

300 and not OUT ©

By

Michael Casey

Sorry Cricket Fans, this is a collection of 300 pieces of me, no not a menu for cannibals either. It's a series of easy pieces of me, easy to digest and will make you ask for more, just like Oliver. You can tell by the food references that I'm fat, in fact my Chinese name is Panzi, which means fat fat boy.

I suppose I should say a little about myself, I started writing by accident back in 1987, I had just reached my life's ambition, I had a nice house for myself. So what next, I stumbled into writing, I had been an avid Radio4 listener for 20years, so that meant I had a good start. One year later I knew how to write, The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker was born. I then tried my hand at writing a play, Shoplife a comedy about the death of a store emerged, I wrote it at the time of the Atlanta Olympics. As I write Team GB have 25Golds, and PM Cameron wishes he could weigh down Nick Clegg with a few golds and throw him in the Thames. Normal daily politics.

I try and write funny pieces that'll make you smile, though sometimes there is a serious piece tucked away inside. I am married now with a Shanghai wife and 2 bilingual daughters, so I try and make fun by explaining our Birmingham Adams family life. 300 not out is a collection of my stories from my soon to be dead www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com site, so immortality beacons via 300 and not Out. I hope you like this and my other books which are on Amazon Kindle, just look for the fat fat boy or Panzi.

Cheers, Michael Casey 10th August 2012

Colours Aug 8, '12 6:01 PM

Colours©

By Michael Casey

I don't know about you but I find BBC4 has some really good stuff on it. Today I was catching up on a programme about colour in Art, then tonight I caught the final episode which was really interesting. We all have a favourite colour, mine is blue, not too blue but blue enough, and then there is the Virgin Mary blue that you see on statues of Mary in church. The show on tv explained how the Church wanted to keep a monopoly on the colour, and in fact how only She should be coloured in that blue. So it was heresy for Mary not to be painted in the right colour so to speak. This is the European tradition, for Faiths all over the world I imagine there are and still are rules and so forth, so I'll stick to Europe.

I've always liked paintings, I saved up and bought a few for my walls many years ago before I was married, you know when you don't have to think about children's shoes and so forth, now you think about the colours of the shoes at your daughter's school and not about paintings for your wall, though both my daughters are artists. Colours are Life, they really are, we have the beauty of girls all over the world and the traditions of hair and the colour of clothing, to be honest a girl's smile and eyes are the most important thing in my opinion. Girls being girls like or should I say adore a bit of colour, it really does control men, if you like colour is the bait that gets a girl noticed and a man hooked. Yes I know that sentence may annoy some, but you can write your own essay and let people judge your writing. Colour is soft, colour is cold, colour is warm, it is matched and mixed, and when every aspect of colour comes together it stops the show. How do I know this? I have a Shanghai wife and two daughters, they have taught me! However for me its just the eyes and smile which I look for.

In the tv show it talked about artists' ideas and beliefs, their feelings are so intense, a factor of 100000 compared to you and me, Don McClean's Starry Starry Night explains a lot, even Dr Who when he met Van Gogh, colour means so much. We can hate a colour for many reasons, it may have been your school uniform or your work uniform. I wear rugby shirts a lot, so bright orange with a

polo scene on my Polo is my favourite, I can wear office wear when I have to, but otherwise its big
brash colours for me, on my site and on Facebook you can see my use or abuse of colours.

On the show they talked about architecture and the use of scale and colour, why do dictators like
themselves so much, North Korea has giant statues, Fascists had statues galore and giant imposing
buildings to match their egos. To me it's like the Emperor's New Clothes, we the people should laugh
at those kind of people, their worth and intellect is in inverse proportion to their monuments. In
North Korea the new boss's wife has her fancy handbag worth 1 year's salary compared to the
average person in that country. Laughter should be used to bring those people down.

Banksy leaves graffiti all over the place making a statement about stuff, perhaps he should do a tour
of all these totalitarian places and draw moustaches and chads all over the loved leaders posters.

The trouble with leaders is that they see things in black and white, colours are forbidden.

Food and PandaAug 2, '12 1:33 PM

We've just come back from a family meal at Wing Wah, the one by Wing Yip supermarket. Its' a bit
like doing bingo, you get a list of up to 80 and you tick off what you want to eat. You have a sip of
your drinks while you are waiting. Then wave after wave of food arrives, its more like snacks, very
tasty. Jing Jie, the wife, ordered 11 items, including chicken feet. We did not finish everything so we
took two items home, and Jing Jie ordered half a duck too as take away. All in all good value, and
best of all she paid. I'm all for equality where women pay. We then paid a visit to Costco to get some
books for Annie our daughter, Eve wanted a giant teddy bear, 53inches tall, but we did not get it for
her. You can also get a cheap snack at Costco should the need arise.

I'm also on Facebook, in the vain hope of getting noticed as a writer, hasn't worked yet. There is
another Michael Casey on Facebook, but he is a porter at Heartlands hospital. And to add to the
confusion on Amazon Kindle there is another Michael Casey, but he is a Monk and writes spiritual
texts, so that's not me. I have 4 photos of myself on the covers, those are me.

Cheerio from Birmingham, I'm listening to Usher on the computer as I talk to you, I got a free CD

when I bought some aftershave. Usher is good, I just hope his aftershave is, or I'll give it to the wife instead.

I forgot to say one of our pandas is a bit dizzy, he was looking manky so we popped him in the washing machine, we watched as his face appeared and disappeared as he tried to swim around the washing machine. Panda came out all bright and clean, the white whiter than white and the black all nice and black, Bold really does work. He said he's talk to his cousin Ted about it. Now the panda is sitting on top of a chair with his bum in the air to dry it.

And the Gold Goes to Jul 30, '12 9:06 AM

And The Gold Goes To ©

By Michael Casey

It's the Greatest Show On Earth and after years of being a couch potato its every sports fan's chance to shine. So it's off to the off-licence for crates of Stella Artois and multi-packs of crisps and a load of chocolates. Then there must be pizzas, 20 pizzas to share, no arguing Pepperoni Rules ok? And after all this eating and drinking there must be toilet paper, so a 48 role multi packet from Costco will do the trick, just in case the host's house gives you the squits, at least a full role ready with 3 more ready on the shelf.

So all is ready and you have a spare set of batteries for the Sky remote control, the chairs are in the best position in front of the 42inch lcd tv, cushions are ready and crisps are at hand and 16 cans are ice cold and ready in the fridge. So let the games begin, everything is ready, apart from air freshener and Domestos.

"Pass us a can, and a packet of cheese and onion crisps," you shout before burping and lifting a leg to fart. You flick through the 35 BBC digital channels of sport, technology is great, Elvis used to have banks of TVs you only need one a 42inch lcd tv monster. Pizzas are passed out and faces are decorated with tomato sauce, and the sport has only been on for 30minutes. Then it's time for another can and a visit to the bathroom, the toilet paper is ready, see everything is planned to perfection.

You get down stairs only to discover you've missed your favourite sport, but with 35channels you'll soon catch up. Then disaster strikes, no not a sprain of a crash of athletes, you cannot find the remote so everybody has to stand and search for the remote. Then it's back to the crisps and Stella, but then another disaster, you cannot find the matches to light oven. Somebody has an idea, then you lean over the garden fence with a twisted piece of paper and like an Olympic torch you lead it into the house to light the oven for more pizza.

So welcome to the 2012 London Olympics, your friends and you have already won the Gold for pizza,Stella and laddish behaviour.

Flowers Jul 24, '12 1:07 PM

Flowers ©

By Michael Casey

I was talking to Ana and we got talking about flowers and gardens and such like, I told her to look at www.rightmove.co.uk and enter B67 with a radius of 1 mile, then she could see what Birmingham looked like. As quick as a flash she showed me a house on the site, I told her it was a ten minute walk from my house and that there was a park and then a wood nearby. All a world away from her own homeland, every country has its own treasures.

I told her what my garden looked like, the grass was cut yesterday as it happens, what kind of flowers we have. I forgot to mention our small front garden with roses, fuchsia and pink hydrangea too. Talking to Ana made me think of my mother, she had green fingers all the way up to her elbow, she even left a surprise after her death, white daisies sprung up in my sister's garden weeks after our mother had died, a kiss from Heaven so to speak.

Flowers remind us of loved ones and bring smiles and sometimes tears back, but most of all flowers bring us pleasure. Flowers are given on Mother's Days and Birthdays and on Wedding Anniversaries, and at Funerals too. There is a lot of love connected with flowers, kiss from a rose Seal sings, daisy daisy give me an answer true, if I am remember The Good Old Days correctly. The thing is flowers mean something and flowers mean more to women than men. Flowers are symbols, they are even on some National flags, the humble Shamrock is a symbol of Faith and of a Nation too.

Flowers were used in the English Civil War hundreds of years ago, the War of the Roses , white and red roses, if I'm remembering my History correctly. Flowers have a scent, they are soft to the touch, as soft as a lover's first kiss, flowers hide the stench of death, ring a ring a roses a pocket full of roses means something. Flowers are spread on a wedding bed, a bride's delight with the scent of roses.

Flowers can also be false, a traitor, a trap, hiding behind smiles of love when really it is lust. Me am I all romantic, do I bring flowers for my wife all the time? No never, I never bring flowers, even though I have a painting of red and yellow roses on the wall behind me. No, because she has hay fever.

Saturday with the girls Jul 14, '12 1:22 PM

Took the girls on a mystery walk this afternoon. They had been swimming in the morning, then singing in the afternoon, at a wedding and they got a few quid too. Then it was time for our Saturday afternoon stroll. I had been looking at www.rightmove.co.uk with area B67 and 1 mile radius. So I knew that near my daughter's new school there were some great houses, only 4 times the value of ours, but maybe one day I'll win the lottery. So we went for a walk and the girls tried to guess where we were going. When we got to the top of the main shopping they guessed I was taking them to the new school. I told them it was a mystery, and we walked past the school. The girls said I was in league with the fairies and I was taking them nowhere. I promised a shop and a treat from the shop when we got there. The girls did not believe me. I knew from Google exactly where I was going, I kept on saying keep right on to the end of the road, then keep looking right, they did not believe me at all, more comments about fairies and fairy dust. Finally we arrived and there was 7 shops in a row with a new agents at the end. So we had tip tops from the shop and then headed back. Tip tops are plastic bags full of flavoured ice, if any of you not from UK have never heard of tip tops. I was transported back 45 years. I really enjoyed the tip top, we'd walked 3 miles nearly 5k to reach there. Going back is always faster, so we got back with 10k under our belt, or should I say under our shoes. We did stop off for a lottery ticket, so maybe we can afford to move there IF we win. Now the girls are watching Charlie and The Chocolate Factory for the 10th time, as they eat mint flavoured chocolate. Twilight is on afterwards so we'll watch that together. I hope you all had a good family day today. Michael in a dry for a day Birmingham

Facebook the new Pen Pals Jul 13, '12 6:33 PM

Facebook the new Pen Pals ©

By Michael Casey

I used to have a SW radio and I'd listen to all the foreign stations from all around the world, in English as I'm not multi-lingual, though one of my brothers is, and a very old friend from grammar school too. The quality of the radio reception was truly amazing, I had a 30foot round room antennae made from old electrical wire. I had a schedule and I'd listen religiously to all the programmes, I even got a request on Radio Brazil, and one on radio Switzerland. That was 30years ago and more. I even heard radio Australia. This was before computers and Internet.

People will probably laugh when they hear of SW radio, it was the bees' knees back then, BBC world service is SW radio still. Reaching out, or listening out was very interesting for me. My first radio was a blue plastic radio with a small square battery in it, the kind of battery you have in your 2 smoke alarms. I listened to BBC Radio4 on an old Bush radio for 20years before I tried writing, so you can understand just how important radio was/is to me. Radio brings another dimension to your life, as children we listen under the bedclothes so dad cannot hear. Or we'd save up for an earphone, which went in one ear only, headphones did not exist back then, 1960s what an era to grow up in. We had a white plastic radio for the living room, my dad heard my brother's request on Tony Blackburn, long live Tony Blackburn.

Computers and Internet have changed the ball game. We can speak and see folks all over the world, we broadcast to Ma in Shanghai all the time, MSN messenger does the trick, its all so easy. You'd be burnt as a witch if you predicted all this years ago, but technology does bring all of us together, that is truly wonderful.

Now what about Face Book. It does bring people together, even if Mark Zuckerberg never answers my messages, and has never bought any of my books. Face Book is the modern short wave radio, it brings people together from all over the place, and best of all it's a 2 way communication. So in my case I contact writers in the vain hope that they'll think I'm a great humour writer and tell their agents and hey presto I'll have a 4 book deal and be on Opera telling her about my latest oeuvre,

and I promise I won't jump up and down on the couch, I weight more than a heavyweight boxer.

Another side to FB is the sharing experience, so as I did some Esol English teaching I can give a few tips, share a few websites with people. LearningEnglishWithMrDuncan on UTUBE is a great resource, 150 short lessons with subtitles. Mr Duncan is now working in Shanghai, this amuses me because my mother-in-law could end up as his landlady. I would still like Mark Z to buy my 4 books and tell the world to do the same, then I could live in Palo Alto, and who knows Mark Zuckerberg could be my landlord.

We all just love call centres (c) Jul 12, '12 3:31 PM

We all just love call centres ©

By Michael Casey

We all just love call centres, we all just love it when they call when we've just sat down on the toilet and we're expecting a call from grandma in Shanghai. So the phone rings and we dash for the Andrex and the sink to wash our hands in. Then still pulling up our pants, we fall down stairs just as Norman Wisdom or Brian Rix would do, then pulling up our pants and doing up our trousers' belt we pass by the hall mirror and see the black eye we've just got. We answer the phone, there is a long long pause, as if the call centre guy is having a final drag on his fag before answering, "hi I'm Guy, could I interest you in cable tv, I've got such a great package to offer." his voice oh so so sexy, in his imagination anyway. Has he not heard of Sky, the best package. So we swear in Shanghai dialect, and hang up the phone. Then we notice our trousers are split, the one's grandma in Shanghai had made for us, the trousers for her Panzi, her Fat Fat Boy son in law.

If only we could get revenge, just like in Bruce Almighty. A bottled water company rings, so we click our fingers and its as if the Dam Busters had breached that dam, a sodden girl will NEVER ring your number again. Then there's a knock at your door, its the Mormons, you smile and smile, and they start running away, only asking which way is the airport. Why? Well I'll leave that to your imagination. The phone rings again, so you do heavy breathing, only for a voice at the other end of the phone to say "I'm Sergeant Dixon, would you be interested in joining the neighbourhood watch scheme." "Sorry Wrong Number is your reply." You decide to change, you're half way up the stairs when the phone ring again, you turn and fall down the stairs again. Your wife is just in the door and she answers the phone, she can see you over her shoulder, "I told you you were too fat for those trousers" You trip over again, "bloody call centres is all you can say."

What Uniforms Say About Us Jul 9, '12 8:54 AM

What Uniforms Say About Us ©

By Michael Casey

Our eldest daughter is off to Secondary School in the Autumn, so she has a few taster days at the school, so it won't all be a big surprise when she gets there. The parents are all invited too, so we can see what the school is like and what the school expects of the students. Some say the new school is strict, I just think its like my old Grammar school 40 years ago, so it's good.

The new school had a uniform display and uniform shop so the parents could get ready for the new school term. It's quiet expensive, but we have a younger daughter, so she can have the hand me downs. She is always happy with caste offs, we are lucky to have such a daughter. She's seen the new school and decided she wants to go there too, so all in all a good deal.

Why do we have uniforms, to be uniform is the answer, though I never want to be uniform myself, I want to be me. In schools it's to give an identity, or so the tell us; rich and poor alike look the same, so no envy can show its face. When you follow a football team you buy the strip because you want to look like your "heroes", the fans have a uniform, and a uniform appearance. The players wear a uniform so they don't pass the ball to the wrong player, only to somebody in the same strip. As players they have lots individual traits, lots of different tempers playing together to win the game. When the team is successful the rewards are mind boggling, they have an off the field uniform, made up of Bentleys and bling, and vacuous trophy girlfriends, each with their the same body, the same uniform body.

We have uniforms in other areas of life, such as DHL and other courier people, it's a brand so people know immediately how the man is knocking at their door. The Police have a uniform too, so we all know who the man is walking down the street, we feel protected by his uniform, it gives us reassurance on a Friday night. A priest has a uniform too, the clothes he wears when he says Mass, or the collar with the white bit in the centre instead of a tie. Uniforms help us connect with those who serve us, who protect us, who love us.

My dad had a uniform too, size ten steel toe capped boots, a small leather bag to carry his lunch in,

an old Russian soldier overcoat to keep him warm once he left the warmth of the furnace in Brasshouse Lane. People have to be safe at work so there is a uniform to keep them safe, maybe a harness while they clean the windows on the 30th floor.

Teachers have their uniform too, shirt and tie and maybe a suit trousers and jacket. In my teaching days I wore chinos, blue chinos and a shirt and tie, though away from a classroom I wear rugby shirts, like an orange Polo with a Polo playing scene on it, it's my off duty look. I always wear comfy Clarkes, your feet are important, especially if you stand all day. During my 3 years as a Concierge at CPNEC I was supposed to wear a uniform, I was too fat so I ended up wearing some decent trousers and an almost matching jacket. People always thought I was the manager because I was not in a uniform like the reception crew, I was the silver haired guy, 20 years older than the reception people, so I must be the manager.

Everybody's style is their own uniform, the pants falling off hips is a modern uniform, they want to be individuals but they all end up looking the same. Listening to the same music and wearing baseball caps back to front, holes in jeans, bad haircuts which are good, and bad means good now, it's confusing. Music is a uniform too, all so very same, no never as good as decades before, pick your own decade. Flick through the music channels on Sky and it's all so very samey, yes there are some great new people, Lady Gaga for example, but just how much is the music all the same, so uniform. It's our words that stop us being so uniform, how we speak and what we actually say, and then do. It's when we step out of the uniform that we can make change. If you look at my photo what do you see and what do you think? "He's an old fart, he can't do anything ." You'll have to judge for yourselves, I hope in the end you do realise, I'm not uniform.

Tombstone (c) By Michael Casey Jul 5, '12 10:05 AM

Tombstone (c) By Michael Casey

What do we leave when we leave this life? We leave a wife and grieving children, we leave a few friends. If we have had a long life we don't leave any friends because they have gone before us. All that remains of us is our tombstone, our name etched in gold on a stone.

Some have the job of erecting these stones, what do they think of as they put the stones in place? Do they think of the poor dead person lying dead below in the grass. Do the tombstone installers think of the lives gone before? Do they think of how old or young the deceased are. That man was the same age as me, or whatever?

The words chosen can reveal a little about the deceased. He was a dad, he was an uncle, he was a man without a name. He was the unknown soldier. She was a Jane Doe with nobody to mourn her, she had lain in a fridge for 6 months and now finally she was buried. Nobody came to her funeral, just old Mrs Casey who hitched a ride with the priest so the dead were not buried all alone. A stranger saying a pray for the unloved.

Tombstones are not always sad. Spike Milligan had "I told you I was unwell" etched on his stone, written in Gaelic so not to offend English speakers. My own Chinese dad, my father in law his stone is all black marble with gold writing in Mandarin, but also on it is one small piece of English "MichaelgCasey" it's almost as if my email address is on his tombstone, has the Internet reached Eternity? No, but it has reached one small corner of a Shanghai graveyard.

From a Father to a Daughter Jul 2, '12 6:47 PM

From a Father to a Daughter ©

By Michael Casey

We took our small daughter swimming today, Monday is her day and Saturday is her big sister's. As me and big sister watched the swimming we talked about the future, Secondary school. My daughter wanted to know what exactly Physics was, and could I help her with the Maths once she started secondary school. I promised to do my best but now it was a long time since I was at school. I told her she could do anything she liked, she could be an architect or a designer, I mentioned the Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing; here was a great design that was world famous, she was ½ Chinese after all so who knows what great things she could achieve. I don't believe girls are restricted in their career or life path, in fact I do believe that girls are best.

I explained how it was when I was at grammar school, I was the 3rd brother in the same grammar school, GD as we called it. I said how we had some really clever people in my class, one Dr Peter as still a friend after 40years, I hoped she could make friends that would last a lifetime. I have told her to make friends especially with those who can help her with her weakest subjects, be honest and open about it, they can help each other, a trade if you like.

I explained that technique can beat brains, the chicken and the hare I miss said, it's the tortoise and the hare, in the swimming baths they have a giant turtle on the wall as big as a bus. My big daughter has loads of technique, she has a great work ethos, she works so hard she could be a Protestant. Clever people can get lazy or bored, that's when the technique of the worker beats them. My girl has beat the Maths wiz in her class because of her technique, so the little boy is cross, he is not the winner any more. I told her how her uncles used to stop up past Midnight that's why they went to the best Universities in the world.

In two days time she will have an induction lesson at her new school, then in the evening we all go up to say hello and buy the school uniform. At home, the family home we have a photo over 35years old on the wall, its of my sister in her old grammar school uniform, so I will recreate that photo and give the photo to my sister so she can put it on her wall.

Perspective Jun 26, '12 12:51 PM

Perspective ©

By Michael Casey

We were walking home after school and we decided to take another road instead of our usual one, it's a quieter road and it's a curvy road. What this did was change our perspective when we hit the main road again. In fact my daughter couldn't recognise our street because of our view, we were higher and looking down at our street, the trees framed it, so it looked prettier than the normal view. I suppose every street has a good end and a bad end, we are at the good end I suppose and the bad end is the route to and from school. You could live your life and never see the other end of your street because you always take one route and never another, the quickest route to the bus stop or the shops.

As a non-driver I take a smaller amount of routes, because I'm on foot or I'm on the bus, so when the wife drives me places it's a different perspective. Birmingham does have a good bus service so I get where I need to go without discovering too many different roads. Back streets stay off my radar, though I do go walkabout and enjoy our local woods and I dream about being able to live just besides the woods, I even have a name for a dog, Subway the dog will be our dog if ever I sell some books. I will enjoy daily walks in the woods with Subway, though its more likely I'd winn the lottery first, which means it'll probably never happen, but dreams are dreams.

Perspective is a thing we have in life too, having a Shanghai wife has changed my perspective, a whole new world has opened up, I have an Eastern eye now. Having two daughters does change your perspective too, Disney Channel and girly tv, not to mention Fashion and girls knickers cluttering up the bathroom. This reminds me when I make some money I want my own bathroom too, a male only bathroom, with no lotions and potions in my way. The girls are far too young to shave, but I don't want to share my razor with leg shaving girls in the future.

A tragedy is a very swift changer of Perspective, if only we knew this, if only we knew that, I would never have said this if I knew. Augustinian thinking talks about putting the other person's shoes on, I didn't learn this, it was part of a sermon I once heard at Saint Mary's. Having an awareness for

others' views or feelings before blundering in, this is a mark of sensitive thinking. Lads may laugh and say you are "soft" but girls like the softer side, and the "drippy" one may end up with the Belle. In Tears for A Butcher the drippy lads will get the twin Belles, why will I write it that way, because I want to highlight what is truly best. So a man with a stammer and a man with a limp will get the two Princesses, these two blokes are the real men, not mouthy ignorant types that you see on Reality tv, its all about seeing Perspective after all.

Crockery or Cups and Saucers to You and Me Jun 19, '12 8:21 AM

Crockery or Cups and Saucers to You and Me ©

By Michael Casey

A cup, a glass, a mug. What do you drink from? I have a mug with a cat on the front with a mouse on its head, on the back is a reverse view. It's in a saucer like thing that came from a fancy mug, its either used as a saucer or you put it on top to keep your tea warm, so really it's a lid that I use as a saucer.

Why do I ask you this? Well what we drink from or how we describe it denotes our Class or how we see ourselves. Politicians leaving with a mug of tea in their hands is a load of rubbish, its pretentious and I know I just say "I hope he spills it on himself the silly man" We used to have decent cups for visitors, and mum would say, "don't give him one with a chip in", all those years ago. The Royal Wedding, the Charles and Di one, led to mugs plastered with their picture. We had a cousin visit from Cork, he remarked that his kids would love one, so my mum emptied the dresser of the cups, mugs I mean. He had 6 kids so six mugs went back to Cork, you couldn't miss out any of his children. A visiting priest would get a cup and saucer, now that is posh, anybody else would get a mug, this was way back in the past. You'd have a sideboard in your middle room and the best crockery came out on important occasions, such as Christmas. We'd have a sugar bowl too that made an appearance at Christmas as well. Plates with fancy patterns and the plates had a design on the edge, so they weren't exactly circular, they may have even had gold on them. A bottle of port was also in that cupboard and it came out on special occasions, that one bottle of port may have lasted 7 years. I was still living at home when I came across a fancy crockery set, the love bird Chinese design on it. I bought it for a fiver of a tenner in West Brom. Six of everything, cups, saucers, plates, side plates, and bowls. I told my mum the next person to get married in the family could have it. So it gathered dust in the sideboard in our middle room, we never had a lounge or dining room. We had front, middle and living room, no fancy names for us. The years moved on and nobody else got married, we all ended up marrying in our forties. So I took the fancy crockery to my new home, the Chinese love birds design in blue, years later I married a Shanghai girl....

What you have in the dresser can say a lot about a family, how many in the family for example. I remember 40 years ago and more my brother was looking for something, he thought it was on top of the dresser in an old, very small kitchen before the extension. He climbed up and leant on the indoor washing line we had across the kitchen, CRASH. The dresser fell over and everything was smashed, cups and saucers and plates the lot, we could have been a Greek family celebrating by smashing the crockery. Dad came home and he had to go back out again to Malcolm's on the Dudley Rd to replace everything. Dad returned with thick, really thick plates that might be strong enough to celebrate any Greek like celebrations.

In my kitchen cabinet I still have some of the Chinese love bird crockery, I even have some fancy thin plates with gold pattern on. I have my sister's left overs, crockery not food that is. Now I have my own family things do wear out, you also get fireworks in your microwave. Gold pattern plates don't mix with microwaves, it's like lightning in the microwave. We have a lot of mugs too, Easter eggs in mugs means we have a new mug once the chocolate is eaten.

What about fine dining, we see all the cookery shows on tv, and we see fancy people all dressed up with all the knives and forks in front of them. I think you start from the outside and work your way inwards, though if anybody thinks to invite me, they should know this I eat with a fork in my right hand, so the crockery needs to be the other way around.

One Dimensional Jun 16, '12 5:57 PM

One Dimensional ©

By Michael Casey

One Dimensional, what does that mean to you? To me it's when you come across somebody or thing that is flat. No personality, no comprehending of anything other than itself. You may meet a maths geek, who can even get a PhD in maths very early in his/her life, but do they know anything else? Do they know about History or Art or Music, or about anybody else's Faith or belief? Do they even care for anything else, are they stuck in a rut. It really saddens me when you meet such a person, that person is only half a person. Their parents may be proud parents and he is even the joy of the village, but really the "genius" is just 1/2 a person. Think back to Good Will Hunting, the genius in the end throws it all away so he can chase after his girl and find love. I support that view entirely, I've heard of somebody like that who was lost, all alone, a prisoner in his own mind. I remind my girls they should have lots of different things in their lives, be observant, watch and observe life all around them. They may make it as writers where I have not so far. Life is Lego, you mix and match experiences and friends and things to build something new, then you take it apart and make something else. With one friend we are like this, with another we are like that. If we drink we may be more relaxed or we may just be terrible and chase the girls and get our faces slapped or get beaten up by husbands and boyfriends. Life is a mixture of happy and sad or even tragic events, it shapes us or moulds us. We are not rock, we are like sponges that soak up life's events. I hope I'm never called One Dimensional, with the size of my chest and belly that will never happen. I know a man who travelled all around the world, he came back to our company and he was exactly the same as before he left, dull. I'm not asking people to deny what they are, to abandon their faith or their loves, or what they are good at and enjoy. I just want people to see the world with bigger eyes, to talk to walk, to sing and shout, not just to smirk when they have a PhD in maths at 17 years old. Go and do something different, experience more of the world, you cannot make love to a calculator. You can travel in your mind and you can be a writer, you can touch people with your words, you can bring them hope, you can bring solace. Just be more than One Dimension.

Growing Up For Dads Jun 12, '12 5:28 PM

Growing Up For Dads ©

By Michael Casey

Does anybody remember Algebra? My daughter is doing lots of maths and she asks me to help. Arithmetic I can do and I remember getting 4 of the best on my behind by the teacher with a pump, for not knowing my times tables. Next time he asked I knew them. I was 8 at the time. I did do my Maths exam one year early along with English but that's a long time ago. My wife was a toddler then, I do have a young wife. But its at the edge of my memory when I am asked questions by my daughter. She moves to 2ndary school in September and having an 11year old in the house is amazing. And it only feels like seconds ago when she was born in the middle of the night. So time and tide and algebra waits for no man. Arithmetic is spontaneous, I don't even know just how do I know the answers. I just do, and that's great because I can help my daughter. She looks exactly like me, a I look at her face its like looking into a magical looking glass and I'm seeing myself as a child, though she is a feminine version of myself. So I have grown older with silver hair, a sign of wisdom I hope, but in her face I see the future again. I hope I'll be of use as she progresses through 2ndary school. I had to visit the school today to fill a few forms in, I walked it so I could tell her just how much time she'd need to get there. I ended up walking 5miles or 8 k today, good for my fat belly no doubt. I was able to answer questions on Quakers and The Society Of Friends, I was even able to tell her that Dame Judy Dench, M, James Bond's boss was a Quaker. So I'm not totally useless after all.

Look in the mirror and what do you see? Jun 8, '12 3:12 PM

Look in the mirror and what do you see? ©

By Michael Casey

Looking in the mirror what do you see?

Do you see yourself looking back at you?

Do you see grey hairs or are you still black?

Do you see yourself pretty and young?

Are you 20 or 30 or 40 or more?

Does a mirror show your age or just your rage?

Does your bust stand proud, or has it sagged?

Does your stumble look white, are you balding and white?

Is your hair receding to match your pot belly?

Does your corset hold everything in?

Do younger men still look at you, are you still young enough to
blush?

When you look into your eyes are you sad and grey?

Have the lights gone out in your eyes?

Or is there a glint, a bit of mischief too?

Or are your eyes sad and lonely, all hope gone?

When the kids come home do you dispare?

Or is there joy and life in your eyes and heart?

Does a kiss make you want to hold her tight and ask for more?

Is your spirit like a leaf blowing across Autumn skies?

Does your spirit reach for the sky?

When you finish putting on a tie and you look into the mirror to
see if it is straight, do you smile or do you frown?

The eyes are the mirror of the soul, so be you man or be you
woman let the lights flicker in the mirror of your soul.

From Bedworth to Bookshelf and Beyond Jun 5, '12 7:04 PM

From Bedworth to Bookshelf and Beyond©

By Michael Casey

The title sounds like a Buzz Light Year saying in Toy Story but its not. I'm just wondering why when I Google stuff it keeps on popping up and saying I'm in Bedworth when I'm always in Birmingham. Any offers? Am I a botneck or whatever where your computer gets taken over? I don't think so, and its not all the time, its just irritating. I have antivirus and so forth, so why oh why does Google say I'm in Bedworth.

Perhaps there's a GCHQ in Bedworth, perhaps they have an interest in my writing. But michaelgcasey.wordpress.com has all my stuff on it, and I annoy Daily Telegraph readers by posting there and on Facebook too. So why Bedworth, can't they wait to read my bi-weekly posts?

I also stumbled on something during my regular random Google searches, don't do a writing course, just write. A famous SciFi writer is quoted as saying that, I've never heard of him myself, but he's never heard of me. I think if you haven't got an imagination no amount of courses can give you one. As for style, that just makes me sick, people are all taught to write with the same style, the teacher's style. Watch some American tv and read a little, and see how the style is all the same, I'm not just talking about writing but about reporters reporting style. They all sound like undertakers with a death wish, "hey man be happy you are still alive" I want to shout at them.

So you write and you put 4 books on Amazon Kindle, you have 300unique blogs on your site, but you don't make a bean. Why is this? Because the only people who make money are those writers who cannot write and just write writers self help books. Or coffee table books written by Z listers boasting about their sex lives with Y listers, so of course they sell 2,000,000 copies. Though 1,000,000 copies are remaindered, and you can buy the 20quid opus for a fiver in the Works.

Perhaps I should write a sex on the coffee table book, which would sell 3,000,000 copies, but that would be too boring to write. Perhaps I should go on the after dinner speaking circuit, I could warm up the audience for Tony Blair or George Bush, I'd do an hour and get 100quid, they do 30mins and get 20,000. My speech would be funnier but nobody would come for me, I'm just the warm up man,

but at least I'd get a great free dinner.

See its nice to dream, I hope it proves I have an imagination, which might mean I should be a writer after all.

Ad Skipper - Life Skipper May 29, '12 1:30 PM

Ad Skipper – Life Skipper ©

By Michael Casey

I read in the news that Dish TV wanted to skip the ads in the tv it bought for its viewers, really its trying to get a discount from Fox, but this is their bargaining ploy. They have a machine that will skip the ads, now as in all things American its in the hands of the lawyers.

We have a Sky+ box at home and we use it to skip the ads, we record a lot of tv so that we as a family can watch it at a later date. A one hour show is really 50mins, we skip the ads when we watch the show at a later date, its fun watching ads at x30 when we are skipping back to Glee, skipping and Glee do go together, don't forget the 90min show in 3 days time. Films not on the BBC can have 20mins of ads in the middle or at the end when the film has really finished but the next show has not started. So perhaps Dish subscribers should just watch everything an hour later and then use a Sky+ box or equivalent to avoid the ads. With the US Election in full swing that in itself is a good reason to time shift.

But what if you could Life Shift or Life Skip, what would you avoid? Would you fast forward past your first broken heart, fast forward through the month of tears, a month of cuddling up to your old teddy bear, fast forward calling all men "BASTARDS" or all women "WHORES"? Would you fast forward past all the comfort eating, the days of not shaving and not caring, the days of tears? What about when your pet gerbil died and it was buried with full honours in an old shoebox in the garden, you had plucked a few rose petals and thrown them over its grave. In the night you hear the foxes in your garden and your beloved gerbil had become their take away or rather dig up and take away. Would you skip your first bump on your brand new car, a 10 year old mini, your pride and joy, you spent days polishing it, and then you had a run in with old Mr Jones a 85 year old, and it was your fault. These are the events that mark us, the events we wish never happened, your mum says it'll all come out in the wash, and all you want to do is drown yourself, in the bath. Instead you compromise and drown your sorrows and then get done for drink driving on your way home from the pub, you get banned for a year and have to sell your car.

If there was a machine just to edit out the bad parts of our lives that would sell. We'd all have perfect lives, we'd all be like Hello Magazine people, perfect just perfect. No beer bellies and 5 days worth of growth and not enough deodorant, we'd be perfect just like Prom Kings and Queens in Glee.

Do we learn from the bad bits, the unedited bits of our lives, the slow and painful bits, the embarrassing bits that seem to last forever? I've had more than my fair share of less than perfect times, learning the hard way is the best way, even though at the time I wished it was over. There is a Shakespearean sonnet where he speaks of the value of a good friend or partner who will stick with you through thick and thin, a bit like wedding vows, for richer for poorer etc. You DO know who your friends are when things get sticky, we cannot fast forward real life, only tv can be fast forwarded. That's why art imitates life, and not the other way around.

Pens and Penmanship May 23, '12 11:22 AM

Pens and Penmanship ©

By Michael Casey

I just read a piece in the BBC magazine online, it was all about fountain pens. Now I immediately have to confess my writing is terrible, and no I'm not pretending, as far back as 40 years ago at grammar school I was told off for it. In fact I was told off in Primary school too, they even got me to write a few rows of "a" and of "b" and so on, it failed to improve my writing, I was a massive reader at the time, for one year I was practically left alone to read, perhaps it was then that my writing died. In grammar school my friends said my writing was like drunken spiders, or in today's world my writing is like spiders on acid. So there you have it, my writing is bad, very bad. So bad perhaps I should be a doctor.

Once you have bad hand writing people take the mick when you tell them you are a writer, as did the nice lady from the neighbourhood office a couple of weeks ago when my daughter went to collect a prize for drawing. Both my daughters draw and paint, they are very very good at it, they have a collection of 700 crayons and paints and pencils, not to mention felts and gel pens and all things that can make marks on paper. My daughters always need more, so that's dad's job to provide more artists material. I am of course very jealous of their skills, if I bit the top off my thumb and used that to sign my name that would be an improvement on my signature.

So what can a writer who cannot write do? He can type, I remember learning to type in 1978, I stood at the bus stop moving my fingers and trying to remember the qwerty keyboard. Now I'm a fast typist, when I'm writing my stuff, I'm not so fast as a copy typist, nothing is more boring than typing up somebody else's stuff. I remember one of the more mature ladies at the law firm who said "I was once clocked at 100wpm" and so she was, and that why one of the partners gave her two crates of champagne as a personal thank you for her typing, at that speed the paper would catch fire no doubt, if we still used the old typewriters.

So how can this writer improve his writing? I use different fonts on Word, and hope people like the look, looks do make a difference. If I can give a silly example, the ASDA near us uses a big bold font,

but the size is too small and the letters touch other. This means to my eyes it's terrible, and that's the only complaint I have about the store, but I'm sure if any ASDA people read this they may change it. A sign encourages us to buy or to laugh, when we leave stuff out in the entry for Sky Burial I leave a note encouraging people to take our junk away. "Sit on Me" for a chair, and "sleep with me" for a bed, as I look out the window our gay neighbours are getting a new bed.

We get loads of junk email, if we had an open fire we'd never need to buy fuel, we'd just toast our bread on junk mail. Junk mail tries to look appealing and is printed on glossy paper, glossy paper is very heavy as I can remember when I carried bags at CPNEC, homes abroad salesmen had cases and cases of the stuff. So writing and communicating all needs words, good words from a writer, but how those words are written and displayed has a massive impact, ask any politician. When contracts are signed it's done on quality paper that is bound together with a heat bind seal, and it'll be a red seal if the contact is for Chinese clients, I know I've done 1000s. So presentation is king, you don't want "thank you for your pieces of paper" when you send stuff to a publisher, and yes 25 years ago I did get that putdown. I hope you are all enjoying this Bookman Old Style, but I know just how important type setting is, another putdown a really good snide one was when I was turned down for a job and the HR lady replied in flowery type face and yes I do know her name.

All I can say is thank God for word processors, 1988 was the year I bought an Atari520 just for the word processor and it was very very expensive, it did play a big part in my life, I had Shoplife accepted by a theatre, I wrote it in Aug 1988 when the Olympics were on. Yes I'd love to be able to write, but I can write but not handwrite, so I hope any future readers will accept a rubber stamp when I do any book signings, my daughters will be on hand to draw a cartoon on each book.

Alternative Swearing May 15, '12 12:29 PM

Alternative Swearing ©

By Michael Casey

Swearing is the norm nowadays, but if it defuses anger and prevents physical violence then I'd say it's a good thing, it's a safety valve. In the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe "Belgium" was the worse thing that could be said. Nowadays everybody swears in films, American TV is very strict so that when it comes to films all the swears that could not be said on tv are said on film. I remember watching Saturday Night Fever when it first came out and thinking they don't need all this swearing, and later the film was edited so that it got a lower certification and more people could enjoy John Travolta, as you all know I am Birmingham's answer to John Travolta.

Now how do we prevent the air going blue, so that the ladies don't blush and aren't offended by all the language. I was talking to Bernard Manning the other day, well in my imagination anyway, and he gave me loads of ideas, as did Lennie Bruce, they share a cloud together in Heaven, it's a blue cloud of course. You aren't calling me a "flowering petal" are you? I'll be very angry if you are, "you're just a custard cream anyway" Now don't look at me with that tone of voice or I'll "dip your biscuit in my tea" and there won't be any "sugar in it either" Are you calling me a "Politician, take it back you table you" ok, so we've all calmed down a bit.

"Politician" is the rudest word of all in the alternative swearing dictionary, though don't broadcast this but I was once called "A lollypop lady", I nearly used a "liquorice" on the person who called me it. Our local MP is a bit of a "custard pie" it must be true it's written on all the bus shelters. Tell me why he is a custard pie, that I cannot deny, he really IS a custard pie. What do politicians, real politicians call themselves? Honest as the day is long is what politicians call themselves, but in reply the press corps call them "A bunch of Daylight Savings, fiddling with the minute hands" which sounds about right. Just a moment I can hear my phone ringing, no not another metaphor, my phone really is ringing.

I'm a bit flustered, that phone call was the worst I've ever had in my life, an hour of heavy breathing, then the lady called me, I can't bring myself to repeat what she said, it was so shocking, an hour of heavy breathing from a lady I can handle, but she just called me a "political WRITER".

Bring Back Barter May 10, '12 1:39 PM

Bring Back Barter © By Michael Casey

Should we bring back barter? I got an ad for something a few mins ago, so I offered to trade my 4 books for some nice Adobe software. Could I write a poem for a loaf of bread and some shopping. Could I pose as a George Clooney lookalike in exchange for some orange juice, and I do love my orange juice. Could I hop 100 yards in exchange for some vegetables or stand on my head for a bottle of milk. Should I wear my clown hat in exchange for a nice Jorg Gray watch, the nice blue hands one on Amazon, President Obama has one but the one I like is cheaper, 84 quid. Should I sit on the wall outside my house and tell stories, I was once called Jackanory when I was at a law firm, no I'm no lawyer. Would people leave scraps in a bowl for me, would I earn coins and maybe notes, food of all kinds as a reward for being a modern fool. Would Prince Charles say "off with his head", would I be thrown into a dungeon, would I be chained to a wall till my beard was 10 feet long and my nails were long and curly. Would people come and mock me in the dungeon. Or would I just be ignored, the fool on a hill, and I do live on a hill. Who knows or do I have a talent to amuse, just as a book on Noel Coward was called. Maybe I'll be famous when I'm dead, and no don't send a hitman to get me, my girls need me, if only to get the bike out from the shed.

Waiting May 7, '12 9:23 AM

Waiting ©

By Michael Casey

Waiting, we all wait, for this for that and for anything else in between; we may have even suffered Waiting For Godot while at grammar school, which is ten times worse than double Latin on a Friday afternoon, two hours of Latin, I know I was that man. Waiting they say is good for the soul, wait for your exam results, wait for the bus to come, waiting for the girl to give in. All sorts of waiting, each of which brings out all sorts of emotions, how could waiting have so much power over us? Are we impatient? Do we want things now, are we the now generation?

We are the Internet Generation, my girls ask me questions and I try my best but if I don't know I direct them to Google, "dad you are our Google" is what they say, as usually I do have some answer. Waiting for the postman to bring news from some foreign field, each letter treasured, then one day it's not a letter but a telegram, a dreaded telegram, a telegram means death. Sadly all over the world this is still what's going on, death in a letter, then waiting for the pension, waiting waiting waiting; sons can go to war but their sacrifice is not recognised, their wives and kids can wait and wait and wait until finally the pension letter arrives. Why did they have to die?

Is something better if you have had to wait? True love, sex, that car, that house, that job, does it taste sweeter if you have had to wait? I remember my cousin's wife telling me that her husband really treasured their children as marriage and family came late to him, so he loved them all the more. Perhaps fifteen years later, "the urge" as they call it in County Kerry came knocking on my door, waiting was over I have a family myself, my Irish cousins say I got all my luck in one go, the waiting was over, I have a family, a Shanghai wife and 2 daughters. Now I am forever waiting for them, 3 girls in the house is fun, but you wait a lot for them, waiting while they change or comb their hair, what's the nursery rhyme? Dan Dan washed his face in the frying pan, combed his hair with a leg of a chair? Well that's me, but my 3 girls, I'm forever waiting, but at least it's not as bad as Waiting for Godot.

A Rainy Saturday Apr 28, '12 2:19 PM

A Rainy Saturday ©

By Michael Casey

It's another rainy April day, mum is out for the day so I'm left with the girls. So we can catch up with our films on the Sky+ box, we watch Charlie's Angels together, it's very funny with lots of tongue in cheek humour, one or two jokes for the grown ups too. We like the kung fu too, we are a Shanghai/Birmingham family after all.

My big daughter is mad for pencils, so she persuades me to order a propelling pencil set, she uses it to draw with too. When you have an artist in the family you have to have the right kind of pencil, the fact that she has 500 pens, pencils and crayons already does not matter, she must have the latest one. She was given 10 new pencils the other day by somebody we met while we were sheltering from the rain, but that was not what she needed, she always "needs" the exact thing she wants. She is a great sketcher though.

As for her small sister, she was upstairs near her beloved dolls house, it now has two bright plastic chimneys, red and blue, old building blocks were added to make her dolls house more distinctive. I shout up the stairs reminding her to read too, I ask what page she's starting from so I can gauge if she is doing enough reading. She does 70 pages plus in a day, she's a very fast reader. Now that she has mastered all her times tables I am a happy dad, the 8s were the hardest, I reminded her I was beaten by the teacher, so I got mine right the 2nd time he asked me, which was an incentive for her. Piano practice was also part of the day, my big daughter can play a little, but she and her smaller sister need to practice practice practice. The piano will be a good investment IF in the end they can both play, we did get a letter from my big daughter's new secondary school offered music lessons and instrument lessons; we are lucky though because Betty from the choir gives them singing and music tuition, all this means is that they are better at the piano thanks to Betty. Perhaps I should nominate Betty for an OBE or something, along with the lollypop lady.

The girls have both retreated upstairs so they must be making stuff or drawing, I do know when to switch the tv off and to switch the computer off too, a balance between fun and creative arts is a

must to my way of thinking. I don't need Dr Spock's book, didn't he say he was wrong years later anyway? I have to finish now, my big daughter says she wants to write a story. We'll turn into a family of writers, now that would make all my dreams come true.

Data Mining Apr 27, '12 1:32 PM

Data Mining ©

By Michael Casey

So you look on line and you buy a great new watch, say its automatic, that's one of my weaknesses, I just love watches. I should say that I had 20 watches in 20 years as I was always carrying boxes around computer rooms or print rooms. Once the glass fell out of a watch so I glues it back, only I glues the second and hour hands together, I wrote about it in The Watch and Me which you can find on my site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Though today I want to talk about Data Mining, you know where you are offered something free, but you end up paying through the nose, or rather you are led by the nose, like an old bull because you've fallen for their bull. Win a free ipod or whatever, but then you have to join this or join that. If you're stupid enough to fall for it you then have to provide information. Your name and age and date of birth, where you live, your salary bracket, how many kids you have and so forth. I get 20 plus emails a day, junk emails that is, I am on Funny or Die so folks over there must feed in my email so I get all sorts of rubbish from USA. Be a proctologist, be a F16 pilot, join the KKK family discount available, pay \$300 and away you go. Respect ME and we can steal \$15,000,000 from Sierra Leone just email me at my private email, it's probably a jail, and we'll be millionaires together, just send 1000USD to cover expenses. The expenses are cheap whores, recommended by the Secret Service, so they must be good.

Surveys online are another way to data mine, then you get thousands of junk emails, I know, I get them all the time. When you buy things they ask for too much information, just so they can sell you more stuff, or just collect 1,000,000 email addresses and sell them to marketing people. It's too much, Big Brother 1984, has anybody read that book, I did at grammar school. I always say I'm 100 years old and live at the Vatican, and that I'm a Pagan. But the data miners persist, they want to know your weight, your height, your inside leg measurement, I even hear that they want a blood sample, a hair sample, a sperm sample too, does my photo look so good that people want to breed from me? Just tell them to go away that's what I say.

Stuffing Tony Apr 25, '12 9:58 AM

Stuffing Tony©

By Michael Casey

Stuffing Tony, what am I talking about, no not our tame turkey whom we've decided to eat, nor anything else. Tony is in fact a soft toy, he's my small daughter's favourite, the one she loves the most. He's a white tiger, he was in fact he was her sister's Birthday tiger from a few years ago, but she cried until she owned him. Tony is a very washed out bleached kind of tiger. Tony has been through the washing machine a couple of times, he was very very dizzy when he came out.

Yesterday Tony got a brother, his brother is a ginger tinger, now christened Ginger. Ginger makes us laugher because Ginger is how English people call my wife if they cannot pronounce her Chinese name.

Tony is one of 40 stuffed toys the girls have, they live up a corner behind the sofa which is just behind me. They are allowed out to form a class when my small daughter plays teacher, afterways they climb back into their Iceland bags and go to sleep. There is a problem with Tony though, he's lived in the fast lane and lost a lot of weight. So following strict instructions, today I have done a stuffing transplant, which is like a heart transplant but much more important and dangerous. Today without any sedative I have made Loony Chick donate some stuffing to Tony. I took the scissors and make an incision in Loony Chick's behind, I then proceeded to remove the stuffing. I had previously made an incision in Tony's neck at the back, it was then a process of removing from Loony Chick and stuffing Tony.

The whole procedure lasted 20mins, Tony now looks very plumped up and proud, as the leader of the pride should look. As for Loony Chick, he, she or should I say it now looks as if he'd had a few dodgy kebabs, very slim, but at least the head still looks plump. When the girls come home from school we'll decide what to do with Loony Chick, should we stuff him with chopped up old clothes, or bubble wrap? Or should he face the death sentence and be sent to a Charity shop, I know it sounds cruel, but since he came back from Shanghai in 2009 he'd mainly been a cushion.

These are the very serious things a modern parent has to deal with, luckily I know how to sew, and I

have a special relationship with all the toys. Now that Tony is full and looks like a weightlifting Tiger I hope Ginger won't be jealous, otherwise one of them may have to end up in a zoo, or the closest equivalent, in one of the 13 charity shops near our house.

Internet Window Shopping Apr 19, '12 8:22 AM

Internet Window Shopping ©

By Michael Casey

Well the Internet really is such a joy, I know this to be true, I also know it really is a great for window shopping. If you're stuck at home for any reason you can still go shopping, or window shopping just for fun. We have Internet at home for 12 years now. At first I just had a blue Sky Keyboard, it's probably a modern antique now, but with having a Shanghai wife we graduated to a computer, you have to talk to mum after all.

Now Internet lets your fingers do the walking, just like the Yellow Pages adverts of old. There are major pitfalls though, you can melt the plastic, and you can end up buying junk at the wrong price. I know of somebody who was addicted to Internet shopping, spending their lunch breaks buying stuff and then filling their house till they couldn't move with heavy oak furniture to take one example. Then you have to put it back on Ebay to get rid of the stuff again, sometimes making a loss. So you need to be careful.

How do you go about Internet shopping? You do it slowly and you must stay within budget, yes there are bargains, Christmas trees at Easter and such like. Buy your winter coat in the summer or spring, I am actually waiting for winter coat to be delivered as I speak to you, Sierra Trading Post is a good place for stuff, as is Cotton Traders. The whole world is your oyster so take it easy and enjoy the Internet experience, you could even invite a few friends over of coffee and cake, make an afternoon of it. Go to the old people's home and rig up the computer with a large screen or us the tv in the day room as a monitor. Then you can begin.

Ok, who wants what? Get the sizes and narrow down what you are after, the Internet is like a supermarket with traps, not sweets and gum by the checkout, but other ways to make you spend more. Previous users also looked at this and that, you even get emails saying they spotted what you were looking at last time so would you like this. If you are looking for extra large thermal knickers, then enter that as a Google search and you are off. I did actually find a place that does do big warm knickers, ask my neighbour he's seen our washing line. Open a few windows/tabs and compare

winter socks or tvs or whatever you are after, beware though there is rubbish and cons galore on the Internet.

Recommendations are best when surfing the web, where surfing came from I do not know, window shopping is a nicer word. So you've found your stuff, or the friends have all come over and the sandwiches are finished, so all you have to do is to give your credit card details, then sit back and wait for the courier to come. Now you can go window shopping in earnest, you'd always love to live where the rich people live so you can go to rightmove.co.uk and enter a postcode then you can peek inside through the curtains at other people's homes. You will all be impressed or laugh at what other folks have in their houses, then if you like a particular house you can save the photo as your own desktop background. I have one very nice house as my desktop background, its near where our daughter will go to her secondary school in the Autumn, its only worth 4 times what our house is worth, does anybody have any good numbers for the lottery?

Once you've found your new home, assuming you do eventually win the lottery, then you can furniture your dream house from the Internet. You can pick furniture and fittings, large screen tvs, family size fridges and so on, Indesit is my own favourite fridge, self -defrosting too. Beds are important so you can pick your Lecco beds, and go on Utube to see videos of beds and mattresses and all kinds of everything. You can decide what kind of garden furniture you want, pick plants and shrubs for your dream home, plant a cherry blossom tree in a corner. All this can be done through the Internet. You can also cut and paste everything into a word document, so your castles in the air have a soft landing in a scrap book.

Well my courier has not arrived yet, but I hope you all get what you need, don't forget to send me some good lottery numbers too!

All Things Bright and Beautiful Apr 17, '12 7:47 AM

All Things Bright and Beautiful ©

By Michael Casey

I haven't written a non-pain piece in a while, so I'll try and forget the pain and write something new. We've just had the half time holidays and my girls have been playing "shop girls" as they call it. They even have a sign on their bedroom door saying "open" or "closed". They steal my wife's clothes and prance about upstairs. Our eldest daughter has bigger feet than my wife now so that's a relief as she cannot steal my wife's shoes any more, but it does not prevent her younger sister from wearing mum's shoes. There is also the matter of the beret with silver sequins, that's an absolute Fashion Must.

Me, I'm not fashionable at all, three girls in the house is enough, if I gave in to them they'd be beading my eye brows, I do wear pink on occasions, so that's as far as I go. If I were maybe 3 stones lighter I'd try other things, I did see a nice cord jacket in Cotton Traders 48R, it was bright blue, Kingfisher Blue, my girls called it a "Clown Jacket". With encouragement like that what am I supposed to do? I did say if I win Euromillions I WILL buy the jacket. My wife has a nice light brown one, although as she is a woman there will be a more accurate colour name, men don't do colours. If you think of it its black and white, blue, green, orange as far as men go, but women at least another 40 names for colours. As far as my hair goes, its silver, though a friend used to say I was an old man with white hair. As the colour of our hair change it's the 7 ages of man.

I remember Ali saying why wasn't it "Whitemail" instead of blackmail. We are in the Pink if we have good health, I long to be back in the pink myself. We say we hope be back in the black not in the red when we do company accounts, we look for the silver linings. We look look look for the rainbow as the song goes, we may find the crock of gold, all our troubles may be over and we can pack them up in the old kit bag. Hope springs up within us, it is now Spring after all, and as Chance the Gardener said "in the Spring there will be growth."

Pain Fear and God Apr 6, '12 11:56 AM

Pain Fear and God ©

By Michael Casey

Today is Good Friday, the day Jesus was crucified. Hugo Chavez is praying for his life we are told. So it makes me wonder when do we, all of us pray? I have to declare an interest straight away, I've had tennis elbow for nearly 4 months now and boy oh boy does it hurt. I cannot lift anything, not even the kettle. This would be bad enough in itself but for the fact that I've ricked my back badly. In fact the pain is the worst I've ever had in my life.

So Hugh is praying to be spared, I'm doing a bit of praying too, but my breath is being taken away by pain. The smell of Deep Heat fills our house, the girls retreat to the garden for fresh air. I can stand for 10 mins or sit and write here for 30mins, after that I have to lie down because the pain is so much. I don't want to pop pips so Deep Heat and hot baths are my tools of choice. My mother used to have bucket loads of pain killers for her bad back but she never took them, she just used to collect them over the pantry door. "Jeekus" she used to wince and half scream through her pain. So I hope its not hereditary.

We all pray when we are in pain, we pray the pain will end soon. Perhaps pain helps teaches us humility, everything sure is in perspective when all you can think of is your elbow or your back. My back has been playing up for 2 weeks on this occasion, how people live in pain and in wheelchairs makes me wonder. My Aunty Mary was in a wheelchair for the last 13years of her life after a stroke, her rosary keep her sane. We have test cases for the right to die, after my own pain filled recent experiences I see things more fully, through the prism of pain. I applaud pain relief experts, I have to lie down now for a bit before I write any more.

My daughter just threw "TonY" her toy at me so I'll get up and finish. Pain can destroy us, but it does clear the clutter of our daily lives, it makes us remember and enjoy the real things in our lives. I really enjoy the taste of food, the experience is heightened, ordinary food tastes like a 5star restaurant experience, and I may just be talking about a bit of toast and peanut butter. If when I finally get better I can remember the real values, of nice simple food, and enjoying watching tv with my kids

then all the pain will be worth it. Yes I know I'll get negative replies to this but, I always learn the hard way which is the best way. Yes I hope I'll never be in such pain again, but if all our lives we live a feather bed existence then we are not really experiencing life. Life includes pain.

Swimming Baths and Painting Eggs Mar 17, '12 12:38 PM

Swimming Baths and Painting Eggs ©

By Michael Casey

Today, Saint Patrick's Day was new day for swimming for my big daughter. It meant I couldn't have a lie in, I had to take her and her sister to the Baths, luckily they are at the bottom of the road. She's in the big pool now as she's progressed with her swimming. So me and my small daughter went up to the gallery to watch, the big pool used to have a diving board many years ago when my brothers went there to swim, maybe 40 years ago. So Time is catching up on me, my big daughter has my exact features, spooky, it's like looking into my own past as I look at her face. Though twice today when I looked at her face at the baths and afterwards when we went shopping, she looked Chinese to me. Yes my wife is a Shanghai girl, but normally our girls look so Western, so it was the Gene Pool reminding me of her mixed heritage.

Swimming finished and then there was the 30mins delay while she changed, lads are so much quicker, so any dads out there who take their girls out for sports bear this in mind. I should say a big thank you to the folks at the pool who teach swimming, this really is such an important thing. Two of my brothers swim like seals, my niece has even swum 2 kilometres; the last time I tried swimming I could have drowned in the hotel pool, but it was 20 years after I last swum and I was at my heaviest ever.

Girls and shopping always involves the stationary shop, felts and glues and coloured pens and so forth. If they don't become artists of some sort I'll be very surprised, so when I look at houses I always think where we could have a studio for them, all I need is a lottery win or to finally sell a few books. I'm in the quiet of the other room while they are painting an egg. It's the Easter project for year 3, whatever year 3 is. My mother said all she ever got was a boiled egg for Easter, 9 people living in a stone shack in Cromane Lower County Kerry, the photo is on my site, so when we all eat too much chocolate and some think Easter is a Cadbury's invention think back to 1920s Ireland this Saint Patrick's Day.

The girls are quiet now while they wait for the glue and the papier-mâché to fix, they always give

me inspiration for a blog, so I thank them. I hope when I'm gone they can look back and read all these blogs, maybe 220 so far, and laugh at themselves and their dad. I'm tired now, the lack of beauty sleep has tired me out. Mind you how much beauty sleep a Shrek like dad need ?

Judging a Book By Its Cover Mar 14, '12 10:10 AM

Judging a Book By Its Cover ©

By Michael Casey

"He's a scruff, I don't like him," said the girl in the street.

"She's a dog," said the boy looking at a photo of his friend's sister.

"He'll never be Prime Minister," said people stopped in the street by Mori.

"If he lost 4stones then maybe," said the women in the hairdressers.

I was looking at a few covers, and I thought what DOES make a difference? I can remember reading Dr No while I was in primary school, I had to make a cover out of brown paper to hide the silhouette of a naked woman on the cover, it was 1969 or 1970 and I was a very big reader. The sex bits in James Bond were boring, but I had to make the cover for a quiet life.

We all look at the cover when we are in book stores, I can remember reading Tom Sharpe's books 25years ago, the cover was a front and back cartoon telling the books' story. It was a good way of getting people to pick up the book and read a bit. Yes, I will mention my own 4 books. I decided to put my own face on the front of them, so just what will people think of my face and my book. He looks stupid, so we won't buy his books, or it must be funny because he looks funny. Will anybody think I look sexy just like Right Said Fred, and decide to buy my cheap books on a whim or will they just think, what a loser and scroll past me on Amazon Kindle. Will my fuller figure excite the women or even the men, or will both conclude, fat BE%^&*. I'm sure marketing departments think about such issues constantly. Even old JKRowling's books were reissued with different cover so to catch an older audience.

I could have liposuction to make me ever so sexy, and then with new and airbrushed photos I could make it as a cover boy on my own books. I would be fully clothed of course, with my M&S best clothes, in sizes for the bigger man. I can hear laughter in my mind, anybody who knows me or has ever seen me, and that may be 100,000 people, as I did work in a hotel for 3 years, everybody would just laugh. Laughter is the intention of all my books, but getting people to laugh with me is a challenge. So even if you don't want to buy any of my books, just go to Amazon Kindle and see does

your mental picture of me match any of my words. But most of all don't judge a book by its cover, even if it has my photo on the front.

Oxbridge and still cannot write essays? (c)Mar 5, '12 6:23 PM

Oxbridge and still cannot write essays? ©

By Michael Casey

I had been thinking about my latest blog here on the Daily Telegraph and on my own site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com then I spotted the article, so that's why I'm writing this.

My own brothers were Oxbridge, me CPNEC was my university along with the good old OU. So I'm Saddened that nobody can write, if I were in charge of Oxbridge I'd do a Maths and an English test, and if they fail the test I wouldn't let them in.

How can somebody 18plus not write a good essay? I was lucky because Frank Brown from County Tyrone was our lodger and he donated a radio, an old Bush radio to me and my brother. You all remember the Bush radio with the marzipan strip carry handle and the saucer size tuning dial, and don't forget the domino size frequency buttons, and the huge battery inside. That radio was part of my education, we used to listen to The World Tonight, Douglas Stewart reporting, followed by The Book at Bedtime. I can still remember falling asleep during the Ghost and Mrs Muir. I must have spent 20years listening to Radio 4 constantly, and it was only then that I started writing myself, and it took me a year to get it right. Now I have 4 "masterpieces" on Amazon Kindle.

So why can't students write? Is it too much cannabis or other Class As, or alcohol. No of course not. Is it too much time playing computer games? Too much sport or sex? Or didn't they have to write an essay a week in English. We had to write an essay a week for Mr Noon, here's the title, now go write two pages. We had a book list of 40 books we had to work our way through too. I was a natural reader, I read nearly everything on the shelves by my school desk in Primary school. I continued reading through my Grammar school days, then on through my twenties. Does anybody actually read nowadays?

I've done a bit of Esol teaching, I'm available right now too, but with Esol you encourage people to listen to Radio4, to practice ten new sentences a day, to read the free newspapers on the bus, to watch BBC news. Lots of simple things can help a foreigner pick up the language, one of our family friends is off to Oxford in the Autumn, her English is perfect, just like Helen Bonham Carter yet she

was not born here, she is Chinese. So the obvious point is why can't people born and raised here do the same.

Essay writing is all about a beginning, a middle and an end. You have to prove your argument too, why was this important, why is History really about Geography. History is Geography, because one leader wants to steal the other country's resources, Hitler wanted living room, Napoleon wanted to conquer Russia too. In a History essay you'd make the bold statement and then you'd give proof, Facts, Detail, Proof, Latin as I once wrote down on a piece nearly 40 years ago. Once you have proved your point you can then give lessons for the future, the past shows us the way NOT to go again, a do not enter sign. History repeats itself, is another phrase, we all chase the blonde who'll slap our face, but still we follow her. Monroe is, was, and always will be a honey trap, History shows us many Monroes, if we could control ourselves and keep our hands to ourselves then we'd learn the lessons of History, and we wouldn't need living room, just stick to our own girl in our own bedroom.

It would be nice if people read and listened to the radio, I fear I'm the final generation of radio lovers, radio is great if only those Oxbridge students listened to radio then they might be better at writing essays. Or they could pay me £xx an hour and I'll teach a few classes. I'd teach them to love words, to adore words, no not as good as having Monroe in your bed, but at least you'd pass your exams, and that would keep the Dons happy.

excuse my convict haircut

Only 2 quid each my 4 books Mar 1, '12 11:30 AM

New for National Book Week

my "ouvres" or books in plain English now at a lower price of £2 or \$3 or 2.70 something Euros.

Tell all your friends.

Alistair Alcohol and Me Feb 26, '12 4:46 PM

Alistair Alcohol and Me ©

By Michael Casey

I've just watched Alistair Campbell's Panorama piece on Alcohol. I found it too understated. He should have actually shown people covered in their own pee and sick, bleeding too. Yes there was a little of that, but it was too cold, a programme an Oxford Don would have given

Wednesday May 23rd 1979 it was 3pm I'd only just got out of bed, I'd been on night shift, I worked for a Market Research Company, we deal with Alcohol sales. Quick Quick screamed Mrs Madden, she was our lodger from the house next door, so I tucked my shirt in and ran next door. It was Andy, her husband and loveable alcohol. He was on his back and gurgling. So I tried a bit of CPR, I realised quickly that an ambulance was needed. I ran up the entry and banged on Mr Dixon's door, he had a phone we did not, nobody did in our area at that time. Quick get an ambulance I shouted to Mr Dixon, I frightened him a little. His son was a policeman, yes, all those Evening All jokes, but it was an ambulance we needed.

The ambulance arrived and I had to open up the doors so they could come through the house. They tried the black bulb with face mask attached but it was too late, too much booze and 3 previous heart attacks now was the death chime for Andy, the loveable drunk from the catholic club down the road. I helped put Andy on the chair and he was taken away by the ambulance lady and a man. My brother came home from school while all this was happening, then I looked down the road and I could see my mother coming up the road with her leather shopping bags full of food for us the 5000 her large family. So they had missed it, I had had to deal with it. It was then I cried, you don't cry while its going on you are too busy, throwing the furniture out the way so you can try and do CPR with Andy lying flat. But it had been to no avail.

Our other lodgers were nearly all Born Again Alcoholic, so I'd say to Alistair Campbell, tell it as it is, squalor with a Capital S. Get up, go to work, go to pub, go to bedsit, get up, go to work, go to pub, home to bedsit etc etc, occasionally have a wash. I can tell many tales of alcoholism, I've seen it at

close hand, as you can imagine none of us Caseys ever became drinkers. I think I used to average 24 pints, no not a week, but maybe in a year. So what do I say about alcohol, yes enjoy it, Jesus's first miracle was water into wine after all. Don't be a Puritan, enjoy a beer or two, but also remember me a half asleep 20 year old having to do CPR after getting up after a night shift.

If one person, just one person reading this has 2nd thoughts about alcohol and/or any other addiction then Andy's death won't have been in vain.

Spring Family Feb 26, '12 11:14 AM

Its really nice here in Birmingham, I had to go up the road to buy bread before we all had breakfast, we like Warbuttons best, the orange wrapper one. After breakfast we knew we'd have to go out and buy another loaf, so that job was left for me. 2nd trip up the road to Iceland I had to buy eggs as well, JJ is going to be cooking. The other family highlight is choosing a mobile phone for our biggest daughter, she'll be off to grammar/secondary school in the Fall as you folks Autumn. So she'll need a phone for safety and "grownup" reasons. The costs are stratospheric, no wonder only the President can afford a Blackburry. Though some of the electronics are very nice the Iphone 4S et al. The built in cameras are better than regular cameras too. It would be a nice present to win in a raffle. Thenthere is which tarrif to have, pay have you go with a nice phone. Me I don't even have a mobile, two cocoa tins with a length of string attached would be fine by me. Or smoke signals, like Red Indians, or I could just use telepath. Telepath could be fun, though I could get my face slapped too.

Am I a girl? Feb 24, '12 9:57 AM

Am I a Girl?

By

Michael Casey

Am I a girl? I just bought some hand cream from Superdrug. I have cracked skin and its almost bleeding, eczema perhaps. The 3 girls in my house use lotions and potions on hands and faces, they said I should get some, I'd not bothered for years so finally I bought some. There's so much choice, I nearly bought baby oil stuff, finally I spotted a product that boasted to work fast and was clinically proven and best of all was it was only 3quid for 400ml. It does smell a bit like woodwork glue. So I can call myself a carpenter and not a girl.

To Be a Writer or 2B a Preacher? Feb 18, '12 6:00 AM

To Be a Writer or 2B a Preacher ?

By michaelgcasey

To Be a Writer or 2B a Preacher (c) By Michael Casey

When you start writing you think you are the bees knees, then everybody says you are total c(*&, which makes you cry and you want to put your head in the oven, only its electric so you end up with a tan like Richard Dreyfuss in Close Encounters.

Then you join a critics club where you all sit around and try and destroy each other's ego. So this makes you so angry that you join a gun club. Your anger finds an avenue so you end up in the Olympics shooting team, and all you really want to do is write.

But still you want to write so after 3 Olympic golds you get bored with shooting and return to your first love. So you write about assassins, you are an expert on shooting after all, no Pulitzers but you do have 3 Olympic Golds. You get fed up of writing about sad and lonely losers who get a gun and shoot people, or about high powered 007 types. But you are such an expert, and the money rolls in. You discover God and decide to be a preacher, and If they don't believe you could shoot them. You find a niche and become a great and good preacher, you write all your own sermons and they are good, but 10 pages isn't as good as 500pages of block busters. But it is a beginning. You get married in your own church with you doing your own service. The Church of I Forgive Myself Ministry. You have a few kids and seduce your secretary on the side, and her sister is so hot too, so you can't resist her, and you get her pregnant in the office behind your church, and then there is the cleaner. Preying is your speciality, not praying. You have your mid life crisis and run away, emptying out the bank accounts while you leave.

And if only you sold all your books on Amazon Kindle, none of this would have happened. But it does give you an idea for a new book. No not your own life story, that's always boring for a writer. No you'll write about stamp collecting.

End

Well folks I really do have 4 things on Amazon Kindle, only 3 dollars each so go take a peek, you can try The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker first

then maybe I'll become a writer, a paid one.

Or do you guys want me to be a Preacher, with a Birmingham England accent?

And Today's Blog Is Feb 14, '12 6:58 PM

And Today's Blog Is ©

By Michael Casey

I was wondering what to write about today, I had already mentioned Dickens the other day, so what should I write about. I have put Dickens picture as a desktop background to inspire me, though I do change my background every couple of weeks. I normally spot a house I'd love to live in and it becomes my desktop background, even though it would take a lottery win to live there. It's always best to live in hope, to dream of the nice house and now with a mahogany desk like Dickens' from which I could talk to the world. You can get some really really nice desks, just google and you will be amazed. We have the bog standard computer desk which you get from PC World for 30quid, but should my dream come true I'd really go to town, it would be a sensual experience to be in front of your desk as you write/talk to people.

I had to have a cigarette just then as my imagination was working overtime, though the cigarette was in my imagination too. Perhaps Rupert Murdoch will give me a slot in the Sun when he visits over the weekend, just on the website, I do have a Chinese wife just like him.... Inspiration for writing comes from everywhere, the girls were baking cookies at their Godparents house this afternoon, they returned with cookies all wrapped in plastic and sealed with a ribbon, very professional. This could be a subject for a blog in itself, David and Fran are very good to them. I could blog about my shamrock which seems to be killed off by the very harsh freezing Winter nights, and now one week later they are so forlorn. I could mention clover, which is similar to shamrock, but I mean Clover the spread from Iceland which is ½ price at the moment, a good spread on top of crumpet is so so nice as the Clover drips down your fingers.

I had to go and make some crumpet just then, or so I will tomorrow, as I neglected to buy any crumpet today, I just used my imagination, yes I use my imagination a lot, I'm dreaming of a nice new job where I can be useful and have fun. Well it's time for bed now so I'll dream of Rupert Murdoch giving me a job, though I'd write for anybody, soul for sale, no I just like talking to the world as I did in my concierge days.

Dickens, Christmas and all that (c)Feb 5, '12 11:08 AM

Dickens, Christmas and all that ©

By Michael Casey

I was reading a gushy piece in the ads so of course I hated it. I switch off if I read gushy stuff. If I meet pretentious people I hate them immediately too. Style is a very difficult thing, my own developed and that's what I and readers are stuck with. People nowadays do have a smaller attention span, and if you watch satellite tv then you will see what I mean. It really is a bad thing, no wonder Americans go to cinema in droves, the tv is so bad and with all the adverts on top, heaven help us.

Now reading is a very personal thing, as is soaking in the bath with just you and your thoughts for company, or maybe a radio in the background. I used to stop up late to finish the latest Alistair MacLean, I read all his books 30 years ago, some in one session till 1am or 2am. I love radio so I spent 20years plus listening to Radio4 too. Finding a book you like and an author too is great. I read all the Sherlock Holmes books when I was 10 or 11 so I was a fan. I watched the new and great tv series set in today's world, so I rushed back to the books, sadly after over 40 years I just could not read them again. Sometimes its best to keep the memory and not go back.

Dickens is big, we all love A Christmas Carol, I have even cried while listening to it on the radio after Midnight Mass, I think we may have had to read some in grammar school, Oliver Twist or something. My own view is that students should be given a week or two to read the set text before starting to do English Lit on it. English Lit can kill a book, we did Over the Bridge by Richard Church, all I remember was that he wanted a piano, and was he ungrateful for all the hard work his parents had to do to provide it. Correct me if my memory after 40years is wrong. Over my shoulder we have an electronic piano, so I'm smiling as I talk.

Dickens used to be serialised before his work appeared in book form, nowadays we all blog and then hope people go to our site and then read more and final buy a book or two. The modern method of writing would I think appeal to Dickens, he could travel and perform and after a busy day blog away

with his thoughts ablaze, a strong drink on his desk. If ever I get lucky I'd have an old fashioned desk and a big sturdy chair, and space for a pitcher of orange juice right beside my computer screen. I'd have a nice old fashioned clock on the desk too, so that I could time how long it took for people to comment on my newest blog. 200years from now I'll be dust, but perhaps my great great grandchildren will still wonder why my hair was so white and why did a Shanghai girl marry me. I hope it's a great story just like Charles Dickens.

Tree Story Jan 31, '12 2:18 PM

Tree Story©

By

Michael Casey

I had a tree at the bottom of my garden for maybe 20 years, it was a Laburnum tree, or Golden Chain. My mother had one at the bottom of her garden for years and years, I don't know where she got it from, but every May it was glorious, golden chains of flowers, really really pretty.

When I got a house of my own I decided that I wanted a Golden Chain or Laburnum of my own too, so I took a sapling from my mum's garden and planted it at the bottom of my own garden, I think I must have taken the 4 foot sapling on the bus to get it to my house. After a year it flowered, glorious and yellow, a sight to behold, a perpetual memory of my mother who had green fingers as far as her elbows. She could dive into a hedgerow or into a municipal garden while on holiday in Weston-Super-Mare and take a cutting then throw it into a plastic bag with a bit of water and then take it home 2 weeks later where she'd plant it and it would grow for her. Anybody else would have a dead plant, not my mother, she passed on her green fingers to my eldest brother who has a show garden. Trees grow and twist and bend as they grow, wonderful shapes and patterns just like a contortionist at the circus, but so much better. So the tree always reminded me of my mum and her love for all her big family. I also have Shamrock growing by the wall outside my back door, again I brought it to my home from the family home, and again it reminds me of my mum and my old aunty from Ballyheigh in County Kerry, it was Aunty Mary who had sent us some maybe 35 years ago. So plants and trees are a token of Love, I'm sure everybody can remember planting something with somebody, together something was shared and is special because it was shared together.

Yesterday I cut down my Laburnum tree it had outgrown the space there was for it, I don't know shall we dig it up and replant or just scatter seeds all around, and have a scented blossom plant grow on the grave of the Laburnum. I'll consult with my two daughters, we can wait a month for the cold snap to stop biting at our ankles and then we can decide on colours and smells. Having said all that a Cherry Blossom tree would be nice, just like they have in Japan, after all we are a Shanghai family ,

and we do really have Japanese neighbours just 2 doors away.

Flowers and plants are really expressions of love, learned men and poets and gardeners will explain it far better than me. My mother's parting gift was white flowers all over my sister's front garden, our mother had died and a few weeks after she had died white flowers popped up all over my sister's garden. Mum had sneaked up to the house and planted seeds, so after her death they were a smile from Heaven. And Nature itself is God's smile.

Ebooks Jan 30, '12 12:06 PM

Ebooks©

by Michael Casey

Just read DT, a bit about Ebooks. First I must declare an interest, I have 4 for sale on Amazon Kindle. Now to ebooks, I've seen a few people on the bus reading them and I have to agree they are great. Its so simple to upload, and then away you go. Getting folks to go and read your stuff is another matter entirely if you are a writer, but the technology is so sexy, and just like the article said its instantaneous. In Roman days it was orgies on tap, now you have books on tap, satisfying the brain instead of any other organs. The ability to read everything ever written, and in such a small package; only the rich could read and own books, then we had Gutenberg and the printing press, it changed society forever, as will the ereader.

We all watched Star Trek when we were small and we were fascinated by the gadgets, just what did Ohora have in her ear. Now we have delivery men and women with an electronic signing form, the gas man has a computer to take readings, in the near future all readings will be sent down the line. So ebooks will dominate, but yes I too like the feel and touch of book, the smell too, just as the Romans liked the feel and touch of their pleasures, as readers of books we all like a nice book, something to cuddle up with, but let's leave the Romans to their vices.

Mr Trout my old History teacher at grammar school advised reading Don Camillo and I did, it was a wonderful experience, I found a nice book shop in Blackpool while we were on summer holidays and I got all the books. I rediscovered them 30 years later and I have an omnibus to the right of me, I've ½ read or should I say reread it. It really is such a joy, I read it in English, but you can also find it published online too, who knows in the future it will be an ebook. The technology for ebooks will I hope make us cherish them more in the future; I have The Outline Of History by H.G. Wells on a shelf to my right, a present from when I left primary school, perhaps my grandchildren will have ebooks and ereaders on their shelves.

Chinese Mother I live that lifeJ an 28, '12 8:10 AM

Chinese Mother I live that life ©

By

Michael Casey

I was just looking at the Daily Telegraph when I spotted a piece about a book Chinese Mother, I scanned it and thought, I don't need to read this I already live this, I have a Shanghai wife, so for 13years I know all about Chinese things. The work ethic, the saving ethic, and the religion ethic, what did he just say the religion ethic? Yes the religion ethic, if and when you meet a Chinese Christian you will be amazed. I don't know if they are all converts or just how many generations of Christians they are, but I do know when they believe they really believe.

I'm a Catholic from County Kerry, 1st generation born in Birmingham, but my Faith goes back 100s of years, from the nipple for generations, very very poor but a faith so rich, see photo Cromane Kerry. Now when you visit Chinese church you may see a lesson going on, lots of adults doing Bible study, the students in their 30s and 40s may all be PhDs, 12 students as many as there were disciples with one teacher, who is of course a PhD too. Once we were at a meeting, and the great thing is there is always food afterwards, just imagine that. Anyway you may ask is he a PhD and the answer is yes yes yes and yes, you notice somebody emptying the bins, is he a PhD, no not him, he is a Professor, Andrew may smile if ever he reads this. The point is they are committed to what they love, their love of God, just being average is no good, just being good is no good, being very good may be acceptable, but being the best of the best is their target, it's the norm for Chinese Christians. That's why they study Bible so much, we have 3 or 4 Bibles in our house 2 in Chinese, and one is bilingual Bible, my kids are encourages to study it every day. I'm classed as the pagan because I don't daily read the Bible, I just remind my convert wife that I have heard the Bible in Mass for over 50years now. I did used to read it on Sundays too, but that's no good for a Shanghai wife, I am a pagan, I may as well be wearing wode and dance around the garden naked. If I can't pass A level Bible studies with an A***** then I'm useless. This really is the standard Chinese Christians try to attain.

In other aspects of life Chinese people want to be the best, computing for example; we had a problem on our home computer and we ended up with a totally clued up kid come and fix it for us. The point to all this is that we have to emulate, compete and try and be better than them, and yes it can be done, we just have to raise our game. I'm fortunate because my Birmingham/Shanghai daughters have a head start because of a nagging, lovingly nagging mother, I'm the more relaxed one in the family. This of course means that I'm classed as useless, however my girls have inherited the love of writing from me, or it could be from their Chinese granddad and a Political Editor Chinese Great Uncle. In the end though it's the Love from everywhere, from Ireland from China from Birmingham from Shanghai, THIS is always the key, without Love there is nothing, there is a famous Bible passage that states all this. If I were Chinese in a nanosecond I'd quote the chapter and verse of it all this, I think its Paul's letter to somebody or another. I'm no Bible Scholar after all, I'm just a writer looking for a publisher.

Ten Years Ago Jan 24, '12 3:18 PM

Ten years ago this week my life changed forever, I got a job at the CPNEC Birmingham England, it was also the week my dad died. I saw my dad for the last time on the Tuesday, I told him about the new job, then on the Saturday he died. He asked for an extra egg for breakfast, by the time Maria returned he had died in his chair. Ten years have past, my daughter playing the piano behind me is ten now, my other daughter is eight, she's upstairs playing with her dolls' house. Working in an hotel was a new and novel experience for me, very hard work but loads of fun. The whole world came through the doors at CPNEC, it was a brand new hotel, I opened it as the say in the jargon. My dad had literally survived a fatal heart attack, my brother did CPR and saved him, 8 weeks previously our mum had died in her sleep, the same brother had cradled her in his arms and tried CPR buy she was gone. 5 priests and 300 people came to her funeral, a barrister took the day off to attend and sing in the choir. Then dad nearly joined her, but he did not, and that's how I found my Shanghai wife, Padre Pio and Me on my site explains it all. I suppose I should have felt older once my dad died but I did not, I'm still staying 20 in my head, its the Birth Certificate that's 30 years older not me. Death Anniversaries shouldn't be times of sadness quiet the reverse, our dad loved us so much, real love, not luvie love all holding hands, just quiet deep deep love, not even spoken most of the time but it was there just as gravity is. The hotel job was part of my life for 3years I excelled at it, the parent part of my life was much much more, and funny too. Having a family late when you don't expect it really is a blessing, enough to make you cry, to look up at the night skies and thank God. Ten years have gone since my dad has gone, maybe in 10 more I'll join him, we all never know the time and place of our parting, I do know one thing for certain, if I'm half as good a parent as my parents were for me then I'll die happy with a smile on my face.

Simon and Garfunkel Jan 24, '12 1:02 PM

I was watching a documentary on Simon and Garfunkel, the creative process was talked about, all the recording tricks of the trade back then, 40 years ago. Yes 40 years ago, they know each other nearly 60 years now. I know somebody over 40 years ago myself but I was amazed that S & G had such a great collaboration even if it did break up. Music is such a great thing, like breath from heaven, only Nature itself can beat Music for the effect it has on us. Nature with morning skies and sunsets, rain and storms, moonlit nights and more. Amadeus showed us how great Mozart was, it touched us and impressed us. Simon and Garfunkel do the same, when you go back and listen again to their music you remember just how great it is. BBC Radio2 did a series about them maybe 20 years ago, I think that was better than the tv show on BBC4, but radio is better than TV. A final thought for all the music lovers out there, it is only by listening to music that we realise that music is God's breath, and it also reminds us of our own mortality.

Hello World Jan 20, '12 6:23 PM

Hello World ©

By Michael Casey

Hello world, or should I say hello Word, I've decided to get a new version of Word, mine was very old, so I googled and found software4students.co.uk The deal with this is that you get great software at ½ the price you'll find it elsewhere. How does it work? Easy these guys work with Microsoft to give you and me cheap software. You must be a student or a parent/guardian of a student. You click on the name and postcode of your child's school and away you go. Less than 40quid for Word 2010 Professional Plus, it's a bargain. They sell other stuff too, I quite liked the pen with a memory in, go to their site and see for yourself.

So I should write something super duper to go with my new Word 2010, but all I can think of is tomato soup, its cold outside and I need something nice, I've had too many hot drinks, I need something with flavour in. Heinz tomato soup will be so nice, though really I should save it for my girls when they come home from school in an hour. I've compromised and had some warming crumpet instead. I mentioned crumpet and Sid James in the same breath to a shop assistant in Aldi and guess what, he'd never heard of Sid James, though he did pass me a packet of crumpet. You can tell when you are getting old when nobody has heard of Sid James, Carry On Up the Kyber was an absolute classic. The first time my Shanghai wife saw it she cried with laughter.

As for the Shanghai wife she is out buying up all things nice for Chinese New Year which falls this weekend, 785 on Sky is Phoenix the Chinese Entertainment channel if you take a peek there will be an entertainment show, just like a Royal Variety Performance. So do take a look, the singing will be fab, I remember watching it in 2000 in Shanghai. Believe it or not but the comedy segments you'll see are very funny, even without the benefit of Chinese language skills. It's the Year of the Dragon this year, nothing to do with Mother-in-Laws either. So go out and get some prawn crackers in, eat them as you watch 785 on Sky, and if you don't laugh then I'm a Chinaman.

Creative Writing Group on Daily Telegraph Jan 16, '12 9:23 AM

I just noticed people were joining the Creative Writing Group at this time of night, are we all night owls?

I used to listen to Radio 4 in bed with my brother 40 years ago and more. The World Tonight with Douglas Stuart reporting, following by The Book at Bedtime, I even remember The Ghost and Mrs Muir. It was thanks to 20 years of religious listening to Radio 4 that I lost most of my Brummie accent, it also meant that when I started to write I had heard a lot of writing previously.

Writing a story is having a baby, of course your baby is beautiful, how dare anybody say otherwise. However you have to be honest with yourself, you also have to tell the whole world GO **&\$&^ because you must always have faith in yourself. I have faith in my play Shoplife, I have faith in The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker which on Leap Years Day 2012 will be 24 years old. I never bothered looking for a publisher and then finally I did, but that's another story. From Leap Year to Leap Year the story of.... I can hear the by-line being typed.

It would kill my writing if somebody told me how to type, I meant how to write, but writing is more than typing, it's all about ideas. You are a writer because you write, not because you type. It's a thought process, it's having ideas, not the physical action of typing. Here's my idea from this evening at Mass. The Arch Bishop was having a Visitation at Saint Mary's in Harborne, so I wondered what it must feel like. It is like having an Ofsted but for a church, so as I left I asked the Arch Bishop as I shook his hand "YOU must be like the Mother-in-Law", the Arch Bishop still shaking my hand laughed and said that he was more like a cousin visiting.

Now that's what writing is all about, it's about ideas, sometimes they come when you should be paying attention at Mass, but ideas always come, even if typing doesn't.

Through My Letter Box Jan 14, '12 11:20 AM

Through My Letter Box ©

By Michael Casey

I don't know about you but I'm sick and tired of junk mail coming through my letter box. Where we live we have tons of fast food outlets, maybe 15 all within a ten minute walk of the house. A young man's delight no doubt, not to mention 3 pubs, and it used to be 4 pubs.

Now if the junk mail, or should I say leaflets were for local fast food places it wouldn't be so bad, but it's for places you have to catch a bus to find them. Can I borrow the Sat Nav love? I'm going to buy some chips and a pizza, its only 99p at the Truly The Best Chip Emporium Ever. So clutching the leaflet I'll set off to find this chip heaven, walking not driving either, I cannot drive after all. You cannot drive and eat chips at the same time after all, well legally you cannot, but don't get me started on all the illegal driving companion activities, are they all just trying to kill me while I cross the road. When you get there it's so far away they have a different English accent, so you point to the sign on the wall, it would have been better to go to MacDonalds. So why do they put their rubbish leaflets through my door?

Recycle bins are ugly, we have 3 huge ones in our back garden, no wonder we have so many burglaries, thieves just stand on them to break into peoples' houses. I suppose after eating so much fast food, as advertised by all the leaflets coming through all the letter boxes; the thieves only break in so that they can raise money to go to health farms. At the health farms young girls wearing plastic gloves squeeze out all the spots created by eating all the junk food as advertised by the junk food leaflets coming through my letter box. I feel like a victim and have a complex, why me, why me, why do I have to suffer from sick letter box syndrome, sob, it's too much for me.

I did think of getting a crocodile that was trained to eat the fingers of junk mail deliverers, I wouldn't need to feed it either as finger food would be enough. But the children want a cat so I suppose we'll have to get a cat. But it will be an evil cat who will scratch any junk food leaflet deliverer. Or perhaps I should get some Chinese scientist friends to develop a sensor that pukes back any junk leaflet all over the leaflet deliverers, and it would spay a scent of puke all over the deliverer.

Now that's what I'm tempted to do, but instead we have an overweight recycle bin that's covered in spots, thanks to all the junk food leaflets inside it. If the Council did some market research perhaps they'd be a byelaw stating "NO JUNK FOOD LEAFLETS" Global Warming would be sorted in one fell swoop too.

TSPS. The Secret Prayer Society Jan 10, '12 8:53 AM

TSPS.

The Secret Prayer Society. Now what is a secret prayer? It's when you see somebody in need of a prayer and your heart jumps towards them, its like trying to catch a baby when they are about to fall. Its instinctive, its natural, its normal, its the best in us leaping out to help others. Its not based on Creed or any other thing, its me or you or all of us, just jumping from the heart. Those we pray for may never know they are being prayed for, its an act of love, I suppose just as our God loves us, its like breathing, a natural thing. You can do a deal with a friend, you pray for me and I'll pray for you. I did this as a child, I prayed for an old man with Parkinsons and he prayed that I pass my exam for grammar school. I met another prayer friend last night, so if good comes it will because of her prayer for me. I'm praying for her too and it feels all right. So why can't we all give it a try. It can be in secret, we can pray for anybody and everybody, for the football team, for the baseball team whatever you like. Of course you can go to church and pray, go to temple and pray, or just sit on the subway and pray for the poor downcast man sitting opposite. He doesn't know you are praying for him but God does know. They say the humblest prayers are the best, right now in my own life I could say the only way is up. All of us all over the FACEBOOK world can impact each other via FB, but we all have much much more power though prayer. So join The Secret Prayer Society today.

What If Dec 31, '11 8:15 AM

What If (c)

By

Michael Casey

What if Today wasn't the 1st day of a New Year but the last Day of Your Life.

Who would you hug, who would you kiss, who would you miss.

Who would miss you, do you have a clue, and do you know why?

Would your years of striving to be a good writer/teacher/cop or whatever still mean so much to you

.

Would you miss making love in a tent high up in the mountains.

Would you miss a real good coffee and donut on 7th and 4th.

Would you miss the sales where you always bought nothing but shoes, shoes for work. But the fun you had with the girls was worth it , because pals are fun.

Would you miss Midnight Mass and Silent Night getting home exhausted and late and crying for your late mother.

Would you be too afraid that you'd not meet her again in the afterlife, or would that be the only hope you'd cling too as you watched the hands on clock sweep around faster and faster.

Would you rail at the world and want to get your gun and shoot those bastards who'd ruined your life in the past , even if all they ever did was steal your parking place, or would you be all sweetness and light, dying peacefully without a fight.

What would be your parting words, would anybody remember you, small kindnesses remembered and rewarded.

Remember thou art dust and to dust thy will return is the Ash Wednesday phrase

Is that how you want to be remembered?

Or he made me laugh, he made me cry but I was always was happy when he was around , I'll miss him yes , but I've not lost him because because a laugh lasts forever.

That is my hope, for the start of this New Year and new day, and everyday because we all should live like today is our last because one fact is certain one day it will be , so make 'em laugh , make 'em laugh, make 'em laugh

Happy New Year from this Comedy Writer Michael Casey

Christmas 2011 Dec 26, '11 5:43 PM

Christmas 2011 ©

by Michael Casey

This Christmas 2011 was a great Christmas for our small but ever growing daughters, their uncles and aunties spoiled them, treasure reached new revels. The girls had decided to set the family Christmas tree up in their bedroom, somehow the tree was taller than ever, they found a longer aluminium pole to insert, it now looks as if a giraffe has taken refuge underneath, so the tree was reaching for the sky. Talking of Sky our Sky Plus box had a fault, half the space disappeared, however a quick IM conversation explained how to get the space back. Then we told the Sky Plus to record 8 things while we headed off to my brother's for Christmas dinner.

For a change we were on time for the family feast, only my brother had managed to forgot to light the gas or was it electric, so we waited 2 and a half hours for the turkey, the turkey must have been thinking of tunnelling its way out, just like in cartoons. Starvation descended upon the 10 of us, we had to have emergency Terry's Chocolate Orange, lest we fall over, or lest our sugar levels went too low. Then finally the food was declared ready, ding ding, like wrestlers we stormed to the dinner table as my brother shared out the turkey. Back in the old days when my mother was alive we would feed 5 lodgers first and give them 4 pints each before we could have our share. The same love is there, I'm sure our parents look down and smile, the Casey family feast is shared. The turkey did not stand a chance. By the time the sharing was done I had finished as had my sister, so we gave up our seats so my brother and his wife could sit and eat.

I mixed pink wine with orange juice, it was nice, not very polite as far as the wine was concerned but I like the mix so that's the way I had it, a poor man's Bux Fizz. Cake and pudding were also served, laughter and photos and love all mixed together. Dr Who followed, the nation's traditional Christmas fare. Dr Who was all about Mother Love, as it should be on a Christmas Day, it all started with a Mother's Love after all. Dr Who cried with happiness for a finish, and that's how it should be this and every Christmas Day. So shed a few tears for those you love, this day and every day.

What is Poetry? Dec 21, '11 4:37 PM

I was thinking what is poetry, then I realised it's the sound of the home. My wife on the phone to her friends, two Chinese speakers sound like chickens, qok qok qok quar, that's how Chinese make the sound of clucking. Then there is the sound of the central heating gurgling away and then the clunk as it switches itself off. Laughter as my girls run up and down the stairs, the rat at tat tat as I type on the keyboard, then the click as I switch on the speakers and start up the music to keep me company as I type. A splash outside as a car drives by in the rain, the sound of barking as the neighbour's dog howls at the moon. Next door a child cries she does not want to go to bed, she wants to stop up and wait for Santa just in case he's a few days early. All this is the heartbeat of a home, even when its hard to think as my wife is two feet away from me screaming down the phone in Chinese. This is my heartbeat, I hope yours is just as strong.

Merry Christmas Everybody.

Michael Casey

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Earphones Dec 19, '11 12:43 PM

Earphones, what a lot of effort it takes to pick a pair.

Do you over the ear or in the ear, do you want plastic or metal, do you want soft rubber or memory foam. Its such a big deal for something that'll only last six month, tops. I had a nice pair and with inline volume control, but they died as they all do. I had a hard plastic replacement to hand but I want a comfortable one read for when these die on me. So I looked on Amazon and Argos, read the reviews. Decided on what I wanted, a blue metal pair, then I read the reviews, 50/50 50 4star, 50 2star, so I decided, if in doubt believe the worst, so those were no good. Then I saw a pair with what looked like steel wire as the lines, and covered in plastic. Argos had them 1/3 off, then I checked with Amazon, the same thing for more than 1/2 the price of the ones on on offer. Which if you've been following the maths means 1/3 of the original before offer in price. Or in simple language, not 15, not 10, not even 5, but 3.90, to those of you who spend a lot on your headphones, I cannot afford the really nice ones, why, because they just don't last and I don't have the money anyway. So I give Amazon my vote and hope that when they arrive they are not a pirated copy. And if you are wondering what I bought, "Kitsound KS1 Noise Isolating Stereo Earphones. If I were brave I'd wear HEADphones in the street and on the bus, but then I'd look a right Charlie, which is a very old figure of speech. The headphones would last, but that's another story.

From Short Wave Radio to Facebook ©Dec 17, '11 7:44 AM

From Short Wave Radio to Facebook ©

By Michael Casey

30 years ago and more I inherited a Short Wave Radio, now what is so special about a short wave radio? Well you can listen to the world over the airwaves, all over the world, from Radio Nederland to Australia to Hungary, Poland and of course radio Albania. I've always loved radio and I still do, my love began when I was about 8 years old which means I've been listening to radio for 45years now. I can't believe I'm that old now, I still think I'm 20, when I talk to my students I say "our age" then I have to correct myself as I am 30years old than them, old enough to be their dad, one actually calls me granddad, and when I do the school run the teachers there think I'm the granddad.

So what's so good about short wave, it's the notion that you can hear radio from all over the world, it's actually bounced off the atmosphere, so its kind of like science project. This is 30years ago and more, when computers weren't invented, the ones we all use I mean, PCs, I was in fact a computer operator all those years ago and computers were as big as washing machines and wardrobes, and people used magnetic tapes and punch cards. So picture the scene, I'd spend my days off playing with this Tandy/ Radio Shack SW radio with a nice speaker, logging the different stations and nations that I could get. I even got a request on Radio Brazil and I managed to get Australia on a hand held radio. To help with reception I had a round room antennae, 30 foot of copper wire in plastic covering, it was a nice hobby when you had days off in the middle of the week.

Time moves on and I enjoyed my SW radio as well as my 20 years of listening to Radio 4 on the BBC, and now I tell my students to listen to the BBC. All of us have computers in our homes or down the street at the local library, so the idea of SW is strange, nobody will listen to SW. So nostalgia leaves a warm glow in my heart, it would be nice to have a small SW radio again, the kids stood on my last one years ago and it bust, I did see one in Aldi but I have lots of radios and a computer so I'll leave than nice radio in Aldi.

Email arrives and I am a great fan of email, I used to email my friend on the 4th floor while I was on the 3rd, it was fun. Then I met my wife and she was in Shanghai and I was here in Birmingham, our

love was kept alive by the blue Sky email machine, I still have it upstairs, an antique in the future no doubt. Computers get better and better, I continue writing and have a site of my own

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com then I'm married so we have a proper simple computer so we can

talk to Shanghai. Grandma visits, twice, she can use the computer to talk to her friends back home. I send emails galore probably thousands, trying to get noticed as a writer, its all in Internet Story, its not how good you are, its getting somebody, and I think it'll be a lady, because ladies help and blokes don't, getting somebody to read your stuff and then you're finally a writer.

Then Facebook arrives, so you leave a message for their leader and a few of his pals, if they have a message facility then use it I think. Only they say you're naughty and don't do that or you can't play. So I connect with loads of writers and poets and a few think my stuff is nice and funny, so that's great, I still have to hope that one of them likes my stuff enough to look at Amazon Kindle and

borrow or even buy one of my 4 "masterpieces" or go to my site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

and read my 250blogs, and see just how fat am I, and how on earth did I manage to get 3 beautiful girls in my life. For the answer to the last question its all in Padre Pio and Me, the writing still goes on, 25years nearly. Technology has changed so much, Short Wave to Facebook these are tools of communication, reasons to be cheerful as Ian Drury would sing. So as Christmas is coming the best communication is a kiss, kiss those you love, hold them in your arms, tell them you love them, take them to bed and make love, now that is far better than Facebook.

Talking to an Audience or I want to be an after dinner speaker Dec 16, '11 12:40 PM

Talking to an Audience ©

By

Michael Casey

The average speaker starts by saying “unaccustomed as I am to Public Speaking” and then he rattles off his talk. I was sent on a presenting course back in 1998 this was a great course and after 2 days of training I had mastered the basics.

The trainer placed a few objects on the table, a pencil, a book, a pair of glasses and several more random things. We had previously been shown how the expert did it now it was our turn. We were given 15mins to prepare then one by one we had to stand up and talk about the object we had chosen.

We all watched and then gave feedback, it was a group thing, we were all on the same team, it was a family we were there to help each other learn how to present. Talking for 5 mins can be scary when you've never done it before, but with training anybody can do it.

We repeated this exercise with different objects, we gave advice and encouragement to each other. Some were not as good as others, for some standing up and talking in front of another group of people was like being naked in front of people. Nobody was naked but it felt that way to the shy talkers.

Having Irish blood in me made it easier for me. Then we were all given the big challenge, the next day we had to stand up and talk for 15mins, on a subject of our own choosing. I decided to talk about my trip to Paris in the February just gone. So on the train from Oxford to Birmingham I started making out some Qcards, notes to help me with me talk the next day. I should explain I was working in Birmingham for ACNielsen but the head office was in Oxford and that's where the training was.

Caroline had been very generous and allowed me to go on the course just months before redundancy beckoned. If I'm honest I hoped the course would help me with my comedy writing.

The next day I was on a train my Qcards all ready, I rehearsed and rehearsed, then I got to Oxford and ACNielsen HQ. I think I was last to talk, or should I say perform. I told them that I had chosen hotel on the advice of JC, only JC had forgotten to tell me it was in a red light area by Gare du Nord

Paris.

Being a lad I had a Chinese and lots of wine, before staggering all over Paris and down the Metro, at the Eiffel Tower my camera was bust, I was using my schoolboy French trying to get the girl in the box office under the Eiffel Tower to fix my camera. I decided a kebab was a good idea after my night time look at Paris. That was a mistake, the Chinese and wine and a kebab all mixed, and made me violently ill. My bathroom was like a wardrobe that you climbed into for both the toilet and a shower. I was as sick as a pig. In the morning I found a pharmacy. "Avez vous des aspirin de bas prix" I asked. In exchange I was given a box which said "aspirin tamponnee" I opened the box and inside was a tube with extra strong mint sized aspirins, aspirins that fizzed. So I had to find a drink and wash the aspirins down, I must have looked like a rabid dog.

I continued with my tale, my audience in fits of laughter. I was nearing the end of my tale when I was stopped. "How many minutes have you done?" asked the trainer. "15" I replied. In fact I had done 30mins. So I think I passed the test, I can present.

3 days later I was in the Czech Republic, my penfriend was giving me a look at Pilsner her home town, the home of lager itself. She had a class and would I, could I talk to them, she was an English teacher you see. So there I was in front of 25 students, so I stood up and presented off the cuff for 90minutes.

I think that proves I had a good teacher in Oxford. My trip to Pilsner gave me an idea for a piece of writing, Czech Story, which proved to be one of the best and funniest pieces of writing I have ever done. Its good because its true. I suppose all art is best when it draws from life. Shall we leave it there for tonight.....

Writing in my HeadDec 11, '11 2:55 PM

Writing in My Head ©

By

Michael Casey

I started writing Tears for A Butcher and I've done one chapter and a few pages of the 2nd chapter. I have all sorts of ideas for this follow up to

The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker but I've got lots of material for the finale and one or 2 other chapters, but I've not started on chapter 3 or chapter 4, I'm thinking it'll be 12 chapters like the 1st book. Then I have a puzzle, should I write the book out of sequence and then stitch it together or should I wait for sequential chapters to form and then write it. There is the other problem though problem is the wrong word to use, I don't want to spend a year of my life producing more stuff until I leave the launch pad with my other stuff. I have 4 books on Amazon Kindle, very cheap and you can now borrow them via Amazon too.

It's a bit of a puzzle, I have enough material to write fully formed chapters, but should I do it this way or that? There are no rules, and if I got a few quid for my 4 "masterpieces" then I'd be encouraged to strike the anvil, my dad was a blacksmith after all. What do other writers do, I'll put this on FaceBook and see if I get any replies. I love my cast in my book, its exciting when I think of things they can do, I've decided to marry a few off in

Tears For A Butcher, it will be funny and full of pathos, but when will I have the time and push to do it, I never get writers block, quite the reverse. I have compromised and used blogs as a method of keeping the writing juices flowing, but I have reoccurring dreams of my cast, not real dreams but the stories want to escape me and dance on paper. If I could draw cartoons I'd be drawing them, there goes Mrs Murphy, here Big Sid, there's the undertaker, I do envy cartoonists. That's all I have to say, apart from this, coffee made with hot milk is so so nice. Goodnight everybody

Michael Casey www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Face Book Datamines Dec 10, '11 6:51 AM

As we all know FB datamines, so that they can give you focussed adverts, then they'll make their 100,000,000,000 is that right, 100billion. I think 20billion will be tops as so far 3billion is what they have achieved on ad revenue, but God Bless them if in the future they copy Bill Gates and throw the money at Good Causes.

Me I'm trying to hit 100 "friends", mainly poets/writers and magazines in the vain hope that I get discovered and make a few bucks for my 401K, thats what you guys call Pension Pot, I hope I'm right. Over here people cannot afford to save for their old age, over here is Birmingham England. Style and Substance is very differerent between here and where you guys are in USA. If Facebook is data mining me, its a publisher I'm after, its folks to go to Amazon Kindle to buy or BORROW my comedy books, we say comic meaning comedy but comic to you folks means Superman comics, and not comic as in comedy/amusing stuff.

So I'm wondering how fast folks can reach 100, 1000, or 5000 "friends", somebody can start a race and see how many friends they can get in 24hours, Guinness Book of Records can be the timekeeper. More free publicity for FB.

The obvious question is how good a "friend" is, or how real a "friend" is, how long do these "friendships" last. I have one real friend I've know since grammar school, so that is 42years.

FB is fun and I have had some very nice comments from a few people, but are the rest of my FB friends just like folks in a crowed lift/elevator, or like people rushing by in Times Square.

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Please hug a Friend for Christmas, a real big hug and say you are the best, start with your mum and dad and your sisters and brothers and then reach out, let in be the United Hugs States of America

Secret Prayer Dec 9, '11 5:40 PM

Secret Prayer© by Michael Casey

Sometimes a prayer is a secret that we cannot reveal to the intend recipient, they would not approve of being prayed for, they would not want to receive a pray, they would lose face, they don't want to receive a grace, yet prayer is a grace, from me to you, or rather I ask and you receive, so why do the deceiving? We are just doing the healing, yes we'll carry on praying and begging for healing, our eyes facing the ceiling. Sure we'll pray for anybody, and we'll whisper their name, "Hail Mary full of Grace, Our Father who art in Heaven" yes we'll pray this, we'll dust off those rosary beads and beg and pray for all we're worth, please please keep this lady on this earth, don't let her die or her other child will be left all alone, no Lord please I'm begging you now, yes MY prayers are worthless, but there must be somebody who reads this whose prayers are golden, whose love is worthy. So please please Lord pretend I'm somebody else praying and a begging you to save this life, save this somebody else's wife, save this somebody else's mummy. Please Lord this is all I can pray, let this lady live many many many a day AMEN

Facing Facebook Nov 26, '11 2:28 PM

Facing Facebook ©

By

Michael Casey

I wrote Internet Story a while back, years ago in fact, it tells the tale of a writer trying to get noticed, to get published. Now years later, the winds of Time have moved on, we are all older and fatter, well I am anyway. Technology has moved on too, Facebook has arrived on the scene, I didn't think much of it, then I thought sideways, I could use it to connect with writers and publishers. So that's what I've been doing.

You have to be careful with Facebook though, the weird and wonderful people of the world are out there ready to contradict and spit at you, the electronic version of spitting that is. People who only have one interest and will be very very very angry if you don't agree with them; its like having the Mafia and the Clu Clux Clan on tap, ready to bump you off. So check somebody's profile before you talk with them, people in America seem to be much more angry compared to folks over here in England, thank God for the Atlantic I say. Having said that you can connect with a multitude of people, women's writers are a big big thing in America, they are nice ladies, sadly I cannot write in that style otherwise I would and perhaps have my writing breakthrough. I can only write in my modern post Ealing Comedy style. You'll all need to go to www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com to see and judge my stuff, and as I said previous in Internet Story it'll cut your heart out when folks are so negative, and in some cases it is out of sheer spite, I believe in saying "good luck and God bless" to people but sadly that sentiment is dying out over here and in the USA.

Erotic fiction is big too, but I always see the funny side, if you read my comic novel

The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker, you'll see that beds break and I use Metaphors because its funnier, I'm not writing the Karma Sutra after all. I would have failed the practical exam anyway.

So if you want laughter with your sex then read The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker, 1% comedy sex, 99% straight comedy at 500 pages and only 3quid on Amazon Kindle a bargain. The hero finally gets his girl, the girl from the dog pound, only he stinks like a tart and she thinks he's

gay, but they do break a bed afterwards and have to glue it back together with superglue.

So I'll post this new piece on Facebook and see if it encourages people to buy my book, I need to explain to the American readers that comic means comic not comic. Or in plainer English, comic means funny, its not a comic like Superman, it's a comic book ie. Comedy book. So I'll post this and see if my sales on Amazon Kindle go through the roof, I have of course broke a few beds myself, but that's because I weigh 112kilos , 17.5 stones or in American parlance 245 pounds. I have also been inside 242 bedrooms, and that's only because I used to work in a hotel, CPNEC, you're minds are so dirty! Enjoy my books.

Disguises Nov 22, '11 3:28 PM

Disguises, we all hide this and hide that from each other and from ourselves. We smile when we really want to say, oh no its that boring so in so. We go around to nans when really we wish she was dead and we wouldn't have to waste our time with all this visiting. If we knew she was rich and was planning to leave it all to use we wouldn't complain so much. If nan heard our bitching she'd leave all her shares and equities to the local cats home. We lie to people to save face, we put a 10 year old photo of ourselves on Facebook. Before we were fat, before we needed a face lift. We are just so vain, vain enough to enter Politics, but which side would we be on, does it matter? When we go to bed are we still acting? Or are all barriers down? Are we sleeping with the enemy? Or is it love? With love there should be no barriers, no marrying for love or for status. For Richer For Poorer, and no disguises included

p.s. photo is me and the wife when we first met, I sent her back to Shanghai to tell her parents all my bad points, no lies allowed

WHY ARE WRITERS SO PRECIOUS? Nov 19, '11 11:23 AM

Why are writers and poets so precious?(c)

By Michael Casey

Why are writers and poets so precious?

Are words more important than people.

Do we love our words more than our selves

Our words are our children

But we hate children

We hate people

We just love words

Words are our mistress

Words are our lovers

Words are our whores

We prefer the page

We prefer the pen in our hand

We prefer the soft touch of the keyboard

A woman in our bed is not good enough

A man in our arms does not satisfy us.

No we want words

We want to make love to a dictionary

p.s. I've just burnt my dictionary I'm going to bed with a woman!

DT had a piece about Padre Pio , here's my own experience Nov 16, '11 3:18 PM

Web site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Padre Pio and Me ©

By

Michael Casey

It's a contradiction in terms immediately , how can I copyright a Saint . A brand new saint at that . I first heard of him through some Religious reading I did . I feel embarrassed to admit it , but I am a practising Catholic , its not fashionable to have any Faith but its mine so I admit it . Immediately the prejudice begins , but if I WERE A Jew or a Muslim , it would be the same . I do feel that my catholic tastes have given me a broader outlook on life , as has my eclectic tastes and rubbing shoulders with a wide variety of people .

But I want to talk about Padre Pio . I had a crisis and was reading about him at the time , so I said my prayers to him and the way forward was revealed . Though Padre Pio always says go Higher , he is just a stepping stone on the way to a better place . What is so hard to understand about Padre Pio is how he suffered . He had the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune . Condemned by his own superiors , made to be quiet for a decade and so forth . Science Fiction teaches or rather amuses us about Time Travel , but with Padre Pio it really happened , he wanted to share in Christ's agony so he thought , what if he too could have and suffer the wounds on that day of Crucifixion . So it came to pass that he suffered for 50years . He had the indignity of medical examinations and of being thought just to be a mental patient , but his work and life proved his holiness .

So it's nearly 1990 and I hear about him and read a few books , its hard to understand the value of suffering in this age of quick fix pain killers and the lets have a fix , whatever the fix might be , sex, drugs and rock and roll or whatever . Its like suddenly studying again after years of lying fallow , the learning curve is enormous . So too is it with Padre Pio , the idea behind his life is enormous , but so too is the capacity for love and help .

My favourite story is how Padre Pio explains that The Wedding Feast at Cena happened because

Jesus could not refuse his mother . Very Italian , or Irish or Spanish and so on , but could any of us refuse our mothers?

So I thought more about what Padre Pio said , and his motto of Pray Hope Don't Worry became my own . Carpe Diem is another good motto but perhaps this can be used by any Hedonist , or other kind of selfish person .Padre Pio reminds us to pray and that pray is not wasted , its perfume that is never wasted is a phrase I like . My mother always used to say that if you couldn't sleep you should say the Rosary , and she was right . Though in todays world an hour on the Internet or with MTV might do the trick .

So why the devotion to Padre Pio , I'll cut to the chase.

My mother died suddenly but peacefully in her sleep , my brother tried CPR , but she was gone . Imagine the anguish amongst her 6 children and her husband of nearly 50 years . All except me , my mother had said no tears when she go ,so I never cried , I was the odd one out .I know how prayerful she was , so I had no need of tears .

Eight bare weeks later my brother , the same brother heard our dad fall out of bed , so he ran to his bedroom . My brother was facing the exact same situation , he tried CPR , the ambulance was called , an injection was given straight to the heart . On weekends there is a doctor in the ambulance , so Luck , if that's the word was with us . The next day 4 of my brothers and sisters came around to tell me the news . When my sister had come around 8 weeks previously I knew somebody was dead but I assumed it was my dad , he's die first we all thought . So now 8 weeks later it was his turn to die . At the hospital dad was given 1 week to live , I cried like a baby , worse than a baby , but I loved him , so I told he he should go to our mother and not hang on if he didn't want to . The next day I was in my sister's house crying , we picked hymns for his funeral .Yet my father survived , 19 patients on a heart ward , 18 died my dad survived . Padre Pio was beseiged by my prayers , I put Padre Pio's photo under his pillow . Dad lost his mind , he was in Dudley Rd for 3months , 12 weeks , more than half of them all tubed up . His life hanging in the balance . At the same time somewhere in Florida another man was at deaths door , he was a totally stranger to me , I didn't even know his name , I'd never met him , he was give 24hours to live , a Chinese man from Shanghai was at deaths door . The

Chinaman survived .My dad's memory was totally wiped , he did not know who I was, I'm your son was greeted with , am I married . I was the favourite son , he did not even know me . But still we prayed , it's a feeling in your guts , just like when you are nearly killed as you cross the road , its in your guts and in your heart , Jesus save my dad , Jesus save my dad , Padre Pio help !!! This goes around your head like a merry go around or a kaleidoscope . Finally dad awoke . He said that he can remember hearing the doctor say to wheel him down to the end of the ward , because he'd be dead soon . At that moment my dad awoke, and the doctor dropped his cup of tea in shock . No not an instantaneous miracle , but as Dr Singh had said if he were 30years younger he'd have a heart transplant because dad's heart was rubbish .

Now , when I told my brother that dad was reading a newspaper he was shocked . His memory had come back . He knew who we all were .Every day for three months I walked the corridor at Dudley Rd , the longest hospital corridor in Europe , 1 kilometre long . Finally he left the hospital , my sister had found a good home for him to live in , he was far too weak to live in the family house .

For 3 years dad survived , like a Godfather with all his children making constant visits . Finally I met my future wife . It was her uncle who had miraculously survived at the same time as my father . It was her uncle who encouraged us in our love . From Shanghai to Birmingham .These great men , her uncle and my father never met , but I know Padre Pio must have helped both of them . Further prayer was needed to bring me and my wife permanenetly together . A Chinese miracle happened . Now we are wed , we have a 2year old and please God a healthy second baby in the Autumn . The improbability of our meeting , plus the fact that both men HAD to live for us to be married and have a family , this may be a coincidence to some but I know a miracle when I see one. A miracle is something that makes you feel humble , it makes you know that God has whispered your name . When I look at my wife , I feel humble . Seeing our daughter laugh and play also makes me humble as will our new baby.

Then you can look back and know that prayer is like perfume that can never be wasted , your life has led you to where you are now , yes at times sad and terrible , but be humble in the sight of God means something , not just for me , but for all Believers .

I once stood by the fridge and said to Padre Pio , I give up , you take over , all I want is to be married , and perhaps have a family , and do something useful with my life . That was just before my eyes were opened to my wife . I used to say that I got 2 out of my 3 wishes . Perhaps my current occupation is my 3rd wish , or a more outstanding miracle is waiting in the wings , but as Padre Pio said ,always ask for the big Grace .Perhaps we have to be humble enough to deserve it , because I believe it to be a fact that , truly great people are humble because they know just how little they really know.

Degree Madness Nov 15, '11 8:40 AM

Degree madness

By michaelgcasey

There was a nice piece in today's DT about degrees and their value or lack of. £27,000 for a degree is madness, and the piece did speak of "rubbish" degrees, I was told by a friend that 40% was the pass grade for an engineering degree here in Birmingham. This is madness pure and simple, I'm sure any real employer would roll their eyes and reach for the coffee. I have also met young people with a piece of paper and no common sense. As demonstrating because it was their right to have a degree, I'd say having a red jumper is more useful than some degrees, save £27,000 and open a business instead.

My daughter took her 11plus 2 days ago, that I hope will help her, but even if she were to fail, we still have 2 ex-grammar schools where she could go. As for University, I am already telling her just to enjoy her life and get 3 years hands on experience, or 4 years if you include the gap year either before or after Uni. She can do what she likes, but always do her best, just as my dad instructed us. Then she has something to offer an employer, I've had a varied employment life these past 12 years, but it has taught me that being useful and flexible is better than a Micky Mouse degree she might apply for. I tell her Paul McCartney's daughter went to a comp but look at Stella now. It's the Person not the Paper that matters

Return of the Blog Nov 12, '11 5:36 PM

Return of the Blog ©

By

Michael Casey

I've been away from my blog for a couple of weeks, I've been trying to get folks to go to www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com and sample my wares, I've been using Facebook and LinkedIn to try and whip up interest in my work. Amazon Kindle now has 4 books of mine waiting to be discovered. I'm Michael Casey, not the Michael Casey the monk who writes religious books, nor Michael Casey the DIY expert, just look for my fat face on the covers then it's the right Michael Casey.

Poetry is a big big thing, Facebook poetry section has almost 22,000 members, I have written 2 great poems in 20 years, other than that the standard on Facebook Poetry is very very high, better than my other attempts at poetry. However as somebody once said my general writing was in itself poetic, so I'm trying to impress the Poetry People with my other stuff.

Today is End Of The 11+ plus day in our house, my 10year old daughter did this exam this morning, if she passes she'll go to King Edwards Grammar School. I can remember my own 11+ and the deputy head teacher whispering to me, "if you're stuck go on, don't waste time." So did I cheat? I did pass and I did go to one of the best grammar schools at the time, 1970s and all that. Nowadays there are fewer and fewer grammar schools, if my daughter fails there are still two good ex-grammar schools just up the road from where we live. I suppose its discipline that matters the most, if you are in a school where the other pupils are badly behaved then you and the rest of the class suffer. So really I don't care where my daughter goes, and pass and fail does not matter, so long as she is happy.

We are celebrating tonight with duck and pancakes, my Shanghai wife is a good cook, she just had to "steal" some leeks from our local take-away friends so that we could celebrate. End of the 11+ study regime, 2 or 3 hours of extra study every night for months, folders from a Chinese friend at Birmingham University. The folders are now in the boot of our car and will be returned, however in 3

years time they will no doubt return for my younger daughter. In Glee the other week the Chinese character got an A- , which was a F as far as his family was concerned.

That line made me laugh out loud, but if you have Chinese family or friends it is so so true, there must be 20 PhDs at least who attend the Birmingham Chinese Church, so their kids are all off the scale as far as studying goes. I used to think look at all those PhDs, then there was one emptying the dustbins, he wasn't a PhD, no he was a Professor. I must also add they are amongst the kindest people I have ever met in my life.

So I'll finish by saying my half Chinese daughters, are A+++++++ in my heart.

Grammar or Style my reply to a LinkedIn piece Oct 25, '11 11:25 AM

I was probably the last person in England to be taught grammar, early 1970s. It is rare for it to be taught now, but Google away and contradict me.

Grammar is scaffolding for language, just as gossip is the glue that binds communities together. People who are fixated about grammar etc, are stupid as New Yorkers might say. Its the message that matters, sure if the words are so badly written that nobody can understand that does matter. Its very American to go on courses to learn how to write or go to Journalism School for 4 years. I'd say don't waste your time.

Me I listened to BBC Radio4 for 20 years before I picked up a pen, its speech radio with drama,news and so on. So from 10 to 30 I must have heard thousands of plays and so on. Then when I picked up a pen nearly 25 years ago I had a good start, but it still took me a year of trying before I said to myself, I can write.

Style you either have or don't have, you can steal somebody elses or over analyse every book you have ever read. My own experience of Eng Lit is that it kills what you should be reading. enjoy the book first and then think why you loved it afterwards. If the passion is there, then make love, don't ring your priest first, just make love. English should be such a passion, I'm told I have a good style, I hope because its funny, but you cannot analyse a joke, its either funny or its isn't. Humour does depend on the delivery, its the way I tell them was what one great Northern Irish comedian said. A favourite uncle only has to purse his lips and we all start to smile, then when he says something we are in stitches. I know from my hotel experience at CPNEC I could raise a laugh, why, because I was practicing all day every day 12 hours a day, with such practice I had to be good. Just as a singer practices and reaches her peak, so does a writer. Bad style or bad writer, say like Dan Brown, can kill enjoyment so you cannot read more than a page, yet we are all different, some people think Dan Brown is great, I do not. I'll leave you with that thought. My stuff is on www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com and The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker my lead book is on Amazon Kindle with 3 other books of mine, just look for my face of the covers.

Just Say No to Warren Buffett Oct 22, '11 6:22 PM

OCTOBER 22ND, 2011 21:41

Just Say No to Warren Buffett

By michaelgcasey

Too many wars broke America. Too many arguements amongst politicians broke America, too lax tax laws broke America. Lending money to folks who had zero credit rating broke America. America is divided, just watch Fox news having a discussion programme, 50% don't bother to vote, and the rest are divided. So 26% of the country tells the other 74% what to do. Politicians need to grow up but they won't. And Still folks naively vote Tea Party. In then end you have to negotiate. I feel sad that USA has reached this point. Perhaps we need the spirit of the 60s again, when we all had hopes and dreams. Spending billions to get elected is obscene. USA can be great again, but it needs to start from the bottom up. Don't complain about China, especially when China is bailing everybody out. USA has to recapture its spirit again, they need to start today immediately, and never never never put their hopes in any politician, change USA one person at a time. Its not a spiritual message, its a love yourself back to health and strength then USA can be what it wants to be.

Red Carpet Oct 22, '11 7:27 AM

The Red Carpet ©

By

Michael Casey

I was just reading the Daily Telegraph, its my paper of choice, they had a photo selection on the continuing celebrations for Paul McCartney and his new wife. This time it was in New York, the red carpet was rolled out, though I couldn't actually tell from the photos was the carpet actually rolled out, a la Oscars. But the theme is the same, you are important, so the red carpet comes out, I've just had a look at Google for the history and Wikipedia says something but remember Wikipedia is not Gospel, look me up and see how inaccurate it is.

A red carpet makes us feel important, as does a fawning flunkey, Dickens captured it all with Uriah Heep, and no I'm no Dickens expert, I just know 2 sentences about everything, which is one sentence more than the average guy, if I'm lucky. Or if any of you are old rock stars then Uriah Heep was a ROCK band. A new carpet has bounce and as we all know it's the underlay that makes the difference, and more importantly than that it's the carpet fitter, the bloke with the gripper who turns a house into a home. I saved up and had all my house done 6 months after I moved in, that's 25 years ago now. It wasn't red carpet but I felt important, I was bouncing around my house, my red carpet home for weeks afterwards. Now years later and I'm married with girls in the house, we had to replace a chair so when the square yard it had sat on was revealed after decades of darkness the square was pristine and bouncy, as bouncy as a bouncy castle. So my girls enjoyed the bouncy square until the new chair arrived.

If you stand while you work as I've done in several jobs then a touch of softness underfoot is so so welcomed, whether it be red white or blue. I used to stand for 12 hours a day walking on marble in the hotel, CPNEC. We did 4 12hour shifts, the first day off I'd hobble down the stairs at home, I needed recovery time. So if ever I get the red carpet treatment, I will really enjoy it, but I do hope it has masses of soft underlay.

Red carpets are noisy they shout and scream at you, I am George Clooney, worship me, me I do

actually look like George Cloony, google "michaelgcasey" and then hit images. Oh I was a bit economical with the truth during that last sentence, but I do look like the Welsh news anchor on the BBC, well my wife thinks so. Yes, where was I, on the red carpet, would it make any difference if the colour was changed? I think it's the concept of an outdoor carpet, we could have wallpaper on the outside of our homes, that would be extravagant, here in UK we have Blue Plaques to show/honour famous people and where they live. Just up the road from where I am talking is The Birmingham Oratory, and it has a blue plaque, John Henry Newman lived there, if you go a few hundred yards further up the road there is a blue plaque for JRR Tolkien, I doubt if there will ever be a blue plaque to me, MichaelGCasey.

So will I ever be smiling from the red carpet walking arm in arm with my three girls, as they talk in Mandarin as we walk the red carpet in Shanghai, my books translated and filmed, the top show in China, probably not, but if anybody has any carpet going spare, my living room now needs a new carpet, any colour accepted.

Inner Laughter Oct 16, '11 5:20 PM

Inner Laughter ©

By Michael Casey

Our smallest will be a year older this week, she's a natural comedian, we wonder where she got it from. Her Shanghai grandfather was a comedian, and I try and write comedy, though I choose the word humour mainly, and not as a get-out clause. So how can a 7 year old be so funny, is it in the genes or is it because she feels so happy and loved that the laughter just runs out. Her humour first showed itself back in 2007 when we were in Shanghai visiting the Chinese family, she would have been 3 and a half then. She picked up chopsticks and mastered them during a family meal for 30 or 40 in a restaurant. The Shanghai cousins begged her to say something, so finally she did "A fan pi, A fan pi" she said which meant "A had farted, A had farted" laughter rippled around the room. She dresses up as a princess or in traditional Chinese costume, she lines up 40 teddy bears and teaches them and takes the register. She parades around in my wife's shoes, bracelets and necklaces clicking as she walks. Faces are pulled and accents put on, English and Chinese. She crosses her legs like LULU, the Chinese interviewer not the Scottish singer, and holds her clipboard and asks questions. Dolls houses are her joy, she got a Sylvester family dolls house as a Birthday present last year, I hope I spelt that right. Anyways, that wasn't enough so 2 or 3 shoe boxes were converted into dolls houses, and sweet wrappers were turned into wind blinds. Other items for her dolls houses were manufactured by her and her imagination. Then she decided to try her hand at writing stories, I've been doing it for nearly 25 years, her Shanghai grandfather also did a bit of writing and then there is the Shanghai great uncle who is a political journalist, so it's in the blood. When I read a piece of hers the other day I was amazed by the style she had, it will be her who makes money from writing before I do. Her Irish grandfather was a blacksmith and he'd be so proud of her. Pride and love I suppose that sums it up, we should all let our small daughters have freedom to use their imagination, but remember to hide your shoe boxes.

Resignation Pantomime Oct 16, '11 10:03 AM

Resignation Pantomime ©

By Michael Casey

Oh sorry Sir, I was caught with my trousers down, with my hand in the till, or was it on the bosom of a secretary or some other members wife. Either way I did nothing wrong I can assure you, it didn't mean anything it was only sex, great great sex but nothing dirty or squalid. I did put the Ministerial red box under the bed and out of site. So why all the fuss, it wasn't as if she was from another political party, she was true blue, true red white and blue, and as for her sister that just happened it wasn't intended. And now both are pregnant and its against their principals to kill the baby, what amount of Child Tax credit will they both get. Do I have to leave my grace and favour home? Can't I stay there, there a great creche nearby. I'd be able to push both bastards in the park and the little bins will be great to throw away all the nappies, and Ministerial papers. Perfect, so why can't I keep my job. &*% the public, I'm better than them anyway, what the *&%\$ do they know about politics, all the nuances and so on. So I have a Swiss bank account and friends from all over the world, but that makes me an even better Minister, if the public how much blood I've sweated for those ungrateful B&%\$£. They'd be making ME Prime Minister, and as for the S&&%\$\$ in the press with their zoom lens, so what if I went to a late night store smoking a joint and looking for contraceptives. If I hadn't to leg it away from the press I would have had protection and both my girlfriend and her sister wouldn't now be pregnant and selling their story to the News Of the World. I will of course be now resigning my Cabinet position, after 15 days I thought I'd got away with it,

Your Close Friend John Doe

Turning Back The Clock Oct 10, '11 7:44 AM

Turning Back The Clock ©

By

Michael Casey

Soon we'll be turning back the clock, Winter will be upon us, we'll be reaching up to the high cupboards and ferreting out our duvets and blankets. We be smelling them to see if they are musty, should we put them on the washing line outside to air them, to make them fresh, or perhaps just bung them in the washing machine. Or if we are students, we'll just spray them with deodorant and then throw them on the bed, just in time for the night of passion.

Boots catch our attention next, we look under the bed, what's hiding there? Spiders perhaps, or if we are students in our digs in Selly Oak or wherever perhaps a mouse asleep in our boots, or dead even. So we search for the vacuum cleaner, now where did we leave it, have we got one anyway? Its hard to remember where a vacuum cleaner is when you never use it, your flatmate usually does or did the vacuum cleaning, he was besotted with cleaning and he always cleaned up, but that was a month ago, when you split up, when you caught him in bed with your best friend, your sister!

We decide to go shopping and buy large tins of soup, soups are always good in Winter, and there's always stale bread in the house as we never like throwing it away, just like Heidi in the old old story. So we will be doing our bit for ecology, recycling our bread, the squirrels would love it as would the birds, but no we will have all the stale bread with our Heinz tomato soup, as the nights close in we will be wrapped up all warm with our bowl of soup.

We'll look at our pile of wood in the woodshed, do we need to do more chopping? Should we order some turf or coal. The scent of peat burning or coal fills the air, it evokes memories from childhood, the coal man coming up the entry with a sack of coal on his back, 3 sacks was what we had, a hundredweight each, that's 8 stones, then in the 1970s we got central heating, as we were in a smokeless zone. Watching tv together in the Autumn/Winter evenings was such a joy, dad telling us to close the curtains as it was so dark and black outside. Going around the corner to the off licence to buy sweets and crisps, and Cidrax a pop that tasted like cider, there was money on the bottles

too. I used to drink the dregs and then buy mojos or blackjacks with the money; only my brother knew me, so he used to pee in the bottle first....

Time itself moved, dad would grab the clock and take it upstairs to bed with him, "don't have that too loud" he'd say pointed to the tv, then he'd be gone. We'd stay up to watch the horror films on ATV, Peter Tomlinson used to have a teddy bear beside him as he introduced the films, all this was when the clocks went back, back in time now as I remember, 45years ago. I hope as you all turn back the clocks you remember everything with a smile, even when you forgot and ended up an hour early for Sunday Mass.

a tired looking me

Star Trek Oct 8, '11 5:57 PM

I saw the 2009 Abrams Version of Star Trek again tonight, it was on last week, so many repeats....

I liked the idea of Spock getting the girl. Simon Pegg was great as Scottie, a great use of Simon Pegg, I like him more and more, his Hot Fuzz is a great film too.

Tonight's Star Trek looked great and the music was fab too, like classical music.

A lot of people my age will have loved it too, all those years ago in the 60s and in black and white we watched Jim Kirk and his adventures. Star Trek is part of our lives, just as Songs Of Praise is part of others' lives.

I know Star Trek is more than science fiction, its part of the feel good generation which came about with the Beach Boys and pop music, its all part of the same generation. As I talk I'm listening to Gerry Rafferty, that's another era too, where have the years gone. I'm sure I'll wake up one day and I'll be dead. So on that note I'll go bed, sleep of the dead.

The Sky at Night Oct 8, '11 12:43 PM

Our back garden forms a rectangle black box with other gardens so we can always get a good view of the stars. I've always encouraged my children to look to the stars, and to see if they can see ET. The other night my daughter said she saw a shooting star. She made a wish for a big house with 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, not forgetting a cat and a dog and a gerbil. So I hope everybody else will be looking to the stars tonight and every night. The stars are always a free show and if we can instill into our kids the wonder for them then we've done something really great. I can remember the Apollo missions and all that, the 60s were great as a kid, Apollo, Mumhammed Ali, Beatles, much much better than todays reality tv and wanna be stars. True stars are in the Sky at Night.

Burglar in Reverse Sep 27, '11 12:18 PM

I was relaxing on my new bed while I read up on the EU, see I always read rivetting stuff. The alarm went off, I went downstairs but nobody was there. Had I put the alarm on incorrectly? NO. I looked in the fridge and there were 3 litres of Tesco smooth not from concentrate orange there. Was this an Irish thief? No it was a Shanghai wife, she had slipped in and out of the house in a minute, putting the orange in the fridge before disappearing up the road. Its great orange by the way IF a little expensive, but if anybody wants to donate orange to me on a regular basis, feel free .

I am Irish after all, Kerry, now I have 60 more pages to read, so if anybody wants to put Camenbert in the fridge while I'm upstairs on my BedzRus bed, Lecco, its really fab.

Michael

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Rediscovering John Denver Sep 25, '11 11:31 AM

Rediscovering John Denver ©

By Michael Casey

A long time ago I used to listen to John Denver, my dad used to say he had a soft voice and if John Denver was on the radio he'd raise the volume. 35 years ago maybe I'd get my giro and buy a few books to read and a John Denver album to listen to. I had saved up £30 to buy a stereo from a previous job, it was 8 watts per speaker.

So me and John had good times together, I remember I read all the Alistair Maclean books at that time, staying up late to do so, I could read a whole book in a day if I stuck at it. Living at home was great, I couldn't afford to live anywhere else either. My dad's charity I repaid 20 years later, I visited him every single day for 3 years, and that's how I met the wife.

Avoiding scratching the record was a major thing in those days, and fluff on the needle was important too. It was a different sound compared to today, you may have heard that some singers and bands try and put back the scratches on records. They don't like the pure song. Now or should I say perhaps 10 or 15 years ago I got John Denver on CD, so I could listen on a decent hifi.

Time and technology moves on so I have put my CD collection on my PC, so I can hear whatever I like while I work on the PC.

Then the latest step is to move my collection to my 10 quid MP3 player, so now while on the bus to work I can listen to JD. I have noticed something great, because I am using earphones I can pick up things I'd never heard while listening on speakers.

People have all kinds of headgear for listening to mobiles and to listen to their music, it is very annoying when its loud and you can hear them even though you have your own earphones in.

They'll end up deaf, THEY'LL END UP DEAF. I had an ear infection for 3 weeks so now I really do appreciate my hearing and God for it too. I'll finish now, but do go and dig out your own John Denver, or Depeche Mode and Crowded House. Just enjoy your own music, and send me 6 lottery numbers, there's this house I'd like to buy, its £4,000,000 biggest house build in 100years in Birmingham. I can just imagine myself listening to John Denver in luxury. Failing that there's a nicehouse for 1/16 of the price, home is where the heart is, and John Denver singing!

Wood or Metal, which is best Sep 12, '11 4:07 PM

Wood or Metal, which is best ©

By Michael Casey

We all can remember the old fashioned sprung beds made from metal, and how you needed a spanner to dismantle them. I'm talking back in the 60s now and the beds now doubt came from the 50s. Pillow cases were stripy black and white, convict style.

Mattresses were just as uninspiring. Headboards were really heavy, made of steel with a wooden piece at the top.

I remember one of the single beds in the room we all shared. The leg had broken off, so first a tin of beans, then an iron, an iron iron, one used for ironing clothes was pressed into service to support the bed in the bottom right hand corner. I suppose we were quite poor in our childhood days, but much much loved.

We also had to move things about in our lodging house next door. Painting and decorating when lodgers bailed out. My mother bought up a load of material from the fire salvage shop down the road and made ticks and pillowcases for the beds in the lodgers rooms. Mum really was a devil on the sewing machine, I'm told dad carried it from West Bromwich to Berry Street Winson Green. Singer was the name and sewing was the game, I think we have the very same machine tucked away somewhere.

So why am I talking about beds, metal or wood today. Well you see I am heavy, very heavy, even if do look 4 stones, ok 3 stones lighter than I look. I bought a bed when I moved into this house and it lasted decades. However when I replaced the pine bed with a metal bed you can guess what happened. The metal headboard went wonky, it rattles and jiggles. Then one side of the bed just gave up all together, like an elephant doing the splits, my bed split apart, but only on the right hand side.

So what would you do? Me I remembered my childhood and reached for an iron iron, but that was not tall enough. I did have a load of photo albums gathering dust, in fact my wife wanted me to throw them away. We had compromised so I put them in an old bag and forgot about them. Now I

remembered them. Perfect to fix my new metal bed, one load of albums at the top, another load at the bottom, and finally another load in the middle. I have to be very careful as there is a radiator right next to the bed, so to avoid a boiling eruption of hot water the bed must be supported correctly. This has been the case for a year, but I'm getting fed up with this arrangement especially as the top of the bed is shaking more and more and clatters into the chest of drawers behind. So today I had a look at beds metal and wood, online and in my local furniture shop. There was a sale item in the window and I was very tempted, I had brought a tape measure with me and the bed would fit. However when I sat on the bed it wobbled like a jelly, and it did say it was a back support mattress. So it failed the test. I tried another bed before heading upstairs to look at what was there. I did find a great bed and it was on offer, £150 for the double. If I had cash in my pocket I would have bought it. I'm like that when I buy things, so normally I don't carry money with me, just pocket money. I went home determined to return and buy it. But first I'd look online. I found the same item cheaper online, 30quid cheaper, the exact same thing. Then the question is, should I buy it online or from where I saw it in the flesh so to speak. I don't want to buy rubbish. I have decided though I'll never buy a metal bed again. I did buy a metal one from my daughter but it is beginning to sag a bit. Pine is nice to look at too.

That's all I have to say for tonight, wood is always better. When I was single I could just please myself but once you are married with children you have to justify every penny. Should I have a new bed for me or should I buy shoes for the girls instead, so far the shoes have won.

How do you know you are fat? Sep 1, '11 2:03 PM

How do you know you are fat? ©

By

Michael Casey

I'm not fat, of course I'm not fat. I KNOW I'm not fat, its other people who are fat, alright?

I'm big yes, but I'm not fat, got it? Just so long as you know, I am not fat. Just because I weigh nearly 3 times as much as my wife it does not make me fat. Just because I weigh as much as my wife and our 2 kids and the mother-in-law does NOT make me fat, alright?

Does this sound familiar? Then maybe, just maybe, YOU are fat, not me but YOU.

Can YOU see your feet when you are in the shower? I can, so I'm not fat, its YOU, so there. I do have to breath in and press my hands on my tummy, but I'm not fat. When you take your clothes off the washing line and hold them up and it looks like a tent the kids can play in, then perhaps you are BIG, like me, big but NOT fat!

I weigh myself every morning on the bathroom scales, after I've used the W.C. and my weight is the same every day, which proves, I'm not fat. 112kilos for the Europeans reading this, or 17.5stones for English readers, for any Americans reading this a "stone" is 14pounds. So do the maths, and we say maths not math, 17.5 stones is $17 \times 14 + 7 = 245$ pounds, I'm as heavy as a heavyweight boxer. But its tight fat, not wobbly fat, so I look 200pounds maybe. You can all go to Amazon Kindle and buy my 4 books and you'll see some photos too. www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com is my site and there's more

photos there as well as a lot of blog. All of which will prove that I'm NOT fat.

I don't know about having big bones, we don't have a dog, so how would I know, but at least my wife says I'm "medium" fat compared to the folks we saw when we were in Florida a few years ago, and compared to folks we saw in Frankfurt, which all goes to prove, I'm just big, not FAT.

So are you all agreeing with me, or do you think I a sad sad fat guy? Do you hear the same words often? Spoken by yourselves. Well my girls love me, my smallest loves me so much because my tubby is like Winnie the Pooh's. I tell my wife she gets more value for money, pound for pound she has more husband compared to those wives who have small husbands. Compared to a regular

Chinese husband, she has an absolute bargain, she has me. And I have white hair too, what more could a fashionable Shanghai girl want. Then there's our bilingual daughters, so pretty, if she stuck with Chinese she would not have had such pretty girls. And its there that I silence her, and I'm still NOT fat.

Peace Corp Aug 29, '11 5:07 PM

Peace Corp ©

By

Michael Casey

I heard about The Peace Corp on the radio⁴ this morning, it was a good programme. I didn't know it was 50 years old. It did get me thinking which is a good sign for any programme. JFK was the man behind it, the thing that changes the most is the soul of the volunteer, soul being the right word. To think that your gift of 2 years of your life, your work for 2 years is a soul changing thing, and the place where you are working benefits greatly too.

DC is on about having community service here, if it worked that would be fun for the youth and society could benefit too. The thing is though, do people in general want to be the Good Samaritan to Society, or are we all so selfish nowadays? Are we ready to have our soul changed? Years ago we had a guy at work he took a year off to travel around the world, when he came back he hadn't change an inch, so I think it was a waste of a year. It might be my Irish blood but we tell a tale when we come back from Aldi just up the road, our Chinese Irish kids are that way too. You have to connect with the world before you can change yourself and your surroundings wherever that may be. You cannot be Peace Corp unless you travel first to yourself, the Inner Journey is the biggest and best journey.

The journey within means you know yourself, you know your own heart, once that is known you can set out on whatever course you want to take. Sometimes in a life you do have the Dark Night of the Soul, but once you pass through that you do have an even greater insight into yourself. Naïve dreams give way to realities, you stop trying to run before you can walk, you plan, even if it's on a piece of paper stuck to the fridge. The Peace Corp idea may have been first sketched out on the back of an envelope, but it grew and now it's 50 years old. Over here we have The Duke of Edinburgh scheme and The Prince's Trust, next time I have a beer with the Duke and the Prince, or more likely in The Duke or The Prince pubs, I'll have to ask them did they think their soul changing schemes would make a difference. If you can discover or touch your own soul then you can have a little peace, peace will have a chance and John Lennon will smile again.

Fashionistas Strike Again Aug 25, '11 5:57 PM

Fashionistas Strike Again ©

By

Michael Casey

Well my daughters struck again, they knew my wife didn't really like my black jeans. So I was encouraged to donate them. Well what can 2 small girls do with one large pair of black jeans? First of all they cut the legs off, they always said I should wear shorts in the Summer. So now I had a pair of shorts. I tried them on, one leg was higher than the other, or is it one leg was shorter than the other? Either way, one thing was certain, I now had my first ever pair of shorts.

As for the girls, my smallest now had a skirt, it was made from one piece of one leg, there was a problem though they had managed to put a hole in the back of her new skirt; inspiration came and they slid on another piece of leg on top of the first, now she had a more stylist skirt, with a more fashionable design. As for my bigger daughter she had turned one piece of leg into a fashion bag, she had sewn up one end and then with a thin strip of leg she had made a strap. To make it even better she had added a spangle broach to it.

I had seen the results and had given in and tried on my new shorts, while they did the catwalk in the living room, Gadaffi was forgotten, they had more important things to do, catwalk. I gave in and donated another pair of jeans, in seconds I had a 2nd pair of shorts. What will the girls produce with the 2nd donation? I'll find out tomorrow no doubt. I did have an interlude in the afternoon sun, my daughter cut my hair, it was a bit of fun, I do have 2 weeks left before my holidays are over, so my hair will grow back before I return to work. I suppose I look like the gay designer in The Devil Loves Prada, but my hair does grow very very thick and fast, but white.

With that thought I'm off to bed, maybe I'll add photo tomorrow. For we are a Fashionista Family.

From Lenny Bruce to Innuendo Aug 14, '11 4:25 PM

From Lenny Bruce to Innuendo ©

By

Michael Casey

I was thinking about words and their power the other night as I drifted off to sleep, Lenny Bruce's name drifted through my mind. I was thinking about how we use words and perhaps I was thinking about my next blog. How nowadays nobody has a vocabulary, just F(*&^ or &*^%, that's what you get if you remonstrate with anybody under 30. I won't bore anybody with my take on the past week's mayhem.

I have a friend called Jim, we worked together at a 4star deluxe business hotel, Jim had worked very hard all his life, he had a tongue on him and he knew how to use it.

The thing though was that he could say anything and could get away with it, why, because he had charm, an old rogue's charm, so instead of getting the sack guests would say, a la Dick Emery, "you are awful". So if you like his use of words was acceptable.

If you rarely curse then it has more power when you do. But 15 year olds can and do curse ad infinitum, so although we can say its bad in fact its more boring than bad. In the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Belgium is the worst word you can use. Perhaps we need to invent a few more words, Politician, NofW, Wall Street, Stock Market are just a few that spring to mind. If somebody has "stock marketed" you, its akin to some kind of rape, that has left you battered and bruised, spiritually, mentally, financially.

No doubt I'll be criticised for my last sentence, which proves that people don't bother to read things in context.

Over here in England we have Innuendo, we have camp and other styles of comedy. In USA Irony is not understood, and you even get attempts at using irony, and you get the joke backward telegraphed and the star saying "I was being Ironic", when really they were getting it wrong.

Innuendo is a good form of language. You can say so much while saying so little. I like the comedians who used it so well in the past, I like words used as weapons of laughter, think back to the Goons

and Around the Horne. Kenneth Williams and Duncan and Sandy invented Camp humour BEFORE it was invented, I hope USA readers will Google all this they could make a comic discovery for themselves. 1950s, 1960s were light years ahead of the game. You don't need an overpaid fast talking guy looking at his own reflection, just go back to the old days, and they really were the good old days for comedy. I have been told myself that some of my stuff leads people up the garden path, which is all you need to do.

Lenny Bruce said, " have you ever Blaaaed a Bla, or have you ever Dooed a Do" I think that's a line from the film. It makes me remember too just how good Dustin Hoffman was/is 2 Oscars and loads of other stuff. The point is though that you don'y have to curse all the time, I think its just boring and lazy. I did a post called Metaphor This a few weeks ago, that proves that language is a balloon that can be twisted this way and that way to form a giraffe.

A sex scene when written down does not need to be graphic, a metaphor can be far funnier. He touched the scales of justice, he adjusted the weights, he was pleased with the result, law was duly served, he pleaded his innocence, but he felt the full force of justice, and he was fully processed, then he was taken down to the cells, he was relieved. That's how I showed Romance between a lawyer and a milkman/baker in my novel The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker. I'm no Jilly Cooper you can go to Amazon Kindle and Judge Me for yourselves.

Yes I do curse on occasion and when I write my actors may curse too, but words are like a cloak, they are clothes for my actors, and words show more Fashion and Class than some moron who can only "Daa a daa," and doesn't know his arse from his elbow.

Why is everything getting smaller? Aug 13, '11 4:44 PM

Why is everything getting smaller and smaller? I bought a personal DAB radio 6years ago and it was as big as a pack of fags. 2 days ago I got an MP3 player from Amazon (£13.50 a bargain)_ and that is about the size of my thumb, or smaller than a box of matches. You can get 600 or so tracks on it AND it has an FM radio. You do need a magnifying glass to read the LCD display, luckily I do have one. I'm old enough to remember the windup gramophone player we had, this was as big as a small fridge, I even remember breaking it up when it ceased working. So from the size of a fridge to a box of matches in one lifetime.

For more go to www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

or Amazon Kindle where 5 of my offerings are for sale.

Fridge Family Casey Aug 9, '11 5:58 PM

Fridge Family Casey ©

By

Michael Casey

Our fridge died on us. My wife had been nagging for ages about our fridge, finally I gave in. I agreed we needed a new fridge, and we could afford it.

So I started looking on the Internet to see where are the bargains were. Argos, Currys, Comet, John Lewis, these were the target sites, not to mention loads of others the google search gave us. But with something like a fridge, or rather a Frost Free Fridge Freezer, you really have to go to the shops and look at the offers.

So Sunday was Family Fridge Day. It began with my wife and girls going to their church, with a promise of a visit to Costco afterwards. I hadn't decided which of my 3 churches to go to, it all depends on how tired or lazy I am, that's why I'm here there and everywhere, so I have 3 priests praying for me. My wife and the girls go to the C of E while I stick with the Catholics. I forced myself to go to my local church around the corner, this is where our Topol look alike priest sings to us. Don't take my word, go and attend.

My wife was surprised when she returned that I'd been out to Mass, and why had she returned instead of directly going to Costco, the simple reason, what did I have in my pocket? My wallet. So off the family went to Costco.

I like Costco because you can have a beef hotdog and a soda, with soda refill for only £1.50, yes really. While we were there we spotted a fridge freezer, so we had a look, trying all the doors and so on. There was one problem, we have a galley kitchen so we had to think, would the door open fully, if it couldn't then we

couldn't buy it. We bought our stuff from Costco and I enjoyed the hotdog.

Next we were off to Wing Wip, he's a major Chinese food hypermarket, several of my wife's friends work there, Mr Ying Yip himself, one of the brothers waved us bye bye as we left the store. I'm told "byebye" is originally a Chinese word.

Afterwards we went to Sainsbury's in Selly Oak, which is a student area, next to Birmingham University. There my wife met more or her friends who happened to be shopping.

So the next port of call was over the dangerous road behind Sainsbury's that's where Comet and Currys and Homebase are.

We looked up and down the aisles we had a good play with the fridges. Ma, my mother-in-law in Shanghai had admonished us to get a big fridge because the kids were growing and would want more food very soon. There was a nice big Indesit a silver colour, immediately we agreed on that. But we still needed to look in the shop next door. So that's what we did, in the next shop my wife eyed a very big Bosch which blew the budget out of the water. So we looked at it and pulled and pushed all the drawers and doors open and closed. Then we went to Homebase but they don't have fridges in the shop, only online.

The final problem was the lack of space in our galley kitchen, really we needed a tape measure to measure from the back of the fridge to the door wide open position. So we thought we'd come back the next day with our measurements and compare to what was in the shop. These are the things the Shanghai Family Casey have to do out of love and madness. I suppose we are like the Adams Family when we hit the shops.

Safely back home we decided to take our measurements down, once we had these we were half way home. But I don't know about you but wouldn't it be easier to just do it online? So armed with the 55cm measurement we went searching online. Hey presto we found an Indesit Frost Free Fridge Freezer that matched our 55cm figure. To be honest it was the very same fridge I had suggested a couple of days before, only I'd been overruled, which meant the Adams Family had to go playing hide and seek while we looked for a fridge.

Family meeting was held and our two girls looked at the Dixon's offer. Yes that was the one. I hit return and bought the fridge freezer, frost free too. That was Sunday, though it felt not like a Sunday more like a Bank Holiday, a family day out while we looked at fridges.

Today Tuesday, the day after tomorrow, the lads rung us up early and said they'd be with us in 10 minutes. Then hey presto they appeared with the new frost free fridge freezer, our Indesit. They

stripped all the packaging away in the street and they carried in the new fridge, a bit like undertakers, but carrying in instead of out. They did carry away our old fridge, and in a matter of 10 mins we had a new addition to the family.

Our girls could not wait to try out the new super freezer, so after 4 hours, which is the wait time before you can switch on a new freezer, I was told this, I didn't know this. So once it was ready me and the girls made up some blackcurrant squash and poured it into the 24 ice cube slots. They were impatient to see the results of their experiment, several times they opened and closed the fast freezer box. Finally all was revealed, we had cracked it, we had flavoured ice cubes!

The girls say they have lots to grow now, as they measure their height against the fridge. Doesn't everybody's kids, or is it in this Shanghai Casey's family only? The new fridge is 1.74 metres, or up to my eyebrows so IF the girls grow that tall then they will be Models, they are pretty enough already, the wife could have been a model too, only she wasn't tall enough, and turned down a chance to be a model for child's clothes in Shanghai.

How she married me is another story, I think it was my ability to choose fridges that swung it for me.

#

Cooling Off Aug 3, '11 11:10 AM

Its really hot here in Sunny Birmingham.

I was thinking of filling the bath with beer and lying in it. I could have a couple of straws to quench my thirst.

I could then get my Shanghai wife to top up the beer by throwing buckets of beer all over me.

I could get the neighbour's dog to wag its tail to cool me down.

How much beer would it take to fill the bath.

Or maybe I could just use double strength squash as my bath filler.

Though beer would be best for my hair, beer shampoo is something the girls know about.

I've never tried orange squash shampoo, but it would be far cheaper than any celebrity hairdresser's products.

Hang on, is that the icecream van outside.

I just bought 20 99s so if I rub them all over my body I'll cool down for sure. When the cold dissipates the neighbour's dog can lick it all off, maybe a few cats too.

The wife has just shouted to me, she's filled the bath with beer, I can jump in now, all the Nectar points have finally come in useful

So SPLASH.

Waiting In Jul 28, '11 12:26 PM

Waiting IN ©

By

Michael Casey

We all wait in for workmen or gas man to come and read the meter or whatever, and one thing can be certain, they never but never turn up on time. Waiting for a parcel or a home purchase delivery can also mean waiting forever.

You wait and you wait, you will the man to arrive, you hope and you hope that it will arrive, you may even pray, the first time in years. Dear God make the DHL, the UPS or the Royal Mail man arrive, I really am looking forward to enjoying my latest lump of plastic gismo which will make my life worthwhile. How I lived without it I'll never know, I'm holding in my pee so I don't have to go, I don't want to miss the delivery man again. Once I was in the bathroom and I missed him and then it was 3 more days before I got my stuff.

This week we had a deliveryman convention, the van stopped and my wife was so happy jumping for joy, only it wasn't for us it was for a neighbour. A huge big thing, the delivery man was just wanting to offload it, any house would do, so long as he gets a scribble on the form or the new electronic machine they all now use. So reluctantly my wife was palmed off with somebody else's rubbish and not her own.

My wife was waiting for a Sat Nav, she'd looked everywhere online, and they were sold out, Tom Tom had gone gone gone. So finally she found Best Buy and they were the only place with stock and 10quid less than anywhere else, and a 10quid voucher too. So she was using tom toms to tell the world where to shop. As for me I spotted a Clarks online sale, so while she waited for a Tom Tom I was waiting for a pair of ½ price G fitting size 10 shoes. We were taking bets on whose stuff would arrive first.

I won the bet and danced around the living room with my ever so light and comfy shoes. My wife just heckled from a settee. I told her that the Sat Nav was delayed because the courier could not find our house. The next day, very late in the afternoon her treasure arrived, she had her Tom Tom, and

why is Tom Tom called Tom Tom, did the inventor have a stutter, or was the product so good it was named twice the same as New York New York.

I was given a 2 hour lecture or is it a joyful nag on the joys of Sat Navs, our kids thought it was a good toy too, it even talks to you, turn left, turn right. Almost as good as a mother-in-law in the back of a car.

I decided to take refuge in another room and wait for another pair of shoes. I hadn't ordered any more, I was just making an excuse to avoid the wife's advertising for Tom Tom. My waiting in was really waiting for her joy to end. I did ask her though could the Tom Tom give a route to Ma in Shanghai.

Move On

By michaelgcasey

Move On. That's what we need to do. The economy is crawling forward like an 80year old man, and what are we doing. We had a two week holiday, yes Hacking needs to be sorted, but while that has been going on nobody has been minding the store, nobody has been steering the ship, nobody has watched the kettle boiling dry.

WE do need to sell stuff, GB needs to sell stuff, we need to do busines, we need goodwill ambassadors, we need salesmen to sell GB. Tonight on TV we watched John Sargent enjoy time with tourists, tourism is a big big thing, we need to sell GB, make them come and when they come make them spend. We also need our salesmen to sell icecream to Eskimos, we need to sell sand to the Arabs, and to sell rice to the Chinese. We do have so much to sell, we are a Nation Of Shopkeepers as Napoleon said before he got a kicking. WE should have pride in ourselves and GB, what we should not be doing is to stop dead in the water because of all the Hacking, yes it was wrong and evil.

But now is the time to set things right, now is the time not for fear and flight, now the darkness of the night is over, now is the time to dance in the light, the morning light is here and all things are now clear. We have to begin again and sing again, we have to whistle while we work, we have to realise what we are worth. We are Great Britain, all people great and small, all of us have to stand tall and remember we can do it, we can do it. Motivate ourselves, have pride again, stride again, back to work. Its time to move on, its the future that matters, we have to move on.

Sherlock plays Badminton Jul 20, '11 6:07 PM

Sherlock plays Badminton

By michaelgcasey

Well the school hols are upon us, our kids break up tomorrow, I broke up myself 2 weeks ago. So on the way back home we decided to get a bit of treasure. You see I missed the chance to get a badminton set for my girls, they had a gret set in Aldi for a tenner, I mentioned it to the girls but it was gone when we went to find it. So they were sad about that, but I was happy as I found a cheap pair of sunglasses only 2 quid, brown and spotty.

So today on the way home I suggested we try another shop, and my smallest with a hawk's eyes found a badminton set for 4quid, it had 2 rackets and 2 shuttlecocks. So we were all happy, I treated myself to cream soda, do any of you remember the taste from childhood? Or adulthood in my case. So for a couple of hours my girls were teaching themselves to play. The 2 shuttlecocks went over our neighbours fence several times. I improvised by scrunching up some paper. We have a tone of paper in our house, so no need to wait for our neighbour to return the shuttlecocks, paper will do. I showed them how to bounce the shuttlecock 6 or 7 times on the mesh, then with that practice done then it should help them play.

My wife returned from helping her friend get her lost property back, a large suitcase that her friend uses as a shopping trolley, only she left it on the bus. So when my wife returned she wanted to play badminton, and yes she was good and quick. She is good at ping pong, her Chinese genes helping no doubt, it turns out she's good at badminton too. So I'm hoping our girls will have some of those good genes too. So the Summer will be full of badminton, even if we use paper shuttlecocks, I am google where I can get some cheap shuttlecocks, I like the idea of multicoloured shuttlecocks, and 4quid on Amazon is the best result so far.

I nearly forgot Sherlock was on tv again and I really loved it, the repeat was even more fun than the original. So with that I'll say goognight, but DO buy some badminton kids for your kids, the silence will be golden.

7 year's old Prom Jul 18, '11 5:04 PM

7 year's old Prom©

By

Michael Casey

Well tonight was the 7year olds Prom. Year2 in modern parlance.

My small daughter put on her party dress with a borrowed bit of glitter and play makeup.

Our ten year old put on her own party dress and walked her smaller sister to the ballroom door, really it's the school hall where the infants have their school dinners. Our small daughter had 2 hours of music and dancing, interrupted by fish and chips.

Me and my big daughter played on the computer for a bit before watching Stardust, we'd recorded it on Sky+ the night before. Then when it was time to collect her little sister, we climbed up the hill to the infants school, only 3 more days and she'll be an infant no more. In September the small daughter will cross the main road and join her big sister's school, the juniors. They'll be together for one year, then the big sister will be off to grammar school we hope.

Proms weren't invented when I was at school 40 years ago. It was too working class then, black and white tv and 2 channels, that's what we had and no Proms. Its an American import, just as Halloween is. The question is though, do the kids enjoy them? Yes, is the answer. Here are the photos to prove it, on www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com So I'll let the pictures be my 1000 words. Happy Proms everybody at this time of year.

A Quiet Night In Jul 16, '11 5:23 PM

A Quiet Night In ©

By

Michael Casey

A quiet night in, now that's what we all need from time to time. The wife and the girls are at Nancy's Mum's, Nancy's mum does have a name but my wife knows I couldn't possibly pronounce the Chinese, so remains Nancy's mum. While they are there the girls will go to an upper room and do some painting with Nancy, Nancy is 17 and an A* everything, with the help of God and 2 policemen she'll go to Oxford.

In the lower room is a Jesus evening, everybody gets fed by Nancy's mum then there are Bible readings and "Sharing" where the friends talk about Jesus at work in their lives. Me I'm here, listening to Genesis and Genesis are singing "Jesus he knows Me." I'm a Catholic from the nipple, with added an added inheritance of my mother's faith when she died. Doesn't make me special, just makes me me. "Can you hear Me, Can you see" sing Genesis, it all seems on cue, but that's how my writing comes out. A mixture of luck and hard work and a pinch of salt or angel dust, then I've got a piece to put on my blog www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com and in MyTelegraph.co.uk were I am the

dunce in the class.

Back to my girls, they are no doubt painting with Nancy and she is good enough to sell her paintings at a car boot sale or wherever is the place they should be sold. They are picking up some great tips, I want them to experience as many things as possible, then they may find things they can keep with them throughout their lives. My wife has no doubt had a good old gossip and is now boasting how God had helped us this week. Other families are sharing their experiences too. I did travel to Nancy's mum's a few weeks ago, just to show my face, but their path is not my path. So while they pray I've been trying to find some way of getting somebody, anybody to go to Amazon Kindle and sample my 4 wares on sale. Traffic is the word they use nowadays, if only I were a corrupt journalist, or a hacker then I'd make a few bob, or is it just a prison sentence. There would be a full stop to my works.

I have found a few folks via LinkedIn and Facebook but are they interested in a fat Charles Dickens,

with 1000th of the ability of good old Charlie. Strange things do happen on the Internet, if only I were allowed to blog for a Sunday newspaper, then I'd have a profile, though my profile at the moment is more like Falstaff, full of sack and a hapworth of bread, you'll have to find my photo and judge for yourselves, well I do hope more than 1 person IS reading this.

I did have time to look at www.rightmove.co.uk and dream of where I'd like to live IF I made it as a writer. I have only moved a mile and a half from where I was born and IF I had money I'd only move a mile and a half more. Near the woods for me and Subway the dog is my dream, though my daughters would rather have a gerbil. It is so quiet here while they are praying and painting, that does give me a picture of God as Banksy, would God use lightning bolts and rainbows to leave his art?

Well its after 10pm now so I'll love you and leave you, Genesis are still playing on the computer, "Dreaming in my sleep" they sing, which we all will be soon. So off to beddie bybys as my mother used to say.

Sampling Pop Jul 14, '11 11:30 AM

Sampling Pop ©

By

Michael Casey

The thing about children is that they like POP, yes POP with a capital P. I have to say or even admit that POP is part of my life too. Yes I did talk about booze a day or two ago, but today I'll talk about pop.

I've just rushed back from Aldi so I can rush out again to pick the kids up, school run ends next week. So today I've picked up a pack of snacks for them, as well as bananas and grapes. I've got 4 litres of apple juice too, and some more milk for my coffee and cereals, though I never mix coffee with my cereals. So that's an ordinary shopping basket, though I can remember my own mum with leather shopping bags before plastic bags were invented, and then condemned decades later.

Where was I? Forgive me my small daughter has just feeding me small seedless grapes, I'm sure all daughters do it. Anyway today the big decision was should I try Pink Lemonade, it looked very strange, very pink. So I bought one, only 40p for 2 litres, an Aldi bargain. I tried a bit but it tasted strange, I waited for it to get cold in the fridge, only it had a strange taste when I tried it, then my big daughter sampled it, her verdict, too fizzy.

We'll wait an hour for it to get really cold then we'll try it again, you have to be like a scientist when you sample pop. If you don't believe me just go ask your kids, and I mean those under 11; children over 11 are too sophisticated they are Dr Pepper drinkers after all. Once correct temperature is reached then the sampling can begin, and don't forget the straws. And if you drink alcohol make sure you hide it while sampling pop, otherwise your kids may sample that instead.

A few packs of crisps should also be available, this clears the children's pallet while sampling Pink Lemonade, then when all done a bowl of freshly diced fruit. I can hear the wife chopping and dicing behind me, her knife skills are quite something, I think she used to be in a circus or something, though to be honest I don't labour the point.

So that's it for today, another look inside the Chinese/Irish Adam's family, I'm heading for the fridge now, Mr Pink is waiting for me.

Cross Dressing Jul 13, '11 5:52 AM

JULY 13TH, 2011 9:33

Cross Dressing

By michaelgcasey

Well, what exactly is cross dressing? Maybe 20 years ago there was a fancy dress party, so obviously I stole my mother's clothes and wore them. The stockings needed a bit of work, so I blew up a couple of balloons and stuffed them down the stockings, I also had a rather lovely handbag, it was 1950s style, well its WAS 1950s.

On the way to the party Chris who was dressed as Big Ears, he did have his own big ears but that's by the by, he got out of the car and went to use the cash point. So there we were an old woman and Big Ears using a cash point on a very busy road, we got a few looks, but I thought it was because I looked so attractive, I AM a good woman after all.

At the party Rich was wearing a clingy tight fitting red skirt or is it dress, anyway it stopped at his knees, he had tons of red lipstick on, actually he looked like Mick Jagger, and I really mean it, he looked like Mick Jagger, has Mick every been to Birmingham? The party went with a swing, the host had a monkey costume but it was too hot so he took it off. So that was then, today these people are IT professionals, me I'm a word smith the son of a blacksmith, hoping to get my break. I've just remembered another party, a couple, a gay couple were kissing in a cupboard, a kind of pantry, "come out of the closet" we all said to them, and that's perhaps what men should do too. Try your wives' clothes on or go shopping with her, and then you'll be wearing something really nice that does justice to your hairy legs.

Don't Whine its on le Wine Jul 9, '11 1:07 PM

Don't Whine its only Wine©

By

Michael Casey

I've just had a little sup of red wine. It is ice cold and I've topped it up with Aldi cloudy diet lemonade.

The perfect drink for a hot summer's day. Though already I can hear "sacrilege" I'm not a drinker at all, but when your sister gives you the dregs, or in this case half a bottle of red wine then what am I supposed to do. My wife wants to wash her hair in it, or add it to one of her Chinese soup concoctions.

So I compromise, I drink it. Normally 2 pints of Stella and I'm out of my tree, so if and when I do drink its with a meal. Then I won't drink for 3 or 4 months. I prefer fizzy pop or milk or a nice mug of coffee. But, and yes I do like a random pint, just as randomly as I buy a lottery ticket.

So the red wine was in the bottom of the fridge getting glued to the base of our fridge, I did do the Clover win a Smeg fridge competition but I don't think I've won, so things get glued or should I say iced in at the bottom of the fridge. We do have an icebreaker, it's the wife and her meat cleaver, she dresses in PJs and a bright red Korean pinny then she attacks the ice with the cleaver. Luckily no accidents yet, I mean she could break the bottle of wine and then I'd whine.

So I've had my wine for today and maybe a sip or two more, which means it'll last 4 days. I do have another bottle of wine, this time white which is palatable. When I get around to that, it'll last 4 days or more. It could have turned into a Jubelee by then. Does anybody remember those triangular lumps of flavoured ice from the 60s? Yes I'm a very young left over from that period. I may have hit on a new marketing ploy, we had the wine box, how about the wine Jubelee.

Yes you purists out there will condemn me, or the usual soothsayers will denounce me, though really they are running away from the truth. Booze is booze no matter what you call it or however you get it down your neck. In the past I worked for ACNielsen, once they bought us up, it was market research into alcohol sales, and I was the shandy drinker with no knowledge of the drinks industry,

you could say I was just the stoker in the boiler room, or computer room to be exact.

A little bit of booze is nice and rewarding. However I should also add we had lodgers who were all alcoholics. One of them died on me when I was just 20, so my views on alcohol are tempered by years of watching them fall over. But I've digressed, yes it may be a sin to mix lemonade with red wine, but at least I don't do it to white wine. We were at our small daughter's end of the year's show and there was a raffle, I get 1st prize, a bottle of White wine. I could save it for weeks, my summer holidays are very long, but when the mood takes me I will drink and enjoy it. Then I'll forget about alcohol for months, maybe even till Xmas. I do have a stash of Robison's orange and barley, 8 litres, so that will be tops of my drinking menu. Though if anybody wants to send me champagne I would do my best to enjoy it, and is it true you get no hangover from champagne? I have my wares on Amazon Kindle and if the miracle happens and I sell all 4 then a bottle of champagne would be nice, even if I may be tempted to mix it with Aldi diet cloudy lemonade.

Good Bye News of The World Jul 7, '11 3:16 PM

Good Bye News of The World

By michaelgcasey

168years is a very long time. WE all bought it to see the sexy girls and sports reports. We all bought it to hear the trash on the nearly famous, all the 15 minuters. It made us laugh and it made us cry. Finally it dug its own grave by looking into others' graves. The paywall was recently created but it had painted itself into a corner, it had cornered itself, it had bricked up its only escape. Instead of a walled garden, the paywall is its own prison cell. Historians and Journalists will write learned books about the how and the why. In the end The News Of The World HAD to die, and WE all know why. So what next? A Sunday Sun? Page 3 seven days a week. Perhaps it will be a topless page 3 lady vicar every week. We can be blessed while we oggle the Page 3 topless vicaress. But what is happening is a divorce, and divorces take time to heal. Perhaps we need a gentle Sunday paper. The MPs got a kicking by the Press, now the Press will get a kicking by the MPs. Few will morn the NOTW, fiddling with the deads' phones IS grave robbing.

SO

Let There Be Light ©

By Michael Casey

Let my tears be my words

Let the candle light be my eyes

Let the flowers in bloom be my lips

Let their scent be my blood

Let the wind be my breath

Let clouds be my mood

Let children's laughter be my hope

Let widows' sighs be my conscience

Let a stranger's prayers be my delight

Let the bees be my wisdom

Let the trees be my strength

Let my patience reach to the stars

Let me be always remembered in your prayers

Michael Casey

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Face Facts Facebook Jun 27, '11 6:43 AM

Face Facts Facebook

By michaelgcasey

As usual the DT does not allow me to post in the right place, and by the way the MARCH competition thing still shows up on the DT so what is the Webmaster doing, playing on Facebook?

Now Facebook is a toy, I joined in the vain hope of bumping into a Publisher or Producer, yes stupid I know but stupid things DO happen, I met the wife in the old people's home.....

I can see all my old workmates from when I was at a hotel, anybody can see their current work mates, or make new friends, and have a shallow connection with them. Real friends you go down the pub with or meet and connect with, you may even have sex with. But to say you'll put all your serious information on a social website, lets be honest, you won't. You'll send them an email, a proper email and you'll share it with those you love. Facebook is just shouting in the street, its screaming Hello Darling when you have had a pint too many, or its a hen night where you oggle boys on Broad St. There are websites where you get back together, Friends United and so on. That arranges a school reunion, then its back to email.

Money men see the advertising revenue potential, but that's all it is, potential. The Lottery here in England nearly died off because there were just too many of them, the big Saturday prize is half what it used to be. Facebook will fade and disappear just as the fairies did in Lord of The Rings, which was made in Birmingham by the way. People should just read The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker by Michael Casey (me) available on Amazon Kindle. Don't waste your time on Facebook, its dying, but a good book, ANY book, others are available as well as my 4 offerings on Kindle, a book lasts forever.

I have to go now I'm hoping billions will spam Facebook and speak of my book, then I'll be a billionaire and maybe, just maybe I'll set up a social networking site in my spare time.

Michael www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

When and if I win the lottery Jun 26, '11 6:15 PM

JUNE 26TH, 2011 22:11

When and If I win the Lottery

By michaelgcasey

My wife is watching the Lottery Losing Show on one of the Satellite channels. Its about Lottery Winners, I'm calling them losers. Nobody seems to know how to control themselves. The Secret Millionaire is the opposite, at least people have worked hard for their millions and now they are giving back. But the lottery winners seem to be losers, all they want to do is spend spend spend, just like the lady who won the pools all those years ago.

I've just nipped back to the telly to see what else is happening, it just seems so sad, or rather the punters are sad. Doesn't anybody know themselves, I'm not being elitist or religious or anything like that, but am I the only person who can say I know myself. I'm sure Freud would have a thing or two to say.

What's the most important thing in your life? Its your family, so if you win the lottery is nice, but your family and your values are more important. I had a friend who'd kick the office chair when somebody else had some good luck, me I just say Good Luck to anybody who has had some luck. This idea of spite and envy just is not in me, in a way I find it hard to understand such negative feelings. Its like saying a new born baby is ugly and not bonnie.

Me If I win the lottery I'd buy a bigger house for my growing family and give myself a pay rise, but then I'd leave the money in the bank, then see what will be 1 year later. Its just seems to me that its Lust, money lust that controls people, if I quote correctly

The Love of Money is the Root of all Evil. This doesn't make me holy or anything else of the sort. And what IF my dream about being a paid writer came true, would I be as shallow as the lottery winners seem to be. Well I have plans for any money I earn as a writer, and it does not involve my ego or id or whatever else is supposed to be inside us. Is it my age which changes my views, or is it that I do really know myself.

Michael p.s. a serious piece for a change

Interviewing Somebody Jun 26, '11 7:57 AM

Interviewing Somebody ©

By

Michael Casey

Welcome to Casey's Company

As you can see we are a friendly company

Would you like a drink before we begin?

Sorry only tea or coffee, no Vodka or lager

At Christmas, then that would be different

But today you are here to be interviewed.

Now why did you apply for a position at Casey's Company?

Because you liked the 12 weeks holiday a year, but you do do preparation at home.

Because you liked carrying a briefcase, because you liked wearing shiny black shoes and a nice shirt and tie.

Or was it because you liked the idea of being called Sir?

What qualities can YOU bring to the role?

What experience do you have in a similar role?

How would you describe yourself?

Are you self motivated?

Pardon? Can I stop because you want to go and have a wee?

Ok are you ready to resume?

You want to go out and make an emergency phone call to your mum, you forgot to ask her to buy some more toilet paper, and some beef burgers and tomato ketchup.

Anything else?

Ok, lets move on.

So do you enjoy where you are employed at the moment?

You're not employed at the moment.

You were sacked!

Why?

You were found kissing in the stationary cupboard, and when security searched you, you had 120 red pens and 120 blue pens, and 120 black pens in your nice fake leather briefcase. So you were sacked on the spot. The Police were not called in as the girl you were kissing in the stationary cupboard was the boss's daughter.

But you do have a glowing reference.

Looking at the signature it looks remarkably like YOUR handwriting.

Is there anything more you'd like to add?

You'd like to have the 1st two weeks of August off, as you've already booked your holiday, other than that you can start straight away.

Oh, you forgot something, could you be paid weekly and in cash.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Oh and when will we let you know if you have been successful in your application for the post.

***** Go to Amazon Kindle and enter Michael Casey then you can buy 3 books and 1 hit play

Healthy Wealthy and Wise Jun 20, '11 7:42 AM

Healthy Wealthy and Wise©

By

Michael Casey

I was doing a bit of reading about exercise, not just because I'm 17.5 stones, I just need a bit of information for a talk I'm going to give. I know the general outline but the DT crowd can give me a few juicy sentences. Juicy sentences go down well and grab an audience's attention, they sit up and listen, they put down their knives and forks and stop talking amongst themselves, and they listen to the speaker.

So I can say they don't need to become body builders, they can be fatties that walk, say the school run, 15 mins up the hill and 15 mins down the hill and maybe an extra 10 mins if you drag the kids around the shops on the way home. I should add that chocolate and crisps may be bought as a treat for the kids but for the parent or grandpa as I'm wrongly called, the parent should not indulge in Cadbury's crunchy, that would only reverse the effect of all the walking. As I walk down the road we can play the what's in the window game, where the children look in the window and then turn away from the window and try and remember what was in the window. If you remember your Dirk Bogarde he did this as a child and he went on to be a photographic interpreter in the war. So this method exercises the mind while exercising the body.

To lose weight you have to stop what's going in your mouth, if you exercise only you'd need to exercise as much as an Olympian to make any difference. Now I have heard of the water diet, where you drink lots of water, so your belly is full and you don't eat anything which will help the belly stay like a fat belly. Of course you eat normally as well, but if you top up with water, perhaps with a little squash in it then you'll see the difference, and so will your friends and family. Yes I have tried this and the have a mug of squash routine has helped me get back to my fighting weight of, 17.5stone, in my hotel days that was handy when I was throwing bags about, some say I look only 15 stones. Orange juice is my big thing too, I just love orange juice, and yes there is a difference between the orange from different supermarkets. I got hooked on orange in 2006 when we were in Florida

meeting that branch of our Chinese family. I was also at my heaviest ever because I'd switched from my 25miles a week walking at the hotel job to my sitting in front of a PC, Life Insurance job, yes really, and I do see the irony. After the Life Insurance I had 3 years standing up all day job. Perhaps we should all pick a job which is best for our health. I'd like to be a professional writer, then I'd get a dog, when I'd done my quota of words for a day I'd be off out with the dog. Maybe I'd do the morning school run with my girls and our new dog and then I'd go home for breakfast and writing, then in the afternoon me and Subway the dog would pick up the girls again, once home I'd do a few more pages. Now this is the life I'd like, me a dog and a PC, you can find my books on Kindle as of today, if only I sold enough to be a full time writer, now that would be good my health.

Michael Casey's Books are now on Amazon Kindle Books Jun 17, '11 6:53 PM

Michael Casey's Books are now on Amazon Kindle Books

By michaelgcasey

Just in case you haven't heard, anybody can now upload their books to Amazon's Kindle's Book Shop.

It really is easy to use, in fact it is Michael Proof.

So once the process is sorted you can all rush to Amazon Kindle Store and buy 4 of my wares.

You are offered 30% Royalties or 70% Royalties. And you can set the price. So in effect everybody out there in Daily Telegraph Land can become self published. Now whether or not you get any sales is another thing entirely.

Best of all it costs NOTHING, self publishing in paper form can be dangerous and you can lose your shirt but Amazon's Kindle seems easy peasy, so why not try it for yourselves and see if you can out sell Jeffeory Archer, 330,000,000 is the target, easy. But IF you do outsell Lord Archer you too can have a Monet of your living room wall.

Me I'd settle for straight wall paper, thanks for listening.

Michael

Glee Jun 13, '11 5:41 PM

Glee by Michael Casey

I don't know about you, but I like Glee. It's harmless fun on the telly on a Monday night. It's all about a Glee club in America, where kids sing and dance.

I don't think we have them over here in UK, but we do have choirs and stuff. My own two daughters are in a church choir, there was a legacy left to help pay for music. So my girls get to do something they like and then at Weddings they get a few quid.

Back to Glee, the singing and dancing is very good, it warms the cockles of your heart, well mine anyway. If you can sing then you can pack up your troubles in an old kit bag, and smile smile smile.

There are also jokes in Glee too and it has a whole collection, or should I say a mixed bag of people and their problems. Young actors acting 17 years old and so on.

There are too many ads in between Glee but at least I can flick to the news channel while I'm waiting for them to finish. What more can I say? If you grew up watching all the Hollywood musicals then Glee is for you. Just remember to put on a happy face.

FOOTNOTE today is 27 May 2013, 2 years on, I think as of today Glee is passé pasted its sell by date.

A Child's Eye View Jun 10, '11 6:14 PM

A Child's' Eye View ©

By

Michael Casey

My small daughter had made a dangly thing, I don't know how to describe it really. It's a piece of coloured plastic which has holes in. Well that much is straightforward, then there are flowers and coloured wires hanging from it. A kind of bad hair day made from plastic. In effect its like those doorways which have strips of material handing down to separate one room from another. There must be a word for it but I'd know it, but I'm sure somebody will tell me. In films its chip shops and barbers who have these "doors", I hope you get the picture.

Now that I've confused things, let me continue with the tale; though I should add that I have good news to share, I've rediscovered Don Camillo again. So I'm expecting a delivery of a Don Camillo omnibus in the post. With such a good feeling I decided to please my small daughter and find somewhere to display her "art". WE did think of hanging it in our living room/ kitchen area, I was about to find a chair to stand on and tie the "art" to an old curtain rail, but we were overruled by the Voice of Reason which is otherwise know as The Shanghai Mum. If you don't know Shanghai mums are very strict and don't appreciate "art", so me and my daughter were banished from the living room.

We retreated upstairs and we scoured the girls' room for a location for the modern "art", in the end we decided if we tied a piece of string to the art we could then hang it up underneath a picture that was on their wall. So we found a ball of string and cut it to the right length, and then attached it to our plastic thingy or watsit, and I was given the task of attaching it to the string that was holding up the painting.

Unfortunately the picture fell off the wall, and even when I found a hammer, all I did was make a mess and the picture fell off the wall again.

So I had failed, Andrew Graham-Dixon would have been moved to tears, so we retreated to my room and hung in on my wall. The plastic "art" was forgotten, the hammer was put away. All that is left

are the marks on the wall where the picture had hung for many a year. But at least the girls have a new location where they can put a poster, all they need is gluetac, which is far easier than hammer and nails.

Why do Men think they are Perfect? Jun 7, '11 8:43 AM

Why do Men think they are Perfect? ©

By

Michael Casey

What do men do when they are surrounded by beautiful women?

I am in that position myself, a model like wife and 2 very beautiful bilingual daughters.

Having a Shanghai wife who could have been a model only she was not tall enough, even though she was very very pretty.

Her parents did hold her by her legs and shoulders and tried pulling her, stretching her, but it was no use. 5feet 1inch was all she stretched to. The agency did say she could be a model for children's clothes, but my wife, or should I say future wife said no.

I would have said yes myself, though my waist is almost as big as her height, well almost, or bigger than if I listen to her. I do have a Chinese name, Panzi, it means FAT FAT BOY.

I may be fat though in my brain I AM thin. So I will dance around the living room to MTV, dressed as a Sumo, I mean just because I am 17.5 stones doesn't mean I cannot dance, I do dance well, and even if our neighbours have called in a structural engineer that does prove anything.

And if I do leave a trail of toast crumbs all over the carpet from the kitchen and to the living room and even as far as this computer desk, what does it prove? It proves I need a wife to love me. Her nagging is just a form of courtship, her Chinese wagging finger just makes me laugh, so I just wiggle my bum to her copying Beyonce moves, I really am such a good dancer.

I hog the computer seeing how many people are looking at michaelgcasey, how many are looking at my blogs today. Then another burst of loving, I am kicked off the computer so my all adoring wife can read the recipes on Chinese and Japanese web sites. I retreat to the living room and watch 503 and 501 and 509 and even 506, which are the news channels. Then I'm kicked off the tv so she can watch a Date with LuLu, it's a daily chat show from Taiwan, not a wee little Scots singer. So I return to the computer to write my blog for the day, behind me our bilingual girls play on the piano, I get them to play a bit quieter as I need to focus while I write.

However as I'm writing right now I'm listening to Shakespeare's Sister, perhaps I should be reading their brother.

Words have such power, was it that which brought Birmingham to Shanghai. Was it my good looks, was it my immense waist, was it my smile, I do have such a nice smile, was it my laughter, Or were the Angels on angel dust when they heard my prayer for a wife?

Thousands of children 'not ready for school' at five Jun 3, '11 8:05 AM

Thousands of children 'not ready for school' at five

By michaelgcasey

I was so not ready myself that I ran after my mother down the school drive, 1963 was the year I think. Years later I was the Head Boy of the school.

As for the general population, am I old fashioned in thinking some parents don't love their children.

You don't have to have children, there are pills before and after, and men can even do something, so there are no excuses for having children, IF you don't want them.

But IF you do have kids then LOVE THEM. I had a humble beginning, if you find the photo of my mum's home in Cromane Lower back in 1920s then you'll see just how humble her beginning was.

The difference between now and then is just how poor my family and millions of others were. In

Andrew Marr's show last night, which made me seasick because it jumped so much, his observation was that the village comes to town, to mega cities, and it is that which binds communities together.

Obviously I was looking out for Shanghai as that's where my wife is from.

When our girls were born, Ma came all the way from Shanghai to be with us here in Birmingham, on each occasion she stayed six months to help out. Sadly in the modern era there is no granny, or granny is a party animal in Ibiza or is on a fly drive in USA.

So you don't have an extra pair of hands, as granny wants her freedom, this means 5 year olds miss out on granny's love. 5 year olds get lots of plastic rubbish with batteries, but love, where no batteries are required, that is sadly missing.

Yes people have to work, I'm content that we love our kids, and there isn't any money for plastic rubbish, and as for batteries... I used to sit at the top of the stairs and have a "social" with my mum, then she'd pat my bottom and send me off to bed, I was happy because I was loved.

My kids are lucky because I'm from a large Irish family, so they have lots of uncles and aunts who love them, give them plenty of crayons and paper, 600 crayons was the last audit of all things for drawing. A pencil and paper IS enough to set a child's mind free, when you unite this with Love from mum and dad and uncles and aunts, what do you get? You get happy kids, Granny in Shanghai is not

forgotten either, with the wonders of the Internet granny can talk to our kids every Saturday and together they read the Bible and teach granny more English, as for my girls they practice their Chinese.

Is this old fashioned and not all hip and groovy? I don't care, I have great kids who love me, and their Chinese/Irish family nothing is better than that, and guess what, batteries are not included.

Easy Listening Jun 1, '11 6:58 PM

Easy Listening

By michaelgcasey

BBC4 had a great programme tonight, Easy Listening. I don't know about you but for 20 years and more radio was my best friend, Radio4 and Radio2. It all started when my brother went to work at a coal mine, after a year he went to Cambridge, he had a gap year before they were even invented. So there I was in 5th year with an old Bush radio for comfort as I studied for my O Level, radio was a constant companion. I listen to Radio2 and Folk weave and all manner of programmes, I also heard a stack of Radio 4 stuck. The Bush radio did wonders for my intellect and it was a great comfort as I really missed my brother.

Easy listening from the radio, plus in later years having a record player and then a very cheap hifi, it was just a record player with 2 speakers, but it was so soothing. John Denver, The Eagles, Jean Michel Jarre, and anything else with a nice album cover, all of them were my companions, especially when I was in between jobs.

Music is soothing and a great companion, listening by headphones is a different experience too, if you haven't tried it then try it right now, steal some headphones from your teenagers. My own kids are still too young to have headphones, mind you tonight my girls were really enjoying their Blik radio as they both read JacquelineWilson books. I had bought the radio for myself but instead I donated it to my girls and I kept the old ugly looking DAB radio.

Music is good for the soul and you can submerge yourself in music, just as you can wallow in a hot bath for an hour, easy listening like Smooth Radio, Real radio used to be great until it went off air. I just adored the music with no ads annoying me, that's what easy listening is all about, its like the bubble from bubble bath that cover and sooth at the same time. Easy listening is like a good massage given by an expert, or if you cannot get a Chinese doctor, buy a book and get some oils and donate it to your wife/boyfriend/girlfriend or whoever and just lie there with the music playing your favourite Carpenters track, or Adele.

Easy listening should almost send you to sleep, which is good because its so relaxing. My journey

started with a Bush radio and now its a DAB radio or my computer with nice Logitech speakers, if
music be the food of love play on.

My Last Wishes May 31, '11 6:20 PM

My Last Wishes

By

Michael Casey

My 1st wish would be that the Telegraph lets me post in the right place. I've heard that hearing is the last thing that goes as we fade away. So a sign saying "Beware of saying bad things, such as Thank God the old B*&&&, is dead" Why, because as we fade away to oblivion the last thing I'd want to hear are words like that, imagine the utter horror as we melt away. So I'd say, just be nice, LIE, but don't send a loved one to Heaven or Hades with such negative words ringing in the soon to be deceased ears.

My father said he heard the doctor say, "just wheel him to the end of the ward, he'll be dead soon."

At that moment my dad awoke and the doctor dropped his tea. Dad lived 5.5years more and I met my wife in the old people's home, Padre Pio and Me explains it. The consultant had given my dad a week to live and it was decided he would not be revived if he had another heart attack.

I think we should all make plans, so there is no dispute. I know I'd like to live long and prosper, I always used to say I want to live till I was 100, having a young family I really need to reach 100 now. But what if the worse case senario arrived? I think I would write down something on paper, I'd make a Will, but I'd enclose a comic letter for my siblings so that as they gathered around at the solicitors they'd have some laughter to remember, they'd be no money to share, but laughter yes. Like my brother peeing in pop bottles because he knew I drunk the dregs. Like our dad saying "Rubber Onion" instead of "Rugby Union", remembering all the love, all the Nuclear Love our mother gave us. I am thinking of having Nuclear Love in Tears For a Butcher which I'm writing, and even Supernova Love. How can I explain it to any future readers? I don't know, Stalin once said "How many divisions does the Pope have?" Only fellow believers of various colours could possibly understand, the power of faith and love that only mothers have.

I'll have to sit down some day and write my comedy cover letter to go with my Last Will and Testament, perhaps leave a video on my website, or a message like Yul Brenner left. Bury Me in My

Boots was a book we heard at assembly 40 years ago, it was a tramp's last request, Mr Reading read it out.

I know that when you are electricuted your family flashes through your mind, as it did for Rich sometime in the 1980s, so if when we die our hearing really is the last thing to go, please be gentle and kind, be nice as Lew Dawson used to say. Just be nice.

Government Dating Agency May 31, '11 10:34 AM

Fill in E784/52 and your new spouse will be ready(c)

by

Michael Casey

I saw somewhere that the Government would be involved with marriage. So that set me thinking.

Fill in form E784/52 and your new spouse will be ready.

Just as stupid as a census form would be the Government provided spouse, all you do is fill in the form.

You fill in sections stating what kind of sex life is required, variety and kind and frequency.

You fill in sections stating what kind of faith is required, though nowadays "None" would be the most common.

Sections for what kind of intellect required.

What kind of hair colour, and type, soft or shiny.

Height requirements would be catered for too.

Tall dark and handsome, or very curvy with a twinkle in their eyes. Eye colour would also be on the list.

The form would go on for three pages and has to be filled out in triplicate. Native language requirements or preferences would also be listed.

It could take hours to fill in the form, but once completed, the Government guarantees perfection and a till death do you part guarantee.

With the government in charge of our mating, nothing can go wrong. Only on the way down in the lift its love at first sight as you see somebody for the first time. Can it be true can it be really true.

You were made for me and I was made for you.

Metaphor This May 27, '11 4:17 PM

Metaphor This ©

By

Michael Casey

Well first of all I have to confess I am using Arabic Typesetting as my font type. I stumbled over it recently on my Word settings, I'm using a very old copy of Word, If anybody wants to sent me a new super duper version of MS Office I'd be over the moon.

Tomorrow I pray MU beats Spain, and that Sir Francis Drake can bowl everybody over, I just want Sir Alex to get what he deserves. It will be a game of two halves, one whisky and one bitter, but I'm sure at the end of the day, all will be equal in love and war, and as Bill Shankly said its more important than that.

So MU will be fighting their corner and especially when there is a corner I hope Rooney can reach for the stars and fly us all to the moon when he gets one or three in the back of the net. No doubt there will be lots of kissing between men, because that's what they do wen they are happy. And perhaps folk will be doing The Lambert Walk, people will be cock a hoop all over the land, in London and in Manchester too, even here in Birmingham you'll hear all the screams of delight, in the privacy of bedrooms and in the bars, for scoring is scoring is scoring, either with a line of white, or with a boy or a girl, for when you get what you want you are always happy and over the moon. And IF things go down the drain then we'll all be as sick as parrots even Joey in the Red Cow who sits on a perch and says "shut the bleeding door". I'm fit to burst with all the emotion and with all the tension, its enough to give me the runs, and I do hope I get back in time from the bog so I won't miss any action. I may have an each way bet on the result, I can even play both ends against the middle and make a killing. But realistically I hope Manchester United give it to the Spaniards so we'll all be done proud, otherwise we'll all be as sick as parrots and have to drown our sorrows.

Well I hope the new CIA computer program understands all of this, otherwise them may come and render the side of my house, which could do with a lick of paint, then when its ship shape I could flog

it, I shudder to think what those guys in Langley are thinking now. Cheerio Michael Casey

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

To Touch A Beating Heart May 23, '11 5:40 PM

To Touch a Beating Heart ©

By

Michael Casey

I was watching Jools Holland's show and later on I watched Glee, its just finished in fact, Music has such an effect on me, I hope on everybody else too. Music DOES Touch a Beating Heart. Music is like a heart beat, it offers rhythm to our lives, it goes fast and it goes slow, and when it ends we are dead.

Obama is in Ireland and now on his way here, he will have no doubt heard some music just as the Queen did, I imagine that as he has tea with the Queen they'll both remark on their Irish trips, and I'd guarantee that Music will be part of that conversation.

My dad discovered Elvis in his 60s, he watched all of Elvis's movies over a Christmas break, my dad was impressed. Musicians do touch our beating hearts, their power is so great, within 2 seconds a piece of music can get to you. If I'm very lucky within 30seconds I've touched somebody with my words, but music is still at least 15 times faster. I am of course so very very jealous, I can hear music on the Phoenix Chinese TV station and even though I know no Mandarin the music and the Chinese words still can touch my beating heart. I am lucky that a window has been opened into another kind of music, I wasn't expecting that when I found my Shanghai wife.

So what is it with Music, when the first cave man made love and heard the beat of his mate's heart, did it fill him with wonder and then did he copy the beat with bones banging on the skull of his enemy who'd he recently eaten? Whatever the reason I am so so jealous, a beat a rhythm a song or just the roar of the sea or even of the wind itself, all of this is music.

I'd love to be able to write songs, I have produced a few good poems, and some say my writing is poetic, but really the way I write is the way I write, I'm not clever enough to analyse my style, it is what it is. I am lucky though if I get a few good reports, but I'd rather touch a few beating hearts.

Look at Me I'm a Nobody May 22, '11 4:01 PM

Look at Me I'm a Nobody ©

By

Michael Casey

Well the Injunction Saga rolls on, out of curiosity I spent 30seconds online and found the name of the footballer. His wife no doubt knows who he is, perhaps he is begging her not to divorce him. Millions are at stake, but it would be nice to think he and she do both love their kids, and its them they are trying to protect.

We all want our 15 mins of fame as Andy Walhol once said, even me, but in my case its just to get my comic novel published and be a paid blogger for The Daily Telegraph. Not even in a million years will this happen. I have blogged a lot these past 2 years and I feel my writing skills have been sharpened, so that is good. I discovered that one of the regulars on MyTelegraph is having his book published in September, so God Bless him and good luck.

Returning to my theme, being famous for 15 minutes has now reached STUPID proportions, people become instant celebrities, their specialities being NOTHING.

Then real celebrities lust after the new celebrities, and that leads to sex and Injunctions.

You should use celebrity to help folks, I think one guy won Big Brother and gave the prize away. On the opposite scale a criminal won the lottery and that led to him being in jail and he lost all the cash too.

So what does this all tell us? To me it tells me we should get back to basics, don't believe in all this S)*(" in the media and the magazines that we find in hairdressers. Its neither real nor important, loving our kids now that is important.

But if you are really bored read The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker on my site, though some may say its just too old fashioned, you'll just have to read it and see for yourself.

Space Galore May 21, '11 3:43 PM

Well I worked out how to make more space on my DT site, I know you'll all be groaning now. I was 99% full, now after deleting my images I've not even used 1%. If you are desperate to see images then go to my website.

Google has been copying the world's Literature so all of us will be saved for Eternity. I hope there is no atomic pulse to destroy everything, and I hope New Technology 100 years from now enables us to read what we secure now. Time and Tide waits for no man so I hope technology doesn't forget our age, we think we are the bees knees but in the future. If we started in 1920 when my mother was born what did she have then? No running water, but a well outside. Now gas, no electricity, plenty of Hope and Love but technology, it did not exist.

Law firms have so much technology, every piece of paper is monitored and saved, an IT department who's job is to save everything, think back to Bob Cratchit in A Christmas Carol working away at a ledger. If he was transported to today he'd scream, the Luddites tried to hold back Progress but even they failed. Now everybody at home has a computer and a free website somewhere too. We all take and treasure photos of kids and family. In my family I was the photographer, with film cameras before digital arrived. So when our mother died just over 15 years ago I was able to produce a photo album for all my siblings so we could all remember her. A photo is such a treasured memory, nowadays with digital you can have 2000 photos on one 2gig chip, can you imagine it? Kodak does not make film any more, but with your computer you can take a photo and print it off on Kodak paper in under 2 minutes. Now that is fantastic in my book, go back 90 years and my mum's family would think it was the work of the devil.

Space on your PC and on a free website such as multiply.com is such a great thing. You can give digital frame picture frames to granny or your book publisher, so they both are reminded just how much they love you.

Space Galore is almost as good as Whisky Galore!

At the Bus Stop May 20, '11 6:21 PM

At the Bus Stop ©

By

Michael Casey

I catch the bus to work, I'm lucky its only around the corner from our house, so I can give the kids and sometimes the wife an extra kiss goodbye before heading for work. A last laugh and hug before I catch my 1st bus to work. We have a good service in Birmingham, my brother once said it was the best bus service in the UK, he used to travel a lot, so I'll take his word.

At the bus stop the occasional pig smokes in the shelter, sharing his pollution, his cancer, I don't know about you but any bit of smoke makes my lungs hurt. I think execution is not good enough for smokers, and as for the cannabis smokers who come on the bus either innocently or brazenly, I wish aliens would come and take them away. Cannabis reeks and the smell stays on the person, yes I wish they'd grown up and stop the habit, but on my bus route, on that stretch of road, its more common that the white lines.

At the bus stop lipstick is applied, and smoothed down by a finger, a final look in the mirror, girls are ready to face the world, girls of all ages. Somebody makes a final call to say how much they love their still sleeping partner. An old lady as regular as clockwork appears with her little Jack Russell, the dog leaps towards me under the walls of the bus shelter, he's just saying hello, I smile to the little old lady.

I swing my heavy bag from one hand to another as I wait for the bus, and I wait and wait, today the bus is very late, normally there are buses every 10 minutes, today I wait 20 minutes. Not to worry I'm always up to an hour early for my new job, the hour gives me time for an early coffee, a chat, and plenty of photocopying. Today I finally get the bus, I can abandon the bus shelter, only there's a log jam of traffic on my cannabis scented road.

Once in town, I head for my 2nd bus stop, its outside Saint Michael's the Polish church, and yes I do smile as I wait outside the church named after me. I sometimes used to attend there when I worked Sundays in the city centre, but that's a long time ago, 15 or 20 years ago maybe. I just missed my

choice of 3 buses, but after a further wait my 2nd bus arrives and I climb on. So I'm happy as I look at my watch, when I do arrive I'm 20 mins early instead of my usual hour.

So another working day begins, I still have time for my coffee, and did you know that if you want to cut your coffee consumption all you have to do is use a smaller spoon, or have only half a spoon of coffee, and best of all it still tastes good. No I'm not a health freak, I just have a nagging Shanghai wife, perhaps we should all have Shanghai wives and then we'd all be healthy, wealthy and wise I don't know about.

Things to do before I die, Part I (c) May 16, '11 3:58 PM

MAY 16TH, 2011 19:52

Things to do before I die, Part I (c)

by Michael Casey

The article was on about a blood test to say when we'd die.

I'd get carried up a mountain, in Lady Gaga fashion, and look at the stars, here in Beautiful Birmingham we have a black square of gardens so we have a great view of the stars, but to go somewhere great and view the stars, now that would be great. I have this theory that Hell is really a black hole, with no light and no stars to gaze at, no music and no touch, no soft touch of the one you love. No cold drinks in the Summer and no hot drinks in Winter, no snowball fights, no nothing.

So if Hell is that and I know how many days or weeks or even years I have, then I would shake myself and do something. I might rush myself to finish writing Tears For A Butcher. Maybe I'd spam the entire world so that they have to read my book, or their email would never ever work again.

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com is where you can go if your free will directs it, just in case I am dying and that email lands on your doorstep.

I'd watch my favourite films again and again, I'd watch Little Women and cry when the professor says "I have empty hands" and she takes them in her hands and says "they are full now." Simple little pleasures. Perhaps I go to Lourdes for a cure, though it is great fun in itself, the parading and the candles, the torchlight processions in the dark, the singing, the electricity, as well as the cafes and the Irish hotel with the singing and the late night drinkiung. Wearing a beret badly, climbing over the fence into the grotto at an ungodly hour. Drinking the water and even having a bath in it, all in the hope of a cure, but Lourdes really is a fun place, so much joy, ask anybody who has been as a helper and they will confirm that it is a great place.

I'd go and see as many live bands as possible, music really is God's breath, I used to see a ton of bands 20 years and more ago, so IF I knew when I'd croak I'd see as many bands as possible. I'd also try and learn to sing, Singing really is when are hearts are happy, Saint Cecilia sai to Sing is to Doubly Praise, not my words but my singing sisters. Now I even have singing daughters. I would like

to read my obituary before I croak, a Nobel moment, I even wrote a post Nobel and Me 2 years ago, but if I am to die my vanity would be satisfied if I had a Nobel moment.

I'd pick the hymns, the songs for my funeral, my wife would put a DAB radio in my coffin, perhaps they invent a battery that works and is charged by perpetual darkness, a solar cell in reverse. That's Part I of the things I'd do before I die. If I live I'll write more, though I'm sure some DT readers are swearing, die you B((((die.

For Telegraph and Sun Readers and anybody else who finds this May 13, '11 6:20 PM

These are my books, if I sold 1% of what Jeffrey Archers sells I'd be a happy man.

The selection of blogs is perhaps only 1/2 of what I've written.

Tears For A Butcher is my 4th book, I'm on Chapter 2, Old People's Home.

I have met some very nice people over the Internet, and some very very negative people too.

So IF you want to laugh read on.

AS USUAL JUST TO REMIND EVERYBODY EVERYTHING IS MY COPYRIGHT.

A little bit of Paris in Birmingham(c) by Michael Casey May 12, '11 3:12 PM

A little bit of Paris in Birmingham©

By Michael Casey

I have my lunch in a little café up the road from where I work. They have these little round tables and when you sit down you immediately struck by the sight of all the cakes, cakes galore so to speak. They are mouth-watering strawberry cakes, everywhere!

I was away over the Easter holidays and the shop had a total refit, new windows, new doors, new floors, new furniture. New display cases for all the cakes, even new tables and chairs.

What hadn't changed was the cakes and all things lovely. I walk through the door and they say hello and start on my beef panini, I grab a drink from the fridge point to it and start drinking. I talk a lot in my job so I need a drink, I finish half my drink before my panini is ready. I'm in heaven, the food is great, the brothers in The Pastry House are very nice. People come in for English tea or Arabic tea, people shake hands and say hello, cakes are chosen and eaten. You hear several different languages, there is laughter in the air, there is debating, there is friendship, there is fun.

For me it's a quick and nice bite to eat before I dash back to work. I asked Zain where did he get the money to pay the Polish workers to do all the changes, "did you win the lottery," I asked.

"No," he replied, "it was a scratch card." I laughed at his reply, he may have been joking, he may have been telling the truth, I'll never know. But I do know, for me, this café on The Coventry Road is my oasis of peace on a busy day, the world may pass by, but for me, for a few minutes, I could be in Paris, Paris in Birmingham.

UTube are you ready? May 9, '11 3:53 PM

My 9 year old is making a movie of herself playing Adele's latest tune, her 7 year old sister hold the digital camera while she plays. All this modern technology in our Chinese/Irish household. Meanwhile harking back to olden times my wife has been baking bread. I'm slightly bloated having been force fed all the bread, old fashioned English bread, and Chinese style bread too. I also knocked over some concoction of mushroom in an old coffee jar, that was lurking in the back of our fridge. Orange juice is nice with all this bread, as is a nice knob of butter, there is something so satisfying a piece of warm bread in your hands with the butter melting down your fingers. Ice cream streaming down your fingers is a great childhood memory too. I have a warming mug of coffee besides me at the computer as I talk to you, behind me one daughter is now singing Adele's song while she plays the piano, the other daughter has decided to go into the next room to film my wife and the breadcrumbs all over our glass eating table. Adele's music echos around the front room as the shadows begin to fall, we'll have more music soon, Glee is on tv, I'll record it for the girls. I hope everybody else out there has a similiar family dynamic, it does make you want to thank God for the gift of family. My small daughter has just returned, she's just done a tour of the house, filming the entire house, perhaps she'll be an estate agent in the future. I did notice on one estate agent website there was a thumb print on all the photos, 1st law of cameras, clean the lens. I wonder did Michael Moore or Spielberg start this way, I know they are not girls, but the use of technology and the naturalness of their creations, I may never be published nor make the stage but they WILL.

Gagging For A Drink May 7, '11 7:01 AM

As usual I cannot post in the right place....

I read the news item about Cocktails and folks trading up in the drinks stakes.

I used to work for a market research company into alcohol sales, StatsMR was the name until ACNielsen bought us out, I had 21 good years there. Since then my life has been a bigger and much more varied adventure.

I can remember when AlcoPops were invented, I seem to remember when my boss said they wouldn't last. I was the shandy drinker while my learned friends were also great at drinking. And I mean great at drinking. We had a collection of spent bottles and cans which would impress any party animal, I suppose we had them instead of potted plants. We really were great company, that's why we were bought up, and our folks became the bosses down at Oxford. The Oxford office of ACN was like a 6th form college with a sports field behind it. It really was like a club not a place of work, but that's another story.

As for alcohol it is a great thing, the first miracle was changing water into wine after all. I'm not much of a drinker myself, I was the shandy drinker at ACN, nowadays a random couple of pints every few months or more is enough for me. I do think alcohol is one of Life's greatest gifts, it does relax it does mellow people, its as good as as taking your shoes off at the end of a busy day. Perhaps we should have shoe racks under the tables in bars.

Trading up is a good thing, a nice drink IS nice and if you can make it even nicer with an extra pound or two then good. I do the same thing myself, though in my case its cloudy lemonade instead of regular lemonade in Aldi; I even saw lemonade in glass bottles in Aldi, harking back 30 years or more, trying to create an upper class lemonade. I wish them well but that won't work, wine yes, lemonade no. My brother used to pee in the glass lemonade bottles because He knew I'd drink the dregs before trying to get the money back on the bottles, perhaps thats why I like bitter lemon.

Trading up in food is good too, I am lucky my Shanghai wife is a good cook, Eastern or Western, she's baking bread as we talk. I like my food too, see the photo for proof, breaking bread is first thing Man

ever did, and sharing a meal is the thing that binds us even in or cannibal days. So stock your freezer well.

Shoes and your Sole(c) May 4, '11 3:47 PM

Shoes and your Soul ©

By Michael Casey

I don't know about you but I love shoes, they are something we all need and they really are good for your Soul.

When you stand up all day, be it as a Concierge, or as a Teacher or as a PC on the beat, you really need to have good comfy shoes or boots or whatever. Being in touch with your Sole IS good for your Soul, we all sigh when we come home and slip our shoes off. We wriggle our toes and throw our socks at the dog, the cat arrives to play with your socks. The dog meanwhile loves to lick the salt off your sweaty toes.

All is balanced, we are all one with Nature, we may soak our feet in a bowl of water, my mum used to add Jeyes Fluid to the water when our dad came home. When you stand up all day in a steel works your feet really do need some TLC, my dad's feet were so so baby white, my mother used to use the tongs that she used in the washing machine to pull my dad's socks off.

400 degrees of heat tends to glue your socks to your feet.

My dad always used to say "It's great to wash your feet." And of course he was right. Finding his slippers for him, then a big mug of tea, this was our family.

Me, I like comfy shoes, I buy shoes, 2 pairs every time there is a sale in Clarks. I buy brown shoes too, not because I like the colour but because they are cheaper, and when money is short then brown shoes will do, besides black shoes mean you are in service, like in an hotel for example.

The bounce and the walk around the carpet in the shoe shop is always fun, but you still have to buy odor eaters because of your smelly feet, and they make your shoes even more comfy. I always buy 2 pairs of shoes at a time, then I don't have to come back till the next sale whenever that is. I am 17.5stones or 112 kilos, so my feet good shoes, good shoes are like a kiss, always welcomed.

Now when me and the wife got together I went to buy her some trainers in Clarks on New St. now my Shanghai wife looks very young, I tell her its because she has me, and of course she agrees with me. We were having a bit of banter and my wife said to the assistant, "he's my dad," and even then

I had white hair, so the assistant believed my wife, "he's my dad," the Freudians amongst you can work that one out.

On another occasion my wife brought back 30 pairs of shoes from her Summer vacation to Shanghai. You can imagine her horror when Lufthansa lost some luggage, and yes it was the shoe bag, her size 3s had gone AWOL. I just laughed, they were cheap but the right size for her. I should add our 9year old now has size 3 feet, so none of mum's shoes are safe. Finally Lufthansa found the bag and we opened our own shoe shop.

WE are also very lucky because our 7 year old loves cast me downs, at the moment she has a pair of flashing Dora The Explorer sandals, which I bought for her big sister when we were in Florida 5 years ago.

I can remember my Concierge days when I used to walk 25 miles a week and that was on marble, we did 12 hour shifts too, so we all used to walk around like hobbled horses on our 1st day off. So I think I am an expert on sore feet, I know just how good shoes are, nice comfortable shoes. Ask the policeman outside

No.10 Downing Street, I bet he and his friends have great shoes/boots I bet he has foot massage often.

When our kids are young we pull their toes and do, this little piggy went to market etc. Wriggling your toes after you've been on duty in an hotel or as a policeman outside No.10 really is something that resonates to the depths of your Soul.

Piano Girl(c) By Michael Casey May 1, '11 10:52 AM

Piano Girl ©

By

Michael Casey

Well it's a bright sunny day here in Birmingham, over the road the Polish neighbours are moving out, they did block the road with their van and I suggested they knock on their neighbour's door so they

could park safely, no I was not being neighbourly, they had nearly smashed into our car, though it turned out it wasn't our car but our next door neighbour's brand new car. I wear sunglasses as I type so I had a problem seeing.....

I'm listening to Paul McCartney's Flaming Pie as I talk to you, I invested 15quid for new speakers on my PC so Paul is better than ever. My old Kenwood HiFi, 15 years old, we donated to the man at the carwash who did a good job so he earnt a hifi as a tip. I listen on my PC for years now.

My daughter is playing on the piano behind me, she asked me to switch off Paul while she played. I explained it was Paul McCartney, so I had to explain who he was, my Shanghai wife has heard of Paul, but my 9 year old daughter, she doesn't know who he is. I wonder how Paul would react?

You see we saved up for a piano and even gave our nine year old piano lessons when she was very small, it used to be £12 for ½ and hour, but she never practised. The piano gathered dust, a sister was born and still the piano gathered dust, its was the Chinese influence in the first place, get them young.

Well time has moved on, both girls are in a choir up the road from their school which is up the road from where we are. At choir they get music lessons and are paid too, a bequest I believe. Before we paid a Chinese girl to teach piano, now a nice little old lady called Betty teaches them and they get paid to sing. The result of all this? My nine year old has just came back into this room after finishing her dinner, and now she's back at the piano playing Katy Perry's Firework, and thanks to Betty she'd getting good. As for Paul McCartney he's been switched off so she can play piano behind me.

I have of course helped my big daughter, I printed off the sheet music from the Internet. Paul hasn't got a look in, not unless he reads this and sends us some sheet music of his stuff, and just be warned Paul, it had better be better than Katy Perry's stuff.

Simplicity is BestApr 30, '11 5:13 AM

Simplicity is Best ©

By

Michael Casey

A year later, I'm making a modest living using English.

I still want my books published and my plays on the stage.

I still blog 2 or 3 times a week on www.michaelcasey.wordpress.com and I blog on MyTelegraph too.

I notice that some people on the Internet like using big words where small ones will do.

Yes I know its to prove they are not inarticulate, but changing gears all the time is boring, if you are in top gear on an open stretch of the road there is no need to rev. Enjoy the ride as Top Gear might say.

Boy racers they rev all the time, they have spoilers on their cars, they have huge exhausts that frightens horses and children in the street.

There is beauty in words, things can be left understated, there's no need to prove you have a thesaurus and that you can spell thesaurus, just let the simple words speak for themselves, and no I don't say this because we don't have a dictionary in our house.

People are herded along by those who speak better, who con them with words, stop and think for yourself, don't trust anybody's words, only trust your own words. The snow blindness of words is a terrible thing, call a spade a spade and trust nobody as Mulder used to say.

Preparing to Speak Apr 24, '11 6:20 PM

Preparing to Speak ©

By

Michael Casey

I'll be giving a talk next week, so this week I've been writing down a few ideas, and fitting them all together like a jigsaw. I've also been timing myself so that my talk lasts 20 to 25 minutes, I've toyed with the idea of altering the line up, or when to add this or when to add that. Writing for myself is one thing, speaking for myself is another, both of which I think I'm good at. However this talk is like a school essay, I have to fit their topic to my words and to my writing. Something I write down is

between me and one lone reader, however for a talk I need to present what I've written, then my words now spoken take on a different direction.

Practice prevents pee poor performance, is what I heard from Derek my boss a long time ago. My sister says she used to scatter the cushions or teddy bears and then give her speech to them, I haven't done that even though my girls must have 40 teddy bears. I just read it through a few times and timed myself. I'm satisfied I just hope my audience is. Having worked in a 4star deluxe business hotel for 3 years I'm happy with talking, I've spoken to thousands of people perhaps even tens of thousands, just think there may be 100,000 people out there who know my face from CPNEC. I once had a guest who did not speak English, she was Dutch and she spoke German too, but I persevered and discovered she spoke French, so I spoke French to her. Problem solved and she had a good stay at the hotel.

Don't give up, just keep on talking is my motto, then eventually everybody is happy.

I suppose the same thing applies with prayer, perseverance denotes Faith is what Padre Pio used to say. So I'll stick to the 5 Ps and see how my talk goes.

Night Night everybody, I hope none of you had too much Chocolate this Easter.

Easter 2011Apr 19, '11 6:59 PM

They say little things mean the most, a kind word, a touch of the hand, a hug.

Simple ordinary things, not big gifts, not a red sports car, nor a Lear jet, sure footballers can and will splash out, but perhaps they should learn what is the greatest gift of all.

Time and Love are the greatest gifts, a few words with the fans on the way out of the stadium, sign a few autographs before getting into your 4x4 and away to your £2m mansion. They say that old players from another era were gentlemen, pick your own club and see how many gentlemen are left today.

But I don't want to talk about footballers, let's talk about Time. When my father survived his heart attack, you can read about it,

Padre and Me on www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com I was lucky because I was the favourite son and

because the Old People's Home was on the route to work, so I could spend an hour with him before going to work. Now I hope all sons and daughters do the same as me, because Time really is the greatest gift we can share and give to somebody else, our Love does shine out and bring Peace to the aged, be it our own family or the dotty old lady on the bus. I'm a firm believer in talking to the "mad" person on the bus.

There are lots of great people doing great things, Lolly Pop Ladies are amongst my favourites, nice Mrs Murphy who stops traffic outside my kids' school. People who give time and work in Charity shops, they are my favourites too. A little bit of time here and a little bit of time there, it all adds up. The member of the family who rushes around looking after the rest of the family, we all know people like that, they give their time and energy, and a whole lot of Love. The favourite Aunty or Uncle who is just there for you, who'll say nothing but give you a nice cuppa while you cry your eyes out at his kitchen table. So many tears, so many tears, that continue down the years, tears and memories and yet more tears and memories and tears again.

Letting it all out IS always best, forget the stiff upper lip, forget we are British, we don't do that. Pretend you are foreign, and give yourself time to cry. We are in Holy Week and Easter Sunday is fast approaching, what does Easter mean to you?

Is it Cadbury's Day? It is about forgiveness and love and hope, new beginnings, its about confidence too. If you have no Faith that's fine, but use the occasion to say you'll start over, if you like a 2nd chance at New Year's resolution, this time in Spring.

Time and Love are the greatest gifts and they were given to us all at the 1st Easter.

Most people have no Faith, so I'll just give you a gentle nudge and ask all of you to give some Time and Love to those you encounter this Easter. Perhaps prayer will never be your thing, so if you randomly hand out a few Cadbury's cream eggs this Easter you'll bring a few smiles to people around you. Say a few kind words to people on the bus, don't hide behind newspapers on the train, for Easter is about a time to live and a time to love.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

The Merchant Of Venice on TV (c) Apr 16, '11 1:02 PM

The Merchant of Venice on TV ©

By

Michael Casey

There was a Shakespeare Double Bill on TV this afternoon, I missed Taming Of The Shrew, the Taylor Burton version, but I did see The Merchant Of Venice. In our house there is a PRE and POST new Toshiba, the new LDC tv makes a big difference to our viewing pleasure. So when we see a film on the new LCD it can and does make a great deal of difference.

Today The Merchant of Venice really did sparkle, however I'd forgotten some of the language, so my own ignorance did lessen my enjoyment. The quotes that you hear really make your skin tingle. A pound of flesh, prick me and do I not bleed, stand out, I can remember on one occasion the guy in charge of the Hacienda, the staff canteen at CPNEC quoting Shakespeare. The same guy now lives near me and stacks shelves in a shop up the road, but I remember him for his Shakespeare, perhaps he still quotes Shakespeare as he stacks shelves.

The Merchant of Venice today looked so good, Al Pacino and a great cast were really enjoyable, I'd forgotten all the plot twists so it was nice to see Shakespeare's craft. I

recorded it to the Sky+ box, so I can watch it again soon, I'm tempted to upgrade to a Sky+ HD box then I could record even more films, and yes if anybody wants to donate a Sky+ HD then I'll take it with both hands.

A Pound Of Flesh is probably the most famous quote from the play, and from all of Shakespeare, no doubt I'll get lots of feedback from everybody out there. It was strange watching the BT Commercial guy playing Shakespeare, but it was good, it really is mind blowing watching Shakespeare, perhaps Mick and Keith may contest what exactly is mind blowing but I have a hunch they ARE Shakespeare fans. I could even get a signed photo of Mick and Keith dressed in Shakespeare's clothes.

Let's have more A list Shakespeare, not Z list Shakespeare, lets have more Shakespeare in Love kind

of films, and can we have that series on Shakespeare himself repeated, it was very educational. I did do an OU on Shakespeare a long time ago, I was even called Shakespeare's agent by my OU tutor. Today really has brushed up my Shakespeare, and why not as Barry Norman used to say.

Fools Errand Apr 11, '11 6:19 PM

Fools Errand ©

By

Michael Casey

The wife often sends me to the shops, and I do forget everything she wants, so she sends me back to the shops again.

She sent me out for red onions and celery today, I half got it right, I brought back a red onion and spring onions. So she sent me back up the shops again, as she was going to cook some some concoction. Only it started to rain while I was at the shops, then she laughed and she was not cooking tonight but tomorrow. So I was a double fool.

I should add that she is a good Chinese cook, but recently she has turned her attention to English food, and as my belly will testify, she is gifted in that area too. Luckily tonight, she had stolen a tenner from me, but I stole back a few quid so I could buy orange juice for myself. Its swings and roundabouts in our house, I give her money for the week and then she steals my share of the food money for her love of all things fruit and cakey.

So I consoled myself by eating the lovely strawberries she had bought. The kids were upstairs playing 3D cinemas, my sister having given them a few dinosaurs in 3D and some 3D glasses, which meant I could scoff the strawberries while they were busy with 3D. It wouldn't be right to interrupt them with strawberries while they were so 3D busy, I am a very caring dad after all.

My other errand was to the Charity shop to offload some of the treasure the girls did not want, at least the Charity shop can make a few quid. Charity shops are great if you want to pick up a few books, especially when you want to pass them on as a teaching aid.

All in all its been a good day, even if I had to throw away a watch and you must know just how much I love watches, if you don't then read

The Watch and Me at www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

That's all folks, from this fool on his own hill here in Birmingham.

Weather Forecast Apr 10, '11 7:01 AM

The Weather Forecast

By

Michael Casey

I just read in the DT that the Weather Forecast was going to be quality tested. This is a joke, Weather Forecasts are an Art it is NOT a science, obviously it involves science, before you pedants out there correct me.

Bob Hope used to say he liked England because you got 4 Seasons in one day, my brother's Wedding Anniversary is upon us, and he had:- snow, rain, sunshine and more, all on one day.

Just look out the window, that's the best weather forecast, we all know that the black clouds bring rain, even children know that. What's with all the Political Correctness and the Weather. Where is the common sense?

There's too much of the "I'll Sue" mentality, it's the weather for God's sake or are we going to start suing God. You got it all wrong with Creation, it should have taken less than 6 days, and as for the 7th day of rest, you should have been doing overtime to correct your mistakes.

And as for Weather, Mr God, you really messed up there.

A bolt of lightning just hit the soothsayers, thank you God, I like weather your way!

Hotel Achat Offenbach Frankfurt 2008 I'd love to go back

The Door Apr 7, '11 5:21 PM

The Door ©

By

Michael Casey

The door wasn't even there, I couldn't even see it, I had always hoped that somebody would open the door. But how could a door be opened if it did not even exist?

Then by a series of random events I found I'd passed through the door, and I was somewhere else, somewhere totally unexpected. I have a photo of me standing up and presenting, at the time I felt that was a dream, a hope, an "if only" and the photo must now be 20 years old.

Concierge duties have prepared me for presenting duties, the major difference is that now I have a whiteboard behind me. The talk is a bit different, much more important now, but the fun is the same, the standing up is the same. The sore feet still part of the territory, but the door has been opened and I've past through it.

So how has this happened? Is it magic? Is it prayer? Is it luck? Perhaps its God's luck.

I did once dream of a dirty white door, but now instead I've passed through an invisible door, I've reached my dream, only 20 years after the dream began. Perhaps I'm a really heavy sleeper, and like Rip Van Winkle I've awoken, only to find myself where I've wanted to be, standing up in front of a whiteboard talking and getting paid for it.

I haven't made the bestsellers list, that's an even longer dream, probably even beyond God's magic, beyond Hope beyond Reason. But I am a good at waiting, very good at waiting indeed, perhaps even better than a pregnant woman, I'm watching the sands of Time fall and maybe just maybe another door will open without me noticing it.

Then before I retire I will be the latest new thing, the latest new writer, and with the help of God and two policemen I'll sell more books than Dan Brown.

Attachment: Shoplife.pdf

The things that bind us Apr 4, '11 6:46 AM

The things that bind us

Our Father Who Art In Heaven, these are the words that should bind Christians together. I'm a Catholic for what its worth, and immediately hatred begins. My daughters have both joined a C of E Choir and one will be Baptised there at Easter, even though I though she was already Baptised, this took place at the Chinese Evangelical Church 9 years ago, and I did dab water on her head within days of her birth.

So that's 3 Christian churches where the family attend, I hope it means our prayers get answered sooner, though if you read Padre Pio and Me on my site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com then you

know I hit the jackpot years ago, spiritually that is, not in money terms.

None of this makes me or us holy, quite the reserve, I am in need of prayer. So its nice that new Muslim friends pray for me at Friday prayers, if any other faith group wishes to pray then I will be very happy to receive all and any prayers. I did write a nice poem which can be seen on my home page, but all in all Prayer for me is a deeply personal thing. Its like the whispers in the night, its like the star lit sky, its the breeze on a summer's day, its like the goodnight kiss from a child before they go to bed.

I just read a little about Melvyn Bragg in today's DT, I wish I had a tenth of his intellect, but I do know that occasionally a few words come to me which are much greater than I ever will be. Artists create and we struggle to understand what its supposed to mean, struggling with ourselves is the biggest struggle. The interior life is the biggest deal of all, its a never ending journey, sometimes along the way you get a "whoosh" perhaps when on a Pilgrimage, or when you are having a quiet sit-down in a cathedral, you're there to rest your sore feet on your lunch hour but then "whoosh" you get a poem or you witness something. I spent 3 years+ of lunch hours resting my feet in St.Phillips, its the C of E cathedral, St. Chads was too far away, I joked that I was trying to convert them to Rome. I saw many things, such as a hugh bodybuilder lighting candles with his wafer thin girlfriend in tow. I was a voyeur while girls cried their eyes out, I just joined my prayers with theirs, a phantom prayer sayer

hoping and helping them with prayers, not that they'd ever notice me.

Does all this sound old fashioned and useless, prayer is dead, God is dead, that's what ignorant people say. So what should I say and do? I'll just say what my mum always used to say, "God is Good."

And so are we if we just stop and listen to the prayers on the wind, listen to the stars, beyond that curtain in the night sky.

Day dreaming(c) By Michael Casey Apr 2, '11 12:56 PM

Daydreams ©

By

Michael Casey

I was just looking at Rightmove.co.uk, its one of my dream sites, there I have my dreams. What would it be like to own this house or that house, would it be big enough for my growing girls, would I get a bathroom of my own?

Dorine used to say her dad in Normandy was so happy when he had his own bathroom, I would be just as happy myself. I am the only man in a three female plus one household. I bought a new chair from Argos the other day, mine had collapsed after 6 years, thanks to my girls wanting to sit with daddy when films were on, and yes daddy does look a bit like Shrek. So I bought a small 2 seater which is nice, only my girls have decided its just perfect for them, so I am relegated to the old and cold leather settee, my wife's laughter is the only comfort.

So I look at Rightmove.co.uk for comfort, only what do I get only sadness, why, because the house of my dreams has been sold, not that I could afford it anyway but its good to dream. Our dad used to say if ever he won money he'd buy us all a house, so the concept no doubt springs from him, but he have us all a home, and that is built with Love so I laugh at myself as I look at the pretty houses. But IF I do win any money then a house it will be. There are lots up by the woods and only cost 3 times more than I'd get for my house, so winning the lottery or finally getting published is the only chance in hell that'll I have. But strange things have happened in my life, luck and prayer do bring results, like my current job path.

So what's my latest dream house? Well its up the road about a mile from where I am sitting and only twice as expensive as where I am now sat talking to you. It's a nice large semi, or rather end of terrace, so by default a semi, with a garage too. So you could extend and make it bigger, if only you or rather I had the money. Hope springs eternal they say, so I hope that one day I will indeed have my dream house, what will it be and where will it be? God alone knows, but I will keep on dreaming, even if I have to wait 30 more years, and then I could be in an old people's home, and all I'd have left would be dreams.

My daughters have vowed they'd visit me in the home, and one has even offered some numbers for tonight's lottery, so on that note I'll just pop out to the shops and see if I can make my dreams a reality, good luck everybody.

Treasure for my Girls Mar 28, '11 4:14 PM

Treasure for my girls ©

By

Michael Casey

My sister was having a clear out prior to having her bedroom redecorated, so she was throwing away years of treasure and assorted rubbish. I had myself throw out an old armchair as we were having a new one, normally Sky Burial takes my rubbish away, however after 2 days nobody has taken my old chair away.

There was a screech of brakes, my sister's car came to a halt, she jumped out and hurled her rubbish onto my old armchair, with a wave she was gone. Monday is her choir practice so she had no time to waste, her tonsils were revving and ready to go, so she was gone. My daughters, her nieces dashed to the armchair in anticipation of treasure.

Once back inside our house, the pirates shared out the hoard, and what a good hoard it was. Clip on earrings in a variety of sizes and colours, necklaces of gold and silver, not forgetting broaches galore, one of which I recognised as a broach from an Irish Dancing shawl from 45 years before. I could

remember the jiggling and so forth, aunty had even won 4 medals, and when she had quit Irish Dancing the shawls were converted into curtains for the bathroom windows, our mum was a whiz on the sewing machine.

My girls shared out the treasure, singing the praises of the best aunty ever, so much treasure and it was all for them, not forgetting all the educational books you always get when your aunty is a teacher. Then my girls opened up shop as shop girls selling earrings and the like. Educational treasure that feed the imaginations, as well as the spirits, it could have been so easily thrown in the bin, but now it would have a new lease of life, thanks to the best aunty ever.

My Dad My Best Friend Mar 19, '11 4:54 PM

My Dad My Best Friend ©

By

Michael Casey

My dad was my best friend, no I'm not boasting, he really was my best friend. How can I say that, well it all started with having a 2nd ice-cream when all my brothers and sisters only had one. When you buy 8

ice-creams for your family buying another 8 is expensive, even in 1960s England. I got an extra one and my siblings called me the "pet" as they were jealous, to tease me they sung the song Michael Rows The Boat ashore, my dad used to say "leave the boy alone."

I suppose it was because I was the 5th child, the 5th child in 8 years and they were not expecting any more that I was spoilt a bit, and yes I did enjoy it. Dad always seemed to wear an old sports jacket and when he came back from his weekend trip to the pub after his week of being in the furnace, he always brought us back cheese and onion crisps in the blue bag. Dad really really loved us, as mum did too, I don't know about other families but we knew we were loved, it wasn't said and we didn't hug loads, we were loved and we knew it. The sky is blue and the moon shines at night, it was as certain as that, we were loved.

I spent a lot of time talking to my dad, I was the penultimate one to leave home, we spent hours talking every night, we were both news junkies, or should I use today's language, we love current affairs. We both loved Sir Robin Day the journalist, I still love journalists, we even have one in our Chinese family. Simple perhaps naïve pleasures, these bond you, glue you to your family. My dad also encouraged all of us to save, he wanted all of us to have a good start, we had lodgers and most loved drink too much, so leaning from their bad example we all saved for our futures.

"What's a bit of food," said dad as we stayed at home, modestly downplaying his influence, his role, his love for us.

"Do what you like but do your best," was his simple yet sage advice when I asked what subjects to do at 3rd year split. His children went to the best universities in the world, they worked hard, we followed his example. Dad would and could work 16 hours a day, he even worked 7 days a week at times, perhaps even for years. A Kerryman will walk into Hell for his children and for 40 years that's exactly what he did. I hear people complain about this and about that and it makes me smile, people should try working as hard as my dad did.

My father survived a "fatal" heart attack back in 1996, I've written about it in Padre Pio and Me, he even found me a wife and perhaps even a job, then he had his last breakfast then he died. I did visit him every single day for over 3 years, then I met my wife. Dad lived long enough to see me marry, only today we found a photo of him holding my daughter in his arms; 8 months later he died, he died 5 days after I'd found another job after a long bleak spell.

Do I miss him? No. The day he died I wept and howled like a tortured dog, but that's normal. When my mother died I did not shed a single tear, I'd been ordered not to cry years before, so when mum died I shed no tears, she was in Paradise so I shed no tears. And what of now? Dad's in Heaven too, no doubt wearing a big thick coat, when you're used to a furnace anywhere else can be cold, I hope he's enjoying watching his 4 grandchildren growing up. I also believe he's now met the Chinese side of the family and together they drink tea, both Chinese and English while they debate just how Irish or Chinese my girls look. The Chinese grandfather and the Chinese great-grandfather watch from Heaven and both will have to admit having some Irish blood is not a bad thing at all, at all at all.

The End Of The World As We Know It Mar 18, '11 7:23 PM

The End Of The World As We Know It ©

By Michael Casey

The Earth shook and our lives were changed forever.

The Water came and washed away all our hopes

Leaving us only with Fears.

The power station was thirsty for water, but there was none there.

Our people fled orderly, our homes were gone, our roads were gone.

Washed away, Washed away.

We don't deserve this, we don't deserve this, the Emperor went on tv.

Our friends came to help us find our families, but they were gone,

But they were gone.

Our friends were gone, our homes were gone, the sea had come

But now it too was gone.

And what was left behind?

Broken houses, like broken matches spilt all over the place,

Nothing was the same, we awoke to a living nightmare, our beautiful country was smashed.

We had run in fear, now we were scattered around our land.

Slowly slowly the dragon had climbed Mount Fuji, the dragon had roared across our land.

And what of now?

Nagasaki and Hiroshima the nightmares from before had now returned as shadows to haunt us.

Our country lives on Satan's fire, our beautiful Japan was now paying the price for its location.

Yet we still have love, Japan loves her own, our friends had come running to answer our call.

With Love we will again climb Mount Fuji, slowly slowly we will climb Mount Fuji.

Japan is a place of Love and Harmony, we will return, we will return.

With Love Japan will return, and again we will invite our friends for tea,
Because We are a Japanese Family.

King James Bible and Spike Milligan ©Mar 12, '11 4:54 PM

King James Bible and Spike Milligan ©

By

Michael Casey

Well I was just watching Melvyn Bragg and his King James Bible stories, previously I had watched the Spike Milligan tribute. Now they are odd bedfellows, Spike in bed with a King but Spike was a friend of a future king, so it's not really an odd combination.

Both have a love of words at their core, one the love of divine words that move and should guide to the right path; the other nonsense which makes us laugh, but laughter is a divine gift and if you can make people laugh I feel that is a gift from God.

People steal God's words and corrupt them to their own corrupt cause, how often do people of no faith say that religion is the cause of all evil.

This can be a feeble argument by feeble people who just could not be bothered to allow themselves to be touched by any God of any faith. So that is sad and tragic even, its very hard to shift them from the God/faith/religion is the root of all evil. Words are weapons:-

Words have meaning words have power

Words are nothing but hot air

Words mean this words mean that

Words can set you free

Words can send you to jail

Words can be sprayed on a wall like cat's pee

Words can be printed on a press and sell millions

Words can be illuminated one at a time by Monks

Words are lies words are truth

Words can send you to war

Words can bring peace

We are Words

In the Beginning was the word

But what is the last word?

And what of Comedy? Spike touched a generation, they say he was the grandfather of modern comedy. His nonsense inspired a new generation, nonsense poetry that Edward Lear would approve of was his forte. Is God in nonsense? Yes I think he is, our existence is such a mad mad mad thing, in Melvyn's programme it took firm believers to investigate our place amongst the stars, The Royal Society did reach for the stars, God had the matches to start the fire. What is before and what is after that's a big big thing, I just hold my daughter in my arms and we look up at the stars together on a freezing cold nights, only a fool would believe there is no creator to such Beauty.

The final guest in the show pondered that the human mind is not good enough to work out the majesty of life and the universe.

Spike is in heaven and God is teaching him more nonsense verse, perhaps God was a fan of Spike's, in truth God is the fan of all of us, for God fanned the fires of our creation.

My Horror Wife Mar 11, '11 5:25 PM

My Horror Wife ©

By

Michael Casey

I'm finishing off a bit of work on the computer while my wife watches horror films, horror films and films in general brought us together. When we met and before her English language skills emerged we used to watch films together, then we'd talk about the film we'd just watched, it was her speed of thought which made me realise she was indeed a clever cookie.

Some marry for looks, others marry for brains or money, me I was lucky I got both, though when I first met her she was wearing her scruffs. It was like something from Beauty and The Beast, I was the beauty and she was the beast, when she threw off her working clothes she did indeed look the beauty, she had been "hiding her pretty". Then for the last decade everybody says I married her for her looks, which we know is rubbish, but convention says otherwise.

Horror films are in her blood, no she is not some Dracula, or bride of Dracula, she is bride of Panzi, Panzi being my Chinese name, it means Fat Fat Boy. As I talk to you the music from the horror film is rising to a crescendo, there is even a gasp of shock from my wife, she is indeed having fun, so all you need to satisfy your wife is a TV licence. Simple, the best things in life are just like that. Vincent Prince, Christopher Lee and the whole host of horror films on the Sky channels have helped cement our marriage; all you need is blood rat at tat tar, as the Beatles might sing, blood is all you need, blood is all you need.

However the creek on the stairs has just as much power, the menacing music, the shadows, the screams in the night, they too have so much power, a howling in the dark, the sound of the dustbins being knocked over. It's the fox in our garden again, or the squirrels fighting over their nuts. A scream is coming from our living room, first it's the tv and then it's the wife, scream and scream again. It's the wife screaming as I've just trod on her toe as I pass by on the way to the fridge, writing makes me thirsty, Netto milk is the answer.

So on into the night she waits for her frights, I may creep up behind her and say "BOO" just for fun, so its another normal night for the Chinese Caseys, and yes we really are related to the Adams Family.

Don't forget to check under the bed before you go to sleep.

English Literature Mar 4, '11 7:58 AM

English Literature

As usual the DT won't let me comment in the right place.

English Literature back in 74/75 was horrible, because it destroyed the book we were reading, too much over analysis, a line by line interpretation just bores kids. In my year at Grammar school 30 of use did Eng Lit while 60 were spared. No blood was painted over any lintels or anything like that, but Eng Lit then was hard.

I think kids/students should be given a couple of weeks to read the book/plays/whatever first, then once they have read the books then they can begin to study them. Back then nobody read the book first it was a line by line "decoding", which was/is wrong. We did Henry IV part I, Prince Hal and Falstaff, all good fun, I remember saying in an essay that Hal "was a bit of a lad", not much different from the current one.

You have to enjoy something first, then you can study it afterwards, its seems the DT crowd forget their own experience of Eng Lit. When you are in love you have a passion, at a funeral you may say/explain why you liked somebody; the colour of your wife's hair, the way she tilted her head to one side when she didn't believe you, the scent of a woman. All of these things colour your view. I went to a Shakespeare play 20 years after I finished school and I struggled to understand the language because I'd forgotten it. Shakespeare in Love and modern films bring Shakespeare back to us. If people see a good film then they may take the plunge and go to the theatre, the bitter pill has to be sweetened.No doubt my last sentence will be over analysed and the wrong meaning glued to it, some DT readers do that and I lament it. If a poem is read and it touches the heart then people will want more of the same, there's some poetry on my site, one of which really touched our local Vicar, but the same thing can be dumped on big time by a DT reader. Why such a divergence? People bring their own baggage to what they read instead of just reading it, then they destroy the meaning, its like pulling out wild flowers and then arranging them badly in a vase.

I went back and reread all of the Don Camillo and after 25years and more the joy in the tale was there for me, I hope we can all agree that there should be joy in what we are reading; ditto with Eng Lit teaching, we should be bringing joy to the students, if that is lacking then we should find a better teacher.

A life in a bag Mar 3, '11 8:06 AM

A Life in a bag ©

By

Michael Casey

One of our neighbours died the other day, she was an old lady with white hair, the kind of nice old lady you see in the street. She used to have meals on wheels, I could see another nice lady deliver them to her door. I could see the old lady's children and grandchildren come and visit. But now she is dead.

I've grown up with death, so I have no fear of it, its another journey, perhaps even like jumping into a swimming pool, you just have to hold your breath and jump right in. We had an undertakers at the bottom of our road, and as an altar boy I served at over 30 funerals, the Funeral Mass is the one with the best reading, Lazarus and all that. Jesus loved Lazarus so much that he raised him from the dead, Eternity will be like that for all of us. Well apart from the atheists, who just won't believe it, so they'll stay in some sort of waiting room, Florida perhaps?

When somebody dies its like a punch in the stomach, your dad cannot be gone, you love him too much, it can't be true; it is and you pine like some sick dog for hours.

I have never cried for my mother, she told us all no crying, so that's what I did, I obeyed her.

You have to clear up after the dead, their home, their possessions have to be sorted and even divided. As you go through the house, the flat, the one room bed sit you see their life fall before you. Are they really like that, did they really do this, all kind of everything are revealed. A secret drinker, a collection of spicy videos, or just 6 Bibles all lined up; the dead have no secrets, they are as naked as the day they were born.

I've had to clear up, and help clear up several times, we had lodgers you see, so we had to act as family and tidy everything up; sometimes even finding forgotten Wills and then following them to the letter. Sending Home a couple of bodies, people want to rest in their own clay; when my time comes there are 3 local cemeteries where I could end up. Burial is best, I don't want to be burnt, I'm

big the fire brigade would have to be ready.

As I look out the window I can see a life being tidied up, everything is still raw for them, you see this, you touch that, a photo or some treasure brings the memories flooding back. When the tears are over you still have them, I tell my kids our love is in them, mum and me made them, they are part of us, so they'll never lose us. As the possessions are taken from the house over the road a life ebbs away, the character of the house is changing, I've seen all this before, I've cleared up, I know how it feels.

A chair or an old radio is taken away, its useful and you'll remember gran/dad/mom/your brother when you use the thing, but the thing is full of love because of who it belonged to.

Finally you've finished and the house is empty, the house is dead, soon the house will be sold. Soon the life of the owner is gone, the house is empty, but once the new owner and family arrives the house will have a new life, it's a home again. Then new life is restored, all that remains are a couple of carrier bags found forgotten in a pantry, you give them to the charity shop, at least somebody will get a bargain.

Kodak Printer/Scanner/Copier Review Feb 2011 Feb 27, '11 8:48 AM

Kodak Printer/Scanner/Copier Review Feb 2011

First of all Kodak has not paid me to say this. I needed a new printer as ours had died, it was an old Epson which was fine, but all it did was print. We had a separate scanner that scanned, and all it did was scan.

Now if you have small children as we do you just have to print out Winnie the Pooh all the time, not forgetting the occasional fairy or two. So your printer gets used as a toy add on, then after 8 years it just dies. Which I suppose is a long life for a printer.

We are lucky as we have Sky Burial in our street, all you have to do is leave old unwanted stuff in the street by your entry and then the birds take it away. Though not by pecking as in Alfred Hitchcock's The Birds, no folks in need come and take unwanted and unloved stuff away. I actually

furnished one neighbour's house. He had a pine double bed, a Toshiba TV, a giant chair that could convert into a lounge/bed and a few other bits and pieces. All of which with a bit of TLC could last a few years more, sounds like a Clint Eastwood film.

Before I buy anything I always do my research on the Internet, then I can see what's good and what's rubbish. Having done my research I can then decide if it's Currys or Comet or Argos or even from the Internet itself. Then I buy my stuff and George Osborne gets his 20% and then everybody is happy. I scrolled through the Reviews and in the main they were great for the Kodak, and the Gadget Show was full of praise for it too. Then you see some very negative reviews, you waver because you cannot afford to make a bad choice. When I was in hotels we were told a bad experience is magnified by 10, people will tell 10 friends just how rubbish they think you or your product is. If things go well, which they do 95% of the time, then you may get a fourfold increase in compliments for a good/great event. Which is why you have to work so hard to make sure you are hitting the target 99.9% of the time. Bad news travels faster than good news in those ratios.

Now back to the Kodak, it is very noisy as the reviews say. BUT you get two ribbons with it inside the box, which cost £18 to buy separately. So for your £70 you get cartridges as well as the printer, it's not just a printer but also a scanner and a copier. I should stop using the ribbon word it shows my age, printers used to have ribbons which were like scrolls, but I'm harking back to 1978 when I was still a teenager. As for the Kodak you do not get a USB cable, that is disappointing and Kodak should include one as well as the two cartridges. In one of my local shops I saw cheap ones for between 2 and 4 quid, I bought one and it cost £12, if I knew beforehand I'd have taken a chance on a cheap cable. The best I've left till last, you really can print 400 pages on one black cartridge, 400 pages for 7 quid, now that is a bargain and that's with the ribbon included with the Kodak.

All in all I would say buy the Kodak all in one printer/copier/scanner there's also some facility to focus on a face in the middle of text when you are scanning. I still need to work out how to use that facility. So visit your local Argos and get a Kodak, there is one thing I do need remind you about, you have to feed the paper in correctly it's fussy on that matter. Marks out of ten 9/10

michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

www.googleartproject.com Feb 3, '11 2:21 PM

www.googleartproject.com

I just read the pieces in the DT about <http://www.googleartproject.com> I had a look and I was amazed. My mother gave me a print on cardboard when I was 10 or so, this got me interested in "art", I still have that print on my wall, though it is now not the only art on my walls.

Google's art project is a wonderful idea and the quality of the paintings I've seen so far is great, they should mention it to schools, it could open a few minds, being dragged around a gallery is a pain for kids. But a few lessons using hi tech to show kids what painting is all about now that is fabulous, and I never exaggerate for effect. Andrew Graham-Dixon has opened my mind now lets hope Google can open a few more minds.

photo is my daughter and her best friend, a princess.

An Early Valentine Poem for all you old romantics out there Jan 31, '11 1:44 PM

You're Never Alone When You Are in Love ©

By

Michael Casey

Love is being together , Love is a smile , a Look , A Touch

Or Just A Sigh , Not really knowing why you chose one another .

Yet Together Till You Die

Love is a Kiss soft and gentle on the cheek which warms your heart and makes you glad you chose one another .

A Kiss can lead to more but I'll leave Passion locked Safely behind a bedroom door

Passion spent you'll not give up each not even for Lent .

You'll just lie in warm embrace and remember you forgot to say
grace .

Whispers and Promises are made , plans for the future and if
she put her hair this way , Do you think it would suit her ?

Then giggles and more embraces , Till the Night is over and with
a dig in the ribs you make him move over .

Then your oneness complete , you have to put up with his cold feet !

But when you are apart your hearts are still one ,

Thought half is absent you are still one .

His socks under the bed , and after what you said .

His "toys" scattered about , and the clout you'll give when he
returns and the warmth of your body he yearns .

His cold feet to chill you after he thrills you , are absent yet the
thought makes you smile , at least you have the comfort for a while.

His grins and leers , which makes you smile at least you'll have
peace for a while .

But his heart is still with you , the love is always there - as
bright as your fair hair .

Close your eyes and he is still there , Remember the embrace as
he played his fingers across your face .

Let your dreams go and remember the whispers in your ear, warm
kisses on your shoulder before he gets bolder . The warmth of love
that soars through your blood .

Dream long , Dream deep , your Man toils while you sleep, though
you are apart you are still together whatever the weather , for you
are never apart for he is locked in your heart .

Though sometimes he can be trying , there's Never any need of

crying for your love is Undying.

Always remember he fills your heart even when you are apart

End

A New Beginning Or Going Around in Circles Jan 30, '11 2:05 PM

A friend revealed he had an angina attack, made me wonder about my own mortality. I've been putting off writing Tears For A Butcher for a number of years. I didn't want to start something and then not finish it if I got sidetracked. Or why add to my collection of writing if finding a publisher was so difficult.

I have produced 3 books, 2 being collections of pieces:-

Essays and Plays

plus

MichaelGCasey'sBlogs2011

The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker being my comic novel

So why Have I decided to resume Tears For A Butcher? Well these past 18 months I've done loads of blogging, enough for a book. So I just wondered could I get back in the groove as far as novel writing was concerned. SO chapter one of Tears For A Butcher was written years ago, and I've got ideas for several chapters and the big finale. So indirectly because of my friend I'm going to see where the ideas take me. Chapter2 is called Old People's Home, I do know a fair bit about Old People's Homes having visited my dad every single day for 3 years and then very often for 2,5 more years. I also wrote a play called Revolution set in an old people's home, I did not actually finish that play, but the ideas won't be wasted. Last night I did a bit of thinking and the first page was nailed. Today I've done some more thinking and so the chapter is nearly fully formed in my imagination. I do write comedy so I have to have a left of field view on things. Once I have the idea the writing is very fast. But I'll not be forcing myself, just enjoying it, as I do with my blogs.

The Trouble With Technology Jan 26, '11 3:35 PM

The trouble with Technology (c)

By

Michael Casey

The trouble with technology is that we all use it, now if we just left it all alone then we all have no problems . Simple really but we all just can't leave it alone, we all just have you use it . In the beginning if we wanted water we'd fetch the bucket and drop it down a well. My mother was born just 30feet from the sea , but they were fortunate because they had their own well , so they went outside and dropped the bucket down the well and then they had water . Then technology comes along and we just turn a tap and we have clean water instantly . We have hot water too , at the turn of a tap . In one generation so many changes . However technology then works against us , because we assume it will always work and that there will be no problems

We don't even know where the stopcock is , so our homes flood and then we discover we are not covered by our insurance .

My mother grew up with an oil lamp hanging above , no luxury of gas lamps for her , as for electricity , that was just a dream . Nowadays how could any society manage without electricity , its impossible to believe life without electricity . No tv , no radio , no freezers , no street lighting , no traffic lights, the list goes on and on . As for indoor plumbing , the luxury of a hot bath , the WC in the home . My mother grew up with no indoor plumbing , if you needed the bathroom as the American's say , then you'd leave the house and pick your spot in a field with the cows gazing on , as for toilet paper you had a blade of grass to wipe your %^** . As for me we did not have such hardships , we had an outside WC , which we did not have to share with any other family , just 8 Caseys sharing our outside bog/toilet . There was a yard light to illuminate the way and a light in the toilet too . Which was sheer luxury compared to my mum's and my dad's childhoods . My dad would always come home and immediately switch off the yard light because it was wasting electricity . Then a shout would go up "Put the light on" , and my dad would always say "I didn't know" . Then there was the indignity of

running out of paper . My brother Tony had a very good sense of humour so it was always the case that I'd shout from the yard "More Bog Roll" which is the English slang for toilet paper . Tony was kind so he'd always bring out a fresh supply of paper , only he liked to tease so he'd push one sheet , just one sheet of paper under the door and say that's all there was in the house , and that mom said I'd have to use my finger . Then he'd go away laughing . He always left a full roll of paper on the doorstep , much to my relief .

Simple technology , we all take for granted , water and electricity . What does all this technology do for us ? It gives us independent comfortable lives , we have clean water , hot water , light and warmth . Then with the miracle of TV we can all watch the world go by , from the comfort of our homes , or the local bar whichever is our true home . We are now a global village as has often been said , but then we become anti social as its easier to watch tv than to interact with real people , we'd rather watch fiction on tv than have a real life . But with technology we can send an email to our neighbour across the road , with pictures and video , rather than leave our castle homes , rather than going over for a coffee and a bar of chocolate .That's one view the optimistic view says that we truly can break down barriers by using the miracle of email to keep us connected though we are thousands of miles apart . I have to hold my hand up and admit that I am an email Junky , I did send up to 5 emails a day to my friend in another part of the office , because we were both having fun . Then when I fell in love with my one true love it was ONLY because of the miracle of email that our love survived .I sent my girlfriend long long emails everyday for 6 months . She was in Shanghai while I was in Birmingham . My heart was breaking with love and hope until finally she came back to me . I'd come home from work at 3am and hit the keyboard , with luck because of the time difference we'd actually be live and talking almost in real time .You cannot imagine how heart rending it was to come home to an email , to get up in the afternoon and read an email before going on night shift .I think whoever invented email should be made a saint, without email our love would not have lasted . An exchange of letters takes 14 days from Birmingham to Shanghai , so thank God for email and God himself KNOWS just how much I mean that , Sainthood is not high enough reward for the inventor of email .Is it Saint Bill Gates ? The telephone is fantastic , but too expensive , I know my

phone bill reached 4 figures , but an email can be read over and over again , and even printed off , so it is a letter.

So I confess email is the most important leap in technology of the 20th Century , as far as I am concerned .

The next stage in the technology story are mobile phones that send/receive video and tv , so we are literally wired up where ever we are in the world science fiction becoming science fact . We all used empty match boxes to pretend we were Captain Kirk communicating to the Enterprise but now they are here for real . If you have been in a theatre,church,hospital and these things bleep you have to decide for yourself are they useful or just a real pain in the *&^% . On balance they are good , but people have to be a lot more considerate , nobody else wants to hear their conversations if they are in church or at the theatre or even cinema . I remember a conversation I had at dinner on Xmas Eve just gone , the guy sat next to me happen to design mobile phones , he was very very good at his job , but I did warn caution about saturation point being reached . Then today 4months on , I am proved right , the mobile giants are in trouble , why , because of saturation point now being reached .

I don't want to end on low note , so I'll tell another anecdote , we all remember when we had our first colour tv , how wonderful it was and how we all marvel and the colours . The BBC started showing snooker because of the colours , and now tv without snooker would be unimaginable . Then remote control came in , so we'd try different positions and even outside the house and through the glass into the room where the tv was . Technology makes us all like children , its supposed to be a triumph of engineering and technology but really its our greatest toy , and our greatest joy . On Saturday my dad will come out of the old peoples home to spend the day with me and my Chinese wife in our home . I'll be able to show him the internet and I hope I can bring tears of joy to his eyes as I show him County Kerry on the computer monitor . Sitting in my living room in Birmingham he can read the Irish newspapers and see his homeland where he started as a blacksmith in the 1930s . This is how we should be using technology .

End

20/4/2001

Well this piece is ten years old now, where have the years flown to

I'm still hoping finally I'll find a publisher or a newspaper that'll find space for me. Rupert Murdoch can give me a job.

photo is from 11 years ago. Meet my inlaws

Pantomime Jan 22, '11 7:24 PM

Pantomime (c)

By

Michael Casey

I was at a Panto earlier tonight, I was wondering how you explain a Panto to a foreigner. My wife a Shanghai girl has been to one but in the main it confused her. So me and the kids go to Panto while she stays at home and watches Phoenix the Chinese channel.

To start with a man dresses up as a woman, a badly dressed woman at that. A woman dresses up as a man and slaps her thighs all the time, and her thighs are always strapping, and what does strapping mean? Then there's a cat who's really a girl all dressed up. Then there's a cow who can dance, just what kind of grass has the cow been eating? Maybe a horse thrown in too, now this horse could never win a race, and no jockey would ever ride such a horse. I used to be a trainee betting shop manager so can you imagine the kind of odds I'd give on a Pantomime horse in a race against a cow, perhaps we'd only give 5 beans, and that would turn into a Beanstalk.

On the subject of Fairies just why are they so cheerful? Are they drinking real ale before they appear in a flash of fireworks, and as for the wicked witch why did she have a Russian accent tonight, a kind of deep throaty voice, almost like a man, a kind of Cruella de Ville but with more sequins. And just how do they learn to scream "AHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA" and all manner of evil sounds. Is there a kind of evil choirmaster who teaches evil witches how to croak and scream etc. Do they have an evil hymn sheet and they practice. Then and only then can they become evil witches in Pantomime, or perhaps you have to pass a GCSE in all things evil before you can strut the stage. Oh yes you do, oh

no you don't, oh yes you do, oh no you don't. Its all so confusing, no wonder my Shanghai wife stays home.

Dancers dance and there is a musician slaving away over 2 keyboards, he is down in the pits, why is it called pits anyway? Did the musician used to be a miner? Its all so confusing, oh yes it is, oh no it isn't. but I tell you oh yes it is. Now dancers are good and they throw themselves into it, or if you are a girl then there are boys who throw you around, they dancers twirl how they don't get dizzy I'll never know, do they practice in the park on the roundabout, dancers strapped to roundabouts for hours on end, then they get a certificate to prove they can dance and twirl and swing in Pantomime. They get Cadburys as a reward.

Singing is a big thing in Panto, me I can only sing "I was born under a big brown cow, a big brown cow" because that's what my siblings used to sing to me when I was a child. Chorus songs are sung and the audience joins in, and as a reward the cast throws things at you, luckily its sweets. So imagine you are from Shanghai and I just explained all this to you, would you want to see a Panto? Oh yes I would, oh no I wouldn't, oh yes I would, I'm all confused now, not Confucius.

I want to be a chat show host Jan 19, '11 3:12 PM

I want to be a chat show host ©

By

Michael Casey

Piers Morgan takes over at CNN, so I thought about the chat show hosts I know, I know 40 years of chat show hosts. No I'm not 95 but I started watching our square 2 channel black and white tv when I was maybe 5.

I remember Simon Dee and Dee Time, this was at the end of the Sixties, when Ali was king and we watch the Americans head for the moon. Dee used to give a quick flash of Fairy Liquid to the camera because it was NOT allowed on the BBC then. Advertising on the BBC was strictly forbidden.

Michael Parkinson was the best because he was a journalist, and he did not talk over his guests. There

is nothing worse than an interviewer talking over a guest, we the viewers want to hear what the guest has to say. I don't want to hear the interviewer drone on about himself. Yes he may have been there, yes he too may have had sex while hot air ballooning, he too may have had to canoe to safety from terrorists who wanted to kill him. Yes he too may have broke the bank at Monte Carlo or Vegas. And he too had the final phone call from Monroe. BUT if the interviewer is so interesting he should have made a film about himself and won The Palme d'Or At Cannes.

An interview should be like a confession, a one sided event with some gentle encouragement from your confessor. Sadly this is not the case nowadays. Especially on US tv, it really does disservice to the Art of Interviewing. And I do believe it is an art. I've also had years of listening to Radio Four in all its incarnations. A good interviewer is a listener, not a talker. I've done my fair share of talking and listening, especially in my days as a concierge. You keep folks happy and when their friends approach you disappear like morning mist, your job is over, let people get on with it.

If only today's interviewers knew what their job was, that's the main problem they are building up their part. Now we have Z list people interviewing other Z list people, and talking over each other, so what does the audience do? They buy 2 million copies of their latest masterpiece, or do the just switch off. Me I switch off. But I will say I am available for interviews.....

How do you die Jan 17, '11 5:21 PM

How do you die?

By

Michael Casey

I read an article tonight in the DT, it really got me thinking. I was interrupted by my 7 year old daughter coming down to say goodnight again and to pull faces in the mirror behind me. So I gave her a drink of milk and she gave me a kiss goodnight and then she went to bed again, happy with her thirst gone. I was happy too, for every goodnight kiss is a priceless thing. I stop to mention this

because the article was about Ovarian Cancer and it talked about the lack of tact doctors have when telling somebody they are to die, the doctors cannot do anything for the patient.

Now back in 1996 my mum died peacefully in her sleep, my brother had ran around and climbed into the bed and held her in his arms and tried the kiss of life. But hertime was up, she had died in the bed he was born in. 8 bare weeks later my brother, the same brother hear a noise, our dad had fallen out of bed, again my brother tried CPR, this time he laid our dad down on the bedroom floor. He saved our dad.

Now dad was given one week to live and we even picked hymns for his funeral, however I believe Padre Pio saved him. In total our dad lived 5 and half years more. And I met a Shanghai girl and now have 2 children.

Now there a a couple of things we all need to think about, does faith change outcome? In America that had teams praying for sick folks and there seemed to be reason to believe that those who were prayed for got better faster. Positive people seem to get better faster, or live longer if they are living a death sentence. If you are negative and a depressive, say your name is Victor Meldrew then you will take longer to get better and if you are facing a death sentence you will reach your grave sooner.

We all rmember the lady who did all the sports and was determined to make a difference before she died. Motivation can make all the difference to a situation. If you are scared stiff of dying then you will suffer horrors. My own dad was in hospital at Dudley Rd for 12 weeks, when he "recovered" he said he really suffered. When you're on diamorphine and all manner of stuff I imagine you get horror movie level of dreams until the veil is parted and you return to the light. Being trapped in your mind must be like being in Hell itself.

Something in your mind leads you out of your sickness. I believe the prayers of family and priests DO help too. When the final curtain becons attitude does make a difference. I know somebody who says "I hate death, or I'm affraid of death." Me I don't have that fear, when my mother died I did not even cry because my mum always said "Don't cry" so I fgollowed her instructions. I did whelp like a puppy dog 5.5years later when my dad finally died. But to my point, I am lucky I inherited my mum's Faith

when she died, not because I'm in any way pious, rather because it was the thing that I needed most. So don't be afraid of death, just don't even think about it. Death is not worth listening too, sure we will all die, but a life lived well is what we should be concentrating on. Even if we are racked with pain and on diamorphine, we can all enjoy the flowers. Yes you will all condemn me, but I reply if we can add a little sunshine to our own lives and to those who are on the final stretch then that will be a good thing.

My other daughter just came down for a goodnight kiss and to remind/nag me to tuck her in and give her another goodnight kiss. These simple things are tokens of love and I pray everybody who reads this will agree with me, a family united in love is the best way to live life until this life ends.

My two girls

Reaching Zen Jan 14, '11 12:02 PM

Reaching Zen ©

By

Michael Casey

How do you get somewhere? You open your door and walk down the street, you may be going shopping for sugar, or you may be popping into church for a chat with God.

You could be feeling lucky and go to Stanley Racing to have a 50p bet, at least smoking is banned now.

To catch the train to Hogwarts in Harry Potter you go to platform 9 ¾ and then away you go on a journey. The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker is set in Old Forge and Singing Anvil which is a magical place somewhere in the Black Country. So how do you get there? Well its easy, you just go to the pub. The Bear Tavern just 5 mins away from where I'm talking to you.

Before you go inside the Bear just pop into the pharmacy and buy a big bottle of perfume, as an apology to your girl. Inside The Bear you ask for 17pints and packet of cheese and onion crisps. The crisps will soak up the 17pints. If you don't like alcohol or 17 pints is too much then just have 17

pints of cola. There is no time limit. Once the 17pints have been drunk and you've finished picking your teeth you are free to leave.

Outside your head will spin at first, but in seconds, you'll wonder where you are as the familiar Bearwood Rd will have disappeared and as for the bear's head and the stone carved bears' heads on top of the Bear Tavern all will have vanished.

Then your head stops spinning and you are on a different street of shops, you are on, well I cannot tell you the name of the street you have to read the book. You are though standing outside The Trader and now all 17pints and the cheese and onion crisps are forgot so you go inside for a drink, just one. The Trader is a real ale bastion in fact Camra just put "I cried" in its listing, it was that good. Wayne the landlord has a secret in the cellar, it's a stash of 40 or even 60 year old malt whisky. He stumbled over the hidden stash when he was renovating his pub,

Now if you like your cafes then there is one just down the road from the Trader, Mark and Gillian got fed up of working in 5 stars, they wanted to see their diners, so they came back home to Old Forge and Singing Anvil where they set up shop, or rather opened a café. Yes you can park your wagon and get a great bacon butty, Big Sid provides the meat and Patrick provides the bread. However with all their skill you are eating Michelin standard food in a small back street of Old Forge and Singing Anvil.

This is just a peek of Old Forge and Singing Anvil, home to The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker. All you need is imagination and 17 pints of lager and one packet of cheese and onion crisps.

Michael Casey 007Jan 12, '11 5:00 PM

Michael Casey 007

By Michael Casey

I had a security pass with 007 on it, so it got me thinking. What if I was in a Bond film. There will be a new film and Daniel Craig will be the man again.

Could I be a baddie? No I couldn't possible do that, I mean I don't look like a baddie do I? My girls wouldn't like it either, daddy couldn't possible be a baddie, and as for the wife, I was her Panzi after all. Panzi meaning Fat Fat Boy in Chinese.

So what could I be in a James Bond film? I could carry his bags, I did work in a 4star business hotel for 3 years. So I have the practice. I could carry James Bond's bags up to his room and knock a few things over, or spill things on James Bond and try to wipe him down with a towel, so James Bond pushes me over the balcony into the pool.

Then the next day Bond lounging by the pool, and me/the porter trips over him so Bond throws me in the pool again. Later in the day I knock his Aston Martin with my trolley, so I get thrown in the pool again.

Finally I/the porter annoys him again, so this time he shoots me. And Bond says "I never believed in tipping."

Now if Lee Evans is not available for the above then I'd do it. Wouldn't we all love to be in a Bond film, just think how much they could charge for the privilege.

As These Tears Fall Jan 9, '11 8:23 AM

As These Tears Fall ©

by Michael Casey

As these tears fall, we remember we have been here before.

As these tears fall, the love we feel hurts so much more.

As these tears fall, we are stunned and don't know what to say.

As these tears fall, we must remember them all.

As these tears fall, we think of the smiles.

As these tears fall, we remember the laughter.

As these tears fall, we remember the kisses.

As these tears fall, we touch their things that will never be used again.

As these tears fall, we finish ironing the shirt or the trousers that will never be worn again.

As these tears fall, we feel a hole in our heart that aches so much.

As these tears fall, we remember their touch, comforting and more.

As these tears fall, we are heartbroken for our lost futures.

As these tears fall, we give thanks for what we did have.

As these tears fall, love carries on, we will meet again.

Facebook and Me Jan 4, '11 2:51 PM

Facebook and Me

Well I have to declare an interest, I think Facebook is overrated. I'm on Facebook but I don't really use it. I'm on Twitter too and I don't really know how that works either.

Yes its great to stay in touch but to say somebody thinks Facebook is worth billions is STUPID. One figure I read in the DT was that it would mean a single ad was worth \$100, multiplying up the number of users and how much revenue could be harvested if they all bought in to the advertising. When I watch tv I always put the kettle on during the ads, or switch channels to watch something else even if its the weather for the 20th time in a day, its preferable to adverts.

Talking of adverts www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com is my site where my comic novel The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker can be read as well as a collection of essays and plays, not to mention a collection of blogs all of which will make you laugh. Now if what I've just said was on Facebook would people read my advert and then go to my site, and then find me a publisher and then PAY for my 3 books. NO is the answer so far.

So what of Facebook? Its full of stuff, you can even comment on George Bush's book. As I and thousands of people have done. In the end Facebook is fun, but will you watch all their ads and buy all the stuff thats there. I know I won't its irritating in the extreme all these ads. If you are googling stuff and then the ads show stuff similar then that's not so bad, BUT if you're doing social networking then you are social networking, I don't want a loan or a holiday or any other rubbish, just

leave me alone.

Now the investment bankers are investing, but didn't they invest in C* & ^% loans in Deep South Property and we all know what happened there. Another South Sea Bubble beckons, and when it happens don't you wish you followed my advice and read a book instead

Gulliver's Travels and Me ©

By

Michael Casey

I was thinking about what to write this New Year's Eve. The past, the present, the future all spring to mind. Jack Black is in a movie Gulliver's Travels this holiday season. So I thought I could use that as my starting point. Then "WOOSH" I remembered I once won a raffle, I won a copy of Gulliver's Travels. I never won a raffle in my life but I did win that one. 42 years ago and more, I was still wearing short socks with elastics to hold them up and short trousers too. There were only 6 or was it 8 of us in with a chance for the raffle.

The book didn't change my life, it was a nice read at the time. The actual book was meant as a lecture, but we all forget/don't know that now. If memory serves a war was brewing because one side opened their egg by the big end and the other opened their egg by the small end. Me I prefer scrambled eggs in the microwave, 2 minutes and you're done, with lots of toast too, go to work on an egg used to be a very old advertising slogan.

Gulliver shows us that we are all afraid of things, and small things can make us all so very afraid. The shadow on the wall, or just being afraid of the dark, all these things spook us. Its so very hard getting children to sleep with the light off. So we compromise and have a night light for them, and maybe for us too. When we travel in some places the bedroom is as dark as a darkroom, but without any coloured safety light. Its total pitch black, so we compromise and have the bathroom light on, with the door half closed, otherwise if we awake in the night we might think we're dead, its just so very dark. I know from my own holiday experiences, but I did also work in an hotel for 3 years and when you do room checks the number of times it was pitch black because the curtains were left closed.....

To some you are a giant, just like Gulliver, your kids think you are great and you make them laugh, they forgive you for telling them off on occasions. They stand on your toes and together you dance around the living room. How long will they see you this way, I hope forever, I always tell my kids to remember things, I'm encouraging them to build up a store of memories and laughter. Then in the future when I'm not there anymore they have this treasure chest of memories. I'm no Jack Sparrow but I hope I have more treasure than him, treasure that'll last down the generations. Laughter is the greatest treasure I can give to my kids, I'm no giant, though I'm fat, Panzi FAT FAT BOY is my Chinese name after all, but a treasure chest full of laughter is what I try and add to every day.

The reverse of the coin is being small. Gulliver was small in the other half of the tale, we all sometimes forget the small people, those who beaver away in the background.

The little old ladies who teach choir, the lollypop ladies who save our kids from the selfish fast drivers who are on the phone as they drive. Today we have the New Years Honours and I for one hope the little people get their due. Little things in our lives can change and guide us to our futures. Advice we listened to once which changed our lives, such as "try computers" and then you end up with a nice job for 21years.

"Write a book", so I wrote a book. Now I've written 3, and I still need a publisher for my books not to mention a producer for my plays. "Why don't you get engaged" was one such piece of advice, and now I am married with 2 girls. Those 3 small separate pieces of advice have changed my life. All of you reading this must have had somebody give advice or make ½ a suggestion, even if you were all drunk in a pub and somebody said "why not go on the Xfactor", or "Go to London and seek your fortune", it worked for Dick Whittington after all. So think big, think small, have some travels Gulliver did, so why not you?

Christmas 2010, footprints in the snow (C)Dec 25, '10 12:53 PM

Christmas Day 2010, footprints in the snow ©

By

Michael Casey

I got a bit of the flu again this Christmas, so I wasn't playing in the snow but my girls were. They came in asking me to come out quick because they'd found a footprint in the snow. I wondered what they were on about. My big daughter had asked what was the hairy animal that left foot prints. She was talking about Bigfoot or a Yeti.

Outside she showed me what she had seen, it was a footprint wider than a man's and longer too, with 4 toe prints, or so it looked. She said there was a 2nd footprint but it had disappeared. Perhaps it was Santa's sleigh mark or was it one of his reindeer's footprint or was it the sleigh itself leaving marks behind. I retreated indoors to the warm, then I suggested that my big daughter that she took a photo.

She took a photo, literally one. I then got an old file divider and folded it in half so that I could take a few photos with the file divider being a scale reference. It's hard photographing footprints or Yeti prints in the snow, it's all too white. The impression in the snow was a large imprint only half an inch deep then a smaller imprint a bit deeper followed by the 4 toe prints. I include a photo below.

Now was it the Yeti in our back garden or was it Santa and the reindeer, just leaving one footprint as they hovered in our garden. Perhaps it was the Gruffalo itself, it was all a mystery. We talked about it while we had our duck and pancakes Christmas dinner, egg fried rice with king prawns will be our supper soon as we watch Dr Who, the new one the silly one as my girls call him. I punctuated the conversation with sneezes and wiping my nose. Terry's Chocolate Orange was our desert. Not very traditional but a good celebration if you have a Shanghai wife and two bilingual daughters.

We're having a break from the tv after the Gruffalo, which gives me time to write this down and tell you all about the Yeti in Birmingham. Though having thought about it, it could just be an impression in the snow made by a cat sitting down and stretching and scratching. Though we do have foxes near where we live and we have had a fox in our garden before. But as it's Christmas Day I chose to believe it was Santa's Sleigh just touching down momentarily, and if it wasn't that it must have been a Birmingham Yeti. A Birmingham Yeti, now that would be something, I could organise coach trips and freeze the footprint and keep it in our freezer just next to the pizzas and the sea bass, I could

charge a tenner a time to see the frozen evidence. And what if it was a Gruffalo? My small daughter did have an apple fall on her head while she was making a snow angel, so did the Gruffalo knock it off while he was trying to hide amongst the trees at the bottom of our garden? Was it her Isaac Newton moment? Was it all her imagination, or was it mine?

Judge for yourself, here's the photo.

My Lottery Numbers Dec 22, '10 12:32 PM

My Lottery Numbers ©

By Michael Casey

Well Christmas is upon us and all our thoughts move towards a baby in a manger. Maybe 40 years ago that was true, nowadays we all have a variety of different thoughts. My wife is telling tales of her youth back in Shanghai, tipping rice out of her bowl and landing on a neighbour's washing below, pants with rice in them, the remainder of the rice landing on an old lady's head. This was 30 years ago.

Other people wish and dream for a lottery win, just in time for Christmas. Me I play spasmodically, and yes I never win, I tend to play when there is a rollover, as if my chances will get any better then. I know I'll never win the lottery, but spasmodically I waste a quid on it.

How do you pick those six numbers? The number of smiles you got on the bus in the morning, the number of times you fell on you're a *&^% in the snow. The number of Z list celebrities who were featured in The Metro the on the bus newspaper, or the number of copies left strewn on the floor of the bus waiting for somebody to slip and twist their ankle on.

Or maybe it's the number of attempts you have to make before your computer switches on at work. Or perhaps the number of people in your lift or how many got out on your floor, or even how many free cups of chocomilk you have in a week from the free vend machine.

Choosing a lottery number is a very engrossing thing. I have won a tenner very very occasionally. I once got an IM from Shanghai my small daughter gave me the winning numbers. So when she got

home from her holiday I gave her the £10. However I'd much rather win enough to move house or even retire, then I could write all day everyday. But maybe the Fates are saving the Reading Public, God does have a funny sense of humour after all, he did make us Mankind after all.

So is there any hope or logic in lottery numbers, no, perhaps what I really need is for Vince Cable to introduce me to Rupert Murdoch and maybe then Rupert will discover my writing. Either that or my 33year old Premium Bond finally comes up trumps.

Merry Christmas Everybody

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com to escape the Turkey.

The Chair Dec 18, '10 6:59 PM

The Chair ©

By

Michael Casey

When we got married we couldn't afford much furniture, just a bed and an old armchair and a table to eat our dinner off. But that was fine my wife could always sit on my lap. That was nice and that was cosy and kept the fire going inside us and between us.

But when somebody sits on your lap the passion soon rises, and soon you're both naked and soon babies will come.

So the question is should I/we all of us not sit on laps and just buy a second chair. Its more civilised no doubt but a girl sitting on your lap leaning against to is much more fun. Don't you agree.

What if you can't afford any chairs, not even one? Is it better to sit on the floor doing Yoga positions? Would you both sit down cross legged and have serious conversations, and quote the Times, or would you both roll about and try something from the Sun?

So would it be better to buy a chair, or steal two deckchairs from a beach?

Furniture plays a major role in romance, a rocking chair is very romantic or even erotic, and when the babies come feeding a baby while rocking in a chair is such a nice feeling.

Your favourite chair, or an old suite donated by a friend is great, you can cuddle up together and watch tv, even if your wife thinks you're like Homer Simpson, not the ancient Greek philosopher. An old chair can be used to stand on while you wash the windows or change a bulb. I used to have an old huge battered old chair that I sat in while I speak these lines to you. Now we have a more modern and smaller chair that I sit in while I share these words with you. Perhaps when I'm very old I'll have a commode for convenience sake and my daughters will spray perfume. Nobody knows the future but I do really miss my rocking chair.

Christmas On A Bus Dec 18, '10 6:44 AM

Christmas On A Bus ©

By

Michael Casey

On a bus coming home the Christmas Story revealed itself to me, ordinary events on a cold Winter's evening.

There was a large man squeezed into a seat sitting crossways as he was so large, I squeezed in next to him, the two of us like boulders abandoned.

A small African child was singing a carol to her mum who was weighed down by worry and a carrier bag larger than the child, behind a bigger child was swinging her feet off the seat.

In front of me a child with a large bright pretty ribbon in her hair was talking excitedly to her nan.

Her nan was all wrapped up against the Winter weather, she was more like a parcel than a person

She was giving sage advice to her granddaughter, don't expect too much this Christmas.

There was a pretty teenaged too, she was moving her ankle in her new clean boots, perhaps

Christmas boots, she was speaking confidently to her ugly friend, pretty girls always have either a fat or ugly best friend, its Nature's balance.

The African family got up it was their stop at the bus stop, I told the child to hold on tight to the rail as she moved forward only she was too small to understand fully. My children are about their age I

said to the child with the ribbon in her hair and her nan.

The large man squeezed in next to me started doing sign language to me, it was only then that I realised he was deaf and dumb. So I signed back to him. A few stops further on the dumb man as big as Gabriel himself got up as it was his stop, we exchanged goodbyes, "Good Luck" I said, he got off and waved goodbye from the street.

I heard a voice on a mobile, "we've got to go then or the graveyard will be shut, I want to give mum some flowers for Christmas." All this represents Christmas, your Christmas, My Christmas, Everybody's Christmas. So take time out to speak to the deaf, to share a smile, to remember your mum, for Christ is Born.

Talking to an Audience Dec 13, '10 3:46 PM

Talking to an Audience ©

By

Michael Casey

The average speaker starts by saying "unaccustomed as I am to Public Speaking" and then he rattles off his talk. I was sent on a presenting course back in 1998 this was a great course and after 2 days of training I had mastered the basics.

The trainer placed a few objects on the table, a pencil, a book, a pair of glasses and several more random things. We had previously been shown how the expert did it now it was our turn. We were given 15mins to prepare then one by one we had to stand up and talk about the object we had chosen.

We all watched and then gave feedback, it was a group thing, we were all on the same team, it was a family we were there to help each other learn how to present. Talking for 5 mins can be scary when you've never done it before, but with training anybody can do it.

We repeated this exercise with different objects, we gave advice and encouragement to each other.

Some were not as good as others, for some standing up and talking in front of another group of

people was like being naked in front of people. Nobody was naked but it felt that way to the shy talkers.

Having Irish blood in me made it easier for me. Then we were all given the big challenge, the next day we had to stand up and talk for 15mins, on a subject of our own choosing. I decided to talk about my trip to Paris in the February just gone. So on the train from Oxford to Birmingham I started making out some Qcards, notes to help me with me talk the next day. I should explain I was working in Birmingham for ACNielsen but the head office was in Oxford and that's where the training was. Caroline had been very generous and allowed me to go on the course just months before redundancy beckoned. If I'm honest I hoped the course would help me with my comedy writing. The next day I was on a train my Qcards all ready, I rehearsed and rehearsed, then I got to Oxford and ACNielsen HQ. I think I was last to talk, or should I say perform. I told them that I had chosen hotel on the advice of JC, only JC had forgotten to tell me it was in a red light area by Gare du Nord Paris.

Being a lad I had a Chinese an lots of wine, before staggered all over Paris and down the Metro, at the Eiffel Tower my camera was bust, I was using my schoolboy French trying to get the girl in the box office under the Eiffel Tower to fix my camera. I decided a kebab was a good idea after my night time look at Paris. That was a mistake, the Chinese and wine and a kebab all mixed, and made me violently ill. My bathroom was like a wardrobe that you climbed into for both the toilet and a shower. I was as sick as a pig. In the morning I found a pharmacy. "Avez vous des asprin de bas prix" I asked. In exchange I was given a box which said "asprin tamponnee" I opened the box and inside was a tube with extra strong mint sized asprins, asprins that fizzed. So I had to find a drink and wash the asprins down, I must have looked like a rabid dog.

I continued with my tale, my audience in fits of laughter. I was nearing the end of my tale when I was stopped. "How many minutes have you done?" asked the trainer. "15" I replied. In fact I had done 30mins. So I think I passed the test, I can present.

3 days later I was in the Czech Republic, my penfriend was giving me a look at Pilsner her home town, the home of lager itself. She had a class and would I, could I talk to them, she was an English

teacher you see. So there I was in front of 25 students, so I stood up and presented off the cuff for 90minutes.

I think that proves I had a good teacher in Oxford. My trip to Pilsner gave me an idea for a piece of writing, Czech Story, which proved to be one of the best and funniest pieces of writing I have ever done. Its good because its true. I suppose all art is best when it draws from life. Shall we leave it there for tonight.....

A New Page, a new leafDec 12, '10 8:56 AM

Well I'm hoping for big things next year 2011. So I'm kind of restarting my blogging here on Multiply. I've created a book of blogs, a selection of 100 blogs. So that means I have 3 finished books and a 4th still being written:-

The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker

Essays and Plays

MichaelCasey'sBlogs2011

Tears For A Butcher

Tears For A Butcher carries on the next day after Butcher Baker Undertaker finishes. I'm having lots of fun dreaming up this book. Now all I need is a few quid to support myself while I have a year off to write it.

I won't be attaching any attachments to my future blogs, but I will be sharing my blogs with MySun and MyTelegraph as usual.

Window ShoppingDec 4, '10 6:51 PM

Window Shopping ©

by Michael Casey

Well the cold has got me so I'm all bunged up and drinking gallons of hot drinks, the kettle is

whistling so wait a sec. Ah that's better, another hot coffee, then I'll switch to hot blackcurrant. Why do colds come at Xmas?

They are as predictable as carol singers. I only ever tried carol singing once as a child that's another memory that has rushed back to me.

Rosie told me she believed that if you looked at a toy shop window you could see all the toys but at night when you were not there they all came to life. She was a child at the time, but I hope she lets that memory come to life often. My kids still believe in Santa as do I, I go for the fittings of his new costume at Slaters every Christmas, and then Santa comes along for the final fitting, we are about the same size you see. You could say I am his body double, just like in the films.

But back to Slaters, now they only have a small shop window then you take the lift upstairs and it's a bit like an Aladdin's cave. But speaking of shop windows and window shopping there are many ways to window shop. The real world one can be tiring trudging around the shops, especially if you have a young and fashionable wife. So I soon realised the best way was to let her go on her own while I had peace and quiet, then once we had kids she took the kids and I had peace and quiet. The perfect solution, especially as I paid the bill. Young girls become very fashion conscience, so they were the perfect mirror, to say mum this is good or this is bad. I'm sure Shanghai husbands/boyfriends agree with me, perhaps there should be a club for the Shanghai husbands/boyfriends

Me I look in 2 shop windows and know they won't have my size, and then I head for Slaters, sometime with the family in toe, then its like lightning, flash bang whallop, I've got all I need. That'll do me for a year or two.

I do like looking in watch shop windows, watches are a weakness of mine, why are men's watches so huge nowadays, its like having an alarm clock strapped to your wrist. I tend to go for the elegant ones, or the elegant ones in my opinion. The ones with multi dials and buttons to press and turn are a turnoff. Oris ones are nice, as are Omega. Yes I do dream of having one of those when I win the lottery or finally sell some books. My first watch was for passing the 11plus, its all in The Watch and Me an essay on my site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Now we are in a technological world, we have windows on the world via our tv and our computer. I

was telling my girls earlier today that we only had 2 or 3 tv channels when I was their age, they could not believe it.

So what do we do with our tv/computer eyes ?

We window shop. Obviously I look at watches and dream of my automatic Oris or Omega, and how nice it would be. I have had maybe 20 watches these past 20 years or so. I'm forever carrying things and banging my watches. One steamed up and the front fell off so I superglued the glass back on, only I glued the hands together.

What else do I window shop? Well when I need a new winter coat I look at the web sites and see what I can see in xxl or 2xl as its called nowadays. Window shopping on the web allows me to see what's available, the designs and so forth, all from the comfort of my own home, as you've seen from the photos on my website. The government encourages all this window shopping because it helps trade and that in turn helps their tax take, which in turn should help us. We do finally leave our homes and visit town and buy stuff and have a beer and a meal while we are at it.

We all look online before we book our holidays, some look online for love, romance, sex. And then they book their holidays. Online is our eyes, nobody will believe how old fashioned the world used to be, my grandkids won't believe the Internet was invented, its as ordinary as trees growing in a back garden, its always been there. In the future there will be guided tours explaining about Window Shopping, about holding hands in the rain, about blokes gathered in the doorway talking about MU while their wives/girlfriends try on stuff. Window Shopping is part of world culture, it's the 3rd oldest occupation in the world after sex and stories comes Window Shopping.

WikiLeaks and all that Nov 28, '10 6:18 PM

WikiLeaks and all that ©

By Michael Casey

WikiLeaks is making the headlines the world over. Wikipedia its near namesake is very inaccurate, Lenny Henry did a piece about it in his Comedy Show which I watched the other night. Now while I'm

talking about Lenny who was born just up the road from where I'm speaking from, he did a 2 part radio play on Radio4 about a washed out Police Padre , now that play deserves to be transferred to TV, so everybody email The Sun and see what we can do.

WikiLeaks shows what can happen when somebody has too much access to military computer systems, and it also proves that the system was not tested enough or at all. The average person at home looks after their computer and their data. Its no use boasting how great a computer system is if its not tested. We have a British citizen who broke into Nasa and other US military computers because he was looking for UFO evidence. Now if he was a terrorist I could understand the USA anger, but he was a simple man who should not be extradited and sent to jail. He should be rewarded for proving how rubbish the security was, he should be given a job to help sort out the security. The poacher turned gamekeeper approach. I bet the majority of people, lets say 85% would agree with me.

Wikileaks shines a light on diplomacy and its many arts. Some things that have been said we all know would be said anyway. But its embarrassing for these facts to come out. The pot has been stirred and lots of *&^% has hit the fan. Its like a couple of girls in the bathroom saying horrible things about a friend not knowing she was in a cubicle behind them. In films the girls kiss and make up, or the girl gets revenge or the girl realises she's a dork and she changes for the better. Sandra Bullock would no doubt star she'd be the girl in the cubicle.

International relations are not about girls in the bathroom, the world is a dangerous place. We have folks who are arming with dangerous toys. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate phallic system, if we could make a wish upon a star we'd all wish them away. Some people love Miami beach others think its dangerous full of dangerous people, others prefer Fort Lauderdale, so it goes with international relations. We have friends who protect us, ie. USA but we don't want our other friends knowing this. I was brought up never to tell a lie, are International relations about lies and deceit? Or is it all about the real world, you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. Only South Africa gave up the Nuclear phallic, any chance North Korea and Iran will do the same?

We can all dream and we can all pray, my god is not better than your god. There is only One God and

his name is "dad" or "abba" its to him we should all be praying, begging our one God to take away the Evil of trophy nuclear weapons. This is something worthy for all of us to do this Advent season, a new life a new hope is born at Christmas, for without hope the certainty is that someday we'll all see an atomic flash on the horizon, which would prove we are just a planet of apes.

Just for fun vote on the best photo of me plus your favourite piece of writing

Whats on the Internet Nov 27, '10 6:13 AM

There was a piece in today's DT about the internet, my post Internet Story says a lot about the subject so I've brought it back below.

But I would first say that using the Internet allows you to practice your skills, it allows you to be a verbal Banksy, to share your "wisdom" with the world. It allows you to hijack websites for your own devices, its like shouting at a tv crew or pulling faces at the tv crew while they interview somebody important or self important, its like mooning while a politician drones on. Which is more important, a politician trying to save face or a mooner behind him?

Me I'm trying to get people to read The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker my comic novel. If I had a few quid I'd publish it as an Ebook, at the moment its a free read on my site.

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com I can empathise with singers who used to tour all the old folk clubs being allowed to do three songs in the interval. Finally they are allowed to do a set of six poems. Mad Dogs and Englishman was a great band from years ago, they may be dead now, I hope not but alcohol has got a few of their kind. Nick Fenwick was another great singer, as was Tommy Dempsy. Back to the Internet, here everybody has their 15mins of fame or their own virtual world in which they are a star, its like Xfactor where you are both the judge and jury and your own publicist. Yes I've broken some of the "rules" on the internet but thats the joy of it you can have your say, the printing press was a great revolution and brought education to the masses, so now in its way the Internet brings enlightenment to the masses. Yes its brings lots of rubbish too, perhaps 50% rubbish and 50% interesting stuff, but I do think I'm right in saying it is as important as the printing press. If

we didn't have the Internet we could still be back in the days of Monks in cells illuminating pages. Now if I could draw my book would be more sellable, a few drawings grab people so they turn the pages, cover art is important too. So if Banksy reads this how about doing some illustrations for me. As payment they'll be one blank page in every book so you Banksy can draw to your hearts content, me I'll just enjoy the royalties.

Now everybody enjoy Internet Story again. Michael in Freezing Birmingham

I know your face Nov 22, '10 3:21 PM

I know your face ©

By

Michael Casey

Somebody said he knew my face today, he was looking at a photo of me on my site

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

But 100,000 people know my face, I worked at a 4star hotel for a few years so that many guests must have seen me.

I have brothers and cousins, so I suppose my face could look familiar. My hair is distinctive, it went white, silver if you're generous to me, it went silver 20 years before it should have. I'm "granddad" on the school run.

In songs a face changes things, "when I saw her face" the Monkees sang, I was small when their show was on tv.

"Take that look off your face" another song sings. For the Chinese its about not losing face, saving face is important.

Putting a face to a name is what we say when we meet after just phone or email contact.

Faces are important, we can see each other, we can see each other's reactions, the look of love or the sneer of contempt. Fear written on a face, tired and worn out, sad eyes, pained eyes all of this is on a face.

But what about a mother's face, love is written all over it, kindness and compassion and laughter too.

My wife took my mother's photo to Shanghai to introduce her to my Chinese family, my mother had died a few years previously but the photo showed them the depths of love, the oceans of love, all of this from the smile on her face.

A face is a door to the soul, a way to the heart, a sign showing just how much spirit of love is inside a person.

A face is a road map for love, so always be open, a hard uncaring, a hard look is self defeating, I'm strong, leave the face pulling alone, leave it for heavy weight boxers.

Me I hope I have a ready smile, a warm look just as it was given me by my parents and by my heritage.

His face reminds me of Santa, now that is a face worth keeping. Smile Everybody.

Counting Money Nov 20, '10 7:55 AM

Counting Money ©

By Michael Casey

The King was in his counting house accounting out his money when down came a Blackbird...

We all remember this from school days, days getting further away from us all the time.

We all know how to save the pennies, save the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves.

Make ends meet, what does that mean, touching your toes perhaps?

Scrimp and save, things are tight, does that mean you are fat? Or lack of money.

We all learn about money when we are small. We remember the sound of loose change in dad's pocket.

We were getting a treat because Dad was getting money out, we could hear the sound we were happy.

I'm old enough to remember real money, pounds shillings and pence money.

It was 12 pennies to the shilling and 20 shillings to a pound, and horses were sold in guinnies, if I've spelt it right.

Our money confused my American cousins, but it was fun explaining it to them. A halfpenny, a penny, a threepenny bit, a sixpence, a shilling, a florin, a half a crown, crowns I next saw, an orange 10 shillings note and then a pound note, and then other notes which I never got to see because I was too small.

Explain all that to a foreigner and they were totally lost, going to the moon was easier to understand.

I'm old enough to remember the joy of the Apollo landing, we were the world, everything was so exciting, Apollo and Ali not to mention the Beatles and real money.

A penny was made of copper and so was the half penny, the threepenny bit was six sided with a portcullis design on it, it went green with age. The sixpence was very slim slimmer than today's 5 new pence. The shilling was thicker and perhaps bigger than today's 10pence. It was real money and the sweets it bought were so much better than today's sweets, or so it seems.

We knew about money because we had lodgers and they came to the back door to pay the rent, sometimes barely able to stand up, smoke and beer belching over us kids. Are you alright Mrs Casey? As they leant on the lintel for support, staggering away to the pub again.

The gas and electric meters had to be emptied and the money counted. We had a copper coloured metal jug which had the keys for the locks on the meters inside it, when dad had then we knew he'd be counting soon. He emptied the money on the kitchen table and started counting, piles of coins, shillings and florins.

Dad was like a Casino croupier counting and stacking the coins. Then when he'd finished he'd put the coins in little plastic bags, and after that in a small leather black bag. This was his lunch bag for work at the foundry, but when the gas or electric bill came it was the bag for the money. I was charged with walking down to the corner shop, there I'd present the money to Mr Singh who wouldn't even weigh it, just throw it in his safe and peel off the money from his very large wad from his back pocket. Smiling we'd say our goodbyes both happy with the exchange. Who needs a bank when you

have a corner shop?

There are more stories to tell, but I'll save those for another day.

TTFN

Michael

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

We Are Words Nov 14, '10 8:22 AM

We have Words(c)

By

Michael Casey

Words have meaning words have power

Words are nothing but hot air

Words mean this words mean that

Words can set you free

Words can send you to jail

Words can be sprayed on a wall like cat's pee

Words can be printed on a press and sell millions

Words can be illuminated one at a time by Monks

Words are lies words are truth

Words can send you to war

Words can bring peace

We are Words

In the Beginning was the Word

But what is the last Word

If Music Be The Food Of Love Nov 13, '10 7:41 AM

If Music Be The Food Of Love ©

By

Michael Casey

If Music Be The Food Of Love wrote Shakespeare, he was right, Music Is The Food Of Love. A boy can get up close and personal if he has the right mood music. A girl's heart will melt if he has the right song on his hifi, or should I say iPod. Music touches us, it makes our hearts beat faster, just as a bit of flesh revealed makes our eyes dilate.

In the interests of balance should I reverse the sentence, a boy's heart will melt, or a gay lover's heart will melt etc. Let's take that as read, Love does Conquer All as my mum once encouraged me, and if you look at my family photo you'll see IT DID.

Now Music has been a big thing in my life, since 1974 to be exact. How can I be so exact? Well my brother went off to be a coal miner then, that was his gap year before they were even invented. He did go off to a very good University the year after, the very best to be exact. So while he was a miner I was all alone in the homework room. To break the silence I listened to a radio while I did my homework. So love of music while I struggled with Latin homework, Latin is a form of torture but it does focus the mind, I'm pleased to say I got a B. Remember the Ablative Absolute is like, say, remember the Alamo.

Years later I used to go to a Folk club and see 3 bands every week. Later still I went to a Jazz club, mainly Trad Jazz, so I know a good or bad musician when I hear one, and I know a good voice when I hear one. If ever I develop cancer it will be because of all the years of smoke while I listened to music. The idea for the Jazz band and Jazz funeral in The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker came from all those years of music.

I love my radio so much, it was and still is a constant companion. Though before I got my own house I also listened to plays on Radio 4, I can spot one from 100yards now, 20years of listening to Radio 4 before I took up a pen myself. But it's music I want to tell you about. Music is a reservoir of emotions, past and present. Elvis brings back memories, why? My dad discovered Elvis in his 60s,

there was a series of Elvis films on TV over Christmas so my dad watched them all and was impressed. If there was a good song on the radio dad would raise the volume and then lower it again when the other rubbish returned. Dad would be shaving in the kitchen because the bathroom was too cold and he'd come in the living room all lathered up and he'd say he/she has a good voice. Me, I'm very eclectic in my tastes though Reggae does leave me cold, its washing machine music the same repeat motion/noise as a washing machine. Yes I know a whole avalanche of criticism will fall on me, but as Joanne used to say "we are all different" so let's agree to disagree. What's amazing nowadays is that lots of the music I remember is 40years old. I was young when I heard Eric Clapton for example because of bigger brothers, so now it makes me realise I'm getting old, being called "grandpa" by teachers when I do the school run is one example. I tend to listen to Magic radio on my dab radio, because the music is good and they don't prattle over the songs. But I still am amazed at the age of some of the music, but it's the music that's old, NOT ME, I still feel 20 in my head. Today Lady Gaga is Queen, she has a great voice and is very pretty, ok very sexy. Her videos are fun and she seems to know how to stay ahead of the music and other press. You get so many wanna bes who if you listen to their voice really are 2nd rate, 1 hit wonders. I suppose the test is, if you listen to your dab radio and hear a voice do you want to open your eyes and poke your head out from under the duvet. If the voice is good then you will because the dab text will tell you who is singing. On some of the tv talent shows the voices are terrible, but when you hear a good voice you can press record on your Sky+ remote. If my dad was still alive he'd raise the volume on the radio to listen to Lady Gaga, if he saw her he might think she was a modern Dorethy Lamore in a Bob Hope and Bing Crosby Road Movie. But Gaga is already making her own Road To movies and they really are a modern form of Art.

Bring On The Tears Nov 11, '10 8:30 AM

Bring On The Tears ©

By

Michael Casey

What makes you cry? I've just wiped a few tears away before I started talking to you. Today is 11th Nov 2010, which is Remembrance day, it is also my dad's Birthday, he would have been 89 today.

My dad was a man of peace who spent his life in the heat of the furnace,

The District Iron and Steel, Brasshouse Lane was where he worked for 40 years. He came over to England in 1944, he was a blacksmith. My father was a gentle man a kind and caring man, he spoilt me he always got me an extra ice cream when he was on holiday, my many siblings called me Pet because of it.

If there was a film on tv and it was touching, my dad used to clear his throat and pretend he was getting a cold, he would move to the kitchen to dab away those tears. Or he'd put the kettle on. My dad was very very strong, after our mum had died he said she was strong, he said mum was as strong as a horse, the highest compliment a blacksmith can make. My mother died in her sleep next to her husband of nearly 50 years. My brother climbed into the bed and cradled her in his arms and tried CPR but she was already dead. Eight weeks later, the same brother heard a noise, it was our dad falling out of bed. My brother laid dad down on the bedroom floor flat and started CPR, he screamed to another brother, 999.

My brother saved our dad.

I wrote all of this down in Padre Pio and Me. The bottom line, I have a Shanghai wife and 2 bilingual daughters all because of my brother and Padre Pio too.

When we look at an object we have an association too, an object is not just an object it's an association too. The electrical socket for my washing machine is there because my dad put it there, it doesn't mean I cry every time I do the laundry, but it does mean I smile. I have an old barn chair with the back broken off, my mum used to stand on it when she washed the outdoor windows, it's been in my house nearly a quarter of a century. This reminds me of my mum. In fact I sat on that chair with the old typewriter balanced on a red stool when I wrote my comic novel

The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker, I can even remember when and where we bought that stool, it was 1973. Simple objects are full of memories and meaning. In Citizen Kane it was Rosebud

the sledge that meant so much when Cane died.

I had a pair of Rosary beads but I felt they were too gaudy, so I gave them to my mum. No doubt she used them well, she really knew how to pray. That may have been 15 to 20 years ago, now she's gone, but my brother said he had a spare set of Rosary bead would I like them. So he have them to me, he said they belonged to our mum, and yes they were the very same pair. So love and "objects" had performed a circle. My sister's house has white lillies scattered all about her front garden, they only appeared after our mum had died. Mum had sneaked up to my sister's house and planted them with Love. So after she was gone there appeared a reminder of her and her Love.

I have a speaker in the corner of my living room, my brother used to play Cream music on it via a reel to reel tape recorder. So that too has an association. I did in fact meet Eric Clapton when I was working in a 4star hotel, so that in a way was a circle.

There are many things and many lives that touch and connect with one another, such as the lolly pop lady when you do the school run, or the nice dog tied up outside a school waiting for the kids to finish school.

There are grand gestures too, such as in My Big Fat Greek Wedding the dad buys his daughter a house, right next door to his own. All this is love in many many forms and I've just touched the surface. I can remember my mum crying her eyes out over a broken wooden coat hanger, why? Because her mother had given it to her in 1944 when she had left Kerry for England. Many things Bring On The Tears, but they are tears of Love.

well the 4 photos show the 4 of us, our family

Journalism and All That Nov 11, '10 7:13 AM

Journalism and All that

Well the new look Telegraph site is all sleek and "sexy", though it still stops me commenting in the right spot, so here's something in the wrong spot.

I read the article about US v UK journalism it was a good read. But as we all know CNN is just a travelogue, I was in Shanghai on a family holiday in 2007 when Iran kidnapped some UK sailors. My only news source was CNN and the coverage was rubbish, and I mean rubbish. Piers Morgan taking over from Larry King, good luck to him, Piers makes entertaining shows, worth a look but still lightweight. Very watchable, but if somebody wants to give me half his resources then I can do better.

From what I've seen of US journalism they are all pompous when on tv, and when I used to read the NYT via internet the articles were too long, just as preachers sermons can be too long. Just get to the point. Yes I've enjoyed their journalism too, I can also say sometimes in The Daily Telegraph the article is too long as well.

Articles should have the Goldilocks factor, not too hot, not too cold, not too hard, not too soft, but just right. They should appeal to both the Sun reader and The Telegraph reader, and if I may copy US tv, Michael Casey's blogs appear in both MySun and MyTelegraph not to mention www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com Happy Reading viewers.

Below are our photos, the modern Adams Family

Football Crazy Nov 6, '10 8:21 AM

I speak as a football naive, I've only been to two matches in my life. It was Villa v Arsenal and Villa v Derby maybe 12 years ago.

But as I said to Barry at the time the crowd was alive, it was like a hugh cat moving and swaying reacting to the play on the pitch. The 1st match I was above the goal very high up. The 2nd match I was with Chris in the middle just a few rows up. Live football cannot be beaten, I cann't really explain how it looks and how it feels. Its like you're in a hugh jelly that you put on the washing machine and then somebody switches the washing machine on, so you wobble and wobble and you have no control. Thats what a football crowd feels like. So much mass movement, so much excitement, 50,000 people screaming and shouting, laughing and crying. The grass so very very green.

This is live football and when you have a master, and here you can take your pick from any team, ManU, Villa, Chelsea and all the other teams. When you have a master on the pitch it really is The Theatre Of Football. Act One, Act Two and even a few dodgy acts trying to impress the Ref, all of this is football. Live is always best. We've just moved up to a new big lcd tv this year, the difference to everything and to football is amazing. I imagine Sky's 3D is going to be totally fantastic too. Footballers are today's Gladiators, instead of Nero or any other Caesar raising his thumb or condemning to death, now we have Sir Alex, and the other managers raising their thumbs from their honoured position in the stands. It's an old quote but a true one, "is it a matter of life or death?" No its more important than that.

I have a lot to learn about football, but I do know one thing, the game is better when all of the players are on the pitch in their natural area and not in self imposed "cages" whatever those "cages" are. For footballers are like lions, they are born free, free as the wind, chasing and ducking and diving, their prey is the football, and the net is their home.

Teddy Bear Cull Nov 3, '10 7:07 PM

Teddy Bear Cull ©

By

Michael Casey

Well we all know about Teddy Roosevelt and how he could not bring himself to shoot a bear while out hunting. Teddy Bear came into existence. Thousands of bears, millions of bears, probably more bears than there are people in China have "Lived" thanks to teddy. I bought my future wife a panda when we first met, the panda was made in China, just as she was. In fact she used to say I was her Panda before she changed her mind and called me Panzi which means FAT FAT BOY. So that panda travelled from China to England and then back to China, and then she brought it back home to England when she came back to me, that's 15,000 miles by my reckoning. My daughters have been

back and forth a few times, when you marry a Shanghai girl international travel is inevitable.

Girls just love their teddy bears too, my smallest just adores Winnie the Pooh, she was saying a few hours ago she wished she could have a Winnie the pooh bed and carpet and wallpaper, basically everything that could possibly be Winnie the Pooh. My girls have received lots of cuddly toys, teddy bears and all things cuddly. I did a count a while back and I stopped at 40. These toys live behind the settee next to the vacuum cleaner and my old collection of CDs. Every now and then my small daughter drags them out from the 3 Iceland carrier bags and makes them pay attention, she plays teacher and they are her class. She then takes the register before starting to read to them. The cuddly toys sit up straight listening eagerly while she reads to them, she is quite a strict teacher. Now a while back while the wife was tidying up the plastic bag with the cuddly toys broke open scattering teddies everywhere. So we had to have a cull, you have to feed fizzy pop gently to the toys until they fall asleep only to awake at the North Pole where Santa welcomes them and makes them as good as new until they become new toys for new owners. We had to have another cull today, my small daughter separated the sheep from the goats so to speak. Then the unwanted toys were placed in an Iceland carrier next to the front door, no fizzy pop for them, just a plastic bag, in the morning they will find themselves in a charity shop soon to have new children to love them. There was one cuddly toy a hush puppy dog that we had brought back from Florida years ago neither of my girls liked it, but I do so I have rescued him from the Iceland bag, he can live on top of my bedroom Dab radio. I cannot decide what to call the dog, my new best friend, HushPuppy maybe, or Subway the dog.

Christmas is coming so the smaller cuddly toys have been saved and will decorate our house one Christmas gets nearer. For now my daughter has arranged them on top of the piano, looking over my shoulder I can see, Winnie the Pooh(of course), Tigger and another Winnie the Pooh, a snowman with bells, a cat from Shanghai who's chasing Minnie Mouse along the keys, it sounds like Jazz and finally there is a smiling teddy with Christmas hat and gloves on. Well I hope the toys find nice new homes via the Charity shop, as for me I hope HushPuppy/Subway hasn't left any messages on my Dab radio.

Terra Cotta Army not in China but a copy in Germany near Frankfurt/Wellburg

I was there in 2008 its well worth a look

From Fireworks to The Grave Oct 31, '10 7:27 PM

From Fireworks to The Grave ©

By

Michael Casey

The girls were singing at a Wedding Yesterday morning, they came home telling us about the bride and groom. They also heard that there was a fireworks display that night. They asked could they go, so I said yes if they behaved.

They behaved all afternoon, so at half past six I nagged them to put on full winter gear, hat, coat, scarf and gloves. They wouldn't believe me that it would be that cold outside but I explained it would. So reluctantly they put all the layers on. The witch as we call my wife drove up to the firework display. It was behind the church where they had been singing a few hours earlier. My wife, or the witch said she'd collect us a few hours later, she said I could ring her. Only I had forgotten to bring the mobile phone, I have only acquired a mobile phone this year and I don't really know how to use it, and I don't really want it either, its for emergencies, its on the Asda tariff because that's the cheapest. Its my wife's 1st phone. Anyway we said goodbye and we went to watch the firework show.

Only there was a problem, the price to attend was too much, I have to watch every penny at the moment and I didn't think it was worth it anyway. So we stood on the pavement in front and to one side of the church. From that vantage point we enjoyed the fireworks display, a bit like watching tv through your neighbours window. There were a few other families who did the same. So we watched the fireworks while my 9 year old filmed it on our old digital camera, she was very pleased with her efforts. I promised them we'd buy sweets and pop to make up for not seeing the fireworks display officially. My girls understood and after 20mins of illegal watching of fireworks we started to walk

home. As I had forgotten the phone we'd have to walk and not get a lift from mum. But I do know how to improvise, it's a gift I do have.

We stopped at the 1st sweet shop and they roamed around, but girls being girls they could not make up their minds, so they left that sweet shop with nothing. Now from the church to our house is a good 25min walk and is twisty and curvy and runs alongside the woods at Warley Woods and golf course. So as it was the Eve of Halloween I asked them did they want to walk through the dark woods. No they both said, but I knew they would like it so we crossed on the crossings which cross the race track of a road. The boldly we went a few yards into the dark dark woods. We were only there for a minute but it was a good thing to do so close to Halloween. Then we crossed back to the safer side of the road. My smallest daughter wanted a rest so we stopped at a bus stop and sat on the plastic seats, I told them that I had a bus pass, would they like me to leave them there while I jumped on the bus.

After a couple of minutes rest we resumed our trek back, were we like the Von Trapp family, no Swiss mountains for us, only the long and winding road. The kids could see the retaining wall of their school, from that point on, even in the dark they knew their way home. Spirits lifted I had an idea. My big daughter's friend lived just down the road on a side road. So when we were outside her friends house we did ghostly noises, just like in Michael Jackson's Thriller. I thought I made the best screams. Sadly no lights went on in the house, not unless we had given her nan a heart attack.

Further down the road by the light of a front room we could see a child in a witches Hat he was pretending to be a witch. It turned out that he was a friend of my other daughter, this was too good an opportunity to miss, so again we made ghost and ghoulish noises. The child inside lifted the curtain to check was the devil outside, no it was only us. My big daughter laughed and laughed when she saw his face appear, she hid beneath the high retaining front wall and then ran laughing to use further down the road.

We went to Thimbermill and got our chocolate and Dr Pepper, we had had some fun after all. My small daughter had said when we were in the dark dark park that she had Seen a cross, we were in a graveyard. I think it was the support posts for a sapling, not unless it

was....

Finally home we decided to scare mum, our resident witch, so my big daughter did her big scream and she managed to scare the neighbours over the road.

but mum had the last laugh, she was sitting in dark watching a Chinese movie on the internet so when we entered the house she scared us.

Well that's how we enjoyed our Saturday night. Tonight 31st Oct 2010 we had several trick or treats at the door, so I just screamed back I'm dead," followed by my best Vincent Price scream/laugh. But the kids and parents weren't impressed. Today does mark an anniversary, its 11 years since I was made redundant from CAN been a few varied years, and best of all I have two daughters whom I can stroll in the dark with

Don't tell anybody though, my witch is more like Bewitched

My Armchair Oct 25, '10 7:44 AM

I did actually bust my armchair the other day. My kids do sit on the arm rests with me while we watch films, Camp Rock, High School Musical etc for the zillionth time.

My wife used to sit on my lap in my rocking chair, the rocking chair lasted 18 years. So the current armchair may be 6 years old. I was lucky with the rocking chair because it was part of a suite, in fact it was the only reason I bought the suite. As for the current armchair it was part of a suite too but the customer did not want it so I picked it up cheap for £45, yes only £45. All my girls do squeeze onto it while they watch Phoenix TV, now the bottom has fallen out of the chair, we've had to put a big cushion under the seat of the chair. So that'll do until we can save up for a new armchair. I had a quick look in two furniture shops and its £200 plus just for a single armchair. I will go back to the same furniture shop where I picked up my bargain 6 years ago, but I'm not holding my breath.

Rocking chairs are great and I'd love to have another furnished rocking chair, perhaps I could be a rocking chair tester, or the NHS could send me one of their new vibrating chairs. A good chair is a thing of beauty in itself, and the rocking is very soothing too, and with a nice drink in your hand then

that is poetry in itself. Cue Queen's Song We Will Rock You.

When our dog long ago broke its pelvis he was saved by the vet, and we placed him in our dad's old armchair when the dog came home. When our dad came home from the steelworks the poor dog got out of the armchair because he knew it was dad's chair, I remember it so well. Our cat used to enjoy an armchair too, soft and cosy, she'd fall asleep purring like a Jaguar car.

So the point of all this musing? Enjoy your armchair, because your kids and wife and finally grandkids love that chair too, in one object you capture the word family.

p.s. cross your fingers so I find a cheap replacement

Michael

The Simpsons are modern Shakespeare Oct 18, '10 5:35 AM

The Simpsons are modern Shakespeare ©

By Michael Casey

I just read a piece in this morning's DT it was about the Vatican's newspaper and the Simpsons.

The DT comment button did not work so I've written this piece instead.

Shakespeare touches all of us, once we learn or are taught how to understand it. It may mean a West Side story experience. It may mean Shakespeare in Love or a modern version with Leonardo di Caprio.

But it is all Shakespeare, yes I know the literati will moan as the always do, but underneath it is Shakespeare. It's the universality of it, www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com for my stuff, more like an Ealing Comedy. But back to today the Vatican/Jesuit take on the Simpsons. My girls tease and say I'm like the dad in the Simpsons, I tell them I'm much much slimmer. Comedy pokes fun and draws us closer together as we laugh at what's happening, and a big part is laughing at others' suffering, PC people will spin in their graves, and the sooner the better.

There was a really good series on tv about Shakespeare and how he could have been a secret Catholic amongst other things, not to mention his eclectic background, he could touch bases with so many things because of his life experience. So the Simpsons touch bases with us because it highlights the worst in us all, and then we laugh at ourselves, there is no "I couldn't possibly be like that"

because we ARE like that. I suppose in the New Testament the common touch in the language/life draws us towards the Divine, The Simpsons could it be called the common man's Bible? I don't know, you'll have to read more of the Bible and watch more of the Simpsons. And ask the Jesuits who write the Vatican newspaper, me I'm going to find my deck of cards you may remember the song.

Mongolia Mines and Hearts Oct 17, '10 9:13 AM

Mongolia Mines and Hearts ©

By Michael Casey

I was reading The Daily Telegraph today and there was a good article in it about Mongolia and its mineral wealth. Basically China its buying up all the mineral reserves.

Next door in Russia there are tons of reserves too. Black Gold or oil is washing its way from Russia to China. I remember what somebody once said to me, History is Geography, or maybe a History teacher said it in a class. But it is so so true, History is Geography.

China has invested its time and money around the world trying to secure its mineral resources as well as the oil that its economy needs. It is not trying to export democracy or anything else. As Cuba has learnt you can export doctors and you'll gain brownie points, China builds schools and infrastructure, it builds the things that will aid China. The Big China is the key the way forward and nothing will get in the way. Having a Shanghai wife I've seen directly and indirectly just how busy China is with its development. Forward is the motto for Birmingham where I'm talking from, it is also the motto for China.

Everybody wants to progress, see the photo below that's where my mum was born and lived till she was 12 years old, along with her 6 siblings and her parents. My mum's brother Tim died of rickets at age 7

So now the wheel of History has turned, China wants to progress. In the 1870s we had the scramble for Africa, it was literally a carve up look at the straight lines on the map of Africa. Everybody wanted

their place in the sun, now its 2010 and it's an economic place in the sun. Offering Democracy and baseball is a bit naïve, or reminding people of Laurence Of Arabia is naïve too. What matters to people is clean water and schools, if you start there then expand from there perhaps you stand a better chance of winning hearts and minds.

Technology may have to be given away too, if you want to save the planet then industrial nuclear technology will have to be shared. I read recently about some element that when used powered a nuclear plant without weapons grade leftovers. I think it was in the Telegraph. It seemed to be a magic wonder pill. Technology is the future for the traditional industrial powers, they need to get over having their clothes stolen by China and other emerging powers. My dad started as a blacksmith in County Kerry Eire and then spent his life in a steelworks in Smethwick. None of his children worked in factories, we the next generation move on. My novel is set in Old Forge and Singing Anvil as a tribute to my blacksmith dad, it also evokes a time a period that no longer exists, that's the charm of it. In the real world though the sun has risen in the East.

Which Way Do You Look? Oct 14, '10 3:06 PM

Which Way Do You Look?

By

Michael Casey

Which way do you look? I'm thinking of this because it's an anniversary today, so it got me thinking. I also heard today about the funeral arrangements for our old priest, he was the priest who came to the house to confirm that our mum was indeed dead, when my dad saw him enter the house with my brother and sister my dad started to cry. So now we cry for that priest.

Events make you look this way and make you look that way. Events touch us and pain us, events make us laugh and make us sigh. Today in Chile the whole nation screams in celebration, to be honest the whole world smiles too, we are the world.

When you look in a mirror which way do you look? If you are a girl or a lady you look at your body

and wonder is it as you want it to be. Is your hair good this way or that way, do those clothes really suit you or should you take them back to the shop to exchange them, you've tried 20 things to match them but they just don't work with your wardrobe. Yes you'll take them back, I mean your mirror is so much better than the one in the shop, and why don't husbands understand about clothes.

Men look in mirrors for 2 seconds as they drag the comb through their hair, they never seem to notice the stubble on their chins, or the paint on their jumpers, they shame their wives.

Do you look forward or do you look backward? It depends on how your life is doing. If you're on the dole with no hope you may look backward to when you had a job and the money that went with it.

You're afraid to look ahead it's looking into the gloom, its like the Titanic, all fog and mist. Some take refuge in drink or worse, glass ½ full or glass ½ empty, or maybe the glass is just not big enough. Your prospective influences how you cope with things.

You can look forward by looking at the property pages on www.rightmove.co.uk if only you get more money then you'll move house, even if it would really be a lottery win amount of money. You can look forward more realistically by looking at argos and currys and comet and do some window shopping for the things you really need to replace once the money comes in again. A new cooker perhaps, a new living room carpet, perhaps a fridge, or just upgrade the central heating boiler. All these are looking forward.

I look back a fair bit, because I have lots of memories and spent a lot of time with my dad in his good years and his fading years in the old people's home, you can find out more by reading Padre Pio and Me on www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com I have almost total recall for my family events. I'm

the one who remembers all the family growing up things. When my brother went to University he bought our little sister a tricycle, it was £5, that was good use of student grant, over 40 years ago. Now my own daughter has ambitions to go to that University. My younger daughter had a tricycle too, I got it as a gift from a toy show that passed through a hotel where I was working a few years ago.

I think having memories is good, it certainly means I have material to write about, growing up with

lodgers for example. I look back with love and think just much love we got from our parents. "You are as good as anybody" is what I can remember my mum saying, proud and defiant she was, for her love was a nuclear weapon. Mothers know how to use nuclear weapons, their love really is that powerful. I have an idea for Tears For A Butcher my 3rd book, if ever I get to write it. A mother's Nuclear Weapons will feature, I just hope I get to share it with you, let's look forward together.

Me and the wife In Frankfurt Aug 2008

Steptoe and Son Oct 12, '10 5:01 PM

Steptoe and Son

By

Michael Casey

I was watching the telly and Steptoe and Son was on one of the Sky Channels, it took me back years, almost as many years as to when I was as old as my kids are now. So a long time ago, 40 plus years ago.

It was the episode where the dad was sick in bed with a bad back, I've hurt my back in the past so I could empathise. But it was the humour where the dad was exploiting his son, Harold was at his dad's beck and call. "Harold" this and "Harold" that. Finally the son realised what was going on, somebody had drunk his lager and he was sure it wasn't the horse, so it must be his dad upstairs. Harold got his revenge and gave his dad a blanket bath with surgical spirits, which was like setting fire to his naughty bits. So he ended up sitting in the kitchen sink to douse the pain.

Last week it was the famous episode where the old dad and the son were playing scrabble, X certificate scrabble and the Vicar came to visit. The vicar got Harold to write a history of Rag and Bone Men. The dad sulked but did a cross word puzzle for the Vicar's magazine. When the magazine was published the Vicar was arrested because the cross word puzzle was obscene.

This is classic comedy and I'm glad Sky has it on one of their channels. It takes me back to when I was young. It also reminds me just how well it was written, some of modern comedy is just not

funny. Personally I don't find the Office funny at all. I still dream that someday some of the comedy I write gets on tv. If Steptoe still makes us laugh then it is a testament to just how good it is. My kids saw a bit of tonight's show they laughed, so that'll be 3 generations of Casey's who like Steptoe, I can remember my mum laughing like a banshee when it was on. If there are any producers out there Shoplife would make great tv and be a cash cow at the theatre www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com is where it can be found. Old iron, old iron.....

Dr Who Oct 10, '10 6:48 AM

Dr Who

I remember watching Dr Who when I was a child, where have all those years gone?

It is more of a film now than TV. It is great family entertainment too, but don't say it'll make kids interested in science and change the world. Yes one or two may get an interest in science because of it, but it is what it is, entertainment.

The scripts vary a lot, you can get rubbish episodes, such as the fat monsters that went into space, those white little bars of soap things. I think Steven Moffat's episodes were the best written as a whole, not unless he wrote the fat one.

Saturday's wouldn't be Saturdays without a bit of Dr Who, I think his name is Sue, as in the Johnny Cash song.

The Dr Who confidential shows are interesting and do show just how committed everybody is to the show, but they also display a flaw. When they rehearse and talk about the episode their passion is far greater than when you see the final thing on a Saturday night.

Perhaps they cannot see the wood for the trees, or perhaps I'm just a little too old to be caught in the spiders web the story spins. I know from my own tv viewing that a film can never match an original book. I know when I write and think how my stuff might appear on tv/film that the nuances die when transferred to film, a book and a film are very different mediums.

Dr Who with Matt Smith is good and I loved how Amy's boyfriend waited 2000 years for her and

punched Dr Who on the chin, she WAS worth waiting for. The threesome does work and I'd love to be in it as the fat guy sat on a bench slobbering over his food as Dr Who or should I say Sue walks by, I do look a bit like Alfred Hitchcock after all, and he was in all his own films.

A Winter's Tale Oct 8, '10 3:29 PM

A Winter's Day

As I look from my window I see the blue blue sky. Birds dive and soar better than any circus acrobat, they are painting a picture with their wings. Tiny tiny wisps of white cloud remain, like left over candy floss on a child's face, like white whiskers on a very old woman's face.

Curtains are pulled open and windows are inched open too, daylight and fresh air to bedrooms shuttered down against a cold winter's night. People stand and yarn and scratch too as they struggle to wake up fully. Then one or two realise they don't wear any pyjamas so they hurry away from their windows, their wives, their husbands, their lovers laughing at their stupidity. At least old Mrs Jones may have had a thrill.

The sounds of morning, of daylight rise. Slowly the sound of the milk float, the sounds of milk bottles clinking together as the milkman does his rounds, this way and that. The sound of Mrs Murphy walking her dog, the dog panting in the cold winter's air. He doesn't have a sheepskin coat to keep him warm. He has his own fur coat but this winter is a cold one, so Goldie the dog could do with an extra coat too.

People dance down their door steps to their car, nagging children to hurry up as it's cold. Children write their name in the frost on their neighbours' cars before being told off. John the neighbourhood jogger rushes past, the kids stick their tongue out at him, he does the same, they all laugh, only for John to miss his stride slip on an icy patch and fall to the ground hurting his elbow as he does so. Still laughing the kids get in the car and are taken off to see grandpa, John is rubbing his elbow and his bum as he gets up gingerly.

The lads, we are so hard, appear from their homes to noisily attack the day, Sunday is for shouting,

but not too loud, as they have headaches and hangovers, did they really chat up that ugly fat girl, but they gave her his brother's mobile number and not his own. They stride off to the news agent for The News Of The World, just for the sports pages, their mums can read the scandal section and the horoscopes.

One or two black people wearing their Sunday best pass by on their way to church, a throwback to decades before when people still went to church and when people still wore their Sunday best.

People used to dress up to go to the theatre too, but now, but now.

I reach for the kettle and have my first coffee of the day, coffee with milk and no sugar, the way English people have coffee, not the American way, just the soft English way. My kids want toast and peanut butter, or cheese on toast, so my 3 slices of toast become one slice of toast as I feed my girls.

I nag them to put slippers and socks on, yes we have nice carpet but in the winter's weather they are always getting colds, so I nag them, I nag them. My wife nags them in Chinese too, or Shanghai dialect. The phone rings, its Germany calling, or rather my wife's best friend who's calling from Germany, the cackle or hens, of chickens clucking is the noise these 2 Shanghai girls make, as they talk in Shanghai, when are we coming back to Germany is the message. Cluck cluck cluck.

The sky has changed the blue has changed to grey, will the snow return, its been a snowy winter over here in Birmingham, some parts of the country have had the worse weather in 20years. The children have quietened down, my wife has relented and put a nature program on the tv for them.

As for me I was going to try and write a poem but instead you see what's before you. I'm half listening to Mike and The Mechanics a cd I've loaded to the computer, "give me the simple life" he sings, I suppose my life is a simple life too. But if we can see the poetry in life then we enjoy the simple things which make up all are lives. All our lives are poetry if only we take the time to watch and listen, while we're making toast for the kids.

Afternoon Atheist Oct 6, '10 2:06 PM

I spent the afternoon with my friendly atheist he was condemning God, he thought God existed but

only as a bad and evil thing. He assumed a lot about my faith, and was wrong about it and me. Now should I bother to try and convert him? Should I point him in the direction of his local church where he could find himself a nice wife. Do people go to church to find wives, now that's another question. Or should I let him carry on until he stumbled over his own direction. I did explain how I stood by my fridge and asked God to intervene in my life, my 3 wishes so to speak, its in my essay Padre Pio and Me on my site. And then as if by magic I met my Shanghai wife. However atheists put themselves in a box, a cold steel box and throw away the key, and they are not Houdini's who can escape, they are like collapsed dead stars deep in the cold of space.

Does family make us believe in God? Wishing for a family was one of my 3 wishes. I got all my luck in one go is what my Kerry cousins say. You ask for anything will do and you get the best, better than all the rest as the song goes.

The autumn leaves fall and Life will soon die, winter will come and cold will descend, but in the spring there will be growth as Chance the gardener. How to plant a seed where there is forever autumn as another song goes. How do you plant a seed in an atheist's heart does he have to suffer a dark night of the soul before like a caterpillar he emerges as a beautiful butterfly? Its a difficult question especially when I got my faith at the nipple. Others of many faiths learnt their faith when they were toddlers, the trendy I'll wait till they grow up so they can decide for themselves always strikes me as child neglect of the worst sort.

Christmas is a happy time full of innocence and hope, perhaps I should drag my friend to Midnight Mass and let him hear carols, silent night holy night. When we sing and remember our family members who have gone ahead. Should I make him look up at the stars overhead twinkling to eternity, for there is always hope. Hope springs Eternal.

What are words for ?Sep 27, '10 6:21 AM

Words are for what? ©

By Michael Casey

Words are for what? Conversation, a chat, gossip, juicy gossip, a quiet word, a stern word, a protest, a scream, a shout, a murmur, whispers, a buzz or just plain old prattle.

Today the news is full of the Labour Party, much is being said and not said, how will the future be, will they the brothers bury the hatchet, do they wish to bury the hatchet in one another's head. Are they both lying about everything? Or are they both champions of truth. One thing is certain the Tories just love this result.

Political reporters just love it too, those political reporters are prettier nowadays too, I remember when I was a child it was just Robin Day in his dickybow talking to other men about politics. I once saw Robin Day in the street, he was a really fast walker. Now Robin Day was great with words, he could and would call somebody a %%%\$\$%^&& to their face but he used such elegant words, it would be an honour to be dumped on by him. Robin Day's most famous quote was "Some here today gone tomorrow politician." He said that to Sir John Knott when the Falklands War kicked off, John Knott walked off set. At the time nobody knew where the Falklands were, were they in extreme northern Scotland?

Words though do have so much strength. Hitler knew this, and look what happened. Other evil leaders did the same thing, pick your own despot.

Sometimes all it takes is a word and things can be healed. Sorry is the hardest word to say as the song goes. Kids play in the playground and harsh words are said, kids are cruel is what any teacher will tell you. "Take it back" is another catchphrase, then you have to say the magic formula of words and all is healed. Or is it? With kids in the playground, or between brother and sister yes, hopefully. But with international relations? Pick your own dispute.

Love songs have so much power, or certain words can tickle us and make us smile, or make us angry. When I was in Shanghai in 2000 meeting the family at one dinner a 13year old boy was proud to sing a song he knew in English, Michael Row the boat ashore. He grew whiskers on his chinagin the wind came out and blew them in again. The Chinese boy was so proud. It was the same song that my brothers and sisters used to sing to me to make me cry. I think I laughted in 2000. In 2007 at another dinner I met him again, he asked did I remember him, he was now as big as myself. Of

course I remembered him, how could I forget that song and the association. I told the Chinese lad to keep up with the English and do Law at Uni. I was working at a law firm at the time.

A way a woman dresses has a lot of power over a man, it leads to the power of love. The way a man dresses has power over a woman, a fireman for example. The way a man undresses has power over a woman too, the Chippendales or The Full Monty.....

But back to words, if they are not matched by action then they are like steam coming off a coffee on a train, just evaporating into nothingness. A few simple words with action attached is better than a hurricane for blowing inaction away. My last uncle died recently and after the funeral his son in law said "He didn't say much but when he did it was worth listening to." He was a quiet man, but he was loved so much, and his words were worth their weight in gold.

Cobwebs of Love Sep 25, '10 10:55 AM

Kids need good parents, friends we choose for ourselves, your families you get anyway.

I'm lucky I had great parents. Faith does help, but kids get bigger and decide for themselves if their parents were talking rubbish or were worth listening too.

Kids travel and find their own way home to their faith and their families. Elastic is very important in relationships and faith. If you try to keep things set in stone then you will be in for a fall. Nothing is set in stone, friendships change and alter and our own understandings change and alter.

Have a bit of elastic in your life is my best advice. You are not in an army and getting up at 5am and doing all the marching and so forth. Yes have discipline and rules, but be aware IF you force somebody to do something when they have the chance to rebel then they will. You cannot chain anybody to you or your faith, brainwashing is a bad idea, listen to the Genesis song Jesus we know him.....

So you bind your family and friends and faith to you by cobwebs of love and nothing stronger than cobwebs of love. Love should be like that its a cobweb of love, also be happy to have a Prodigal Son in your life, happy because you will always welcome them back. If you're lucky you'll never have any

Prodigal sons

in your life but I already tell my kids I'll always love them and they can always come home, leave your doors open with cobwebs of love waiting there

Bicycle Removals Firm Sep 21, '10 6:19 PM

The Bicycle Removals Firm ©

By

Michael Casey

Today's blog is inspired by what I saw through the window.

And what did I see? Well you may have all seen The Quiet Man with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. In it a spare bike is "carried" by somebody already riding one. It no doubt takes great skill.

It wasn't that I saw but something much more intriguing, I saw a man on a bike carrying a mirror under his arm. Not the newspaper, but a real mirror, a 3.5foot one under his right arm. He also had it mirror side out, so no doubt several car drivers would have been dazzled.

Later on as I sat here at the computer I saw him again, this time he had an ironing board under his arm, at least the legs weren't sticking out. He just pedalled past. I was wondering what would happen next. I was thinking it was nearly time to collect the girls from school when he came walking past carrying a heavy bundle on his shoulder.

As we walked home I told my girls what I'd noticed, I always try and teach them to be observant, such as seeing the new trendy sign over the help the aged charity shop today. And as we walked home why the policeman had got out of the panda car near the bank, to go to the cash point and then

go to Subway for his sandwich.

I explained to my girls that the man on the bike must be moving house, but he didn't have a car so he was DIY moving with the aid of a bike. My mother once put on all her clothes and then walked

home to Cromane Kerry because she had no suitcase so she wore everything. Her mum had belted her for her stupidity, this would be in the 1930s. I encouraged my daughter to use the bike man as a story for her next English lesson, she said it was not her style. Then as we closed the front door, who did we see? The man on his bike with a mixing desk under his arm, my daughter laughed, but her little sister had the last laugh, she'd found the chocolate biscuits.

So what can I say, I hope that if ever we move house, if ever I sell my 3 books then I hope we can at least have a van to transport our things. Or perhaps I could self upgrade from a bicycle removal service to a bus removal service, I do have a bus pass after all.

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Would Cardinal John Henry Newman Agree with Me? Sep 18, '10 6:20 PM

Here in Birmingham England the Pope will tomorrow announce that John Henry Newman is Blessed, if you've watched the TV coverage so far Catholics are very happy.

So that made me think of an old post which I'll paste in below.

What is Prayer ? What is Love? ©

By

Michael Casey

What is Faith? We are told in one Bible passage that if a man can do many things yet there is no Love then man has achieved nothing. I remember this being read at grammar school at the morning assembly. . Sorry if I cannot quote it verbatim. I'd come home from work and my dad would be sitting down in the living room his dinner on a chair so he could watch the news, he'd have the first bite raised to his mouth. I'm not hungry he'd say and offer me his dinner. This is love. Another time, another shift pattern. I'd come home at 11p. Dad would wait up to see me before he'd go to bed, he'd be up at 5am for his work the next morning. This is the standard I'm used to, I'll do the same for my own children. Its normal, it's obvious. To me anyway.

My mother used to watch Dallas on tv after she'd fed all her children, one hand in her apron as she

watched tv. Only the hand always jumped in her pocket, she was saying the rosary while she watched tv. Very Irish, very motherly. Very normal, the standard I got used to. Countless mothers the world over do the same. They may be Christians, they may be of a multitude of different Faiths, yet one thing in common. Love, love of God, love of family, love of children . And do we thank our parents for this love? If we didn't and now our parents are gone, then do we live with regret all our lives . No, this would be folly. We can thank our parents and our God by being good parents, by trying to copy the good example shown to us . I met my wife in the retirement home where my dad lived after his near fatal heart attack, which happened 8 bare weeks after my mother died in her sleep. My dad lived long enough for me to meet/marry and have a granddaughter. As I gaze on my daughter's face I often say "thank you". Thank You to God for allowing me a wife and for having a daughter. An extremely beautiful daughter, healthy and funny. I have to show the moon to my daughter because she thinks its so pretty, she loves stars too , not yet 22months old and she knows the wonder of creation . As I look upwards and see the cold beauty of space I know how lucky I am. I know how lucky I am. Lucky enough to cry, which I do on occasions. My tears are my humble thanks and praise of God. I have a family. July 96, mom was gone 2 months, and dad was now given 1 week to live. So after 3years of constant visits to the seniors home I met my wife, my Shanghai China. So yes I cry in the dark of the night as I look up at the stars . I am a lucky man, because I had good parents, I know I did . I hope everybody could be as lucky as me

well I hope this reads ok , I couldn't think of any poetry , I just hope telling it plain catches the spirit , the spirit of love . One word, one look, one sigh, one flicker of the eyes, each of these is a prayer, a deep prayer . A prayer of hope, pray, hope and don't worry is a motto I try to live by that's all the advice I can give

michael

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My New Computer Part 2 Sep 17, '10 12:53 PM

A new home computer is an event. You think how quick it will be. You prepare by backing up your files, but you have so many of them. Then you have email accounts and favourite sites and so forth. You think you've thought of everything but you haven't. BUT you do have a safety net, you've emailed your important files to yourself, in fact you have a couple of email accounts so your stuff can be safe. Only you forget the passwords.

I'm sure we've all done it. Luckily the nice folks at Google can help. But then there is GMX can they fix it too?

Then you get 60 day trial of software from Norton which features an online backup, so your files are safe on a server in the USA.

So I had loaded our family photos to the new PC and then deleted them from the memory stick thing.

So that was ok, only I then lost them from the new PC. So I have to rely on Norton, only there's a glitch, I can see my files on their Server but I cannot restore them to my PC. It may just be I need to click somewhere I cannot see. So I send an email to Norton, that's a couple of hours ago, but I'm sure those guys are just as nice as Google.

Have I learnt my lesson. Yes, buy 2 memory sticks and don't delete anything.

Footnote I first used a computer back in 1978, DEC PDP 1170s but then computers were as big as washing machines and dealt in megabytes and tape decks were as big as wardrobes.

Tags: 1st ten chapters

How to Teach a Nine Year Old Long Division Sep 13, '10 12:54 PM

How to Teach a Nine Year Old Long Division ©

By

Michael Casey

Well my daughter only has 2 more years in primary school, year 5 is what they call it. So my Shanghai wife is pushing her to learn maths, 11plus beckons next year.

I remember I was called the "Ready Reconner" by the lady in the butcher's shop, Marsh and Baxters. The shop had a variety of changes over the past 45 years but now it is once more a butchers, a halal one. I was 8 or younger at the time me and my mum would go to the butchers and buy the meat for the 8 of us, sawdust was on the floor in those days. The lady in the shop would write down all the separate items on a piece of paper using her pencil. Then she'd try to add them up, remember it was pounds shillings and pence in those days. 12 pence to a shilling, and 20 shilling to the pound, 240 pence in one pound. If you did not know your 12 times tables then you'd be lost. Mr Gallagher my old school teacher threatened us for months with a times table test. He sprung it on us and the result was 4 of the best, a pump on my bum. The next time he tested us I was perfect. So with a stinging bum as a reminder I was red hot as far at times tables and sums were concerned. Hence I was the ready reconner

We always paid the right price for our meat, the tills were huge monsters in those days with big symbols appearing in a glass window, watch Ronnie Barker in Open All Hours and you'll see one. Now how do you teach division to a 9 year old. Well my wife starts in Shanghai dialect, then I interrupt in English giving a metaphor or two, upside down stair is how I explain. Then we jump on Utube and you get lessons galore, 360 maths lessons is what I hear. Though its American so is Math lessons, I was boasting as they explained long division that I had shown our daughter the correct way, but Utube had another set in the upside down steps, by basically I was right. I then reassured our daughter if she did 100 examples then she'd get it. If you know how to multiply then you know how to divide. More encouragement is given in Shanghai dialect. As for our daughter she heads for her room and Galaxy on her DAB radio, perhaps if she counts the stars in the Galaxy then she'll have her head in the stars.

Dr Who at The Proms Sep 10, '10 4:46 PM

Well the girls were out at Choir practice so I thought I'd have a quiet evening. I stumbled over BBC3's Dr Who at the Proms. It really was a great show, I recorded the 1/2 I saw and I hope I'll cat the

repeat. If the BBC sells this show it should do really well.

They have Dr Who in the USA now so I hope they get to see the show there soon. Classical Music is an acquired taste, you have to learn it. I know lots of Classical buffs will contradict me immediately, I can only speak from my own experience. I was chasing a girl a long time ago and she introduced me to Classical Music. The Dr WHO show at the Royal Albert Hall tonight on TV married together Science Fiction and Classical Music. For the girl I was chasing she'd never marry me, it would be like Science Fiction.

Music really does touch the soul, the composer said he loved Dr Who and AMY so it was easy to write music with them in mind. When I wrote The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker (www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com) I had Julie Walters in mind for the part of Mrs Murphy, now 22 years on she is the right age for the part, I can also reveal that she used to live just up the road from where I am sitting right now. Its a small world.

As for Dr Who he's been brought back to life these past few years, and its our hearts which have been touched and we cry tears on occasion. In the audience tonight on TV I did see a lady crying, that is the highest compliment anybody can give to a performer.

Sometimes words are not enough, sometimes a hug says more, sometimes silence has to be broken.

I'll finish tonight with this:-

Let There Be Light ©

By Michael Casey

Let my tears be my words

Let the candle light be my eyes

Let the flowers in bloom be my lips

Let their scent be my blood

Let the wind be my breath

Let clouds be my mood

Let children's laughter be my hope

Let widows' sighs be my conscience

Let a stranger's prayers be my delight
Let the bees be my wisdom
Let the trees be my strength
Let my patience reach to the stars
Let me be always remembered in your prayers

My Mouse is Drunk Sep 3, '10 9:05 AM

My Mouse is drunk ©

By

Michael Casey

Well my mouse is drunk, I did see the warning signs and I hoped and prayed that it would get back to the straight and narrow, but it did not. The mouse is a drunkard and that's all there is to it, its not that I live in a windmill with the sails producing electricity for our home our windmill home. It would have been just fine if the mouse wore cloggs and did a bit of break dancing. Living in a windmill would be fun too.

I am of course talking about a computer mouse, not any Nick Park creation. Our computer was waving goodbye as you can see by my previous post, but now the mouse was joining the strike in sympathy, all for one and one for all.

Can you remember the last time you were on a double decker bus up stairs and drunk?

I can remember being on the Metro in Paris Feb 1998 drunk and very happy, but that's another story. So picture that in your mind and that's just how my mouse is behaving. Scrolling and jumping and highlighting galore, could be like a scene from an old film, Easy Rider perhaps, and yes I remember seeing that at the cinema, 2pound a week pocket money so I could go to the cinema at the Grove.

You think you can master a silly little mouse but you cannot, its like a jockey verses a giant, the jockey is wiry and nimble so its very hard to catch him and lay a punch on him. Exactly how it is

between me and my mouse. I was to do a few things before the new needed replacement computer arrived, but it was a battle of wills and the mouse, the computer mouse was winning. I need to renew my house insurance so I thought I could do this online. I had rung up my existing insurance company and they immediately offered a 40% discount! But it was still cheaper to change so I had been looking online, but with the mouse playing up it was like being in an Irish Pub on Saint Patrick's day, one giant jelly mass of people, me and the mouse were just like that. Finally I had to give up I was getting seasick. 4 of us use this computer and the mouse has been battered for years, so now it was time to put it out of its misery, the only decision was whether to bury the mouse in an old shoe box or just cut off its tale and give it to the with. kids to play

We're having a baby Aug 30, '10 11:35 AM

We are having a baby ©

By

Michael Casey

We are having a baby, after much though and heartache we have decided to have a baby, it will be our 3rd. Now in Google search that'll be condensed so everybody will be mislead until they click and read the full version. Yes we are having a baby, and yes it will be our 3rd, but not a baby baby, which would indeed be our 3rd. No we are not trying for a boy after having two girls, we are just having a 3rd baby, I mentioned it to my eldest daughter on my way back with a coffee in my hand, she said it wouldn't be a 3rd baby, it would be a 4th baby, or even a 5th baby. You see we had a new Tv after ours gave up the ghost after 16 years, so the new Toshiba was a baby, and our new noisy whistling kettle was a baby too. What I'm really saying is that our computer has reached the age when it should be replaced. The baby I'm on about is a new Emachine computer, a baby computer because it should be so much smaller than the original one from over 7 years ago. Best of all it was on offer, 200 off. If it wasn't on offer it would have stayed in the shop, but we really need our computer so thankfully a cheap one has popped up to save the day.

As for our current Emachine that'll find a new home with somebody who had our last old baby, a tradition is forming, he has our old cache which saves him cash. Its nice if you can recycle things, and I'm sure our friend will spruce it up to make it better than we had it. I know somebody who has a computer who has never done a disc cleanup, but that's another story. As for us I now have to backup our old files, can you imagine how many 1000 photos you take when you have a young children; you have to send them to grandma in Shanghai and friends in Toyko and Taiwan and Singapore, and the most exotic Stourbridge and Reading and Frankfurt. You do have some on the family website but now as change is in the air you must backup everything, you cannot lose your children's childhood snaps.

Yesterday I looked at USB sticks they can be pretty expensive, finally I worked out how much stuff we just had to backup and move. Play.com turned out to have the best offer for 16gig flash security. Lets hope it's a simple as I think it is to back things up, I have 14gig of stuff to backup. As you can imagine I have to keep my other babies safe, my stories my writing, which are dreams in themselves.

I had them on floppy discs scattered all around my house. I do have my site

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com so my "masterpieces" will survive fire and floor and even nuclear

war as the are on a server on a different continent. However I still need them on my new baby computer my new Emachine, so my 16gig flash storage will have a mission. There is one thing to remember though I remember somebody saying if you don't dismount/unload you media properly then you lose what's on the flash media. Well I'll find out about that soon enough, Wednesday will be my security day.

Then once everything is safely loaded I can breath a sigh of relief. But what else do you have to do once you have your new baby, your new computer. Get connected to the Internet, without being swamped by viruses because you forgot to get an anti virus program. Set up accounts on the computer, I have my side and my wife has her side. With a Shanghai wife though I get stray Chinese characters appearing on our current computer, and strange things have happened. So I need to keep a clear head while I get things as I want them to be, however give it a fortnight and China will have invaded my side of the computer and stolen all the duvet. I still dream of having my books in

Waterstones and sold as Ebooks for all these new devices, but most of all I want a computer just for me!

From A to B From Sat Nav to Blocked Sink Aug 23, '10 7:14 AM

Well I hope you are all fine this morning. For us the Sat Nav debate continues.

In the old days a Black Taxi would not be seen using an AtoZ, it was beneath his dignity. He'd done the Knowledge and it was all up there in his head. Jack Rozenhal wrote a great play about it, was it 30 years ago? Maureen Lipman was his real wife.

Delivery drivers have an egg and bacon butty in one hand dripping egg on to the AtoZ in their other hand while they try and deliver a chest of drawers, with 5 days growth of beard for good measure.

Bus drivers know their route, so once they've done it a while it's automatic, they know what they are doing. All they have to do is put up with kids trying to use a 3 day old ticket, and not get too high from all the cannabis on the bus. Or remember when they have switched routes because that can lead to strange directions.

Door to door salesmen all those years ago, with the rap at tat tat on the back door had their route carrying the suitcase with samples in. I can vaguely remember one at our back door did my mum buy a clothes brush? But that must be 45 years ago.

So basically we all know what we want and where we are going. Going further back they say people only knew a six block radius around their home. Going to War changed all that as did radio and then more importantly tv. Tv being our eyes on the world, previous to that only Merchant Seaman knew of the world. My own granddad was a merchant seaman, I sometimes wonder did he ever get to Shanghai

Or was it me, his grandson who got there first. Had he visited at the turn of the 19th/20th Century 100 years and more ago.

Which brings us back to Sat Nav. Me I use a bus which is fine apart from the pot heads who sit next to you on the bus and all I want to do is puke. My wife is a car driver, so she and our girls love the

car. But my wife has borrowed a Sat Nav and likes the ease of it so now she wants one of her own. The result is that I'm being nagged to provide one. You pay, me pay, yes you pay, why me pay, because you are the husband so you pay, no way me pay, you pay you pay yourself, I say. And on the ding dong, sing song goes. Which is the fun part. Me I no pay, use computer I say. You can get perfect directions off the computer all you then have to do is print them off, if our printer was still working we'd be doing that. So really all the wife has to do is copy them down, in English. She's busy with the wok as I talk to you, she's compromised now, she only wants me to pay half. So I say I'll be doubly generous and double the share I won't pay, I'll pay zero and she can pay 100%. That's the true spirit of negotiation, now I have another thing to resolve, she's blocked the sink, so pardon me now as I take the plunge, or rather take the plunger to the sink, no need to use a Sat Nav to get there, its over my shoulder in the next room, just turn left at the tv and go straight on to the sound of bubbles. Love is everywhere don't you know it, just find it, no Sat Nav required.

Read My Mind Aug 22, '10 4:50 AM

Read My Mind ©

By

Michael Casey

I just read in the Sunday paper that soon they'll be able to read my mind, everybody's mind. A computer firm is scanning brains so that in future you can control your computer with just a thought.

"Where do you go to my lovely when you're alone and in your bed, tell me the thoughts that surround you" as Peter Sarstead sung in the old and very good song.*

Now the song was a great song, perhaps they'll play it on Magic again soon.

But our thoughts are private like the sunglasses of our mind. They ring fence our brain and keep strangers out, they hide our boredom when at Company events, the same speech and the same director laughing at his own jokes while as one we all think "what a plonker". A whole hall wishing

he'd stop so we could get on with the entertainment, free bar and circus.

Politicians lie, we all think they do, and if we could read their minds we'd all throw cabbages at them, or eggs or just manifestos. We heard what Gordon really thought of that lady and it helped lose the Election for him. Then the apology shambles, you can't take back something like that. If somebody could read Gordon's mind they would have dived in to save him before he even said it. Politicians need to be clear but they never are. Why have clarity when you can have deniability. Let's just wish Gordon a good relaxing next 5 years.

But what of you and what of me. You see a girl, you see a boy, you've got your shades on, you take a good hard look, the object of your attention cannot see your eyes, you try and look cool and not move your head an inch. But you lust after him, you lust after her. Choose your own words as to what you are thinking, or are you lusting. Well they'll never know because they cannot read your mind. But if they could, they'd be a few slapped faces that's for sure. Or they'd be a few sudden snogs in doorways and in bus shelters or on the top decks of buses. And all because we can read each other's minds. Perhaps in the future the gismo to read minds would be attached to your shades, so you'd look cool while they drool.

What about your mum if she could read your mind? She'd be sending you to bed without supper, she'd scream and shout "get out of my house."

What about old gran and granddad, they'd know what you really think of them. Do you love them or are you just playing along to get their money when they die.

Reading Minds is a dangerous thing, we need protection from ourselves, a stray spoken word can hurt, but luckily our words are locked up in our minds and they can be chosen and picked and used with caution. But if they were there all naked in front of us, no nuances, no clarification then we'd all be in big trouble. I believe we think

4 times faster than we speak, but speech is our filter so that we DO pick the right words, we don't say the wrong thing. Reading Minds can be dangerous, yes it would be great if you could walk down the road and have all the girls dreaming of you, but what if you were walking down the road and you could hear everybody's inner voice saying I hate you. What You Don't Know Can't Hurt You, so as

far as I'm concerned I'll Fortune Telling to Gypsies.

*Peter Sarstead Copyright.

Good Will Hunting Again Aug 14, '10 7:05 PM

I just watched Good Will Hunting on tv, I'd seen it before. I do in fact have a few cousins in Boston, one is a cop.

Anyways this time it got me thinking about my grammar school days back in 1970. WE had one lad who was just like the star of Good Will Hunting, his name was RP he had brains to burn as they say in Ireland. Unfortunately he had a deformed back, Esmerelda and the bells were no doubt said by us, though I never actually remember hearing it. RP was especially great at Maths and Sciences, years later at a school reunion, thanks to physio he was alright. He was writing computer games somewhere. God Bless him I say now and I said then.

All this brings to mind just how great God and genetics really is. As I've mentioned in other blogs things can run in families, maths or music or painting or writing, good looks or lack of them. Then every now and then Nature can play a binder. Look at the Mozarts of the world. Remember the film Amedeus, I can remember looking back and seeing 2 people crying in the audience at the old Futurist cinema in Birmingham. So why are these geniuses thrown up. Is it God saying, just when you lot thought you knew everything I throw a googlie or a curve ball, or whatever sporting metaphor you care to choose, or does God bend it like Beckham.

I think it is for a reason. Perhaps to make us Mankind humble, to make us realise we don't really know much after all, we may have jumped of the 3rd rock from the sun and had a day trip to the moon, but really we are all still chimps banging two rocks together to make a fire.

Great Art, such as the Cistine Chapel the very sparks of Creation and of Intelligence now this does show us many things. A cow grazing on green green grass, giving us milk which really is a great invention, now that's something we all overlook.

Life really is a great invention, junkies think they see great things when they shoot up, but I'm sure

God can take their hand and lead them to a beautiful garden and from there they can see the movement of the spheres, see planets form and reform, see erupting super novae. All of God's creation, then finally we are all shown a mirror and we see ourselves, our so small selves. It is only by having Mozarts that we can aspire to be better than being chimps on a rock hurdling through space and time. Can you hear the music?

My Daddy's like Google he knows everything Aug 11, '10 7:06 PM

My Daddy's like Google he knows everything ©

By Michael Casey

My kids were in London today for a day out with my wife and one of her friends. Me I stayed home I'd picked up some bug last night, so I nursed my bug.

The girls were all excited when they came home and my smallest one was telling a story. It began with a box fell from the sky, but it was no ordinary box, it was a magic box. So I told her to keep the idea in her head and she could write it out in the morning, it was late now. Her bigger sister observed that when she wrote she wrote all posh, but when she talked she did not. I then tried to explain the difference between :- speaking, writing, presenting, teaching. Some people may be able to do one but this does not prove/equate to being able to do another. Then my smallest let loose with the line that I was Google and should be a teacher and that I should write kids books. I'll do anything IF somebody sponsors me, or becomes my patron, though in my case it would be Saint Rita or Saint Jude themselves who'd help. Thinking back to 1969 I did win a Junior Free Handwriting Competition, I have the certificate somewhere, Brook Bond sponsored it, I'd forgotten about it till just now.

Daddy, any daddy has to try and be an encyclopaedia to give his kids some information, in some SciFi film or it may have been in Dr Who I saw a battered Robot become the teacher, with holograms too. If only I could be some sort of magician, then that would be swell as the Americans say, card tricks with lessons on, slight of hand passing messages of learning. I am aware that I have to try hard and

give good information out, otherwise 1984 becomes a reality, rubbish becomes fact, and facts become rubbish. There are more questions than answers, luckily I'm very eclectic so I can give a base camp answer, then watch as their minds click and you can see from their expression, from the look in their eyes that they understand and they can begin to work things out for themselves or just have a look online. The main thing though is that Daddy, this daddy, me, encourages his girls to use their brains.

The cobwebs may grow IF I didn't have children asking this and asking that. In a couple of years time my biggest daughter can read my book, it's a 12 certificate so although she's seen it she'll just have to wait for the dubious honour of reading daddy's The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker.

Where do the tears go when they are shed? Aug 9, '10 3:27 PM

Where do the tears go when they are shed ©

By

Michael Casey

Where do the tears go when they are shed

While I lie here crying on my bed

Do the tears drip drip away and seep though

The floorboards and head for the sea.

Do my tears join an ocean that rises and falls

Do the tears yell and scream but only sea farers

Hear them, do whales moan as they crash through them

Only whales know of my distress as my tears groan

In deep deep oceans in the unknown dark deep seas.

Do my tears head north to the North Pole and Santa

Does Santa Ho Ho Ho so much because he is trying to drown out

The cries and sobs and tears held back for so many years.

Do tears form ice shelves and become icebergs, silent and majestic

Like giant cathedrals of ice. Is this the way to silent the voice of tears.

Frozen in Time for 100s of years, the fears of today and yesterday are merged
As one, gagged for eternity in an ice cathedral.
Will everything be forgot, deep freezed, quick frozen like garden peas.
Do my tears evaporate and head for the sky, joining the clouds as they pass by.
Are my tears blown this way and that, are they taken far away over the ocean.
As planes pass through the clouds that are my tears, can the passengers hear
Can the passengers hear my tears, all my hopes and fears, or are my tears
Drowned out by the in flight movie, 007 killing my prayers to heaven.
Do my tears wash away my pain, my guilt, are they like mothers' milk?
For tears touch us all, they are like a morning mist that shrouds us.
For tears are the dark dark night of the soul, a cold coat that covers us.
In the morning we remember we fell asleep crying, but what of now?
Now we've looked at our dead mum's photo and think of what she would have said.
We smile as we remember, her fight, her love, her spirit, her smile.
But never tears, she shed no tears for us, she shed no tears for us.
Tears will come, tears will come again, but they are just water, we are stronger
Than mere water, we have a boat and that boat is Love.

p.s. I stumbled over this poem on my PC so I hope you like it. We were at a wedding a few weeks ago, that's us in the photos

Its Just Got to be Winnie The Pooh Aug 5, '10 2:21 PM

Its Just Got to be Winnie The Pooh. My youngest daughter just loves Winnie The Pooh, my wife thinks its because I look like Winnie The Pooh, judge for yourselves.
We have a collection of soft toys tidied away behind the settee, about 40 I think. Every now and then my small daughter lines them up in rows and she's the teacher. Winnie The Pooh is always 1st in the queue. Then she takes the register and tells the toys to pay attention. Then she reads to them,

everything is done in an orderly way. I think she'll end up a scientist as she's so organised, my wife did Science back in Shanghai, so its in the genes. Her Chinese grandfather did a bit of writing too, as did her Chinese great uncle, and then there is me www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com , so writing is in

the blood too. Does anybody remember Abbott the Physics text book? That just sprung to mind, we were told to read it cover to cover, my brother actually did do that.

So back to Winnie The Pooh, I'm being told that she wants a Winnie The Pooh lunchbox, she just saw it in the Netto leaflet that came through our door. Then another leaflet had a Winnie The Pooh duvet and duvet cover. I did buy her a Winnie The Pooh blow up cushion but that developed a slow leak, so I stuffed Winnie the Pooh with a few old pillows, and she was able to continue sitting on it. We have Winnie The Pooh dvds and some old VHS tapes too, and a few days ago we bought her a Winnie The Pooh cutlery set along with a face cloth. So thats just the tip of a big iceberg, she has a white Tigger thats not really Tigger but he does look like a very very pale snow Tigger. When she grows up we will tease her about this. But I know one day a chubby cuddly man will ask my permission to marry her, perhaps his name will be Christopher Robin.

The Best Days Of Our Lives Jul 31, '10 3:50 PM

The Best Years Of Our Lives ©

By

Michael Casey

They say that the best years of our lives are our schooldays.

Maybe its true, but we are all too busy doing the homework, or suffering Latin homework. I can vouch for Latin in Grammar school, it's a form of torture, but it does help your vocabulary, and it does make you persevere.

I suppose Uni is the best days of your lives too, until you get the bill. And realise that nobody rates a degree any more because everybody has one so the currency is devalued. 3 years experience doing something while you did you degree in film studies. So the experienced one gets the job.

Getting married and setting up home, are they the best years of our lives?

Then the first baby and the lack of sleep, learning to catch and throw dirty nappies out the house, just like a wicket keeper.

Finally getting your book published. Getting a few plays on the stage, having a column in The Sun and The Telegraph, would these be the best days of our lives. www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Or is it the old days, when your life is in part 2, when the grave can be seen in the distance, it may be 50 years away but you've have the 1st 50 years so you are on the slide to the grave. With experience and love your view of life has changed, you have a young family, but you know how to love them.

You can feel it in the air, you can see it in the garden, you can hear the children's laughter, you can enjoy a glass or two, but you are at Peace, that's when you have reached The Best Days Of Your Life.

Michael Casey

The Lambs are Silent Jul 28, '10 4:24 PM

The Lambs have gone its Silent, my girls are in London today, my wife took them there. So I'm home alone, and its so silent.

"Dad, what does xyz mean" asks my big daughter, but she's not here,

I explain and tell her to use one of the dictionaries we have. I want her to be able to find out answers herself. When you explain things you find that you try and be so exact so that you don't confuse your kids. It probably makes me think more clearly too.

This morning my smallest girl put a Tamagatu purple cat on the desk, she said it would keep me company while they were away. Its still on the desk besides me as I talk to you. My old copy of Don Camillo's Dilemma is there too, I've read 50 pages just 200 more to go, then its Don Camillo meets the Hells Angels, then I'm done, 6 books all about a Catholic priest and a Communist Lord Mayor.

The stories were 1st written over 50 years ago, I know no Italian so I read them in English translation. I was actually going to learn Italian several years ago, only I got distracted by this Shanghai girl, I married her, you can see some photos of us all on this site, we were at a wedding a

few days ago. I'm the George Clooney look alike in the photos, though my hair looks as though I've washed it in DAZ. Our 2 girls are there too, along with the wife, not forgetting the Bride and Groom. As for Italian, I put the books in an old holdall and put that under my bed, years later my nephew was learning Italian, so I donated everything to him.

You could hear a pin drop in the house, its so silent, and yes I hate it. All I have is the pain from tearing down the fence, its sharp and makes me wince a bit, but aren't we all stupid sometimes, or is it just me who's cornered the market. I look to my right and can hear the clock ticking, its a battery powered but still I can hear it. No small girls running about in the room above me. No BlicK DAB radio blaring out Galaxy on their radio above. The clock in the living room strikes nine, my girls should be getting on the train home now. London Euston to Birmingham, 28pounds for the 3 of them with Virgin trains, see the offers for yourself. I can hear the boiler click into action, heating the water for baths on their return. The computer hums in front of me, just by my knee. I hope I win the HP Envy 17 laptop in this weeks Sun's competitions, our computer is 7 years old and freezes a lot. The irony is I joined the MySUN site so I could enter the competitions, and then I stumbled into putting my blogs here on MySun. The sound of the keyboard echoes around our empty house. I jump in my seat, the telephone has just exploded, my wife has just rung to say they missed the train. Only she was teasing, I can hear our kids in the background on the train. So all is well, but too too quiet. I know one thing I could never live alone. Tomorrow the kids will want Tux Paint on the computer, or want to use the Graphic Tablet on the computer. There will be noise galore, a family noise, the noise I prayed for all those years ago.

Cheerio from Birmingham and London Euston

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Take My Fence Away Jul 27, '10 5:29 PM

Take my Fence Away ©

By

Michael Casey

Well just for something different today I took my fence away. The day had started noisily when a courier nearly knocked my door down, and it wasn't even my parcel.

So wishing him well I closed my door. Half an hour later a polite knocker knocked at my door. "Sorry for disturbing you" he began "yes you are disturbing me" I finished as I closed the door. I don't know about you but I just wish cold callers didn't bother. Or they all got a disease and took the Junk Email writers with them, a kind of modern plague, where the skeletons decayed over computers. But perhaps I'm being too mean today.

As for my fence, we have a rickety old one on one side next to the entry, its parallel supports with boards nailed alternately on the inside and on the outside. However with age it's developed a stoop, or backward lunge, a kind of limbo dancing look.

The alley is kind of blocked because of this, but nobody uses it but me, however I decided it was getting dangerous, so the fence had to go. Just in case. So I leant on the fence and it creaked and groaned, not unless that was my back. 3 sections gave way, the supporting posts had had it for years. Then all I had to do was saw the last bit away. Only I don't have a saw, but I do have a metal saw, or rather just the blade which was part of the tools I inherited 30 years ago. They gather dust mainly as I am not a DIY kind of person. I can work out what needs to be done, but as for doing it, I leave that to the experts. I once tried painting a wall, only it took gallons of paint, the wall was covered in a wallpaper that was just like carpet, so it just soaked up the paint, a bit like painting a bear I suppose, not that I've ever tried painting a bear.

But back to the fence, finally I'd sawn away the last support and I had a kind of woodern ladder in my entry. All I had to do was heave it to the rubbish area at the bottom of my garden. I had to jump up and down to break it up, I had to be very careful too as there were 6 inch nails all over it. Rusty nails but still dangerous, apart from the one I nearly stabbed my chest with, everybody must have done similar such things. Did I ever tell you when I painted my bathroom. It's on my site somewhere www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com Michael's Bathroom. But back to the fence, I was triumphant when I was finished, then the washing line broke, my bright orange Polo top with a polo scene on it

went sailing to the ground along with my jeans. Another task for me.

Over the road in the hardware store I got a plastic washing line, £4.50 I was robbed.

I also bought some green twine, £1.60, I had an idea you see. Once home I got my biggest daughter to hold the end while I tied it to the tree and then to the peg in the wall. I didn't realise just how long 20m is, so I was able to have 2 new plastic washing lines. This is good in the long run as I live with 3 girls, if only I had another bathroom, but I need a lottery win before that happens, or Rupert Murdoch sees this and gives me a job. Hold on a second while I watch a pig fly past.

So now I had a new washing line, all I needed was a new fence. That's where the twine comes in. I called my girls outside, together we ran up and down the yard tying the twine to what was left of the supporting posts. A kind of net, a bit like the net at Wimbledon was formed. Straight lines then vertical lines in between, plus some coloured paper to make it more attractive. My big daughter has done crochet at school so she was well pleased with her efforts. My wife said it looked like prison bars but she just has no imagination said me and the girls. We hope small birds will rest on the top line and sing to us. It was a fun hour or so, apart from the twinge in my back, the fence was heavy after all. I forgot one thing, I wanted to teach the girls about Gravity, so I shook the Apple Tree at the bottom of the garden and they watched the apples fall, Newton remembered. Then they gathered a few apples and pretended to cook them, the apples were bobbing in a container, Archimedes came to mind so I mentioned him to them. All in all an educational Summers Day

Sherlock Holmes Jul 26, '10 6:39 AM

Sherlock Holmes

What were you doing 40 years ago? Me, I was reading all the Sherlock Holmes books. A Study in Scarlet was the first one. I was reading them before mummy was born I told my small girls. Which proves 2 things, I have a young wife, and that I was a bookworm all those years ago. At the moment I'm working my way through all the Don Camillo books, which are about a Catholic priest in Italy and his adventures fighting a Communist Mayor, though I fear some people may think its a Mafia story,

if they spent a second on google then they'll know what's what.

Sherlock Holmes has had a good life in film and on TV. Basil Rathbone is the best film actor, and we have all seen The Hound Of The Baskervilles. Peter Cushing also did a great version on the telly, I'm old enough to remember watching it on TV, in black and white, we only had black and white tv at the time. Kids today will think I'm joking when I mention Black and White TV. Colour 3D is arriving as we speak.

Its 2010 and Sherlock Holmes lives. Sherlock last night on the TV was a very good concept. As I watched it it made me think of the new Dr Who, then when it finished I saw Steven Moffat's name on the credits, the new Dr Who boss. As for the show last night it had some great touches and it did remind me of Dan Brown's The Da Vinci code, the style and so forth. You all know what I think of Dan Brown, see profile. But back to last night, I liked seeing Una Stubbs as Mrs Hudson, the landlady, not the housekeeper. I can remember her as Alf Garnet's daughter, am I really this old. My mind says I'm 20, its just the Birth Certificate that says otherwise. I'll be a Pensioner before finally I get my books published, www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com Getting back to Sherlock it was a nice twist with

his brother when we all thought he was Moriarty, and then in this opening episode Sherlock says Moriarty who? All in all I'd recommend Sherlock 8/10 it'll be interesting to see it grow, there's potential for Dr Watson too.

If you want to know more about Sherlock just pop along to your local library, mine is 150yards away. Then there's always the local bookshop or even charity shop. As for me I've got to finish off Don Camillo and The Devil then I've only got 2 more left to read. After that maybe I'll carry on writing Tears For a Butcher my 3rd book, the games afoot as they say.

Michael www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

So Hypnotize Me Jul 21, '10 1:33 PM

So hypnotize me

I was just picking up the kids from the school on the hill, I overheard a mum saying that her son was

thinking of doing Hypnotism as a subject for part of his University course. It made me think about what kind of world we'd be if we could use hypnotism to iron out the rough spots. If we could use it to make us all shiny and new all the time. It made me think of Scifi films, from Logan's Run to Matrix, the perfect world.

So what if it was just weight loss, or fear of animals that was hypnotized away. You used to be able to listen to a tape while you slept and then hey presto in the morning you could speak Chinese.

That'd be good in our house as my wife is a Shanghai girl and our girls speak Chinese with her while I'm trying to write here at the computer.

Learning piano via hypnotism would be good too, my small daughter is now trying out the guitar after playing on the piano for 30mins. We saved up for years to buy the piano and then my brother gave us a child size guitar which he'd picked up cheap in The Works. My girl is making up a song now behind me as I talk to you, its hard trying to type when you're trying not to laugh, try it for yourself.

Now hypnotists use a watch to hypnotize, so that'd interest me straight away, just the watch. I have a Russian KGB officer automatic at present, if you're read The Watch and Me you'll know about me and watches. When I have some money I hope to buy an Oris watch, but it will have to be a strong one. So there I am being hypnotized to learn after dinner speaking, I'd really love to get on that circuit, however I don't know any Freemasons. I'm being hypnotized when I realize the hypnotist has a lovely Omega, so what happens. My love of watches overrules the hypnotist, I escape with his Omega and the hypnotist is found staring at the clock at New Street Station, he's mumbling just look into my eyes, look into my eyes. I'm sent back to the hypnotist, he's very famous, he has a Cartier Bleu watch, he just gives it to me, everything becomes a blur.

In the morning I wake up in bed speaking Chinese and giving an after dinner speech, on one wrist is an Omega, on the other is a Cartier Bleu. As for the hypnotist he's found on the no8 bus going around and around Birmingham, on his wrist is my Russian KGB officer watch, and guess what, he's speaking Russian.

Das Vidanya Everybody,

Michael www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Cover Letter Jul 10, '10 2:42 PM

I just read a piece in a newspaper on how to write a good cover letter/cv. Then I realised I'd done that already. So was it my age or the fact that I like writing which is held against me?

Rather than give you a list, I'll show you what I have done/can do.

In some ways I've had my life in reverse. Having a big job 1st and then having smaller jobs. 10 years ago I was made redundant from XXXXX after 21 years, this was mainly a bulk printing operation working 24/7. In 1999 I met my Shanghai wife in the old people's home where my dad lived after he'd survived a near fatal heart attack. I visited every day literally, on the way to work on my 12 to 8pm shift, finally after 3 years of visits I met the Chinese cleaner. I was then vetted by a Chinese Ballet dancer from the Birmingham Royal Ballet. In 2000 I went to Shanghai to meet my future family, so that was 1st hand experience of a very different Culture. It continues to this day and we have 2 girls aged 6 and 8. Working in a hotel and ending up Employee of The Year, as close runner up. That experience of Customer Service on the Front Line was great fun and hard hard work. Cleaning rooms, working in the laundry, doing security patrols, picking up litter in the car park, organising taxis, recommending restaurants and places of interest to visitors from all over the world, using a bit of French and Spanish. Working on switchboard and reception duties as well as concierge duties too. Using Opera which was the hotel's computer system. Looking after celebrities, whether it be Will Young or Sharon Osborne, then switching from that to helping a blind person negotiate the lobby. Pushing the occasional wheelchair, making time for anybody who needed that little bit of extra consideration. All the different needs of different people had to be catered for. I hope everybody I met felt looked after and cared for. I never treated anybody as just another body to be sorted, each person was an individual with individual needs, that's why I had thank you letters sent in to the hotel. While they were in the hotel I tried to make it a home from home for them. It was a business hotel and our guests all worked very hard so it was only right that we worked hard for them in turn, whatever it was, even cleaning their shoes. I would have stayed there till retirement but my

hours were changed so I'd not see as much of my children, so I left. Coming home at Midnight is not family friendly so I left. The 12 noon to 8pm shift which I've often done fits with our family life. I imagine I will have to do some degree of shift working but so long as I can see my kids I am very flexible. My job at a major law firm where I worked for nearly 3 years until they made me redundant, was in a very hot Print Room, standing all day, talking to Lawyers and Secretaries. Jobs also came to us via the PC and we'd do the job as required, such as printing A1 or A0 plans. Doing bulk printing, making up training manuals by the score from a few pieces of paper. When we finished we had a good glossy product that could be used in seminars or as a pitch document to bring in new work in for the Firm. We would also take documents apart to copy and/or scan them. I would then have to put them back together again using binding machines. Heat binding, wire binding or plastic binding. Or with very old documents which could be 100years old we would sew back together with silk or green ribbon. You can actually taste the document as you repair them. I have also done lots of laminating for training courses. As you can imagine Training is a good revenue stream for a Law Firm. I know I can talk to anybody and everybody and have done so all my life, starting all those years ago (1978) when I was a computer operator in a very busy computer room working on a 24/7 basis. All those years ago computers were a novelty and as big as washing machines that vibrated just as much. Not to mention punch cards and magnetic tapes. For 10 years I have a PC at home and I now blog on the MY SUN as the Christian site where I used to practice my writing has closed down that section. I have been writing for over 20 years, I have written 2 books so far, The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker plus Essays and Plays, I also blog a bit on my own web site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com it's a kind of car park where I leave my writing in the hope that somebody will one day discover me, however I think it may be the next generation before we have a paid writer in the Casey family. Earlier today I was talking/broadcasting to Shanghai where my wife and our 2 kids are enjoying the Summer and Grandma is teaching them psalms from the Bible. My 8 year old is very blasé about talking to Birmingham over the internet, none of this existed when I grew up, but she and I use it as a tool so that we can tell each other that we love each other. Technology is such a great great tool. That's all I can say really, apart from the fact that I can and will

do anything, this makes me a useful person to have on the team. I counted 10 different roles that I did at the XXXX hotel during my time there. Flexible and adaptable is what I'd call myself, it's all on my CV in greater detail. Thanks for taking the time to read this. I hope its more interesting than a bare list.

Well, I hope my cover letter makes you smile. I hope that somebody in MySUN world will help get me a writing job. Though anything would do. Providing this does not get deleted.

Cheerio from sunny Birmingham, there's tons of stuff to read on my site.

Michael

Pizza and Rice Jul 9, '10 12:19 PM

JULY 9TH, 2010 13:23

Pizza and Rice

I wouldn't say I have a love affair with frozen food, say pizza, nor that I like my bacon sandwiches so much. Its just that I used to work such odd hours. Getting home at 9pm doesn't encourage you to get Delia's book out and be creative. You just want something quick, as its 6 hours or so since your late lunch at 3pm. It may even be nearly 10pm when you get home, after doing a workfavour for somebody. So now your stomach does think that your throat has been cut, it rumbles away as you sit on the bus, other passengers think its the deep base of somebody's personal stereo. Once home its flick Sky on grab dinner from the freezer, in 10 minutes time the dinnertime Pizza is ready, washed down by two mugs of milky coffee. If Delia has got 1/2 a page left to fill she could just squeeze it into one of her books.

Time moves on and I'm married and we have two little girls. Rice is on the menu daily, you need a degree in Oriental Languages to know whats in the fridge. I have a Shanghai wife who really can cook. Chopsticks make an appearance, as does the spoon shovelling techniques for eating. I can come home to find movement in the kitchen sink, its alive and will soon be dinner, its a crab. Fish is being cooked too, the rice cooker is on, you would not believe just how fluffy and nice rice can be.

Before Shanghai, I'd have scoffed at the idea of rice being so different, Ambrosia creamed rice from a tin was the height of my experience, now I scoff nice rice. My wife goes to the Korean shop to buy the rice as it tastes so good. We are lucky we have a huge Ying Yip down the road a few miles too. Once dinner is ready there are 3 or 5 dishes on the table, Phoenix is of the TV too. I think my wife only came around to my house in the first place all those years ago because I had Chinese tv, either that or she really loved my frozen pizza. Occasionally there are prawn crackers on offer, you really have to be quick to make these or you'll burn them and yourself.

My dad used to have a bowl of corn flakes as a snack before bedtime if he was peckish, I do the same. Cereals tend to be my breakfast too as they are so quick and easy to make, well they make themselves. My wife likes snacks too, but they can seem tasteless to a Western tongue. However biscuits and cakes from Sainsbury's are a delight for her, if I search hard enough I can find them, our girls love them too. You have to understand if you follow the Eastern diet then you are very slim, both of my girls are slim and tall, so to fall of the Eastern diet is a treat. Going to the chip shop for them is a bit of a wonder, they get "takeaway" every day at home, so chips is a treat. As for me my diet has improved as I have the left overs, though I still weigh 3 times more than my size 0 wife. As for me and Delia, we do have one thing in common, and I don't mean our love of food, Delia and Me are catholics.

FAMILY FEATURES Jul 4, '10 12:34 PM

I was thinking about what to talk about today, as I need to practice my writing skills, Eric Clapton once said in an interview that if you don't practice you could lose your gifts, so practice. So this is what I'm thinking about today.

Our kids, all of our kids inherit things from their parents. Beauty or lack of it, freckles and red hair or not. Being a bonnie baby or not, being quiet or not. Our first daughter was very quiet and did not wake us up in the night. However the 2nd one was the opposite, if she was the 1st one then maybe we wouldn't have bothered with a 2nd. Ask your own friends for their experiences. Our 1st one was

born in the early hours, I got home at 3am and had to explain to my Shanghai mother in law that it was a daughter. A week previously I had been to my brother's house where we loaded up an estate car, Steve from Steve's takeaway had helped. My brother had saved everything from his kids and now he passed it on to me. Then once home me and the mother in law had constructed the cot, without any common language between us, it took 1.5 hours. Today it would take 1/2 that time as the mother in law understands a lot more English and I'm much better at constructing flat packs. Our 1st girl was born almost on Padre Pio's own Birthday, he being the Saint who'd started the ball rolling so to speak. Our daughter was big, like me I suppose. But she has perfect Chinese hair, the kind of hair girls would kill for. Look at the photos here and judge for yourself. Apart from that I suppose she looks very Western.

The thing you learn very fast when you have a baby is how to change nappies and get them and their smell out the house. You save all the plastic bags from shopping, and it's a bit like wicket keeping, a catch and a throw and out the door. Ask any cricketers if nappy changing is as I've explained. I'm sure they'll agree.

As children grow then traits appear. Our 2nd child is very funny. Before she was born she was in Shanghai and her granddad was making my wife laugh. A child in the womb can hear, so our daughter would have heard all the laughter, as did her born sister. I think my wife was 8 months pregnant when she returned home. I can remember waiting at Heathrow after they'd had 2 months in Shanghai. My daughter was sitting on the luggage trolley being pushed by grandma, behind was my very pregnant wife. I was crying with happiness. And as the cot was already ready, no 1.5 hours of lego like building.

Drawing is a delight for both my girls. My wife can do all fancy stuff, Calligraphy and Chinese letters etc. She even used to go drawing of some sort for the Police in Shanghai. One of my brothers is good too. So drawing is in both sides of the gene pool.

As kids grow the family features show. My big daughter looks like me when I was her age, it's like Dr Who in a way, she is my past and I am her future, it's a bit spooky as the resemblance is so very strong. My other daughter apparently looks exactly like my wife when she was young. So Nature has

given each of us, a clone so to speak. Our youngest also has the fantastic hair too. You'd have to do some market research amongst your friends to see if all of them rate hair as the best thing to have. So long as neither of them go white early like me.

Social Secretary Jul 3, '10 1:57 PM

Once you have kids you become a servant, sometimes till you die. Today our biggest girl was off to the bowling alley. Her friend was celebrating her birthday so her mum took her and her friends bowling. To be followed by Frankie and Benny's Pizza. A really good day out. We the parents have to get the child to the venue and organise a present and a card. Normal stuff, only in our house we have two calendars, one just besides me here where I'm talking from and another a much bigger kitchen calendar. So all the kids events are marked out. Only there is one drawback, my wife will write things down in Chinese, not Pinyin, but your actual Chinese Chinese with all the fancy squiggles. Why didn't you tell me its Florences party tomorrow, how would I know, but its on the calendar, see right there, and JJ points to 23rd. Yes but that's Chinese I explain, you're so stupid she replies before demanding my wallet so she can rush out to Asda's. I'm her Clever and Stupid husband you see, I'm her Panzi which means Fat Fat Boy. My calendar is prettier, but the Chinese one is best as it has more room on. Our smallest writes her Birthday on it just to make sure we don't forget. I told them that 30 years ago or more we forgot our dad's birthday and his Birthday was on 11th NOV which is an impossible date to forget, but in a big household these things happen. My mum sent me upstairs to steal a fiver from dad's wallet and I had to get a box of Cadbury's Milk Tray. Now if in them days the Casey family had a huge calendar from China then we'd have not have forgotten. But when he spent his later years in a home he had twice as many visits as all the other residents put together. Padre Pio and Me on my site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com explains it. I suppose we should have an excel spread sheet and that would cover everything, but it wouldn't be as much fun would it.

homeJul 1, '10 6:07 AM

Home ©

by

Michael Casey

Home is where the heart is.

Homeless is outside a house looking in wishing it were your home.

Put into a Home is where due to circumstances a loved one has to be put into care.

As I talk to you this morning I have a drawing on the desk propped up by the computer speakers.

It's a drawing of a girl with all her hair to one side, she has long eyelashes and is carrying a small bag.

Besides the biro drawing of the girl is a big heart and some stars, written above is "For Daddy."

I have a notepad on the desk in front of the computer monitor so my girls love leaving drawings.

On the side of the fridge is this week's spelling list, held there by magnets that aunty gave us.

On top of the fridge is a fruit bowl full of fruit and sweets.

By the fruit bowl is container full of pens and crayons, a shopping list in Mandarin beside it.

There are photos of family scattered about the house, in one corner photos of my mum and dad both long gone, but still much loved. When you get to Heaven you'll see them is what I say to my girls.

We found a stilly photo of me so I put it on the shelf next to the huge red Chinese dictionary, the fairy from the Christmas tree is also on that shelf waiting ever patiently for Christmas to return.

Behind me is a painting of an angel a Burne Jones copy, blowing a flute thing.

Girls shoes are scattered about the house, waiting to trip me up.

Behind the sofa in this room are two huge bags of soft toys, waiting to escape.

Once my smallest is back home she'll release the soft toys from their Jail.

Then she'll line them up in rows and sitting on the teddy bear wooden stool she'll be teacher.

All the toys have names and she'll chide them as together they learn this week's spellings.

Her big sister has her nose in a book, she's determined to win a prize from the local library for

reading the most books. I told her I read everything in the school library when I was young.

The sound of chickens comes from the living room LULU, not that lulu, but a chat show queen on Phoenix can be heard. Then my wife is on the phone while she shakes her big wok.

I look outside and am pleased to see my sea of shamrock, I transplanted it here many years ago, it nearly died during the harsh Winter we just had but now I have enough for all of Riverdance.

I'll stop there for now.

But you can see what I'm on about. A home is a combination of all the things I've just talked about.

A home is a physical place, but it is much more than that. It's the little things inside the house that turn it into a home. Such as the Looney Chick toy that I'm using as a cushion, my girls brought it back all the way from Shanghai last year, and now we use it as a cushion.

The drawings on the desk in front of me are done with love by my girls.

Sharing a pack of Rolos, even though you love them so much, this is home, this is family.

In the end, where there is love then there is a home. Without the love even if your home was better than a 5 star hotel, then it really wouldn't be a home, it would be just a location.

For as we all know Home is where the Heart is.

Just send me something useful Jun 27, '10 6:01 PM

I started watching Evan Almighty but it was too slow. Though it did remind me of a thought I was having. You see if you read Internet Story here at MYSun or on my website

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com then you'll know all about my writing passion IF that's not too strong a word for it. So yesterday I had a phone call offering cable tv, this gave me a germ of an idea which led to yesterday's post about Call Centre Calling. Then today I had an email offering 4600 channels in HD. Only the email came from Singapore. I know some email providers scan your emails and is it this that leads to junk emails. I now must get 60 a day, I just wish their computers died.

However going back to films, Bridget Fonda and Nicolas Cage were in one film where a cop falls in love and shares his lottery with a cafe girl. You must have all seen it, its a great feel good movie. In

the end he has nothing but his new true love, then New Yorkers post \$10 dollars to them, so that finally they are not just happy in love but rich. In my story Internet Story the last line is "just send me \$10." and no I hadn't seen the film when I wrote the tag line. In fact the BBC banned my essay Internet Story because it Solicited money, they did not see the joke.

My line of thought is, why don't folks send me something useful, like an English translation of the Don Camillo stories which were written by Giovanni Guareschi. But no all I get is rubbish emails, for viagra, from Barrister this or that, or from the office of Mr Big, Can I be trusted, can I help as they are dying of cancer but want to give me a Zillion pounds all in used fivers. I even get emails from myself. I don't know how to do that BUT I do know its quiet easy for any IT buff. They should just save their energy, or get a girlfriend. Though now I have started this piece I'll ask for a new central heating system, British Gas tried to overcharge me. I told the guy all I needed to do was wait as his quote was outrageous. Then 3 weeks later they offer the job at 1/3 OFF. Or if we follow the premise of the lottery win film then folks can send me a 1 pound lucky dip. If there are any legal brains out there can you tell me if I'm ok to accept lottery tickets and would there be any comeback if I won willions. Do the folks need to write FREE TICKET on the back.

Now having written this email will I get lots more "you have won the lottery please send all your details" emails. Or will some nice company offer to replace my boiler. I could do with a new cooker too, its all gas stuff I need. OR should I cook on my own hot air.

Good Night Everybody as The Waltons used to say.

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Call Centre Calling Jun 26, '10 3:46 PM

We all just love call centres, we all just love it when they call when we've just sat down on the toilet and we're expecting a call from grandma in Shanghai. So the phone rings and we dash for the Andrex and the sink to wash our hands in. Then still pulling up our pants, we fall down stairs just as Norman Wisdom or Brian Rix would do, then pulling up our pants and doing up our trousers' belt we pass by

the hall mirror and see the black eye we've just got. We answer the phone, there is a long long pause, as if the call centre guy is having a final drag on his fag before answering, "hi I'm Guy, could I interest you in cable tv, I've got such a great package to offer." his voice oh so so sexy, in his imagination anyway. Has he not heard of Sky, the best package. So we swear in Shanghai dialect, and hang up the phone. Then we notice our trousers are split, the one's grandma in Shanghai had made for us, the trousers for her Panzi, her Fat Fat Boy son in law.

If only we could get revenge, just like in Bruce Almighty. A bottled water company rings, so we click our fingers and its as if the Dam Busters had breached that dam, a sodden girl will NEVER ring your number again. Then there's a knock at your door, its the Mormons, you smile and smile, and they start running away, only asking which way is the airport. Why? Well I'll leave that to your imagination. The phone rings again, so you do heavy breathing, only for a voice at the other end of the phone to say "I'm Sergeant Dixon, would you be interested in joining the neighbourhood watch scheme." "Sorry Wrong Number is your reply." You decide to change, you're half way up the stairs when the phone ring again, you turn and fall down the stairs again. Your wife is just in the door and she answers the phone, she can see you over her shoulder, "I told you you were too fat for those trousers" You trip over again, "bloody call centres is all you can say."

My Old AgeJun 24, '10 5:21 AM

I'm called "grandpa" by the teachers when I pick up my kids from school. Because my hair is prematurely white. In a way its a joke, but I am over 40 years older than my kids. I was a late starter, but I do have a young wife, who looks even younger because she's from the East, Shanghai to be exact. In the East they respect Old Age, so I'm all in favour of that. But as for having a good old age, I think I'll be dead, I won't last that long. I'll have to work to at least 66, and maybe 67. So I'll be worn out by the time it comes to retire. My dad was a blacksmith and then spent 40years in a steel works, The District Iron and Steel in Brasshouse Lane Smethwick. Has a ring to it don't you agree? He retired a year or two early when the works was closed down. He had ten golden years with my mum, then

mum died, then he had 5 years in an old people's home, read Padre Pio and Me
www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com But he at least had those golden ten years.

My brother was made redundant and now at 60 he's retired. He can look forward to 20+years of relaxation and learning. Me I've got 14 years more to do, if there's any jobs left. If I could win that lottery, then I'd retire today and write more books. Or if I could get something produced/published then I'd be able to retire. The chances of that happening, probably zero, but strange things have happened, read Literary Criticism on my site. Perhaps the government should start a National Laughter Campaign to cheer us all up, Ken Dodd should be ringmaster. The thought of years of slavery is saddening, perhaps we could start a National Singing Campaign, a kind of whistle while you work, Arthur Askey reincarnated to pass all those extra working years away. We could sing the Song of The Hewbrew Slaves, for that's what'll happen, retire at 95 IF we're still alive, in the year of 2010 If we're still alive

My favourite SweetsJun 18, '10 1:32 PM

My favourite sweets are, now let me stop before I continue. What are your favourite sweets, as you sit in front on the PC, a cup of coffee perched by your screen as you read this instead of doing those oh so interesting Excel reports for the boss. Can you remember back to when you were a child? Or have you never given up on sweets, or are you a parent? Well for me it was always a Cadbury's Crunch. My brother would sell his very soul for a Rolo, my youngest daughter loves them too, her delight is squashing them until these stick to our glass coffee table, which is also our Chinese eating table. If you look though the living room window you'll think you're looking at a restaurant or looking at China. Well you are, Shanghai to be exact, rice with everything. With a diet like that my girls are tall and thin. Thats why they enjoy sweets so much. My big daughter likes Caylie now, if I've spelt it right. We all adore a nice bag of crisp, so an Aldi 26 pack does down well. I'm old enough to remember the salt being in a blue bag inside the crisps, and not when they reinvented it 20 years ago, I mean 45 years ago. Pop came in heavy glass bottles which had a penny refund on the bottle,

and you could get some chews with the refund. I always used to drink the dregs from the pop bottles before taking the bottles back. My brother who I'd put a red hot poker on his leg, just for fun as kids do. Well my brother peed in a few bottles, to simulate dregs, and yes you've guess it, I drank those dregs. Which reminded me of the salt in crisps packets. We had an old fashioned sweet shop just a few yards away from the family house, two ancient sisters with a small husband between them lived there and made bread but in the front room was a sweet shop with all those jars of sweets. They used to say to us children as we left "off ye go, home to your parents. So we called the shop "off ye goes".

As you grow up your tastes change, and its a nice novelty to rediscover an old fashioned sweet shop. Then the memories come flooding back. I'm lucky in a way because I drunk so much milk it protected my teeth from all the sugar. However I did give up sugar in my coffee when I was 19, just to see if I could. Blokes discover beer and stop having sweets, well until they are parents. As for women its said that a woman would prefer a bar of Cadburys or Galexy instead of a man. Give her a Jackie Collins and chocolate and maybe some Baileys and the whole human race could die. Sobering thought that. But it does give a whole new meaning to "I'm Sweet on You."

Cheerio from a wet Birmingham, and don't forget wine/chocolate/beer/Dr Pepper are all best served cold just like revenge, as any Mafia friend may tell you,

Drawing Pictures with WordsJun 17, '10 5:53 PM

A picture is worth 1000 words, and its true. A photo will show more detail and instantly convey so much more than a paragraph or more or even an entire article. I have lots of photos of me covered in ice cream like a big kid, or Panzi which is my Chinese nickname, Fat Fat Boy. So a photo shows I'm just a big kid, even if the teachers ask am I the granddad when I pick up my kids from school. In fact I'm the dad is my reply. Photos convey happiness, that's family photos. News photographers will capture sadness and pain and suffering, and the occasional piece of joy. Years back I was surgically attached to a basic snap camera and I was there to capture all the drunkenness of the people I

worked with. When you have your own kids you take lots of snaps and invest in a digital camera so that you can email photos to Shanghai or where ever the mother in law is best kept. Absence does make the heart grow fonder, is what they say.

Drawing is a different medium, it changes things, it can soften or exaggerate, it can bring things down to earth, it can deflate politicians. Its like a close up that pulls back, then it reveals that the politician is hiding something, even if it reveals the politician is sitting on the toilet with his pants down and he is wearing ladies underwear, just like Pinocchio in Shrek. I wish I could draw but I cannot. I can give 1000 ideas to a cartoonist but I just cannot draw. My wife is very very good and my girls probably inherit their drawing skills from her. I try and draw pictures with words, but I am aware I need a minute or two to paint my picture, whereas a cartoonist can do something in seconds. So I'm jealous of artists, I'm also jealous of songwriters who get to the punchline so much faster than me. However when I do get a poem right, then I get a result fast. Perhaps I should not talk in terms of competition, the biggest competition is with ourselves. One of the best compliments I ever got about my writing was that I lead up the path and put a picture in somebody's mind.

Well www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com is my path, will you follow it?

Praise and Reward Jun 15, '10 6:52 PM

Praise and Reward, its a sticky question. Some things don't ask for praise or reward. Like if your kids do a small chore for you, they don't ask for a pound, they are just happy to help you, because they love you. If you are thirsty they'll fetch you a drink, they won't charge you for it, they'll do it instinctively. Just as my daughter did this evening when she watched me decorating, or rather my attempts at decorating, she even sacrificed her fizzy pop for me, she knows how I prefer pop to alcohol. Sometimes I'll offer a reward and she'll turn it down. For me this shows I'm bringing her up the same way I was brought up. I know the majority of people reading this will think I'm old fashioned. I do know that her Irish grandparents would be so proud of her if ever they saw her, Irish grandad did hold her in his arms but after 7 months or so he was gone, as for my mum she went

early to make the tea.

Encouragement does work and should be used all the time. My youngest daughter just loves Matilda the film based on the Roald Dahl book. Why does she love it? Because it's funny, and because the little girl does find love with the teacher. The teacher loves and encourages. Just as everybody reading this does love and encourage their own kids, even if at the moment the encouragement is to move out of the way of the tv so all dad's mates can watch the world cup, and isn't the garden a great place to be and dad will give you some money for pop from the corner shop if only the kids get out of the way of the tv.

My daughter has joined a Sunday choir, so there she is praising God, and she gets rewarded with a few quid for singing.

They do say we all have to sing for our supper, just like Little Tommy Tucker.

The Windmills of My Mind Jun 13, '10 10:43 AM

I'm dreaming of a White Christmas makes us all think of Snow and Love and the film with Bing Crosby, not forgetting Family. A few bars of a song and we are away, our minds are somewhere else. Mind you in today's world it's a few drugs, or so called legal highs and the youth of today are away. Their minds turning to mush.

Me I like to use my mind and not destroy it. I've been thinking about Tears For A Butcher which will be the follow up to The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker. Words, ideas, dreams float by and I sew them together, not with a needle and thread but with imagination. It takes time and a lot of energy to create a jigsaw that is a story which turns into a book. It's like word association, or an old photo that's discovered and brings back memories. We found a photo of me in shorts and wearing glasses I was alongside my tall brother, we were in Oxford visiting my brother at University. An angelpoise lamp was in the photo, the same angelpoise lamp that sat in a corner of my brother's house today. Pictures lead to memories and in some cases to more futures, dreaming of the spires of learning, but that's another story and another university. When I write it with passion, I really am

taken over by the words, by the thoughts, sometimes its like an avalanche and I'm right in the middle of it. I couldn't be all clinical and planned and precise. I'm not an architect, I am a dustman, I pick up what I find and use it, I transform it, and If I can be pretentious, it transforms me too. We have a friend who just loves music so I emailed him my best 3 poems and to his surprize he now now thinks I'm a poet, in fact his wife just rung my wife, about some recipe no doubt. Chinese folks are just mad for their food. Anyways with Poems they sneak into my mind and then I sit down with the idea and I finish it off. BUT Poems are in charge of me and now me in charge of them. In Nov 1987 I wrote a poem called The Dead and The Living because I wanted Percy the Undertaker in my novel to be a man of great tenderness, a poet in fact. The idea came to me on a bus as I was on my way to my Sunday shift as a computer operator. I knew then that I would never write anything better than those few lines. However last year I had a line come to me while I was in Saint Phillips Cathedral having a rest and a sit down. The line was Let my Tears be my words. When I got home I sat down and finished the poem with my daughter sat on the edge of my chair. When I finished I realised that I'd just written something better than the Dead and The Living, it had taken 22years. Such is the nature of Poetry. As for my comedy writing I start somewhere and a connection will take me somewhere else, a bit like being a ball in a pinball machine, I get knocked and flipped and nudged until I end up in quite a different place to where I began. It is very tiring. Two hours is like a 12 hour shift, because I'm using all my juices. I have toyed with the idea of writing Tears for A Butcher, in fact the 1st chapter is down on paper and in cyberspace. But I don't want to commit myself to a year of writing, If I sold some of my other stuff then, or if I had a fan base, then yes. But for the moment no, so I am content to be a windmill in my mind, and yes it really is my favourite song.

my stuff can be read for free at www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com which is where you are right now

Kung Fu FightingJun 11, '10 5:59 PM

Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting

Marrying a Shanghai girl brought many changes to my life. The sound of chickens clucking for one, Chinese really does sound like chickens in a hen house, if you listen to the wife talk to her friends over the Internet or on the phone or when a few are around the house. Chickens, chickens, chickens. The Mandarin for it is "quock quock quar" or something like that. Just ask ask your own Chinese friends and they will agree. They'll also tell you that Panzi my own Chinese nickname means FAT FAT BOY, not a fat boy, but FAT FAT BOY. I finally get married and have a family and I get called Panzi. Weighing 3 times as much as the wife or mother in law, has nothing to do with it, honest I'm a priest you can believe me.

Films brought us together and we still enjoy watching films on tv. If I could afford Sky Films I'd love to have it, and a Sky+ HD box. Our Sky+ box is always filled with films for all the family, Over the Hedge, Bride and Prejudice and all manner of stuff. Occasionally we have to cull the films to make room for more. Sky+ really is a godsend for any family. I was just watching Kung Fu Hustle which had Steven Chow in it. It really was great fun. Lots of Kung Fu action and lots of fun, and I do mean fun. It was in Chinese with the bottom of the screen cut off for the sub titles. I was really laughing, it was on Film4. Chinese Kung Fu films are like ballet and yes beyond belief but great great fun. If you don't normally watch subtitled films then please take a chance on my review skills. Do watch and laugh along. I won't tell you anything else about it I don't want to spoil it. Previously there was another film on the tv, it was called Red Flowers, again in Chinese with subtitles. This was about a nursery and how a child was dumped there, it had no Kung Fu in it, but it was really charming. How they got all the small children to act in it I'll never know but it was well worth a watch. I was asking my kids just how much Mandarin they each understood, one was busy reading the subtitles while the other seemed to understand a great deal of it. Having 2 languages I hope will pay dividends for my kids. In the future they can bring Crunchies and Dr Pepper to me when I'm retired, they should be able to afford them if they keep their language skills up. Their heart they get from me and their beauty from my wife.

I'll leave it there for tonight, lets hope England can win the football tomorrow.

Singing Songs Jun 7, '10 2:47 PM

To sing is to doubly praise, Saint Cecilia said that. My sister says it too on occasion. Singing makes us all happy, it lightens the load, it helps pass the time, if we are happy we'll whistle or hum or sing. Just ask any workman, though workmen still like to whistle, or should I say wolf whistle when they see a pretty girl. "Hello Darling" rings out from high up an unfinished building, followed by laughter when the girl turns around and the girl is in fact a boy with a girlish haircut.

But I was talking about singing. My girls were singing "A sailor went to sea, sea sea, to see what he could see see see." so obviously I joined in. My youngest was amazed that I knew it, so I told them that that rhyme must be at least 50 years old. So on they sang, doing the hand clapping that accompanies it. It took me back, where have all the years gone, I really hope I can last till 100 then I'd have more time with my girls and any grandchildren or even on great great grandchild. But that's up to God, the girls Great Grandpa is alive and kicking into his 90s, he's on his 3rd wife now having worn out the 1st 2, Shanghai diet in a warm China may explain it.

Grandma does sing Jesus songs with the girls over the Internet from Shanghai, and my big daughter has just joined the choir at Saint Hilda's down road from the woods. Google tells me Hilda was very wise and lived a monastic life. My daughter did an audition and was let into the choir. They even pay a small stipend. My own sister has been singing over 45 years, despite us telling her to shut up. Me and my brothers were altar boys, none of us getting any reward for this church work. Perhaps we should have stopped being Catholics and moonlighted for the Protestants. I was also a reader for 7 years, so I can remember passages from the Bible, as well as hearing them all my life these past 50 years.

Singing songs is very very touching, a song will touch the heart and my sister is right, to sing is to doubly praise. Songs at funerals which open the floodgate, Angels by Robbie Williams is very popular now, it was played at my cousin's funeral; songs at the last night of the Proms which make you proud and happy. As I talk to you I listening to music, Hotel California from the Eagles, 34 years ago that was out. I never guessed I'd spend 3 years in an hotel. Hotels have music to kill the deadness of an empty foyer/reception area, as do bars. Songs that you can sing too give a place a good vibe. Gay

bars play lots of Abba I'm told, again because its great happy music, it helps the fun on a cold Tuesday evening. I'm listening to an old Elton John album now, Made in England, its worth digging out, its from 1995. Classical music and opera touch us too, even when we cannot understand a word. Pavorotti, and that blind Italian singer Andrei Bocelli, both can touch us. I remember in 1966 when the whole family went to Lourdes, we were singing Ave Maria in the darkness, holding up our lighted candles, perhaps 40,000 people singing in the dark. Now that is really touching and uplifting. I suppose other Faiths do things their way which are no doubt just as powerful.

As you have all no doubt gathered through these blogs, I do like my music, a pocket DAB is always close to me, in fact after 5 years its a bit battered, so I have to save up for a replacement. When you're happy and you know it clap your hands, is a song we sing when we are kids, we are all so free. We sing when we are in the shower, we sing when we are in love.

Song is the Spirit that cannot be broken, we sing to babies in the crib, babies can hear before they are born, its singing that creates love.

So sing, sing, sing. For we are alive.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

As these tears fall Jun 3, '10 12:33 PM

As these tears fall, we remember we have been here before.

As these tears fall, the love we feel hurts so much more.

As these tears fall, we are stunned and don't know what to say.

As these tears fall, we must remember them all.

As these tears fall, we think of the smiles.

As these tears fall, we remember the laughter.

As these tears fall, we remember the kisses.

As these tears fall, we touch their things that will never be used again.

As these tears fall, we finish ironing the shirt or the trousers that will never be worn again.

As these tears fall, we feel a hole in our heart that aches so much.

As these tears fall, we remember their touch, comforting and more.

As these tears fall, we are heartbroken for our lost futures.

As these tears fall, we give thanks for what we did have.

As these tears fall, love carries on, we will meet again.

Having a Heat Wave May 22, '10 7:11 PM

Well the sun has shone on Birmingham, my wife took the kids to a fancy pool with slides and so forth. I had said just go down the road, 200 yards to the local swimming baths. The kids wanted slides so off she drove. Only the Stourbridge centre was closed. So she soothed the kids with magazines. I just laughed when they got back, the kids didn't want to try the local baths as they now had something to read. So the back garden was now the beach, a pink umbrella was now a sun shade, pink hats were worn and sun tan cream was spread everywhere. The plastic kids chairs were also dragged out into the garden, the bedspread from one of the beds upstairs was also dragged into service. The fish radio would also have been pressed into service only the batteries have fallen out. As for me I went out shopping when the edge had gone off the heat. It was a DIY Subway brought into the home, so we had wraps that we filled with mayonaise and ham and spicy stuff. Washed down with fizzy pop and coffee. Ice cream and cones were ready in the fridge. We had a pudding if thats the right word of ice cold pineapple and its juice. If you've never had pineapple and its juice chilled right down, then do try it. It was family affair then we settled down for Dr Who on tv, we cannot decide on the new Dr Who, he just seems silly, we want him to be great but he isn't. A kind neighbour knocked the door to tell us the car window was still open, the kids had left it that way when they were out searching for a pool. So at least the car will still be outside in the morning. My girls are off to join a choir in the morning, so you can imagine what that'll lead too. I can remember my sister singing and 45 years ago and more "shut up" was how us Casey boys responded, she's still in that church choir. So If I reach 100 my own girls could be singing in the Warley Woods

choir. So that's our day today, tomorrow is Pentecost which is when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, its a kind of birthday, the birth day of the Church. It was a beginning and Pentecost can be a beginning for each and everyone of us, we don't have to speak in tongues or do miracles. Just saying hello to somebody on the bus or in the street, a simple smile can be a beginning, breaking down barriers with love.

thats us in florida in 2006

As I Look Out My Window May 12, '10 7:07 AM

As I look out my window the breeze gently rocks the rose bush in my front garden. Loony Chick the teddy bear or should I say the teddy chick big and bright yellow sits in the front window. He or is it she, came all the way from Shanghai last Summer now Loony Chick sits in the window of our Birmingham home. But at least Loony Chick can still hear some Chinese every day and still smell Chinese food. So Life is normal for him or is it her? So what is normal? Having your own bed to sleep in and not some hotel far far away, not grandma's house in Shanghai, not an uncles house in Shanghai. Just normal, ordinary Birmingham. The clouds are so bright, the white white candy floss with all its funny shapes. The grey clouds are trying to group together to form rain clouds and then in the middle is the blue blue sky. This is Nature and is a Free Show, just as the breeze can be like a kiss on the cheek, the flowers beginning to bloom, the buds on the buds on my neighbours apple tree next door, the golden chain at the bottom of my own garden. Transplanted 20 years ago and more from my own mum's garden. The technicolour green grass in the garden, the bluebells in the flower bed and a few stray ones in the lawn itself. Grandpa's flower too, as we call one lone tulip which holds such memories for us. There are a few weeds too and some wild shamrock that survived this harsh Winter just gone, scattered chalks in the yard, or should I say patio, which has drawings all over it, thanks to my artistic girls. Then there is the view of the washing line with small small clothes on it, untill you see my "flags" giant items blowing in the wind, my clothes are so big compared to my girls things. When I was in Shanghai the 1st time, now over 10years ago, we could locate Ma's

house by my flags hanging from bamboo poles from the window ledge 4 stories up.

And the point of all my musings? Today everybody wants to talk about the new PM and the New Politics, and there will be much noise made. So instead of worrying about that, why not just sit sit back and have a nice cup of coffee and a Cadburys Crunchy Bar too. Look outside in the garden and see the bumble bees bumbling, see the magpies dance about, they may even steal your Crunchy Bar wrapper. Watch the clouds amble through the sky, listen to that ticking clock on the shelf besides the hugh Chinese/English dictionary, bound in red of course. The Tick Tock is soothing compared to the whine of the PC processor at my feet, I can hear the back door close as my wife brings in the washing. All these are ordinary things BUT usually they go unobserved, take time out, if I dare mention a rival chocolate bar, take time out just to enjoy life. None of this costs any money nor takes any effort, BUT will be good for your Spirit, failing that just reach for the Johny Walker Red Label, or in my case the Dr Pepper.

This is Me - This is You May 3, '10 5:27 PM

This is me, that's what all these these blogs are. Though I'd prefer you'd read the attachments, they are longer and have more depth to them. I'd also hope you'd read the 500page novel The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker. Or maybe my play Shoplife.

Though there is more to me and to you than that. I took my watch off last night and it set me thinking. Our possessions define us, what we own shows what kind of person we are. My current watch is a cheap Russian one, but its an automatic one. I've fallen in love with automatic watches these past 7 years since my Chinese dad sent one to me. I also like paintings, real ones because there was an Italian art gallery near my house, if I look out my window I can see it, the artist is still there but he's moved on, now he does photos printed on canvas, his son's face beams out from the shop window. I also like Kebabs but I hardly eat them at all now. But I still love fizzy pop, 100 times more than I like beer. So does this make me a big kid? Or should I be all grown up and tell lies and pretend to be this and pretend to be that? I also love music, for years I saw bands in an upper room, a very

smoke filled upper room. As well as listening to lots of music on the radio and buying CDs. Now I've moved on, I've downloaded my CDs to my PC so while I'm writing I can listen to my favourite groups. So there you have it, a picture of me. If you heard this on the radio instead of reading it here would you like what you hear? Or the more of the picture you get do you hate it more and more? Its like the Election 2010 the more we hear from the different politicians the less or more we hate them. But what about you? What would you reveal, what would you hide.? Its like the makeup a woman puts on. If its done right it highlights her best features, but if its done wrong, it can be as bad as a child putting its mom's makeup on. Its your tone of voice which has to connect with or sooth the listener. Just as a mum soothes a sick child, or just as a dad scolds a naught child. Warmth can be heard in a voice, anger and violence can be heard in a voice, a voice can be as bad as chalk screeching on a blackboard. Thats why songs and music is so sweet because instantly it connects with our souls. If I'm very lucky it takes 20seconds for my words to reach your heart, music is so fast and so powerful, thats why I admire and am jealous of music makers.

This is Me and This is You, you are the reader I hope you like what I write, I DO write so that people hear my voice, I'm not clever enough to write long literary passages. I hope I write as the average reader would write if they had the time to do so. Somebody was very kind the other day and she said she liked my stuff. So I can say that a little encouragement does go a long way. So when your son or daughter won't put the light out because they have not quite finished their diary, just be patient, just as you have been with me.

my girls at breakfast

May is a month of memories - something from a few years agoMay 2, '10 2:03 PM

May is a month full of memories. Tomorrow my wife is 33, so its happy birthday to her.

Next Friday , one week after her Birthday its the 10th anniversary since my mum died

2 months after that ,my dad died, my brother did CPR and saved him long enough for the doctor to come

injection straight to the heart. Dad had died, but was revived. He was given a week to live. I sat in my sister's house a few hundred yards from mine and we picked hymns for dad's funeral.

But he came back, read Padre Pio and Me for details www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Later in May just 2 years ago my wife's dad was killed in an accident in Shanghai. I rushed home from the

hotel, my eyes full of tears. Only he agreed with me and said I'd been right to send JJ back to China with the message to tell her parents all my bad points. Now still young he was dead. He died a few days before his

granddaughter's 3rd birthday, his 2nd granddaughter was still only 7 months old.

Two deaths and 2 Birthdays that's what May brings. Every May brings the promise of Spring and Happiness that Birthdays bring. But it is balanced by 2 deaths. Death of a mum for me, and death of a dad for my wife.

Eternal balance and equilibrium. I remember my mum standing by the fridge in her blue and white smock, that was the last time I saw her, apart from in her coffin when I kissed her ice cold cheek. So much warmth now it was all gone. My sister went back to her house one day a few weeks after the funeral. There were flowers growing everywhere, white daisies growing everywhere. Our mum had sneaked up to my sister's house on the 82 bus, then she'd planted seeds. Their scent was her memorial. Always loving her children, her 6 children, now the flowers were her smile goodbye.

I had put my wife on the first flight to Shanghai, I rung the hotel and said I'd be back in 2 weeks, I was left holding the babies, while my wife dashed off. Her dad was not quite dead when she arrived in Shanghai, he was on support and still warm, JJ had time to kiss him goodbye. Then she had to arrange the funeral.

Now I wear my Chinese dad's best watch on my wrist, I have always loved watches, now I have a good one, all because somebody had died. May is a time of celebration in China and the East, the Spring Festival and so forth. For me May reminds me of my blessings, a mom who gave me such a deep Faith, as deep as I need it, and we all know that can be very deep indeed especially in time of need. My dad survived because of a miracle and I am not abusing the word. My prayers were heard

and now I have 2 daughters too when then I had no clue what the future would do.

May moves me and I hope it moves you all, none of us can predict the future, no matter how hard we try but I know my ma and a are looking down from up there in the sky.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

The Chicken or The Egg or I want it my way 1stApr 28, '10 9:27 AM

Which came 1st? The Chicken or The Egg? When we were kids our parents would say do the chores first and then you can have the tv or then you can go out and play in the garden or then you can shoot hoops. All manner of things, you can think of your own family situation, homework had to be done 1st before the relaxation. I'm smiling now as I think of Matila in the Roal Daohl story, we were wating the film version again recently. There her parents were total slobbs and wanted her to watch TV and not study, its a great film, go get it out of the video store. Danny Devito and his real wife star in it. As for my own girls they are turning into minor book worms, and I'm so proud. We are lucky as the public library is at the bottom of our street. They still want kids tv first on occasions, and I might want to watch something myself but I have to keep the tv off, its my small sacrifice for them. I suggest that other parents have to keep the tv off as well as the hifi off too.

Falling in Love is another chicken and egg moment, boys or so it used to be wanted a kiss and more before falling in love. Whereas girls, or so it used to be wanted Love first and kisses and more 2nd. In Ireland its called the urge, when biology overtakes reason or shyness.Its when your body says its time, when your heart says its time. In my family 5 of us were over 40 when we married, but in the end the urge got us all. Its like coming home after a long holiday or vacation as you call it in the USA, finally you are at a place where you feel relaxed, like a comfy pair of shoes, like a warm bubble bath with chocolate and a glass of wine to hand. And if your bath is big enough, like having your love besides you, and if your bath isn't big enough well there is always a Valentine Night at a 5 star hotel. My cousin in Ireland said I had all my luck in one go. My dad had survived a near fatal heart attack and then he went into a home and there I found my one true love, as the National Enquirer might

call it. Read Padre Pio and Me in attachment for detail. When you are in love though the chicken and egg does not matter because you try and put the other one 1st which is the old meaning of love. Or you end up arguing, but you then end up laughing so that must mean you both have egg all over your face, but neither of you cares.

Why does it not matter. Because there's always plenty of hot water in a 5 star hotel.

p.s. I started writing one thing but ended up doing another, could that too be love?

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

Volcano April 2010Apr 21, '10 2:01 PM

Some say that Volcano is Iceland's revenge on the UK, as it had to pay back billions when Iceland more or less went bankrupt. It had been selling very high interest bonds which in the end failed. England used anti-terrorist law to freeze and seize Iceland's assets. There is also the memory of the 1970s Cod Wars which were between Iceland and the UK.

The Volcano has made us all think about just what would life be like without planes. Just what it must have been like when people saw their first plane about 100years ago. Life has changed so much and the pace of life really does get faster. The photo below is where my mother was born in County Kerry Eire opposite Inch and the famous Dingle Peninsula. She lived in that "house" until she was 12, along with her mum and dad and 6 other siblings. Her brother Timothy died aged 7 of Rickets. I can remember my mother stood at the kitchen sink, crying as she shared this memory with me.

The Volcano has stopped all of us in our tracks, for a few days we were back in the 19th Century. Though we still had our phones and our Internet. Back then merchant seamen were the only men who sailed the seven seas. My granddad, my mum's dad, who I never met was a merchant seaman. I muse did he ever get to Shanghai, from the West of Ireland to the East of China. Without planes my wife would never have travelled so far. Airplanes have stirred the pot, I have a wife from Shanghai for starters, and the rest of my family is made up of different nationalities. Remember the old song

"what the world needs now is a great American pot." You can Google it for the words and no doubt its on Utube somewhere.

The Volcano has emptied the skies, but filled our hearts. Filled our hearts with Hope and Longing, just when will our mum, dad, children, grannie be back with us where they belong.

In our house when the Internet was playing up, thats when we think when can we see grannie in Shanghai again, when can she sing songs with the kids over the Internet, when can we laugh and joke? Nowadays in our world air travel is just as important as that.

We only realize just how much we need a thing when we lose it, whether it be a plane in the sky or our water supply. In some Faiths they have a Retreat, which is when you retreat from this world and do without normal everyday things. A bit like a Pilgrimage. I've been on Pilgrimage 3 times in my life at different ages and it was fun. I went to Lourdes in southern France, you can literally feel the electricity in the air. Then it was stepping out from my normal day to day life and having a dose of Faith. I should add that its not just all praying in Lourdes, there is fun too. I'll write about it in the future. Back to the Volcano, this event has made us all realize just how much we all use/need planes. It can give us all a time for Peace

to get more connected with our inner self. A chance to get off the conveyer belt, to see the clear blue skies, literally. A chance to breath, to think, to ponder.

A Volcano is a big dirty thing that shakes, rattles and rolls us. A kind of rock music without the blue suede shoes. It reminds us just how little we are, we are like ants on this our beautiful Earth.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

How do YOU blog?Apr 13, '10 12:15 PM

How do YOU blog? And perhaps more importantly, Why do you blog? I was thinking about my next blog here when I thought instead of writing about today's events I write about how I get to write about today's and any day's events. Me, I've started writing back in 1987, I kind of stumbled into it like I've done most things in my life. It did take my 1 year to learn, learn the hard way to write. I

hope that I'm a better writer because of this. Little stories gave way into an attempt to write a book. Sat in front of the gas fire, on an old barn chair with the back cut off I perched a typewriter on a stool and away I went. I ended up with a 235 page novel which I then called "A Nation Of Shopkeepers", which was Napoleon's contemptuous phrase for the English. Until Wellington cut him down to size. A few years later I decided I wanted more than just one typescript of my "masterpiece" so I bought an Atari 520 and started copytyping it all out, so then I'd have it on a computer and I could make multiple copies. I should add that the novel doubled in size and I renamed it The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker, I still have those multiple copies scattered around my house, just in case of fire or theft. 10 years ago when I met my Shanghai rose we had to invest in a proper computer and Internet so my wife could talk to her mum in Shanghai. As for me it was a chance to have a website so that my babies were safe in cyberspace. It also gave me a chance to blog. Now IF you compare one of my essays, attached to these blogs, then you can see there is a difference in style. I hope my blogs read as if it's a bedtime story, your nan or grandpa is sitting in the chair beside you and he's recounting a funny story that makes you feel secure and happy and lets you drift off to sleep. For me it's writing practice, if you don't practice then you forget how to do it. It's also a short form of writing that takes no more than an hour or much less, but it gives you a chance to "preach" to the rest of the world. You can also make friends. I used to practice my writing on [positive thoughts.com](http://positive-thoughts.com) and there were lots of nice folks there, one post got 800 views. The forum has now closed that's why I annoy people on this site instead. But back to my theme, why do we all blog, well it's so we can all say "hey listen to me " , "I'm just as good as you", ultimately we have our own tv/radio station via our blogs. Or perhaps I should say Newspaper, it's a chance to share, to boast, to grow together even, to laugh together too. I must say there are some good jokes that do the rounds and I do like them, not to forget the poems and thoughts that are shared. I was once in a bar in County Kerry and the pub was owned by an Irish writer, his book *The Field* was made into a film with Richard Harris. His niece told me that he wrote because it was "in him". What does that mean? I think I understand because the stories that are "in me" just have to come out. Even if you stop writing and it's only as you are picking up litter around the 4star hotel car park that those ideas come back to you, then you can begin to

understand what "in me" means. Just as musicians have the music in them, so words are in me and in you all as you blog here and now on this Multiply site. Do you wait for all the story to be ready in your head or do you just start with an idea and wait for the Muse to take you where it wants to go. I enjoy going with the flow, its like closing your eyes when you are on a long journey and when you open your eyes you have arrived at some place totally different, like crossing a border in the night. While I blog my big daughter sometimes sneaks downstairs so she can watch and read as I write something. Or when I finish a new blog I get her to have a read to see if it makes her laugh or whatever. All I can say is that to blog is to share, folks may never bother to open an attachment but at least for the course of the blog I have an audience, even if it could only be an audience of one, and that's my daughter.

Library Books Apr 12, '10 2:54 PM

Over 40 years ago one Summer my brother needed to go to the library, so he took all of us in toe. The library is a fine old building from the Victorian age when it was thought you could educate the working class masses. You can google and find out more for yourself, or maybe there is an old English history book in your own local library. Anyways we got to the library and it was shut, so my brother said "at least you've seen the library." It was a hot summer's day and we had all just walked 2 miles and it would be 2 miles back. I can remember there was a little sweet shop right next door, but I don't remember if we had any money for sweets on that occasion. It was before the tower blocks were built at Spring Hill, this was around the time that old houses were demolished and the brand new idea of tower blocks was invented. It makes me realise just how much the passage of time has passed. I'm like Bill Clinton now in that speech he gave, "I have seen more Summers than I will see." I've reached part two of my life, the part that leads to the end. Personally I feel my Life has not yet begun, does this make me a child or am I in denial? I still have dreams and you all know what they all, they are attached to my blogs. Back to the library, we have one at the bottom of my street, so we're getting our girls to use it. No need to walk to the Victorian one, which still stands, and they

even diverted a new road to save the old library and now its a listed building, and still opens occasionally. So instead we walk to the bottom of our street, and to the right is the library, I think it was built in the 30s. Inside I get my girls to browse and pick up as many books as they can. Nowadays you are allowed to borrow 12 books at a time, when I was using a library it used to be four. I read Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes books when I was 12 or so, I never became a detective, I was just hiding from Mr Gallagher and his hit slipper, that started at the age of 8 and changed my life for the better. Corporal punishment hurts the butt but focuses the mind. Once hitten twice shy so to speak. I ended up as Head Boy too. And all because of not knowing my times tables, but I was never hit again, I made sure of that, There was the class library on the bookshelves besides me so I practically read everything, literally everything, mainly History. When I left Primary school I was given The Outline Of History by H.G.Wells by the headmaster. It sits on the bookshelf to my right, next to an enormous Chinese/English dictionary and a bigger English dictionary, and a little fairy next to a photo of my girls with just enough room for a clock, I do love a nice clock, and watch for that matter. Back to the library at the end of the road my girls browse and my smallest one chooses a few books with bears inside, anything remotely like Pooh Bear always interests her. She finally settles for 10 books and her big sister has five. Its still the Easter holidays so I want to keep their minds occupied. A bit of reading and then TV and cartoons, all things Roal Dahl on tv are always a bit hit. As we leave the library "Daddy when will your books be in the library." "Whenever I find a publisher." is my reply full of hope. We cross over the road so they can look at comics in the store, then its off home, later after they have done some reading there will be reward while we do some shopping. I can still remember my mother teaching me to read by looking at the Phantom cartoon in the local news paper, more than 45 years ago. Now my big daughter as I call her is on Library books and she's away, my little daughter who calls herself the qutest while her big sister is the prettiest she just needs a bit of encouragement and then she too will be flying. My little daughter says she wants to be a doctor, she has a plastic stethoscope already, so only time will tell. I tell both of them to try and remember everything so they can in turn tell their own kids. My big daughter wants to be a designer so if she's a designer and her sister is a doctor then I'd be so proud. Us, we

the Parents are stepping stones for our children to stand on, our shoulders are there so they can stand on them, and books are food to feed their appetite.

Me and my RadioApr 7, '10 7:24 PM

I remember my first radio, it was a small blue plastic tranny. I can remember when we heard the news on it that RFK had been assassinated. I remember the white plastic family tranny we had. I remember the old Bush radio with the saucer dial, that is now called retro. Having that radio given to us by Frank Brown a lodger of ours changed my life. We used to listen to the world tonight with Douglas Stewart reporting followed by the book at bed time. I can remember listening to The Ghost and Mrs Muir, only I fell asleep so my brother had to tell me what happened. I always had a radio beside me, it was my company when my brother left home, company while I did my homework and studied for my O Levels. Listen to Radio 4 constantly for 20 years. Perhaps hearing 3 plays a week for all those years, enjoying words, enjoying knowledge and news. When I heard about DAB I just had to have one, though they do eat batteries big time. I even bought an adapter so I can hear DAB through my HiFi. Real radio was my favourite until it disappeared, stations with Music and less prattle and talking over songs were my joy of DAB. I even bought a personal DAB radio as a Birthday present to myself 5 years ago. My Ferguson is still going strong, though my daughter has stolen it these Easter holidays and wants one of her own, even though she has a Blick DAB in her bedroom. Yes I am in love with radio, and if anybody wants to give me their DABs because their love affair is over then just send them along. AND if there are any fancy Pure personal dabs to be had I'd love them too, that way all my family could have one and I wouldn't have to hide my personal Dabs from my two girls. Radio can change a life and radio really is company, in some ways it has been a best friend to me, 40 years a friend and I hope 40 more years of friendship, though I'd rather hear my own plays on the radio. I can spot a radio 4 play at 100 yards now.....

General Election in UK coming soonApr 3, '10 9:14 AM

I have a dream we had honest politicians

I had a dream only our elected representatives run the country

I had a dream people got selected because of worth

Not selected because of earth, how many acres they own

Not selected because of their dad knowing somebody else's dad

I had a dream that Class Warfare was in the dustbin of history

I had a dream where people voted for the best man or woman

NOT a parachuted in friend of a friend

Not a woman because she was a woman

But a candidate who was the best person for the job

Not a media savvy nobody who was sucking up to a somebody

I had a dream that we the voters gave two fingers to the Political Class

I had a dream that we voted in somebody just like us,

Somebody just like our mum and dad or our uncle or our best mate

Just Somebody we could trust, somebody who would push the car in Winter, somebody who'd buy us a drink in the pub and not expect any in return.

I had a dream that we all looked in the mirror and voted for somebody just like us

Well that's my take on the Election Campaign here in England, you can read the newspapers on the internet www.telegraph.co.uk is what I'd recommend.

But there's lots of choice, bbc.co.uk/news and skynews.com are good .

As for me a long time ago I wrote a comedy version of an election. Its chapter8 and chapter9 in my comedy book The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker I'll attach those 2 chapters so you can read it for yourself, and if you like it the entire book is attached too.

me in my best politician look,

or do I look like a doorman?

Good Friday Service with added Shona Singing Apr 2, '10 1:40 PM

A few years ago at Easter Sunday Mass we had Shona singing, I think I put that blog on this site somewhere. Today its Good Friday, and in our Catholic tradition this means the passion Of Christ and the kissing of the cross. Followed by communion. Kissing of the cross is about thanking Christ for his humility in dying for us on the cross. Our priest also said a few words, he's been reading a Jewish scholar's book about faith and God and sharing it with us. Some of what he said I could understand other bits I could not. Its Philosophy and that takes a lot of thinking about. Though what I did understand I did agree with. Everybody goes up to kiss the feet of christ, so there are hymns while this is done. The final hymn was in Shona, very very good with a drum beat and shakers shaking while they sung and swung as the sung. This music really touched me. After kissing of the cross there was communion and more hymns, the final hymn was a Shona one, again with drum beats and shakers. This really was a great Good Friday for me. Normally the Shona Mass is at 1pm on a Sunday but for me it was really great to have them with us this Good Friday. 400 people may have been squeezed in.

Olympic Folly I name it Spagetti UFOMar 31, '10 1:08 PM

The new folly for the Olympics is a great idea.

I THINK IT SHOULD BE CALLED SPAGETTI UFO

cos thats what it looks like in the drawing in todays Telegraph. Do I get a prize for naming it. Spagetti UFO it rolls off the tongue.

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

cheers from Birmingham the home of spagetti junction.

me and my girls 5 years ago, flu included

National Health Service In England/ UKMar 22, '10 1:09 PM

I've heard a lot of rubbish from USA explaining how the health service works in the UK. So here is a simple explanation from somebody who lives in England and uses the NHS from time to time. We all pay our taxes and national insurance levy when we get paid every month, PAYE or pay as you earn its called, in total this is roughly 25%. so if your earn 1200 a month 300 is taken away and you have 900 in your hand. Now if you are sick you make an appointment on the phone then you go to the doctors surgery. There you are examined and if medicine is needed then you get a perscription. The perscription you take to the pharmacy and the pharmacist gives you the medicine. The perscription costs 7.20 or so per item. If you need a few items on this occasion then you pay 7.20 or so for each one. However if you are on regular medication for say blood pressure and or high colestrol then you can get a prepayment card for 140 a year. So your medications may cost a lot BUT by buying the prepayment card you can save 100s of pounds.

There is NO charge to see the doctor. If you need to see the nurse at the doctor's surgery for any reason, say for checks of any kind then that too is FREE of charge. If you have a problem and the Dr refers you to the hospital for an Xray or Catscan or Physio then that is FREE too. You may need to see a specialist too for whatever reason. That is FREE too. When my dad nearly died and was given 1 week to live back in 96, my dad stayed in hospital for 12 weeks or so. There was NO charge for that either. So if any US politician says otherwise then they are just plain STUPID and a LIAR. You may think that paying 25% of your wage in tax/insurance is high, maybe it is I don't know what the USA figure is. BUT in return you get a good health service that looks after you from cradle to grave.

Before my mother died she slipped on ice and broke her elbow. The medical care she got was FREE, she also had a slight stroke 6 months before she died, the medical care for that was free, as was the ambulance ride to hospital. My dad had a few heart attacks before he died, all of the medical care he got was FREE. As was his medicines, when you are old all medicines are free and you don't need to buy a prepayment card. If you are on a low wage then medinices come free too, I think under 16k income then its free medicine. If you read Padre Pio and Me attached to this blog then you'll have your eyes opened in another way.

Over here you don't need a mortgage to pay for your medicines nor a mortgage to pay for doctor's visits. That's what makes this society a great place to live in, YES its not perfect but there is a Health Safety Net for all. If you have money you can pay for things IF you want, but remember the line "WE the People" that should mean something in any society.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

Let Them Eat Cake or how the wife tried to poison me Mar 11, '10 11:01 AM

me with the flu in 2005

My wife loves cake. She always brings home some really nice cake and if I'm lucky I get the crumbs, and I mean crumbs. But we end up laughing so that's fine, the kids love cake too. So I'll see the wrapper and be told that it was the kids fault and there was none left. I'm too big already I'm told, so I get none. You can get some really nice cake in Sainsbury's or you can get some cake and coffee in Drucker's cafe in the city centre by House of Fraser. My mum used to buy glazed ring donuts when I was a child, somehow I always ended up with 2 or sometimes 3. That's a long time ago now. As for the wife and her cake, she loves eating it and there is Chinese cake which is different to western cake. So the wife decided to make cake and I was the crash test dummy so to speak. The first attempt was ok but the filling was not totally baked. I still ate it anyway. The crust was a little burnt too, but didn't King Alfred burn the cakes too, so she is in very good company. Next she contacted the good and the great in the Chinese community, even the Dr wife of the Dr who had given me acupuncture last week. No it wasn't a medical problem, just what was the methodology for making the best cakes. Chinese people are totally focused on anything they do, whether its science, industry, building Shanghai, or as I've discovered making cakes. There is good news though, the one think Chinese people are bad at, is, drinking beer. They fall over after just a few pints. So my wife armed with fresh insight and the correct gas setting for the oven tried again. The second attempt was even better, I was scolded for eating all her hard work. She even left a trail of flour dust all over the computer after she'd checked a Chines site which had a cookery section. Today she was

practicing making beef, so obviously I had to try it, and it was very good. The 3rd attempt at baking was also today. And it was perfection, her Chemist training no doubt had helped, even if she joked she was a Chemist and she could kill me if she wanted. The cakes were good and I reluctantly had to leave some for the kids for when they got home from school. Tomorrow another lot of baking will happen. I will pretend to be a porcupine as I have more acupuncture while downstairs my wife will be dressed in her bright red cook's bib with the Korean writing on as she cooks. Masterchef in our house.

New Technology Feb 27, '10 7:19 AM

New Technology (c)

By

Michael Casey

I was a computer operator a long time ago, back in the 70s to be exact. People used to be impressed when you told them. A computer disc drive was as big as a washing machine and it vibrated just as much. Tape drives were used too, 2400 feet of tape that had to be screwed onto the machine, which was as big as a wardrobe. The sensors on the tape drives had to be cleaned regularly, the cleaning fluid used to turn my finger tips white. Every now and then you had to cut back the magnetic tape as it became worn out as only the first few hundred feet were being read and so the start of the tape was crumpled.

You had to be inventive too, one night shift disaster came calling our names. The beginning of the tape of a master file just broke. We just had to fix that tape, so what did we do? We cut off 30 feet from a spare tape, and literally tied it with a knot to the beginning of the master tape. By doing this the master had enough run in tape before the silver marker. After the silver marker was raw data, in front was just the run in, enough tape to wind around the post before reaching the silver marker and then the all important data.

So holding our breath we typed in the command, the update run began, we scream in relief. And

then we did just what we always did. We hit play on the ghetto blaster which lived on top of tape decks. For those technology historians reading this we used Dec PDP 1170s, then later on we updated to Dec PDP 1184s. The height of previously used computers. Now people will laugh, but back then 30 years ago and more we were all "Smooth Operators" we just loved the Sade song when it came out. As for today's technology, a touch screen HD quality 23inch all in one computer is what everybody will have soon. Life moves on.

Pennies scattered around my house Feb 20, '10 6:43 PM

They say that if you look after the pennies the pounds/dollars will look after themselves. So what should I say if I have a trail of pennies, if I keep on finding pennies all over the place, a kind of trail of pennies. And they are pennies and sometimes dimes, for my daughter has decided to leave American coins all over the place for me to find. We were in Florida in 2006 and we no doubt brought back a few coins. My daughter has found them and thinks it's fun to leave them all over the house for me to find. I don't know if it's just a joke, or is she trying to encourage me with this trail of coins. Someday I'll win some money, or maybe even the lottery and then we can buy a big house and then she can have an arts and crafts room. That would be better than a trail of paint and water up the stairs to her room. It is nice to find the odd American coin, it makes me smile and it reminds me just how much she loves me. Her younger sister has no notion of money, we don't give her money, we buy her any things she wants so we avoid giving her cash.

It's better to keep children innocent as long as possible, some children demand money and know notes are a lot better/bigger than coins. This always strikes me as taking the innocent away from children, just as saying Santa does not exist is a bad and evil thing to say. Everybody knows Santa is real. Anyway don't let your children fall in love with money, my youngest doesn't even know that the brown coins have less value than the silver ones, nor that the gold ones are best of all. I want that to stay that way as long as possible. Streetwise kids are a sad reflection of society, mine will stay safe for as long as possible.

And as for a trail of American coins around the house, they are my big daughter's joke, for she knows I'm happy to find even one penny, especially as it means she loves me.

Goodnight I have to tuck my children in bed now, and that is better than all the pennies or pounds in the world.

Feb 19th snowman

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

Sex and The City Feb 17, '10 2:50 PM

Sex and The City is a big hit tv show. Perhaps it was a girl thing that spread to everybody else after girls loved it first. I never used to watch it. My wife introduced me to it. The outrageous behaviour of the 4 girlfriends and their outrageous friends, some gay some straight, but all funny.

It's not the kind of thing I'd write, my style is my style, a gentler kind of comedy, harking back to Ealing Comedies and Don Camillo books. But as for Sex in The City it's big it's brash and very loud, just as Americans are, I believe Michelle Obama is/was a fan. The blonde in the show has the most outrageous lines and is the one with the biggest lust, but there is pathos too. In one episode after a bout of cancer she is now wearing a wig and at a benefit she says it's all too horrible and as for the wig it makes her sweat, so she takes the *(&^ thing off, and the audience of female cancer survivors do the same and there is massive applause. I suppose the thing about Sex and The City is that it shows women as lusty ones, normally it's men who are chasing women in films and tv shows. We all remember Michael Caine in Alfie probably 40 years ago now. With Cilla Black singing the title song "What's it all about Alfie" Now decades on we have women who know what they want and will get it, if a man has what they want then they will take it with both hands, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. It is very funny and at times very touching. I would recommend the tv show to anybody.

Though I know it's not everybody's cup of tea, you can always read my book and see how I deal with the subject. Though Sex and The City must have 1,000,000 more times readers/watchers than any of

my stuff, so far.

1999 me and the wife

Tv Table for Chinese New Year Feb 11, '10 4:57 PM

Well we are updating our tv, after 16 years our Toshiba is playing up, though I'd not spend money fixing it. After thinking about it for a few weeks we finally decided to get a new LCD tv. In the end Toshiba was chosen again. There are cheaper ones, but the best deal was with John Lewis, you do get a free 5 year guarantee and thats what swung it. If you buy from other stores its 100 on top for a 3 year guarantee. Or other places say its only a fiver a month for peace of mind. Which turns out at 180 for 3 years! Robbery I say, I've just reminded myself of what my own dad used to say in those situations. I'm smiling now at the memory, it wasn't Queen's English either, a bit more blue. So there you have it John Lewis won. As my old Toshiba has its own stand we decided to buy a new fancy tv table. I had a trawl through the internet and picked one out, me the kids and my wife agreed. It arrived today and I had to build it, Its a kind of jigsaw that you do. Last time I did a kind of jigsaw was when I built the cot for our 1st daughter. My brother had 2 kids and just when we were having our kids he donated the cot. So me and my Shanghai mother in law together built the cot to go by the bed. My mother in law did not know any English then, and I didn't know any Chinese, but together we built the cot. Steve who runs the Chinese take away had given me a lift to my brother's house and my brother had loaded up the car with all kinds of stuff. So thats how I ended up building a multilingual cot, even if we didn't speak each others language, So as I built the tv table I thought of my mother in law. But as you all know its hard to avoid any mother in law. Now as for my old tv I did email a charity who could have taken it away, but they did not even reply. With just a bit of TLC and the old Toshiba would be company for somebody. I checked with the local council and they charge, normal we just stick old stuff outside the house and within hours soembody will take it away. A kind of street burial in a way, our unwanted stuff goes off for another life. When the new tv arrives we have to remind our girls that Irish dancing, or any other kind of dancing is only allowed if they are

ten paces away from the tv. Its Chinese New Year this weekend so the tv is a family Chinese New Year present for us all. We will be eating loads of crackers and watching the variety show on Pheonix tv, channel 785 on Sky. I remember 10 years ago when I was in Shanghai for the 1st time it was Chinese New Year then and I really loved the variety show. You don't need language to have fun and enjoy the show, its one of my life highlights the tv show and the neighbours outside letting off huge huge fireworks, almost as if an army was invading.

So I'll end there and say Happy Chinese New Year, year of the Golden Tiger

The Birthday CardFeb 6, '10 5:58 PM

The Birthday Card.

Well we forgot to get a card for my sister. But our two small daughters both love marking things. So the 2 of them each came up with 2 designs which they put on 2 cards. One was a rainbow and happy birthday to Aunty written several times on the card. With half the card covered in kisses. And in best handwriting the card was signed by our 6 year old, the smaller one in the photo. We managed to find an envelope amongst our stash of other greetings cards, even though we had not got an aunty one. Then the other daughter appeared, she's the really arty and crafty girl. Her card for her aunty was neatly drawn and shaded in and very well produced. Who needs moonpig when you have a daughter with over 400 crayons and felts at her disposal. Our daughters win hands down, The 2nd card was bigger, luckily my 2nd daughter had previous borrowed some envelopes from my stash of envelops. So her card was all ready now. Luckily for me I had already sealed the 1st card, there is always rivalry between them as to who is the best at making cards. So if anybody wants a pair of great card designers them do get in touch

Dunkin Donuts and Me 1999Feb 2, '10 3:22 PM

Dunkin Donuts and Me 1999

I wrote a short piece about Dunkin Donuts, or rather set there. I found it the other day, today is its

11th Birthday so to speak. So I gave it to my 8 year old to read, that's her in blue in the photo. I read it again myself. So much time and tide has passed these 11 years. I'm married for starters. It's funny watching my 8 year old react as she reads. I think of myself as a precocious reader 40 years ago. I hope when she's older and maybe a grandma herself she'll think back and remember her dad and the stories he told and the stories he wrote. I always try and fill her mind with memories so that she in turn will have stories to share with her own children or nephews and nieces or maybe the kids in her class. WE never know our future but if we can pass on a little love and laughter then we have achieved something with our lives.

the photo is of my mum's birthplace in Cromane County Kerry

2 Feb 2010 12:14:02

A Child's Love Jan 27, '10 4:59 PM

How can I describe a child's love? I can speak of myself when I was a child which from the Birth Certificate was a long time ago. Though some may say I'm still a child, others, such as women, all women, say that men never grow up and are always children.

I can remember when I was 10 and I used to sit on the top step of the stairs and we'd have a "social", me and my mum. I'd tell her all we'd done at school and what had happened, all in quiet a large amount of detail. Then my mum would kiss me goodnight and give me a gentle pat sending me off to bed. There was so much love in my mum, lots and lots, for all her big family, lots of prayer too. I always got an extra ice cream from my dad when we were on holiday in Wales, we seemed to go to Abergele all the time. My dad discovered hamburgers for the 1st and tried 1 then another then another, in the end he had 6, such wonderful memories. I seemed to remember a castle nearby, playing golf with my closest brother, we had 1 club and 1 putter each, this was before Tiger Woods existed. Our parents loved us and we loved them, this was before the Modern Family was invented too. Nobody hated their parents then, nobody dreamed of the Wii and hating your parents because they would not buy you one. Tv was 2 channels and in black and white, everything was black and

white, you loved your folks and they loved you.

Now 40 or so years later I'm married and I have two small girls of my own. My Chinese/Irish girls who love me. Having a family when you thought you may not ever marry, and then having 2 beautiful girls, this is very humbling and does make me thank God. The important thing is to make sure when they look in the mirror they don't fall in love with their reflection. Its what's inside that matters I always tell them. And you know what? Even at their young age they know that beauty fades and is worthless. A nice smile and a big big heart is what matters, the reflection that you see in the mirror is worthless. Mind you I always tell everybody that I fell in love with my wife because she made me laugh. Nobody believes me, but there are 2 people who know I'm telling it as it is, my 2 daughters know it. I bought a book of Poetry today, from the cheap book shop. There are lots of of illustrations in it, 300 famous poems, including a Children's poetry section. My biggest daughter loves to draw and she is good, so the idea is to appeal to her eyes and to her ears. It worked, she wanted to take the book to bed with her. I said no as I'm old fashioned and think books should be preserved, not bend and creased, especially if read in bed. However as I write this I think I should have let her. So tomorrow I will allow her to take it to her room. However her smaller sister does love to write on anything and everything. Perhaps I should write a poem about that.

Girls like to be tucked in at night and you have to tell them a story or say prayers with them. Then 10 mins later they'll come down because they want a drink of milk, and another kiss goodnight. And could I possibly come upstairs and tuck them in again. Then 20mins later they need another drink, so they come down again. Later on, the girls reappear because they need the bathroom, well did have all those drinks. Finally carrying more drinks they disappear up the stairs. This is our Pantomime, a pantomime of Love. I think of my dead parents and I know how they would laugh. And my girls are only here because my dad survived his big heart attack, Hugs and Kisses is what little girls give. I love you 20 is what my small daughter once said, 20 is a big number, so I'm loved that much. I hope everybody reading this is loved 20 too!

As Valentine's Day is just around the corner here's a Valentine Poem Jan 20, '10 5:55 PM

Michael Casey email michaelgcasey@hotmail.com

You're Never Alone When You Are in Love ©

By

Michael Casey

Love is being together , Love is a smile , a Look , A Touch

Or Just A Sigh , Not really knowing why you chose one another .

Yet Together Till You Die

Love is a Kiss soft and gentle on the cheek which warms your
heart and makes you glad you chose one another .

A Kiss can lead to more but I'll leave Passion locked Safely
behind a bedroom door

Passion spent you'll not give up each not even for Lent .

You'll just lie in warm embrace and remember you forgot to say
grace .

Whispers and Promises are made , plans for the future and if
she put her hair this way , Do you think it would suit her ?

Then giggles and more embraces , Till the Night is over and with
a dig in the ribs you make him move over .

Then your oneness complete , you have to put up with his cold feet !

But when you are apart your hearts are still one , Thought half is
absent you are still one .

His socks under the bed , and after what you said .

His "toys" scattered about , and the clout you'll give when he
returns and the warmth of your body he yearns .

His cold feet to chill you after he thrills you , are absent yet the
thought makes you smile , at least you have the comfort for a while.

His grins and leers , which makes you smile at least you'll have
peace for a while .

But his heart is still with you , the love is always there - as
bright as your fair hair .

Close your eyes and he is still there , Remember the embrace as he
played his fingers across your face .

Let your dreams go and remember the whispers in your ear , warm
kisses on your shoulder before he gets bolder . The warmth of love
that soars through your blood .

Dream long , Dream deep , your Man toils while you sleep , though
you are apart you are still together whatever the weather , for you
are never apart for he is locked in your heart .

Though sometimes he can be trying , there's Never any need of crying
for your love is Undying.

Always remember he fills your heart even when you are apart

End

p.s. look what poetry did to me.....

Reading BooksJan 19, '10 7:25 AM

When I was at school the teacher would say "Can you all open your desks and get out your reading books." we'd slam open and slam shut the desks and all begin to read. One by one we'd be called up to the front of the class and sit at the teachers desk and we'd be heard reading. I can remember in the lower class the book we started on. It was Book Nought, Kitty and Rover and the pictures were all in a kind of purple. A few years later I was on Book Five and this was about the Sleeping Beauty, the last story was that one. Book Six was next, this had the William Tell story in it. Up in the high mountains was the opening. But I could not pronounce HIGH, I said HIG, not HIGH. So I was put back

one book. All for one word. The next year I was in Mr Gallagher's class and I was afraid of him. Mr Gallagher looked a bit like the Irish actor Milo O'Shea, if any of you saw Barbarella with Jane Fonda then you will remember Milo O'Shea in that playing the organ. So it was because I was so afraid of Milo O'Shea, sorry I mean Mr Gallagher that my Life changed. I read books to stay out of his way. It worked, I kind of grew a brain at fast speed. Which in turned meant that 3 years later I got in to Grammar school.

At the moment I am encouraging my smallest one to read, I hear her read all the time as does my wife. It can be funny because If there is a new word then my wife will explain what the new word is, in Chinese and then explain what it is in English. Kids guess what is happening so you have to make sure you get them to read what the words on the page are. Though we all know that our brain fills in the spaces, so you have to stop and slow down and make sure that children read what is on the page and not guess. There is a thing you can get on the Internet, its a paragraph and there are lots of mistakes in it. But if you give it to somebody they will read it perfectly, why? Because your brain fills in the spaces. As for reading its just getting the child involved and encouraging them, sometimes with bribes and sometimes with punishments such as no tv and Disney. My bigger daughter is all grown up, she is on Library Books as we used to call them. In a couple of years time I'll get her to read my books, and I hope it won't be a punishment for her. At the moment she is working her way through Roahl Doal and we also watch films which are based on his books. He really was a great writer.

You can curl up with a book just as you can curl up with a radio on a long Winters Night, the gift of reading is such a great thing. I can remember my mother teaching me to read from a cartoon in a newspaper, it was the Phantom, as well as Chipper the cartoon dog. I remember my old History teacher recommending the Don Camillo books, they are about a Catholic priest and a Communist Lord Mayor in a mythical village on the river Po. Very much cartoon figures but a great read. Sadly you cannot get them in English translation and Santa did not bring them to me this Christmas.

As for today's books, you have huge best sellers which were ghost written, my golden goals by some footballer. I did it my way, by some tv celebrity who has just won a reality tv show. Or the A to Z of

sex by some pop star groupie. These kind of books will sell 2 million copies and end up on the coffee table of your local hairdressers or beauty parlour. As for me I read the Daily Telegraph on the Internet, or I listen to radio 4, not forgetting the good documentaries you can find on the BBC or some of the commercial stations. I also practice my writing here. If I want junk to read then I'll go and have a haircut.

The Dead and The Living Jan 16, '10 10:00 AM

The Dead and The Living (c)

by

Michael Casey

I first saw a deceased when I was nine years old ,my father said not to worry as the dead are the same as the living , only the laughter has left them , the sparkle has gone from their eyes , the worry has been lifted from their shoulders , and their voice has vanished to eternity .

In paradise the sparkle will return for it is the twinkle of the stars , the laughter will return too for it is the morning breeze and the turning tides are their sides shaking with laughter .

I treat the deceased with the same courtesy as I give to the living , though I find the deceased are always more polite . My father also had a few words to say about the living .

He said that the living are only the caretakers of the soul , yet they think their existence is everything , that they know everything because they experience many things with their senses .

What the living don't acknowledge is that their time is short and when I lay their bodies to rest then their souls continue without

them , without their strong , without their weak , without their beautiful or even ugly temporary form , to where I cannot say , only that it is a better place .

Percy the undertaker placed the lid on the coffin ,the soul was free

THE BEGINNING

Traffic and Bubble BathJan 13, '10 5:25 PM

I watched the film Traffic today, I recorded it the other night and left it on our machine, so today I watched it. Everything was understated, it was directed by Steve Soderbergh, I hope I got that right the credits were rolling fast. I was impressed by the good Mexican cop who risked his life so much, he was a very good actor. Michael Douglas also gave a very good performance. His daughter slipped into drugs from being a very rich kid who was bored, in the end she was a hooker to pay for her habit. Very seedy. The style of the film also made it more interesting. How many awards it won I don't know. I could Google and find out but I'm sure the film buffs reading this will tell me. In the end Michael Douglas realised that his grand job was worth nothing compared to the love of his daughter and his wife for that matter. Family is everything.

Bubble bath is so nice, perhaps some may call me a girl for saying this but it is true. A good old soak in the bath is great, especially with the radio for company. Being like a Hippo for half an hour or until the water is no longer hot IS great. You do come out all wrinkly a lot like a prune but it is great. I know in USA its showers but I think a soak is always nicer. My wife likes sauna, then a shower or a bath when she comes back from the sauna at the bottom of our street. My old uncle Dan in Boston loved the public sauna too back in 1980 I was taken there when I was on holiday. But back to bubble bath, it is a kind of church. Why do I say church, before you have cartoons in your mind let me explain. You are at your most relaxed when you are lying there in a warm environment with nice aromas around you. Its a kind of womb, and if you put your ears under the water then things sound how the outside world sounds to an unborn baby. In the bath or should I say tub, in the bath you can

relax and all the day's problems can dissolve. You are probably closer to your god too, no outside events crowding your time and mind, I'd bet too that people pray more while they are all alone in the bathroom. You are all alone and there are no barriers, you are literally naked before God. No expensive suits and designer jewelry, you cannot be pompous and powerful when you are naked and looking like a prune and covered in bubbles. Inventors probably get their best ideas when they are in a bath. Don't let us forget Archimedes in his bath either.

But why am I linking Traffic and Bubble Bath? Drugs kill and corrupt. Bubble bath turns us back into kids and cleans us. Our minds, our imagination are our greatest gift. We may be thrown into jail but we still have our minds. We may be doing a job we hate, but our minds are free. Drugs are just a passing high. But if you have your mind, your imagination then you have something to play with which is more powerful than any drug. An imagination is even more powerful than Nuclear Weapons. And man's imagination can bring an end to nuclear weapons.

Perhaps its in our baths covered in bubbles and hot water that we know just how great Peace is and how Peace and NOT drugs should be shared around. So starting one person at a time we can influence Life on Earth.

p.s. while I was cleaning the car park of CPNEC that's when the idea for Tears For A Butcher came to me. Imagination is our greatest gift.

Extended ChristmasJan 11, '10 8:13 AM

We have a lot of snow in England at the moment, some even say its the worst Winter in 30 years. The Infant school opened only to shut down on the first day at Midday. The Junior school over the road stayed open, they did let you take the kids home if you had a sibling at the Infant school. Both schools are at the top of the hill, literally on the brow of the hill, with the soup bowl woods just behind the Junior school. I decided it was safer to walk than drive the car, so JJ stayed while I walked the kids up the hill. I kept on saying "remember this", as we listened to the sound of the snow crushing under our feet. I got them to observe the snow as we walked to school, the pretty natural

"pictures" they could see and how they could draw them in the future. I encouraged them to observe the shapes, I want them to have memories for the future. When they have children and grandchildren they can tell them about the big winter of 2009/2010, just how pretty it all looked. They may even remember me. After school we went through the woods, the snow looked great behind the school as I showed the girls. There must have been 150 people all enjoying the snow and maybe 15 people with sledges, any of you film fans out there will remember "Rosebud" and Citizen Kane, so I needn't say any more. For me though it was an opportunity to plant seeds in my kids' imagination, joy and love and snow. Today and the weekend we missed another load of snow but there may be more tomorrow. In fact it was noticeably milder and the snow in the back garden wasn't rock solid, it had melted enough to make a snowman. So I started a snowman for my girls and when they get back from school together we can finish it off. These simple pleasures are what makes family, so I hope wherever you are reading this you do the same for your own family.

Junk Mail and how to destroy it and all of their computers Jan 7, '10 6:09 PM

I don't know about you but junk mail is a total bore. I think I'm world famous now, why? I get 20 a day, sometimes more. Sometimes for fun I reply and give them rubbish information. You always get the story that they are dying of cancer and they want to leave you all their money. Or the subject line is "from the desk of barrister James Pooh" and other such gems. I saw on tv news how in one place in Africa there were a line of computers and a teacher at the front who had written the fake story on the blackboard and they were all typing it out. Junk emails also come from China too and all corners of the globe. HOTMAIL ALERT please send us all your info or lose your hotmail. Phishing scams galore, and I click them out of existence. If I had Captain Kirk's technology then I'd vapourise them. If only Bill Gates would let me hit return and then send a magnetic pulse in an email so I could wipe their computers, and far far worse. I'm sure everybody who reads this is agreeing with me. Oh don't forget the 1,000,000,000 I've just won according to the junk email, just send my details and then they'll ask for a 100 to cover expenses and then they'll post a check for 1,000,000,000. And yes

I just to attention when its from the desk of barrister James Pooh. And don't let us forget they are believers, DECIEVERS and crooks and liars that is what they really are. With each email address that is zapped they get an even more improbable new address. I still think Bill Gates should let me send a zapping email that wipes their hard drive. But he's too busy trying his new Google phone. Hey Bill can you just put that down for as second and help me with this email. However somewhere in the wide world somebody who has English as a 2nd language may end up reading this and think Bill Gates is sitting on the chair next to me sobering up after stealing all my beer from the fridge, and then I'll end up will 200 junk emails a day. But as we all know today is Thursday 7th Jan and every Thursday that is also the 7th Bill goes bowling with the President, not the USA President, but with the President of the Michael Casey appreciation society and they read all my stories from my site www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

AND IF YOU BELIEVE ANY OF THIS THEN YOU BELIEVE IN FAIRIES, or you are still reading from a Blackboard.....

Diary or Blog or am I just ranting today help me Richard E Grant Jan 4, '10 5:47 PM

I was just watching the tv when I stumbled over a programme hosted by Richard E Grant the actor. It was all about diaries. So it set me thinking. Is a blog a diary? I think it is in today's world. As kids we all found our big sister's diary and read through it before trying to put it back in exactly the same place. If we were really cruel then we'd write in it. As I think of it I remember the name of the boy who first had a crush on my sister. Thats a 40 year old memory thats just came sailing back. Do we remember the people and places in diaries? For family things I do seem to have total recall. The rest of the family don't seem to remember, in some ways I had a very good childhood. The Love my parents had for us all shines through. Though I wouldn't really like to share or expose all of our family life. These reality programmes do go too far in my opinion. Its usually broken/drunken/crazed people who want the limelight the 15minutes of fame. Me, I say lock them in a dark cellar and leave them there, very much what the Simpsons would do. I did actually see the Simpsons movie today so

perhaps they have given me that notion. Real people doing real things instead of grasping people who want fame for fame's sake. Perhaps Religion has died so much, certainly over here in UK, that Fame and being on TV is the closest spiritual reality some people can find. I say this as a believer, so it really does sadden me. There's a thought for the philosophers out there who may be reading this. Tonight on the tv news a young man helped save a family from a fire, he went back into the flames twice in order to save his neighbour's children. Now he is somebody I'd like to applaud, NOT hyperventilating dyed hair people who've spent too much time under a sun lamp. Thankfully we have the final series of Big Brother on tv, I imagine none of them will have heard of George Orwell and 1984, me I read the book in grammar school. But I do realise that blogs are rants as well, I just proved it to myself. Though I must say that when you can connect to people then it is worthwhile, for its the things we share that make us all family, whether you read this in UK, USA or somewhere in Asia

Horror Story and other stuff Jan 2, '10 6:17 PM

I asked my daughter for an idea then I'd write a story, just as we all used to do when we were kids in school. She said "Pain" as I hurt my back again recently and it took 2 weeks to heal. But I decide to write about Horror instead. As I speak the kids are in bed, either that our they are staying in their room and drawing. Drawing is big in our house. My wife is very good and can ever do calligraphy in Chinese symbols. My own brother can also draw well, so I'm pleased its being passed down the generations. Me, I'm just rubbish.

What about horror? Well you meet somebody and then they turn out different to what you expected, so that in a way is a horror story. As for real horror films, or suspense films they tend to be polarised. You have the buckets of blood ones, which I cannot really watch. Or the suspense ones, with the creek on the stairs. I think the creek on the stairs ones are better, buckets of blood ones tend to be just that, all buckets of blood and no plot. I saw the Lost Boys recently on TCM it was funny and had a good plot and did not rely on too much blood. My wife hides behind her hands

when the suspense ones are on. It was film that brought us together, watching films, and yes we are a kind of Adams Family, when my young daughters friends arrive I say "welcome to the adams family", sharing a good film does break down barriers.

Japanese films are good too, the cartoons that are so well drawn, we saw one this afternoon it had even won an oscar, best of all it was on BBC so there were no adverts to ruin the film. Its still funny when we see an old film and its the first time my wife has seen it in English, or without Chinese subtitles. But then I watch Chung Ying Fat in some things and I'm raving about it. My wife just gives me a potted history of all the stars and who is married to who. So films are our joy, so don't switch off the lights I'm going to bed now and I'll make lots of noise as I go up the scared, just to frighten away any ghosts that may be there.

2010 New Years Resolutions Dec 30, '09 3:25 PM

1. Win the lottery, why, well why not. I have a list of things that need doing.

A. The tv is going blue and losing picture, I have tried the satelite box, I've adjusted the dish outside, I've reseated the cables, I've even changed the tv settings too. Its been a great set but after 16years I think I need a new Toshiba will be needed. Once you have kids its a whole new world of tv and the number of hours its on is trebled compared to just me when I was single.

B. The central heating boiler, this is now 17years old, and will be 18 at Easter. I have religiously maintained it but finally the company have refused to cover it. In England now all new boilers must be the condensing version. Apparantly new boilers are 95% efficient whereas my old one is 65% efficient. If I could cheat a new old style boiler is 800 but the new ones without any reserve of water are 2000 or 3200 in dollars. I don't know if they are cheaper here or over there where you guys live.

C. When I moved in I had new carpet fitted everywhere, this room is very new looking but the living room carpet could do with being replaced. Traffic in the shape of children and prams means your carpet takes a beating.

D. This computer has had a hammering so after 7 years its time to replace it. The keyboard we did

replace. We recycled an old new style keyboard. One of those curvy ones with the alphabet split in half.

E. My bed, the frame need replacing, it was new when I moved in but now it creaks, I am heavy though, so it has lasted well.

F. There are other things I'd like to do around the house, such as a new cooker for the kitchen, this is my 2nd one since I've moved in but another new one would be good.

G. Premium Bonds, these are a kind of lottery ticket with the government, but what is good about them is that you can get your stake back. I've had a ten pound stake for over 30 years. I've never won a penny. However ever month I could win a million, and there are other prizes too. So I haven't claimed my 10 quid back.

I do the uk lottery every now and then, I waste 1 pound on a ticket and when I lose I wish I'd bought a bottle of Dr Pepper instead. So there you have it my list of resolutions which I'll do as soon as I win the lottery. There are lots of things needed for the house, though IF I was lucky enough to win big, I'd just walk away from the house without looking back, now a new house that would be great.

p.s. www.rightmove.co.uk is a housing site if you enter birmingham then you can see our houses over here, and one thing you'll notice straight away is that UK homes are very dear compared to USA. Goodnight Everybody as the Waltons used to say. Michael

Found OUT----LET SANTA LIVE Dec 28, '09 5:04 PM

My daughter was using the computer to do a project on cats. This is good because at 8 she knows how to search and gather information. Though I do tell her to read books as well. Not to forget that Wikipedia is NOT perfect and should NOT be used as the sole source of information. The Internet is full of rubbish and rubbish leading to yet more rubbish. Anyways she was pleased to do her project and get a list of breeds of cats. I told her that our cat Jean lived over 20 years, so a cat can be a great friend and company. My small daughter also knows how to use the computer, BBC CBeebies is her favourite site as it lets her play games and so on, its very educational. So I am pleased that both of

my girls know how to use technology. I was a computer operator back in 1978, in those days a computer was as large as a washing machine and vibrated as much. There were magnetic tapes too, which you had to cut back a few hundred feet and put new silver markers on, when they got old and worn. Not forgetting to clean the tape heads, the cleaning fluid used to make the tips of my fingers go white. We even had to clean the air conditioning filters, these were a yard square and about 2 inches thick. They were absolutely filthy, so they bought us short lab coats to wear when we cleaned. Totally inadequate, but those were the days. Finally we moved with the times and had 2 gig of space on our new pcs, thats about 11years ago. Now I noticed an ad for a computer that advertised 1 teraquad of space which is 1000gig, I think. This one I'm using is old and when I have the money I shall replace it. It has only 80gig, such is the pace of technology, If Bill Gates is reading this feel free to send me a nice PC. But going back to my Title, Found Out, my daughter decided to have a read of my latest post, and what did she find. It was daddy and not Santa who had put buttons on the snowman at 2.30 am after Midnight Mass, so I improvised and explained somebody must have edited my post just as Wikipedia is edited for the worse at times. I showed her the suspects from those who have visited my site, so forgive me readers if I put the blame on you. The alternative is to make two young girls NOT believe is Santa. Mind you, you could all be like me and DO BELIEVE IN SANTA.

Cheerio to all the usual suspects

Midnight Mass and all things SantaDec 25, '09 7:11 AM

Well we had a little bit of snow and it was still there in the morning. So the girls made a snowman. One made the body and the other made the head. I just supervised and took photos so we could send them to Grandma in Shanghai. I used to make snowmen myself till I was about 30. We had two gardens so it was great. I can even remember having a big snowball fight with my brother in the 60s, now I'm closer to 60 than the 1960s. My brother had a wall the length of one end of the garden and I had a hollowed out 1/2 snowman to hide behind, This was after we had the new garden fence,

bulldogs used to come up the rear entry and snap at us. I still hate and fear bullgogs.

Anyways after my daughters had finished the snowman I took 30 photos on the digital camera and sent them to grandma in Shanghai and to their cousins 9 miles down the road, where we will be sharing Christmas dinner. Such technology would have been beyond belief in the 60s.

Last night was Christmas Eve so I got a lift to Midnight Mass with my sister, we picked up Mrs D on the way, Mrs D was our mum's best friend, Mrs D is 86 now, 87 in the new year, We sat together while my sister joined the choir. I had forgotten how pretty our old church is. Saint Patricks Dudley Rd, With the massive Dudley Road Hospital opposite. It was 3000 staff and the main corridor is 1Km or over 1/2 a mile long. It was there that my dad cheated death 13years ago, its all in Padre Pio and Me. I said hello to the altar boys, they could not believe I was an altar boy there 40 years ago. So Mass was held the candles were everywhere on the altar, we all had one in our hands too. The church was full, I tried not to burn the girl in front of me, she had long long hair. After Mass we took Mrs D home, then I could have/should have shared a coffee with my sister but I had other business to attend to. Secret Santa Business. My girls had left a mug of milk and some biscuits out for santa. So I had to eat them, then I wrote in red crayon S & R xxx on the plate, I also left some coins and I shook a few crumbs of cereals on the plate. Then I had to go outside, it was after 2am by then. So I made red buttons out of cardboard and stuck them to our snowman. Then by 2.30am I got into bed. This morning, Christmas Morning I had to explain things. Santa and Rudolf had visited and Rudolf was so hungry he's stolen my cereals. The coins were to pay for the cereals he'd eaten, afterwards Rudolf had thought the snowman would look better with red buttons on, so Rudolf had made them. I think my girls believed me, but they were a bit suspicious. Maybe this year will be the last year they believe. Me, I will always believe, because thats what Christmas is all about. So Happy Christmas Everybody, I have dinner waiting for me at my brothers house.

How did you spend the last 10years 2000to2009 end of 1st decade of 21st Century?Dec 22,

'09 5:15 PM

Well, the newspapers are all talking about the end of the 1st decade of the 21st Century. So I'll tell you all what I've been up to. I was engaged and decided to go to Shanghai to meet my future wife's family in 2000. I was vetted by the one uncle in Shanghai who then told another uncle in Maimi. He hides nothing was the comment. My girl came back to me and later on we married. The day of the wedding was a very full day. We got married and the sister of somebody I was working with was the registrar. We had a family get together at my sisters house. Then we went to my house. Later on we went to McDonalds to meet my old schoolfriend. MY wife and DrBigD PhD wrote chemical equations on a napkin. Then we went to a 25th reunion for my old grammar school. The joke was I had been Shanghaied. The next year my mother in law came over to help out when we had our 1st child. So marriage and parenthood. My wife also passed her driving test and we got a car. I was working at a 4star hotel next, 3 years of very hard work but fun. Employee of the Year, well almost. Another child another girl. Both are blessings especially when in 1999 I had passed a landmark birthday and then marriage and kids. If you say your prayers then God does listen. The mother in law came over again when the 2nd child was born. Kids are the best thing in the world. When they are potty trained THAT is a great event too. Watching them learn to walk is great too. I used to give my brother's kids lots of stuff. So when I had kids myself my brother gave me all the stuff back. Books galore, I'm sure our dead mother must be smiling.

I also self published my book this past decade, it did not work out, so I still dream of being discovered. The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker is a good title. This decade my hair has got whiter and whiter, I just tell everybody its a sign of wisdom.

Our house has got smaller and smaller, from just me to 3 girls taking over my bathroom and then the rest of the house. So I dream of having a bigger house, IF only I could win the lottery.

Thats all for tonight, I hope everybody out there has a good Christmas

I'm forever blowing bubbles Dec 20, '09 3:26 PM

Well the school holidays are here, this means the kids are on holiday and my teaching family are on

holidays too. My brother arrived with his Hungarian wife, we are nothing if not cosmopolitan in our family. They had Christmas gifts for the girls, my sister in law is very good at crafts so she made two fluffy pink scarfs for ther girls. My sister and another brother also got scalfs. What do you think I got? I got a freshly prepared salad and a bottle of low calorie sauce. Obviously I tore the cling film from the top and started to eat it, food is food after all. They were also telling me to lose a bit of weight. My brother had been put on a diet by his Hungarian wife, this obviously made him hungry, but he's lost 15kilos or 2 stones which is 28pounds to those of you in North America. Before his diet he was the same weight as me. So now that I have a mixing bowl to make salad in I may try a few salads. Like most men I think a meal is not a meal without meat and or bread. So now thanks to my unique Christmas present the weight will just drop off. Getting a new job may help too.

My smallest was blowing bubbles all over the house as I started today's piece, so thats where the title came from. Though I must admit I enjoy blowing bubbles too. Its so innocent and fun and brings out the child in anybody, just blowing a few bubbles, pretty bubbles in the air. I also have to get our smallest to read her reading books everyday of the holidays too. This morning the pair of them were upstairs in a bedroom trying out the watercolours their unclean aunt had brought. Finally when they were finished the youngest came down with technicolour green fingers, it was too much temptation, nail varnish they don't have but paints they do. It was like meeting the swamp monster. I laughed, we tend to laugh a lot, small children do that, and I thank God for it.

WE had our first real bit of snow last night, JJ had taken the girls with her to a friends house. So when they came back they were high, snow is like alcohol for kids, same as being dizzy thats childrens alcohol too. I told them I had made a snowman in the garden only the squirrels had stolen it. I put the yard light on to show them, but yes I must be right because the snowman had vanished, the squirrels are thieves, yes really.

WE are discussing what to leave out for Santa, a carrot for Rudolph and milk and biscuits for Santa. If things go to plan I'll be home at 1.30am after Midnight Mass, it would be a nice snack for me too. So I'll end on that note, leave something for Santa,

Merry Christmas from a snowy Birmingham Michael

Tags: 1st ten chapters

Its The End Of The World As We Know It? No Lets Laugh Instead.Dec 17, '09 6:44 PM

Its The End Of The World As We Know It? No Lets Laugh Instead.

If you read the headlines its the end of the world soon. Climate change will kill us all. Dan Brown will no doubt be writing another badly written epic blaming the Vatican again. There's not enough places left to paint more Pope's portraits and the Incas said 2012 was the end of the world. So lets all cry and head for the hills as the ice caps melt and try to drown us all.

Pray, Hope and Don't Worry is what I say. Padre Pio's advice and personal motto. Santa is flying around looking for our house, we will write "Land Here" in the snow IF we get enough snow here in Birmingham. My sister has lost her voice, for years we us to shout "shut up" at her, but to be honest she is a great choir singer. But Santa won't be able to hear her so she may miss out on presents, so being the good brother I shall be singing Falsetto and mimicing her voice, I'll even stand outside her house on Christmas Eve just to make sure Santa calls. I'm sure brothers worldwide would do the same. My big daughter may sneak out with me to attend her first Midnight Mass, I used to be an altar boy for 8 years and reader for 5, it was always fun at Christmas. The lighted candles, the smell of insense, the hiccups from the drunks, the nurses who came from the hugh Dudley Rd hospital opposite. Seeing old schoolfriends who you hadn't seen for 20 or more years. The walk home on the cracking ice, the occasional slip and holding onto my brother as we walked home, brothers one. All this is just the tip of the iceberg, which is made up of love and laughter. SO I for one refuse to give in to all this doom and gloom. WE are all better than this, and together things will improved. Actions speak louder than handing over dollars,pounds or RMB, and if I'm wrong nobody will ever have ice with their drinks, because the icecaps will have melted.

Climate Change - Think Small For Big ResultsDec 15, '09 6:30 PM

I've watched a bit of the Denmark Climate Change Circus. Grand Gestures here there and everywhere. The bottom line as ever is money. India and China will NOT give up their Industrial Revolutions. Nor Brazil. Their people have a very low standard of living, 100s of millions deserve clean water and a basic home to live in. Back in the 1960s I can remember just how great it was to finally get an indoor toilet, here in Birmingham England. Then colour tv, and a land line phone years later. So I for one understand the hopes and aspirations of all of these people in the 3rd world and other such places.

Transferring technology is a big thing and nobody wants to do it for free, least of all USA, France and even UK. But it WILL have to be done. Arnie is right too in saying the cities and states shouldn't wait for their governments, they should do it for themselves. We have a big recycling bin and I'm amazed by the fact that 80% of our rubbish can be recycled, I could never have believed it until our local council started the service. So just think IF that could be replicated worldwide, yes I know the difficulties BUT just think about it. Think.

Green savings such as insulation and solar cells can provide work, and we all need work and it will help the environment. BUT I wouldn't be writing blank cheques to 3rd world countries. There is so much corruption and mismanagement. Aid has to come from the ground up, NEVER top down, otherwise it just ends at the bottom of a mountain in a Swiss bank vault. Think small too, NO big ideas. We should be planting trees all over the world, we should have fish farms everywhere too. Save the fish species before they disappear. If you go on google earth and look at Birmingham England you see all the trees in the back gardens, its pretty and hopefully its good for the environment. Every local council can help all over the world, Arnie was right about that. Keep it local then something can be done, leave it to BIG Politicians then we are all ---&*()*&*. Green ideas can make changes to the world, it just depends on getting people onside. The Long March in China started with the 1st step, Neil Armstrong's one small step one giant leap for Mankind, started with Nasa taking small small steps. We all have to stop being selfish, then although we are in the gutter we can reach for the stars.

Tags: green world

Luck of the draw Dec 15, '09 11:32 AM

I got out of the bath on Friday and guess what? I hurt my back. Such a simple thing that resulted in a lot of pain. My wife wanted to grab a Chinese specialist and get him to manipulate my back there and then. I just elected to send her for the pain relief spray from the pharmacist. Its 3quid or 4.5dollars and stinks to high heaven, like a mens locker room. I knew after a few days of pain and stiffness I'd be better again. Its Tuesday now and I'm still a bit stiff though I can move fast, I had to as I burnt my toast, because I left it while I was on the computer.

My biggest daughter will be singing in the songs from Oliver on the last day of the school term so my back is good enough to attend. I didn't leave the house for a few days as I moved like a 900 year old man, or a baby with a full nappy, you can pick your favourite metaphor. As I speak the wife has just parked outside so our kids will tell me what they have been up to. As for me I stumbled over a new Internet radio service so I've thrown my hat into the ring for that. It could be lots of fun and a good experience If I get past the 100s of much younger people who throw their hats into the ring. I also stumbled over a couple of nice regular jobs so I've sent my CV off for those.

I also got a Christmas card off my last uncle, when I was a kid I had uncles galore, like apples on a tree, aunties too. Now he is the last one, the very last one. You know when you are the older generation when you only have one last uncle. I still feel 20, its the birth certificate thats old, a bit Dorian Grey, but I do have a young wife and small children SO that DOES make me young, as for my white hair, thats a sign of wisdom, and who am I to disagree with my mum. As I talk my girls are comparing how many Xmas cards they've got, the designs and everything, my oldest is jealous because the smallest got the most cards. All the display space in the house is gone now. Next year I'll have to put a string up to display them all. <http://www.media-kube.com> is the internet radio I've applied for, if you click on music you can hear a sample, I've dipped in while talking to you all, its kind of chilling IF thats the right term, I do have very catholic tastes so that'll all today, and before I forget a Very Merry Christmas to One and All, where ever you are, and you are all over the world judging

the stats. Michael

Shanghai File Sharing in China Dec 13, '09 7:17 AM

I was reading in the Daily Telegraph about file File Sharing in China and I have tripped over Osun.org so I wondered what would happen if I put Shanghai File Sharing in China as a blog title and with it in the body of text. You see one piece keeps on jumping to the top of a google search SO what IF Shanghai File Sharing in China was there would it overtake other items.

But if I suddenly have a load of Chinese interest then I can say that my writing is a very easy read, and at the moment its a free download. WHEN and IF I find a real publisher THEN I hope to make my fortune. All they have to do is click,read,laugh. I can also confirm that The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker will be followed by Tears For A Butcher in that book there will be a Shanghai Billionaire and his Playboy son, so its worth the 1,350,000,000 Chinese people have a good laugh,so they'll be ready when I finish the follow up comedy novel. There is of course Essays and Plays my other book that can be devoured too.

Here's my advert in bad Chinese, I used a computer to translate

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com 屠户贝克和承办人是喜剧戏曲关于商店街道在老伪造和唱歌

铁砧互联用笑声修造和修造的短篇小说。这味道韦恩购买每遗弃客栈并且他的妻子是怀孕与孪生,事不能更坏,墨菲夫人走向抢救以贷款,并且建造者运作为没什么的2套孪生,上帝看得下来和帮助,韦恩发现一个暗藏的地窖在地窖,它充分之下40year老威士忌酒左从战争WWII,客栈是地方黑市交易商留下一切的地方。韦恩和家庭被保存。承办人有仇隙与交通监狱长为投入那里违规停车罚单在他的hearse.On方式'爵士乐葬礼,玩具熊称帕特里克,狗称有他自己的头脑的长毛的Amjit。承办人的儿子留下事务并且Percy困惑不解,他的儿子回归以一个败家子儿子主张给饶恕,"父亲原谅我,我现在知道计算机不是为我,那里是没有爱在计算机里,但在我们的事务有爱和慈心。承办人设法敲诈拆毁商店街道他们全都居住的一位弯的建造者。和平被恢复因此承办人成为竞选代理为建造者和采取他在所有休养所游览中,以便建造者结束进入议会议院。

推托赌赛马为业者微笑的保罗有赌注在竞选和赢取1million 磅。承办人是愤怒的直到她听见微笑的保罗有一条路对大马士革经验并且给了所有金钱帮助之外他的中国朋友的中国餐馆业。如此微笑的保罗成为荣誉的人,和得到一个惊人女朋友在途中,因为中国人必须尊敬他。文字是滑稽和舌头在面颊,如果一些读者看见它正ma和pa书然后好,但如果他们跨步他们看见我柔和地嘲笑在我的字符。譬如大Sid是象一年在圣诞老人附近的屠户。面包师设法有爱生活的帕特里克但所有街道知道他的每移动。他的母亲被解除当他最后遇见正确的女孩,贞女,结果是人唯一的女儿在之前保存面包店许多岁月,对帕特里克的妈咪它上帝奇迹和意愿。圣经传送带人,简单的诚实的伙计将爱书,和原谅帕特里克的愚蠢因为,哎呀他是一个好男孩。纽约人和加利福尼亚将爱太因为他们将嘲笑传说的对方,屠户贝克并且承办人是为大家,并且在翻译它将找到更大的观众。我预言15million销售在美国单独。我完成以一首诗从Percy 承办人迈克尔·Ge 死者和生存(c)由迈克尔·我第一次看见逝者的Casey 当我九岁,my 父亲说不担心因为死者同生存一样是,只有笑声留下他们,闪闪发光去从他们的眼睛,忧虑被举了从他们的肩膀,并且他们的声音消失了对永恒。在闪闪发光将返回为它的天堂是星的闪光,笑声将返回太为它是早晨微风并且转动的浪潮是他们的边震动以笑声。我对待逝者以和一样我给生活的礼貌,虽然我发现逝者总更加礼貌。我的父亲并且有几个词说关于生活。他说,生活是唯一灵魂的保管财物者,他们认为他们的存在是一切,他们知道一切因为他们体验许多事以他们的感觉。什么生活不承认是,他们的时间是短的并且当我放置他们的身体然后休息他们的灵魂继续没有他们,没有他们强,没有他们微弱,没有在哪里我无法说的他们美好甚至丑恶的临时形式,对,只有那它是一个更好的地方。承办人安置盒盖在棺材的Percy,灵魂是自由的起点 Thats 全部,现在给予我一个条件

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com 买书在 或亚马孙 并且在google 书查寻。

p.s.hello from birmingham england where i am hobbling about as i hurt my back two days ago, 3rd time i've done it in 2 years. i once wrote about it in a piece called crawling like a worm in the dirt its funny and can be found on my site. my book is an easy read, if you don't like one chapter then just wait of the next or just dive in at chapter 7 and then go back to the start. Or just read my play Knocking and then try the novel The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker. Sorry I don't know your language, my kids speak Chinese with my wife but after 10 years I've still not learnt it. Thats about it,

enjoy my site if you have the time. i'M NOT CLEVER ENOUGH TO HAVE A NICE SITE, MINES MORE LIKE A CARPARK FOR MY WRITING. Cheerio from a chilly Birmingham England

A Day in Our Life - Morning Dec 11, '09 6:18 PM

I did the early morning school run yesterday. So I was up at 8 and scraping the toast while badgering my small girls to make them get ready for school. They prefer gossiping and singing songs even first thing in the morning, instead of putting their uniforms and shoes on.

Then I have to find the jam because I can never find things where my wife leaves them in the kitchen. Is the jam in the fridge or is the jam in a cupboard on a high shelf. Finally I find it in the fridge behind a bowl with a fresh fish on, the fish will be dinner later in the day.

Then its time to make the sandwiches for school dinners while the kettle is boiling so that I can make their breakfast drink of hot chocolate. As I make the hot chocolate I leave a trail of chocolate powder all over the breakfast bar. Then once I've wrapped the sandwiches I have to hunt down the sandwich boxes. Once found and filled I have to find the school bags and make sure they have all their "rubbish" in their bags. Then telling them to brush their teeth and have a toilet I dash back upstairs for my own outdoor clothes.

I eat their crust edges and steal a quick coffee before grabbing my coat and scarf and shepherding them out the door, not forgetting to switch the alarm on. Then its a 15minute uphill walk to get to the school, its right next to the woods and golf course. I take my big daughter in first as her school the Juniors starts before the Infants which is on the other side of the main road which is busy and right on the crest of the hill. So we cross thanks to a very brave Mrs Kelly the lollipop lady, then we cross back to the Infants school, and my small daughter goes to her class.

Now I can go home, its all downhill but the road is dangerous and you have to watch out for traffic as you cross all the little roads. Then once home I can have a proper breakfast.

Cheese Purse Watch a Metaphor Dec 9, '09 8:45 AM

Cheese Purse Watch A Metaphor ©

By Michael Casey

Cheese, purse, watch all three I've found in the past 10 days.

Does this mean the folks where I live are all absent minded kids?

I haven't gained by any of these finds. The cheese was left in the

Basket by a shopper. My favourite cheese too, only recently I decided to give up this cheese, not because I have lots of mad dreams, just to see if it'll help me squeeze into my pants my easily. Feta cheese now that really DOES give mad mad dreams, go on try it for yourself.

The purse I found on the edge of a zebra crossing, next to a pub. It was a nice big red purse, it looked full of money and cards. A few moments after I picked it up a lady appeared, she'd noticed she'd dropped it. It's a good job I'm honest, but it does warn all of us not to ram our pockets with junk so our purses/wallets fall out.

The watch, and I really do love watches was the last item I found, I found it in the school playground when I was bringing home the kids, I do the home run school run. As for my love of watches I even wrote a piece called "The Watch and Me", I hope eventually to have a posh automatic watch. I wear an automatic watch my Chinese dad sent over, its 15years old and did give perfect time until I changed the watch strap, and now because I wear a looser strap it is now 15seconds fast a day. It's irritating because it was so perfect before. I suppose I spotted the watch in the playground because watches are on my radar.

I saw lots and lots of nice watches when I worked in a hotel for 3 years, our guests all had them. So I got my daughter to hand in the watch when she was handing in the raffle tickets for the coming Christmas draw.

Three items lost, 3 items found. Cheese, purse and a watch. Now is this really a metaphor? Cheese is something I love but have given up for a few months now. Is this a message to test my resolve, some form

Of test from God? Or a reminder of just how great is God's bounty?

Eat enough but don't be a pig?

The purse is money and we all need money even when all we can afford is just to eat, without any

extras. Money is a tool to buy what we need, but when we don't have a lot of cash to spare then we understand what we really need and we buy what we need and not what we desire. When we love money and will do anything for its sake, then it is our master when it controls us, instead of us controlling it. The correct quote is "the love of money is the route of all evil".

I did think of becoming a male model but I decided I did not love money that much.

The watch can be a luxury item, it screams I'm rich, I have taste, I'm fashionable, I am so sexy. But it does have a function, it gets us all there on time. We are all in the same place at the same time, life, order and rules make us a timely workforce. The monks used to have a candle burning, this was the Omega of the day. Now we have atomic clocks and radio controlled watches, time is money so to speak. The watch also tells us that time here on earth is limited, so we should use it well.

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat, spare a thought for your neighbours and talk to them, it may be the only time of year you do it. Time is after all the greatest gift of all.

Merry Christmas Everybody from Birmingham England.

Pub to Bus Wisdom? Dec 6, '09 6:12 PM

I went to see a friend and his crew today, a few beers followed by a noodle bar, a few jokes too. Time really does fly when you are enjoying yourself. 40 years worth of time to be exact, I've known BigD since grammar school, 40 years ago. In fact my mother knew his grandmother for years before we ever met. He remembers our exam scores from 40 years ago. He credits me with much more than I really am. Though I do use him for references, why because he went to University, in fact he is Dr BigD PhD, I had him sign his name at my wedding too, just so my kids in the future would be impressed by it all. Mind you once I married into a Chinese family and met Chinese folks a PhD was quiet common. If there are 1350,000,000 people you had better have a great CV or you'd get nowhere. Also at my wedding was William and Cindy. Cindy was a beach babe/lifeguard from Taiwan and her husband William was Dr William and his PhD was in Metalurgy, and my dad was a Blacksmith, so William was both impressed and honoured to meet my dad. On the bus BigD, which is

his nickname because he is so small and BigD was a brand of peanuts 40years ago. On the bus BigD was telling me how he had to take a few exams every year so that he stayed certified as a Path Lab person, obviously I'm totally ignorant of all things medical. On my wedding day JJ and BigD were doing chemical equations on a napkin in McDonalds, jj the wife has a chemistry degree so they have something in common. BigD once had chicken's feet cooked for him by jj at our house, he thinks I'm a girl for not trying them. The bus carried on so I asked had he made his Will yet, what with swine flu around, besides he could always leave me his stamp collection. Then I'd buy a bigger house. Sadly he said he wanted to be burnt with all his worldly goods with him , a bit like a Viking I suppose. I told him JJ wanted to be cremated too, but I told her I'd just bury her in the back yard. Yes we did get a few strange looks from people on the bus, but we had alcohol and chinese in us so we didn't care. He told me he'd send a postcard from Seattle, he's been going there for 8 years, so Christmas time is his vacation time. Then he stumbled off the bus, my stop is 3 stops more down the road. So I got off and did my usual sprint down the Bearwood rd. I noticed a half price bed in one shop, IF I can squeeze it into my dog leg stairs then I may get a new bed forChristmas. Then getting home I managed to fix the computer, 1st law of electrics, unplug and rest and then try again. So it worked. I also entered a win a watch competition on a watch website. So if I win then I'll have a nice new watch, a 250dollar automatic one, it will be my Christmas present. At the moment I wear one donated by my Chinese dad the year before he was tragically killed in Shanghai. But I did meet him when I went to Shanghai in 2000, and he agree with me, he was the only one who agree with me that sending jj back to tell all my bad points WAS the right thing to do. And the rest is history or you can have a look at the photos section. That's about it really, oh by the way tomorrow our youngest is a sheep in the Nativity Play so I'm looking forward to that. And then 14-18 Feb is Chinese New Year. So Goodnight Wherever You Are, HIC

The First Christmas CardDec 2, '09 7:19 PM

My daughter brought her first Christmas card home from school today, so in time honoured

tradition I picked her up and we placed it on top of the kitchen cupboards. In fact she had 5 cards, so we bunched them all together so that when the avalanche of cards arrives we will have room for them all. Back in the days when me and my sister lived at home there were stings going backward and forward across the living room and the tally was 200 or even 250, my sister was/is very popular so her cards were the bulk of those that the Casey family got.

So now 25 years and more further on I hold up my daughters and we display the cards. Soon the kitchen space will be full so then I perch the cards on the paintings that we have on the walls, then we fill the space on top of the telly with more cards. Christmas is on its way. My brother came with cards and presents for the girls. I hid the presents and they will have to wait 3 more weeks before they get them. They love their uncle because he always brings something, he does look a bit like Santa too what with his huge white beard. Our mother no doubt blesses all her children from Heaven, we continue the love without her.

My youngest was at a Birthday party tonight so I took her big sister with me when I went to fetch her home. We went up the shopping street and could see the Christmas lights as they were switched on tonight. We also noticed how the posher streets than ours were so dark, at least our street lights were brighter. We passed by one of my dream houses, but again in the gloom I did not like it so much. Bringing the small one home we got her to close her eyes and walk, she didn't cheat either then on the count of three she opened her eyes to see all the pretty colours that make up the shopping street Christmas decorations. She was impressed.

Walking home we observed all the Christmas trees and lights that people had in their own homes, nice and pretty. Though it does remind me of County Kerry when everybody has a light in the window, so you can look from Cromane over to Inch on the Dingle Peninsula and see all the lights in the windows. I think it's to guide the 3 kings, but ask your own local priest or Fr. Google may know. Though it was in 73 when I remember it the most. We were all much younger then. Christmas is a time of Love and Family, a time of watching *The Bishop's Wife* with Cary Grant. Of watching a Christmas Carol with a tear in our eye, eating too much and spilling ice cream over the new jumper your aunty had just given you. So you will have to wash it first before you give it away to the

Salvation Army. But most of all it is a time of Hope.

How to bribe the kids while the wife is at the dentist Dec 1, '09 6:06 PM

Well, just how do you bribe the kids while the wife is at the dentist? The answer is Dr Who, a science fiction action show for all the family. Goggle will reveal all. My kids knew there were 2 Dr Who episodes on tonight on 2 different stations. They reminded their best friend and her nana on the way home, it was so important not to miss one.

Once home we had 2 hours before Dr Who started. So books out and must be read before any tv.

Apart from me and Tv news, I watch BBC, Sky, Fox News. My girls hammered the books and I prepared their meal. Mini instant 3 minute pizza, followed by milk and bananas and oranges.

Normally its Chinese food made by my wife, rice with everything, so what I dish up is a change for them. Its three saucepans on the go and my wife stiring just like the witches in Macbeth, ubble, bubble, boiland eye of newt and tail of bat. That's how I tease her, you have to, its what she'd grown use to after 10years or so.

The kids ate and I watched the news. Then the reading all done it was wash then Dr Who, I got them to get all cleaned up so they could watch Dr Who back to back. Dr Who then bed, everything all done by 8pm. Well so much for the plan. The 1st episode I did not want to watch again so I browsed the Internet, just in case Tiger Woods had stopped by.

The 2nd episode of Dr Who was set in ancient Pompeii, on Volcano Day. I have actually been there, back in 1995 its a great sight to see. If you ever get the chance then do go, but no doubt Google can reveal lots for you. So I enjoyed Dr Who with the kids, I should say that Dr Who started 40 years ago when I was a kid, it was reinvented recently and has won awards like the British equivalent on a Tony award. Yes that good. Dr Who does not die he just grows a new body and carries on, he's over 900 years old. I'd love to see his 401 plan. So Dr Who ended and the kids went to bed. Result.

My wife arrived late, I knew she'd gone off for an adventure. Only to CostCo for margarine, with the coins she'd stolen from my wallet all in the name of car park machines. I had wanted to go with her

tomorrow because you can get a great hot dog and a soda and a soda refill for 1,47 which is 2.25 in dollars I think. So I had missed my chance for a hot dog. She did have some news though. Her wisdom teeth would be taken out in January, and they wanted to pay her 150pounds or 220dollars IF she let them try a new anaesthetic. So they would be the witches and she would be in the pot so to speak. I told her she should have said NO.She had said No already. Then she told me the date. The date for her wisdom teeth to come out will be my dad's 8th anniversary of his death.

Tv news has changed so much over the yearsNov 24, '09 1:02 PM

TV news has changed so much over the years. In the old days in England there was only the BBC. TV was only in black and white, colour tv was only dreamed of. The BBC had a monopoly, that's changed now. The commercial Tv stations all have their own news service. News is squeezed in between Spiderman and his webs. Weather forcastes have become as important as news, there are celebrity weathermen. There is also 24hour news from the BBC and 24hour news from Sky News. Sky tends to be more Populist, more working class if you like. The Sky channel has bought up all the sports, so the working man so to speak IS a Sky viewer and enjoys Skys sports. The BBC tries to maintain a more conservation tone, though the BBC has become more Populist as the years have gone by. For news junkies they can flick between BBC and Sky to see the breath of coverage, Fox news is also available in England so if there is an international story a 3 way picture can be obtained. Though watching Fox from England means you have to be quick as they dart about so much, one second there is a report on global warming the next second Fox is making hotdogs in the car park outside the studio. Should even wider breath of coverage be required there are English language versions of Pakistani, Indian, Iranian, French, German, Chinese news services. Though some may ask who do you trust the most, not forgetting CNN which is the world travellers standby. By watching a news service a world view from that particular country can be obtained, people can shout at the tv and see just how unfair or unjust any certain situation is. There is a format for each news bulletin, with a happy ending at the end of the news bulletin. A story about a cat stuck up a

tree or a happy ending about a brother and sister separated in childhood only to discover they have been living around the corner for 40 years. Commercial Tv tends to spend more time on the feel good stories, some may say that the total coverage has been dumbed down and that less real news is on tv.

Some say the BBC is best because it hasn't dumbed down so far so fast. Otherwise away from TV news Tv as a whole has dumbed down, its reality shows galore and tv game shows along with shows where the whole world can claim their 15 minutes of Fame. If Andy Wahol knew just how right he was then he would be spinning in his in his grave.

One word of hope Radio4!

p.s. I was told I look like the Mafia in a suit, no wonder I cannot get hired.

Tags: radio 4 is best

Telephone Interviews Nov 23, '09 2:22 PM

Telephone interviews are a new feature of the modern world. With so many people chasing those jobs, it's the fastest way to sort the wheat from the chaff. There are good and bad points to it. The interviewer can be sat on the bed in a 4star hotel with a nice bottle of wine gently breathing beside him as he asks questions over the phone. As for the interviewee he can be in his dressing gown with 5 days worth of stubble on his face, his hair unwashed and uncombed, a hole in his slippers. Then politely they talk about the skill set the interviewee can bring to the task, how much experience he has doing this and doing that. The interviewer can ask the interviewee to hold the line as there is another call coming in, and he does apologise. So the interviewee is left on hold while the interviewer finishes his glass of wine and pours himself another glass. The interviewee pastes his hair down with spit even though he cannot be seen, but while on hold he will tidy himself up a bit. The interviewer watches the sports headlines on Sky TV before having another sip from his glass before resuming the interview. Questions about experience and future career paths are posed and answered. The interviewee feels confident and smiles at himself in the mirror. The interviewer

loosens his belt and lets his stomach out. The interview is concluded.

Mr Unkempt gets through to the next round. This time he has to SSS which means exactly what it says, SSS. He spends ages in the bathroom , more than his sisters did when he used to live at home. He wears his best shiny black shoes, only for the laces to snap, so then he has to hunt around to find a lace that matches his shoes. Only he cannot, so he steals a navy one from a different pair of shoes. He looks in the mirror to see if its noticeable, and it is, so he loosens his belt, so his trousers hang lower so that they hide his shoes, only problem is that with his fat belly his trousers might fall off completely. That would certainly make an impression at the interview. If he was applying for a farce actor's position then it would be great, Brian Rix would be impressed. The interviewer is a power dresser, his 1000pound suit compared to the 49.99 one worn by the interviewee. And yes the laces are noticed, immediately.

Positive body language v negative body language, neutral body language. Arms folded, arms open, open legs with hands on top of knees. Licking of lips, eyes skyward, eyes averted, eyes straight and looking into the soul.

The usual interview so to speak. Then the waiting for a letter in the post, or an email for fail.

Happy Interviews everybody.

Die Hard 4.0 or how to use talents Nov 20, '09 7:03 PM

WE just finished watching Die Hard 4.0 on the tv. We all really enjoyed it. The story revealed around people taking over all of the computer networks in the USA. There was loads of action but what made me think was how would you deal with hackers?

In England we have a man with a form of autism who just after 911 he broke into USA computers, because he was looking for news of ETs, it was his hobby. He has been dragged through English courts and finally he will be sent to USA where he could go to jail for a long time.

So the question is why weren't the USA computers hack proof. Was it because they weren't tested?

Was it arrogance? Me, if I were the USA authorities, I'd give the guy a job and let him explain just

how he did it. Or is it empty pride? It would be far cheaper than sticking him in jail. I'm sure if those of you who are in the USA are reading this and you stop to think you agree with me. War Games is a film from 10 to 20 years ago when teenage hackers get into NORAD. A similar them.

When I eventually get around to writing Tears For A Butcher my follow up comedy novel, then in that book there will be a handicapped person who is a whiz on IT. Their body may be mal formed but their brain is not. In my story its to show that we shouldn't put people in a dustbin because we are ignorant about them. And arrogant towards them. In my story those IT whizes do get offered a great job working for the USA, why because they did what was in Die Hard 4.0, by the way I thought up my plot line before I saw the film. Also in the follow up book two twin sisters find their first boyfriends, and who do these Venuses pick. Do they chose football heros with bulging muscles, but maybe no brains. NO these two Venuses chose a guy with a limp and the other pick has a severe stutter.

Why do I chose to make my characters in my book behave in such a way? I want people who see the true worth of people. Its not the smile, all flashing perfect teeth. A better person may have bad teeth and bad breath. A real hero is not all "Hollywood", its the guy in the garage who fixes your car. Its the fat middle age lady who is the crossings lady when you take your kids to and from school. Its you when you deliberately start a conversation with the lonely old lady on the bus. Your very words are warmth to her soul. She'll smile and get off the bus and wave to you. She'll talk about you to her cat when she gets home. You have been the one ray of sunshine in her day.

These are ordinary people who make up our world. Some will have talents which God has sprinkled randomly, just to remind us that all are loved by him. Even me, even you.

Google to Google or Internet Maze Nov 16, '09 2:45 PM

Google to Google or Internet Maze ©

By

Michael Casey

Google to Google, you know what I mean? Well you start in one place and end up somewhere totally different. 25 years ago I went for a walk in Normandy and ended

Up miles and miles away, about 25 miles away. Luckily I found an old cottage that happened to be a restaurant, so I stopped and had a very good meal and 3 coffee pots of coffee. It was a bit like the Witches Cottage in Hanzel and Grettel or some other fairy tale. Finally I emerged and decided to head back the way I'd come as it was getting dark. A car stopped and asked me the pedestrian for directions. So I gave him the exact directions. He said au revoir and he was gone. Only I didn't have the sense to ask for a lift, he was going back to where I was going back. So I continued walking for 2 or 3 more hours along those winding roads that the GIs had stormed back in 44.

That's an example of just wandering without any destination, an example of stupidity too, but I have a Phd in Stupidity. With Google the whole world gets to follow my example. Today I clicked on this and then clicked on that, which led me there and then I was somewhere else entirely. It can be very educational, or it can make you want to pull your hair out. It is like looking for a needle in a haystack, or maybe you just find a haystack that is made up entirely of needles. So you have to refine your search. Today's semi-random search lead to www.interead.co.uk which is a company that make ereaders and sells ebooks by the million. So of course I've emailed them in the vain hope that they could sell my two books as ebooks.

The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker and my Essays and Plays. Google as we all know IS the best search engine. Bing and Yahoo trail behind in 100th place in my opinion. Test it for your selves and see what you get.

An easy way to start is by putting your city, your name, your hobby in and then see what pops up. Then you click on that and go there and then there leads you somewhere else. Many years ago there was a black and white TV series on tv here in England, I think it was called Pinpoint, I saw the repeats when I was a child so its very old now. Anyways the point of the show was to follow the connections starting with the pin point and travelling around till you got back to where you started. If anybody wants a host for the show if some TV producer is reading this then I'm free and cheap. James Burke the great tv presenter did a show in the 80s I think about technology and all the connections, it was

a great show and very well presenter. With Google you have the chance to do the same thing. Place names tell us all about the past from a place, if it was a steel town in the past, or if it was a scene of a battle. Just click and go around the world in 80 clicks, there's another idea there for you. Google is clicking us all together, we can stagger from one site to another, you can plan a pub crawl just by investigating your local pubs on Google. For those who pray, then you can plan your prayer holiday, whatever style of prayer you follow.

Google is a Maze of information but by clicking your way you can find your way home, and if home is where your heart is then cuddle up to www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com and with a warm drink or wife in your hand you can see out any winter's storm.

Happy Reading.

Michael Casey

Shakespeare in Love and various other thoughts Nov 14, '09 1:49 PM

We just watched Shakespeare in Love the 1998 film. It was very good and I enjoyed the music too. The passion for words and the wheeler dealing was funny too. I think Dame Judy Dench got an Oscar for it too, forgive me if I'm wrong. The Passions and Pain was all revealed too, I'd forgotten how good the film was. A long time ago I did a course on Shakespeare, you have to try and understand the style of the language too, the metaphors and old English language. All in all a very good film, with even a young Ben Affleck in it. So grab a pizza and get a copy from your local video store. What Shakespeare also reminded me was how we all need to communicate to each other. If Joe knows cars then we speak in car metaphors. It not patronising its socialising, when I was working at the hotel 5 years ago if we had Scots visitors then the word "wee" would slip into my language it was the natural thing to do. We even had Top Cops conferences so I'd share a joke with a Chief Constable or two as I walked around the hotel on a security patrol. The joke was we had a sniper on the roof to keep petty car thieves away. We did have the most secure car park on the NEC site. The NEC is the biggest exhibition site in Europe, and bigger than the one in New York, so I've been told.

If talking to chefs you always listen with respect not just because they were masters in their field but because chefs have knives, lots of knives so it's always best to have respect. The housekeeping crew knew everything about cleaning rooms and corridors, so I'd share a word while I did my 30 mins patrols that took me everywhere. Some days I might even be helping them when the hotel was ultra busy. So I'd stay out of Vicky's way by cleaning the bathrooms while she cleaned the bedrooms. It's very hard work, but there is a sense of fulfillment when a corridor has been done. 15 rooms a day I think it was, though it could have been 20. I'd take off my front of house jacket and roll up my sleeve and put the rubber gloves on while I was on bathroom duty. My mobile phone might ring then I'd be summons downstairs to help out at front of house. It's all like a mad and busy ballet, though I've never worn a tutu, though I have been positively vetted by a Chinese ballet dancer when I first met my wife, but that's another story.

Life is all about stories, if my story is appealing to another person then we may become friends, to others it may be boring and go on forever, so then I'm a bore. It's how our lives connect and how social jigsaws fit together that makes us all work as friends and as work mates. Sadly there are people who put themselves above us, it can be a boss or a priest in church or the snob selling newspapers in the street. Life is about blowing bubbles in the air that blow this way and that way, they may stick together or blow randomly all over the shop. But bubbles are a glorious thing they make us like children, happy and innocent and willing to share our sweets. I'm forever blowing bubbles, pretty bubbles in the air is the song. But the most important thing is the range of colours, the joy, the happiness that bubbles bring, just like Shakespeare's sonnets.

If I were a Fashion Writer, what would I write
Nov 10, '09 3:24 PM

To begin with let me explain. I was trawling through the jobs sites when I came across an ad looking for all kinds of everything for a Fashion Mag, non paid I might add. So it set me thinking. I do have a Shanghai wife who sets heads turning, and I have to comment on all the fashion she wears. So after more than 10 years I have learnt a little about Fashion.

I would no doubt be called Grandpa whenever I attended a Fashion Event, I have the same white hair that the famous fashion designer has, I don't wear gloves with the fingers cut off though. Though I do have thinsulate gloves in black and in red. Just as he has two colours. My waiste line is bigger, I'm as big as 2 models, though you would never see me in purple lipstick and covered in rouge. Fishnet tights though, that's another matter, Men in tights and Pantomime is an English tradition. Google Pantomime if you have not heard of Panto. Men dress up as women and women dress up as men, perhaps as Robin Hood. Its fun for all the family. But I was talking about fish net tights before I was side tracked. Fashion makes a very big statement. Some of the high end fashion is not really fashion. It really is a work of Art. I saw a documentary once on TV and after watching the man with the funny gloves and the white hair go about his work I realised it really was Art and not just Fashion. Now what would I do at a fashion show? I'd drink the free champagne for starters, pity they don't serve hot dogs too, then I'd be in heaven. Some of the designers destroy what they are trying to achieve by too much hideous make up. The fashion really would be better served by well dressed dummies. Smearing a beautiful models with soot just destroys the vision. The dead eyes that you see when models walk the cat walk is terrible. Yes Fashion is King, but if the models looked happy and you could almost believe that they all fought to get into the dress they were wearing. Then you'd say, she looks so happy wearing that you can see the joy in her eyes. Then Fashion would be better served.

There are other designs which are truly great but they are ruined because the colour palet is so bad. Its like when you see 2009 Punk Rockers, I remember the original ones 30 years ago so today's versions are just so passe. You can go into a shop and as you look around you see 40 shades of grey or 20 shades of black. Its not even worth trying the clothes on. Ditto when you can see the clothes are for 40 or 50 somethings. Colour is Great, so USE IT, life is in Colour so lets see it in the designs. Women are beautiful and the more intelligent 1/2 of our species, their beauty should be celebrated and enhanced by fashion. Colour and Cut matched to sympathic makeup will make women glow, and allow women to wrap men around their little finger even more. Good fashion does this and I know that when I look at my wife.

Pax Vobiscum

BBC asks top writer to take course on drama Nov 1, '09 9:21 AM

BBC asks top writer to take course on drama

Sunday, November 1, 2009, 02:00 PM GMT [General]

BBC asks top writer to take course on drama. I just read that in today's Telegraph. I'm trying to get my foot in the door in the writing game. I once posted my Internet Story comic essay on a BBC site, where it was removed, why, because

"And help find a publisher for my book , and then you've guessed it , just send me 10 dollars !" Is the tag line for the joke at the end of the essay. But to the BBC I was soliciting money, so they removed it. If I had a Bafta and had the BBC telling me how to write , I'd slam it down on the desk of the idiot who asked me to do a test and ask them to write a thesis on "How to win a Bafta". Total BBC Idiots, Sorry Moses you cann't part the Red Sea without Health and Safety assessment 1st. And as for that stick in your hand we will notify the Police, weapons are not allowed. As for you Gandalf, drop it now or we'll try this new mace on you, we've just imported it from USA.

Sorry no Loaves and Fishes or Water into wine either, you don't have A3 consent.

Sorry Gordon and David, those speeches have to pass the censor, and don't forget the 3pm watershed, we don't want kids home from school getting all confused, which one is the liar, is it always the one in Government or is it just the Opposition.

So the BBC has to bore everybody with fair and balance just like Fox news. Sadly I am not surprised, perhaps the stuff I write is never PC, so it will never be published or produced.

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is where to find it, so judge for yourselves. My latest idea is to turn my non PC play Shoplife into a Health and Safety piece by using reverse logic

If I were a Rich Man, though I'd settle for being able to Sing Like Topo! Oct 30, '09 6:44 PM

I wanted to write a piece to celebrate Halloween, Christopher Lee the great Dracula actor got Knighted today, was the spurr. However this time of year brings back a few memories to me. 1977 was a turning point in my Life. 1986 another turning point and 1999 a 3rd turning point. Why Autumn should be such a turning point I'll never know. The Love my father had for all of us stands out amongst these anniversaries. November was his Birthday as well, his last Birthday was his 80th, we had a gathering at my sister's house, he held his granddaughter in his arms, he'd beaten Death and had 5.5 years of extra time.

When I bought my house his advice was "Michael, buy that house" So I did. The dog had actually found the house, he had cocked his leg and christened the gate post, and it was only then that I saw the for sale sign.

Now I dream of a bigger house for my girls, so that they can have a room to do art in, even if it is the garage. My youngest even has dreams about us living in a big white house, the one on the school run, and that we have a dog and a cat. I'd just love to have a bigger house closer to the park and the woods. That's been a dream of mine for 30 years at least, so I suppose I have brain washed my girls. Though I do miss the days when at the family home we did have a cat and a dog. One of the dogs even went to the seaside with us, even attending Mass, and delighting a blind boy by licking him all over when he bumped into him on the beach.

I do sing If I were a Rich Man, from time to time, and then break down in pretend tears, saying why do I have girls, 3 girls, if you include the wife. They laugh as I do all the actions and become a Birmingham version of Topol, though the Jazz improvisations are all mine. Though I might add that my local priest does look like Topol and sing as well too, Life does immitate Art after all. When finally it is time for bed and I get my girls to say their prayers, they add " and please Jesus can we have a big white house and a cat and a dog called SubWay"

Direct and to the point, but Padre Pio used to say always ask for the big grace, so if you all excuse me for tonight, I just have to say my prayers before I go to bed, I was thinking about asking for a cat, and a dog called Subway just for the kids and maybe a big white house for us to share with the animals. It

is Autumn after all and big things always happen in Autumn or should I say the Fall.

Under My Bed Oct 25, '09 8:10 PM

What's under your bed? We used to have an airline pilot stay at the hotel who would open his room door and leave his flight bag down propping the door open while he then rolled an orange under the bed. He said he travelled all over the world and this was his safety routine. If you go to a bad hotel you may find an uneaten Kentucky Fried Chicken still in its box, under your bed. Normally its an odd shoe or sock, if the housekeeping crew are trained well you will never ever find any of these things. Having cleaned a few rooms myself when I was at a 4star deluxe hotel for 3 years, I can say it is hard work and you have to be fast and furious. But so long as the hotel gets 6 quid or 10 dollars for the room then they are in profit.

But all of this is an aside, what's under your bed? We decorated a few years ago and I had hundreds and hundreds of photos in photo albums. We took down a couple of shelves while we decorated, but then we had a problem, one of them broke. The one which had all my photo albums on. I hadn't really looked at all these photos in years, so the bin beckoned. However I decided I'd keep them. So where to put them. Under the bed was the solution, we had an old suitcase so I put all my photos away. It must have weighted 25 kilos, or 55 pounds or 4stones in English terminology, which is as much as my big daughter weights, talking of weight my wife only weights 6 stones, light enough to be a jockey. Now there's an idea, my uncle Patrick used to keep a donkey just to cut the grass around the house in County Kerry. My wife could have become a jockey, if only my uncle and the donkey were still around. Life is all about timing after all.

So grunting and groaning I carried the old suitcase upstairs and slid it under my bed. There it remained for years. Two children later and today our smallest one wanted to look at all the photo albums, the ones we keep in the pantry. Though technology has moved on now and we have maybe 1000 photos on the computer and in cyberspace on our family site. But our smallest likes to see herself when she was even smaller. So I decided to drag out the suitcase and show both our girls

photos of me from 25 years ago and so. We had snaps from when my sister did her year abroad, from when my brother lived in Paris. There were lots of photos, 10 small albums of County Kerry, donkey included. All my cousins, my dad's brother had 10 children after all, my mum had 5 surviving brothers and sisters. There were photos of the beach at Cromane, my cousin's son measured the distance from the corner of the house to the sea, just over 7 metres he said, or about 23 feet in old money. I remembered the Love my aunty showed to all of us, she was always the driver, 1000 miles in 2 weeks seeing all the clan, she is truly blessed. From the base in Killarney to all points North/South/East/West you could put on a stone, or 14 pounds in 2 weeks, 3 relatives a day, 3 meals a day. All my cousins were always so generous and welcoming, there was always so much gossip and stories to be heard.

All this lived in suspended animation in a suitcase under my bed. They all awoke like a Princess in a Fairytale story when I dragged out the old suitcase today. My girls said I looked so cool with my sunglasses and my moustache. I told them I was younger than mummy is when the photo was taken. Why did everybody have a moustache in them days?

I also found my copy of *The Outline Of History* By H.G. Wells, signed by Mr Lester the headteacher from my Primary school. It was a leaving present, believe it or not I was Head Boy at Primary school, it was a bit like being a jailer really, as I had the keys to the building and I locked up at dinner time. I also found a certificate from 1969 because I wrote a story for a competition, Junior Free Handwriting Story something. This impressed my big daughter.

I found my mothers prayerbook with lots of religious pictures inserted into the pages. Mrs Murphy in my novel, *The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker* is based on my mum, but not just her but my Aunty in Killarney and the 2 other sisters. So my fictional Mrs Murphy is to the power of 4. While I'm thinking of it, I deliberately did not write about my dad in my book, however after I finished it I realised that Big Sid the butcher he was my dad. Not because of any similarities whatsoever, but, the Love Sid has is the same Love that my dad had for all of us. Love is how you judge people, anything else is s*&%.

I also found a nice little book about Saint Martin de Porres, I'll try and get my daughter to read it, it

must be 30 years old. All in all a lot of memories came flooding out just because I looked under my bed. The suitcase I threw away, the history book is back on the remaining bookshelf just beside me. I found a large strong plastic sack and I put my photos back in the bag. The only thing I had to decide was where to put it. You know what I think I'll put it back under my bed. Memories to sleep on

Wrapping Paper Oct 24, '09 11:07 AM

I was in Aldi and I spotted Winnie the Pooh wrapping paper, my smallest girl just loves all things Winnie the Pooh, so I got the paper. I wasn't sure whether to wrap her Birthday present in it or just let her have the paper. In the end I gave her the paper to play with. She was delighted, immediately she wanted to use the wrapping paper to wallpaper the walls with. As I've said before she once said she liked Winnie the Pooh because his belly reminded her of my belly. Such is a child's love, unflattering but love.

It did get me thinking though, why do we need wrapping paper? Packaging is part and parcel of ordinary life. Easter eggs are the thing with the most packaging, so much packaging and then so little chocolate. My mother gave up on Easter Eggs because of the cost, there were so many of us Caseys after all. So we had bars of Cadburys chocolate instead, the Cadburys factory is just a couple of miles from where I'm sitting. Easter came and we devoured the Cadburys bars, cheaper than the Easter Eggs but so very tasty.

People have wrapping paper or layers all around them, we can all remember what Donkey said to Shrek, so many layers like an onion. At the moment I'm dressing up in the wrapping paper called a "suit", so that I can get a new job. So people can see me at my best, hide my tummy and hope they forgive my premature white head of hair, as for my bushy eyebrows God alone knows what they may think. You can judge for yourselves by clicking on the photos on this site. How much do you reveal, how much do you hide as you have an unnatural experience that is called an interview.

Perhaps interviews should take place in a coffee shop, as you may know Lloyds of London started in a London coffee shop 100s of years ago. Even better interviews could be held in a bar. You have two

pints to prove your worth, so don't spill the peanuts over the interviewer's haut couture dress.

Perhaps then at the 2nd interview you have to sing karoki with the 2 interviewers, and IF you can sing My Way word perfect then you get the job. It sure would be more fun.

More wrapping paper is used when we are embarrassed or too shy to explain things to our doctor, we waste 5 mins talking about the weather and the Fall leaves before we finally blurt out that its a boil on the bum ort something below the waistline. And why is it that on these occasions the doctor on call is one of the opposite sex, why cann't it be your usual doctor.

Wrapping paper is used an awful lot in Faith, we lie to ourselves and our God/Gods by thinking we don't have to do this or we don't have to do that. Faith can become a Buffet, we lie to ourselves and God, this bit does not matter, so we'll show God only so much of ourselves. A bit like cheating in an exam. I'm sure God's smiling as he watches us, perhaps the Saints place bets on who will finally come clean, clean being the operative word. The Saints queue up ready to interven, which 999 or 911 call will come though so that a Saint can be dispatched. I know in1996 when my mum had died suddenly and then 8 bare weeks later my dad was given 1 week to live, we actually picked the hymns for his funeral he was so bad. Then all the layers, all the wrapping paper was off, Padre Pio came to the rescue. So that I met my wife in the old peoples' home, 3 years after my dad came back from the dead. Dad lived long enough to hold his granddaughter in his arms, 5.5 years after that massive heart attack.

The ultimate wrapping paper is love, its hard to say you love somebody when your heart has been broken so many times before. Its hard to take a chance when somebody might laugh in your face. Slowly you reveal one thing, then another, then another, yes I can see the idea of a Monty Python joke as I write this. I do write comedy after all. But when 2 strangers become friends, when 2 become one, then all the wrapping paper is off. She may not mind your hairy back or fat stomach, he may not mind her big feet or whatever she feared. It can turn out that what one thinks is ugly your Love may find attractive. Love is Blind after all, Love conquers All, Love is all you need. Together naked, the wrapping paper is discarded.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

The White Door Oct 22, '09 2:45 PM

The White Door, or the dirty white door to be exact. I had a dream last night and I saw a door, a dirty white door. There were two nails driven into it in the top left hand corner of it. That's all I remembered, we do have 2 white doors in our house but neither are like that.

So what was I dreaming about? Years ago I had a dream dictionary, I would have eagerly read that to find out. So instead I'll have to use the Internet, google will have an answer no doubt.

I've said for years that I'd only get a real publisher IF somebody opened the door for me. A negative friend always says you have to make your own opportunities. I take the view that its not ability but knowing somebody, the old saying, its not what you know but who you know.

I knocked on loads of doors via emails, but still after 20 years no publisher for my novel. A friend said its not just a door but maybe a window I'd may have to sneak my talent through a window before I finally got my chance, before my boat comes in.

My smallest daughter said she had a dream last night too, she dreamt we moved house to the big white house we walk past daily on the school run, and that we had a cat and a dog. The dog will be called Subway. She was all excited as she told me. Children just love animals, but I've said no animals till we get a bigger house. Somebody somewhere has to find me and like me, and then publish me before our dreams can come true. Or my 32 year old lottery ticket could finally come up trumps, thought I doubt it.

You never know whats around a corner my old boss once told me a long time ago, she was right, I met the wife in a most unbelievable way. Its all in Padre Pio and Me and my Literary Criticism essays. Doors can be opened and closed, closed in your face. For 3 years I stood by a door when I worked at a 4star deluxe hotel, the whole world passed through as I was a 30 second living commercial for the hotel. Best 3 years of my life in a way.

Doors in the mind are the best doors to open, because they free you to experience more, I'm not talking about taking pills or whatever, just in case any Old Hippies are out there and reading this. Just

open your heart and you will open a door to experience more, to remove barriers that leave you in a box, full of your own prejudices. Think of it as food, we always have this and we always have that. Because thats the way we have always done things. Then we meet somebody different and our food world changes, our doors are open. Imagine me meeting a Shanghai girl 10 years ago , I told her fish and chips was haute cuisine. Now you need a degree in oriental languages to know what's what in our fridge. The kids love going to Subway as its a change from daily Chinese food. Thats why if ever we move house the dog will be called Subway.

I'll leave it at that now, though I can say that Fear opened one door for me. I was so affraid of my Primary school teacher when I was 8 that I started to read books, and it changed my life. Getting an old Bush radio from one of our lodgers also opened another door for me, expanding your mind is a great adventure. If you are lucky it leads to a corridor full of doors and opportunities. I suppose writing these blogs as well as the essays and plays and the comic novel is a door too, you the reader are seeing into my mind, I just hope you like the view.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

Where do the tears go when they are shedOct 18, '09 4:48 PM

Where do the tears go when they are shed ©

By

Michael Casey

Where do the tears go when they are shed

While I lie here crying on my bed

Do the tears drip drip away and seep though

The floorboards and head for the sea.

Do my tears join an ocean that rises and falls

Do the tears yell and scream but only sea farers

Hear them, do whales moan as they crash through them

Only whales know of my distress as my tears groan
In deep deep oceans in the unknown dark deep seas.
Do my tears head north to the North Pole and Santa
Does Santa Ho Ho Ho so much because he is trying to drown out
The cries and sobs and tears held back for so many years.
Do tears form ice shelves and become icebergs, silent and majestic
Like giant cathedrals of ice. Is this the way to silent the voice of tears.
Frozen in Time for 100s of years, the fears of today and yesterday are merged
As one, gagged for eternity in an ice cathedral.
Will everything be forgot, deep freezed, quick frozen like garden peas.
Do my tears evaporate and head for the sky, joining the clouds as they pass by.
Are my tears blown this way and that, are they taken far away over the ocean.
As planes pass through the clouds that are my tears, can the passengers hear
Can the passengers hear my tears, all my hopes and fears, or are my tears
Drowned out by the in flight movie, 007 killing my prayers to heaven.
Do my tears wash away my pain, my guilt, are they like mothers' milk?
For tears touch us all, they are like a morning mist that shrouds us.
For tears are the dark dark night of the soul, a cold coat that covers us.
In the morning we remember we fell asleep crying, but what of now?
Now we've looked at our dead mum's photo and think of what she would have said.
We smile as we remember, her fight, her love, her spirit, her smile.
But never tears, she shed no tears for us, she shed no tears for us.
Tears will come, tears will come again, but they are just water, we are stronger
Than mere water, we have a boat and that boat is Love.
**** I had this poem in my head so tonight I tried to a nail it down

A Famous Life, an Expired Life, Words from Beyond The Grave Oct 18, '09 7:23 AM

I did my best, I tried to live a holy life, thinking of the next life and not tied to this. But now I'm gone you turn me into an icon, I get 15minutes of fame, after I'm dead, but those 15minutes last forever. I wanted a humble grave, a quiet send off, only a brass band turned up. People spoke kind words about me, some even meaning them, but for what? For vanity, for care, for compassion to those I left behind, or to make themselves important by association. I'm just a signpost pointing the way, go higher, don't stop at me, the signpost, go higher. Go to heaven itself, not this ornate graveyard, with people selling tee shirts with my name on. Go higher.

I'm just a mother so remember me well, don't fight with one another, love one another and help each other, if you want to remember me then remember those words of mine. And I'm not angry with you any more, for that joke about Thomas being the ideal name for an aesthet. Breathe the fresh air, sit on the grass in our small garden and remember how as kids we all cut that grass by using small pairs of scissors because we couldn't afford a lawn mower. Life goes on without me, I never saw those pretty girls of yours, but God lets us see things sometimes, and yes you are right I would have spoiled them if only I had lived to see them. But my passing led to dad going into the old folks home, and it was there where you met your wife, at least he held the 1st girl in his eyes before he was called into Paradise. And do you know they have a beautiful garden there, and for fun we are allowed to cut the grass with scissors, one blade at a time. So enjoy your life and enjoy your family. Those prayers you said for years brought tears to Heaven, and then by chance at a letter box she met a man who ran the home, and that's why she was there waiting for you, waiting for you all the time, love is no crime. Hope and Tears and love, and I did give cupid a push from above, and I'm so glad you didn't call anybody Thomas.

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

Pink Floyd, Music and Me Oct 15, '09 9:30 AM

I've just watched a biography about Pink Floyd's Dark Side of The Moon. It was very good, music

really is the soundtrack to our lives. Compared to Music, Writing is rubbish, Photography is better than Writing too. The old saying a picture is worth 1000 words rings true. I used to be surgically attached to a camera as my old boss used to say. Any company event and I was there with my camera. That's no longer true, but I use it to illustrate the fact that I like photos, taking them and composing them. Straight boring photos were people line up, like in 1950s school photos are terrible. Photos should have energy, I did enter a competition to win a nice new Nikon. but I don't think I've won. They wanted a cycle shot, like in Tour de France. I sent in a photo of my daughter, then aged 3, riding a plastic tricycle in our back yard, she was wearing her pink pyjamas and some pearls she'd stolen from my wife. If Nikon have a sense of humour then perhaps I'll win after all. Anyways I hope that proves photos are more powerful than words. Going back to music though, my brother used to have a reel to reel tape recorder and a speaker through which he played music at high volume, to drown out the sound of the rest of us while he was studying. Using this method he got into the best university. So it was then 40 years ago that my Love of Music began, at the time it was Cream music, which featured a young Eric Clapton. I still have that speaker in my house. And as for Eric Clapton, I almost carried his bags. Going back to my point though, Music touches us in seconds, a Clapton riff, the first few notes of a piece played by a pianist on a piano, a phrase by Michael Bulee. Musicians have power over us. So much power. Perhaps the caveman who drummed on a skull with a bone from other caveman he'd just eaten; perhaps he, perhaps he excited the cavewoman enough so he could mate with her, and that led to us, and me writing here in Birmingham England and with a press of the button sharing my thoughts with the entire world. So a drumbeat on a skull was the beginning of music, and sex and the continuation of our species. As for writing, thousands of years had to pass before it began and could be used to pass on stories. Storytelling started straight away, as the cavewoman told her sister to get some of the action from the drummer. But the writer as such did not start until thousands of years later. Perhaps that is why Music is deeper within us, and why we hum and whistle or tap tap tap on the steering wheel while we are stuck in traffic. If there are 3 words that can be written to compare with the speed of Music's power, perhaps its " I Love You" , "I want you" , "Come here...." Words like that, spoken, do

have power, but words have to be backed up with better words, stronger words, the words on the page have to ignite to get the reader to read more, to touch the reader. A poem or two of mine can touch people when my poetry is on form, but, but it takes 30seconds for my words to go from the page through somebody's eyes and then finally touch their heart. And that's why I'll always be jealous of drummers, even if the drums are made of leftover skulls from dinner.

Attachment: Crawling Like a Worm in The Dirt.doc

Attachment: Padre Pio and Me.doc

A Winter's Day Oct 13, '09 5:54 AM

As I look from my window I see the blue blue sky. Birds dive and soar better than any circus acrobat, they are painting a picture with their wings. Tiny tiny wisps of white cloud remain, like left over candy floss on a child's face, like white whiskers on a very old woman's face.

Curtains are pulled open and windows are inched open too, daylight and fresh air to bedrooms shuttered down against a cold winter's night. People stand and yarn and scratch too as they struggle to wake up fully. Then one or two realise they don't wear any pyjamas so they hurry away from their windows, their wives, their husbands, their lovers laughing at their stupidity. At least old Mrs Jones may have had a thrill.

The sounds of morning, of daylight rise. Slowly the sound of the milk float, the sounds of milk bottles clinking together as the milkman does his rounds, this way and that. The sound of Mrs Murphy walking her dog, the dog panting in the cold winter's air. He doesn't have a sheepskin coat to keep him warm. He has his own fur coat but this winter is a cold one, so Goldie the dog could do with an extra coat too.

People dance down their door steps to their car, nagging children to hurry up as it's cold. Children write their name in the frost on their neighbours' cars before being told off. John the neighbourhood jogger rushes past, the kids stick their tongue out at him, he does the same, they all laugh, only for John to miss his stride slip on an icy patch and fall to the ground hurting his elbow as he does so. Still

laughing the kids get in the car and are taken off to see grandpa, John is rubbing his elbow and his bum as he gets up gingerly.

The lads, we are so hard, appear from their homes to noisily attack the day, Sunday is for shouting, but not too loud, as they have headaches and hangovers, did they really chat up that ugly fat girl, but they gave her his brother's mobile number and not his own. They stride off to the news agent for The News Of The World, just for the sports pages, their mums can read the scandal section and the horoscopes.

One or two black people wearing their Sunday best pass by on their way to church, a throwback to decades before when people still went to church and when people still wore their Sunday best.

People used to dress up to go to the theatre too, but now, but now.

I reach for the kettle and have my first coffee of the day, coffee with milk and no sugar, the way English people have coffee, not the American way, just the soft English way. My kids want toast and peanut butter, or cheese on toast, so my 3 slices of toast become one slice of toast as I feed my girls.

I nag them to put slippers and socks on, yes we have nice carpet but in the winter's weather they are always getting colds, so I nag them, I nag them. My wife nags them in Chinese too, or Shanghai dialect. The phone rings, it's Germany calling, or rather my wife's best friend who's calling from Germany, the cackle or hens, of chickens clucking is the noise these 2 Shanghai girls make, as they talk in Shanghai, when are we coming back to Germany is the message. Cluck cluck cluck.

The sky has changed the blue has changed to grey, will the snow return, it's been a snowy winter over here in Birmingham, some parts of the country have had the worse weather in 20 years. The children have quietened down, my wife has relented and put a nature program on the tv for them.

As for me I was going to try and write a poem but instead you see what's before you. I'm half listening to Mike and The Mechanics a cd I've loaded to the computer, "give me the simple life" he sings, I suppose my life is a simple life too. But if we can see the poetry in life then we enjoy the simple things which make up all our lives. All our lives are poetry if only we take the time to watch and listen, while we're making toast for the kids

p.s. This piece was from last Winter.

A writer talked about Kindle in Today's Observer- an English Newspaper, MY REPLY Oct 11, '09 8:50 AM

This is for Observer Readers

Sunday, October 11, 2009, 01:34 PM GMT [General]

11 Oct 09, 1:16pm (8 minutes ago)

I started MY book 20 years ago, then I slumbered. I tried self publishing but that did not work out.

The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker is a good title and on www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

you can all read it. You can print it off and read it in the bath with Victoria, just make sure she does not make you sit

at the tap end of the bath, but she may have a jacuzzi, so they'll be room for 3 or even 4. In which case Essays and Plays my 2nd book could also go to the bathroom with you all, a kind of slumber party but in the water, reading my stuff, or you could download it from my site to a kindle device, it only has batteries so none of you would be electrocuted. Another thought why not have literary launches in bathrooms, or in steam baths. Dress up in togas and have slaves wash your back, very Anthony and Cleopatra, while eunuchs read pages from the latest release, in wax on tablets. Then everything will have come full circle.

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

p.s. Victoria, I also write plays, Shoplife for example, but we'd need a rugby team's bath to get all the actors in.

Having just browsed the Observer I can say I do prefer The Telegraph. I'd also say that any medium that encouraged reading is good. I do most of my reading on the computer in front of me. So Kindle would be nice, though I've never had one so I cannot say once I had one would I prefer it to paper or the LCD screen in front of me. If somebody wants to donate one, then great, IF it were full of kids stories then that's good, I have 2 kids 6 & 8 you see.

P.S. I used to work in a 4star deluxe hotel for 3 years, so I'll beg anything, if anybody has a house they don't need anymore.....

Tempus Fugit - I am your Future, you are my Past Oct 10, '09 7:36 AM

Its my smallest daughter's Birthday soon, this got me thinking. My sister sent some presents over in advance and my daughter was delighted with her treasure, even if it wasn't Winnie The Pooh but some other bear. Eyes lighting up as she went through her bag of treasure, counting out the treasure just like the King in his counting house. Her big sister observing and trying not to get jealous, however she had some treasure of her own, my sister had sent some Maths quiz books over to encourage her with her sums.

This morning they were having a disco in their bedroom, with a DAB radio blasting out Heart at high volume. I had an blue radio with holes in it like a sieve when I was their age, it had MW & LW on it. FM was not the standard yet in those days. IT was while listening to that radio that we heard RFK had been shot, I remember running down stairs to tell me mum, she was in the kitchen, she was always in the kitchen, she fell to her knees and got her rosary beads from her apron pocket.

A few years later Frank who was one of our lodgers went back to Ireland to look after his sick mum, her left all of his stuff behind, a full and heavy suitcase plus a Bush Radio. He eventually came back and said we, thats me and my brother could have the radio. The Bush radio is a classic design. It has a large strip carry handle, like a giant strip of marzipan, it also has a giant saucer dial with grooves in it, and as for the controls they were like dominoes, plus a grooved wheel to turn for volume. That radio changed my life. Why? Well me and my brother used to listen to the World Tonight with Douglas Stuart reporting, which was a 30min news programme from the BBC Radio4 and best of all it was followed by The Book at Bedtime. Because I started to listen to Radio 4 from the age of 10 or so I became addicted to Current Affairs as posh people call it, News to you and me. The stories and plays were great too. Though after 20years of radio plays, The Radio 4 radio play style can have its shine taken off. So that was my thing for 20years or so, I suppose that was what led me to Writing. It also made me realise Radio is better than TV, as far as news goes. Radio has more power and the picture don't get in the way of the story. IF you try an experiment and listen to a news story then later watch the news and hear the same story, you will realise that the Radio version is better. Those

of you in USA may not be able to do this experiment directly, so try closing your eyes and listening to the news, then watch the same piece later. Ears are better than Eyes.

Nowadays DAB radio is the thing, though they use lots of electricity, but the sound quality is so good. So my daughter has a DAB radio and that's her standard, small radio but high quality. The Bush radio we had was bigger than a cereal box and heavy too, but it did change my life. It was company for me when my brother left home to do his gap year, before gap years were invented, as I struggled with my Latin, my Bush radio was the sound in the background. Though I had music on when I did homework, now as I write this I have music on too but this time its via the computer. Where have all the years gone, I look at my eldest daughter and she looks so much like me when I was small over 40years ago. WE have a joke as we look into each others eyes. "I am your future, you are my past."

Attachment: Crawling Like a Worm in The Dirt.doc

What If Oct 3, '09 6:10 AM

I stumbled over this from a few years ago, perhaps you'll like it. The attachments can be downloaded in seconds and then you can sample my 2 books and a couple of plays. They all go well with a coffee and a donut

What If (c)

By

Michael Casey

What if Today wasn't the 1st day of a New Year but the last Day of Your Life.

Who would you hug, who would you kiss, who would you miss.

Who would miss you, do you have a clue, and do you know why?

Would your years of striving to be a good writer/teacher/cop or whatever still mean so much to you

.

Would you miss making love in a tent high up in the mountains.

Would you miss a real good coffee and donut on 7th and 4th.

Would you miss the sales where you always bought nothing but shoes, shoes for work. But the fun you had with the girls was worth it , because pals are fun.

Would you miss Midnight Mass and Silent Night getting home exhausted and late and crying for your late mother.

Would you be too afraid that you'd not meet her again in the afterlife, or would that be the only hope you'd cling too as you watched the hands on clock sweep around faster and faster.

Would you rail at the world and want to get your gun and shoot those bastards who'd ruined your life in the past , even if all they ever did was steal your parking place, or would you be all sweetness and light, dying peacefully without a fight.

What would be your parting words, would anybody remember you, small kindnesses remembered and rewarded.

Remember thou art dust and to dust thy will return is the Ash Wednesday phrase

Is that how you want to be remembered?

Or he made me laugh, he made me cry but I was always was happy when he was around , I'll miss him yes , but I've not lost him because because a laugh lasts forever.

That is my hope, for the start of this New Year and new day, and everyday because we all should live like today is our last because one fact is certain, one day it will be , so make 'em laugh , make 'em laugh, make 'em laugh

Happy New Year from this Comedy Writer Michael Casey

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Pick Your Poem + (c) my new childrens book Sep 26, '09 6:22 PM

This is my new childrens book, this is the first page or so, my big daughter is going to do the drawings for it. Perhaps I'll end up as the new Raold Dahl

Pick Your Poem + (c)

by Michael Casey + Annie

ONE

Dad loves watches, he loves if they sparkle

BUT THE SAD THING IS THEY ALWAYS BREAK.

He told me that he got one for passing the 11 plus

I'm not sure what that is, I think its when you are over 11

So when dad was 11 and 1 day he got a watch. He said it was

from one of the lodgers, Big Jim. Big Jim was like an uncle

to my dad, he gave him things and when Big Jim died dad

got lots of his things. But I was talking to you about watches.

Dad has a very sweaty wrist, so when dad works his wrist gets

sweatier and sweatier. So that the watch steams up, just like

when mum is making rice and the kitchen window steams up, so

mum has to ask dad to open the kitchen window to let the steam

go out. She is very small you see, because my mum is from Shanghai

which is in China, didn't I tell you that already. Well you know now.

Unlike a kitchen a watch does not have a window to open to let the

steam out, the teacher in school told us that blind people do have

watches with windows, but that's not to let the steam out, its so the

blind people can touch the time. So really dad should have a watch

like that, then everything would be ok.

The Photo is Mum and Dad a long time ago in the kitchen

Dad has had lots of watches, not just steamed up watches but

he breaks them too. Dad says its because he's always been carrying

Things,like heavy paper in computer rooms. He even told me that

Computers used to be as big as washing machines, I think he was

telling me lies, computers are as big as books everybody knows that,

so I told him "liar, liar burn in fire" That's what Irish Grandma

used to say. He said one nightshift the glass came out of his watch, so dad glued it back on with superglue, only dad glued the hands of the watch together. Sometimes I think dad is stupid, but then he tells me stories so he can't really be that stupid. Mum says he's her stupid and clever husband. Chinese Grandpa sent him a watch and dad hasn't broke that one yet, he's had it 6years perhaps all he needed since the 11 plus was a Chinese watch then he wouldn't have broken 20 or more watches.

TWO

Tick toc tick toc

The hands on daddy's watch go around

The hands are getting dizzy

The hands are going around and around

Tick Tock Tick Tock

The glass is steaming up,

its hot inside this watch.

Tick tock Tic Tock

The hands are slowing down

The hands are slowing down

Its steamier than a bathroom

Inside this watch

Tick Tock Tick Tock

The glass is all steamed up now

Tick Tock STOP

The watch is as quiet as a mouse

The watch has stopped forever

Tick Tock stop

If you like what I've done so far then send me an email thanks. Michael

The Next Big Thing or how my big daughter told me to write for children Sep 24, '09 6:26 PM

The kids finally go to bed and we can hear them rushing around and laughing. We shout up the stairs telling them not to make such noise and be quiet or they will wake the baby next door. But it does make us smile, me especially. Then my big daughter sneaks downstairs to have a chat while the other half of the family sleeps. Its nice, I used to have a "social" with my mum when I was young, she's sit on the top step of the stairs while I told her all my hopes and dreams, then she'd give me a goodnight kiss and I went to sleep happy. Now over 40 years on I am doing the same thing for my daughter, and not doubt she will do the same with her children. Tonight I was explaining sibling rivalry and how it was really a waste of time, I could never match my brothers and their very high educational standards, I was me and they were them. Could they write a poem such as this:-

Let There Be Light ©

By Michael Casey

Let my tears be my words

Let the candle light be my eyes

Let the flowers in bloom be my lips

Let their scent be my blood

Let the wind be my breath

Let clouds be my mood

Let children's laughter be my hope

Let widows' sighs be my conscience

Let a stranger's prayers be my delight

Let the bees be my wisdom

Let the trees be my strength

Let my patience reach to the stars

Let me be always remembered in your prayers

Well I don't think so, but they can drive, I have a driver in the form of my wife. So I tried to explain this to my big daughter, how we were all different. Then she got me to put her to bed, and tuck her in, then she said I should write poetry for kids. So there you have it, I'll be trying to do that. It doesn't take as long as writing a play or a novel, she said I should put Tears For A Butcher on hold. The 1st chapter is written, and I've got ideas for 50% of the rest of the book, but now I think I'll follow her request. Then she can do the drawing for whatever I come up with. We did think of writing "My Silly Family" a while back, but now while I try to find a job I have a bit of time to try writing poetry and stories for children. So forgive me if I park my new babies on this site. Does anybody remember Edward Lear and his Nonsense Verse from 100 years and more ago, we can all check google for him after I have finished writing this. So basically that's my next thing to do after I put it on my to do list. Goodnight and God Bless as my mother used to say in the 60s.

Michael

5 Year Old Piano Player who loves Winnie The Pooh Sep 22, '09 4:43 PM

5 Year Old Piano Player, I'm talking about our smallest girl, her big sister did have lessons but never put the practice in, so we stopped the lessons. Over here its 12 pounds a half hour, or 20 dollars where you are. Now the piano is in our front room, along with the hi-fi and the computer, so when our smallest decided to tickle the ivories if I can use the fashion phrase, I had to plug it in for her. Its an electronic piano I should have said. Then she struggled to move the footstool we use as the piano chair, then she was ready to begin. Smiling at me she began, and guess what, she was able to play a fair version of jingle bells, she kind of sings and catches the beat as she presses the keys. I think she was very good, considering her age and the fact that it was her big sister who had always used the piano the most. Next she hummed another song and played it out, again it was good. Then she decided enough was enough, so grabbing the karaoke machine she went happily back to the living room, she wanted to watch Winnie the Pooh on TV. Later on she returned with a shopping catalogue, she wanted me to tear out the Winnie The Pooh pages so she could sellotape them to her

bedroom wall. She is in fact a Winnie The Pooh addict, she said she loves me because my tummy is just like Winnie The Pooh's. So the Moral of the Story, if you want your small daughter to really love you, all you need is a Winnie The Pooh Tum.

Goodnight Everybody as The Waltons used to say.

For History- my last post on Positive Thoughts where I practiced my words Sep 21, '09 5:23

PM

My last post on www.positivethoughts.com

Saturday, June 20, 2009, 11:40 PM GMT [Wisdom to Share]

Well what can I say, only goodbye. I've practiced my writing here. Sometimes direct, sometimes via little stories. The world is an uncertain place. North Korea wants an excuse to zap everybody with their nuclear bomb, while their own people die starving. Iran fiddled the vote and priests who should know better turn the other way while police kill their fellow citizens.

Give peace a chance is all I can say.

Each of us in our daily lives can give peace a chance, even if its only by smiling, even if sometimes we want to scream, but a smile and a little prayer can do some good.

Saint Teresa's little way was the right way, I actually went to her shrine 25years ago.

Spreading a little laughter can build bridges, if I could sent Laughter to North Korea and to Iran by hitting the keyboard in front of me then I would.

Let my laughter ease your pain

Let my laughter stop your fear

Let my laughter break down the walls between us

Let my laughter make us friends

Let my laughter feed your people

Let my laughter make us grow together

Let my laughter bind us together like a steel cable

more and more intertwined more and more strengthen TOGETHER

Love conquers all is what my mother used to say

So let love end madness in North Korea and Iran

For Love is all we need as the Beatles sang.

my laughter lives on at www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

Thanks to ALL at Positive Thoughts for your friendship, Cheerio from Birmingham England

My Wife The House Painter Sep 17, '09 5:18 PM

My Wife The House Painter ©

By Michael Casey

As I speak my wife is painting the bathroom. Its 9:45pm and the kids are all tucked up in bed. So she can paint away to her heart's content. She is a much better painter than me, if any of you have trawled to the bottom of my site you will have read Michael's Bathroom a tale of paint and disaster from 11 years ago, from before I met my Shanghai wife. That's her 10years ago on my profile photos. Right now she's wearing her pink and red strawberry pattern pyjamas while she paints. She is very good, she can even do intricate calligraphy, I think its because she's good at that so she's good with a paint brush in her hands. Earlier I had to test our 5 year old ready for her spelling test in the morning. She got 10/10 last week so we want her to continued. I got her to write the spellings out while I said them for her, you have to try and sound out all the letters, and remember the "baby" pronunciations too. She got lunch wrong she spelt it "luch" so I got her to write it out ten times correctly, only she wrote it out ten times incorrectly, so I encouraged her again and she wrote it out 10 times again, but this time correctly. We never had any of this 40 years ago, education has progressed in leaps and bounds. My other daughter had homework and a crossword too, I had to explain what crosswords were all about, and not arguing, but words that crossed and fitted into each other like Jigsaws. She also had some maths, she was on a high because she was the best in her class that day. The teacher made her a bracelet out of stickers as a reward. But my big daughter has been

“ cheating”, while she was in Shanghai her grannie, Ma, had given her lots of homework everyday. Ma was the accountant for the bus company you see, when I 1st visited Shanghai in 2000 I had been in her office and there is a photo of me trying to safe crack her safe, the bus company safe. My daughter has in fact got a photo of Ma and my wife with the safe behind them on her bedside table. Ma's brother a former journalist also gave my daughter homework while she was visiting his house for a few days. So it was that combination of Chinese discipline and love, that had helped her so much. Now she is in bed asleep, the smell of paint is slowly drifting towards me though 2 doors are firmly closed, but in the morning I will have a new bathroom, so much better compared to when I did it. Being married these past few years has given me an appreciation of the finer things in life, and one of them is to know when to “allow” my wife to dabble with a paintbrush. We just have to make sure the girls don't touch anything in the morning. I should say that one thing I go get my girls to do every night is to say their prayers. At the moment there is a little girl of about their age who has just been diagnosed with cancer, so I ask my girls to pray for her. They say that a sinner's prayers are golden , a child's prayers are golden too, so if any of you who are reading this can spare some time then DO pray for that child. I remember back in 1998 I was in Paris and I stumbled on a funeral and they were saying that the deceased was a traveller and there I was a traveller at his funeral, so of course I prayed for him. So now I ask the same of you, please pray for this child.

Tomorrow is another day, tomorrow I may have a new job, I've been redundant 8 weeks tomorrow. I could be getting a new job with a different Law Firm. All I need is a new lick of paint and then I'll be ready for the rest of my life. It would be a good birthday present too, that's all I have to say tonight, except buy some paint brushes for the Love in your life.

Michael 17/09/09

Why is America Afraid of Charles Darwin? Sep 12, '09 1:22 PM

I just read in The Daily Telegraph, a major English newspaper that a new film about Darwin has failed to find a distributor in the USA. I am shocked and saddened. Why? Because nobody in the rest

of the world would still behave like naive children. If we accept the Theory of Evolution then we still have the question who created it all in the 1st place, and the answer to that is no doubt, GOD. The Bible was written by an elite who could write, the common man was still in the dark. Really, the people who don't believe in the Theory are still 150 years behind the times. As children we come out of the dark of the womb into the noise of the world. Without being suckled we would all die. In the bad old days, many many children died or did not make it past infancy. In China there is a celebration when a child reached its 100days. As we grown we sit up, we look about and we smile. For six months we are nothing more than eating and pucking and pooing animals. With Love and Care and Affection we grown and we stand up and we start to eat solids. Love and Faith start while we are at the nipple. We learn to talk and then we learn to read, We go to school and we read books. We also go to church and listen to the Bible being read. Or we go to the Mosque and hear the Koran, or we go to the Sinagogue and hear Scripture. We are nurtured spiritually and literally. As we grow we learn more things from books and from study at school. We discover things via the National Geographic TV or by the BBC, but all the time we are growing. AS we learn we discover things that shock us. Was it only back in the 60s that we had segregation and people called dark skinned neighbours Niggers. Did people really call homosexuals Faggots and Queers. Were people who demonstrated against Vietnam Communists. The stain of 3 assassinations in the 1960s lingers on. So the question is how far have we grown, how far have we travelled? If we never change then we are either a rock or we are dead. If we are literalists, and we think that even word in Genesis is the Gospel Truth, then it means we have kept the minds of 5000year old people. Perhaps Man never walked on the Moon, perhaps it was Faked on a beach in Fort Lauderdale or wherever, perhaps the Moon IS made of Cheese. The Interior journey is always the longest and the hardest, I'm still on that path and will be till I die, I'm the Catholic who spent every lunch hour for 3 years hiding in the Protestant Cathedral, why? because as mountain climbers say "because it was there" and not because I'm "holy" but because I'm in need of prayer. I have managed to come up with some really good poetry due to my time spent before the cross. As for Evolution, I read a history book when I was 10 it was called "The Outline Of History" by H.G. Wells, it mentioned The Theory Of Evolution,

don't be afraid of a 150year old theory. For if we evolved doesn't it prove just how Childish we, and by we I mean Mankind is. WE needed such a long time to evolve because WE ARE SO STUPID. LOVE should turn swords into ploughs BUT how are we all doing? WE still bickering worse than children, we are still calling are neighbours Niggers and Faggots. IT is Time for all of this to end, look into Space at night and see the Glory of God's creation, the stars at night, these are God's watch, the night breeze of your face is HIS breath. What difference does it make if HE did it in 6days and rested on the 7th, or IF Darwin is right. But don't be afraid of a film and "ban" it. Time, Evolution, and our Wisdom is just a Joke compared to God's LOVE.

photo is where my mum was born, very very poor, but VERY STRONG FAITH

From Shanghai to Birmingham Aug 31, '09 12:54 PM

My girls are home at last after 8 weeks in Shanghai, so I'm no longer Home Alone. I'm not like the kid in the film, I'm a grown up, or so I'm told. My 2 small daughters plus the wife were in Shanghai visiting the Mother-in-Law, or Ma as we all call her. My smallest shed a few tears as she missed me so much. My big daughter as I call the other one discovered the joys of IM, so she could send me messages. We did use the camera as well, and the voice aspect too. One daughter spoke to me while the other sent cartoons and silly things via IM, I got my big daughter to practice "the quick brown fox jumped over the lazy blue dog" as an exercise. I can remember my brother doing that 30years ago or more when he taught himself typing and Pitman shorthand.

My parents could never dream of such modern technology, text, voice, and full voice and camera. If you saw a postman once in a blue moon, now that was something special, though that was back in 1920s/30s Country Kerry. Now the generations have moved on, technology is king. My kids went to the zoo and saw not 1 but 3 pandas and one was a baby panda. Something big to boast about when they return to primary school in a few days time. They also went to the new beach by Ma's house. There wasn't one there 10years ago when I first visited, so they decided to build one and charge people 30RMB each to use it. It looked nice on the photos they emailed me, however as its that part

of the world you do have to be careful, because there are small sharks around. A great experience for such small children, they have come home speaking even more Shanghai dialect. They moved around too and spent time at various houses belonging to uncles and aunties. The Film uncle, the USA uncle, the Army uncle, the Taxi uncle, I cannot pronounce the names so we have shorthand to explain who is who. I have a Chinese name, Panzi, it means FAT FAT BOY, because I'm so big compared to the Chinese side of the family. They also saw Google cousin, because she and her husband work for Google. They did go to the Irish pub and send me a photo showing them enjoying themselves, I think that should be classed as torture, there I was Home Alone while they were in the Irish Pub in Shanghai, its near the US Embassy if ever you are over there. They came home via Frankfurt, and 2 bags got lost because of equipment failure, but luckily the bags appeared, along with my wife/kids' treasure, shoes, a bag of shoes. I got a silk duvet, and that is a great great treasure, and what was the final treasure brought all the way from Shanghai, a big wok.

p.s. The house is so noisy again after 8 weeks of silence!

What makes me smile Aug 25, '09 1:54 PM

We all have different views on what is funny. Americans seem to like custard pie humour, where the joke is telegraphed. Pie face pie face, custard pie in face. Say like Laurel and Hardy. Over here in England its a bit different. I can remember Monty Python starting on TV, I was in 1st or 2nd year of Grammar school. We had to explain to our French teacher what was all this "woody" business, Monty who? was his reply. Different styles of humour work in different different places. As you all know a baby can hear while in the womb. So why does our youngest daughter have such a good sense of humour. Was it because of us her parents, her West meets East in her blood. you know what we think, while my wife was visiting she was 7/8 months pregnant, so the unborn baby heard her Chinese grandad making jokes and making everybody laugh. So that at an early age she is a mimic and makes us laugh, michaelgracy casey she calls me, putting on a deep voice and reciting what my prayer is, let my comedy book be published and can we have a bigger house, please god.

And pumping up her shoulders too. This makes us laugh and is a natural thing, a 5 year old cannot be taught this. My own dad used to say "your ear is very near me", which was an implied threat, so it told us to behave. Me and my sister remember this and laugh, a 40year old laugh, I have told my own kids this and the smallest says it back to me in her deep voice. So it will pass down the generations, a remembrance, a prayer almost.

I was a concierge in a 4star deluxe hotel for 3years, this job gave me plenty of time to watch and learn from people. It also gave me a chance to practice my stand up while dealing with people. In the main I could make most people smile. It is a different art compared to writing or straight presenting, if you can do one it doesn't mean you can do the other. But if you smile at people they do tend to smile back, so if you start with a smile then you cannot go far wrong.

Down my Street turn left to reach the worldAug 24, '09 6:00 PM

They say that 100 years ago a man knew 2 blocks North, 2 blocks South, 2 blocks East and 2 blocks West. Or back in Ireland as far as the market and back to the farm. No doubt the same in England. World War One changed everything, their innocence was taken away from them, no virgin on a wedding night. But rape as the guns fired over no mans land. Men came home with tales of woe, tales of Paris and drinking by the Seine. Tales of Mud and Death, they never spoke of because it was too much of a torment.

The small world of the village was swept away. Buses came along and linked village to town, the railway too. A small world was changed into a bigger world. Radio was invented, the wireless as it was called. The world could reach into every nook and cranny of the isolated village. Was it the work of the Devil, this radio. Newspapers too, not to mention the fact that more people could read.

Isolation did not exist any more. Then came the Cinema, the Flicks as it was called because the films flickered. Everybody's world was changed, everybody had a bigger and bigger world view. It was like a walled garden that had its walls removed. No longer a cosy world, but the winds of change, the winds of communication. The walls came tumbling down, the walls came tumbling down. You would

need to be a hermit, or a monk hidden away on top of a mountain on an island that was lost at sea, then and only then could you have a sheltered existence. TV came along, black and white then colour. Then cable and satellite and then HD. Not to mention computers and Internet, perhaps living on the dark side of the moon is the only place to be, IF you want solitude. For my street is the world, and all its news.

The Invisible Diet Aug 21, '09 11:37 AM

I'm big, my boss calls me "the big man". Some may say "fat", I'll stick with big. I am 3stones heavier than I look which I suppose is good. 3 stones is 18 to 20 kilos, that in itself is the weight of a growing child, or one suitcase ready for international travel. My fat is not wobbly fat, so I don't look like a jelly, it's tight fitting fat. Makes me sound so glamorous, you can see my photo on this site so you can be the judge. Just big, or big boned as some fat people say. Me, I'm just big, so let's leave it at that, you don't want me to cry do you. I did have a compliment from my Chinese masseuse, she told my wife that all my skin was tight, so there you have it from a PhD Chinese doctor.

Now what if I could share with you knowledge which will make you all lose 1/2 a stone, that's 7lbs if you are an American or 6 tubs of margarine if you are metric.

So how do you lose weight? You just don't try, and then as if by magic you lose weight. A Muslim friend at work SR, explained Ramadan to me. I said for Lent I'd just give up chocolate or something. Very easy compared to Muslim fasting. That was when I was a kid, now old age and so on meant... So I agreed to give up Chocomilk from the company drinks machine. The drinks were free and we did work in a very hot print room. So I gave up my favourite drink for Lent. I still carried on drinking, but only the squash, not the nice and caroline laden Chocomilk. After a few days I did not miss my favourite drink, and the weight just fell off. Though another friend was quick to mention that M&S had just closed its sandwich shop near the office, so I was having smaller and not as nice sandwiches. That he thought may be the real reason why my trousers were looser, whatever the reason, once

my friend had come back from holiday with a new bride, he saw the difference. Mainly with my thinner face.

So what is the moral of the story? If I can lose 1/2 a stone then so can anybody else, I did not look at any magazines or starve myself as girls do. It was the lazy man's diet and it worked. So here I am still Big but happier looking more and more like George Clooney. Look at my photo and judge for yourself, more photos can be googled.

Is serious news treated as a spectator sport, what do you think of Fox news style
Aug 18, '09
3:12 PM

Food For Thought

Think AS You Watch TV (c)

By Michael Casey

As we sit in our armchairs watching the news , do we care what is going on over there , in some place hot , too hot to think about , or too cold to bear , ice and snow everywhere . Are we just waiting for the sports report , are we waiting to see was the battle hard or a walkover , did our favourite player score a home run , or 10 touchdowns , were the crowd , the audience behind him , did we win 100dollars from the bet we had on the side . In the interviews after the war was won , were we just watching to see the design on the teams shirt , is that a new logo , is that the same logo spruced up . Or is it a new logo entirely , does it make any difference in how the team played , or just another million dollars in the owners pocket , paid by us the audience , the fans , just so we can all look so identical . The reporters are screaming loudly , half excited and half in fear , they want to watch , they want to cover their eyes , but they are there so they must report . Are they in some arid desert , or in some cold cold place , pain and fear and hope etched on their face , are they in some war zone , or at the stadium , if all we heard were just their words , could we tell the difference , do we care , so long as we can switch it all off with our remote control .

Just a little food for thought , you can read my Betting On Disaster

Education always reach for the stars Aug 10, '09 6:41 PM

Education always reach for the Stars

Monday, August 10, 2009, 11:31 PM GMT [Current Affairs]

Where I was born and grew up, is only 2 miles or so from where I live now. I was born in the shadow of a brewery and ended up working for a Market Research company doing research into alcohol sales and I was a shandy drinker. Do you want a girlie I was asked when we went to the pub, sadly the barman died early, so you can pray for him. My father, my dad was a blacksmith and my mum was a farm girl. Both from County Kerry, the best county, just you ask any Irishman. My dad was apprenticed to a Blacksmith in Rathmore, in 1995 we went back and rediscovered the very place next to a new road. The blacksmiths had turned into a hairdressers and the store had been demolished. My dad always spoke fondly of the blacksmith. That blacksmith never had any children, but my dad was treated as family. Go out woman to the henhouse and see has the hen laid. This would be about 1935/6. If there were 3 eggs then they all had one. If 2 the blacksmith did without, and if only 1 egg was laid my dad got it. This is how "family" should be. In 1944 my dad came to England and the steelworks in Brasshouse Lane. For 40 years he endured the heat, 400 degrees beside the furnace. You could lose 1/2 a stone a day in sweat. My dad often did 12 hour shifts and sometimes 16. So coming from that he always wanted his children to do better, EDUCATION was the key and it still is. I remember asking him what subjects I should do when we did the 3rd year split. His answer was I don't know, but do what you like but do your best. Now perhaps that should be written on every blackboard throughout the country. My dad had a large family and he loved and encouraged us. So imagine his pride when in 1968/9 one son went to the best university in the land. Then a few years later another son went to the opposition best university in the land. Today do kids listen to ignorant teachers, back at our grammar school we were encouraged. And mum always said you are as good as anybody. Me I'm the failure I'm just a Wordsmith.

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com photo is my mums birth place and home till 12

My stories, my babies Aug 5, '09 6:00 AM

My site, this site disappeared for a few days, a few thoughts passed through my mind. Have I lost my "babies" my "work" my "stuff". For anybody that writes, be it me who writes simply hoping for a bigger audience once I'm discovered, or say for the Google Librarian in charge of millions of books. Worthy books and all kinds of everything, the one word passes through your mind "OH HOTDOGS" as the astronauts used to say. However I used to be a computer operator back in 78, yes 1978, I was still just a teenager then. And the "one thing" as Glen Beck is fond of saying, the "one thing" I learnt was NEVER NEVER NEVER trust a computer, always but always have lots of backup. We were a very small outfit to start with but then we taken over. And in the beginning we flew by the seat of our pants as early pilots used to. So at work we kept 3 generations of backup, first of Magnetic tape then many years later on super8 video then data storage tape. AT home over 20 years ago when I first started to write I had not one but 2 photocopies of my book. Then when I decided that a typewriter was old fashioned I moved to an Atari 520 which a few years later I updated to an Atari 1040, my friends were into games bigtime so that was their recommendation. I only needed a word processor but I took their advice anyway. It was very expensive 300pounds or 480dollars at todays exchange rate, and that was nearly 20years ago. Yes a fool and his money are soon parted. Our lust for writing soon means money departing. Now I had my own computer then, so did I have 3 generations of security. NO, I had TEN. My stories, my babies were the most important thing in the world to me, so I always too 10 copies on floppy disc and scattered them all over my house. When I finally finished my book The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker I even hid one in the family home. So if there was theft or fire I'd still have my back up. I'd leant from the antics at work, always but always have back up. Moving onto the Internet age, I hide/store/conceal/save whichever is the correct word, my writing is in Cyberspace so that it should survive anything as its on servers on the 4 corners of the globe. Which book would you chose to save in Cyberspace. On Desert Island Discs the Radio4 show on the BBC they ask that question in a manner of speaking. The Bible and Shakespeare is given to

you and then you can chose a book. Would I be conceited and chose me own book. No, yes really, no, because you know your own book so well and you can create more windmills in your mind so easily as more pieces of the jigsaw appear in your mind that nobody would chose their own book, well perhaps some Hollywood types. So what would I chose. Probably a History book, I once wanted to be a History teacher, and my own History teacher did recommend Don Camillo to me, a comic priest tale from Italy. In some ways I hope my writing is like Don Camillo, a mythical place with comic, English meaning of comic, goings on, If finally somebody says my stuff is comic. Then then I have finally made myself understood

Thats all Folks as Bugs Bunny used to say or was it OH CARROTS

Fat Man's exercise and food shopping tips Jul 25, '09 12:58 PM

Well I start my new life today. I'm redundant and looking for a new job, so I have my plan to follow. I will walk to the top of Bearwood every day, it 10mins there and 10 mins back, so it might be 2k altogether, or 1.25miles on the way I browse in the shops but spend nothing as I have to watch the pennies until I get a new job. On the way back I do my shopping. I look for bargains, such as gamon instead of sliced bacon, fresh orange juice at half price, yoguart as a treat and at the lower original price. Cereals too because they are quick first thing in the morning. Not forgetting green bananas that will ripen for when I'm ready to eat them. Cheap 1/2 price pizza too and 1/2 price cheese that I can slice and add to the pizza to make them nicer. Milk is always good so 3litres of that as well and some sweet corn for good measure. All in all my week's shopping. I used to work for ACNielsen a long time ago and they would put me in the opportunist shopper bracket, no brand loyalty just a vulture so to speak Once home some 1/2 price coffee from when I stocked up before then its on to the Internet to trawl through the job websites. Staying positive is the name of the game. Apply for nice jobs that will speak to my heart, as well as apply for jobs that will just feed me. Now at my age, I'm 20 in my head, but my birth certificate says otherwise, I'd like somewhere where I can stay till I can retire, hopefully with a lottery win in 3hours time, but failing that till regular retirement age.

However with politicians being so bad as they are, and the economy too, I imagine I'll be 92 before I can retire, which leaves only 8 years to have fun. I always said I'd like to live till I was 100. So where will I end up? God alone knows, and he doesn't talk to me any more, perhaps I should listen more and then I'll hear his voice. Though I can say that when you do listen you can come up with inspired poetry which some may say comes from God. You can find several such pieces scattered all over this site, or in my 2nd book Essays and Plays.

That's all for today, I hope it doesn't pour tomorrow because whatever the weather I must do my walk, just to blow away the cobwebs and who knows I may come up with a new poem I can share on this blog. I find IF I can get the first line then the rest just pours out, poetry is harder than anything else. Writing a book is much easier, its getting published that takes decades. Cheerio from sunny Birmingham as the clock strikes six.

Tags: fat poet

Nobel and Me, or what people say behind your back Jul 21, '09 5:24 PM

Nobel and Me, or what people say behind your back

Tuesday, July 21, 2009, 07:52 PM GMT [General]

Nobel read his own obituary and was so shocked by what he read that he changed. When you leave a job people say goodbye or good riddance to bad rubbish. It can be quite a shock. I've been deeply shocked and humbled by what one of the late shift secretaries said to me an hour ago. At least I'm no Nobel.

People also shake your hand and say keep in touch, then forget who you are once they have their 2nd drink. People can get sad and weepy, I'll miss you all.

What's the truth behind all these emotions? I'll find out on Friday when my Life changes again.

10 years ago was the last time I was made redundant. 10 years ago I had finally met the right one, and sent her back to Shanghai to tell her family all my bad points, 6 months later she came back to me.

Now 10 years on, we're married with 2 beautiful girls, and they are in Shanghai as I talk to you, Summer with the Mother in Law, Me I'm here Home Alone and about to be redundant. I still dream of getting my 2 books published, or getting a play or two on the stage,

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com is where my "talent" is wheel clamped in Cyber Space. Will some

kind soul pay the "fine" and unleash my writing onto a public that loves Big Brother and Britains Got Talent. While I look for a new job and my CV fights it out with other CVs for a job, any job will do, to paraphrase Joseph and his Technicoloured Dreamcoat. Perhaps Andrew Lloyd Webber could turn my comedy play Shoplife into a Musical with the "Hairy Angel" in the lead. Would the Public like that or would they prefer Dennis Norton in another show.

Who knows or who cares? But at least I'm NOT Nobel.

Tags: sample my writing

So what can you do? Jul 17, '09 6:01 PM

So what can you do?

Thursday, July 16, 2009, 10:06 PM GMT [General]

A lot of people are writing their CV at the moment. Me too, you think you have a safe job at a firm then blink and you are excess baggage and you are gone. I have one more week then I join the unemployment statistics. And we all know what they say about Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics. UB40 made a song about it many years ago. And believe it or not I was at school with Ali Campbell, he sat in front of me. We were only in 1st year together, I continued in the fast stream and never noticed him again. Now 40 years on, he's a multimillionaire and I'm just some fat bloke with lots of white hair, so my young children are asked am I "granddad".

Perhaps I should send him a poem or a play or a copy of my comic novel I wrote long ago. Would The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker make him laugh. Could he turn into an angel and get my play Shoplife on the stage.

I'll have plenty of time to ponder this when my job ends.

So pass the red red wine.

Cheerio from rainy Birmingham

www.michaelgcasey.wordpress.com

What is Prayer ? What is Love? Jul 10, '09 6:24 PM

What is Prayer ? What is Love? ©

By

Michael Casey

What is Faith ? We are told in one Bible passage that if a man can do many things yet there is no Love then man has achieved nothing . I remember this being read at grammar school at the morning assembly . Sorry if I cannot quote it verbatim . I'd come home from work and my dad would be sitting down in the living room his dinner on a chair so he could watch the news , he'd have the first bite raised to his mouth . I'm not hungry he'd say and offer me his dinner . This is love . Another time , another shift pattern . I'd come home at 11pm . Dad would wait up to see me before he'd go to bed , he'd be up at 5am for his work the next morning . This is the standard I'm used to , I'll do the same for my own children . Its normal , its obvious . To me anyway .

My mother used to watch Dallas on tv after she'd fed all her children , one hand in her apron as she watched tv . Only the hand always jumped in her pocket , she was saying the rosary while she watched tv . Very Irish , very motherly . Very normal , the standard I got used to . Countless mothers the world over do the same . They may be Christians , they may be of a multitude of different Faiths , yet one thing in common . Love , love of God , love of family , love of children . And do we thank our parents for this love ? If we didn't and now our parents are gone , then do we live with regret all our lives . No , this would be folly . We can thank our parents and

our God by being good parents , by trying to copy the good example shown to us . I met my wife in the retirement home where my dad lived after his near fatal heart attack , which happened 8 bare weeks after my mother died in her sleep . My dad lived long enough for me to meet/marry and have a granddaughter . As I gaze on my daughter's face I often say "thank you" . Thank You to God for allowing me a wife and for having a daughter . An extremely beautiful daughter , healthy and funny . I have to show the moon to my daughter because she thinks its so pretty , she loves stars too , not yet 22months old and she knows the wonder of creation . As I look upwards and see the cold beauty of space I know how lucky I am . I know how lucky I am . Lucky enough to cry , which I do on occasions . My tears are my humble thanks and praise of God . I have a family . July 96 , mom was gone , and dad was given 1 week to live . So after 3years of constant visits to the seniors home I met my wife , my Shanghai China . So yes I cry in the dark of the night as I look up at the stars . I am a lucky man , because I had good parents , I know I did . I hope everybody could be as lucky as me well I hope this reads ok , I couldn't think of any poetry , I just hope telling it plain catches the spirit , the spirit of love . One word , one look , one sigh , one flicker of the eyes , each of these is a prayer , a deep prayer . A prayer of hope , pray , hope and don't worry is a motto I try to live by thats all the advice I can give
michael

Let There be Light (c) by Michael Casey Jul 8, '09 6:01 PM

Let There Be Light ©

By Michael Casey

Let my tears be my words

Let the candle light be my eyes

Let the flowers in bloom be my lips

Let their scent be my blood

Let the wind be my breath

Let clouds be my mood
Let children's laughter be my hope
Let widows' sighs be my conscience
Let a stranger's prayers be my delight
Let the bees be my wisdom
Let the trees be my strength
Let my patience reach to the stars
Let me be always remembered in your prayers

Michael Jackson and Me or You Jun 28, '09 3:56 PM

Michael Jackson died a couple of days ago. We've all had saturation coverage. Even here in England. Was he Bad or was he Mad, it went to court and he was declared innocent. His work, his art, his dancing will be remembered for many a year. Over here in 48 hours he's sold 300,000 records/albums. His body has had 2 inquests so we are told. Folks will fight over what remains of his money. Will anybody have time to love his kids? All these are questions that are all over the media, be it the quality end of the press or the supermarket magazine side of the press. WHICH MAKES ME WONDER Who will mourn when I die. Will my daughters cry, or will they moan that it has broke into their holidays. Will they say I should have prepaid for my own funeral. Will they hold my still warm body in their arms and let the damn burst with tears. Will they cry and laugh as they remember how I nagged them to always wear their slippers as they were forever getting colds when they were kids. Will they put on my voice and mannerisms as they remember and cry in equal measure at my loss. Will they laugh even more because i never learnt Chinese even though mum, my wife was a Shanghai girl. So my girls could trick me just by speaking Chinese to each other. Will my death make

my Shanghai beauty suddenly grow old. Will she scream and shout and cry for days when I'm gone. Will my three girls put a watch on my wrist and a DAB radio in the coffin beside me. Will all this come to pass?

It will because I am blest with love, my girls love me though I am fat, Panzi is my Chinese nickname, it means "FAT FAT BOY", perhaps they'll even have in on my memorial stone as well as my name. ALL THIS WILL COME TO PASS BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN LOVED.

So sleep long, sleep deep Michael Jackson, I just hope you were loved as much as I am.

Tonight 23rd Jan 2009 Jan 23, '09 5:58 PM

I've just posted some of my short pieces, they were on my old site. I hope you like them. My book The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker is posted too.

I also compiled a 3rd book Essays and Plays.

I have yet to finish my 2nd book Tears for a Butcher. Though the pieces of that jigsaw are floating through my mind and more and more of the story is finished in my mind. I just wish I could afford to have a year off to put it all down on paper.

As of tonight NO White Knight has yet appeared to open the door for me so that I could become a real published and paid writer.

The Watch and Me Jan 23, '09 5:53 PM

Sep00 Michael G Casey email michaelgcasey@hotmail.com

The Watch and Me ©

By

Michael Casey

I suppose my love affair with the watch started when I was just a child now 30 years on the passion is still there . I remember lifting up my

dad's shirt sleeve to look at the watch on his wrist , watching the second hand sweep around and asking what time was it , not that I really understood the concept of time , I knew midnight was always dark , that was about it really . Oh apart from some special time called "opening time" and "closing time" , our lodgers would pay their rent at the back door before rushing off to the pub , it was a mystery to me .

A cousin of ours was to be ordained a priest in Dublin , so dad and 2 of my brothers went off to Dublin for the ceremony . I remember Tony coming back with a watch on his wrist , it had a black strap and had a small face , then at the bottom was separate dial with a second hand on it , we all thought it was very posh . So being children we now used this dial to see how long we could hold our breath , we'd take a deep breath and pump up our cheeks then Tony waved his hands and we'd start our endurance test . Only stopping when we fell over our faces brilliant red and our eyes bulging . I remember Tony seemed to win this game always , not because he cheated but because he loved under water swimming so had mastered holding his breath . Then we had a contest to run down the yard past the hedge to the bottom of the garden and touch the fence and come back and touch the wall of the house , we were all young and mad then but such simple fun was all because we had a watch with a second hand .

Jim was our lodger for 20years , when he'd been with us for 11 years I badgered him for a present , for a watch . if I passed the 11 plus exam. Finally he gave in and gave me his own 2nd best watch , in fact I got it before I even sat the exam . So the watch Jim gave me was my first watch ever . The trouble with leather watch straps is that they dig into your flesh , so you loosen the strap but then the watch dangles , so I compromised by using stretch straps , then you can slide a stretch strap

all the way up your arm , until it feels comfortable . I also always liked mechanical watches , it was a night time ritual , taking my watch off and winding it up , setting the time against the chimes of Big Ben on the radio . So you can see just how important a watch is to me . There is just one thing I've forgotten to mention , watches always break . Well when I wear them anyway . For the past 20 years as a computer operator I'm always carrying something and banging my watch on doors or whatever . So they break , leaving my watch in the bathroom while I take a bath was another of my bad habits . Watches steam up on me , or the winder gets rusty and breaks off , or I break the glass , or the glass falls out . Once the glass fell out , so I glued it back again , only to make a mess of the job and glue the hands of the watch together as well . Finally I decided to get a quartz watch , they were accurate , only my sweaty wrist steamed up the face constantly , so I couldn't read the time . On average a watch lasts me 1 year , my sister Mary always laughs every time I show her my latest new watch . A simple Lorex watch was the best one I ever had , its lasted 5 years . However I must confess that it has only lasted me that long because when dad was in hospital after mum had died and he had nearly died too he wanted a watch so he could pass the time , by looking at the watch , so he'd know when his next meal was , the fact that there was a clock on the wall not 2 yards away did not matter . Of course I took the watch off my wrist and gave it to him . he was my dad and I loved him , so if a watch would please him , he could have mine . That was 4 years ago , dad is called the miracle man , by the doctors , he beat death , dad's time was up and the grim reaper made an appearance twice , but dad is still alive and kicking , my watch ticking on his wrist . Or so it was until last month . Jie Jie my Chinese wife bought me a fancy watch for my

Birthday so I gave dad my watch , a fancy Esprit model , and I retired the old one , but I have kept it as a souvenir , we all thought dad would die in weeks , but his heart is still ticking as strong and reliable as a Rolex watch . I think when we all die , if we are not worthy of Paradise immediately God will issue us with a Rolex and we have to wear it for a billion years , until we are worthy of Paradise . God's watch is the turning tides , the movememnt of the stars accross the heavens and rumbling super vovas , after all didn't time begin with creation . It is us stupid mankind who try to limit it to a dial on a watch .

The Shy Girl Jan 23, '09 5:52 PM

The Shy Girl ©

By

Michael Casey

Helen let herself in the house and shouted hello to her aunt as she dashed up the stairs two at a time . This was usual for her on a Friday night . Once in the bathroom she breathed a sigh of relief , her aunt hadn't seen the carrier bags she was carrying . Helen put the plug in the bath and then reaching into the Body Shop carrier she poured a liberal amount of "enriching body bubble bath" into the bath before turning the hot tap on . Next she hit the play button on the cassette and began to get undressed , she got undressed slowly and deliberately , just as she had read in Cosmo in the article on how to turn on your man . She'd been practicing for three months now , she was very good at it.

Helen was twenty five and three months old , she wore baggy clothes to hide her figure , for she was a shy girl , it was only on

Friday night when she reformed her ritual "temptress" routine before she tried on her new clothes that she was truly free . All alone in the bathroom with just a mirror for company Helen could act out her fantasies, now she stood naked before the mirror , she took a bow , she really had mastered the the routine Cosmo had suggested . If only she wasn't so shy if only she didn't hide her bust behind a baggy top and her bum behind a loose fitting three quarter length skirt .

Helen took a long hard look at herself in the mirror , she'd look good on any page three , only she never bought the Sun , just looked at it over the shoulder of people on the bus . She always thought "tart" every time she got a glance of page three , but if only she could have a thimble full of their brazeness , then she wouldn't be so shy , then she'd have a steady boyfriend . When she reached 25 she promised herself that she'd stop being so shy , and for the past three months she'd been buying things that would show off her figure , next week she was going to get contacts too , after all men never made a pass at girls who wore glasses. The only problem was that for three months she'd bought the nice if not exactly sexy clothes , only all she did was try them on before neatly folding them and putting them at the bottom of her wardrobe . She really was a shy girl , some might think a frump , just to judge by outward appearances , its just that she was shy , shy shy shy.

Her bath was ready so reaching in her carrier she reached for a magazine before getting in the bath . This month the main article was about sex , relationships and why can't men just be friends , there was a picture from the film "When Harry Met Sally" above the article . Helen started to read , her glasses steaming up already , she reached down for her bar of Galaxy taking a big bite as she read . Helen's friends had

started to get married and /or have serious relationships , she was beginning to feel left behind , especially as once her friends had a man they had less time for friendship with her . She read the article hoping to find fresh insight into her situation . It was asking how far should you go on your first date , second date and so on , there was even a chart so you had an at a glance guide .

Helen thought of her last boyfriend , three months ago in fact , he had assumed that as it was her birthday the thing she'd like most would be him ! He's pressed himself against her , and put his hand on her breast , only she'd kneed him in the groin , and his fancy watch with its even fancier watch strap had got stuck on her bra strap , so as she stormed off , she had his Cartier watch dangling from her chest almost like a nurse's watch .

She read on pausing for more chocolate , if only men were as nice as Galaxy that would be something. She finished the article and turned the page to be met with a picture of agent Fox Mulder from the X files . She sighed , she wouldn't be shy with him that was for sure , mind you millions of woman would doubtless say the same . She spent five minutes adoring his picture before taking another bite of chocolate , and then sinking lower into the bath , yes yes yes , oh yes , this chocolate was something else , or was it Fox Mulder ?

There was another article about pets and stress levels , that was quite interesting , apparently you live longer if you have a pet , as you have something to love and it in return loves you unconditionally . if only she could find a man like that . Mind you animals did have one major disadvantage . they were very wanton , very caveman like . If a male animal liked a female it just jumped and got on with it , perhaps she

should be wanton , just once , just to see if it worked , could you find true love by being a tart just the once and hoping you'd found the man of your dreams ? She closed her eyes and shook her head before saying outloud , "a tart is a tart , is a tart " . Then she farted , giggled helplessly as the bubbles disappeared . She thought of her friend Vicky , she was like her , very shy and hiding her figure behind frumpy clothes , she'd given herself away , only she'd got pregnant and the lad ran a mile , then her mother threw her out , so she ended up running away to London to have an abortion . Helen closed her eyes and shivered at the thought of it , she turned the hot tap with her big toe , she was determined that would never happen to her . Why she'd even gone on the pill so determined was she .

She just wished she'd meet somebody who was gentle and kind who could make her laugh , and above all was not so fast , she wanted to be courted , in fact she wanted to tell him , "you can put your hand on my breast now" , perhaps she was longing for the 50s , even though now it was nearing the millenium . She wasn't looking for a man with a book in his hand all the time and she wasn't looking for a body builder either , Martin was just perfect only the one time he got carried away and had touched her bum with one hand and felt her breast with his other hand , and without asking either . So naturally she'd kneed him in the groin , what else was she to do ? In fact the men at work called her "frigid" behind her back , but she had to have standards didn't she ? It had been the first time she'd ever closed her eyes , normally she'd keep them open so she could keep a lookout for any roving hands , then the first time she had relented and that had happened . Perhaps one day she'd love and trust somebody enough to give into her animal insticts , but she

just wasn't ready now .

The bath water was getting cold now ,so she got out of the bath and dried herself in front of the mirror , once she was dry she'd try on her new clothes . She had bought some red skimpy underwear , a red knee length skirt and a tight fitting blue top , as she got dressed she began to laugh , if only people could see her now and when she got some contacts she'd be really knockout . Then she sighed , she'd tried lots of bright colours over the past three months , but in her heart of hearts she knew she'd never wear them in public , she just didn't have the confidence besides every time she looked at herself in the mirror the only word that sprang to mind was "Tart" . But she would at least wear her contacts , it was at least a start wasn't it ?So slowly and sadly she changed back into her frumpy clothes , nobody would ever see her at her best . Except the fourteen year old lad named Michael who had been watching through the window from the house next door , for in her rush Helen had forgotten to close the curtains .

Internet StoryJan 23, '09 5:50 PM

Internet Story ©

By

Michael Casey

So all I had to do was send an email , and then I'd be a writer , my book in every shop , my face smirking from cardboard cutouts of me holding my book aloft . My book had a great title , so it was bound to sell . A Nation Of Shopkeepers was a great title , if only people could remember their

History , were people interested in History , and for that matter my book . It wasn't a history book , would people think it WAS a history book , and then not buy it . It was a comedy drama , about a street of shops , interconnecting short stories , for all the family , but would people notice the levels , the strands of humour , or would they say it's a Ma & Pa book , and miss the joke , just as one publisher called did ?

I decided to keep the title , though I had a reserve title , The Butcher , The Baker and The Undertaker . Then I realised the US market would rename it The Butcher , The Baker And The Funeral Arranger . You don't think about such things when you are writing the book , you're just happy , on a roll , in love with your own intellect , or just surprized you actually DO have any intellect , then you discover that you are dyslexic , you really are dyslexic , thankfully not a really bad case , just dyslexic . As you proof read you see you have put BUT instead PUT , LEAD instead of READ , things like this and other strange things . Sure there are spellcheckers but or is it put , you have to check it anyway . As you read you are surprized at your own ability . You didn't waste 4years in journalism school , but your writing is GOOD , Did I write that ? Then your chest filled with pride you get somebody else to read it , and guess what ? They think its crap . So now you have to decide , should I give up or should I carry on ?

I gave up for as while , while is a unit of years in my case , my life took another path , so the writing was forgotten , it lay dormant for years , then like a phoenix it arose , or more truthfully , like a tortoise awaking from hibernation , sleep still in my eyes I slowly poked my head out , then back in , went back to sleep again , then finally with the pangs of hunger in my stomach I just had to do something . In my case it was eat , as in really eat , then I turned to my old Atari and realised it was not PC compatible , so I bought a new , or rather an old new Atari which was PC compatible . Then I spent a day copying my files so that I could read them on a PC . Then I wrote a few more pieces before I realised I'd get nowhere in England . The chances of being published were 1 in 2000 . So like a bear , I went back in my cave and slumbered .

Meeting my wife Jing Jie was a turning point in my life , and not just because it was like Thunder as Jing Jie calls it , it was a turning point because I had a professional opinion on my writing , from a

journalist at the very top of the tree . Her uncle is an editor in chief , so his comments were and are like gold , worth more than my first coffee and Cadbury's chocolate , the pleasure rush I treat myself to every day , his comments really were that important to me , and I really DO like my Cadbury's , so being better than Cadbury's is the highest praise I can give . So I knew the quality of my writing , even if others said and say its crap .

Getting a modern PC and internet connection was another turning point . Email in our house is like water and electric in any other homes . Jing Jie can "talk" to her mum in Shanghai every day . To friends all over the world as well . Birmingham IS the centre of the universe .So with hope and fear I had to transfer my files from my old Atari to the new PC . The floppy discs were old and battered , several were unreadable , finally my work , my babies were safely on the new PC . Just to be on the safe side I set up a website , so now my work was on somebody's server in the US , thousands of miles away , safe from fire or theft . I could also put our new baby's photos on the web site so that my Chinese family in Shanghai and Maimi and friends all over the world could see Annie and Jing Jie and me , they could even read my work too .

So now all I had to do was market my work in the US , simple really , soon I'd be doing something useful with my life , making people laugh . I'd be a writing whore , I'd get paid to make others laugh , the best job in the world . So how would I set about it ? I got a list of radio stations from the internet and started sending emails galore . I'm talking in the hundreds now , to radio stations the length and breath of the US .They could publicise my site then eventually I'd get published , or my play would get produced . It was simple wasn't it . So merrily I went about my business , sending emails galore . Years before I used to send off big heavy envelopes with my work in , with more persistence than hope in my heart ."Thank you for your pieces of paper"was the best put down . I once even met a writer and he agreed to to read my play Shoplife , then he wrote back calling me a plagerist , because it was so good . So I used his note as toilet paper , Shoplife was so good because I had 20years of experience given to me by my sister , I just improved on it , but yet I was called a Copyist , so naturally I was angry and used his note to wipe my bum .

I wondered why my strike rate was so low with my emails to radio stations , then somebody casually

mentioned , “You do know they will just delete anything with an attachment” . In these days of viruses or worms which I’ve discovered is the new trendy word , nobody can risk their PC , so I merrily send and they merrily delete . I’d been wasting my time , but not my money because I’d got a 24/7 package on my internet from AOL .However one radio station did read Shoplife . The DJ or is it Host , he called it hilarious and he could not stop reading it . It turned out he was an actor as well , though isn’t everybody an actor in the US ?

So I thanked him , and quoted him in my future advertising .Humour is a funny thing . The things that make English people laugh are not the same as the things that make Americans’ laugh . We are constantly told by people on tv that English TV is the best in the world , the US material we see is the top 10% , the rest is rubbish . But I know I’d never get my foot in the door in England so I had to persist with my American campaign , so now I pasted in my material , no attachments . Just get them hooked , then paste in a sample then direct them to <http://groups.msn.com/michaelcasey>

Then bingo part2 of my life could begin ,I’d be the man that made America laugh , a naïve sentiment , but it was honest .Only AOL turns things into zip files and some people cann’t unzip your files , its like wanting sex but your zipper is broke and you cann’t get your trousers off . Such a strong urge , but no forfillment .

I switched to MSMAIL and pasted in my stuff , things started to happen , my files weren’t being deleted or too zipped up to be read . At least I wasn’t frustrated any more . Now I had an agent interested , and a new magazine , even a theatre replied .All praise to Bill Gates , and to a Christian called Pat Verato who pointed me in the direction of a few good sites .However some of the sites that I trawled through were just , so very American . Hey , you too can be a writer , just send me 10 dollars and I’ll send you my book “How to make 10 dollars” , and he does . Then there’s magazines you can subscribe to , yes you’ve guessed it , just send another 10 dollars “Writing for Beginners” . There’s all these agents too who are so successful , persuading tap dancing bus drivers to write about Tap Dancing For Bus Drivers , the complete self help book , costs 10 dollars . The agent gets 20percent , and the bus driver pays 5000dollars to print 500 copies , then he can boast he’s a writer , not just a bus driver , and guess what if you pay 10 dollars you can learn to tap dance too .

As for me , what do I think of all this ? I'd say just keep on writing , stop your selling , or attempts at selling , just write a bit . Add to your catalogue of 3 poems and 2 short stories , then search for an agent . Believe you'll never be published and then you won't be disappointed. There is one final thing you can do though , just tell everybody to go to my site <http://groups.msn.com/michaelcasey> And help find a publisher for my book , and then you've guessed it , just send me 10 dollars !

End

this site is my new site

Literary Criticism Jan 23, '09 5:49 PM

Nov99 Michael G Casey email michaelgcasey@hotmail.com

Literary Criticism (c)

By

Michael Casey

I always thought I was a good writer , people told me so , and it was what I wanted to hear , so naturally I believed it . That was until Jee Ji came to live with me . She told me she'd read my stuff , my "rubbish" and give an opinion , her uncles were influential , so perhaps , or just maybe they could help me get published or even produced . Then the world would be my oyster , however I had forgotten one fundamental thing . Jee Ji was Chinese , her English still had a long way to go , and besides which would British humour travel as far as China , or as far as her Chinese brain ?

So naturally I gave her my funniest story to read first , the true yet surreally funny Czech story , and what did she say ? "Its boring" , if she had been a man or one of the lads from work I'd have punched her , or at the very least called her an "ignorant bastard" . But because I loved

her , I took the criticism like a man and smiled , and that was a revelation in itself , why ? Because I had found somebody whom I respected enough not to curse at when she hated my work , my stuff , my "rubbish" . Love is a strange thing , making you smile , instead of curse . So it at least proved how much I loved her , I had told her that my stories were my children , the product of my love , the only thing with meaning in my life , with value in my life . Until true love came along in the form of Jee Ji herself . So now we could discuss things , with love in our eyes , and my writing was , what it really was , just words on paper. Perhaps someday my simple words would really have great value , but now I realised what they were - words , just words , perhaps never to have any meaning , except to me alone . In the Bible it begins with "In the beginning there was The Word" , and after that we have the Bible itself , and the rest is History . So perhaps my humble words would have a beginning , and perhaps my future words would have history too , obviously not as great as The Bible , but I still dream that someday my words will have an effect on people . I don't want to move mountains , just make people laugh , that's enough for me . However humour is a funny thing , I cannot tell a joke to save my life but somehow when I put words on paper I can make people smile and even laugh . When I'm really relaxed and down the pub I can actually make people cry with laughter , and I don't know why , the tears of laughter just flow , so perhaps when I write I should just relax and pretend I'm down the pub and most of all , just don't try to be funny , just let the laughter flow naturally .

So much for the theory , the practice is that you write for years and nobody pays a blind bit of notice , then you write one thing and hey presto you are recognised as a "writer" , well in your office at any rate

. So you are suddenly "world famous" to a group of friends , if you are lucky 30 friends , that's just how "world famous" I became . Offer any other pieces of your "literature" and you are treated like a leper , "Unclean , Unclean" people almost say . I did get one real fan , and I fell in love with her , only she didn't fall in love with me , as she repeatedly said . However I did make a friend for life , which is better than nothing . And I'm use to nothing , so that can't be bad .

Jee Ji revealed her uncles's connections , after I'd already guessed , I was happy but not overwhelmed . I had a play accepted 12 years ago , only it did not happen , so I've given up believing I'd ever be acknowledged as a writer long ago . If a miracle happens and her family decides to help me then that's wonerful , but I have her love and love is the greatest gift of all , so I'm more than happy . World recognition as a writer will never happen , not unless my mother who makes tea in Heaven pulls lots of strings for me , having said that she sent Jee Ji so perhaps helping me find my true vocation is next on my mother's list . "Blessed is he who expects nothing" , so perhaps before I die I will be blessed , and become a writer .

So that's how Jee Ji has become my literary critic , if I get 100 out of 100 she will pass on my work to her uncle , but she is the filter . This makes me smile and is the ultimate irony , becuase her English is very good , though her verbalising is not as good as what's in her head , and she still has to look words up in her electronic dictionary . So I have a Chinese literary critic , who is still learning English !

So I gave her another piece to read , it was "Its all in the Stars" a comedy based on me and Louise . This made her laugh and smile , occasionally Jee Ji would look up and ask "What Mean?" and spell out a

word and I'd explain and make her look it up in the dictionary . So I'd be smiling as I watched her read my story , and then I'd smile even more when she stopped to ask for explanations of English words . God really DOES have the last laugh , first I have to write something funny , which is hardf in itself, then I have to write in such a way as to please a Chinese girl . Now that is the future which I have to bear in mind . As for my back catalogue , I just have to hope that with "The help of God and Two Policemen " as my mum alwasys used to say my old "stuff" will pass the Chinese filter and get 100 out of 100 , and then a Chinese uncle in Maimi or a Chinese uncle in Shanghai will help this Birmingham England boy get his foot in the door as a writer .

So I watch from my rocking chaire as she reads , as I watch for smiles I admire her beauty , though I call her ans "ugly mug" as a joke , and as a way of making her realise that beauty is only skin deep . And we both realise too its because we see each others heart that's why we are sitting opposite eacxh other , that's why I have a Chinese critic of my British humour , and yes God really DOES have a truely great sense of humour . If I can do the impossible then I will perhaps finally get my chance to be a writer . Though I must immediately say that my mum does make the tea in Heaven so I'm sure she's bribing Saint Jude , the patron saint of the impossible , "Look , Saint Jude if you want the best tea for all eternity , just help Michael my youngest son , let him make people laugh for 70 years with his writing . But only if he can make his Chinese girl give him 100 out of 100 . And only if its the Will of God." .So basically that's the situation . Simple really , I just sit in my rocking chair and watch Jee Ji smile and every now and then she says "What Mean?" and I explain and she checks it out in her electonic dictionary , then she

laughs more when she reads the Chinese translation . I'm sure I can hear God laughing in the background , but I REALLY do believe mum sent Jee Ji to me , so I hope its just a matter of time before I get my foot in the door and I get a chance to be a writer . Having said that perhaps I should add that Time is God's greatest joke , didn't Padre Pio once say something like "The prayers I will say tomorrow will have helped you yesterday ."

To finish , perhaps I should just teach Jee Ji more English and then Hey Presto she'll see what a wonderful writer I am . I'm laughing now at my own stupidity , its more likely she'll think even more how useless I am as a writer , however God works in mysterious ways and another thing my mother used to say was "Far Fetched , Like Shit from China." Why ? Because our meeting and falling in love is so unbelievable and so far fetched just like "Shit from China" , so the ultimate joke is that it takes a real Chinese miracle for me to find a girl AND get published .

Or can I hear God Laughing ?

***** this is a true figure of speech that my mother used to use, IT IS NOT anything else.

Padre Pio and Me a true story Jan 23, '09 5:47 PM

Padre Pio and Me ©

By

Michael Casey

It's a contradiction in terms immediately , how can I copyright a Saint . A brand new saint at that . I first heard of him through some Religious reading I did . I feel embarrassed to admit it , but I am a practising Catholic , its not fashionable to have any Faith but its mine so I admit it . Immediately the prejudice begins , but if I WERE A Jew or a Muslim , it would be the same . I do feel that my catholic tastes have given me a broader outlook on life , as has my eclectic tastes and rubbing shoulders with

a wide variety of people .

But I want to talk about Padre Pio . I had a crisis and was reading about him at the time , so I said my prayers to him and the way forward was revealed . Though Padre Pio always says go Higher , he is just a stepping stone on the way to a better place . What is so hard to understand about Padre Pio is how he suffered . He had the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune . Condemned by his own superiors , made to be quiet for a decade and so forth . Science Fiction teaches or rather amuses us about Time Travel , but with Padre Pio it really happened , he wanted to share in Christ's agony so he thought , what if he too could have and suffer the wounds on that day of Crucifixion . So it came to pass that he suffered for 50years . He had the indignity of medical examinations and of being thought just to be a mental patient , but his work and life proved his holiness .

So it's nearly 1990 and I hear about him and read a few books , its hard to understand the value of suffering in this age of quick fix pain killers and the lets have a fix , whatever the fix might be , sex, drugs and rock and roll or whatever . Its like suddenly studying again after years of lying fallow , the learning curve is enormous . So too is it with Padre Pio , the idea behind his life is enormous , but so too is the capacity for love and help .

My favourite story is how Padre Pio explains that The Wedding Feast at Cena happened because Jesus could not refuse his mother . Very Italian , or Irish or Spanish and so on , but could any of us refuse our mothers?

So I thought more about what Padre Pio said , and his motto of Pray Hope Don't Worry became my own . Carpe Diem is another good motto but perhaps this can be used by any Hedonist , or other kind of selfish person .Padre Pio reminds us to pray and that pray is not wasted , its perfume that is never wasted is a phrase I like . My mother always used to say that if you couldn't sleep you should say the Rosary , and she was right . Though in todays world an hour on the Internet or with MTV might do the trick .

So why the devotion to Padre Pio , I'll cut to the chase.

My mother died suddenly but peacefully in her sleep , my brother tried CPR , but she was gone .

Imagine the angusih amongst her 6 children and her husband of nearly 50 years . All except me , my

mother had said no tears when she go ,so I never cried , I was the odd one out .I know how prayerful she was , so I had no need of tears .

Eight bare weeks later my brother , the same brother heard our dad fall out of bed , so he ran to his bedroom . My brother was facing the exact same situation , he tried CPR , the ambulance was called , an injection was given straight to the heart . On weekends there is a doctor in the ambulance , so Luck , if that's the word was with us . The next day 4 of my brothers and sisters came around to tell me the news . When my sister had come around 8 weeks previously I knew somebody was dead but I assumed it was my dad , he's die first we all thought . So now 8 weeks later it was his turn to die .

At the hospital dad was given 1 week to live , I cried like a baby , worse than a baby , but I loved him , so I told he he should go to our mother and not hang on if he didn't want to . The next day I was in my sister's house crying , we picked hymns for his funeral .Yet my father survived , 19 patients on a heart ward , 18 died my dad survived . Padre Pio was beseiged by my prayers , I put Padre Pio's photo under his pillow . Dad lost his mind , he was in Dudley Rd for 3months , 12 weeks , more than half of them all tubed up . His life hanging in the balance . At the same time somewhere in Florida another man was at deaths door , he was a totally stranger to me , I didn't even know his name , I'd never met him , he was give 24hours to live , a Chinese man from Shanghai was at deaths door . The Chinaman survived .My dad's memory was totally wiped , he did not know who I was, I'm your son was greeted with , am I married . I was the favourite son , he did not even know me . But still we prayed , it's a feeling in your guts , just like when you are nearly killed as you cross the road , its in your guts and in your heart , Jesus save my dad , Jesus save my dad , Padre Pio help !!! This goes around your head like a merry go around or a kaleidascope . Finally dad awoke . He said that he can remember hearing the doctor say to wheel him down to the end of the ward , because he'd be dead soon . At that moment my dad awoke, and the doctor dropped his cup of tea in shock . No not an instanteous miracle , but as Dr Singh had said if he were 30years younger he'd have a heart transplant because dad's heart was rubbish .

Now , when I told my brother that dad was reading a newspaper he was shocked . His memory had come back . He knew who we all were .Every day for three months I walked the corridor at Dudley

Rd , the longest hospital corridor in Europe , 1 kilometre long . Finally he left the hospital , my sister had found a good home for him to live in , he was far too weak to live in the family house . For 3 years dad survived , like a Godfather with all his children making constant visits . Finally I met my future wife . It was her uncle who had miraculously survived at the same time as my father . It was her uncle who encouraged us in our love . From Shanghai to Birmingham . These great men , her uncle and my father never met , but I know Padre Pio must have helped both of them . Further prayer was needed to bring me and my wife permanenetly together . A Chinese miracle happened . Now we are wed , we have a 2year old and please God a healthy second baby in the Autumn . The improbability of our meeting , plus the fact that both men HAD to live for us to be married and have a family , this may be a coincidence to some but I know a miracle when I see one. A miracle is something that makes you feel humble , it makes you know that God has whispered your name . When I look at my wife , I feel humble . Seeing our daughter laugh and play also makes me humble as will our new baby.

Then you can look back and know that prayer is like perfume that can never be wasted , your life has led you to where you are now , yes at times sad and terrible , but be humble in the sight of God means something , not just for me , but for all Believers .

I once stood by the fridge and said to Padre Pio , I give up , you take over , all I want is to be married , and perhaps have a family , and do something useful with my life . That was just before my eyes were opened to my wife . I used to say that I got 2 out of my 3 wishes . Perhaps my current occupation is my 3rd wish , or a more outstanding miracle is waiting in the wings , but as Padre Pio said ,always ask for the big Grace .Perhaps

we have to be humble enough to deserve it , because I believe it to be a fact that , truly great people are humble because they know just how little they really know.

Crawling Like a Worm in The Dirt, humbled by a photo copier. Jan 23, '09 5:45 PM

Crawling Like a Worm in The Dirt, humbled by a photo copier.

This is one piece from my www.positivethoughts.com essay/blog postings, I type fast so excuse any mistakes.

Well this is my 100th post, I had hoped I could think up something nice or even spectacular. This is what I've come up with. I'm laughing now as I type. Yesterday 5minutes after I started work I bent down to fill up the copiers. I filled one, then another, then I did a third. I then screamed, I had straightened up too fast and had ricked/strained my back on the right hand side. So these past 27hours have been a lesson in pain and humility. I felt such a fool at work, the girls I work were both sympathetic and funny. Somebody came by for some coloured paper , I bent down to look under our shelf and I was racked with pain, one girl told me to crawl away out of the way so that she could find it instead. I hobbled away, out of the way. The rest of day I moved about like an 80 year old, rather like my own dad. I hoped that on my lunch break while I sat for 30mins in the cathedral my back would be restored. We stand all day in our print as some of you may remember me mention. Prayer and rest for 30mins no doubt aided my soul but not my back. I went back to work and hobbled about for a couple of hours. Then I decided I really had to go home and rest.

Getting home I got off the bus and had to walk only 300yards, a crippled Charlie Chaplin kind of walk, though I look more like Oliver Hardy. I was home 2 hours earlier than normal so the family were surprised.

I told them I was fired as a joke. Then I sat down on an old chair and then I could hardly move. Standing up again was an impossibility. Last Friday we had a drama with my youngest, this Friday, Friday13th it was my turn. My girls all laughed at me, just as I would laugh at them if the tables were reversed. Night came and knew I could never climb the stairs to bed, but at least our bathroom was downstairs. So I tumbled onto our sofa and got ready to spend the night there. Only we have a glass coffee table in front of it and I was afraid of falling off onto it. So at 1am I staggered up the stairs like a drunk with locked joints, then I rolled onto my bed, screaming as I did so. I did sleep, but in the morning I had to slither out like a snake sliding out of bed on my belly. Some positions were possible and some were not. My wife laughed till she cried my youngsters did too, as for me, I laughed and cursed and laughed again. My wife went to see the pharmacy man for advice and a

spray for me. The pharmacist laughed too, he's an old friend. When she got back I was all sprayed up, the old spray and the newly bought one drenching me and my room with the stench of a bad back. I slithered in and out of bed, crawling around as I couldn't stand up straight. As for getting down stairs that would be an impossibility. My wife went shopping, stopping first to steal my debit card, laughing she left me in my bed of pain. When she returned she gave me yogurt and orange juice. Later I just had to go downstairs, but I couldn't walk. I slithered off bed like snake, then made it to my hands and knees, then an inspired idea. I bounced down the stairs one step at a time, on my butt, one step at a time. Then I crawled across our living room and pulled myself up onto a chair. I did notice that we needed a new carpet after 20 years our carpet does need replacing. I then rewarded myself by stealing my wife's pork she'd just made.

Later after some movements like belly dancer of 120 years old, I managed to straighten up. I do walk as if I have a full diaper though. I made it to my big chair in front of my computer. And that's how I got to write this 100th post.

The moral of all this? Well I am a very bad patient. Health is the most important thing in our lives. I rejoice that my girls have a good sense of humour, even if I am the butt of it all. Last year when I had food poisoning they had plenty to laugh about then. And I do laugh at that memory. We are all worms crawling in the dirt. It is God's love that lifts us up, as does our family life. Sometimes it is only through pain and adversity that we learn such truths, sometimes we learn mundane things, but they too have meaning for us, even if it's just the fact that we need a new living room carpet.

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TechnologyJan 23, '09 5:43 PM

The trouble with Technology ©

By

Michael Casey

The trouble with technology is that we all use it , now if we just left it all alone then we all have no problems . Simple really but we all just can't leave it alone , we all just have yo use it . In the beginning if we wanted water we'd fetch the bucket and drop it down a well . My mother was born just 30feet from the sea , but they were fortunate because they had their own well , so they went outside and dropped the bucket down the well and then they had water . Then technology comes along and we just turn a tap and we have clean water instantly . We have hot water too , at the turn of a tap . In one generation so many changes . However technology then works against us , because we assume it will always work and that there will be no problems

We don't even know where the stopcock is , so our homes flood and then we discover we are not covered by our insurance .

My mother grew up with an oil lamp hanging above , no luxury of gas lamps for her , as for electricity , that was just a dream . Nowadays how could any society manage without electricity , its impossible to believe life without electricity . No tv , no radio , no freezers , no street lighting , no traffic lights, the list goes on and on . As for indoor plumbing , the luxury of a hot bath , the WC in the home . My mother grew up with no indoor plumbing , if you needed the bathroom as the American's say , then you'd leave the house and pick your spot in a field with the cows gazing on , as for toilet paper you had a blade of grass to wipe your %^** . As for me we did not have such hardships , we had an outside WC , which we did not have to share with any other family , just 8 Caseys sharing our outside bog/toilet . There was a yard light to illuminate the way and a light in the toilet too . Which was sheer luxury compared to my mum's and my dad's childhoods . My dad would always come home and immediately switch off the yard light because it was wasting electricity . Then a shout would go up "Put the light on" , and my dad would always say "I didn't know" . Then there was the indignity of running out of paper . My brother Tony had a very good sense of humour so it was always the case that I'd shout from the yard "More Bog Roll" which is the English slang for toilet paper . Tony was kind so he'd always bring out a fresh supply of paper , only he liked to tease so he'd push one sheet , just one sheet of paper under the door and say that's all there was in the house , and that mom said I'd have to use my finger . Then he'd go away laughing . He always left a full roll of paper on the doorstep , much to my relief .

Simple technology , we all take for granted , water and electricity . What does all this technology do for us ? It gives us independent comfortable lives , we have clean water , hot water , light and warmth . Then with the miracle of TV we can all watch the world go by , from the comfort of our homes , or the local bar whichever is our true home . We are now a global village as has often been said , but then we become anti social as its easier to watch tv than to interact with real people , we'd rather watch fiction on tv than have a real life . But with technology we can send an email to our neighbour across the road , with pictures and video , rather than leave our castle homes , rather than going over for a coffee and a bar of chocolate . That's one view the optimistic view says that we truly can break down barriers by using the miracle of email to keep us connected though we are

thousands of miles apart . I have to hold my hand up and admit that I am an email Junky , I did send up to 5 emails a day to my friend in another part of the office , because we were both having fun . Then when I fell in love with my one true love it was ONLY because of the miracle of email that our love survived . I sent my girlfriend long long emails everyday for 6 months . She was in Shanghai while I was in Birmingham . My heart was breaking with love and hope until finally she came back to me . I'd come home from work at 3am and hit the keyboard , with luck because of the time difference we'd actually be live and talking almost in real time . You cannot imagine how heart rending it was to come home to an email , to get up in the afternoon and read an email before going on night shift . I think whoever invented email should be made a saint, without email our love would not have lasted . An exchange of letters takes 14 days from Birmingham to Shanghai , so thank God for email and God himself KNOWS just how much I mean that , Sainthood is not high enough reward for the inventor of email . Is it Saint Bill Gates ? The telephone is fantastic , but too expensive , I know my phone bill reached 4 figures , but an email can be read over and over again , and even printed off , so it is a letter.

So I confess email is the most important leap in technology of the 20th Century , as far as I am concerned .

The next stage in the technology story are mobile phones that send/receive video and tv , so we are literally wired up where ever we are in the world science fiction becoming science fact . We all used empty match boxes to pretend we were Captain Kirk communicating to the Enterprise but now they are here for real . If you have been in a theatre, church, hospital and these things bleep you have to decide for yourself are they useful or just a real pain in the *&^% . On balance they are good , but people have to be a lot more considerate , nobody else wants to hear their conversations if they are in church or at the theatre or even cinema . I remember a conversation I had at dinner on Xmas Eve just gone , the guy sat next to me happen to design mobile phones , he was very very good at his job , but I did warn caution about saturation point being reached . Then today 4months on , I am proved right , the mobile giants are in trouble , why , because of saturation point now being reached .

I don't want to end on low note , so I'll tell another anecdote , we all remember when we had our

first colour tv , how wonderful it was and how we all marvel and the colours . The BBC started showing snooker because of the colours , and now tv without snooker would be unimaginable . Then remote control came in , so we'd try different positions and even outside the house and through the glass into the room where the tv was . Technology makes us all like children , its supposed to be a triumph of engineering and technology but really its our greatest toy , and our greatest joy . On Saturday my dad will come out of the old peoples home to spend the day with me and my Chinese wife in our home . I'll be able to show him the internet and I hope I can bring tears of joy to his eyes as I show him County Kerry on the computer monitor . Sitting in my living room in Birmingham he can read the Irish newspapers and see his homeland where he started as a blacksmith in the 1930s . This is how we should be using technology

About Journalism about us. Jan 23, '09 5:40 PM

As we sit in our armchairs watching the news , do we care what is going on over there , in some place hot , too hot to think about , or too cold to bear , ice and snow everywhere . Are we just waiting for the sports report , are we waiting to see was the battle hard or a walkover , did our favourite player score a home run , or 10 touchdowns , were the crowd , the audience behind him , did we win 100dollars from the bet we had on the side . In the interviews after the war was won , were we just watching to see the design on the teams shirt , is that a new logo , is that the same logo spruced up . Or is it a new logo entirely , does it make any difference in how the team played , or just another million dollars in the owners pocket , paid by us the audience , the fans , just so we can all look so identical . The reporters are screaming loudly , half excited and half in fear , they want to watch , they want to cover their eyes , but they are there so they must report . Are they in some arid desert , or in some cold cold place , pain and fear and hope etched on their face , are they in some war zone , or at the stadium , if all we heard were just their words , could we tell the difference , do we care , so long as we can switch it all off with our remote control

The Dead and the Living Jan 23, '09 5:38 PM

The Dead and The Living ©

by

Michael Casey

I first saw a deceased when I was nine years old ,my father said not to worry as the dead are the same as the living , only the laughter has left them , the sparkle has gone from their eyes , the worry has been lifted from their shoulders , and their voice has vanished to eternity .

In paradise the sparkle will return for it is the twinkle of the stars , the laughter will return too for it is the morning breeze and the turning tides are their sides shaking with laughter .

I treat the deceased with the same courtesy as I give to the living , though I find the deceased are always more polite . My father also had a few words to say about the living .

He said that the living are only the caretakers of the soul , yet they think their existence is everything , that they know everything because they experience many things with their senses .

What the living don't acknowledge is that their time is short and when I lay their bodies to rest then their souls continue without them , without their strong , without their weak , without their beautiful or even ugly temporary form , to where I cannot say , only that it is a better place .

Percy the undertaker placed the lid on the coffin ,the soul was free

THE BEGINNING

The Tears I Shed are for MeJan 23, '09 5:36 PM

A family friend died today, just 42, 2 infants and a wife left behind. He only found out he had cancer weeks ago and now he's gone.

The tears I shed are for him and his kin.

The tears I shed are for myself too.

Our ages were close we both have/had toddlers too.

We connected though he was a Chinaman and I was from Birmingham.

He always wanted a family and I had said just hold Annie and you'll soon be holding your own.

He held Annie and 1year later he was holding a daughter of his own.

I was so happy for him, his name was one of the few I could pronounce and remember.

He went back home to Beijing from Birmingham , he had a second daughter.

He held a Phd , but he talked and behaved just like you and me.

Now in the night gave up the fight , his life on this earth is over.

His 3 girls he leaves behind.

I have 3 girls too, his plight has deeply touched me, we are just leaves blowing in he wind.

Our life is short , treasure your girls, no matter which way the wind blows.

Kiss them goodnight, kiss them goodbye as you fly out the door, for one day you will see them no more.

The tears I shed are for me, for all family, we must love our family as we love our God, there is no certainty in this life, just remember to love your wife.

Valentine's PoemJan 23, '09 5:32 PM

Michael G Casey email michaelgcasey@hotmail.com

You're Never Alone When You Are in Love ©

By

Michael Casey

Love is being together , Love is a smile , a Look , A Touch

Or Just A Sigh , Not really knowing why you chose one another .

Yet Together Till You Die

Love is a Kiss soft and gentle on the cheek which warms your heart and makes you glad you chose one another .

A Kiss can lead to more but I'll leave Passion locked Safely behind a bedroom door

Passion spent you'll not give up each not even for Lent .

You'll just lie in warm embrace and remember you forgot to say grace .

Whispers and Promises are made , plans for the future and if she put her hair this way , Do you think it would suit her ?

Then giggles and more embraces , Till the Night is over and with a dig in the ribs you make him move over .

Then your oneness complete , you have to put up with his cold feet !

But when you are apart your hearts are still one , Thought half is absent you are still one .

His socks under the bed , and after what you said .

His "toys" scattered about , and the clout you'll give when he returns and the warmth of your body he yearns .

His cold feet to chill you after he thrills you , are absent yet the thought makes you smile , at least you have the comfort for a while.

His grins and leers , which makes you smile at least you'll have peace for a while .

But his heart is still with you , the love is always there - as bright as your fair hair .

Close your eyes and he is still there , Remember the embrace as he played his fingers across your face .

Let your dreams go and remember the whispers in your ear , warm kisses on your shoulder before he gets bolder . The warmth of love that soars through your blood .

Dream long , Dream deep , your Man toils while you sleep , though you are apart you are still together whatever the weather , for you are never apart for he is locked in your heart .

Though sometimes he can be trying , there's Never any need of crying for your love is Undying.

Always remember he fills your heart even when you are apart

End

Its almost that time of year again so here's this

The Light from a CandleJan 23, '09 5:24 PM

I watched as the candle's life ended, smoke spiraled in the air. I tried to see where the smoke was going only it just disappeared into nothingness. Another candle came to an end, but suddenly it rared up a final flicker of flame then it was gone, black smoke twirling into the air. I strained to see where the smoke was going only it was no use. I'd need a magnifying glass, binoculars, a microscope or a periscope, smoke just could not be followed. Another candle went out again I strained to see where its life had gone, but it was no use, the trail disappeared into nothingness. The candles were going out randomly, I had to jump from one to another in a vain attempt to see its moment of death, so that I could observe what was happening to them. In all 7 maybe 8 candles "died" as I watched from my position sat next to the candle rack in the cathedral on my lunch break. That was all yesterday, and today the process was repeated. Each candle is a hope, a wish, a prayer. Just as Jazz music is music turned into smoke, that weavers and sneaks its way through an audience, a candle and its

smoke is a living flame of hope and love which we all hope will touch God's spirit and let him hear our prayers. The smoke from a candle is like a ballet dancer doing the most intricate of dances, its like girl dancing with a ribbon at the Olympics. Only the candle and its smoke might say more for us when we can't think of the right words to say, God Help Us, can be all we can say, but if said from the heart then it is enough, For Faith Moves Mountains.

And candles are more than flickers that end in smoke, they remind us of the Light and Warmth of God's Love.

Let there be LightJan 23, '09 5:22 PM

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Let my tears be my words

Let the candle light be my eyes

Let the flowers in bloom be my lips

Let their scent be my blood

Let the wind be my breath

Let clouds be my mood

Let childrens laughter be my hope

Let widows sighs be my conscience

Let a strangers prayers be my delight

Let the bees be my wisdom

Let the trees be my strength

Let my patience reach to the stars

Let me be always remembered in your prayers

That's all folks as BUGS Bunny used to say,

I hope you enjoyed 300 and not Out

Michael Casey 10th August 2012