# The Towns times

EUROPEAN EDITION www.townstimes.co.uk ISSUE NUMBER 6

# A change for the better ?

**By our reporter Keith Towns**

Ever since we have embarked upon our new lifestyle I have felt a compelling need to change my appearance.

I feel like a new age traveller without the dirt and with an MOT. As such, a ponytail would go rather nicely with my newfound rebellious way of life.

I have this image in my mind of long flowing hair down my back and even though I may be thinning slightly at the front, I would portray an air of stately youth much like the members of Status Quo.

Unfortunately my desires and reality are sometimes in disagreement and every time I mentioned my wish to the family I was met with much mirth. The main argument they gave was that to achieve my objective, I required hair, and a lot of it.

Unfazed by their negative responses, I searched for an alternative image makeover. Then it came to me, if I can't have flowing locks to run my hands through I'll have a shinny patch to caress and massage. After all, Yul Brynner was a sex idol so surely that's what will happen to me.

So my Gillette Mk3 did not stop at my sideburn, with a deft stroke it went up, over my head, down the other side and cut the top of my ear. After copious amounts of toilet paper to stop the bleeding, I continued on until no hair was to be seen apart from eyebrows.

Debbie was amused to see me with bits of pink toilet paper stuck to my head and the children went into denial that their father looked like Buddha. The Yul Brynner effect must come in soon.

I then realised that only half the job has been done. The sun did not penetrate where there once was hair and at that moment my head looked like a vanilla ice cream cone. Time to sunbathe.

Having a shaved head has some unexpected consequences. For example, an advantage is, I no longer have to take shampoo to the shower. However my once a month haircut has increased to once every two days and I now have to shave my face regularly otherwise my head starts to look upside down. At the in-between stage of bristle, putting on or taking off a T-shirt turns into a fight as my head is one big piece of Velcro. Looking this sexy is hard work you know.

Now I need to hit the streets and find out if I will be accepted as a Beckham/Brynner sex god or an English football thug.

The results of this social experiment will be in the next edition of *The Towns times*.

## Creepy Crawlies

As the weather is getting warmer, to the delight of Debbie, the local creatures are beginning to surface.

It all started about 8 weeks ago when the crickets began chirping in the early evening. Now this chirping is not the romantic warble often heard in the background of movies, oh no. Take that noise and amplify it to a level that hurts your ears if you stand too close.

Hazel and I went out with her pink fishing net and torch to catch one of these strange insects but they were very well camouflaged. This was very brave of Hazel who I am sure thought she would find a cute fluffy pet. Yesterday I found one in daylight, Hazel was not impressed.



**And they fly**

As I cycled through the grass I disturbed an insect that flew up and landed on the side of a tree. This thing looked like a cricket but bigger, a lot bigger. You could have put a lead and collar on it and called it Dave it was so big.

Then we have what we think is their pupae. Long black slug like creatures that drag along their bodies like a fat caterpillar with all its rear legs pulled off. At least they are slow and you can see them coming.



**Yuk!**

The other day we were all sitting on our patio, okay the bit just outside our awning, when we had a visit from our local lizard. We have seen him on the patio a few times but he usually scampers away. This time we gave chase.

Out came Hazel's pink fishing net and while Debbie ran around on tip toes like the woman in the Tom and Jerry cartoons, we chased and caught the lizard.

Now no one was brave enough to pick Larry (yes I know) up for fear


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of being bitten, but Hazel and I gave him a stroke. It was during this process Larry saw a chink in our armour and shot off for freedom.

Having seen Larry safely enclosed, Debbie had stopped squealing and had sat down; Larry knew which way to run. He headed straight for Debbie and as he got to her feet, he did something remarkable.

As he passed right under Debbie Larry detached his tail. It is his instinct to do this as any chasing prey will go for the detached tail and leave the lizard to escape. However, we were not prepared for the trick up his sleeve.

The tail did not just fall off, oh no, it wiggled like a snake for about 2 minutes. Debbie was beside herself with interest. Like the cartoon woman, she was up on her chair holding up her apron, metaphorically speaking. Hazel went into a state of shock and required some gentle attention whereas James and I found it hilarious.

My only regret is I threw the tail away; otherwise James and I could have had great fun over the next few weeks with Debbie.

We now have a pet. The children got up one morning and found a small snail on the toilet door; it must have come in on one of our shoes.

So now we have Emily Amy Towns with us in her plastic sandwich box. The acronym of Emily's initials was not intentionally created by the children but will amuse the French when she gets bigger.

### We are going, honest!

Our intended departure for Spain announced in the last newsletter did not happen.

Easter in Portugal and Spain is celebrated seriously and everyone heads for the coast.

Hence we could not leave our campsite as the next camp may have been full and other sites increase their charges for the Easter break.

So I bet you are thinking that we will never leave Portugal? Ah ha, dear reader, you are wrong.

We left the week after Easter for Spain, but that story will be covered in newsletter number 7 (and you will find out after the commercial break).

### Bad Good Friday

To show it's not just a UK phenomenon, it rained on the Easter Bank Holiday in Portugal.

They came in their hundreds to the campsite, Dutch, German, Spanish and Portuguese. As soon as the Bank Holiday started it rained. They next day, the sun came out again.

Perhaps there are too many English here.

### IF

James has memorised the poem 'If' by Rudyard Kipling (as in 'If you can keep your head when all about you……' etc.)

He recites it at will and the most amazing thing is Hazel starts to join in.

### Did you know?

The phrase 'In the Bag' is used to describe something that has a certain outcome.

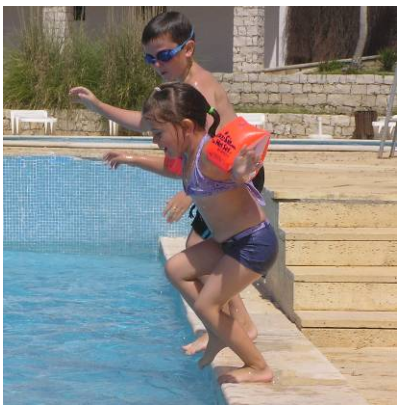
Since the beginning of Parliament all petitions that were successful were placed in a velvet bag on the back of the Speakers chair.

So if it is 'in the bag', it will happen. The bag is still there, although its use has now discontinued.

### Gallery



**Wonderful coastline**



**At last it's warm enough to swim outside**



**Life here is still hard work**



**All of us**



**Best of friends**

All the best,

*Keith, Debbie, James and Hazel.*



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