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Thanks for the Greetings

The FP would like to express its thanks to the hundreds of fans who were kind enough to send Christmas Greetings to this column.

Sadly, these communications have remained unanswered due to the lack of an expense account with which to pay for secretarial assistance. (Editor, please note...)

[Duly noted, and ignored - Ed.]
In circumstances such as this, it is worth mentioning that the Flying Pussy will never be forced on to the defensive; this column is not inclined to explain; it does not apologise; the FP is, in most respects, entirely self contained and idiosyncratic (witness our wonton use of colonic punctuation).

Now, following on from the foregoing, many of the cards sent to the FP were accompanied by a 'round robin' letter. These well-intentioned, and lovingly produced tracts usually contained puzzling details of holidays taken in distant places, and the minutiae of scholastic successes gained by total strangers.

However, despite our apparent indifference to the outside world, the Flying Pussy can occasionally exhibit a rather soft under-belly.

We feel constrained, therefore, to print for our readers the following seasonal letter, received in an envelope without a stamp. It brought a lump to the FP's throat.

'Dear Flying Pussy,
MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Last February, Stanley's ticket had all six winning numbers in the lottery. Having phoned Camelot to have them confirmed, he immediately sent an ill-advised letter of resignation to his boss.

My family and friends should know exactly what my husband wrote:

"Dear Sir, I have been a thorn in your flesh for many years. You are a masochistic so-and-so and seem to have enjoyed every minute of my deprecations. You have provided fuel for my aggression by denying me the opportunity to earn a decent living, and by entrusting the highest paid jobs in the organisation to the most sadistic and inept members of your personal staff.

You have also denied me a parking space, and thus obliged me to walk 100 metres each morning and evening through rain, hail, snow, and the poopies of the entire dog population in this part of town.

I now give you notice that, failing a substantial increase in salary, I shall be obliged to consider putting out a contract on your life.

I can afford to do this, having taken out a 3rd mortgage on my home.

On reflection, I shall go ahead with the contract anyway, so you would be well advised to resign your position immediately, and scurry off to hide in some vile conurbation where your disgusting practices can come to their full flowering - far away from all the decent people whose lives



you have ruined.

May I beg one last favour before you go? Please give my fondest regards to your wife. I have had the pleasure of knowing all aspects of Rosemary's plangent beauty, at length, and at leisure, for many intimate moments.

Those exquisite moments extended, on occasion, to the fullness of hours.

She's a right little raver, as I expect you know. Yours sincerely
S T A Smithers."

Stanley made two serious mistakes. He left a copy of his letter on the computer, and he didn't notice that the date of his 'winning' lottery ticket was for the previous Saturday. He won nothing and lost everything - his job, his house, and me (I'm suing for divorce).

He's been institutionalised after a severe breakdown, so he's probably lost his mind as well.

On a brighter note - our sons, Vic and Sorely, expect to be paroled in 2006.

Happy New Year
Elmor Smithers (Mrs)

P.S. Stan's action for wrongful dismissal failed on appeal.

Heard in the town

It seems that there was a German POW who was released from confinement twice weekly to work in a lady's garden. He was very keen to plant bulbs and other stuff, and kept the place neat and tidy.

The woman was sad to see her German labourer repatriated at the end of 1945 - until the crouches he had planted flowered in February 1946.

They spelled out 'Heil Hitler' across the middle of her lawn. That's saying it with flowers!

Do any FP readers recall this incident? Perhaps it occurred within the 10 Parishes.

(A rural myth, perhaps, do readers know of any other such tales, real or imagined, that they wish to share? Big Ed)

R (Reg) Peugeot writes

I was being driven through a narrow lane

Up on the Farm

I hope that by the time you read this the sun will have reappeared, as it seems that since the start of the new year it has forgotten us!

It is very windy here this morning but still mild and damp . . . and was the coldest, hardest winter on record that was forecasted! We did have a couple of days of snow but our cows stayed out and most are still out.

The winter so far has been reasonable for farmers, although some land has been too wet to work on. Up here the land remains dry



despite the rain and we can take advantage of that in the winter. However, it is swings and roundabouts as in the summer we dry out quickly in hot weather.

We are looking after a young bull for friends of ours who are short of house room and he is in with our young ones. He is a smart white bull with the nick name of "Snowball" and he has fitted in very well.

The bigger bulls are doing well and should be ready for sale about May time. It will be interesting to see where they go and what sort of herds they will be "in charge" of!

Some of you will laugh at this bit . . . but I have a new friend - a lovely little robin who comes to see me whenever I go to feed the stock in doors.

Keith says he only comes in for the bits of barley that the bullocks drop but he only appears when I am on my own. Then he stands on one of the gates and sings to me while I work! He is an example of the nature that is all around us, if only we stop to look.

Last time I told you about the shorthorn competition here in the South West. The results came out just before Christmas and I am very pleased to say we won several prizes, including one for Archie and one of his young sons.

It is good to see that Archie's good breeding is showing in his offspring. We all try to produce the very best whatever we do in farming and it is nice to get noticed!!

Do you remember I told you about the new set up for payments to farmers (the Single Farm Payments) and how the forms are so complicated and Defra rules about them so bizarre?

Last week we had a notice to say we had filled out one of the forms wrongly. When we rang Defra and pointed out that the letter we sent last May corrected everything, they had to admit they were wrong.

Then they wanted us to write a letter to confirm we had sent a letter in May and that they had confirmed that they had found it and now knew that we knew that they knew . . . etc.

I think that people at the ministry have shares in paper making companies! Who would be a farmer?

Lastly, are you keeping to your new year's resolutions? One of mine just flew out of the window: I am late again with my article! Hope the sun shines where you are.

when I met BS03. The Big Shiny One, as we used to call him, was being positioned to tow a milk float out of a ditch.

"Hi! Reg," he said, as my driver pulled into an adjacent passing space.

I returned the greeting, and complimented him on his fine array of mud splatters. He clearly seemed to be a contented vehicle. We had time for a chat, as his driver and the milkman searched for a suitable place among the bottles to fix the tow-rope.

He reported that L (Land) Rover was enjoying his semi-retirement. I sent my best wishes to the dear old workhorse.

My companion then told me of a recent incident. The youngest of his drivers, when sitting in the front passenger seat, opened one of the many storage compartments. Therein lay a spray-can containing a substance called 'Virtual Mud'.

"I remember exactly what the boy read from the packaging," remarked my friend. "'With this product you can be the envy of your neighbours. Just spray the contents liberally over the sides of your 4X4. It will REALLY look as though you have spent the weekend OFF-ROAD!!'

"Sickening, isn't it?" he added.

I was laughing too much to reply.

"My previous owner planned to spray me with this stuff!" continued BS03, "oh, the shame of it!"

"As a towie you would probably have been rather proud to be disguised as a working vehicle..." I said, gently.

He pondered for a moment.

"Reg...I think you may be right! But since I've been living and working in the hills everything has changed!"

I believed him.

At that moment his driver inched him forward and BS03 effortlessly hauled the milk float out of the mud.

Our namesake photographed

The Flying Pussy column is delighted to see a photograph of Thomas Bessie, the winged cat, displayed on page 268 of the Wiveliscombe History Book. Thomas was a well known character-about-town in the 1880s.

He displays, in the picture, all the sophistication, world-weariness, and aplomb that are integral to the FP. We feel comforted that this little critter will be around to inspire readers of the History for many decades to come.

The Flying Pussy wholeheartedly congratulates the makers of this book. It is a very fine achievement.

Swampy reports lost ferret

Pepsi has gone missing! With Ted's assistance he chewed through a wire fence and they both ran off.

Ted has been found and is pitiful to see in his loneliness. We would ask our vast readership to keep an eye out for the missing ferret and notify the FP of any sightings.

I'm Sure You'll Have Noticed . .

I'm sure you'll have noticed that when the holiday weekends - which for many seem to meld into one long break of anything up to a fortnight - have passed we get buffeted by the media on how to get rid of the surplus fat accumulated by over-eating/drinking/lazing and general lack of exercise.

The daily papers carry pieces telling you how to sort out those problems which, by now, are keeping you sleepless with worry.

The television starts pumping out much the same which they either made during the late and long-gone summer or even chatted together with clips from earlier but identical shows (and there are those two and three-hour compilations of clips with countdowns of the best hundred boobos in half a century of soaps; overweight there too!)

Who are these people at whom those things are aimed? It may be supposed that there are those who over-indulged themselves on the booze and certainly for a few days in early January there were some spooky looking folk making their way to and from the shops while avoiding eye contact. "Do you mind, I'm a touch delicate this morning!"

But has anyone made note of acquaintances who have put on a great deal of weight? Of being generally very sluggish and in need of spells at the gym and who never needed such a thing until now?

It's mostly rubbish, because those people - the newspaper editors, the television producers - have vast areas of space that have to be filled each and every day.

All that recuperation stuff is useful to pop in between the inevitable repeats of instalments of situation comedies which are interspersed with commercials trying to sell us DVD sets of the series they keep throwing at us anyway. All that and the advertisements for half-price sales which must end soon but which continue for weeks and which are useful too for the daily press in helping to fill the pages.

One can get carried away by all that and, getting back to the first paragraph, do those who have a nice long break over Christmas and New Year give a thought to those good folk who work in the shops?

Yes, they have the 25th and the 1st off and that's about it because those executive types at head offices have set up the sales and gone off for their long breaks. Someone has to do the actual preparation and then take the money and wrap the bargains.

So if occasionally you find yourself irritated by a salesperson who is rather unsmiling, if not decidedly grumpy, do try to forgive. They too might like a longer break and, even, be paid something extra for being unable to enjoy that.

Jas