was going to Phaestos or Tymbaki (or Agia Galini), but he replied no, he was going to Iraklion. This was my first introduction to a certain base stupidity common amongst Greeks, but all I felt at the time was merely annoyance that they should not give me a lift on this godforsaken road. I paid the cafe proprietor and followed them outside, to see them drive up the road about a hundred yards, then stop, but not to pick me up, for they continued on their way about half a minute later.

However it was not long before I found myself by surprise at the offturn from the Agia Triada road near Phaestos. In fact the village lay down in the valley just below Phaestos on the plain of Messara.

Near Phaestos an English couple in a car asking me the way to Matala accosted me. They offered me a lift thither, which I of course refused, having just come thence. Later I was to regret turning their offer down. Already I was cursing my lunacy in coming on this abortive expedition, sweating it out and steadily frying on this hot dusty road under the broiling sun, when I could have spent the day so much more profitably lying on the beach at Matala soaking up the sun in a far healthier way.

On reaching the Mires Tymbaki road, I stopped in the shade of a tree for about fifteen minutes, then, still unable to get a lift, I set off walking along the road towards Tymbaki. I still had no luck. The only vehicle that stopped was a motorcycle that obviously could not pick me up as it had an object on the pillion, but I guess the riders main intention of stopping was simply to practise his French. I complained bitterly in my best French what a hopeless day I had had, then he continued on his way and I continued walking. At another stage a car whose driver made a truly idiotic sign indicating the direction of straight ahead overtook me. Whatever it meant, I don't know, but it was as if to say: "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I'm only going straight on down the road." Towards Tymbaki! Whither the hell did the stupid idiot think I wanted to go?

It was eight kilometres from the Phaestos offturn to Tymbaki, and it was three o'clock by the time I walked into the latter place, a whole five and a half hours after setting off from Matala that morning. By this time I was once again very thirsty, so I entered a shop in the main street. That other afternoon in Phaestos Gordon had introduced me to a red fizzy drink called *vissinadha*, which I had liked very much and now wanted. However I had forgotten the name as I forget all Greek words, except that it began with v. I had an infuriating time trying to make understood to the woman in the shop that I wanted a red drink, and I did not know the Greek for "red" and she remained obstinately dumb and uncomprehending. Following that I yode out to the nearby bus station to meet equal Greek perversity, but a man sitting outside who spoke broken English told me that the next bus to Agia Galini left at a quarter to four.

A bus drove in from Mires and stopped at the bus station. After the passengers had alighted, I stepped aboard and asked the driver:

"Agia Galini?"

"No," was the reply. "*Andere* bus."

"Που:" I asked. *Anderebas*, where the hell was that place?

"*Andere -- Bus*," repeated the driver but this time only in German. Then I realised what he meant. He had been telling me in a mixture of bad German and bad English that this bus was not going to Agia Galini and I had to take another. Bloody hell, these people could be irritating! Why the hell couldn't they just speak Greek? I had far more hope of understanding them then, than if they spoke, as they insisted on doing, in pidgin English or German so badly pronounced as to be

quite unrecognisable. It was impossible to pick up the Greek language this way, for all one learnt was a horrible degenerate corruption of the major languages in particular English, German and Italian.

Somehow that completed my discouragement from going to Agia Galini that day, and I decided to take the bus back to Matala. The fare was fourteen drachmas, a nasty little bite into my rapidly dwindling funds, but I just couldn't face trying to hitch or walking all that dreadful way back.

The bus stopped at Phaestos on the way to pick some tourists and sightseers up, then I had to get off at Mires. I asked a Greek there how to get back to Matala, and once again he told me in that typical Greek rudeness that I could take a taxi, otherwise I would have to walk. I call it rudeness because, as it went out, there was a bus leaving at half past four, as I managed to glean from the chalk scribbled timetable in the bus station, and I caught it.

There was quite a large crowd of more cave-bound people on this bus, Americans and English. One of the Americans, a small dark quietly spoken fellow, had been to Matala before, but he had left after a short stay on having some travellers' checks stolen, an all too common occurrence there. The Englishmen, mainly from the London area, were a wild unruly mob, friendly enough but a little overpowering. From then on they always called me "Aussie". They were travelling in a van that they had left in Athens and coming to Matala for about a week, looking forward to soaking up the sun and swimming in the water whose temperature they understood to be as high as 60 degrees. This didn't sound too warm to me, and I had found the water warmer than I had expected anyway considering that it was only May, but they told me that that was a great improvement on the waters of England, in which, I must admit, I had never swum. And so, as the Sun sank towards the western horizon, I went back from my abortive expedition with this large crowd of newcomers.

That useless abortive day proved Agia Galini inaccessible, unless I spent two days over it, but this I was not prepared to do, as it most likely meant giving up my cave in Matala and I did not expect to find any better place to sleep in Agia Galini than the beach. Gordon was quite critical of my inertia about the business; he could imagine the poor guy sitting and waiting there day after day wondering what had happened to me. However, I reasoned that if I stopped here long enough Tom would eventually come to Matala of his own accord. Then he would see that the place was not so bad after all and no doubt a distinct improvement on Agia Galini.

In the meantime I made my own plans independent of Tom. The outward trip hither had been devastatingly expensive. During those ten days in Italy, the worst phase of the trip, I had been spending money at the rate of two pounds a day, twice the allowable limit, and I was left now with barely more than half of the ninety pounds I had had in my pocket on leaving London. I calculated that I had enough money to keep me here for a month, leaving twenty pounds after that to get me back to England. I knew I had to stay here for a while for a badly needed rest to recuperate from my devastating ordeal and soak up some badly needed sunshine. I had to do this in order to recover my health so that I could face the future again. The return trip I had dreaded even worse than the outward trip before setting out, but after a conversation with the Liverpudlian in Athens I had decided definitely

not to go back through Italy but to take a train from Athens to Belgrade and hitch the rest of the way thence. The Liverpoolian had come out that way taking only a week and sed that it should take only five days. Back in England I still had two hundred more pounds, nearly thrice as much as I had had when I had first come to England, and that should do me very nicely to look around for a job and to set myself up preferably in some place like Southampton, to start all over agen and try to achieve something worthwhile. In the meantime, while in Matala, I had the draft of my next two stories to write.

My first brief encounter with tom Elrick had made a deep moving impression on me. He had struck me as such a pathetic figure, so young, bewildered and lonely with a big problem. His influence reached deeply into the opening pages of my story. I had originally planned to make the main character a mere projection of myself, a very bad failing of mine as a writer incidentally, but now I set out to make him somewhat a composite of both Tom and me. I gave his age as twenty-three years, the mean of our ages, and the given name of Tom. But this feeling was only a passing phase.

However he had also brought about in me an effect that was seriously undermining my morale. Here he was, only twenty years old, and he had already seen the light and acted on it. Here was a fellow with some sense. When I looked back at how I had been and what I had been doing at twenty, I mentally cowered in shame. I had then still been caught up in the system with that idea resulting from my boyhood conditioning that I had to make a respectable career. Six years ago I had been living an overall futile and purposeless life. Oh sure, during my first few months in Armidale I must have appeared so very young, pathetic, bewildered and lonely even more so than tom but it was in a situation that was crushing, soul destroying and unbearably humiliating. Tom had had the courage to break out of the big web of work and respectability before suffering, as I had done, unbearable humiliating experiences that could undermine his health. It had taken me six years longer to break out for good, even though I had had several opportunities to do so on earlier occasions, with the result that something inside me had been destroyed, leaving me devoid of courage, initiative and enthusiasm. The most painful thought was how much better and more happily I could have spent my early twenties, the best years of life, if only I had had more sense in the past.

However Matala was a beautiful place, and one personality that did much to unify it into a community was a very well fed Austrian named Max who sat at one of the tables outside Leon's cafe from about nine o'clock in the morning till about eleven at night, feeding his fat gut with food and wine and burping. He was never alone; an entourage always surrounded him, and two people who seemed to be in his company most of the time were an Englishman named Paul and an American named Sue. Max was very friendly, always ready to invite one to join his company. He was also quite a linguist; apart from his native German he spoke good English with a rather American accent, and he seemed to have a reasonable command of the Greek language. He knew French, as I was to see later, and he demonstrated on another occasion quite a degree of fluency in Italian when addressing another well-loved Matalan character.

This was a French Italian fellow named René, but because he was always bubbling with enthusiasm and exclaiming "Fantastico" this favourite exclamation of his

became his nickname. He spoke good French, and thus I managed to converse with him. He had arrived here only about a week earlier than I, but he was destined to succumb to a well-known insidious evil so peculiar to the modern world...

Yes, there were people there who smoked pot, but this at that stage was not an obsessive part of the Matalan way of life. This habit manifested itself to me as no more than a dimly red-lit circle sitting on the beach at dusk...

On Saturday, two days after my abortive trip to Agia Galini, Gordon left, and on the Friday evening before we had a really good old discussion. Having six months free, he was making a really big trip. Already he had worked for three weeks in Athens looking after a motorboat, to supplement his funds. He told me that quite a few jobs were advertised in the *Athens Daily Post*, the Athenian English newspaper, but competition for jobs was stiff, a real rat race. He did not want to stop here long, for he had a lot of ground yet to cover. He had made a fairly extensive journey through the Peloponnese, and next he was going to Israel. Thereafter he planned to travel further east and hoped to end up in India.

One country he told me he did not like was Germany, because the people were so regimented and efficient. After a while I was delighted to learn that he did not swallow that big lie about "Progress", but just what he did believe in I could not make out. He called himself an atheist, but he also struck me as something of a nihilist. He admitted that he found it very difficult to accept anything as the truth. He contrasted our highly sophisticated complicated race with the Greeks: if he were asked for something like money by a beggar, sed he, he would have to weigh the situation up asking himself whether he should give the beggar something and why he should or should not, whereas a Greek, a much freer soul, would simply say "yes" or "no" on the spur of the moment. This gave me much food for thought; I tended to find Greeks very irritating at times both in Australia and here in their own country, but perhaps that was simply because with my complex sophisticated western mind, product of a technological industrial society whether I liked it or not, I just did not understand them.

But the very profound interesting discussion we had concerned the revolution. Just recently, in the last year or so, I had gotten wind of the talk of revolution in the air, and, as already stated, I had set out from England with this idea in mind. I had first talked about it with a young Italian who had approached me on that afternoon of that terrible Sunday when I was stuck at the autostrada tollgates near Arezzo. We had managed to converse in bad French with a little Italian mixed in, and he had told me that this summer he was going to Paris to make money by drawing pictures on the promenade by the Seine, and to fight the revolution. We had discussed the revolution at great length within our mutual linguistic limits, and I had asked him just how he intended to make the revolution, and his answer was woefully unimaginative with bombs and barricades. I had protested that this type of revolution in modern western society was utterly futile and surely doomed to failure. He agreed with me, but the main idea to him was simply to fight it. Indeed I wonder whether the poor fellow actually knew why he wanted the revolution, unless perhaps he just considered it now the "in" thing to fight the Revolution.

But his arrival on the scene had greatly brightened up an otherwise dreary day on which I had been right out of available cash and eaten and drunk nothing all day. At this stage I had been about to walk back into Arezzo and spend the night there at the youth hostel, but the other fellow, who also wanted to go back into town (where his home was, he told me), was determined to hitchhike in. So we made an arrangement: I continued in my fruitless endeavour to get a lift towards Rome, while he stood on the opposite side of the road promising me to ask the driver of any car he stopped to take me too, unless I stopped a car first. As it went out, the car he stopped happened to be going right through to Perugia, and so that was how I came to end up there that evening.

Anyway Gordon presented his own more sophisticated albeit rather crazy idea of the revolution. The word "revolution", sed he, meant wending about, revolving, and this was how society should be, in a state of continual revolution from the feudal system through the present bourgeois capitalist system, then back to the feudal system, round and round and round in ceaseless revolution. Fine, but the trouble was that They wouldn't allow this to happen. Instead they wanted things to keep changing along a straight line that they called "Progress" hence the mess we were in today.

But how to fight it? Well, sed Gordon, it was hopeless pushing against the current it was impossible to fight it that way, for the tide was too strong. The secret was to push sideways: that is, to provide a centripetal force acting at right angles to the direction of motion and thus bring about a circular motion in other words, a revolution. When I asked him how exactly he intended to campaign and questioned even the hope of success, he replied that he didn't see any great hope of success either, but the most important thing was to fight the Revolution, and we'd die fighting.

He was like most modern revolutionaries anti materialist, but then he conceded that that was probably due to the fact that he had not actually worked and made money, therefore he didn't care about it.

He left next day about half past twelve. He told me that he did not take kindly to doing nothing all day and the place was just like a holiday resort. Although I raised no argument, I didn't agree with the latter statement. Matala had none of the straight petty bourgeois atmosphere of a seaside holiday resort, nor even of a Sydney beach, the type of place which I had shunned for most of my last seven years or so in Australia without knowing why, except perhaps the contention that "everybody" yode to the beach, thus taking the spirit out of it.

I spent some time alone in the cave that afternoon, keeping out of that burning midday sun but also learning Greek, having been shamed into a greater effort by people like Gordon, max, Paul and sue. I also attempted to write more of my story, but I found it difficult to set my mind to the task and stick to it the old problem agen.

Later that afternoon an English fellow appeared outside with the words:

"You're a bit of an individualist, aren't you, in here on your own?"

He came in and we had a bit of a chat in which I came to say how I'd like to do some swimming around here with a mask and snorkel. The other fellow said that we could borrow some from another bloke whom he called "the Englishman" and who came from Newcastle on Tyne and dwelt in a cave further along near the end of this level towards the sea. So we did this and set off, climbing along the cliff towards a rocky cove he had told me about down the coast just a little from Matala bay.

On the way I discussed with him the sanitation problem here. There was a public lavatory in the village square, but it was utterly filthy and not fit for even pigs to use. Elsewhere the countryside was too open for one to shit in private, and one place which did afford a little privacy, the inland side of a small building on the edge of the beach, discouraged prospective bowel movers with the notice on the door: DON'T SHIT HERE. However the other fellow replied that people here didn't mind one having a shit as they all had the same problem and regarded it as inevitable and natural, and he pointed out to me a little cleft in the cliff on the way back, which had been used for that purpose. Generally however it seemed that people waited until dark. One thing that helped here in regard to this problem was the dry climate: faeces rapidly dried up and became harmless and inoffensive instead of staying soggy and stinking more and more abominably.

I had discussed the problem with Gordon, but he had been all right because he hadn't needed to shit while he was here. From this he made the point that back in the civilised life we must eat an awful lot of rubbish, for it was not really necessary to shit every day, as the small economical diet suited to the relaxed Matalan way of life proved.

On reaching the aforesaid cove, we saw a couple already there, so we walked further down the rocky coast. The afternoon was hazy, obscuring Agia Galini from view, but above that village, sticking up above the afternoon haze, snow-capped Mount Ida stood out very clearly.

The cove we eventually came upon about half a mile or so further down was one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. It was completely rocky, and the water was so completely crystal clear that one could make out every detail on the rocky bottom, allowing for the refracting distortion by the wavelets. The volcanic rocks were sharp and treacherous near the water level, but with the very small tides in the Mediterranean there were no oysters. On reaching the inland end of the cove and setting our gear down, I had a leak, taking care however to avoid pissing into that beautiful clear water. As the Englishman said, such an act would have been sacrilege.

We spent about half an hour there during which I explored part of the cove underwater, something that I hadn't done for several years. I couldn't use the snorkel however, because the mask kept letting water in, an intolerable situation. Four months later I was to realise that the last time I'd used a mask I hadn't had a beard...

I cooked spaghetti on a fire that evening outside the cave that he shared with his mate and the aforesaid Londoner. He asked me whereabouts I had dwelt in England. When I told him that I had spent most of the time in London but also

four months in Gloucester and a few weeks in Chester, he replied that he came from Chester himself; I think he said he dwelt in Connahs quay. When I told him that I would be going back to Chester when I went back to England because my sister dwelt there, he replied that if I was there at the end of August I must look him up and have a pint with him.

The Londoner, who was travelling on his own, had been working on the new underground Victoria line, the first section of which had just been opened when I passed through London a month ago. This was his first trip outside England. He told us of how he was repeatedly asked "*Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Sprechen Sie Deutsch?*" while hitchhiking down through Greece as a result of the murder of the six Greeks by the two Germans.

Later that evening we sat in their cave where my Chester friend read aloud a bit of the diary that he had kept of the outward trip, and it sounded more interesting than my trip. The Londoner suggested at one stage buying a bottle of wine and splitting it three ways, making me feel rather snubbed and left out, so I soon retreated to my own cave.

I had a terrible night. It was my first night here alone, and for some reason I just couldn't sleep. The gravel floor felt intolerably hard, and I tossed and turned and shoved clothes under myself, but the night was one big long sleepless drag. There are times when I really hate the night...

Then about three o'clock in the morning there arose from over near the village a fearsome cacophony of vocal animals, mainly dogs and chooks, as far as I remember.

I sat up in alarm. I had read that animals with some uncanny sense of perception kick up such a dreadful row just a little before the onslaught of a terrible earthquake. Crete, I knew, lay in the earthquake belt, and I also knew that there had been many severe earthquakes over the last three thousand years since these caves were hollowed out as burial chambers. Only that afternoon I had observed from the rock strata of the cliff, how the whole headland had once either sunk at one end into the sea or been thrust up out of it. Fortunately perhaps I had not yet noticed the caves that had collapsed at some stage during their three thousand year history, but I was afraid enough just the same. So I sat there in fear and apprehension, listening for that approaching ominous rumble and the first violent shock...

It was a bad night.

Next morning in the cheerful blessed daylight of the harsh Mediterranean sun I stood on the ledge outside the cave and brooded over my predicament. In all I felt miserable, in a state of despair. The false earthquake alarm was nothing in itself, only the workings of an overactive imagination, nor was a sleepless night, miserable a curse though it may be, the end of the world, for after all even the very best of us suffer so at times; these things were merely the culmination of my unhappy mental state.

The trouble was that I was bored stiff. Here I was in this beautiful place, yet I still could not relax and unwind. I had no valid reason to be bored, for I had plenty to

do; when I was not soaking up the sun or swimming I should be learning Greek or writing my story. But I could just not concentrate on or apply myself to either. It was not even as if I felt like sleeping during the day I stayed wide awake yet lacked the inclination to do anything and therefore felt bored. The very thought of my condition made me feel so miserable that I thought that really, for all it was worth, I might as well take a high dive off this cliff and end it for once and for all.

What really made me miserable was the awareness that I lacked all inclination altogether. I had known the pain of what is called unrequited love, I had suffered the intense sexual frustration that had kept me awake so many nights last autumn, and I had lived through a long cold dismal winter during which I again had lain awake so many nights for the same reason. I had foreseen that it was essential that I quit that intolerable hopeless environment before spring, otherwise, I knew, I would be right off my rocker after a couple of weeks. As it was however, my departure for Matala had been postponed until mid April, but by that time I had realised that I had no need to fear losing my sanity through frustration, for all that had died in me. This worried me because it was not normal. Fact of the matter was that even if the nicest girl in the world should crawl into my cave and ask to sleep with me I still could not have raised the inclination to do anything.

I also missed Tom. I knew that if he were here with me he would be a constant companion, for he was one of those few people with whom I had a special rapport. We could talk all the time without the subject matter running dry, a problem that had seriously worried me with certain other people, and I needed somebody to talk to during the day but even more importantly at night. In this place social life was essential at night to fend off boredom and eventual madness...

Slowly I wandered down to the Englishmen's cave, as I had been invited to do yesterday, to cook some fastbrek.

"You're very quiet this morning," remarked one of the Chester blokes, as I stood moodily by the fire.

I replied that I had had a bad sleepless night. The other replied sympathetically that that was probably due to being on my own.

That conversation, small as it may seem, is a memory I have ever since treasured and cherished. It really meant a lot to me to have somebody else show enough interest and concern towards me to notice and remark on something like that. It was one of the little things destined to keep my memory of Matala rosy for the next four months.

That afternoon, after the sun's fiercest heat had passed, I yode once again with my Chester friend down to that beautiful idyllic cove equipped with the Englishman's mask and snorkel. On the way back we discussed the vulgar subject of money. The Englishman told me how he worked every winter in order to save up enough money to take a holiday all summer. The last few summers he had spent in Greece, but next summer he wanted to visit America for a change and perhaps even work there. He and his friend had very little money between them to last them here for the next couple of months or so. He offered me a primus stove for eight drachmas because, said he, they couldn't afford to buy kerosene to use it.

He put me to shame, for even here I failed to curb my spending satisfactorily. Already today, Sunday, I was again short of money, having spent my latest £5 travellers check, which I had cashed in Iraklion only last Monday. I would have to go into Mires tomorrow to cash my next check. Five pounds had lasted me a week, a rate of a little under a pound a day, but in this place where it was cheap to live that wasn't good enough. After all, all I needed money for was food, for rent was free, nor did I have to spend money on transport except for odd occasions such as my bus fare into Mires tomorrow, and for that I had to set aside 9½ drachmas.

There were two buses a day out of Matala, and I was planning to catch the 2:30 a.m. one, but fortunately I was warned off that that evening outside Leon's cafe by Max and co. The bank was open apparently only during the morning; therefore I would have to catch the bus that left at the ungodly hour of half past five in the morning. It so happened that Max, Paul and Sue were also going into Mires tomorrow and had to catch that same bus for the same reason. They talked of staying up all night.

We sat there until sometime after ten o'clock that evening, a merry crowd, eating and drinking, and Leon helped keep the party going by putting on beer, wine, bread and fish on the table. Here was a facet of Greek life, the likes of which one would probably never encounter in such advanced developed countries as England and Australia.

That I managed to wake up in time to catch that bus next morning was probably sheer luck. I was awakened by the sound of the bus's horn blaring across the bay. Looking at my watch, I saw that it was a quarter past five, and by the time I had dressed, gathered everything together, clambered down the cliff and trudged through the sand across the beach to the village square, I was only just in time.

We arrived in Mires about half past six, one and a half hours before the bank was due to open. Having no money left on me I could not buy anything to eat or drink until after I'd been to the bank, so I just hung around with Max and co. They yodded into a shop where Max wanted something repaired and he had a long dialogue with the shopkeeper in Greek with a little humour understood by Paul and Sue but not by me. Afterwards we walked up the street where the bank was and met a hairdresser. Max seemed to know half the population of Mires and we had a conversation with her in French. Later we walked back to the main street where we spoke to another man. When the others told him that I was Australian, he shook hands with me, saying in some kind of bastard French: "Greco Australian relations very good!"

During the course of the last few days in Matala I had written a letter to my parents, the first letter to them since one I had posted in Desenzano. In it I had told them of my feelings of regret of the way I had spent the last nine years enslaved to the Gospel of Work and about Tom Elrick and his far superior action. This was a new departure from the shit I had written them two months ago about feeling wretched over having fallen out with the world of jobs and careers tempered with my fear of the future and concern over such inane insanities as the Concorde and London's third airport. Whatever regrets I had about my life, at least now I had some weapon with which to defend myself.

I had the letter with me now to post, and this I did after max had kindly lent me twenty drachmas for a stamp. In addition to the postage stamp I also stuck on the letter one of those "21 April" stamps, which were free.

Finally eight o'clock came and I yode into the bank to cash my next check, and while in there I had the rare experience of seeing a man standing beside me holding one of those Australian \$5 notes which had been released shortly before my departure. Following that, I broke fast some, then yode into a stationery shop to buy an airmail writing pad. I had some trouble making understood to them what I wanted; the Greek words for "paper" and "map" are almost identical with a subtle difference: χαρτη and χαρτης respectively. Finally they said the word Μπλοκ (block), to which I said, "Yes," and they fished out a writing pad.

I had been toying with the idea of taking the bus to Agia Galini on the off chance of finding tom there. Somehow I was not overly keen on the idea, but after some inner debate this morning I decided to catch the ten o'clock bus to Tymbaki. As I walked across the square to the bus station I noticed how hot the day was becoming the weather was wending considerably hotter than it had been over the last few days.

The bus left about ten o'clock and we chugged along through the green sunbaked country towards Tymbaki, past Phaestos and along that same road where I had trudged so fruitlessly four days ago, then past a church and an army camp on the outskirts of Tymbaki.

And then, as the bus roared in towards the village square, I saw him, trudging along the other side of the road towards of Mires with his rucksack. It was only a momentary glimpse, but I recognised him instantly, also noticing that he was very warmly dressed for this hot weather, wearing his jacket and sweatshirt.

It was Tom Elrick.

1706-24 Eva Rd.
 Etobicoke, ON
 CANADA M9C 2B2

December 21, 2004

Dear Michael:

Thank you for the website version of Busswarble 83. I'd be happy to receive future issues like this; I know how much it costs to mail and produce zines, and it's getting more expensive all the time.

Your explorations of the Greek ruins sounds quite interesting, but I get the feeling that like most places, the tourists drive the natives up the wall with questions and wandering around in places they possibly shouldn't be. I have envied you a little for finding a place on this earth that you would be quite content to stay for the rest of your life. There is too much pressure on us to move about and go to work and return, and consume. I'd like a place where I could stay the whole day, read, explore the Net, and create, and never have to worry about money or other kinds of commitments.

I am glad you are still reprinting some of Harry Warner's letters. Now that Harry is gone, he has left behind a confusing will and a jumbled estate, and this means the esteem that many fanzine fans had for him is largely gone. Some describe his as an old bumbler, and others are forgetting him rather rapidly.

Chester Cuthbert is lucky to be retired; I wish I was. I do have some full-time work in the new year, but it will become a night-shirt job eventually, and I hope I can find something else in the meantime. I see so many jobs in the newspaper and online that I apply to, but somehow, I never seem to have the right qualifications. Some jobs pay minimum wage, and demand qualifications that might have paid top dollar a decade ago. I would like to think that I am more than capable of doing many jobs, and I would like to continue my career in publishing, but there are few vacancies, and only too many people to fill them. It's hard to rise to the top and get the plum job, so I just have to keep trying and find out more about the industry and who runs it.

John Kaemmerer...now there's a name I haven't read in a long time. John produced his own fanzine many years ago, can't remember its name.

Near the end of the page, so Michael, I wish you ease from your burdens, and the hope for happiness in 2005. Let us pray for what we need and what we want; we seem to get very little of either. Take care, enjoy the warmth of winter, and I look forward to more Busswarbles in the new year.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

The warmth of winter? I hope you're joking. – MfM.