

“When / use a word”,
said
Humpty Dumpty,
“it means just what
I choose it to mean,,,
neither more nor less.”

“The question is,”
said Alice,
“whether you can make
words mean different things.”

In my narrative I have already taken you back to 1946. In the interest of exploring some further ideas I am sure you won't mind going the extra mile to arrive at 1939, and the beginning of World War 2. When the utter seriousness of the situation became so starkly visible, the great majority of people of all ages were determined 'to do their bit'. For teenagers like me, there was salvage collection 'for the war effort', fire watching, and in my case, at weekends and in the holidays, farm work and a forestry camp; then, later on, joining one of the cadet forces. My father was too old to take up again his rifle and bayonet put down at the end of WW1, so he became a Special Constable.

The combination of wartime diet and many miles of beat pounding produced a leaner, fitter Dad than we had seen for a number of years, while 'The Law' took on a different image when its face was that of your own father. Of the few accoutrements that he brought home, one was his police whistle, surreptitiously tried out, and another was his police manual or handbook, which defined just about everything. It provided fascinating reading to a fourteen-year-old, particularly the descriptions or definitions of deviant or sexual crimes. One phrase that stood out was 'unlawful carnal knowledge'. Any sort of carnal knowledge was eagerly sought, but the *unlawful* sort was wide-eyed imagination stuff.

Quite recently, a friend has suggested that when someone was arrested 'for unlawful carnal knowledge' the initial letters became the standard abbreviation in police notes, and, in turn, became the word which many people still abhor and never ever use - in spite of being told by 'alternative' comedians and TV programme makers that it is an adult world. Humpty Dumpty would have a field day with modern TV 'thinkspeak'.

It was an even more reprehensible word in 1939; and so, picture the dilemma of many of the young men joining the forces from then on, and finding themselves in a totally alien culture and vocabulary. I served on the lower-deck of the Navy and encountered such a variety of words - genital, copulatory and excretory words - used alone or in such 'poetic' combinations - largely to try to give some colour and emphasis to an otherwise very limited vocabulary. The dilemma that presented itself was, essentially, how to appear manly, one of the lads, without resorting to the all-pervading obscenities. Some found the answer in back-slang - i.e. the reversal of the offending word. Thus "Chuff it!" - "Oh dear, I have hit my finger"; "Chuff off!" - "Please go away"; "Chuff me!" or "Well, I'm chuffed!" - "Gosh, how surprised I am!".

The euphemisms and service slang returned to Civvy Street as we all became ex-servicemen - though we continued to hear them in context in 'The Navy Lark' and 'Much Binding in the Marsh' et al. But gradually Kilroy wasn't everywhere and Chad no longer demanded "Wot no....?" - totally meaningless concepts to most readers I am sure. Individuals continued to use their service slang, however, and gradually origins were lost and meanings changed as they were taken up by wives, girlfriends, work mates. And so it was that 'chuffed' was demobbed and achieved a different connotation - one of approbation. Thus, to be "Dead chuffed" is to be highly pleased - although I still get an odd reaction when an attractive young woman tells me that she had been "very chuffed"!

How many times and in how many ways do words and ideas undergo such metamorphosis without any serious help from Humpty Dumpty? Words that have a legitimate and specific meaning in their original creation and context are taken up and fed into the common vocabulary because they may 'sound right' or appear to give verve to an unimaginative vocabulary. Take a simple sounding expression such as 'negative feedback' - as originally coined in the terminology of electronic and control theory there was a specific meaning, namely that of taking a small part of the output from an electronic circuit or a control system, reversing it and feeding it back to the input end of the circuit or system and as a result, producing stability. Because it sounded meaningful in the instant-speak of the media or the City, the expression was taken up, lost its original meaning, and became yet another easy-come-easy-go bit of jargon. Just as 'black box' emerged also from the world of electronics design, where it is applied almost without exception to any innovative electronic device. Thus, when aircraft flight recorders were first used in planes, the boffins, when talking to the media, inevitably used the jargon and referred to the recorders as 'black boxes'. Not knowing any better, the media people assumed that the device was indeed a Black Box, and some even to this day refer to it as such - even Black Box Flight Recorder - which is rather like continuing to say "Gee-gee horse" when you've actually grown up. Someone even purported to have located the Professor Black who had invented the Black Box!

How often has history been re-written or myth created because someone who wasn't even there, who only knows half the story, or wants to impress with his instant 'knowledge', or, having good access to the media of the day, wants to 'say his piece'? Constantly, for example, so-called 'documentaries' are shown on television where someone is putting an entirely new slant on the last war - rubbishing the accepted version of events, denigrating the leaders or Service heads of the time, calling into question decisions, plans. Obviously much information was kept back or propaganda disseminated, either to fool the enemy or to encourage domestic morale. But how can someone today, reading from the records, possibly think that they can construct the actual situation as it then was? I can say, without fear of contradiction, that they can never recapture the ethos of the time, a feeling or mood or

determination that has to be experienced to be understood. When you look at newsreel of London on VE night, how can anyone who wasn't there, capture the thrill and the joy and the exuberance of that day and night? And yet, I can look at the scenes in front of Buckingham Palace or in Whitehall as Winston Churchill addressed the crowds, and still recall with a shiver, and know that I was somewhere in those seething rejoicing masses. But how could I convey to anyone that thrilling mood, the laughter, singing and dancing? Impossible! How can any history be truly written to represent the totality of an event, occasion? Having lived through some events and seen how they are now, even less than sixty years after their happening, depicted and analysed, I despair at finding *any* history of *any* time or event with much more than an outline or sketch of the actuality or truth. Everything is subjective in the eyes of the participants, and even more so in those of the subsequent analysts. When, as often happens, a history is deliberately rewritten or misrepresented, where is truth?

Take one Naval event that has gone down into popular perception - part myth, part history - the Mutiny on the Bounty. Unless you have been living with the pygmies in the deepest Amazon forest, you cannot fail to have seen on television at least one of the many re-runs of the film featuring Charles Laughton and Clark Gable. I saw it in 1938, the year of its first release, and like everyone else, I have lived with the belief, yes, *belief*, that Cap'n Bligh was a vile, cruel tyrannical man who drove his crew to mutiny by ceaseless flogging, keel-hauling and other nastiness. *Mea culpa!* How wrong I had been. Total character assassination in the interest of popular writing and cinema box-office. The film was based upon a book by Nordhoff and Hall, who seized, like many authors, upon the unhealthy and prurient fascinations that physical and capital punishment have for many people. Thus, what an opportunity to dwell at great length on the detail of flogging, the making of the cat o' nine tails, the way the man was triced up, flogging round the fleet, keel-hauling and the rest, not to mention the Press Gang! And what good cinema it made - the repulsive Laughton as the vile Bligh, and the handsome, plausible Gable as *Mister Christian!*

Sorry to disappoint you. There was no Press Gang, no flogging round the Fleet, no keelhauling. In the whole of the twenty-seven thousand miles of the voyage to Tahiti, there had been, and reputable historians accept this, just *two* floggings, the normal punishment at that time for the offences committed. HMS Bounty was not a man o' war, she was an armed transport, purchased for the express purpose of taking breadfruit plants from Tahiti to the West Indies. Lieutenant William Bligh had sailed twice before to the South Seas as Sailing Master under Captain James Cook. His character would have been totally known, and he was recommended by Joseph Banks the botanist and explorer who had voyaged with Cook. Thus, unlike Cook who carried a party of marines on board for protection, Bligh had none, for no trouble was anticipated. Following a practice introduced by Cook and learned from him, Bligh, in fact, took considerable care over the health and well

being of his crew. Amongst the enlightened practices were the feeding of the men with anti-scorbutic foods such as sauerkraut and a type of marmalade; below decks, he introduced a form of fumigation and 'sweetening' by burning charcoal in iron pots. His big mistake was to allow the men total laxity in Tahiti, many of them taking native 'wives', and it was the enforced leaving of these and the idyllic island life that were the chief causes of the mutiny.

Bligh had been chosen to command the voyage because of his exceptional reputation as a navigator, surveyor, cartographer and naturalist, and his skills as a navigator were tested to extremes when he was cast adrift with eighteen others in an open boat just twenty-three feet long. (The very same size as the boat in which I, myself, learned to sail). Sailing principally from memory, with no friendly land near, he successfully navigated a mainly unexplored ocean, covering over 3,600 miles - much further than Southampton to New York - and reaching Timor in forty-seven days, without the loss of a man, placing it high in the list of epic small boat voyages - and *mapped and surveyed as he went*. I do not class him as a personal hero, but I admire his courage and skill, and was glad to read his own account in a re-issue of his log and narrative to mark the bi-centenary of the voyage.

This is just one, and probably a minor one, of the many instances of truth being stood on its head and history being re-written, for financial gain, personal power, national pride - it is happening all the time. As communication is so rapid and wide-ranging nowadays, the fabrication is often seen and exposed in a very short time, but it does not *undo* the harm already done, and people are very slow to eliminate the misunderstanding, the misconception, the *lie* from their minds. (I'll bet that you will have the greatest difficulty in accepting that Bligh was not tyrannical and cruel; Hardy, Nelson's Captain at Trafalgar is recorded as inflicting far more severe and frequent punishments than Bligh ever did). If you use or are in touch with scientific literature and other people's research, you must be aware of many cases where results have been 'massaged' or even falsified to achieve the outcome that the researcher wanted in order to promote an idea or enhance a personal reputation. The problem can be that, even when the falsification is exposed, there will still be people who will have taken on board and continue to accept as true, the originally published conclusions - as in the case of cot deaths. There are still some who accept that a proportion of deaths are due to 'breathing apnoea', in spite of the fact that it is now known that the five siblings upon whom the research conclusions were based, had all been murdered by their mother. Not, however, deliberately falsified results, but incredible naïveté on the part of the researcher, and only brought to light 25 years later by a very perceptive District Attorney, the mother then confessing.

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Unless a whole concept is indelibly carved in stone, or defined with a nicety that defies alteration, you can bet your last penny that *some* wiseacre, know all, will come along with "what it *really* means is...". Even when a definition *has* been given, that does not stop an idea being hijacked and a concept being totally altered from that intended by its progenitor. Take a simple notion such as 'Ley Lines'. Simple? Not any more. Someone who comes to the concept now will find a mishmash of conflicting ideas ranging from sacred ways linking mysterious sites of ancient significance to lines of earthly power and energy, and *black* ley-lines and *white* ley-lines, ideas that are guaranteed to produce apoplexy in most archaeologists today. If these same archaeologists were to use the 'ley-line' concept of Alfred Watkins properly, they would find in their hands a tool with which they could open up much relating to human activity stretching back three or four thousand years. "Who on earth," do you ask "is Alfred Watkins, and what did he do?" Well, he is only the bloke who *coined* the term 'ley-lines', and, if you are interested, you will find all about it in his book *The Old straight Track*. I shall give details in an addendum. Watkins' ley-lines are a fact, a reality, and I get immense pleasure as, with map and compass, I identify and follow them over the never-ploughed, never-developed terrain with which this area abounds. There are wonderful moments of serendipity as I come across a totally isolated and abandoned little bridge or stepping stones, or see the shadow of a long abandoned track when the sun slants across a slope, or a light fall of snow reveals it. Likewise, the 'earth currents' are a reality, as anyone who wants to read can find out (Encyclopaedia Britannica is a good starting place, and knowledge of them can provide an understanding of the causation of certain serious illnesses, but, as with Watkins' lines, I'll provide more information for the enquiring mind in the addenda or appendices). An interesting reflection is that I find that many people who have come to 'ley-lines' in their mystical, 'earth energy' form are just not interested in the truth of their origin, and indeed, would rather have their mystery than the truth.

But don't you find this to be the case in whatever area of activity or human knowledge that you care to choose? 'Don't give me facts, I've made up my mind'. 'When I've made up my mind nothing will shift me'.

I have related how I came to join the Training Department as a stage in my rehabilitation at work. One of my first tasks in my new post was to become familiar with the newly adopted *Système International d'Unités*, the SI System, or International System of Measurements, and then, having become familiar, to assess the impact within the Works and produce publicity. Why should this be of such great, or any, significance? Well, the world, i.e. the complete scientific, technological, commercial, industrial community, embracing the whole planet, had agreed upon the exact definition of every function capable of being measured. Thus, a metre is the same in Novaya Zemlya as it is in Wagga Wagga, and likewise, from degrees Celsius to teslas or sieverts, anywhere in the world

they are the same. This is the world of the engineer, the scientist, of practicality. If you buy a car, you expect that all the wheels will be round, and of the same diameter, and that the pistons will slide effortlessly in their cylinders whether the car is made in Taiwan or Toulouse. If you tune your radio to a designated frequency of transmission, you will receive your programme whether you use the most sophisticated hi-fi system in your home or a wind-up clockwork radio in the African bush. Would that other realms of human activity were as precise and predictable!

"But", you may say, "what about the world of imagination, of fantasy, of the spirit, even; are they not suppressed, stifled, by your desire for order, definition, predictability; are you not creating a world of automata, robots, without any individuality - removing the ability of individuals to choose for themselves?" Not at all. Does not our society, civilisation, depend upon universally accepted laws, laws which if broken have defined consequences? Is it not obvious to all, that children, to take an example, are far happier, grow more assuredly, when their world is certain, regulated? Whether one likes it or not, the 'natural' laws exist, apply, whether or not one accepts them. Ignore them at your peril. If you disagree, try jumping off a cliff and see whether you can suspend the laws of gravity. But an understanding, recognition of the laws of physical existence can be liberating and certainly do not stifle the imagination, the sheer *magic* of living.

Running over the fell-side behind my house is a narrow mountain road that I take when heading out of the area. This road at its summit goes through a pass of sorts. One morning some years ago I took the road just before daybreak; a beautiful morning with a strong following breeze blowing in from the sea, and over the pass. When I arrived at the summit and looked over, I just had to stop and gaze in awe and wonder at the literally breathtaking sight that met my eyes. *There* was the magic. Tendrils and streamers of mist flowed down from the pass, wreathing around the scattered trees and junipers. Every blade of grass, every twig, every frond, had its dewdrop, every hollow its little pool - and every single drop of water held its own personal rainbow. The ridges of the hills and mountains ranged east to the distant Pennines, over which the sun had just emerged, and every ridge was a line of opalescence, of pearl. What it was to be faced with a sea of rubies, diamonds, amethysts, and a backdrop of mother-of-pearl! I simply sat *entranced*. Yet, in my stillness, the logical 'me' knew that the air coming from the sea was moisture laden, saturated, and that as it was funnelled through the 'venturi' of the pass, it was speeded up and compressed, only to expand and cool on the down slope, just as the gas circulating in a refrigerator system is compressed, expands and cools. The cooler air could not hold the moisture and it settled on all available surfaces, forming drops which then refracted the incident light - and so on. Does that deny or remove the beauty, the magic? Not for me, for I can find a different kind of magic in the order, the functioning of natural phenomena, natural laws.

On an even grander, more immense, scale, who can look at the pictures received from the Hubble Space Telescope and not be amazed? One that I remember in particular is of a gas cloud trillions upon trillions of light-years in length, in *one corner* of which a completely new *galaxy* was forming. Yet even here, in this immensity, one can marvel at the skill of the astronomer-scientists who can, by the application of universal and natural laws, identify and quantify the component gases and measure, for instance, the speed of movement of surrounding stars. But, and more amazingly, in the face of that immeasurable immensity of uncertain origin, a neuroscientist at a very recent international conference on research into the human brain could say that, with its billion, trillion connections, the human brain is the most complex unit in the whole Universe!

But more than that, and here is the awesome thought, every brain is contained in a unique human being, and each being is at the centre of its own universe. A universe made up of the material composition and the - what? Whatever it takes to make that individual unique. Whatever it takes to make me gaze transfixed at the beauty of a mountain dawn, while around me the sheep continue grazing or ruminating, completely unmoved. I will not even *begin* to *try* to take the thought any further, but think instead of the dedicated work of the brain-scientists, the neuroscientists as they struggle to understand the totality of this 'universe within a universe', the human brain. With my own experience in the world of measurement, I can marvel at the skill and ingenuity of the measuring techniques, devices, without necessarily understanding the complexity of what it is that is being studied, measured; just as these same scientists might have equivalent difficulty in appreciating the complexity of measurement within a nuclear reactor.

On the other hand, why should we not, just for a little while, pause and consider this wonder of wonders, the human brain, and the unique vehicle, the human body in which it finds itself? Unique in that its fingerprints have no duplicate worldwide, neither is there matching DNA anywhere on the planet, so we are told - six thousand million and still counting and expanding exponentially. And yet this brain, this body, are in one gigantic lottery. How else can you explain, for instance, to a cretinous dwarf in Bangladesh that if someone had provided a modicum of iodine to replace that which his native soil lacked, he would have a mind which functioned properly and a body which grew to a normal size? Or what about these brains, which are not going to live more than a year or so because they are in diseased or starving children 'living' in what is so easily written off as the 'Third World'? Or these that will be programmed from birth to carry on a warring, family or religious feud whether in Afghanistan, Sicily, Northern Ireland or wherever? Happy and fortunate these brains, which are being nourished physically and lovingly fed knowledge, in what are going to be well rounded people. Most *unhappy* and *unfortunate* these brains, which started off so well and hopefully, but which became polluted and destroyed by alcohol and drugs; or equally unfortunate these others which, because they or their owners show some

aberration, difference from the accepted norm, are destined to be invaded and possibly warped by prescribed drugs, some of whose very *side-effects* can be so alarming just to *read* about, or, Heaven forbid, shocked into submission by a bizarre 'therapy', that is not understood and is administered by practitioners, some of whom are not fully trained in its application and who would not submit to it themselves.

Many people, if they consider it at all, are happy to let the lottery be administered by God or Allah. Believers in reincarnation put it all down to past lives and the carry-over of karma there from. Others believe that they arrive back into the new brain-body combination complete with a worked out plan of action. David Icke, in one of his books, when considering the tragedy of cot-death, suggests that maybe the infant had just to go through the birth process to finish off its overall development as a well-rounded spirit, or that the parents had to go through the trauma of bereavement to complete *their* full development.

Astrologers have *their* own way of looking at the origins and future of each unique brain-body-spirit combination. But in which, oh where, in what system do I find my own *raison d'être*? Do I join the other five hundred million people worldwide who are Sagittarians, or do I throw in my lot with the slightly smaller number who are, to use Chinese astrology, Wind Buffaloes? My date and time of birth, according to the Mayan calendar, are so auspicious as to make me a possible candidate for some celestial high office; so do I settle for that? If I should read my 'horoscope', courtesy of some newspaper or magazine, do I reflect upon the idea that in Ulan Bator or on the shores of Hudson Bay, other Sagittarians are having, have had or are going to have a similar day to mine?

It is into this gigantic lottery, with the dice forever being thrown, the wheels forever being spun, through this minefield of human beliefs and practices, that the mainly white, middle-class males who make up the bulk of practising psychiatrists and psychologists must make their way. It is the minds that are the products of these origins, beliefs and life-styles, minds that are not behaving as their owners or the society in which they live would have them behave, which have to be regulated, mended. But first, they have to be categorised, and here we enter an entirely different and additional lottery, a lottery with so many possible variables, variables that are as numerous as the practitioners. The practitioners are as varied as their own origins, upbringing, the school of psychiatry or psychology in which they were trained, or to which they adhere -, schools that may spawn closed minds and tunnel-visionaries equally with the brilliant, the caring; practitioners who find it necessary to use an esoteric language that might give Humpty-Dumpty some problems, so subjective are its interpretations. One psychiatrist, for instance, writes of the 'private language and idiosyncratic narratives glorifying or obfuscating disorders of the mind'. Well, he wrote it; who am I to disagree?

I wrote earlier of the definitions and standards that governed the work and communication of my own profession. Would that there were similar standards and points of reference in the professions of the mind. But, on what scale and from what point zero do you place, for instance, an individual who is 'manic depressive'? The Clinical Psychologist who became my neighbour when I took up residence in a farmhouse flat after leaving my home, had analysed herself and concluded that *she* was manic-depressive. Over a period of four years we became friends, and I can promise you that she demonstrated nothing other than the expected and frequently observed mood swings of her gender. I sometimes wonder just how she would have characterised Harry (obviously not his real name) who used to come and stay with me from time to time, seeking the sort of sanctuary that my house and surroundings provide. Now Harry *was* a manic-depressive! Did he not have a total of nineteen months, and still counting, of 'voluntary' incarceration to his credit? He was a general practitioner who could no longer practice, but who had many insights into what had happened, was being done to himself. He wrote a diatribe against psychiatry and the prostitution, as he saw it, of true medicine, by doctors who engaged in psychiatry. He could not get his essay published, so, having the only copy extant, I shall include it in my writings should they ever see the light of public day. Posthumously as it turns out, for Harry died young from the accumulation of all that he had received or inflicted on himself.

It is perhaps not surprising that one of Harry's heroes was Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, who preferred to be known, and who can blame him, as Paracelsus. Having read the account of the latter's life and work in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, he could definitely become one of my heroes. Beginning his education in the Bergschule in Austria, the young Paracelsus was being trained to become an overseer and analyst for mining operations in gold, tin and mercury and other metals and ores, gaining knowledge and experience that laid some of the foundations of his later discoveries in the field of chemotherapy, which, for someone born when Columbus was discovering the New World, was most remarkable. He attended the Universities of Basel, Tübingen, Wittenberg, Vienna, Leipzig and Heidelberg and along the way graduated in medicine. But, in spite of, or because of this experience, he rejected much of the, then, traditional education and medicine - which is perhaps the rebel spirit with which Harry identified. Paracelsus wrote "The universities do not teach all things, so a doctor must seek out old wives, gypsies, sorcerers, wandering tribes, old robbers and such outlaws and take lessons from them. A doctor must be a traveller... Knowledge is experience." We are a bit short on sorcerers, wandering tribes and outlaws these days, but in spite of that I find much in the *spirit* of Paracelsus to which I warm, and I would far rather find my own remedies in natural herbs and substances than in neatly packaged capsules in a bottle. It is interesting to reflect that many of these self-same capsules will contain in refined form the very remedies that had been used and dispensed during numerous past centuries by the old

wives, gypsies and sorcerers. In the refining, much will have been lost, for often within a plant and discarded in the refining are the buffers and catalysts that aided the process of healing and minimised adverse side effects.

It is all too easy to conjure up in one's mind pictures of a Golden Age of caring, of dedicated nuns, monks and friars issuing forth from their monasteries and priories, dispensing unqualified love and tinctures and salves made from the herbs and simples grown in the physick garden, with no thought other than the physical and spiritual well-being of the sick, the mentally afflicted, the halt and the lame, the paupers (although William Cobbet insists that pauperism did not exist before the dissolution of the monasteries - provocative thought!). Doubtless such an Age never existed as such, but isn't it a lovely concept to reflect upon, particularly in respect of the mentally disturbed? It is so difficult to understand and tolerate, let alone to care for (and *love*(?) someone whose mind is out of kilter. In some cultures, such are seen as being precious to God; the practising Christian will try to see the suffering Christ in each one; others will reach out in care through such organisations as the Samaritans. As I write elsewhere, one longs for the actual concept of 'asylum' - not the *buildings* but the 'benevolent affording of shelter and support to some class of the afflicted, the unfortunate' - as an attitude, a reality, not the reality of the medico-commercial industry, which seems to direct, control, dominate and profit from, make a career structure from, the treatment and management of the misfortunes of the nervously disturbed and mentally ill.

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My own Consultant, MC, appears, from my notes, to be very glib at allocating classifications. For example, he categorised my then wife as 'dominant'. How sterile! You might as well try to classify a will-o-the-wisp! Born in India to a doting father and a mother who should never have had children; partly raised by an ayah and 'bearer', and then dispatched to the vastly different world of England at five years old into the care of a kind but very firm and vigorously disciplining aunt, whose prescription of senna and Mass on Sundays purified both body and soul. Rebel? Yes. Individual? Yes. An intelligent and sensitive horse-woman; an artist manqué as her later exquisite and innovative pottery demonstrated, she should have gone to art-school or university not to a teacher training college run by nuns. Different? Yes. Dominant? Just what the hell does that mean apart from being a meaningless bit of shrink-speak? The same classification was applied by him to another lady who subsequently, and for a short time in the 'seventies, graced my nuptial couch. Now it would be most difficult, if not impossible, to find two such different women. Apart from each having the usual complement of female accoutrements, furniture and fittings, they just could not have

been more different! The second lady defined herself as 'bloody minded'. Who could disagree with her?

You may sense as you read that there is a developing, growing anger. It is not an all-consuming anger that is gnawing away at my inner man and possibly harming me. No; but it is an anger that has grown steadily since I first took a tentative look into my medical notes some eleven or so years ago. As I write elsewhere, I could not at first read the notes in their entirety because of what was stirred up by my reading, but what I did read began a change in my perception of the people who had had virtual control of a period in my life, a period in which my then life was shattered - but from the shards of which, fortunately, I have been able to create an entirely new one, one which in itself is immensely satisfying. Until I started to read the notes I looked back and acknowledged what had been attempted on my behalf and the time that had been allocated to me, and, at least twice, I had written to MC to thank him for his concern and the hours that he had spent with me. With the reading has come the revelation, the realisation that there were at least two sides to the man that were now becoming apparent. There had been the urbane friendly chap who sat tying salmon flies as we chatted and he gave me my fortnightly psychotherapeutic 'fix', that contrasted totally with the man who had written these letters and notes. With each reading I experience a deeper sense of betrayal. From our very first encounter I had, as I recall, tried to convey openly all that was passing through my life at that time and before. But where were my achievements, the successes, the things that I was proud of? They figured not at all. On the contrary, anything, any event that had a negative component, any past goal not achieved, these were all listed and psychiatric 'conclusions' drawn. These 'insights', together with an unnecessary amount of personal and family detail, were then relayed in correspondence to my G.P. and, as I note elsewhere, into my Practice records, where they remain, colouring the perception of me by any subsequent doctor who has read them.

Why, then, am I continuing to read and write about these times, these people? Why not just put them back where they had been for all those years? I ask myself these and other relevant questions frequently at the time when anything likely to disturb my peace of mind surfaces; I ask them mostly during the 3 a.m. stint. Yes, often I wake still at about that time. I am much more aware now than I was in times past of the reasons for waking, and I have devised several strategies aimed at countering them or the consequences of being awake. In spite of these insights, I still meet the occasions when it is virtually impossible to still my mind and its content of the tragic memories that the reading and writing are bringing back to the surface. How they flood in and keep recycling - perceptions of losses, real and virtual, the 'what if?' and 'if only' - and pictures of faces harrowed by misery, despair and tears. And I curse myself profoundly for having been so stupid as to begin the process of remembering, analysing and writing, and of wasting time during the day pounding this keyboard, when I would far rather have a chisel or gouge in

my hands, carving or wood-turning, or be doing something out-of-doors. By which time I have usually abandoned any thoughts that I may have had of an immediate return to sleep, and am downstairs making a cup of tea. Reality and healthy recollection soon return, and with them somehow a remembrance of when, a few years ago, I had a profound and focused prayer life. I used, in fact, to welcome my frequent waking at six bells in the middle watch, because in reality it did become a 'watch'.

As I take up my narrative in a little while I shall relate how I entered into a more determined way of living spiritually. I had learned the strategy of 'offering' a particular period of time, a specific activity or a difficult or unpleasant task, for the benefit of some group or individual. Thus, and for example, if I had a particular prisoner of conscience in mind I would 'offer', say, the cleaning of the kitchen floor tiles on his behalf. This meant that I held him in focus and performed the work for his benefit; which in turn meant that I could not let him down and tried to produce an immaculate result from my work, and the work in its turn became a form of prayer.

In my own middle-watches, memories were wont to return of my past nights of desperate despair and anguish, and I started to 'offer' the time of wakefulness. I used to think of and pray for people currently in psychiatric wards, and for the staff attending them, and also for the physical prisoners, locked and isolated in the meanest of accommodation in our jails. In particular I prayed for the innocent people in prison, of whom, we are more and more beginning to realise, there must be many. In time, I found that I had no problem with being awake at these times and in fact came to value and look forward to this very private and personal time.

By the grace You grant me of silence without loneliness, grant me the right to plead, to clamour for my brothers imprisoned in a loneliness without silence!

The emphasis of my spiritual life has changed over more recent years, and in many ways I regret my move away from that particular form of prayer. On the other hand, what has happened may be the result of the activities of that time. The practical, pragmatic 'me' has always taken the view that it is not sufficient to project prayers heavenward in the pious hope that 'something will be done'. In the reality of life I reckon that you have to be prepared to add action to supplication, and rather than asking "please will *you* do so-and-so?" asking instead "please help *me* to do so-and-so." And so it might be that in this remembering, analysing and writing I am creating my own answer to my original prayer and doing something *practical* for the benefit of the ones for whom I had originally prayed.

I found a parallel to my line of thinking recently when listening to a man on television describing his own experiences. I had switched on briefly mid-morning while having my tea break to find this man recounting

the horror of his twenty-five innocent years in prison. When, in his late teens and describing himself as "withdrawn and inadequate", a young woman was murdered in his neighbourhood, the man had a very vivid dream in which he clearly saw the face of a woman and the circumstances of a murder. What he saw in the dream was of such clarity that he himself believed that he could only have known such things if he had actually been involved. On going to the police, more to get clarification than anything else, the young man found himself taken in as the only suspect, all other investigation was dropped, and his feet never touched the ground until he was locked up for life. After three years in prison, he realised that he was innocent and just could not have committed the crime, and has spent the remaining time trying to get his case re-heard and securing his ultimate release.

During the interview the man was asked why, having lived through such traumatic times, he was still continuing to be involved with the processes of law and the prisons. His reply was that if he could prevent anything similar from happening to only one other person, he would willingly keep exposing himself to the publicity and the agony. It is in this respect that I see some parallels to my own circumstances. I had been in a form of prison of someone else's making for nearly seventeen years, although I didn't in fact know that I had been 'innocent' until some time after my release. My sole motivation in writing and opening up my past to scrutiny is just the same, namely to try to 'release' even one other person, or to prevent someone from being entrapped in the first place. If I can do this, I shall consider the time to have been well spent.

Sitting on the same sofa was the psychologist who frequently appeared on the particular programme, and he just seemed unable to contain himself as he waited to get in with the psycho-gobble about dreams, causes and interpretations thereof. There seems to be nothing that cannot be explained courtesy of Messrs Freud and Jung! But he found himself totally out of his depth, and fortunately shut up when the man described the overwhelming and disabling emotion which swept over himself, and which, often with only the slightest trigger, caused him to curl into himself so tightly and weep uncontrollably. I have never been so drastically affected, but I recognise the times past when, metaphorically and internally, I have 'curled up and wept' at the memory and actuality of the pain and loss and humiliation experienced by myself and those whom I formerly held so close and dear. The psychologist started to develop an instant explanation of 'panic attacks' but was promptly and completely silenced by the man himself.

Why do these psychologists and psychiatrists who appear so widely and frequently on television and radio, have to believe that they have an instant and complete answer to every human situation and problem that crosses their orbit? Can they never be persuaded to say "I don't know" or "That is outside my experience"? Yes - *outside my experience*. It should be patently obvious that, except in a rare few instances, very few of the practitioners of these 'arts' have experienced

the mental conditions that they are trying to define and correct in the people before them. It is purely hypothesis and theory that is being put into practice, often at the expense of people's minds and lives. A surgeon has a particular task before him, and if he gets it wrong and cuts off the wrong bit, or has an unacceptable number of fatalities to his credit, then eventually someone notices and steps are taken. Likewise, if a drug therapy results in numbers of babies being born with vestigial development, that, too, becomes obvious. But who is there to blow the whistle on a psychiatrist? If patients deteriorate, well it's just a continued manifestation of the original 'syndrome' (how they love that word!) and a more advanced drug regime is called for. Is there not a crying need for a less interventionist approach to people's distressful inability to cope? Less a need for invasive action, but rather a system of support, of 'cocooning' people until their crisis is past, and they and their partners, friends, develop a greater understanding of causes and practical remedies. Often understanding, communication and support are all that many people need. From many sources, it is obvious that the first and often only response is the latest in-vogue and well-marketed tranquilliser or anti-depressant.

During another morning tea break switch-on, I happened upon the same sofa psychologist presiding over a phone-in on 'control freaks'. Women, some of whom were obviously in great distress, were describing their situations in which husband or partner was exercising such a degree of control over most aspects of their lives and activities as to make their lives intolerable. I understand and sympathise greatly with the callers and their desperate need for help, but what disturbed me about the programme response was that, without having met or heard from the partners in the marriage or relationship, the men were, without exception, labelled 'control freaks' by the psychologist and presenter, who was just as bad with his glib, 'know-all' categorisations, and then of course, having stuck on a label, 'they' all come into a common category - 'they' all behave like this; 'they' all do that and the other. This facile and often stupid labelling (bearing in mind that the current Prime Minister is also designated a 'control freak!'), creates great dangers in its wake, bringing back to mind my own sad decline, which began with the application without consultation or justification of the 'chronic anxiety neurosis' label.

I make no apology for revisiting this part of my story. I am not doing so in order to extract the maximum of hand-wringing sympathy from you, nor to take up my cudgel, metaphorically to beat the heads of the psychiatrists and doctors who were sequentially participants in the original drama. No, I want to analyse in more detail what was written and, equally importantly, what was *not* written in the hope of exposing the vulnerability of the individual caught in the toils of 'the system'.

Just suppose that I had been suspected of having committed some major crime, and that BW had been retained by the prosecution as an expert witness in order to provide a psychiatric assessment of me. So great is his status in his field, that his name on an adverse report would mean that it would be accepted without question by judge and jury alike.

If my crime had been murder, the chances are that, virtually on his assessment alone, I could have been found guilty and be on a one-way ticket to Broadmoor or some similar establishment.

I regard myself as intelligent and articulate, yet what happened to me did happen in spite of that, largely because, in effect, I had yielded control to those whom society places in authority, and whose competence we are not in a position to question. Just imagine the situation of someone who is less articulate, possibly with the difficulties of communication experienced between people of different ethnic or social backgrounds, or someone who may be withdrawn or, for whatever reason, disturbed, being arrested for some crime or misdemeanour and held in custody, possibly allocated the duty solicitor and, if necessary, the duty psychiatrist, each of whom may simply be doing a job and not have the true well-being of the prisoner at heart. Such people are easily misunderstood, and easily influenced and vulnerable, and, as we are aware, dire things can happen to them. I recall the case of a young man from New Zealand who had been arrested for shoplifting in London. He was held for psychiatric assessment and then ordered by the court to be deported. However, the psychiatrist who had examined him wanted to study him further for her own purposes and arranged for him to be held and not immediately released. In his despair and isolation, the young man took his shirt, tied one end to a bed leg, rolled the rest tightly around his neck - and strangled himself.

Nothing as dire happened to me, although I came perilously close to suicide - and all because of a label and inadequate communication between people with preformed minds, people with limited experience of the way of life of many of those who come before them as patients. Try as they will, it is nigh on impossible for them to identify, or even understand the problems and stresses. I have mentioned already the artificial community, Seascale, in which I lived. When I was in hospital, I was struck by the fact that, in proportion to its population against that of the rest of the hospital catchment area, Seascale was over-represented, particularly by its womenfolk.

It was an artificial and peculiar community in many ways. The original Seascale had been created in the latter half of the nineteenth century to give some purpose to the newly laid Furness Railway. Conceived as a select watering place, it had a core of basic shops, two hotels and several boarding houses, two private schools and a golf course. It was run by long-standing residents, and there seemed to be a general resentment against this hoard of 'off-comers', many very well paid by the standards then prevailing locally. The purpose of the addition to the village was to house staff brought in to create and run the new nuclear complex of Windscale and the later Calder Hall power station. Virtually every house had its graduate, possibly two, for wives were often as well qualified as their husbands. That was part of the problem - the educated mind with very little outlet. Cars had not yet become readily available or affordable in the years following the war. Children poured out of the

woodwork, for, for many, it was the first home of the young after demobilisation and graduation.

.....

Men had their work that was, in the main, revolutionarily new, and all-absorbing, often requiring long hours at work, trips to headquarters and to contractors' works, and, of course, it was secret. Even if we wanted to talk about our work and associates at home, it was difficult because of the unusual nature of what we were doing. Then there was the shared camaraderie of war service that isolated the men from their women. In other men's reminiscences I was in the cockpit of a Lancaster bomber over Germany; trying to establish radio communication in the desert; in Changi jail in Singapore - or wherever the world-wide conflict had taken me and my colleagues. The women were isolated - intellectually as well as physically. They went 'home' (i.e. back to mother) to have babies or at every opportunity; they pushed prams in the teeth of the winds that rushed in from the Irish Sea; they had the 'hierarchical' coffee morning! Everyone's grades, and hence salary, were known, and houses were allocated by size of family and by grade. Thus, when I reached the grade of Principal, we moved into an 'A' type house, i.e. four bedrooms plus garage. These were the ladies who found their way to the newly opened psychiatric wing of the now-being-constructed hospital and the newly appointed consultant MC, who, in turn, sent some for a second opinion to BW. With the best will in the world, how could these specialists really understand the home life, social background of many of their patients? Of the three psychiatrists whom I saw, not one had been in the armed forces; none had been in industry or saw many people outside their profession other than patients. Thus it was that LW and BW, on the basis of forty and ten minutes contact with me, respectively, presumed to analyse, categorise and prescribe.

As with many of my colleagues at work, I had at first lived in a nearby hostel for unmarried or unhoused staff. I lived there for four years and many friendships were formed. We got to know each other's girl friends who later became wives, and our children grew up in the influence of these groupings. I still have a number of on-going friendships from those days, ones that were formed nearly fifty years ago. Of some partnerships only a widower or widow remains, and in a haphazard way our paths sometimes cross, and we reminisce. On two separate occasions, I had virtually identical conversations with two of the widows. Both of the husbands had been friends of mine and aspects of the past were being discussed, and both widows used exactly the same words - "I never really knew him". Now this had been after thirty-five to forty years of marriage, and, in one case, the upbringing of three children. "I never really knew him". If this was the case after such a long period of shared life, how possibly could a psychiatrist in one short interview do more than

scratch deeper than one micron into the surface of the individual before him?

My label of 'chronic anxiety neurosis' was applied to me when all else had failed in the ongoing battle against my enteritis, not as the result of thoughtful consultation and analysis, and the Librium prescription was the medicine of last resort. My second GP (GP2) accepted the diagnosis and continuing prescription seemingly without question. But where were the cautions, the restrictions? With so many 'Home Doctor' programmes available on CD in our computers, it is now so easy to access the information that was presumably made available to medical practitioners with the launch of new drugs. One does not have to be well qualified in medicine or psychiatry, but only to be able to read - yes *read*. Thus benzodiazepine - for the *short-term* relief of *severe* anxiety. But they have paradoxical side effects - thus *increased anxiety*, and *perceptual* disorders, which, coupled with the *drowsiness* and *light-headedness*, were the likely cause of the apparently psychosomatic disorders that ultimately led to my referral to MC. But this was after *two years* of prescription. Where lies the responsibility to assess continuously the results of medication?

Should not MC have carried out an audit when I was first referred? He classed me effectively as 'garrulous, giving a wealth of hypochondriac detail', yet another of the paradoxical side effects is *talkativeness*! My referral letter records the fact that I had been taking Librium for two years - where was his awareness of the oft stated caution that withdrawal should be *very slow* after such a long period of usage? He should surely have been aware that *abrupt withdrawal* might produce *confusion, toxic psychosis, convulsions or a condition resembling delirium tremens*. As I have recorded elsewhere, my withdrawal was *immediate*, with the consequences that I have noted. Yet no alarm bells seem to have rung and caused him to review the medication - only puzzlement at the presumed and never before recorded idiosyncratic reaction to the new drug that he had prescribed. But, as his notes record, I was having problems also with *micturation* and *libido*, standard and well recorded side effects of benzodiazepine. Well?

When I became an in-patient in his ward, MC prescribed various *barbiturates* to help me sleep. Now, there are cautions listed advising against using the two types of drug together, which it would be tedious for me to include. One side effect of barbiturates is the *suppression of breathing*, yet when one day on the ward I commented that my breathing was very restricted, I was told that as my lips had not yet turned blue I had no cause for alarm - all very jocular, but not very perceptive. I later recorded *numbness of my scalp and part of my face, tinnitus*. At one time, my *vision* was disturbed - at times blurred, and, for a period, I lost *peripheral vision*.

Remember, all this medication was gratuitous; I had never had the conditions for which the drugs were compounded, although in all the literature, I have not been able to find any comments relating to the effects of *unnecessary* prescription. Remember also that benzodiazepine

are classed as *minor* tranquillisers; God help you if you get on the wrong side of the *major* ones, the *anti-psychotic* drugs. I don't suppose that you will be aware, though, your mind will probably have gone into orbit! In the wide world of industry and agriculture, people have to be tested and licensed and re-tested periodically to ensure that they are, and continue to be, fit to handle noxious and potentially lethal or harmful substances. Surely these drugs should be placed in a similar sort of legal 'containment', and practitioners should be re-tested at periodic intervals?

You are being very patient if you have read this far; I hope that you are not finding it all too tedious. As we are yet in the Wonderland of Alice, perhaps we have strayed into the Caucus race. "What on earth is the Caucus race?" said Alice. "Why", said the Dodo, "the best way to explain it is to do it" - no start, no finish, just keep running in a circle until you feel like stopping, and everyone is a winner - that is what it feels like to me at times as I revisit my past. The people who have read this far tell me that they want to know the full story, so you can blame them not me; I'm still running in my circle, how about you?

The letter written by MC to BW in which he asked for a second opinion gave no account of the drug regime of the previous three years, but simply mentioned the brief high dose of Librium within the sequence of E.C.T and insulin therapies that he listed. My own reaction on first reading it was one of total surprise and dismay at the absence of real fact and the sheer negativeness of his narrative. He records, for instance, that I had failed my Higher School Certificate (today's A-level). There were reasons, such as having to take subjects that were not my first choice because of limitations in the availability of staff, war service having claimed several, and other reasons, which it would be tedious to relate. Why did he not say, for instance, that I had been Head Boy, Head Prefect and School Captain, that I had for several seasons played rugby with the First XV and had represented the School at throwing the javelin, or that I had taken major roles in school plays (Richard Burton was a contemporary and fellow thespian), or that I had delivered the valedictory address to a long-serving, and now departing, headmaster?

This disappointment, and the one of not attaining a commission, plus any other of life's seeming catastrophes that he could include, were seized upon by LW in the letter which he wrote for BW to sign, as examples of my inability to cope with failures. How little he knew! Within a fortnight of getting my exam results, I had volunteered for the Royal Navy, and was accepted for a University Short Course with the hope of ultimately being commissioned. In a further short time I was at Glasgow University being trained in aspects of seamanship, signalling and sailing, and learning the practice of coastal navigation, while academically I was studying Natural Philosophy and Geography. Disappointed? Like hell! I was revelling in it all. I cannot convey to you the joy in my life in at last being in a boat and learning to sail under

expert tuition, nor of being taught the intricacies of knotting and cordage by a Chief Petty Officer who, at *seventy*, had returned for service - someone who had actually served in *sail*. My cup of happiness was very full. I passed with distinction, fourth out of a course of about eighty. My academic subjects were also passed well and there was the prospect of a return to Glasgow on demob.

Those of us who had chosen to try for a seagoing commission joined, next, a formal training establishment, where we learned more seamanship, gunnery and so on, and were tested in our 'power of command' and our ingenuity in trying to cross a crocodile infested river using only a length of rope and two short planks. The hoped for commission did not materialise, which disappointment is another which LW in his analysis said I had difficulty in coming to terms with. Oh! Get a life! If he had probed further he would have learned that, out of the whole group, less than 15% succeeded, and he would have learned also the prime reason, namely that on D-Day, and after, the anticipated losses of landing craft commanders had fortunately not happened - and it was for such jobs that we were principally being prepared, and were therefore not needed. We 'rejects' didn't sit around moping, fat chance anyway, and at eighteen one is nothing if not resilient. Within a very short time, several of us had chosen to be trained as Radar Mechanics, and away we went into a fascinating new world, a world that had only been created in the previous three years, and an entirely new track, which fundamentally altered the course of my life.

In this short interview, LW had me dissected and sorted, or so he thought. Oh, the arrogance of the man! Take this point: at sixteen I had had a severe gastric upset which had resulted in a barium meal, abdominal X-ray and the conclusion of our family doctor that "I had nearly had an ulcer". LW's contempt was palpable - "You can't *nearly* have an ulcer, it must have been dyspepsia" - end of story. What sheer bloody arrogance! The family doctor had been a *family* doctor. He had delivered me in our home and had tended all my growing-up illnesses, as well as removing my adenoids. Which of these two men is most likely to have been able to assess the causes of my gastric ailment? But this is what one is up against, and the consequences, and not just for me, are enormous. When you contemplate the 'armoury' that is at the disposal of psychiatrists, you should quail, not only have they powers of incarceration but they have, in the shape of drugs, prisons without bars and shackles without chains. And yet, as my case shows, conclusions can be reached and decisions and actions taken on the basis of the most cursory analysis and arrogant self-belief.

There is so much in these two letters that could be subjected to *my* analysis and comment, but no great purpose would be served; I think that I have made a sufficiently valid point. I must also acknowledge, though, that LW and BW had not been given a full picture in that details of the drug regime and symptoms had not been included in the referral letter; facts that might have alerted them and inspired a deeper examination. On the other hand, to be sent for examination

having been preceded by a comment such as MC had made, namely that I 'presented a puzzling mixture of anxiety and depression, with, at times, an ominous schizoid flavour' does not allow one much scope to demonstrate that one is not actually doolally.

I know that in concentrating upon my own experiences at the hands of three individuals I am presenting an unfair picture of the whole profession. There are undoubtedly many dedicated and competent psychiatrists in practice, and I know that I would not like to do their work, and I acknowledge their commitment and caring. I know, too, that it will be said that my own experiences are unusual and atypical. I sincerely hope that they are, but that being said, there are elements that one learns are still being repeated in the lives of other people, and will continue to be repeated as long as humans have human failings both as patients and practitioners. Essentially, all the latter really have to do, and yet it is most difficult, is to listen with a mind which is not preformed, and to make judgments that are not instant but which are open to further scrutiny, and which can be revisited, revised and reversed, and do not result in the compounding of one symptom by one drug, which creates another symptom or side effect, which has to be treated by another drug, which creates another side effect which... Do I exaggerate? I have a friend who was having problems sleeping. She was given sleeping pills (designed for the *short term* - ha bloody ha - relief of insomnia), which have the adverse effect of creating nausea and vomiting; so now she has a gut problem and more medication. The pills also interfere with the heart and circulation, so more medication, and they cause anxiety, so she has an anxiolytic drug, which also can produce depression, which requires an anti-depressant. No, I do not exaggerate - this is real. But listen, yes, if they would only listen. I had a venerable friend who was chuntering away one day when I called. He had painful arthritis in his shoulder and had been to a consultant, but "...they don't *listen*... they never listen, in spite of what you have to tell them...and as for N (naming his GP) *she* tells you what you've got and then you have to *pretend* to have it!"

I am fast approaching the point where I shall leave my medical records behind, although MC will briefly tread the stage later in the saga. Before I finally quit them, two further points from the notes, if you don't mind. One fills me with dread at what finally might have happened to my mind, for I see that after twenty-three E.C.T.s and the insulin jamboree, MC had been considering *further* E.C.T! Fortunately, as he records, I firmly rejected the idea. I speculate with horror that my poor innocent mind might not have survived yet further assault.

The other entry concerns a later time when I was divorced and living alone, but in regular contact with my daughter and former wife. We had decided that our daughter should move on from ponies to a small horse, and together went to a recommended dealer who found for us a

delightful little mare, an Irish hunter of about fifteen hands and which had already been hunted by a girl of roughly my daughter's age. We put her through all the tests for steadiness and suitability that we could devise - from standing by the roadside while lorries with flapping tarpaulins thundered by, to having a car rev-up and its horn sounded under her nose, and a shot-gun being fired behind a hedge. She, whom we called King's Courier, or KC for short, came to stay with me, and my daughter would come from school at weekends to ride. One Saturday it was raining, and she wore a police cape that covered herself and the saddle, but, unfortunately, something that I hadn't anticipated happened. The cape flapped in a breeze and startled KC, which caused the cape to flap more and startled her further. The mare took off on a road beside a river that was in full spate, soon came to a skew bridge, leapt the parapet, and broke her neck as she hit the water. Fortunately, my daughter was flung clear and I bless forever her keenness in swimming, for, heavily clad though she was, she got to the bank and came and found me.

MC comments upon the episode in the next letter to my GP and goes on to write, "...I think that Roy is more distressed at the loss of the horse than at what might have befallen his daughter".

I was once acquainted with two men, one at work and the other through the church. The first had two sons and the elder went to university to study geology. On the first weekend visit home, brand new geologist's hammer, family trip to Wasdale, two boys dash up Yewbarrow, eldest jumps over a rock, hammer in hand - never seen alive again. He wasn't found until next morning, for he had immediately lost his footing and crashed down some way to his death.

The second man also had a son, and the lad had reached the magic age that allowed him to ride a motorbike. The lad longed for day arrived as did the gleaming machine, bigger than youngsters are allowed today. They lived just a short distance from the 'Irtton Straight', where everyone of my acquaintance who owned a bike used to go to test it after adjustment. The lad must have dreamed so many times and lived it all in his mind, as I had lived my sailing. The bike roared into action. He went around the corner heading for the Irtton Straight, and they never saw him alive again.

I used to see both men frequently. I never ever saw them smile. Their eyes showed that they were locked in a world of perpetual misery and possibly self-condemnation. I looked briefly into that abyss and came away quickly. You don't dwell on it; you don't think about it. If you do, even so briefly, you don't share your thoughts with anyone - certainly not with a psychiatrist, no matter how friendly he then appeared to be. Since reading what he wrote, and remembering all that he had caused to happen to me, I have feelings now that would cause me to use the language of the lower-deck. But what's the point?

Come, let us move on....

But where, oh where shall we go?

Let's send Alice to enquire, shall we?

Strange, where did that Cheshire cat appear from? Perhaps he knows...

" Alice, will you enquire directions for us, please?"

"Would you tell me, please," said Alice, " which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends," said the Cheshire Cat, "on where you want to get to.

Over there... lives a Hatter,..... and over there ... lives a March Hare.

Visit either you like: they're both mad."

"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.

"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad, you're mad."

"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.

"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here".

Which seems to be where we came in.

Perhaps we should emulate the

Cheshire Cat

and

j u s t d i s a p
p e a
r

