“Unbelievable – This Forum is Full of Whiners” – An Investigation into the BBC’s *Have Your Say* Message Forum with the Appraisal Framework and WordSmith 5 Tools

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the Internet has transformed the way with which we communicate with each other. It has had an enormous effect on the modern way of life. This new electronic frontier has fascinated many scholars and the present study is an attempt to add to this relatively new field of Internet studies or Internet linguistics as it can also be called. The omnipresence of the Internet has enabled it to become a daily tool for people who use it for several purposes including work and recreation.

The Internet highway – the new electronic frontier – is a medium where people can express themselves maybe more freely than ever before in the history of written communication. Internet message boards are a forum where it is possible to give your opinion on topics that usually cover a wide area of interests from different areas of life. The opportunities that the Internet offers to millions of people around the world are infinitely versatile and varied.

David Crystal (2011: 3) describes Internet linguistics as likely to develop in the direction of studying syntax, morphology, semantics, discourse, pragmatics and sociolinguistics among other things. Crystal (2011: 9) writes that an important aim of Internet linguistics is to establish the linguistic character of the various genres found online. However, he points out that in order to form a genre there should be a certain amount of homogeneity in the data which according to him has not yet been established.

Steve Jones (1999: 9) argues that on the Internet we all are “engaged in incredibly meaningful communicative processes all the time”. According to Jones (1999: 109), Internet newsgroups are cyclical in nature. He describes online conversations as having a comment-response cycle. Naomi Baron (2008: 19) defines one-to-many communication as both asynchronous (blogs) and synchronous (chat rooms).
Crystal (2011: 10) introduces a neutral term for discussing different varieties of Internet language. He proposes that the term output is used when different types of Internet language are discussed. Crystal (2011: 153) lists the following as outputs for Internet language: chat rooms, blogs, instant messaging exchanges, texting, and Facebook and Twitter postings. He considers neologisms to be a distinctive feature of some Internet outputs. According to Baron (2008: 28), it has been debated since the earliest discussions on computer-mediated communication took place whether the language found online is a “new or degenerate” form of language.

Internet as a medium has considerably changed the nature of communication as it has become possible to remain anonymous while writing on Internet forums. Internet message forums are often - as is the case also in this research - moderated, and the writers have the choice to either use their own names or to keep their true identities hidden.

The linguistic choices made and the lexical items used by people writing on the Internet are going to be explored in this research. In addition, any emerging regularities or typical patterns for Internet message board language will be investigated. The postings are gathered from the Have Your Say discussion forum, which is a moderated message board in a blog on the BBC website, where people can send their opinions on different topical issues. The corpus that is used in this study consists of 1800 Internet messages.

The aim in this research is to describe and explain aspects of the language use as accurately as possible with the resources that are available within the Appraisal framework. Methods from Corpus linguistics are employed and the Appraisal framework is used in analysing evaluative lexis. The aim is to use relevant parts of this framework and combine it with statistical methods from corpus studies. WordSmith 5, which is a computer programme for lexical analysis, is used in computing the frequencies of words in the messages. If any recurring patterns can be found, they will be discussed in chapter 6. Discussion of the findings. Some concordance lines will also be compared to each other.
The Appraisal framework is used to categorise the evaluative language and concordance lines are used as a data displaying device, which is a method used in Corpus linguistics. The observations will be presented in both the form of tables and figures as well as explained in the analysis. The concordance lines will be analysed with the framework as well. An attempt will be made towards finding an effective way of describing the new kind of language use that has emerged on the Internet.

In the next chapter the theoretical background in this research will be presented briefly as the Appraisal framework is introduced in chapter 2 and Corpus linguistics and the WordSmith Tools are presented in chapter 3. The *Have Your Say* corpus is introduced in chapter 4. Data and then the categorisation is presented in chapter 5. Analysis of the message threads and this thesis will end in discussion of the findings in chapter 6. and Conclusion in chapter 7.
2. THE APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter the Appraisal framework will be presented and the ways to use it as a tool for classification are explained. Corpus linguistics will be introduced in chapter 3.

The Appraisal framework has its roots in Systemic Functional Linguistics. According to Martin & White (2005: 7-9) in Systemic Functional Linguistics language is seen as a resource for mapping ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. Susan Hunston (2006: 79) points out that in Systemic Functional Linguistics there is a real significance on the choice of words: whether we choose to use an adjective, a noun or a verb has an effect on how we construct reality.

The Appraisal framework was developed by Joan Martin and Peter White during the 1990s in Australia when these scholars were working with the Disadvantaged Schools Program’s Write it Right literacy project. The framework consists of three main systems and it is divided into several subsystems, which are presented in the following three subsections in this thesis. The main aim of the Appraisal framework is to explore, describe and explain how speakers and writers use evaluative language.

The Appraisal framework consists of three main parts, which are Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. Attitude is itself divided into three subsystems which are Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. Not all parts of the framework are needed in this research, therefore only those subcategories which are relevant to this study are introduced next. It is also pointed out which categories are not used. The subcategories that belong to the category of Attitude are presented next.

2.1. Attitude

Attitude is one of the three main categories in the framework where the writers describe their reactions to people or things by using evaluative lexis. This section will go on to introduce the three subcategories which form the main part of the framework. Martin & White (2012) introduce the Appraisal framework online as a
text analytical tool. They divide the Appraisal system into categories of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation in their book (2005) the Language of Evaluation – Appraisal in English.

2.1.1. Affect

Affect is a subsystem in the Attitude category that depicts the feelings and emotional reactions of a writer or a speaker. According to Martin & White (2005: 42), Affect is a category that includes lexical items that show whether we are “happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored”. Affect can express both positive and negative emotions. In table 1 only relevant parts of Affect that are used in this study are presented.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dis/inclination</td>
<td>miss, long for, yearn for</td>
<td>wary, fearful, terrorised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cheerful, buoyant, jubilant;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>like, love, adore</td>
<td>sad, melancholy, despondent; cut-up, heart-broken...broken-hearted, heavy-hearted, sick at heart; sorrowful...grief-stricken, woebegone...dejected...; joyless, dreary, cheerless, unhappy, sad, gloomy, despondent, down-cast, low, down, down in the mouth, depressed...; weepy, wet-eyed, tearful, in tears...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un/happiness</td>
<td>together, confident, assured;</td>
<td>uneasy, anxious, freaked out, startled, surprised, astonished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comfortable, confident,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trusting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in/security</td>
<td>involved, absorbed,</td>
<td>flat, stale, jaded; cross, angry, furious; bored with,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>engrossed; satisfied, pleased,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dis/satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.2. Judgement

Martin and White (2005: 52) divide the category of Judgement into two different parts which are Social esteem and Social sanction. Judgement is concerned with attitudes towards people and their character and the way they behave, which is admired or criticised, praised or condemned. The category of social esteem is used when the judgements concern normality, capacity or tenacity. Social sanction is used to describe the veracity and propriety in the judgements. Lexical items that belong to these classes are presented in tables 2 and 3.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social esteem</th>
<th>Positive (admire)</th>
<th>Negative (criticize)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>normality</td>
<td>lucky, fortunate, charmed; normal, natural, familiar;</td>
<td>unlucky, hapless, hapless; odd, peculiar, eccentric;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how special?’</td>
<td>cool, stable, predictable; in, fashionable, avant garde;</td>
<td>erratic, unpredictable; dated, daggy, retrograde;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>celebrated, unsung;</td>
<td>obscure, also-run;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capacity</td>
<td>powerful, vigorous, robust; sound, healthy, fit;</td>
<td>mild, weak, whimpy;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how capable?’</td>
<td>adult, mature, experienced; witty, humorous, droll;</td>
<td>unsound, sick, crippled;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>insightful, clever, gifted; balanced, together, sane;</td>
<td>immature, childish, helpless;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sensible, expert, shrewd;</td>
<td>dull, dreary, grave;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>literate, educated, learned;</td>
<td>slow, stupid, thick;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competent, accomplished;</td>
<td>flaky, neurotic, insane;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>successful, productive;</td>
<td>naive, inexpert, foolish;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenacity</td>
<td>plucky, brave, heroic;</td>
<td>illiterate, uneducated;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how dependable?’</td>
<td>cautious, weary, patient;</td>
<td>ignorant; incompetent;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>careful, thorough;</td>
<td>unaccomplished;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>unsuccessful, unproductive;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
meticulous...; tireless, persevering, resolute...; reliable, dependable...; faithful, loyal, constant...; flexible, adaptable, accommodating...;
weak, distracted, despondent...; unreliable, undependable...; unfaithful, disloyal, inconstant...; stubborn, obstinate, wilful...;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social sanction 'mortal'</th>
<th>Positive (praise)</th>
<th>Negative (condemn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>veracity (truth) ‘how honest?’</td>
<td>truthful, honest, credible...; frank, candid, direct...; discrete, tactful...;</td>
<td>dishonest, deceitful, lying...; deceptive, manipulative, devious...; blunt, blabbermouth...;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>propriety (ethics) ‘how far beyond reproach?’</td>
<td>good, moral, ethical...; law abiding, fair, just...; sensitive, kind, caring...; unassuming, modest, humble...; polite, respectful, reverent...; altruistic, generous, charitable...;</td>
<td>bad, immoral, evil...; corrupt, unfair, unjust...; insensitive, mean, cruel...; vain, snobby, arrogant...; rude, discourteous, irreverent...; selfish, greedy, avaricious...;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.1.3. Appreciation

Martin & White (2005: 56) describe the subcategory of Appreciation as giving an evaluation of things, especially “things we make and performances we give”. They divide Appreciation into “our reactions to things (do they catch our attention; do they please us?), their composition (balance and complexity) and their value (how innovative, authentic, timely, etc.).” Appreciation is also a way of evaluating semiotic and natural phenomena. Similarly to Affect and Judgement, evaluations can be divided into positive and negative ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reaction: impact</strong></td>
<td>arresting, captivating, engaging...; fascinating, exciting, moving...;</td>
<td>dull, boring, tedious...; dry, ascetic, uninviting...; flat, predictable,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘did it grab me?’</td>
<td>lively, dramatic, intense...; remarkable, notable, sensational...</td>
<td>monotonous...; unremarkable, pedestrian...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reaction: quality</strong></td>
<td>okay, fine, good...; lovely, beautiful, splendid...; appealing, enchanting,</td>
<td>bad, yuk, nasty...; plain, ugly, grotesque...; repulsive, revolting, off-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘did I like it?’</td>
<td>welcome...</td>
<td>putting...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composition: balance</strong></td>
<td>balanced, harmonious, unified, symmetrical, proportioned...; consistent,</td>
<td>unbalanced, discordant, irregular, uneven, flawed...; contradictory,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘did it hang together?’</td>
<td>considered, logical...; shapely, curvaceous, willowy...</td>
<td>disorganised; shapeless, amorphous, distorted...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composition: complexity</strong></td>
<td>simple, pure, elegant...; lucid, clear, precise...; intricate, rich,</td>
<td>ornate, extravagant, byzantine...; arcane, unclear, woolly...; plain,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘was it hard to follow?’</td>
<td>detailed...</td>
<td>monolithic, simplistic...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valuation</strong></td>
<td>penetrating, profound, deep...; innovative, original, creative...; timely,</td>
<td>shallow, reductive, insignificant...; derivative, conventional, prosaic...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘was it worthwhile?’</td>
<td>long awaited, landmark...; inimitable, exceptional, unique...;</td>
<td>dated, overdue, untimely...; dime-a-dozen, everyday, common...; fake,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>authentic, real, genuine...; valuable, priceless, worthwhile...;</td>
<td>bogus, glitzy...; worthless, shoddy, pricey...; ineffective, useless, write-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate, helpful, effective...</td>
<td>off...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2. Engagement

Martin & White (2005: 97-99) describe Engagement as a category in which the lexical items convey meanings that the writers or speakers use as a way of either actively acknowledging dialogically alternative positions and viewpoints or challenging and restricting the scope of such locutions. In this category they divide the lexical items as either contracting or expanding the dialogue. Contract, concur and affirm are subcategories of Engagement. The subcategory of disclaim which includes denying and negations, e.g. don’t and countering, e.g. although is chosen to be left out of this study.

2.2.1 Proclaim

Martin & White (2005: 97-102) present the subcategory of proclaim as describing the proposition as “compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally-agreed, reliable etc.” This happens when the writer “sets itself against, suppresses or rules out alternative positions”. This is realised through the subcategory of concur and lexical items such as naturally, of course, obviously, admittedly, certainly. These lexemes are used to affirm that something is the case.

The subcategories of pronounce (I contend...the truth of the matter is...there can be no doubt that...) and endorse (X has demonstrated that...X has shown.) are not included in this study.

2.2.2. Entertain

In the Appraisal framework Entertain is one of the subcategories of Engagement. Martin & White (2005: 98) describe the category of Entertain as taking into account alternative positions. Therefore the proposition is one of the possible outcomes rather than definitely in a certain way. Martin & White (2005: 117) list the following lexical items in this category: it seems, the evidence suggests, apparently, I hear,
The subcategories of attribute which includes acknowledging, e.g. *X said, X believes, according to X, in X’s view* and distancing, e.g. *X claims that, it’s rumoured that* are chosen to be left out of this study.

Figure 1. *A part of the Engagement system as used in this study. According to Martin & White (2005: 134).*

2.3. Graduation

This category is concerned with values that can be either up-scaled or down-scaled. The lexical items that have gradability are values under Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. Martin & White (2005: 137-140) write that Graduation includes “grading according to intensity or amount”. They introduce Graduation online (2012) as a “set of resources by which the force or tone or intensity of an utterance may be raised or lowered”. They continue that Force and Focus are used to change or shift the focus or preciseness of lexical items that are used in communication.
2.3.1. Force

The subcategory of Force is needed in order to assess the degree of intensity and amount. This is called intensification and according to Martin & White (2005: 140-143) it can be used with qualities like slightly or extremely foolish or it stopped somewhat abruptly and it stopped very abruptly. Processes can be evaluated with intensification slightly and greatly as in these examples. This slightly hindered us. and This greatly hindered us. Intensification can be used with the verbal modalities of likelihood, usuality, inclination and obligation. For example, it's just possible that and it’s very possible that. Martin & White (2005: 148) write that intensifications are both figurative, i.e. crystal clear, came out like jack in box, prices sky-rocketed and non-figurative, i.e. very clear, greatly reduced, moved rapidly. They divide intensifications that are realised in isolated lexemes, i.e. slightly, very, greatly, semantic infusion, happy – ecstatic and the use of repetition laughed and laughed and laughed. The realisation can be also lexical, e.g. amazingly easy, crystal clear.

Quantification is defined as “assessments of amount that apply to entities, rather than to qualities and processes.” It is used for “the imprecise measuring of number, e.g. a few miles, many miles and imprecise measuring of the presence or mass of entities according to such features as their size, weight, distribution and proximity, e.g. small amount, large amount, nearby mountain, distant mountain”.

2.3.2. Focus

Martin & White (2005: 137) exemplify the use of focus with the following instances: kind of, of sorts, effectively, bordering on, and the suffix -ish (it is an apology of sorts, we’ll be there at five-o-clock-ish.) Graduation (focus) applies to categories that are not scalable. They also show this usage of Focus with the example of jazz. “They don’t play real jazz. They play jazz, sort-of.” Focus is a category that is used when people want to ‘sharpen’ the specification so that the prototypicality is indicated, e.g. a real father, a true friend or down-scaling or softening the specification so as to characterise an instance as having only marginal membership in the category, e.g. they sort of play jazz, they are kind of crazy, it was an apology of sorts.
Figure 2. Force: intensification – quality and process. According to Martin & White (2005: 141).

Figure 3. Force: quantification. According to Martin & White (2005: 151).
3. CORPUS LINGUISTICS

Corpus linguistics began in the 1960s (even though research with large corpora had been done in the 1950s and even earlier). McEnery & Wilson (2001: 20–25) introduce important developments in the early corpus linguistics. The earliest machine-readable corpus was produced by Roberto Busa when he studied the language of medieval philosophy from 1949 onwards. Alphonse Juilland called his work mechanolinguistics and developed machine-readable corpora, gathered texts from a range of genres and from different writers, developed sampling techniques and a primitive form of corpus annotation. He also started projects in contrastive corpus linguistics in comparing different languages and in lexical statistics in which he was interested in the dispersion of words within texts, genres and languages.

In the 1960s Quirk constructed his Survey of English Usage and the Brown corpus and the London-Lund corpus were compiled. There are large corpuses, for example the British National corpus which is a 100 million word corpus of modern British English. According to McEnery et al. (2006: 53), the British National corpus consists of a spoken section of 10 million words and a written section of 90 million words. The Bank of English corpus includes more than 320 million words. Sinclair (1987: 150–151) writes that the size of the Cobuild Main Corpus is approximately 7.3 million words. In comparison to those large corpuses the Have Your Say corpus used in this study consists of 1800 messages and 205,290 tokens.

The overall development of the computerized world brought with it a powerful possibility to study large corpora by computing word frequencies and learning about the behaviour of words and phrases through their collocations and colligations. With the development of computer technology new computing devices have also been developed. For instance, WordSmith is a computer programme that is used in the present research as a tool for calculating word frequencies and displaying concordance lines.

McEnery & Wilson (2001: 2) describe the relationship between corpus linguistics and other fields of linguistics and argue that corpus linguistics is not a branch of
linguistics in the same sense that for example syntax, semantics and sociolinguistics is. Corpus linguistics is more a methodology than a branch of linguistics. Corpus studies can be seen as being a part of linguistics that is regarded as a tool with which it is possible to go through large amounts of data. Computer assisted processing of vast numbers of texts has enabled researchers to investigate the behaviour of individual lexical items and their collocations in large corpuses.

WordSmith 5 is a computer programme developed by Mike Scott. There are three programmes that are used to analyse the vocabulary in the source texts. Scott (2010) writes online that these tools are WordList that allows you to see all the words or word clusters in a text, KeyWords that let you find the key words in a text, and finally Concord which gives a chance to see any word or phrase in a context so that it is possible to see what kind of company the lexical item keeps.

In Corpus linguistics there is a distinction between types and tokens in a text. There is a certain number of words in a text but only some of them are new words that occur in the text for the first time. Stubbs (2002: 133) describes the type-token ratio as showing the lexical diversity of a text and it means that the number of new word types in relation to the overall number of word tokens is given.

Mike Scott (2013) writes that there can be for example 1000 word tokens, but only 40 word types. The ratio between types and tokens in this example is 40%. This type-token ratio varies considerably depending on the length of the text. Scott states that “A 1,000 word article might have a TTR of 40%; a shorter one might reach 70%; 4 million words will probably give a type-token ratio of about 2%, and so on.” He then argues that “Such type-token information is rather meaningless in most cases --.” This research is focused on the categorisation of the lexemes with the Appraisal framework and the lengths of the messages also vary so that is why the type-token ratio has been decided to be left out.

The nearest lexical items that surround the research word are its collocations. These words can belong to all grammatical categories and it is usually five words to the left
and five words to the right from the node word that are taken into account when determining and presenting collocates. The node word is the linguistic item under investigation (i.e. the researched word) and occupies a position in the middle of the concordance lines. In collocation the lexical (i.e. content words) occur together, for example an adjective and a noun in common sense or in common knowledge in the message thread airport security. The colligation relationship between the node word and the grammatical (i.e. function) word is, for example, the relationship between an adjective and a preposition like good at in She’s actually good at maths in the message thread three Rs (education). Stubbs (1996: 72) introduces these two categories that traditional parts of speech can be divided into as lexical words which include nouns, adjectives, adverbs, main verbs and grammatical words which include auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, pronouns, prepositions, determiners and conjunctions.

M.A.K. Halliday (1991: 36) writes that positive sentences are more frequent than negative sentences, active voice is more frequent than passive voice, and declaratives are more frequent than interrogatives and simple tenses than compound tenses. Sinclair argues that positive statements are more frequent than negative ones in a ratio of 9:1. Therefore out of every 10 sentences there are 9 positive statements and one negative statement.

Stubbs (2002: 42–43) states that the core vocabulary of a language consists of content words with a maximum usefulness. These words include lexemes that are widely distributed in different texts as well as lexemes that can be used to describe other lexical items. According to Stubbs (2002: 42), the core vocabulary will contain the most frequent words in a language and the hundred most frequent word forms contain function words such as the, of, and to. In addition to that there are some content words such as think, know, time, people, two, see, way, first, new, say, man, little and good that are included in the list of a 100 most frequent word forms in a large general corpus. Michael Stubbs’ argument and the findings in this research will be considered in chapter 6. Discussion.
According to Stubbs (2002: 7), the choice of words is vitally important when we construct meanings with words. “Any choice of words creates a mini-world or universe of discourse, and makes it likely that other words will be co-selected in the same context.” The mechanisms of co-selection or collocation will be examined as well as Appraisal analysis will be performed for chosen lexical items in the *Have Your Say* data. Stubbs (2002: 29) states that corpus linguistics is based on the assumption that events which are frequent are significant.

Stubbs (2002: 16) argues that repeated patterns of co-occurrence provide clues for inferring the meanings of words. A word predicts a close proximity of certain other words in a certain context. Collocation can be used to investigate how strong the co-occurrence relations between words are. According to Sinclair (1992: 15), “one way of describing collocation is to say that the choice of one word conditions the choice of the next --.” He then argues that the lexical item is not separable from its environment. This view emphasizes the importance of the context in which the words occur. This is important in both Corpus linguistics and in Appraisal analysis.

Gordon Tucker (2006: 81) describes a corpus as being a “compiled collection of texts either spoken or written, or both”. He states that a text is uttered or written in some context and for some purpose by a speaker or several speakers. Therefore he (2006: 81) describes a corpus as “consisting of the records of authentic discourses, of actual uses of a language in their social contexts.” Biber et al. (1998: 246) argue that a corpus should be compiled to be as representative as possible if the aim is to represent a language or a part of a language. The corpus in this research consists of written Internet messages and the individual lexemes and groups of lexemes of interest found in these postings.

Biber et al. (1998: 24) describe collocation as “the patterned way that words group together”. According to them (1998: 51) words do not necessarily need to be adjacent to each other in order to be associated with each other. They mean that certain words can co-occur even though there are some words between them.
The concordance lines show the context of chosen lexical items and this sheds light on some recurring patterns in the sentences. There are some repetitions that are significant. Howard-Hill (1979: 4) argues that “the basic function of a concordance is to bring together (“concord”) passages of text which illustrate the use of a word --.” Hunston & Thompson (2006: 18) write that concordances make it possible to observe repetitions in a large corpus and it is possible to find “exact repetitions of word-forms and sets of semantically related words”.

Sinclair (1991: 5) argues that “one really enlivening feature of corpus study is the individuality of the examples”. There are some typical and frequent occurrences of lexical items and then there are some delightfully unique instances of language use that make the English language so expressive and beautiful. Some of these lexical items are introduced in the tables in chapter 5. Analysis of the message threads. However, as one of the objectives of corpus studies is to find out something statistically significant about language the patterns for chosen lexical items will be presented in chapter 6. Discussion of the findings.

Sinclair (1991: 17) considers the main use of a corpus as being a tool to “identify what is central and typical in the language”. He goes on to argue that if the aim of corpus research is to describe realistically the language use, then “we must record the usage of the mass of ordinary writers”. This is what also this research aims to achieve as the messages that form the Have Your Say corpus are written by ordinary British people.

[Type text]
4. DATA – THE BBC’S HAVE YOUR SAY FORUM

The data used in this research will be introduced here. This thesis is an investigation into a message board language on an Internet message forum. This research deals with British online messages which can be found in an online blog in the message board archives on the BBC website.

The Have Your Say message board is a moderated forum which means that there is a moderator who checks all comments before they appear on the message board. This pre-moderation is one of the three ways of checking the content of the messages. They also use post-moderation and reactive moderation which happens when somebody complains about a comment.

There are some house rules that guide the posters. According to the house rules on the BBC website people who write to the message board must be signed in to post a comment and they must avoid using offensive language, swear words or racist or sexist language. Writers are also not allowed to advertise products or links to other websites, include their contact information or appear to impersonate someone else. The messages are not allowed to appear on the website if they break the law or encourage unlawful activity, are written in any other language than English (Welsh and Gaelic can be used where expressly stated), are considered likely to offend others, are considered spam or have been posted multiple times, or if the messages are off-topic.

The selection of the topics in the message threads was made with an attempt to cover a variety of different topics from many areas of interest. The original message threads from the BBC website can be found also in the appendices at the end of this document. They form a corpus of 464 pages altogether. The corpus includes the following topics: Do aliens really exist?, three Rs, Did God create the universe?, parties’ support for papers, How should society work?, snow and weather, parenting girls and boys, university fees and elitism, weddings, sensible drinking, young people
and the countryside, April fool, child benefits, airport security, new technology, bus services, and neighbours from hell.

The data was gathered from a time period of 12 months in order to be able to paint a picture of Internet language from that time period. The posts in the *Have Your Say* message board are from February 2010 to February 2011. The data consists of 1800 messages which were chosen from the beginning of each month and the first 100 messages are included from every message thread. There are some months when more than one message thread is included in this study.

The nicknames of the writers have been removed from the messages and replaced by a “nickname” in order to protect the identities of the writers. Some original nicknames can still be seen in the concordance lines since there was no way of deleting them. In addition to that the appendices contain the nicknames and messages in the way they originally appeared on the *Have Your Say* message board. The dates and times in the messages remain in place in order to keep this research valid and repeatable since all the messages can be found in the appendices section of this thesis. The messages can still be found online (in June 2013) in the BBC website archive.

The shortened versions of the message threads can be found in appendices 1-18 where the 46 messages that were chosen as the examples in the analysis part of this research can be found along with some extra messages that characterise the discussion in each message thread. All the message threads containing all 1800 messages are in appendices 37-54.

The word lists in the tables are shortened versions of the word lists that were made with the WordSmith programme WordList. The selection which is presented and analysed in the analysis tables includes representative examples of the data that was gathered from the original word lists. The word lists containing the frequencies of all the lexical items in the corpus were calculated with the WordSmith tools, but are not included in the appendices, because they are over 50 pages long each and add up to

[Type text]
over a 1000 pages and in addition to that the same information about word frequencies can also be found in the appendices 19-36 where the concordance lines for all the lexical items in the tables are presented.

The message threads that are used in this study can also be accessed on the Internet on the BBC news website at http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/haveyoursay. The addresses to the message threads are listed in the references.
5. ANALYSIS OF THE MESSAGE THREADS

Messages from the message threads in the Have Your Say corpus are presented in this chapter and this part of the thesis is structured so that first some examples are given from each message thread in order to introduce the contexts of the lexical items. Then a table will be presented in which selected lexical items are analysed with the Appraisal framework and the frequencies of occurrence are given and finally concordance lines are displayed.

There are 18 topics altogether in the message threads and 1800 posts in these threads as each thread contains 100 messages. The first 100 messages from each topic were chosen to form the Have Your Say corpus. However, the length of the individual messages as well as the length of the examples that are chosen to be analysed varies in the data. There are 46 messages which are analysed in more detail, and the number of lexical items under investigation varies in the examples. In addition to that ten items that characterise the topics are chosen from the word lists for each message thread and the numbers of occurrence and the appraisal analysis for these lexical items are presented in the tables. A concordance for one lexical item from each message thread is presented at the end of the analysis for each topic.

All examples are presented in the analysis in the exactly same form as they appear in the original posts and therefore the messages include some typing mistakes as well as some grammatical ones. However, suggesting corrections for those blunders is not within the aims of this research. The way of presenting this analysis is slightly repetitive, but the objective is to introduce these messages and individual lexical items in them in a consistent way.

The message thread Three Rs (education) begins the analysis part of this study. The three Rs stand for the three basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic which are the basic elements of education.

(1) message 17. At 1:05pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:
They need to be part of something more fun / interesting and be shown to be relevant to the whole of learning.

In example (1) the lexical item relevant is positive Appreciation and Valuation and it refers to the subjects that are being taught. The subjects are depicted as something that should be more fun and interesting and these adjectives belong to the categories of positive Appreciation, Reaction and impact in the Appraisal framework.

(2) message 25. At 1:14pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:

You don’t need much more in life than a good grasp of the 3r’s. (The message continues in appendix 1)

This usage of good belongs to positive Appreciation and Reaction and quality. A confident grasp of the basic skills taught at primary schools are seen as a basis for a good life.

Table 5. Items, occurrences and analysis for the thread Three Rs (education).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actually</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Engagement: Contract: Disclaim: counter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appalling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Reaction: quality &amp; - Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social esteem: normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brilliant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coherent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Composition: balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fictional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation / + Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| good | 28 | + Appreciation: Valuation 
+ Appreciation: Reaction: quality & 
+ Judgement: Social esteem: 
capacity |

In table 5 (and the same applies to all the tables in this analysis) membership in a positive category for the lexical item is marked with a plus sign (+) and if the item belongs to a negative category with a minus sign (−) in the type of appraisal column. If there are several possible categories in which the item can be interpreted to belong to, the names of the categories are separated by a forward slash (/). The ampersand symbol (&) is used when the lexical item is interpreted to definitely belong to both categories.
These examples show that *good* often tends to modify nouns in contexts like these. *Good* is positive Judgement, Social esteem and capacity on line 17, where it refers to the teachers. It can be categorized as positive Appreciation and Valuation on line 23, where the whole education system is evaluated. There are 28 occurrences of *good* in this thread and in comparison *bad* occurs only twice in the message thread. Good collocates with nouns *education, grounding, school, teacher, level* and *grasp*.
Young people and countryside is the second topic that is included in this corpus. These messages illustrate the debate about city vs. countryside and whether young people can afford to live in the countryside or not.

(3) message 7. At 12:35pm on 04 Mar 2010, nickname wrote:

In the country there is no work and unaffordable housing. In the cities badly paid work and unaffordable housing. This is no reason to kill our green belt. The root cause is ignorant, greedy and dysfunctional local councils and the government who stifle businesses by their financial demands, neglect infrastructure despite collecting huge taxes and through petty bureaucracy driven by the nimby set impede the private building (in brown sites) of affordable housing.

The adjective nimby is used to describe people who object to or criticise new things in their neighbourhood or more accurately in their backyards. This belongs to negative Judgement and Social sanction and propriety. Affordable is positive Appreciation and Valuation whereas unaffordable belongs to the negative subcategory of Valuation. The local councils are depicted as ignorant and greedy. Greedy is negative Judgement and Social sanction and propriety. Ignorant belongs to the category of negative Judgement, Social esteem and capacity. Dysfunctional when it is used to describe the councillors’ capacity to function is negative Judgement, Social esteem and capacity. Bureaucracy is seen as petty which is negative Appreciation and Valuation.

(4) message 81. At 2:50pm on 04 Mar 2010, nickname wrote:

In fairness, it's not just pricing driving the young out of the countryside. The bright lights of the big cities have been drawing kids out of the countryside for years, and poor phone reception and utterly awful internet coverage are only worsening the feeling of being 'cut off' from where it's all happening in the countryside. You could give the homes away, and most youngsters would still want to spend their twenties in a big city.

The writer describes the disadvantages that he associates with living in the countryside. These issues seem to affect young people who wish to leave the countryside and move to big cities. Poor belongs to the subcategory of negative Appreciation and Reaction to quality. Utterly is Graduation, Force and intensification. Awful refers to the availability of the Internet connection and therefore is negative Appreciation and Reaction to quality.
Table 6. Items, occurrences and analysis for the thread Young people & countryside.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>artificial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Appreciation: Reaction quality/ Reaction: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; + Judgement: Social esteem: normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impossible</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Reaction: quality &amp; Graduation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation &amp; - Judgement: Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>esteem: propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Reaction: impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ridiculous</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Concordance lines for poor in the thread Young people and countryside.

1 start in the ‘poxy’ areas of town, the poor areas, the undesirable areas and 2 obtain a council house/benefits and too poor to afford my own place. I feel that 3 out of the countryside for years, and poor phone reception and utterly awful 4 farm machinery you see. Narrow roads, poor shopping, virtually no public 5 wrote: Well, yes, price is a factor. But poor internet and mobile phone 6 house and bathes in the tears of the poor - despite the fact that the trade 7 live there. Then blaming them for being poor! Complain about this comment 31. 8 middle of no-where, with horrendously poor communications and enjoy being

The adjective poor collocates with nouns area, phone reception, shopping and internet. In the Appraisal framework poor is negative Appreciation and Valuation.
Postings from the April fool message thread are presented next. This message thread is characterised by funny incidents which take place on April Fool’s day when people fool each other with practical jokes.

(5) message 9. At 10:18am on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

Even infants don't get taken in by this april 1st **rubbish** anymore.

The adjective *rubbish* is negative Appreciation and Valuation. This example conveys a negative attitude towards the tradition of fooling people with the April fool jokes and pranks. The writer seems to think that it is childish to be deceived by the practical jokes that people play on each other.

(6) message 80. At 12:51pm on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

Sellotaped the button down on a colleague's phone so it carried on ringing after she'd picked up **Childish** I know but ....

In example (6) the evaluative item *childish* refers to the writer’s behaviour and this adjective belongs to the category of negative Judgement and Social esteem and capacity.

Table 7. *Items, occurrences and analysis for the message thread April fool.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>angry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Affect: Displeasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boring</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Reaction: impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extra</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation / + Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
really | 8 | Graduation: Force: intensification: quality  
edeous | 2 | - Appreciation: Reaction: impact  
several | 3 | Graduation: Force: quantification: number

Figure 6. Concordance for funny in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 a piano hinge was, She did see the funny side. Complain about this
2 first place. On the one hand, it's really funny. On the other hand, I am now a
3 because we all know there is nothing funny about 13 years of Labour! OOPS!
4 comments. Please guys, just funny stories." Yes because we all
5 , only to realise it was serious. Really funny but a sad reflection on our times...
6 been pretending i joined the army! so funny haha Complain about this
7 comments. Please guys, just funny stories Complain about this
8 was fooled into thinking this would be a funny HYS but it's just full of people
9 perfect condition. Luckily she saw the funny side. Complain about this

Figure 6 demonstrates that the lexical item funny collocates with nouns such as stories and side. It is positive Appreciation and Valuation in the framework. Funny stories occurs twice on lines 4 and 7 and so does funny side on lines 1 and 9.

These messages are from the message thread Do aliens really exist?

(7) message 5. At 12:16pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

If space is **infinite**, then it is **infinitely** likely that aliens do exist.

The possibility of extraterrestrial life intrigues the writers in this thread and there are many speculations on the aliens’ possible actions and friendliness or the lack of it. **Infinite** is an adjective which belongs to the categories of Graduation, Force, quantification, extent, proximity and space. **Infinitely** can be categorised as Graduation, Force and intensification.

(8) message 30. At 1:08pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

[Type text]
Avoiding contact with them just because they MIGHT attack us seems a bit silly to me, they could just as easily turn out to be friendly, spirited types willing to share technology with us.

In example (8) avoiding contact with aliens is something that is silly to the person writing this post. Therefore this is negative Affect in the Appraisal framework. The aliens are described as friendly and spirited and these adjectives belong to the categories of positive Judgement, Social sanction and capacity.

(9) message 49. At 1:38pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

Statistically it is unimaginable that we are the only intelligent life in the universe. The likelihood of us bumping into each other depends on how close together we are positioned and the degree of technological advance. Given how hostile we still are to one another, life more advanced than us might either be hostile too, or have the good sense to steer clear until we settle down.

Unimaginable is negative Appreciation and Valuation and intelligent is positive Appreciation and Valuation. Hostile can be interpreted belonging to the category of negative Judgement, Social sanction and propriety. Good sense is positive Appreciation and reaction to quality when it refers to the understanding that the extra terrestrials might have regarding to staying away from us if they are ever to be met on our planet.

Table 8. Items, occurrences and analysis for Do aliens really exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>advanced</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capable</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social esteem: capacity &amp; + Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Engagement: Proclaim: Concur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likely</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Engagement: Expand: entertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Engagement: Expand: entertain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Graduation: Force:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rather</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>intensification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sort-of-intelligent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Focus: softening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7. Concordance lines for intelligent in the thread Do aliens really exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>to these conclusions: 1 – Aliens are very intelligent, 2 – we will never know, 3 –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>assumes extraterrestrials are highly intelligent and light years ahead of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>26 Apr 2010, Muhammad Zaman wrote: Intelligent aliens observe all the political,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>of intelligent life in deep space. Or intelligent life will detect us... Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>that timeframe we'll detect evidence of intelligent life in deep space. Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>guesses about the likelihood of intelligent life elsewhere would certainly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>and equal obstacle. Not only would two intelligent civilisations have to exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Despite the almost certain probability of intelligent life existing out there, the vast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>are already a slave race to highly intelligent alien beings. that humans are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>do the job on Saturn's moon Titan), but intelligent life may be so much rarer that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>over-estimating the probability of intelligent life evolving. Microbial, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>: We have been looking on and off for intelligent extra-terrestrial life since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>can yet be made in the laboratory using intelligent guidance so there is no way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>be in contact with an infinite number of intelligent aliens but there would be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>It quickly makes the likelihood of other intelligent life existing at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2010, Stootwarbler wrote: Why would intelligent aliens want to descend into a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>is your birth; And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere out in space,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>too much space out there for nothing intelligent to exists. Then again, it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>for them. So yeah, trying to contact intelligent life out there doesn't seem to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>somewhere else we may colonize. So if intelligent beings exist out in the void,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>would want to communicate with us. Intelligent life would have sent out a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>of us to think we are the only intelligent beings in the universe and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>it is unimaginable that we are the only intelligent life in the universe. The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>span could be several million years, an intelligent alien species would have to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>here on Earth humans will be the only intelligent life to spawn from it. This</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>etc., may well prove we are way lower intelligent form not fit at all amongst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I have it on good authority that not all intelligent life is able to prevent itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>wrote: I think Hawking's reference to &quot;intelligent&quot; aliens is an oblique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>, etc). Why is that? If there is or was an intelligent species somewhere in our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>future. Will we ever communicate with intelligent life on other worlds? Now that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>get a reasonable estimate of how much intelligent life is out there that we have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>the chance of life developing, becoming intelligent and creating a technological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>everybody else, do not know if there is intelligent life out there but, we should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>ours supports intelligent life (well fairly intelligent), doesn't seem likely to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>in our universe and only ours supports intelligent life (well fairly intelligent),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>deity created this world. Would an intelligent life form really want to contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>of intelligent life forming and then intelligent life capable of interstellar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>then have to know the probability of intelligent life forming and then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>indeed to claim that none contained intelligent life. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>the cosmos it's possible that countless intelligent civilisations have come and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>contain what we define as &quot;life&quot; and an &quot;intelligent species&quot;. Considering the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>said it was perfectly rational to assume intelligent life exists elsewhere, but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>the ice on europa. They may not be intelligent or something we could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>on 26 Apr 2010, coastwalker wrote: Intelligent aliens do exist because the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>, then statistically there MUST be intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>the only planet in Creation that contains sort-of-intelligent life. The question that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>said it was perfectly rational to assume intelligent life exists elsewhere, but</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 7 shows all 47 occurrences of the word *intelligent* in this message thread. This adjective belongs to different categories in the Appraisal framework depending on the object of appraisal. The adjective *intelligent* collocates with the noun *life* in the noun phrase *intelligent life*. The type of appraisal is positive Appreciation and Valuation or it can be interpreted to belong to positive Judgement, Social esteem and capacity if the aliens can be thought of as having personality traits similar to humans.

The next posts are from the message thread *How should society work?*

(10) message 6. At 12:03pm on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

I have news for Mr C Our society (Big or Small) isn't broken!
There are hundreds of incidences every day of *generosity* and *kindness* towards neighbours and strangers.

The *bleak* Orwellian nightmare that Lord Snooty likes to imply for *narrow* political purposes is a figment of the fevered imagining of The Daily Mail and Tory Party Central Office.

There are four adjectives in example (10) and the items *generosity* and *kindness* are positive Appreciation and Reaction and impact. *Bleak* can be interpreted to be negative Appreciation and Reaction and impact. *Narrow* is negative Appreciation and composition and balance.

(11) message 11. At 12:06pm on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

Government and public services are there to serve the people, not the other way around. I like the Tory ideas regarding the 'big society' but remain *unconvinced* they can put it into practice fully.

In the Appraisal framework the adjective *unconvinced* is Affect and dissatisfaction.

Table 9. *Items, occurrences and analysis for How should society work?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>basic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation / -Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broken</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>- Appreciation:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Better belongs to the category of Graduation, subcategories of Force and intensification which is realized via comparatives. On lines 13 and 14 there is repetition of better in dressed better, behaved better and this kind of use of repetition belongs to Graduation.

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These are examples from the message thread Papers’ support for parties.

(12) message 14. At 10:39am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote:

I think the public has the brain to vote for a party regardless of whether a paper is pro
tory or labour. It is the idiots of our society who are very easy to lead that worries me.

In this example the evaluative item is the noun phrase the idiots of our society which
refers to those people who are possibly influenced by the newspapers. The public is
depicted as being intelligent people in general and being capable of making their own
decisions in the phrase having the brain to vote. Both of these examples can be
interpreted as evoked evaluation. Being an idiot of the society could also belong to
negative Judgement and to Social esteem and capacity.

(13)  message 45. At 11:09am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote

(The beginning of this message is in the appendix 42 all messages in the message thread
Papers’ support for parties.)

-- I am so sick of the constant wishy-washy opinion lead journalism of all the papers
and tv news channels, the fact that they call themselves journalists is, quite frankly, a
disgrace. They are not, they are gossip-mongers!

The writer of this message is sick of the current state of journalism. This is Affect
and dissatisfaction in the framework. The writer continues to evaluate the journalists’
own opinions that influence their writing too much. The adjective wishy-washy is
negative Appreciation and Valuation. Constant belongs to Graduation, Force,
quantification, extent, distribution and time. The state of journalism is also seen as a
disgrace and this noun can be interpreted as negative Appreciation and Valuation.
The journalists are seen as gossip-mongers, which can be interpreted as negative
Judgement, social sanction and veracity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>afraid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Affect: insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; - Appreciation: Valuation &amp; Graduation: Force: quantification:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engagement: Proclaim: Concur: affirm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clever</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation &amp; - Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Affect: happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impartial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social sanction: propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obviously</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engagement: Proclaim: Concur: affirm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unbiased</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation / + Appreciation: reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9. Concordance for good in papers’ support for parties.**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | Labour” - what the hell is the Sun? A good reason for wondering why ILabour” - what the hell is the Sun? A good reason for wondering why ILabour
| 2  | Web-of-Deceit - if the Daily Mirror is "a good reason for never voting Labour" - they think it will do the electors the best good! Complain about this comment 74. Web-of-Deceit - if the Daily Mirror is "a good reason for never voting Labour" - they think it will do the electors the best good! Complain about this comment 74. |
| 3  | and then on HYS you have can have a good laugh. So Nick Robinson has gone and then on HYS you have can have a good laugh. So Nick Robinson has gone |
| 4  | political party? Well, it's always good to know the most patronising are political party? Well, it's always good to know the most patronising are |
| 5  | I still think that this election might be a good one to lose for the Conservatives, I still think that this election might be a good one to lose for the Conservatives, |
| 6  | views. I even view the TV guide with a good deal of circumspectness! My spell views. I even view the TV guide with a good deal of circumspectness! My spell |
| 7  | . Hang on a minute! We don't have good government, do we? Thank . Hang on a minute! We don't have good government, do we? Thank |
| 8  | of information & freedom of choice. A good government must therefore raise of information & freedom of choice. A good government must therefore raise |
| 9  | particular paper, should already have a good idea of its political standpoint. particular paper, should already have a good idea of its political standpoint. |
| 10 | clever, already rich don't get all of the good jobs because of the brand of clever, already rich don't get all of the good jobs because of the brand of |
| 11 | do if left unopposed. The Daily Mail is a good example of what would happen if do if left unopposed. The Daily Mail is a good example of what would happen if |
| 12 | wrote: The Daily Mirror is a very good argument to never vote Labour wrote: The Daily Mirror is a very good argument to never vote Labour |
| 13 | Good is positive Appreciation and Valuation in the Appraisal framework. On line 4 Good is positive Appreciation and Valuation in the Appraisal framework. On line 4 |
|    | good modifies the noun laugh and is positive Appreciation and Valuation. On line 7 good deal belongs to Graduation and the subcategories of intensification and quality. |
Sensible drinking is the topic in the following examples.

(14) message 5. At 11:08am on 02 Jun 2010, nickname wrote:

- - (For the beginning of the message see appendix 6.) Instead of treating us like irresponsible children, perhaps they should instead be looking at the reasons why people drink and why this problem exists in the first place. Minimum pricing is not going to be the answer to this one, and once again it is the irresponsible few who are causing the sensible majority to suffer.

(15) message 50. At 12:03pm on 02 Jun 2010, nickname wrote:

As I understand it, the maximum 'safe' units of alcohol limit is a fairly arbitrary figure and not based on any type of reliable scientific study (as with the '5 fruit and veg' and '8 glasses of water' a day figures!) I'm not inclined to pay any attention to some quango who pulls fantasy figures out of the air, however I digress...

In example (14) the people who drink are called irresponsible and are also being compared to children who cannot control their behaviour. This item belongs to negative Judgement, Social esteem and capacity. In the framework the adjective reliable is positive Appreciation and Valuation and this is also the category where fantasy belongs to in example (15), but the evaluation is a negative one.

Table 11. Items, occurrences and analysis for the thread Sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brilliant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expensive</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irresponsible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social esteem: tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: valuation &amp; + Judgement: Social esteem: normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stupid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Reaction: impact / Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unhealthy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation &amp; - Judgement: Social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In figure 10 every often collocates with an expression of time. This is the case for example on line 10 every minute and on line 5 every now and then, every weekend, and every time. It is also used in the phrases every other day and every couple of months.

These posts are from the message thread London Olympics.

(16) message 18. At 05:19am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

The fact that this absurd, media driven frenzy, which has little or nothing to do with sport, should be brought to our capitol city is one that makes me cringe and can only to serve to show the rest of the world what, after 13 years of a socialist government led by liars cheats and thieves, what a second rate nation we have become.

The only ones to get any benefit from this nonsense are those whose personal fortunes have been made by duping the games selection committee by under-calling the cost of staging 'The Games' in London.

(17) message 21. At 08:11am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

Complete and utter waste of time and money. Roll on 2013, because I'm already sick to death of hearing about it.
In example (16) the Olympic Games are described as absurd, media driven frenzy which is negative Appreciation and belongs to the subcategory of Reaction to quality. Politicians are the object of appraisal in the next sentence, where the writer describes them with nouns liars, cheats and thieves. The writer continues to negatively evaluate Britain as a country and it is seen in its current state as a second rate nation. This can be categorized as negative Appreciation and Valuation.

_Nonsense_ can be interpreted as referring to the whole situation of getting and having the Olympics in London. The Olympic Games are seen as useless and not making very much sense at all to the writer of this message. In example (17) the Olympic Games are seen as complete and utter waste of time and money, which is negative Appreciation and Valuation.

(18) message 43. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

It was a multi-cultural, urban, scruffy, awkward, hip-hop, angular, street dance mess. It was disjointed, amateur and thoroughly unpleasant and those who organized this travesty should hang their heads in shame for the dishonour they have brought to this country.

In example (18) the object of appraisal is the acceptance of the Olympic torch (see Appendix 8, message 43). This event is depicted negatively as untraditional and un-English. The adjective disjointed belongs to the categories of negative Appreciation and in Composition and balance. All adjectives in example (18) belong to the category of Appreciation and to negative Valuation.

Table 12. _Items, occurrences and analysis for the message thread London Olympics._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horrible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incredible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification &amp;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Table 11. Concordance lines for great in the message thread London Olympics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Tag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>the mystic babblers pronouncing how 'great' they 'feel' about it now its only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>listening to Boris about the Olympics, great stuff. My suggestion would be why</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the Olympic's would turn out to be a great success if we put Boris IN A BOX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>will stop moaning and realise what a great thing The Olympics is. But there's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>it on home soil?? True, the timing isn't great with the crisis, but you could</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>most ardent nay-sayers would have no great objection to them. This could very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>25% will be positive, national pride, great world event, regeneration of a run</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>London! Im sure the Olympics will be a great boost to the economy of London</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>job creation scheme for the supposedly Great and Good that could ever have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>and suburbs? (like they need it), With great facilities for Londoners afterwards!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Great is positive Appreciation and Valuation on lines 7 and 10 on these concordance lines. Great collocates with a noun such as success on line 3 and it can be categorized in Graduation and in its subcategories of Force and quantification.

The next message thread is from August 2010 and deals with the wonders and challenges of new technology. The advantages and disadvantages that it has brought with it are the topics in this message thread.

(19) message 57. At 08:43am on 20 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

Technology is an excellent servant, but a cold, brutal and unthinking master that reveals all, knows everything.

Excellent is positive Appreciation and Valuation, but it can be also interpreted as positive Appreciation, Reaction and impact. Cold, brutal and unthinking are negative Appreciation and Valuation.
It certainly hasn't taken over mine in the way that it apparently has zombified the rest of Britain. I don't own a mobile phone. I don't have a Facebook account. Naturally, most people I know have forgotten I exist because I'm not right there ROFLMAO at their SMS texts or LIKEing their latest status update on Facebook.

I do stare at a computer screen for most of the day, but I don't have a lot of choice if I want to earn a living. So I don't feel too left out.

This message conveys the writer’s attitude towards new technological inventions as negative since the British people are seen as spending too much of their time with their mobile gadgets. The writer describes his own life as certainly being taken over by this technology and other people as having forgotten that he even exists due to the absence of online activity. Certainly and naturally both belong to Engagement, proclaim and concur in the Appraisal framework.

Table 13. Items, occurrences and analysis for the message thread New technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>awful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Reaction: quality &amp; - Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modern</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; Judgement: Social esteem: normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sad</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Affect: unhappiness &amp; - Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The lexical item *good* collocates with nouns such as *thing, balance, news* and *citizens* in the concordance examples. The lexical item *good* is positive Appreciation and reaction to quality. In addition to that there is positive Judgement, Social sanction and propriety on lines 16 in *good citizen* and on line 27 Judgement, Social esteem and capacity. On line 21 there is positive Appreciation and valuation in *technology is good* and negative Affect in *it makes me fed up.*
These messages are from the message thread Weddings. The happiest day of your life is the topic in the next examples.

(21) message 2. At 11:30am on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

2nd time around, I had the most amazing wedding, great venue and all that, not massively expensive, but we fed and watered most of our friends and a good time was had. I have great memories of the day.

In example (21) the lexical items amazing, great, expensive and good refer to things and places which make them a part of the Appreciation category. Within that category it is possible to categorize these adjectives into the subcategories of Reaction to quality, Reaction and impact or Valuation. The adjective amazing can be interpreted to belong to the category of reaction and impact when the writer describes the wedding as a whole. In addition, most belongs to the category of Graduation: Force and intensification.

(22) message 85. At 1:15pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

My husband and I focused on the marriage, not the wedding day. It seems that many do not, but what point are amazingly glamorous wedding photos without a happy marriage? We had a small wedding of close friends and family, a small but lovely reception and a lot of fun. It was a perfect day.

Many is Graduation and Force and quantification. Amazingly belongs to the category of Graduation and Force and intensification. Glamorous can be interpreted as positive Appreciation and Reaction to quality. Happy refers to the institution of marriage and therefore belongs to the category of positive Appreciation and Valuation. Small is Graduation and Force and quantification. Lovely is positive Appreciation and Reaction and impact or Reaction and quality. It can be interpreted as meaning both the impact that it has on the writer or as reaction to the quality of the event. A lot is Graduation and Force and quantification and fun is positive Affect. Perfect is positive Appreciation and Valuation.

(23) message 24. At 12:05pm On 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

The most important thing is to make sure your guests have a good time. Don't keep them waiting while you have endless photos taken of you with Auntie Doris etc between service and reception ; serve gallons of real Champagne and give them edible food.
The lexical item *important* belongs to the category of positive Appreciation and Valuation in the framework. *Good* is positive Appreciation and Valuation. *Edible* can be seen as positive Appreciation and reaction to quality. *Endless* belongs to Graduation, Force, Quantification and number.

(24) message 76. At 1:05pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

I much prefer a funeral to a wedding. I hate the pressure of having to be **exceptionally happy** when your not, or even if you are **happy** why does the 'big day' need to be **the happiest** day of your lives? If that's **the best** then it's only **down hill** from there.

In example (24) **exceptionally** is Graduation, Force and intensification in the Appraisal framework. It also conveys an attitudinal overtone. The lexical item **happy** belongs to Affect and happiness. **The best** is Graduation, Force and intensification. What happens in your life after the ‘happiest’ day is described as being **downhill** and this is evoked evaluation which implies that things will get worse after that.

Table 14. *Items, occurrences and analysis for the message thread Weddings.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exorbitantly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation / Graduation: Force: intensification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expensive</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Affect: happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huge</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation / Reaction: impact &amp; Graduation: Force: quantification: mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lavish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Graduation: Force:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>quantity/ intensification</td>
<td>Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ridiculous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>romantic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serious</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. Concordance for **best** in the message thread **Weddings**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>happiest day of your lives? If that's the best then it's only down hill from there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>lot would get bored! So do as you feel best, but do it because you want to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ceremony for immediate family and best friends, with a big party in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>are STILL calling our wedding the best they've ever been to. It doesn't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>bit, and by far the most expensive. Best advice I could give to those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>sort of wedding you choose, one of the best things is the memories - I could fill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>, some flower arrangers. I was both best man and master of ceremonies at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>an exhibition of the pretentious. But the best weddings are those without guests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>your friends and family involved - it's the best way to do it. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>the bride will look stunning (always), the best man's speech will have an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>reasons (health/finances etc). It was the best day of our lives and all our relatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 4 instances out of 11 where the adjective belongs to the subcategory of Graduation and intensification. For example, on line 6 *one of the best things is the memories* is one of the occurrences. In comparison, the sentence on line 2 is positive Appreciation and Valuation. *Best* is also part of a noun phrase *best man* on line 7.

Messages from the thread *Did God create the universe?* are presented next.

(25) message 13. At 12:06pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:

> The laws of physics quite simply preclude the existence of a deity by any current definition of the word. So, although I find Stephen Hawking's writing style fairly **impenetrable**, I am **happy** to agree with him on this point.

The writer describes Hawking’s writing style as **impenetrable** which makes it negative Appreciation and Composition and complexity. **Happy** is positive Affect and happiness.
(26) message 51. At 12:32pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:

So that's both Stephen Hawking and Richard Dawkins who say God doesn't exist. Such brilliant minds, such amazing thinkers. It surely can't be down to just fate that such genius is created?

In example (26) brilliant is positive Judgement and Social esteem and capacity. Genius belongs to that same category. Amazing is positive Appreciation and Valuation.

Table 15. *Items, occurrences, and analysis for Did God create the universe?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>absurd</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Composition: complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benevolent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complex</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation &amp; - Appreciation: Composition: complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eternal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: extent: distribution: time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fantastic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engagement: Expand entertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spontaneous</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Reaction impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 14. Concordance for spontaneous in Did God create the universe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>anyone else. The idea that Universe is a Spontaneous creation from nothing on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>and a priest, I am not a Deist. A spontaneous creation merely describes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>of the universe is absurd why is the spontaneous creation of the creator,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>way beyond the average person's. If the spontaneous creation of the universe is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>anyone else. The idea that Universe is a Spontaneous creation from nothing on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In the past things that we thought were spontaneous turned out to have a cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>aswell. The only system that supports spontaneous creation is quantum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>universe is the same as saying it was spontaneous as the question of how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>turned out to have a cause. Spontaneous is not an explanation but</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concordance lines show that spontaneous collocates with creation in six of the examples. This is a collocation pattern. There is colligation in the noun phrase a spontaneous creation when the indefinite article colligates with spontaneous.

Airport security is the topic of this thread. The security checks that take place at the airports are the subject of the next examples from the posts.

(27) message 2. At 08:01am on 27 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

The reason we are all subjected to rigorous security checks is because of political correctness. Profiling of passengers would mean the vast majority would pass through security unhindered. Because profiling would disproportionately target ethnic minorities, every granny and small child ends up being checked out. Madness.

The lexical item rigorous belongs to positive Appreciation and Reaction and quality. Vast belongs to the category of Graduation, Force, quantification and mass. Madness refers to the whole sentence and it belongs to negative Appreciation and Valuation.

(28) message 85. At 09:35am on 27 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

The security checks aren't actually all that effective. They're only there to make people think something is being done when it isn't. This is a false security. There have been countless examples where people have tested this so-called security and have passed through unhindered while carrying things deemed to be "unsafe". Very few examples of where it has actually succeeded.
Effective is positive Appreciation and Valuation and false belongs to negative Appreciation and Valuation. Countless is Graduation, Force, quantification and number. The lexical items unsafe and succeeded can both be interpreted to belong to negative Appreciation and Valuation. They both refer to the security measures which the writer of the message evaluates to be unsuccessful or at least that there are not many examples which have succeeded.

Table 16. Items, occurrences and analysis for the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social sanction: propriety &amp; - Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excessive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Reaction: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Judgement: Social esteem: normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pointless</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ridiculous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+ Affect: Security: confidence &amp; + Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 15. Concordance for *common* in the message thread Airport security.

Common collocates with the noun *sense* in 11 out of 14 examples in figure 12. This is positive Appreciation and Valuation in the framework. There are 14 occurrences in this message thread and when compared to the whole corpus there are 38 occurrences. *Common* collocates with nouns *knowledge, interests, needs, argument* and *affiliation* in the *Have Your Say* corpus (see figure 25).

The next examples are from the message thread Child Benefits.

(29) message 11. At 09:41am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

-- To take away this universal benefit is the *worst* blow yet to the *caring* Britain we once lived in. I am *saddened*.

*The worst* belongs to Graduation, Force and intensification. This is an example of relative scaling via a superlative. *Caring* is positive Appreciation and valuation of the country. *Saddened* is negative Affect and unhappiness.

(30) message 18. At 09:47am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

- - If you want to save money, why not target those who don't care about working and quite happily knock kids out for the fun of it and live perfectly *fantastic* lives living on the tax contributions of all of the *honest, hard working* people of this country.

[Type text]
**Hard** can be both negative and positive Appreciation. When it is used in a negative context like *hard times* it describes a period of difficult times whereas the noun phrase *hard working people* conveys positive Judgement about people who work very much and do it in an efficient way. It belongs to the category of positive Judgement, Social esteem and capacity. *Fantastic* is positive Valuation. *Honest* belongs to positive Judgement and Social sanction and veracity.

(31) message 29. At 09:55am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

Absolutely right. This *ridiculous* benefit has meant the poor subsidising the rich to have kids for way too long. But why does it take so long to implement the change?

In the Appraisal framework *ridiculous* belongs to the category of negative Appreciation and Valuation.

**Table 17. Items, occurrences and analysis for the message thread Child benefits.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>crazy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation + Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social sanction: veracity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Engagement: Entertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasonable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Judgement: Social sanction: propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensible</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation + Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twisted</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 16. Concordance for simple in the message thread Child benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>total household income. This is clearly simple but unfair. Meanwhile there are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>afford children without the help is simple don't have them or cut down on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>not one of whether people can fill out a simple form so that total household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>that are fair rather than going for the simple knee-jerk reaction to make some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>idea Why wait til 2013? Just make it simple, over £50000 total household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>or those without children, or whatever. Simple answer, if you cannot afford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>04 Oct 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote: *Simple answer, if you cannot afford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>done away with. Means testing that is simple and see as fair is the only way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the concordance on line 3 simple is positive Appreciation and Reaction and quality. Simple can be interpreted to belong to positive Appreciation and Valuation on the first line. Simple collocates with answer on lines 6 and 7.

The next topic deals with the joys and challenges of bringing up children. There are challenges in treating both boys and girls in the same way and the writers in the HYS message board take a stance on these aspects of parenting. This message thread can be found in the BBC web site’s blog archives under the name Do sons have it easier than daughters?

(32) message 45. At 09:44 am on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

Netmums! A totally pointless organisation of coffee morning women discussing their brats, and what rubbish subject for HYS.

The adjective pointless is negative Appreciation and Valuation. The evaluation of the subject of this message thread belongs to the same category.

(33) message 75. At 10:57am on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

I think that the most astonishing thing about raising children (one of each) is that however hard you try to treat them in a similar manner they still grow up completely different.

Parenting boys and girls seems to be a subject that raises emotions in the posters in this forum. Similar is positive Appreciation and Valuation and different is positive or negative Judgement, Social esteem and normality. The categorization of this lexical
item depends on whether one considers it a good or a bad thing that children grow up being different from each other.

Table 18. Items, occurrences and types of appraisal for Parenting boys and girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>astonishing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Appreciation: Reaction: impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheeky</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social sanction: propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social sanction: veracity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Affect: happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretty</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Engagement: Expand: Entertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ridiculous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>totally</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification: quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17. Concordance for good in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1  it usually relates to her needing to set a good example to her brothers. Complain
2  thought of me - no one will ever be good enough for her! My mother on the
3  on 06 Oct 2010, ziggyboy wrote: I had a good relationship with my mother but a
4  the time by my mother. My dad was a good cook and if it hadn't been for his

Good collocates with nouns in 3 out of 4 examples. It is positive evaluation on lines 1 and 3. On lines 2 and 4 it belongs to positive Judgement, Social esteem and capacity.
These messages are from the thread University fees and elitism. The writers in this message thread do not seem to appreciate media studies very much as they often portray this discipline as useless or unnecessary.

(34) message 28. At 11:26 am on 03 Nov 2010, nickname wrote:

They should make it cheaper to go to university but harder to get in. That way, the tuition fees wouldn't need to be so high because nobody is paying for the useless "media studies" and other chumpy subjects.

The writer considers media studies useless which belongs to negative Appreciation and valuation and other subjects are also regarded as chumpy. This item is categorized in the same subcategory.

(35) message 100. At 12:24 pm on 03 Nov 2010, nickname wrote:

The one area that this country is well known for, throughout the entire world, is the creative industry.

Entire belongs to Graduation, Force, intensification and size in the framework.

Table 19. Items, occurrences and analysis for University fees & elitism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bright</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confident</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Affect: security &amp; + Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expensive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fantastic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irrelevant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>massive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasonable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
useful & + Appreciation: Valuation

useless & - Appreciation: Valuation

Figure 18. Concordance for huge in the message thread University fees & elitism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. when they will have all retired on their huge pensions while tending to their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. parents had had to pay or I had to incur huge debt to do so. Neither could many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. her. So many important aspects of this huge change are just not being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. unions have warned that MPs will face a &quot;huge backlash&quot;. Will these changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. , how many want to start work with a huge debt at a time when they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. has stated that it is not fair to leave a huge debt burden on our children &amp;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18 shows that huge collocates with nouns such as debt, pensions, and backlash. Huge can be categorized in the category of Graduation, Force, Quantification and mass in the Appraisal framework.

Examples from the posts in the message thread Snow and weather. The fact that it snows in the winter seems to surprise many people every year.

(36) message 1. At 3:01pm on 01 Dec 2010, nickname wrote:

Isn't it strange how it is national news because the South of England has snow. Scotland, Wales and the North of England seem to just get on with it. It is disruptive and dangerous but unfortunately we live with useless councillors who don't grit the roads. Either take it up with your council or suck it up like a good little Brit

The adjectives strange, disruptive and dangerous belong to the category of negative Appreciation and in the subcategory of Valuation. The description useless when it refers to the city councillors actions or in this case to the lack of it makes it a part of the category of negative Judgement, Social esteem and in the subcategory of capacity.

(37) message 32. At 5:09pm on 01 Dec 2010, nickname wrote:

Yet again the UK proves itself a nation of incompetents that cannot cope with a little snow! Get the ploughs out - salt and grit the roads - keep the trains running - put winter tyres on your road vehicles - it really is not such a big deal!
The British people are seen as not being able to cope with snow. The evaluation of their competence to deal with snowfall is negative Judgement, Social esteem and capacity.

Table 20. Items, occurrences and analysis for the thread Snow and weather.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extreme</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extremely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incapable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>normal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation + Judgement: Social esteem: normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>severe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification &amp; + Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vast</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: mass &amp; Graduation:quantification: number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 19. Concordance lines for little in the message thread Snow and weather.

The concordance lines for little show that it collocates with late, hard graft, snow, practice and Brit. The noun phrase good little Brit occurs three times in this concordance. In the Appraisal framework the item little belongs to Graduation, Force, quantification and mass.

These are messages from the thread Neighbours from hell. The writers in this message thread complain about their neighbours’ behaviour and describe vividly all the inconveniences that they have had to endure living next door to these less than desirable citizens. See appendix 17 for the whole messages in this thread.

(38) message 14. At 11:03am on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

-- My previous home had a violent drug dealer (and his partner & toddler) next door. We occasionally had a peaceful few months when he was sent down. --

Violent is negative Judgement, Social sanction and propriety in the Appraisal framework. Peaceful belongs to positive Appreciation and Valuation.

(39) message 25. At 11:20 am on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

The sooner the people who are neighbours from hell are moved on the better for the whole community - why should I have to put up with idiots, idle feckless teenagers or...

[Type text]
kids who know they are above the law? All of the last few governments have failed to tackle this adequately. --

In this example young people are called idle and feckless and these adjectives belong to the categories of negative Judgement, Social esteem and capacity. The governments are evaluated negatively as not being able to work adequately which belongs to the category of negative Appreciation and Valuation.

(40) message 63. At 12:21 pm on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

-- The solution is to put all the noisy, selfish morons in one place. --

In example (40) the neighbourhood hooligans are depicted as morons who have negative qualities such as being noisy and selfish. These unflattering attributes belong to categories of negative Judgement, Social sanction and propriety.

(41) message 77. At 12:40pm on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

What about MPs from hell? These greedy, grasping, cheating, immoral, self-serving hypocrites who still think they are above the law. --

(42) message 95. At 1:06 pm on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

-- I suppose it was Thatcher’s fault you burnt your toast this morning. Another delusional leftie --

As it can be seen in examples (41) and (42) no matter what the original topic of the message thread is – in this case the postings should be about your neighbours and their antisocial behaviour – some writers always seem to be able to turn the subject to politicians and their shortcomings. In the Appraisal framework the adjectives grasping, cheating and self-serving can all be categorized in the category of negative Judgement and Social sanction and in the subcategory of veracity.

Immoral and greedy belong to negative Social sanction and propriety. By referring to politicians as hypocrites the writer implies that they say one thing and do the other and therefore this can be interpreted as invoked evaluation and, also because their ability to act according to their words is questioned, to the category of negative Social sanction and veracity if the lexical item under scrutiny was an adjective
hypocritical. The adjective delusional in example (42) is negative Judgement, Social esteem and normality.

Table 21. Items, occurrences and analysis for the thread Neighbours from hell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Engagement: Proclaim: concur: affirm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incapable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social esteem: capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ Judgement: Social esteem: normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noisy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social esteem: normality &amp; - Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuisance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>- Judgement: Social esteem: normality &amp; - Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probably</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engagement: Expand: Entertain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 20. Concordance for nice in the thread Neighbours from hell.

These concordance lines show that nice collocates with a noun such as family on lines 1 and 2. The noun estate occurs in 6 out of 13 instances. In the Appraisal framework nice can be interpreted to be positive Appreciation, Valuation and reaction and impact as well as positive Appreciation and Judgement, Social esteem and normality. Nice collocates with nouns such as estate, house, area, car and time.

The last examples in this analysis are from the message thread Bus services. This topic seems to get people to complain about the quality of the bus services.

(43) message 8. At 11:52am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

Not at all. I refuse to use public transport - it's inconvenient, rarely on time and overcrowded.--

The public transport system is described as inconvenient which is negative Appreciation and Valuation. It is also depicted as being rarely on time and overcrowded. Both items can be interpreted as negative Appreciation and reaction to quality.

(44) message 9. At 11:52 am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

-- In rural areas, particularly for the elderly and those who don't have their own transport, it's vital. –
*Vital* belongs to positive Appreciation and Valuation in the Appraisal framework.

(45) message 12. At 11:57am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

The bus service is **fairly useless** at the moment. --

The adverb *fairly* belongs to Graduation, Force and intensification and the adjective *useless* is negative Appreciation and Valuation.

(46) message 32. At 12:23pm on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

There is a fully private bus system where I live. Unlike the **horrible, wasteful** part-public funded rail services, this is a **brilliant** counterpart to the **cheaper but less comfortable** council-run buses. --

The lexical items *horrible* and *wasteful* both belong to the category of negative Appreciation and Valuation. *Brilliant* belongs to the same category of Valuation, but is a positive item. The comparison *cheaper but less comfortable* is positive Appreciation and reaction to quality.

Table 22. *Items, occurrences and analysis for the message thread Bus services.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical item</th>
<th>occurrences</th>
<th>type of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beneficial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convenient</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: reaction: quality &amp; + Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hideous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huge</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation &amp; + Appreciation: Reaction: impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: quantification: number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>necessary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+ Appreciation: Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quite</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduation: Force: intensification: quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Graduation: Force:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concordance lines in figure 21 show that when the lexical item *most* is used with adjectives it functions as a part of a superlative as on lines 3, 10, 13, 14 and 17. In the Appraisal framework superlatives are used to realize intensity. In addition to that *most* is used with nouns as in line 2 *most bus services* and it is categorized in the framework as Graduation, Force and intensification. Other collocates are *places, jobs, my purchases, and publicity.*
6. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

According to Martin & White (2005: 58), the grammatical realisations for items belonging to the category of Attitude are usually adjectival, i.e. adjectives are the main grammatical category for lexical items belonging to this group. This is also the case in this research as the items that were studied are mostly adjectives. In addition, adverbs very, certainly and probably are also included in the observations about the whole corpus. The lexical items good and little will be discussed as well as some message threads will be compared to each other. The categorisation of some lexical items is discussed first.

In the Appraisal framework the context is of utmost importance: an individual lexical item can change its meaning with the sentence and as a result end up having even the opposite meaning in a different context. For example in the message thread weddings, in a noun phrase a perfect day the adjective perfect can be used to describe a beautiful or a lovely day, whereas a perfect idiot conveys quite a different meaning for perfect. It can have the meaning of total or complete in this context. Therefore the role of the context is vital in determining whether the appraisal is positive or negative.

The lexical item great can belong to many different categories in the Appraisal framework depending on the sentence where it occurs. If the noun that it modifies is place, it can be considered to belong to the Valuation category. However, great is also used with distance and there it is a part of Graduation and the subcategory of space and distribution. It can also belong to the categories of Graduation and Force and quantification as well as positive Appreciation and Valuation. The following examples illustrate this: I read this article with a great deal of interest. I have great memories of the day.

This aspect of the Appraisal framework is challenging in doing this type of research, because the same lexeme can belong to different categories depending on the context in the sentence. Kaltenbacher (2006: 292) identifies the same problem in the
Appraisal system, which is the ambiguity of the lexical items and the fact that these items can be interpreted to belong to more than one category.

For example the lexical item *bad* can belong to two different categories depending on what is being appraised. If the object of appraisal is a person or their behaviour the category will be negative Judgement and Social sanction, but if the object is an institution this will change the category into negative Appreciation and Reaction and quality. The context is needed in order to define the category where the lexical item under investigation belongs to.

In the message thread weddings the lexical item *simple* belongs to positive Appreciation and in the subcategory of composition in the Appraisal framework. However, in the message thread about new technology there were no examples of composition in the data, but instead the examples contained valuations of cognitive constructs such as *simple reasons* or things like *simple telephones*. This is why it was placed in the category of positive Appreciation and Valuation.

*Serious* can be interpreted as reaction to quality as in the phrase *serious commitment* or as reaction and impact as in *serious reflection*. It can also refer to the wedding ceremony as in *serious ceremony* and that makes it negative Appreciation and Valuation if the wedding ceremony is considered to be a fun occasion rather than a serious one.

The adjective *average* can be interpreted to be either reaction to quality or valuation to the object of appreciation. Therefore the classification of this lexical item depends on the context in the message. It can be interpreted to be negative if it is used in the sense of something being *just average*, but it can be used neutrally, too. In the message thread Young people and countryside this item is used in noun phrases like *average wage* and *national average salary*.

Kaltenbacher (2006: 274) argues that there are certain things that need to be taken into account when combining corpus research and the Appraisal framework. The
main difference between inscribed appraisal and evoked appraisal is that in inscribed appraisal the items are explicitly lexicalized. Evoked appraisal cannot be found in individual lexical items, but is expressed through the implied meanings in longer stretches of text. This happens usually on a clausal level. The lexical items analysed in the examples, tables and concordance lines are mostly inscribed evaluation.

*Certainly* is a modal adverb and in the Appraisal framework it belongs to Engagement and the subcategories of Proclaim, Concur and affirm. There are 50 occurrences of *certainly* in the whole corpus. There are 6 occurrences in the message thread neighbours from hell, 3 in London Olympics, 2 in April fool, 4 in snow and weather, 2 in weddings, 3 in university fees and elitism, 1 in three Rs, 2 in sensible drinking, 4 in parenting boys and girls, 4 in papers’ support for parties, 8 in new technology, 1 in how should society work, 7 in do aliens really exist, 1 in did God create the universe, 1 in bus services, 0 in young people and countryside and 0 in child benefits.

In comparison to that there are 20 occurrences of *possibly* in the corpus. There are 2 in snow and weather, 3 in weddings, 1 in three Rs, 3 in sensible drinking, 1 in neighbours from hell, 1 in how should society work, 4 in do aliens really exist, 1 in did God create the universe, 1 in Child benefits, 1 in bus services, 1 in April fool, 1 in airport security and 0 in other message threads.

The concordance lines that were presented in the analysis section are displayed in table 23 with the number of occurrences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>message thread</th>
<th>concordance line</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Rs (education)</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people &amp; countryside</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April fool</td>
<td>funny</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do aliens really exist?</td>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How should society work?</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
There are 47 occurrences of intelligent in the message thread Do aliens really exist? The most frequent collocate for intelligent is life which occurs as the first word right from the search word in 25 occurrences in the concordance lines. The second most frequent collocate in R1 position is the noun alien in the plural form aliens with 5 occurrences in R1 position.

The chosen concordance lines in the message thread three Rs and Young people and countryside are good and poor with 28 and 8 occurrences. In the message thread Three Rs the lexical item good is chosen as the node word and it occurs also in the message threads papers’ support for parties, new technology and parenting boys and girls. Concordance lines for good in Three Rs show that it collocates with nouns such as reason, government and idea. These nouns occur one word to the right of good in the noun phrases a good reason, a good government and a good idea. In the message thread papers’ support for parties idea, laugh and government occur one word to the
right from the node word *good*. The message thread new technology also has *good* as a node word. The lexical environment of *good* includes as collocates the nouns *thing*, *balance*, *news*, *citizens*, *film*, *lp*. *Good* also occurs in the adjectival phrases *good at* and *good for*.

There are 218 occurrences of *good* in the *Have Your Say* corpus. *Good* is the most frequent adjective in the whole *Have Your Say* corpus. The most frequent lexemes in all message threads include lexemes such as definite and indefinite articles *the*, *a*, *an*, prepositions, *on*, *in*, *at*, and verbs *be*, *have* and other common auxiliary verbs *do*, *can*, *would* and *should*. Personal pronouns *I*, *we*, *it* are frequent, too and *people* is the most frequent noun in the data that consists of 205, 290 tokens and 12, 959 distinct lexemes.

Sinclair (1991: 18) presents the frequencies of some common words in the English language. Sinclair (1991: 143) displays the Cobuild frequency count “the commonest word in English – *the* – has approximately twice the frequency of the next two, *of*, and *and*.“ In addition to that, he states that approximately half of the vocabulary of a text – regardless of the length of the text – consists of words that have occurred only once in that text.

In the *Have Your Say* corpus there are word clusters including *a good thing* (13 occurrences) *a good idea* (7 occurrences), *a good education* (6 occurrences), *a very good* (5 occurrences). These nouns are in R1 position which is one word right from the node word. The words in L1 and L2 position are forms of the verb *be* in its different inflections or the definite article *the* and the indefinite article *a*. *Good* has 65 collocates in this corpus. The patterns for *good* are presented in figure 22.
Sinclair (1991: 143) presents the Cobuild frequency count where the 113 most frequent lexemes in English are listed. In that list there are mostly function words at the top, but the adjectives *little* and *good* also appear on the list. *New* is the most frequent adjective on that list. The lexical item *good* in this research has altogether 218 instances with occurrences in all 18 message threads and with this is the most frequent adjective in this corpus. There are 102 occurrences of *little* in the *Have Your Say* corpus and figure 23 shows the patterns for this adjective.

As stated in chapter 3 Michael Stubbs lists *little* and *good* as belonging to the 100 most frequent words in English. This is also the case in this study as *good* is the most frequent adjective also in the *Have Your Say* corpus. There is corpus evidence to suggest that grammatical words are among the most frequent ones in the messages, however adjectives are not as frequent as nouns. Stubbs and Hunston have also made this observation and the same applies to this study.

Grammatical words are the most frequent lexical items and then nouns are more frequent than adjectives. The adjective *little* is the chosen item in the concordance lines from the message thread snow and weather. There are 14 occurrences of *little* in this message thread. *A little* collocates with *snow* in 3 out of 14 instances in this
message thread. The subject matter of the message thread is the weather so it is not surprising that there are instances of weather related vocabulary such as for example the noun phrase *a little snow*.

The term colligation refers to the co-occurrence of a grammatical word with a lexical word. For instance in the case of superlatives in the message thread weddings the grammatical relationship of the definite article *the* and the superlative *best* is colligation. The lexical items *better* and *best* belong to Force and intensification and are realised through comparative and superlative forms. Adjectives *huge* and *little* both belong to the category of Graduation and in the subcategory of Force and quantification. These items are in the tables for the message threads how should society work, weddings, university fees and elitism, and snow and weather.

There are also instances of Graduation and the use of Force and quantification in lexical items *extra, many* and *several* in the message thread April fool. The lexical item *many* is chosen for analysis also in these message threads: Young people and countryside (24 occurrences), April Fool (8 occurrences), and Do Aliens really exist? (8 occurrences). The lexical item *more* occurs in the message thread bus services with 49 instances and belongs to Graduation, Force, quantification and number. In comparison to that there are 22 occurrences of the lexical item *most* in the message thread Weddings.

Figure 24. *Patterns for most in the Have Your Say corpus.*

Graduation and Focus and intensification which is realized through the evaluative item *most* in the message threads weddings (22 occurrences) bus services (22
occurrences) and child benefits (11 occurrences). These message threads also happen to have the exact same number of occurrences of this item even though the topics in these threads are not similar to each other. However, this could be only a coincidence. In addition to that there are 11 occurrences of *very* in the three message threads from October (airport security, child benefits, parenting boys and girls).

A summary of the findings in the whole corpus for the lexical item *very* is presented in the next table.

Table 24. *All occurrences of very in the Have Your Say corpus.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>message thread</th>
<th>number of occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Rs (education)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people &amp; countryside</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April fool</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do aliens really exist?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How should society work?</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers’ support for parties</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensible drinking</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Olympics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did God create the universe?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport security</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child benefits</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Boys &amp; Girls</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University fees &amp; elitism</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow and weather</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours from hell</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus services</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altogether</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lexical item *very* occurs quite frequently throughout the corpus. All the message threads have occurrences of this item. All threads from October happen to have the same number of occurrences, which is 11 occurrences. There are 6 occurrences in the threads April fool, Three Rs and London Olympics and in addition to that the exactly same number, 10, also in Did God create the universe and University fees & elitism. *Very* belongs to Graduation and in the subcategories of Force, intensification and quality in the Appraisal framework. The instances of *very* belong to isolated and non-figurative intensifications. The use of *very* can also be up-scaling of intensification.
Figure 25. Concordance for **common** in the Have Your Say corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>anything these days. Ever heard of <strong>common</strong> sense or finding out yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>didnt make a decision until it was <strong>common</strong> knowledge that trains were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>anything these days. Ever heard of <strong>common</strong> sense or finding out yourself?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>should a wedding be celebrated? With <strong>common</strong> sense, within financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SATS targets to the exclusion of <strong>common</strong> sense. SATS have sucked the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>because I have this built in thing called <strong>common</strong> sense. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>see any problem with just enforcing <strong>common</strong> sense. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>and this is becoming a more and more <strong>common</strong> way of dealing with that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>worked together as a team towards a <strong>common</strong> goal with the usual general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>. However, this effect is offset by <strong>common</strong> sense. The Sun, Mail,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>or World of Warcraft. The two most <strong>common</strong> things I have found as well is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>lives? No, it has become integral. The <strong>common</strong> incorrect notion is believing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>knowing our neighbours, having little in <strong>common</strong> with them, and so we are all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>money for a captive market all with a <strong>common</strong> interests and needs. Complain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>, I hope a degree of cooperation and <strong>common</strong> sense can prevail so that we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>greedy political party is expecting the <strong>common</strong> people to do their work whilst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>to be raided. As iron is one of the most <strong>common</strong> elements in the galaxy, this is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>, or possibly marine life, may be <strong>common</strong> on worlds with temperatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>of two civilisations sharing both a <strong>common</strong> space AND time greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>. The question that intrigues me is how <strong>common</strong> it is; is it found on one planet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>have to gain from this relocation is a <strong>common</strong> knowledge among American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>of sand on the beach and it is only <strong>common</strong> sense that other star's or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2010, Magi Tatcher wrote: All logic, and <strong>common</strong> sense, points to science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>on 02 Sep 2010, MattStoke wrote: The <strong>common</strong> argument religion takes is that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>by Islamic terrorists (by far the most <strong>common</strong> affiliation at the moment) then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>and nailclippers. Heathrow applied <strong>common</strong> sense and waived it through;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>objects is absurd with no application of <strong>common</strong> sense. I have had cuticle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>start to be implemented. Against the <strong>common</strong> people. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>just adds to the awful experience. No <strong>common</strong> sense is applied to airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>shoes off or not being one of the most <strong>common</strong>. Even going through the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>, Crack of Dawn wrote: Don't ask for <strong>Common</strong> Sense in today's world !! Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>about their jobs simply have had more <strong>common</strong> sense and have used their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Oct 2010, pkay wrote: I agree with 53.<strong>Common</strong> sense has been taken out of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>roam this world; but a little more <strong>common</strong> sense might eliminate some of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>for elderly individuals-ABSOLUTELY NO <strong>COMMON</strong> SENSE. When I have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>, the Sluiceterer wrote: At last some <strong>common</strong> sense from someone in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>staff and passengers. Lets get some <strong>common</strong> sense back. 1 total screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>, have been incapable of using their <strong>common</strong> sense. BRISTOL AIRPORT is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the message thread Airport security the lexical item *common* collocates the most often with sense. It occurs one word to the right from the node word in 11 cases.

In the message thread neighbours from hell there is one example of invoked evaluation which is the case of MPs being called hypocrites. Most examples in this research are inscribed evaluation which means that the evaluative items are explicitly expressed in the text.

It needs to be also pointed out what cannot be found in this corpus. It is surprising that there are only a few occurrences in the subcategory of Tenacity in the whole corpus. And there are some adjectives that belong to this category and have no occurrences in the corpus. For example, there are no concordances for the lexical items *heroic* and *resolute* which belong to Tenacity. Most items in positive tenacity have only a couple of occurrences in the whole corpus of 1800 messages. It has to be remembered that the size of this corpus is small (205, 290 tokens and 12,959 word types) compared to larger corpuses that often consist of millions of words. However, it is surprising that there were not more adjectives in this subcategory.

**Figure 26.** Concordance for *unreliable* in the Have Your Say corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>to travel to other areas, or that travel is unreliable or unavailable too? More</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>have suffered as a result of infrequent, unreliable and expensive public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>most of it on TV. Another factor is our unreliable weather - nothing worse than</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>all public transport for shift workers are unreliable and very unsafe at certain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>, but where I live, the train service is so unreliable that I need to take the bus on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>bus and train services are sparse and unreliable; therefore people don&quot;t use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>my car/taxis. Buses and trains are too unreliable. Yet they never were when I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The items in negative Tenacity, for example *unreliable*, have only 7 occurrences in the whole data and there is often evaluation of the bus services or the weather. In comparison to that there are 5 occurrences for *irresponsible* in the message thread sensible drinking. There also were not many occurrences in the subcategories of Composition, balance and complexity in the whole Have Your Say corpus.

The message thread Do Aliens really exist? is a source text that consists of messages that are written in quite a formal style and that is why there are not as many
It seemed at first that the message threads How should society work? papers’ support for parties, child benefits, Did God create the universe? and Do aliens really exist? might have the most colourful language, since these threads have the highest number of different lexemes. However, not all lexemes were adjectives and the type of appreciation with the adjectives varied also considerably much. The style in these threads is also more formal in comparison with April fool and Neighbours from hell threads where the topics are somewhat more light-hearted.

Emma Honkala studied in her master’s thesis (2008) how the mainstream news media portrays the blogging phenomenon. Her study focuses on the language in news articles in the blogs on the BBC website whereas this research explores the language used in the messages or comments section in the Have Your Say blog. News articles are written by professional journalists while the messages in the Have Your Say corpus are likely to be mostly written by ordinary British people who do not have a special training in writing and in addition to that the Have Your Say forum is moderated. This affects the style in the messages, because the writers are not allowed to use swear words or otherwise offensive language.

Hunston (2006: 67-68) states that there is an overall probability of one in ten for a clause to be a negative one. But in some registers and for certain lexical items the possibility can also be higher. “This makes it possible that some registers have a relatively high frequency of negative clauses because they contain a high frequency of the lexical items that attract the negative or that the lexical items are often negative because they occur in those registers.” The vocabulary in the Have Your Say corpus seems to consist of more negative than positive clauses. It could be investigated in another study whether there actually are more positive or negative sentences in this data and what the ratio is. The whole relationship between positive and negative sentences might be upside down.

Crystal (2011: 149) discusses the formal and informal styles in writing on the Internet and considers the Internet as having added to the informal usage. The
informal language features include nonstandard spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Crystal aims to describe the character of the language on the Internet and this research is an attempt to increase the knowledge about the nature of online language by investigating the frequencies of lexical items and by dividing them in the categories in the Appraisal framework. Internet message board language is one of the outputs that Crystal defines.

In the message thread Three Rs (education) the lexical item actually can be interpreted as an instance of the subcategory of counter and therefore it belongs to the main category of Engagement. In the examples there are seven instances where actually functions as a modifier for nouns or for adjectives. It also functions as an adverb in several examples in this thread.

There are 46 examples from the message threads that were chosen for analysis with the Appraisal framework and in these examples there were most lexical items in the category of Appreciation and in the subcategories of positive and negative Valuation. A surprisingly small number of items that belong to the subcategories of positive or negative Tenacity or Composition were found in the whole corpus. The word lists show that in the whole Have Your Say corpus the grammatical words the (9,046 occurrences), of (4,086 occurrences) and a (3,974 occurrences) are the most frequent lexical items. The most frequent adjectives are good (218 occurrences) and little (102 occurrences) in the whole corpus. The adverbs very (252 occurrences), certainly (50 occurrences) and probably (20 occurrences) belong to the categories of Graduation and Intensification, Engagement and Proclaim and Engagement and Entertain in the Have Your Say corpus.
7. CONCLUSION

This research was an investigation into the Have Your Say message board with the Appraisal analysis and the quantitative analysis that is used as a research tool in Corpus Linguistics. The Have Your Say corpus was explored and the vocabulary in those messages was investigated with methods used in corpus studies. More specifically, the tools used in this research were a computer programme WordSmith 5 Tools and the Appraisal framework. This research was mostly focused on using the Appraisal framework in order to categorise the lexical items in the message threads.

The concordance lines show the company the words keep and present the usage of those lexical items. Therefore corpus studies give insight into how words tend to collocate and in what contexts they appear. It is also interesting to compare the frequencies of certain lexical items and WordSmith Tools provide convenient word lists for that. The vocabulary could be further investigated with the WordSmith Tools for example by using the keyword feature in another study. This would increase the knowledge of the behaviour of nouns as this present study was focused on adjectives and adverbs. Most key words are nouns and almost all lexical items categorised in the Appraisal framework are adjectives or adverbs. That is why the keywords feature in the WordSmith Tools was not used in this study.

The resources in the Appraisal framework were used and it seems to be a useful tool in categorising lexical items. However, using the framework poses some challenges to the researcher, as the lexical items can be placed in different categories according to the context. The evaluative items categorised in this research were mostly inscribed evaluation. However, there is always some subjectivity in this kind of research. The categorisation of the lexemes can be challenging at times, but the findings in this research can still be considered to be valid and repeatable.

The message board that was chosen in this research was chosen keeping in mind that many human interest message boards are typically filled with postings where people complain about things, so this might make the researcher biased towards finding
vocabulary that conveys negative emotions. This does not necessarily give an accurate picture of the nature of British online writers, but instead represents the British as complainers and whiners. The online forums are often places for people to rant about things. It is also possible to use a nickname instead of your own name and this provides a chance to complain anonymously about various issues. So it seems to be quite rare when people write about things that are good and fine in these messages.

In order to continue research within the fields of Internet studies and Corpus studies it might be interesting to explore Sinclair’s observation of the number of positive and negative sentences and how it shows in these kinds of message boards that people tend to complain about things. This could be investigated in more detail if all the sentences in the *Have Your Say* corpus would be studied and the numbers of positive and negative sentences were calculated. However, the nature of these kinds of message boards as places where people rant and complain about things would surely have an effect on the vocabulary and this could perhaps produce different results when compared to Sinclair’s argument that out of ten statements there are nine positive ones and one negative.

It could also be investigated what differences or similarities there are between American and British message boards. In addition to that since language is constantly changing, one interesting aspect would be to compare the language from different years or decades with the findings in this study. This research paints a picture of only one year and the language use which is typical of that time period.

As the Internet language keeps on changing rapidly it is a fact that these studies can only capture a certain moment in time and the online language keeps constantly changing. This change needs to be recorded and studied also in the future when the power and the influence of the Internet as a communication medium continue to grow.
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[Type text]


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Online 15 May 2013.

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Online 15 May 2013.

<http://www.bbc.co.ukblogs/moderation.shtml>

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Online. 07 June 2013.

Three Rs

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Young people and countryside

[Type text]
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/haveyoursay/2010/03/are_the_young_being_priced_out.html>
April fool
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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/haveyoursay/2010/05/how_should_society_work.html>
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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/haveyoursay/2011/01/how_should_we_deal_with_neighhb.html>

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/haveyoursay/2011/02/how_important_is_your_local_bu.html>

[Type text]
Appendix 1. Messages from the message thread Three Rs (education) February 2010.

message 6. At 12:56pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:

Children are being failed by the education system. They quickly develop an aversion to subjects like mathematics because the teaching of it is so bad in many primary schools. Once children have fallen behind, it is very difficult for them to catch up and this only makes them fear mathematics even more.

The reason teaching is poor is because many teachers and parents were put off maths during their childhood and this feeds on to the current generation - it's a vicious cycle. 25% of adults have the maths ability of an 11 year old. If this statistic worsens, the long term economic damage will be huge and I can easily foresee the UK falling out of the top 20 economies within a generation.

message 17. At 1:05pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:

One reason that the subjects fail to inspire is that they have become divorced from the rest of the teaching day. They need to be part of something more fun / interesting and be shown to be relevant to the whole of learning.

Long lessons on just one topic are really off putting for any child who struggles in these areas.

message 25. At 1:14pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:

You dont need much more in life than a good grasp of the 3r's. Simple.

Cant stand the new look HYS. Bring back recommendations.

message 40. At 1:32pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:

There is nothing wrong with teaching the basics. All children should be taught basic maths and English. The trouble is that everything taught in schools is directed towards SATS targets to the exclusion of common sense. SATS have sucked the creativity and fun out of teaching and learning. The English papers are dull and anything challenging on the maths paper can be done on a calculator.

message 43. At 1:40pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:

Based on the shocking spelling and grammar on some of these posts perhaps the initiative has not gone far enough?

message 51. At 1:47pm on 24 Feb 2010, nickname wrote:

'.. The reason teaching is poor is because many teachers and parents were put off maths during their childhood and this feeds on to the current generation...'

What utter rubbish. Its not the teaching that's poor the difficulty with maths is that you have to THINK, something most young people are incapable of.

[Type text]
Appendix 2. Messages from the thread Young people and countryside March 2010.

message 7. At 12:35pm on 04 Mar 2010, nickname wrote:

In the country there is no work and unaffordable housing. In the cities badly paid work and unaffordable housing. This is no reason to kill our green belt. The root cause is ignorant, greedy and dysfunctional local councils and the government who stifle businesses by their financial demands, neglect infrastructure despite collecting huge taxes and through petty bureaucracy driven by the nimby set impede the private building (in brown sites) of affordable housing.

message 11. At 12:44 on 04 March 2010, nickname wrote:

I don't think it has anything to do with coming from the countryside just that country dwellers tend to have more of an affinity with their fields and things. Virtually all skilled people have to move to find appropriate jobs - and let's face it - very few of them are on farms.

message 12. At 12:45pm on 04 Mar 2010, nickname wrote:

I live in Norfolk as a 22 year old, and personally am screaming to get away from the countryside into the cities because of the lack of jobs, lack of cosmopolitan life, lack of 'buzz'. The transport links are shocking, and overpriced; it is cheaper to drive in to Norwich and face the carparking hell than bus it in (though the train is better because of Young Persons card).

I do love the countryside, and do love the peaceful life I have been brought up in but I haven't looked to see if I could afford a place to rent in Norfolk, because I don't want to live there anymore. I'm going to find my cheap housing and beautiful scenery over in Canada. Initial start up costs to get out there are high, but it is well worth the move.

message 20. At 12:57pm on 04 Mar 2010, nickname wrote:

The decline in rural areas is complex and multi-faceted but results in a steady exodus of young people from those rural areas and a influx of older people who see rural areas as a nice, quiet place to retire and are willing to pay a high price for housing which younger people born in those areas cannot easily afford.

message 81. At 2:50pm on 04 Mar 2010, nickname wrote:

In fairness, it's not just pricing driving the young out of the countryside. The bright lights of the big cities have been drawling kids out of the countryside for years, and poor phone reception and utterly awful internet coverage are only worsening the feeling of being 'cut off' from where it's all happening in the countryside. You could give the homes away, and most youngsters would still want to spend their twenties in a big city.

[Type text]

message 22. At 10:39am on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

Many years ago my son, bless him, fooled me into believing that he had heard that a 'dog's toilet' area was to be placed on the green directly in front of my house. I was incandescent with rage and phoned my local council to complain only to find they had no idea what I was talking about. Don't you just love kids?

This is the same child that on another occasion took the wheels from his father's new vehicle and left it standing on bricks. They do say that your grandchildren are your reward for putting up with you children. I can well believe that.

message 26. At 10:43am on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

Not me personally but one colleague of mine had just got her pride and joy car back from the garage of hitting another car in a supermarket car park.

One of my other colleagues came running into the office looking all flustered and apologising to her, saying he'd hit the accelerator, not the brake and run in the back of her. Her face was an absolute picture as she charged outside to see her car in perfect condition. Luckily she saw the funny side.

message 36. At 11:02am on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

Just remembered another one! We once told an apprentice that the computer that ran the barcode printer worked on voice recognition, and that to get it to print a new barcode, you had to tell it the sequence of lines by reading them from the proof. So the poor guy sat there with a microphone that we connected to the back of the PC with tape saying 'thin, thin, thin, thick...' for about 20 minutes before someone asked him what on earth he was doing!

message 80. At 12:51pm on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

Sellotaped the button down on a colleague's phone so it carried on ringing after she'd picked up Childish I know but ....

message 82. At 12:51pm on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

My trade is photography & printing. One April fools trick we used to play on juniors was to send them over to the chemist to buy some 'sharpo' powder to sharpen up prints that were out of focus! Worked every time!

message 89. At 1:05pm on 01 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

There was a story in our local newspaper some years ago regarding the plan to make cars available for public use, free of charge, rather like the bicycles that were used in the same way at that time, the idea being to use the car for your own purposes for the day, then leave it for the next person. The photograph in the newspaper showed a row of cars in the scheme, and there was our old one heading the line in the Town Hall car park. Much impressed, and having fond memories of the vehicle, we made a special trip to see it. Needless to say, the car park was empty, and we quickly sidled away in case anyone saw us. To this day, we get amused looks from the editorial staff.

[Type text]

message 5. At 12:16pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:
If space is infinite, then it is infinitely likely that aliens do exist.

message 20. At 12:49pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:
What convinces me that alien life has already invaded is a look at some of our politicians.

message 30. At 1:08pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:
I'd be amazed if they didn't. Countless billion other planets in our universe and only ours supports intelligent life (well fairly intelligent), doesn't seem likely to me. Avoiding contact with them just because they MIGHT attack us seems a bit silly to me, they could just as easily turn out to be friendly, spirited types willing to share technology with us.

message 35. At 1:20pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:
Every time I come away from a visit to the in-laws I'm convinced alien life exists.

message 37. At 1:21pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:
Aliens with sufficient technology to have star-travel will not "raid the Earth and move on". What's the point? From the knowledge we have of our own solar system plus the fact that most other stars appear to have planets, physical resources are not an issue (by this I mean water, oxygen, metals, hydrocarbons etc etc).

A star faring society will more than likey have advanced terraforming technology at their disposal (the ability to turn dead worlds into living ones), so a lack of Earth-like planets should not be an issue.

Of course there may be aliens out there who could wish to hunt us for fun, sport or food, or some which believe all life apart from theirs is inferior and must be exterminated. Still, what are the odds of that happening against the odds of us wiping ourselves out?

message 40. At 1:28pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:
If there is or was an intelligent species somewhere in our Galaxy, it seems very strange we haven't seen any evidence of them. Conclusion: there is a lot we don't know. Either life is incredibly rare and fragile... or the Universe is not what we think it is. (See Appendice xx. the HYS data for the whole message.)

message 49. At 1:38pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:
Statistically it is unimaginable that we are the only intelligent life in the universe. The likelihood of us bumping into each other depends on how close together we are positioned and the degree of technological advance. Given how hostile we still are to one another, life more advanced than us might either be hostile too, or have the good sense to steer clear until we settle down.

message 92. At 2:58pm on 26 Apr 2010, nickname wrote:

[Type text]
Unless you are self-absorbed religious nutter then the answer is "there must be". Probably the more pertinent question is one of: "Is there alien life out there we can ever hope to interact with and, like Hawking implies, is it advisable to do so?"

message 2. At 11:55am on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

The one thing this BIG society needs is the return of Fox Hunting ask David Cameron.

message 6. At 12:03pm on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

I have news for Mr C Our society (Big or Small) isn't broken! There are hundreds of incidences every day of generosity and kindness towards neighbours and strangers.

The bleak Orwellian nightmare that Lord Snooty likes to imply for narrow political purposes is a figment of the fevered imagining of The Daily Mail and Tory Party Central Office.

message 11. At 12:06pm on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

Government and public services are there to serve the people, not the other way around. I like the Tory ideas regarding the 'big society' but remain unconvinced they can put it into practice fully.

message 29. At 12:21pm on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

The most important thing is to find out where all the money is going; Over £500 billion a year is raised by the government as taxes under the pretence of paying for services to the UK population. And to make matters worse, this is not enough, the government still borrows a further £160 billion for this year, using the UK population as collateral.

We are not getting value for money!!

The vast majority of public money goes towards individuals and organisations that give little or no return. This needs to be turned around immediately.

message 30. At 12:21pm on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

How should society work?

With the minimum of interference from the state.

message 47. At 12:47pm on 03 May 2010, nickname wrote:

First, it is not the Government's money - it's ours! So the state should take as little as possible from us.
Second, the Government cannot solve every problem or save every individual from his/her own mistakes.
So a bit more of standing on our own feet and "judgemental" allocation of benefits by the Government will be welcome.

message 11. At 10:35am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote:

At least the papers state their political preferences *OPENLY*. Furthermore, if I don't buy a paper, I don't have to pay for their party propaganda.

Unfortunately, the BBC claims 'neutrality' despite its pro-Labour prejudices. I can point to some BBC programmes that are more partisan than Labour party political broadcasts. Furthermore, I am forced, under threat of prosecution, to pay for the BBC's Labour party propaganda.

So am I concerned about the papers? No. Am I concerned about the BBC's failure to meet its duty of political neutrality? YES!!

message 14. At 10:39am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote:

I think the public has the brain to vote for a party regardless of whether a paper is pro tory or labour. It is the idiots of our society who are very easy to lead that worries me.

message 38. At 11:01am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote:

I am not swayed at all by the papers. I just do not need them to tell me who to support at all. Have never been a floating voter and have supported the Tories all my life, come hell or high water. Let them stick to exposing crooked MPs and others, they're best at that!

message 45. At 11:09am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote

- - The beginning of this message is in appendix 42 All messages in the message thread Papers’ support for parties. - -

I am so sick of the constant wishy-washy opinion lead journalism of all the papers and tv news channels, the fact that they call themselves journalists is, quite frankly, a disgrace. They are not, they are gossip-mongers!

message 32. At 10:54am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote:

I am surprised any paper supported the labour party. They would be seriously limiting their readership to the small section of society which is no longer socialist yet not quite Tory

Do you really think that everyone who buys the Sun/Times/News of the World supports the Conservatives?

message 74. At 11:51am on 01 May 2010, nickname wrote:

Of course it makes a difference, most people would agree that it works as follows

Times - usually non committal - now Conservative
Guardian - usually fiercely Labour - now LibDems
Independent - Labour, but bizarre
Mail - sort of old fashioned strange Conservative ish
Express - Depends on house prices
FT - whatever business thinks is best
Mirror - Labour

[Type text]
Sun - Conservative
Sport - You've got to be joking

News - Sky - reasonably unbiased - now Conservative - was Labour
ITV - reasonably unbiased - sort of veering towards Cons/LibDems
BBC - anyone but Conservatives/ quasi Marxist

If it didn't make a difference the political parties would not work do hard to get their points across.

message 5. At 11:08am on 02 Jun 2010, nickname wrote:

What people drink and how/when they choose to drink it is a matter of personal choice and bodies like NICE should butt out and leave us to responsible drinkers to enjoy the last pleasure open to us without nannying us into submission.

Instead of treating us like irresponsible children, perhaps they should instead be looking at the reasons why people drink and why this problem exists in the first place. Minimum pricing is not going to be the answer to this one, and once again it is the irresponsible few who are causing the sensible majority to suffer.

message 17. At 11:23am on 02 Jun 2010, nickname wrote:

'A health watchdog is calling for a minimum price per unit of alcohol in England. Would this make you a sensible drinker?'

Excuse me, I AM a sensible drinker because I have this built in thing called common sense.

message 50. At 12:03pm on 02 Jun 2010, nickname wrote:

As I understand it, the maximum 'safe' units of alcohol limit is a fairly arbitrary figure and not based on any type of reliable scientific study (as with the '5 fruit and veg' and '8 glasses of water' a day figures!) I'm not inclined to pay any attention to some quango who pulls fantasy figures out of the air, however I digress...

I'm aware that the Scottish parliament were proposing a minimum price of around 40p a unit. Well, as far as I can see the drinks considered to be 'problem' drinks are already pricier than that. This will hit people who enjoy picking up a couple of bottles of whatever with their weekly shopping, not the people who want to go out and get blitzed - who will continue to do so whatever measures parliament decide to impose. Besides, I believe there is a piece of EU legislation that probably makes minimum pricing illegal. It's enough to drive you to drink.....

message 22. At 11:33am on 02 Jun 2010, nickname wrote:

This is nonsense!
Some people do have a problem with alcohol, but increasing the price will not solve anything. Look at those people who smoke. Even though the price of cigarettes has almost doubled in the last 10 years smokers will always find the money for them. This will punish those who enjoy a drink but who can do so sensibly. Are these people saying that those with money can be trusted to drink sensibly but those who are worse off cannot?

Whatever happened to personal responsibility? There are countries in Europe where alcohol is cheaper than the UK, but without the level of misuse. This problem is a cultural one, not an economic one.

Why on earth should I pay more for something I enjoy just because there are other people who misuse it? If price is the issue, why does the House of Commons have a subsidised bar?

message 43. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

What are your hopes for the 2012 games?

I suspect the games are going to be more cringe inducing than anything. The closing performance by the Chinese when they had the Olympics was well choreographed and as such breathe taking, truly breathe taking that people could be organised to perform something so awe inspiring.

In contrast the acceptance by the English of the Olympic torch for the 2012 games was embarrassing to the point of cringe educating and I had to turn over. Bar the London bus and Jimmy Page there was nothing remotely English about it. It was a multi-cultural, urban, scruffy, awkward, hip-hop, angular, street dance mess. It was disjointed, amateur and thoroughly unpleasant and those who organized this travesty should hang their heads in shame for the dishonour they have brought to this country.

If this is what we have to look forward to as the overriding theme for our Olympics – an inner city youth club hocked up on caffeine drinks and Ritalin and as devolved from anything even remotely English as its possible to get then I intend to disassociate myself from this as much as possible, it is going to be a mess.

Where did we go so wrong?

message 45. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

I hope for some proper coverage - UK media reporting of the last Olympics was appalling, focussed solely on 'team GB' instead of on the best that WORLD athletes can display. I do not care about nationalities, I want to see sporting excellence.

message 46. At 08:43am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

//My suggestion would be why don't the Olympic committee and Boris, (because he thinks outsided the box)//

Thinks 'outside the Box', Boris? Are you sure about that? I 'think' the Olympic's would turn out to be a great success if we put Boris IN A BOX and set him adrift in the Thames - maybe he would float off to a 'new' airport in the middle of the North Sea or some such other nonsense!

message 74. At 09:41am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

A big YES! I definitively will go there one day to see something; just to soak up the atmosphere and just to be there. It is the biggest event in the world and off course I cannot missed.

Unbelievable this forum is full of whiners and "lethargists".

message 94. At 10:10am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

[Type text]
No, why did we ever get involved. Because it is a chance for demented architects to build those structures they imagined while smoking pot, and for members of the old boys club to pocket a few bob for having their photo taken. For Joe public, we are just waiting for the stadia, built with the aid of sky hooks, to collapse.

message 80. At 09:47am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

No. A complete and utter waste of money for a two week jamboree that will leave no lasting benefit for the majority of those who participate in sports in this country. The money should have been spent at grassroots level to improve access and training.

We've just seen a football World Cup where the difference in the number of coaches and the system followed in a country make all the difference to the outcome. If the UK want world class numbers of participants in any sport the lesson is that money needs to be spent at the bottom, not the top.

message 99. At 10:22am on 27 Jul 2010, nickname wrote:

I can't wait. London and the rest of the country needs this to show we are still an influential member of the global community.

If done right, the benefits gained from increased tourism will be felt for decades (something which may be hard to measure).

Bring it on! Let's show the world what an incredible city London is, and what a fantastic country we live in.

[Type text]

message 2. At 11:34am on 19 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

Technology helps, but I am glad that my non-work life is not evolving around a certain product or virtual environment. I still prefer reading a book, watch a movie and go to see places and people. There will always be more technology. It just depends on how the individual choose to live his or her life.

message 6. At 11:53am on 19 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

Personally no but I do wonder about the people who walk down the streets head down looking at their mobiles whilst ipod headphone chords dangle from each ear. What vital messages are sending to people?

message 16. At 12:43pm on 19 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

VCR, beta max, Digital revolution Are you on facebook, you have to be
HDMI, blue ray, mega confusion To keep in touch with the likes of me
DVD, watch and see You cannot afford to be left behind
Listen to your MP3 In the digital future, so I’ll remind

Nothing to watch on satellite TV You to do it online, without the human touch
900 channels are insufficient for me No interaction no cuddle or clutch
I remember when TV closed down Just living in a world of gloom
We got the test card and a girl with a frown Watching the same programme in a different room

Now kids are easily unamused
They get so much that is not used
Games that only last them hours
They must have mighty techno powers

message 25. At 1:25pm on 19 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

Technology is ruled by two types of people: those who manage what they do not understand, and those who understand what they do not manage.

message 57. At 08:43am on 20 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

- - (the beginning of the message is in Appendix 45.) Technology is an excellent servant, but a cold, brutal and unthinking master that reveals all, knows everything.

message 58. At 08:55am on 20 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

The other day on a 20 min bus journey a teenage girl was sat in front of me chatting to her mate when she got off she found out her mate had been on the upper deck of the bus the whole time. Technology has its benefits but only if used with intelligence.

message 63. At 10:36am on 20 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

[Type text]
Has new technology taken over our lives? Well we certainly use it a lot. Is that a bad thing though? Not if our intentions are good and we use wise judgement.

I am waiting for the do-gooder-lefty-humanist bureaucrat to appear to propose a law to discriminate against on-line, say, shopping, and limit my internet access to no more than n hours a day. At that point I start turning the ploughshare back into a sword.

message 2. At 11:30am on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

2nd time around, I had the most amazing wedding, great venue and all that, not massively expensive, but we fed and watered most of our friends and a good time was had. I have great memories of the day. (The message continues in appendix 46.)

message 24. At 12:05pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

The most important thing is to make sure your guests have a good time. Don't keep them waiting while you have endless photos taken of you with Auntie Doris etc between service and reception; serve gallons of real Champagne and give them edible food. If you are on a tight budget, spend less on the dress and flowers etc and invite fewer people. That way everyone will remember what a good time they had.

message 30. At 12:10pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

In my personal opinion, marriage is an outdated concept. I don't need an expensive piece of paper to tell me that I love someone...

message 48. At 12:34pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

A daughter of my Dad's friend was very insistent on a lavish £35k wedding including a chartered private jet experience which basically went up in the air, circled Birmingham a few times and came back down.

3 months later, yes 3 months she was fed up and left. Parents not happy but apparently all she wanted was the 'big day' and not him.

message 49. At 12:36pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

Being recently married - and having been lucky enough to have had the perfect day that was everything my husband and I wanted - it makes me feel rather irritated that people feel the need to judge and comment on a couple's decision of how they would like to celebrate the start of their married life together.

Some weddings may appear lavish, some modest, some outrageous and some completely bizarre depending on your viewpoint. However, is it not the freedom of choice in holding your wedding day the way you want to, that makes marriage so wonderfully personal and cherished to the couple involved?

message 72. At 1:02pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT ME!

I'm in obscenely expensive hired clothing spending obscene amounts of money to show my "love and compassion" for another person by pouring money down the drain of an outmoded yet legally binding ceremony originally designed to show that women are nothing but property.

[Type text]
I'll probably spend the next 10 years paying emotionally for this nonsense once the illusion has worn off, and I probably don't even particularly like the person I'm with, so I'll have to go through some cumbersome and expensive legal activities to reverse it!

LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT ME!

message 76. At 1:05pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

I much prefer a funeral to a wedding.

I hate the pressure of having to be exceptionally happy when your not, or even if you are happy why does the 'big day' need to be the happiest day of your lives? If that's the best then it's only down hill from there.

message 85. At 1:15pm on 05 Aug 2010, nickname wrote:

My husband and I focused on the marriage, not the wedding day. It seems that many do not, but what point are amazingly glamorous wedding photos without a happy marriage?

We had a small wedding of close friends and family, a small but lovely reception and a lot of fun. It was a perfect day.
Appendix 11. Messages from the thread Did God create the universe? September 2010.

message 8. At 12:03pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:
No

message 9. At 12:03pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:
Yes.

message 10. At 12:03pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:
No

message 11. At 12:04pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:

Wow, This ones gonna turn nasty quick! 
In a word, NO. (because he is imaginary) ok, that was some words, not just one :)

message 47. At 12:29pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:

Perhaps the human race will split like that predicted by HG Wells in the time machine into those who don't believe and those that do - for me belief is fine but the name God no matter what religion you come from if replaced by the word Earth in all the writings still works - God is purely another term for the Earth and is a way to explain that which people did not understand centuries ago into a concept that people can grasp. Yes God exists - God is the Earth itself. Though God as some bearded bloke in the clouds watching us - no way and there is no need to wind him up on sundays as a certain song lyric a few years ago stated. Creating the Universe is pure chaos, a fantastic concept...so perhaps the concept of chaos is actually God..?

message 51. At 12:32 pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:

So that's both Stephen Hawking and Richard Dawkins who say God doesn't exist. Such brilliant minds, such amazing thinkers. It surely can't be down to just fate that such genious is created?

message 54. At 12:32 pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:

It's all down to perception of 'What is God'. To say that the laws of physics created the universe is insufficient as then you can ask what created the laws of physics. Something did - and if you want to put a name to it - you call it God.

message 64. At 12:39 pm on 02 Sep 2010, nickname wrote:

Don't be ridiculous! We live in the age of science and whilst anyone has the right to believe whatever fanciful nonsense they wish, I expect - no, in fact I demand - that an august organisation such as the BBC be more enlightened than to run HYS threads pandering to the zealots
Appendix 12. Messages from the message thread Airport security October 2010.

message 2. At 08:01am on 27 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

The reason we are all subjected to rigorous security checks is because of political correctness. Profiling of passengers would mean the vast majority would pass through security unhindered. Because profiling would disproportionately target ethnic minorities, every granny and small child ends up being checked out. Madness.

message 18. At 08:37am on 27 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

US security paranoia makes me unwilling to visit there or use their carriers knowing I am going to be treated like a potential terrorist every step of the way. They seem to have the knack of responding in an extreme manner to every threat, but only after it happens. Today it's shoes, tomorrow do we get our Y-fronts inspected?

message 19. At 08:38am on 27 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

We're between a rock and a hard place on this one...

...we either have strict airport policies and succeed or we loosen them up until something untoward occurs.

However these strict policies are draconian, intrusive and time consuming making flying an awkward experience for anyone travelling with children.

Its the 'something untoward occurring' thats the problem. A hijack at an airport is bad but not as bad as a bomb exploding onboard at 35,000ft.

There is the chance to do something about the former but not the latter.

And would you want to be on board in either situation?

message 85. At 09:35am on 27 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

The security checks aren't actually all that effective. They're only there to make people think something is being done when it isn't. This is a false security.

There have been countless examples where people have tested this so-called security and have passed through unhindered while carrying things deemed to be "unsafe". Very few examples of where it has actually succeeded.

message 42. At 08:55am on 27 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

Living abroad and flying frequently back to the UK from other destinations shows you that this is all pretty pointless. The rest of the world is not interested in the degree of nit-picking that the British airports have made a way of life. That means that anyone coming into a British airport has not undergone the degree of checking the British seem to need- and they can wander round at will.

If the US and the UK are so interested in this degree of security then keep it on flights between their two countries

[Type text]

message 11. At 09:41am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

As I understand it a couple with two £40k incomes will still get the money but a single parent on £45k won't? That is hardly fair. It also is discouraging to earners who not only will get taxed at 40% for crossing some silly threshold but also now get taxed heavily again by losing their benefit. It is unquestionably socially damaging and one of the best examples yet of the Tories using the deficit argument to pursue ideological objectives.

To take away this universal benefit is the worst blow yet to the caring Britain we once lived in. I am saddened.

message 18. At 09:47am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

I'm not a parent as yet, but this is something my wife and I are planning. How do I feel? Personally, I feel you can't be successful in this world without being knocked down. I work hard, build up my experience and skills in my career and when I finally get to the point where I want to have children I get told I am too successful for my own good so the government will offer me no assistance.

I ask the government, will you decrease my tax payments in lieu of taking away any potential child benefits?

If you want to save money, why not target those who don't care about working and quite happily knock kids out for the fun of it and live perfectly fantastic lives living on the tax contributions of all of the honest, hard working people of this country.

message 29. At 09:55am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

Absolutely right. This ridiculous benefit has meant the poor subsidising the rich to have kids for way too long. But why does it take so long to implement the change?

message 64. At 10:22am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

It is unfair that the cut off point is not per house hold but applied to the individual. My husband earns just over £44k pa but a couple next door may earn £43k each totalling £86k but still receive child benefit.

Anyway, the reality of my husbands take home pay means that I work part time (we work 7 days a week) to pay our way, we dont have enough money for extras and I rely on that money to buy clothes, shoes and at times food for my children.

It is very easy for the ignorant to describe us as High earners but the reality is very different.

message 94. At 10:36am on 04 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

Scrap it completely - and do it now.

If you can't afford to have children, don't have them.

message 45. At 09:44am on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

Netmums! A totally pointless organisation of coffee morning women discussing their brats, and what rubbish subject for HYS.

Now how about asking why no one is interested in the commonwealth games and why the stadiums are empty and will the GB Olympics go the same way (hopefully), and if it does then can we put an end to all this athletics circus, get rid of the sickening Seb Coe and company stop wasting UK taxpayers money on a collection of minor sport’s events that clearly no one is interested in.

message 64. At 10:41am on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

A lot of people are positing that Fathers favour daughters and Mothers favour sons; a theory with which I have to say I partly agree. As a thought, and as a much more interesting debate, what implications does this have for the idea of the traditional family as compared to alternative family types such as single or gay parents?

message 68. At 10:46am on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

I don't think "eager to please" or "serious" should necessarily be seen as negative traits, or "cheeky" be seen as a positive trait. All those words are open to a lot of different interpretation.

I think my parents treated us all equally. As for me I only have sons, but if I had daughters I would try to treat them in the same way.

message 75. At 10:57am on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

I think that the most astonishing thing about raising children (one of each) is that however hard you try to treat them in a similar manner they still grow up completely different.

message 88. At 11:56am on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

I think, that however much you try not to, you will always tend to favour the child of the opposite sex to you. I think this applies to both mums and dads.

message 97. At 12:36pm on 06 Oct 2010, nickname wrote:

Of course the male child has it easier for example they have more access to education worldwide. Male chances of survival must also be greater because there are an estimated one million 'disappeared' females worldwide and the list could go on.
Appendix 15. Messages from the message thread University fees and elitism 2010.

message 4. At 11:09am on 03 Nov 2010, nickname wrote:

This seems a very fair price to pay for further education, which is entirely optional.

It's about the same cost as an average second-hand car, which parents happily fork out when
the time comes. Elitizm has nothing to do with it.

message 19. At 11:21am on 03 Nov 2010, nickname wrote:

Higher fees will of course deter many, how many want to start work with a huge debt at a
time when they are starting to take on their own house and family commitments. The multi
millionaires in the cabinet and supporters of the Tories are pleased, there will be less
competition from the plebs for places and they will be able to pay the fees in one go out of
their pocket money. Does anyone really think that Cameron and Osborne have a clue what
these fees mean to the average family, after all university is cheap when you have been
paying Eton school fees for years

As for the Lib Dems do they really think any of their loyal supporters will be able to accept
this betrayal. Their election promises meant nothing

message 28. At 11:26am on 03 Nov 2010, nickname wrote:

They should make it cheaper to go to university but harder to get in. That way, the tuition
fees wouldn't need to be so high because nobody is paying for the useless "media studies"
and other chumpy subjects.

message 65. At 11:52am on 03 Nov 2010, nickname wrote:

No. It will just hopefully stop the people who go for few years of drinking and getting up late
and come out at the end with a media studies or dog walking degree .

message 100. At 12:24pm on 03 Nov 2010, nickname wrote:

I am concerned to read all the negative comments about arts graduates in here and the fact
that people feel that their courses should not be funded. The one area that this country is well
known for, throughout the entire world, is the creative industry. We train some of the best
artists/designers/film makers etc in the world.Every single article that you pick up and use in
your daily life has been designed - by an arts graduate. Look at James Dyson - a graduate of
the Royal College of Art. How much income is he generating for the country? Without good
design and the highly skilled people who work in that area, the UK would not be able to
function within the manufacturing arena. Yes, we need doctors and scientists but we also
need good designers. Please do not let anyone tell you that these people have "noddy
degrees" in basket weaving - just not true! As a retired art teacher, I despair at the lack of
understanding and insight of the people making these comments - and I bet you own a Dyson
vacuum cleaner as well!

message 1. At 3:01pm on 01 Dec 2010, nickname wrote:

Isn't it strange how it is national news because the South of England has snow. Scotland, Wales and the North of England seem to just get on with it. It is disruptive and dangerous but unfortunately we live with useless councils who don't grit the roads. Either take it up with your council or suck it up like a good little Brit

message 24. At 4:36pm on 01 Dec 2010, nickname wrote:

I get very tired of the chip-on-shoulder comments about the South of England. As has already been pointed out, the news for the last week, when the South was not affected in the slightest, has been dominated by how the North and Wales have been struggling with the snow.

Yesterday it started snowing here and, thanks to no gritting locally, nearly every school is shut. The traffic is chaotic and the roads on my estate are quite literally a sheet of ice. They probably won't be gritted at all. The blame rests firmly with the Council, who charge extortionate local taxes to run our public services and each year fail to do their duty.

message 26. At 4:40pm on 01 Dec 2010, nickname wrote:

It's all a bit pathetic really... okay so we get some proper winter weather for a change. A few generations ago in the UK hard winters were the norm and people grumbled a bit, threw on an extra pair of thick socks and got on with it. Many places in the world still do so annually but not here. A bit of snow and it seems that everything beyond the front door becomes dangerous and inconvenient, we're told to stay indoors, anything that can be cancelled is cancelled and the country grinds to a halt. Man up and adapt people, were not bigger than nature and never will be so suck it in, change pace and relearn how to live with whatever it throws at us.

message 32. At 5:09pm on 01 Dec 2010, nickname wrote:

Yet again the UK proves itself a nation of incompetents that cannot cope with a little snow! Get the ploughs out - salt and grit the roads - keep the trains running - put winter tyres on your road vehicles - it really is not such a big deal!

message 40. At 6:06pm on 01 Dec 2010, nickname wrote:

I turned 50 this year and I can remember very severe winters in the 60s that went on forever with much deeper snowfall than we have had in South Yorkshire in the last few days.

I too grew up in S.Yorks - Sheffield, and I too remember many bad winters in the 60's. Certainly there were no closed schools, but then as you rightly point out most people could walk there. Whilst there was as much or more snow then, they weren't considered bad - for us youngsters they were a pure delight. Sheffield being a city on hills was a sledging paradise.
Appendix 17. Messages from the message thread Neighbours from hell January 2011.

message 14. At 11:03am on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

Many people don't want to report these types of behaviour for fear of retribution. My previous home had a violent drug dealer (and his partner & toddler) next door. We occasionally had a peaceful few months when he was sent down. He was eventually evicted because a neighbour had complained repeatedly, that neighbour was beaten severely, the dealer was arrested again, but not charged. None of my neighbours reported anything (according to the safer neighbourhoods team) after that.

How will fast-tracking help? Eviction only moves the problem to another property?

message 25. At 11:20am on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

The sooner the people who are neighbours from hell are moved on the better for the whole community - why should I have to put up with idiots, idle feckless teenagers or kids who know they are above the law?

All of the last few governments have failed to tackle this adequately.

If you cannot behave normally in a community you do not deserve to live there - easy BTW for some of the above - this has nothing to do with Thatcher or the student riots - if you can actually stick to the subject.

message 63. At 12:21pm on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

5. At 10:53am on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

The problem is eviction does not solve the problem it only moves it and it then becomes someone else’s problem ..........................

Doesn’t have to be that way. Problem is they, council, never put all the anti-socials in one place. They fail to see the logic, all anti-socials don’t mind other anti-social behaviours, it’s normal to them! The solution is to put all the noisy, selfish morons in one place. I have had problem neighbours for a decade. The council does nothing. The last neighbour moved out not because of eviction, because he was imprisoned for being a nutter! Next lot move in who are basically having 24/7 drinking sessions, all over 50 by the way! Most irritatingly an eviction notice is presented within weeks if the rent is not paid! Eviction maybe not, move them all to the same place definitely.

message 77. At 12:40pm on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

What about MPs from hell? These greedy, grasping, cheating, immoral, self-serving hypocrites who still think they are above the law. They tell us anything to get elected then ignore us for another 5 years.

message 95. At 1:06pm on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

"5. At 10:53am on 11 Jan 2011, nickname wrote:

The problem is eviction does not solve the problem it only moves it and it then becomes someone else’s problem.

We are now reaping the rewards of the Thatcher years and this government is just going to add to the problem not solve it."

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>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of the Thatcher years and this government is just going to add to the problem not solve it."
I suppose it was Thatcher’s fault you burnt your toast this morning.

Another delusional leftie

The proposal will throw the problem neighbours' out of their home and they will no longer be able to claim government support for housing.

I think this alone will hopefully make many 'problem neighbours' think twice BEFORE they get thrown out.

If they do get thrown out, I suspect they would think more than twice about doing it again. I think its called a deterrent and has been used by human society for many thousands of years with success. But of course this is the REAL world and the left don’t like this so I suspect it will be against their 'human rights'.
Appendix 18. Messages from the message thread Bus services February 2011.

message 8. At 11:52am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

Not at all. I refuse to use public transport - it's inconvenient, rarely on time and overcrowded. I'd rather walk, or stay at home, if I can't afford to drive myself. There needs to be massive investment in it before people will be tempted out of their cars. And before the Greens have a go at me, I've cut my CO2 emissions by: Getting a smaller car, driving around 25% fewer miles, turning my central heating down & wearing a jumper, improving the insulation in my home, gradually replacing appliances with energy efficient ones, recycling/composting everything I can, etc.

message 9. At 11:52am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

This is a question you shouldn't have to ask. In rural areas, particularly for the elderly and those who don't have their own transport, it's vital. It shouldn't be down to some twonker in a council office to decide whether we have the means to travel. Schools have been closed and centralised, the same with hospitals, local banks have closed, post offices etc. We are supposed to be making moves to abandon cars and go greener yet every which way we turn some overpaid twonker in authority decides cutting services and jobs is the only way to preserve their precious ill gotten bonuses. What's happening in Egypt isn't far from happening here, we need a cull of the twonkers at the top then everything will be cushty, yu no wot am sayin?

message 12. At 11:57am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

The bus service is fairly useless at the moment. If there was 10 times as many buses and half the price then it would be a good thing. I can drive to places for much less than the cost of a bus fair. It also needs to go on much later at night. If I go to a town 6 miles away, by bus, to visit a pub then I don't want to be forced to leave at 10:15P in order to get the last bus back! 1:30AM would be more like it....

message 14. At 11:58am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

I frequently travel around the Yorkshire Dales using the heavily subsidised Dalesbus services. Whilst I would be willing to pay more for this marvellous service I appreciate that the few other users of the service probably can't. However, the subsidy could be covered ten times over if the Council were to charge all those pesky cyclists and bikers for coming into the Dales and cluttering up the place with their cycles and motorbikes!

message 15. At 11:59am on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

The bus 'service' is very important for the many rural communities in Devon & these are the first routes to be cut because, as usual, councillors know the cost of everything but the value of nothing. In Devon there are currently proposals to cut the school bus service because it's not making enough profit. It's disgusting that, yet again, the most vulnerable are having to go without due to the excesses of the government. Many people that live in the rural villages are not second home owners with lots of money, they're usually elderly people who have lived all of their lives in the villages who have seen their local post offices, shops & schools closed
& have been forced to go in to the town to do their business. We're not 'all in this together', some of us are more 'in it' than others.

message 20. At 12:03pm on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

Another tool that will rid rural communities of the less affluent, what if house prices out of reach years ago, this should insure the final solution to economically cleanse rural communities, another 20 odd years and you will be hard pushed to go to a rural part of the country and hear an original local accent. Still we are all in this together.

message 21. At 12:03pm on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

Chopping local bus services? Just another on last nights stupid-vindictive-cuts list, which included local swimming pools (used by the disabled) and a couple of libraries. Ah - I see "Cheese And Biscuits" has just posted - must be time for lunch....

message 22. At 12:03pm on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

Public transport is indeed rubbish, and I live in London: heaven knows how bad it is in rural areas! However, as a non-driver, it's my only option. It takes over an hour and a half for me to visit my mother in law by public transport, yet it is a 20 minute drive by car. I thought the government was trying to dissuade us from using cars? This doesn't seem to me to be the right way of going about it...

message 32. At 12:23pm on 03 Feb 2011, nickname wrote:

There is a fully private bus system where I live. Unlike the horrible, wasteful part-public funded rail services, this is a brilliant counterpart to the cheaper but less comfortable council-run buses.

It is a little more expensive, but it is comfortable (leather seats!), reaches very far from the city centre and shows that public and private services should exist alongside each other, not in a hideous public funded, privately run amalgamation where taxpayers line shareholder's pockets.

Having said that, I do not believe public buses should end. They serve their place as the cheap option, a public service available to all, and force private companies not to charge extortionate prices without competition.
APPENDICES 19 – 36. Concordance lines for the lexical items in the tables.

Appendix 19. Concordances for lexical items in the message thread Three Rs (education).

Figure 1. *Concordance for actually in the message thread Three Rs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>needed is a good teacher. One who actually cares about all the pupils and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>it makes her go round in circles. She’s actually good at Maths, but the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>during class on the computer and not actually developing their learning any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>wrote: Well, since only one of them actually is an ‘R’, I reckon they should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>to wonder why the government doesn’t actually validate its policies with Ofsted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>of teaching that the Government would actually have a good idea what methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>properly and let them get back to actually teaching. Allow them to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. *Concordance for appalling in the message thread Three Rs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 years on from my time at school is appalling. Unless a child understands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>the CVs of many university students are appalling; they can hardly string two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>system in the UK is absolutely appalling, and has been since I was a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. *Concordance for average in the message thread Three Rs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Set Tag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>, who I believe has normal or above average intelligence, has struggled with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>to take a lot of the blame for this. The average child would not understand the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. *Concordance for bad in the message thread Three Rs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dislexia has been used to often to cover bad teaching and teachers and it's time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>because the teaching of it is so bad in many primary schools. Once</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. *Concordance for brilliant in the message thread Three Rs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>. My son looks like he's going to be a brilliant engineer but he's given no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 6. Concordance for **coherent** in the message thread Three Rs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>meet graduates who can barely write a <strong>coherent</strong> sentence, cannot do the most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>word and to be able to compose a <strong>coherent</strong> argument (a sentence would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>meet graduates who can barely write a <strong>coherent</strong> sentence, cannot do the most</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Concordance for **correct** in the message thread Three Rs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>from OFSTED! They are quite <strong>correct</strong> in identifying the core problem:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>this change? You must be Politically <strong>Correct</strong> to teach, thus part of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>issue in primary schools (feel free to <strong>correct</strong> me). I'd like to see more support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>technology to do basic maths or to <strong>correct</strong> spelling, then you DO NOT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Concordance for **current** in the message thread Three Rs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>. Put another way, the demands of the <strong>current</strong> system decensitise teachers or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>. The Sunday Times tells us 20% of <strong>current</strong> maths teachers can't do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>on Channel 4, they'd know that the <strong>current</strong> quality of maths teaching in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>is going to give credence to the <strong>current</strong> claim that the government is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>their childhood and this feeds on to the <strong>current</strong> generation - it's a vicious cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>their childhood and this feeds on to the <strong>current</strong> generation... 'What utter rubbish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. Concordance for **fictional** in the message thread Three Rs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>film based on several famous <strong>fictional</strong> literary characters. Alan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 10. Concordance for **good** in the message thread Three Rs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>wrote: You want 3 words that sum up a <strong>good</strong> state education system? Fund Not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24 Feb 2010, Sarah wrote: It could be <strong>good</strong> to concentrate on the 3 Rs but it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>her go round in circles. She's actually <strong>good</strong> at Maths, but the school doesn't</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>job. Yes, all children ought to have a <strong>good</strong> grasp of the basics by the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>same answer as 'what is the key to a <strong>good</strong> hospital', a good police force, etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>'what is the key to a <strong>good</strong> hospital', a <strong>good</strong> police force, etc etc. p.s. I am not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>wrote: The three Rs are central to a <strong>good</strong> education. Too many kids are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>, but don't think smart appearance, <strong>good</strong> time keeping and good manners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>appearance, good time keeping and <strong>good</strong> manners are necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Incidentally the new HYS is not very <strong>good</strong>. Complain about this comment 98.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>over the years, and most have had a <strong>good</strong> level of numeracy and literacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>subjects because they haven't had a <strong>good</strong> grounding in the basics. My</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>school children should be given a <strong>good</strong> grounding in these. Without these,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>managed to get a qualification, looked <strong>good</strong> on the figures. Complain about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>You don't need much more in life than a <strong>good</strong> grasp of the 3r's. Simple. Cant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>words do you think sum up the key to a <strong>good</strong> education?&quot; How about &quot;Leaving it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>, because they didn't need to; they were <strong>good</strong> at their job and they knew what</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>the Government would actually have a <strong>good</strong> idea what methods work. Stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>words do you think sum up the key to a <strong>good</strong> education? Do you have a child at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>, Writing and Arithmetic are all well and <strong>good</strong>, but where is the Reason that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>wrote: The Three Rs have been <strong>good</strong> enough for generations of children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>. Being able to read, write and perform <strong>good</strong> arithmetic forms the backbone of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>arithmetic forms the backbone of all <strong>good</strong> education systems. Why does</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2010, displeased wrote: The key to a <strong>good</strong> school? Independence from a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>argument (a sentence would be <strong>good</strong> these days) or the maths to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>myself somewhat and eventually got a <strong>good</strong> Degree. The first year of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>To teach the 3 R's all that's needed is a <strong>good</strong> teacher. One who actually cares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>for them to make any progress. What <strong>good</strong> is humanities if you can't read the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 20. Concordance lines for the lexical items in the message thread Young people and countryside.

Figure 1. Concordance for artificial in the thread Young people & countryside.

1. along with better access to all services. Artificial measures to keep alive of there homes, taking out loans on the artificial money. Complain about this

Figure 2. Concordance for average in the thread Young people & countryside.

1. regard to buying property, unless the average wage is suddenly going to start to be larger and more luxurious than the average townhouse. Added to which if regulations to make it practical for the average person. This gives the big at the average rural house price to the average rural wage before making such to buy a house." Please look at the average rural house price to the average equivalent of 4 years pay. Today, the average house costs 7 or 8 years pay, his house in 1960, it cost £4000: the average wage then was just £25 per way above the affordability of the local average wage. Those of us that bought build affordable (circa 5-6 times national average salary) in order for key workers at a minimum cost of 8 times national average salary. Whatever governments

Figure 3. Concordance for bad in the thread Young people & countryside.

1. spreading). There were good things and bad things about village life. Everyone with prices in millions of pounds. It's bad enough that the vast majority of

Figure 4. Concordance for every in the thread Young people & countryside.

1. being taxed to hilt to provide benefits for every other demographic. Complain opportunities in the early 1800s and every technological advancement we've . Moral of the story. Become a MP get every thing paid for and when you get and work there. I quickly found that every house that came up for sale the an election, and then fail to deliver on every single policy. Complain about this , greedily raising the by 10k for every 1k they spend on it. Do you really

[Type text]
Figure 5. Concordance for **impossible** in the thread Young people & countryside.

N Concordance
1 while building something new is almost impossible. Instead of protecting the
2 who live in cities it is making it virtually impossible for enough housing to be
3 I need to get the careers I want are impossible to get as I live too far away
4 of pounds for a mortgage is near impossible when the rents are so high
5 large towns near here that are virtually impossible to get to by public transport.
6 children can afford to buy and renting is impossible unless you have a partner or
7 accommodation comes with the job it's impossible for them to buy a home on

Figure 6. Concordance for **great** in the thread Young people & countryside.

N Concordance
1 2:16pm on 04 Mar 2010, Nic121 wrote: Great, so even though I earn a
2 too long. While this makes these areas great to visit for those of us who live in
3 jack pull the ladder up attitude. i've a great deal of sympathy for the young of
4 be ashamed. So many of our once great towns and villages have been

Figure 7. Concordance for **high** in the thread Young people & countryside.

N Concordance
1 near impossible when the rents are so high for even a tiny place (and, indeed
2 remain at reasonable levels due to high crime. Do we not think there is a
3 was it exactly that sold these houses at high prices in the first place? Who
4 . The last thing we need is arrogant, high horsed snobbish townies coming
5 90's when the prices in the Lakes were high but not ridiculous, and neither was
6 because the countryside rents are too high and there's no way I could get a
7 place to retire and are willing to pay a high price for housing which younger
8 Initial start up costs to get out there are high, but it is well worth the move.

[Type text]
**Figure 8. Concordance for many in the thread Young people & countryside.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>they’re talking about. There are far too many factors contributing to this in the jobs available. This caused many people living in rural areas, can be built and where it can be built in many of the rural areas that have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>on 04 Mar 2010, SR4Z wrote: Like many city dwellers, I'd love to live in the the negative consequences. There are many solutions to the rural economic 04 Mar 2010, LeftieAgitator wrote: Too many townies have an idyllic view of the a reasonable house, but there are too many planning rules &amp; building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>economically significant but why do so many people seem to forget that it or blocks of flats. Why look to build so many new houses when there are 04 Mar 2010, Mike Thomas wrote: So many of you are saying the young to countryside, are they mad, so many houses round my way where cut</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>be able to afford a house on the wages. Many immigrants will rent (paid for by 2010, Apple-Eater wrote: So after so many years, the government's just hit by a double whammy. The irony is, many liberal pc brigadistas are happy to and post offices' have long gone in many areas' What jobs are left? the news, just re-highlighting another of the many challenges to the rural way of life. a decent life is beyond the reach of many people. Complain about this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>wrote: Problem is there are just too many people chasing too little space in Labour policies for the situation, as many are, is ridiculous. Complain about needed to labour. Labouring is not a job many people want, they want inside of salaries within all organisations- too many years of percentage pay increase farming and such like, dont need many workers’ if any ? there is only doing such should be ashamed. So many of our once great towns and that which the locals can afford), and many farming communities are having</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9. Concordance for nice in the thread Young people & countryside.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>moving into an area they perceive as a nice place to live. Get over it. This is run, fewer people! Faster internet will be nice for those with a home in which to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>of older people who see rural areas as a nice, quiet place to retire and are willing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10. Concordance for ridiculous in the thread Young people & countryside.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>transport and the house prices are ridiculous. All those townies buying up buses, ones that just don't turn up and ridiculous timetables. I am trying very up property prices in pursuit of some ridiculous rural idyll, and thereby for the situation, as many are, is ridiculous. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]

Figure 1. Concordance for angry in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 hard. Lighten up! - get unnecessarily angry/horrible/sour for absolutely no
2 , and are serious when necessary, angry when it's warranted, and use
3 another, getting more and more upset, angry and panicked at the prospect.
4 and pointed out to my embarrassed and angry wife, that it was April Fools Day.
5 , or be verbally torn to shreds by a very angry woman. Complain about this

Figure 2. Concordance for best in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 I've got 4 points so far this year. Not my best haul but not bad. I sent out a text
2 01 Apr 2010, Confuciousfred wrote: The best of all, the "Apollo G" golf club
3 wanting to control immigration is the best one I've seen since the People will
4 10:57am on 01 Apr 2010, pb wrote: The best April Fool I've ever heard was the

Figure 3. Concordance for boring in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 likely to be moderated for being utterly boring & cringe-makingly predictable..."
2 likely to be moderated for being utterly boring & cringe-makingly predictable..."
3 likely to be moderated for being utterly boring & cringe-makingly predictable...
4 point of coming up with the same old boring stuff in a discussion about April
5 point of coming up with the same old boring stuff in a discussion about April

Figure 4. Concordance for extra in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 their petrol price up yesterday for the extra 1p duty rather than today when it
2 . It was guaranteed to give any golfer an extra 50 yards..........if you were lucky
3 their petrol price up yesterday for the extra 1p duty rather than today when it
Figure 5. Concordance for good in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 01 Apr 2010, thomas wrote: Here is a good one to fool a friend. You get you making, Mr Misery? I would call it a good thing to have silly and childish fish at each other...sounds quite good, certainly better than all the to offer'. Silly and childish is sometimes good - life's short and hard. Lighten up! - on the Lisbon Treaty. Stitched me up good and proper. Complain about this revealed after mid day. 'The reg' got us good and proper Complain about this Apr 2010, Clevor Trever wrote: Here's a good un' which just arrived in my mailbox

Figure 6. Concordance for many in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 source of amusement is that on so many occasions I thought I had spotted . By the way, have you noticed how many budding politicians are on HYS... the zoo.....this is the zoo..... Only after many attempts did the penny drop and the number given. It's amazing just how many times they kept asking the progression of the knowledge of many people today. Complain about . Today is April Fool's day and in many parts of the world people are :39am on 01 Apr 2010, thomas wrote: Many years ago my son, bless him, gov comments. There are and will be many occasions to mention your

Figure 7. Concordance for old in the message thread April fool.

N Concordance
1 01 Apr 2010, es1212 wrote: My 6 year old son played a joke on his Grandad but deserted, immigration out-of-control, old Bushites dragged out and dusted off cars in the scheme, and there was our old one heading the line in the Town story but this beats by a mile the age old 'sky hooks', 'long stands' and the point of coming up with the same old boring stuff in a discussion about the point of coming up with the same old boring stuff in a discussion about

[Type text]
heavy snow at the beginning of April, I really would have thought it to be an
one, only to realise it was serious. Really funny but a sad reflection on our
on 01 Apr 2010, gingerheroine wrote: I really am getting bored with HYS
it in the first place. On the one hand, it's really funny. On the other hand, I am
Apr 2010, wizmyrddin wrote: Man I was really caught out this year, I am always
lol to get back at them.all very chilish really. Complain about this comment 6.
01 Apr 2010, Megan wrote: Perhaps not really April's Fool, but my husband is a
that an early April fools day ..or was it really Tony Blair we saw ? then again

wrote: Cue lots of pithy and utterly tedious anti-Labour comments. Please
these people realise how wretchedly tedious they are? Complain about this
wrote: Cue lots of pithy and utterly tedious anti-Labour comments. Please

name lives there. The call gets repeated several more times before the caller
piece of coursework for history, and for several other subjects, due to be
we had completed, which had taken several months, had been done wrong
Appendix 22. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread Do aliens really exist?

Figure 1. Concordance for advanced in the thread Do aliens really exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>nonsense. Why would a race with such advanced technology have to travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>said aliens be more technologically advanced than us, and what are their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the “aliens” are always technologically advanced to us? The possibility that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>slaves? If they are that technologically advanced they have robots! (Cheaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If they're less technologically advanced than us, then we have little to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>this to be a rather large error. Any advanced alien civilisation able to reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>, they would also be far technologically advanced than we are today. What</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>over. If they're more technologically advanced, then their motivations for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>here about the variables to consider. An advanced civilisation has to be close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>we still are to one another, life more advanced than us might either be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>our broadcasts as to them it is about as advanced as smoke signals! So, is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>it's always that alien races will be more advanced and will either ransack us or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>. Which leaves the question of whether advanced aliens will be peaceful, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hawkins. Any alien with technology so advanced that they can get here will not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>faring society will more than likey have advanced terraforming technology at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>have observed us for long being highly advanced and haven't yet attacked us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>not fit at all amongst those far more advanced out there. - It may be also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>for granted that they would be more advanced than us,if we was to make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>, I disagree with his views on this. An advanced space-faring civilization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for big in the thread Do aliens really exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>asteroid collision) to end up with a very big number indeed. It quickly makes the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>This number, incidentally, is significantly big. But there is one problem. We have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>( the big bang ) and and an end . &quot; The Big Bang marks the beginning of our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>infinite though . It has a beginning ( the big bang ) and and an end .&quot; The Big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>precisely for the same reason. Space is big, unimaginably big. Complain about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>possible. Trouble is, the universe is so big that even if it's crawling with aliens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>infinite though . It has a beginning ( the big bang ) and and an end . I don't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>reason. Space is big, unimaginably big. Complain about this comment 16.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 3. Concordance for *capable* in the thread *Do aliens really exist?*

N Concordance
1 *About the only reason alien lifeforms capable of interstellar travel would want*  
2 *the odds of Earth being the only planet capable of supporting life as we know it,*  
3 *If they themselves or their machines are capable of landing on this planet, they*  
4 *if at our stage of development we are capable of recognising them! Complain*  
5 *Americans. Are there aliens out there capable of communicating with us? If*  
6 *life forming and then intelligent life capable of interstellar communication*  
7 *wrote: if they exist, and they are capable of sucking the earth of our*

Figure 4. Concordance for *certainly* in the thread *Do aliens really exist?*

N Concordance
1 *wrote: I agree with Dr. Hawking who certainly has a fertile mind, but I don't*  
2 *been described as a double planet. It is certainly within the bounds of possibility*  
3 *of intelligent life elsewhere would certainly be helped by the proven*  
4 *intelligent life out there but, we should certainly look for it: were we to have*  
5 *Stephen Hawking says aliens almost certainly exist but warns it would be a*  
6 *Mathematically and logically, they certainly do. Or more accurately, have*  
7 *out there. Fortunately they are almost certainly many, many light years away*

[Type text]
Figure 5. Concordance for intelligent in the thread Do aliens really exist?

Concordance

2010, Stoatwarbler wrote: Why would intelligent aliens want to descend into a
is your birth; And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere out in space,
It quickly makes the likelihood of other intelligent life existing at the same time
can yet be made in the laboratory using intelligent guidance so there is no way
be in contact with an infinite number of intelligent aliens but there would be
too much space out there for nothing intelligent to exists. Then again, it is
of us to think we are the only intelligent beings in the universe and
it is unimaginable that we are the only intelligent life in the universe. The
would want to communicate with us. Intelligent life would have sent out a
for them. So yeah, trying to contact intelligent life out there doesn't seem to
somewhere else we may colonize. So if intelligent beings exist out in the void,
: We have been looking on and off for intelligent extra-terrestrial life since
of intelligent life in deep space. Or intelligent life will detect us... Some
that timeframe we'll detect evidence of intelligent life in deep space. Or
26 Apr 2010, Muhammad Zaman wrote: Intelligent aliens observe all the political,
to these conclusions: 1 – Aliens are very intelligent, 2 – we will never know, 3 –
assumes extraterrestrials are highly intelligent and light years ahead of
guesses about the likelihood of intelligent life elsewhere would certainly
do the job on Saturn's moon Titan), but intelligent life may be so much rarer that
over-estimating the probability of intelligent life evolving. Microbial, or
are already a slave race to highly intelligent alien beings. That humans are
and equal obstacle. Not only would two intelligent civilisations have to exist
Despite the almost certain probability of intelligent life existing out there, the vast
span could be several million years, an intelligent alien species would have to
the cosmos it's possible that countless intelligent civilisations have come and
contain what we define as "life" and an "intelligent species". Considering the
indeed to claim that none contained intelligent life. Complain about this
of intelligent life forming and then intelligent life capable of interstellar
then have to know the probability of intelligent life forming and then
said it was perfectly rational to assume intelligent life exists elsewhere, but
the only planet in Creation that contains sort-of-intelligent life. The question that
said it was perfectly rational to assume intelligent life exists elsewhere, but
, then statistically there MUST be intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.
the ice on Europa. They may not be intelligent or something we could
on 26 Apr 2010, coastwalker wrote: Intelligent aliens do exist because the
deity created this world. Would an intelligent life form really want to contact
wrote: I think Hawking's reference to "intelligent" aliens is an oblique
, etc). Why is that? If there is or was an intelligent species somewhere in our
I have it on good authority that not all intelligent life is able to prevent itself
here on Earth humans will be the only intelligent life to spawn from it. This
etc., may well prove we are way lower intelligent form not fit at all amongst
future. Will we ever communicate with intelligent life on other worlds? Now that
ours supports intelligent life (well fairly intelligent), doesn't seem likely to me.
in our universe and only ours supports intelligent life (well fairly intelligent),
everybody else, do not know if there is intelligent life out there but, we should
get a reasonable estimate of how much intelligent life is out there that we have
the chance of life developing, becoming intelligent and creating a technological

[Type text]
Figure 6. Concordance for **likely** in the thread Do aliens really exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>: If space is infinite, then it is infinitely <strong>likely</strong> that aliens do exist. Complain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>are that if we ever detect a signal, it is <strong>likely</strong> to have originated 100 or 1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>: &quot;If space is infinite, then it is infinitely <strong>likely</strong> that aliens do exist.&quot; Space time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>in the universe life on other worlds is <strong>likely</strong>. Nobody yet understands how life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>how life formed on this world and how <strong>likely</strong> it was to happen. You can't make</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>life (well fairly intelligent), doesn't seem <strong>likely</strong> to me. Avoiding contact with them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>aliens would colonize/use earth is most <strong>likely</strong> based on his belief that alien</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>number of stars out there that there are <strong>likely</strong> to be a huge number with planets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>, BertieBobbins wrote: I reckon it's more <strong>likely</strong> that there are aliens than it is that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>exist out in the void, then it's pretty <strong>likely</strong> when they do find our planet their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>our documented xenophobia, it's more <strong>likely</strong> to be the former than the latter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>disruptive) So they only aliens we are <strong>likely</strong> to bump into are microbes, the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>apart 1 million to 1 is 14 times more <strong>likely</strong> to happen than winning the lottery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>that, based on probability, it is highly <strong>likely</strong> that we are not the only sentient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>is the case, then Drake's equation is <strong>likely</strong> significantly over-estimating the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>solar system. So let's take a look in the <strong>likely</strong> areas. That'll take 30-50 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>conflicts we have on Earth, and would <strong>likely</strong> have an utter lack of respect for us</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>. Maybe 'god' is an alien! God is most <strong>likely</strong> alien in many ways to humankind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Concordance for **probably** in the thread Do aliens really exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>would have a huge challenge, as <strong>probably</strong> would we were we to enter an</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>to be 13.5 billion years old, and is <strong>probably</strong> much older. It is not the size of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the number of planets/ large moons that <strong>probably</strong> exist (a very large number with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>situation and reported back. There are <strong>probably</strong> outward facing warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>. Either way, they and we, would <strong>probably</strong> be much better off if they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>then the answer is &quot;there must be&quot;. <strong>Probably</strong> the more pertinent question is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>survival. Any aliens in the first category <strong>probably</strong> wouldn't be interested in us -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>would have a huge challenge, as <strong>probably</strong> would we were we to enter an</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>to be 13.5 billion years old, and is <strong>probably</strong> much older. It is not the size of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>the number of planets/ large moons that <strong>probably</strong> exist (a very large number with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>situation and reported back. There are <strong>probably</strong> outward facing warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>. Either way, they and we, would <strong>probably</strong> be much better off if they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>then the answer is &quot;there must be&quot;. <strong>Probably</strong> the more pertinent question is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>survival. Any aliens in the first category <strong>probably</strong> wouldn't be interested in us -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8. *Concordance for rather in the thread Do aliens really exist?*

N Concordance
1 out that the universe is rather large and rather old. The odds of any 2 presence to exist. I believe this to be a rather large error. Any advanced alien worth pointing out that the universe is rather large and rather old. The odds of 4 about the real world of ideas rather than the artificiality of politics! As 5 26 Apr 2010, Leviticus wrote: There is a rather famous equation that correlates

Figure 9. *Concordance for many in the thread Do aliens really exist?*

N Concordance
1 is nothing new and has been discussed many years ago. Yes there are other 2 to raid our resources when there are many more easily accessible sources 3 is an alien! God is most likely alien in many ways to humankind so your 4 exponential. You don't have to multiple many 1 in a few thousand probabilities 5 . Fortunately they are almost certainly many, many light years away because I 6 more accurately, have done, or will do. Many worlds will have come and gone, 7 completely populated and repopulated many times over. 3. We haven't found 8 they are almost certainly many, many light years away because I agree

Figure 10. *Concordance for sort-of-intelligent in the thread Do aliens really exist?*

N Concordance
1 the only planet in Creation that contains sort-of-intelligent life. The question that
Appendix 23. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread How should society work?

Figure 1. Concordance for basic in the thread How should society work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>local community given that I received basic housing, food and some support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>taxation itself amounts to an assault on basic freedoms. Further, when the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>subject to citizen choice of provider and basic care would be reimbursed by their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>parts of our lives and only providing a basic range of public services (looking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>cannot even control or implement basic standards of compliance and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>what you end up with and have a basic lifestyle when you retire. If you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Concordance

over public life. In regards to the BIG SOCIETY, some people here think 2010, Tom Dolan wrote: 32 Cameron's "Big society" is no different to "no such people obviously are opting out of the 'big bit' because of their behaviour. (e.g. but also to see themselves as part of a big society. Yes, i can see where 03 May 2010, Lord Eiric wrote: Labours "big government" approach is nothing have slept walked into an intruding Big Brother society, cameras and ID Things to come under Conservatives 'Big Society' www.daily-news.org. job" they are doing. Society needs less big government, less incompetent . evolving backwards and people making big money out of reinventing amongst and setbacks for real change. This 'Big Society' notion needs the glare of a HalfaWebsite wrote: David Cameron's 'BIG SOCIETY' ideas are based on the wrote: Government should be a big as is needed to deliver the public tables. I don't believe anyone in the big 3 know what it is like to have very on 03 May 2010, billyhano wrote: The "big society" encourages groups of May 2010, jml1970 wrote: Cameron's "Big Society" seems to be little more Cameron something probing about his 'Big Society' idea? The Conservative extortionate bills. The trouble with the "big society" idea is that most of the "society" would be run for the profit of big business, not for the good of the enemy of the state wrote: The Tories' "Big Society" idea is just a thinly-veiled May 2010, frankiecrisp wrote: The tories "big society" sounds like if you have . I like the Tory ideas regarding the 'big society' but remain unconvinced through taxes. In the Conservatives' big vision, if you want public services Toxie Tel wrote: The one thing this BIG society needs is the return of Fox secretary Michael Gove spoke of a "big society", saying the issue was for wrote: I have news for Mr C Our society (Big or Small) isn't broken! There are "post code lotteries", the tory view of a "big society" means rely on charity and that the state has become far too big and far too involved in our lives. Over : We all know that the Conservative Big Society=Big Business=Big Tax cuts for : We all know that the Conservative Big Society=Big Business=Big Tax Tax cuts for the RICH Cameron's 'Big society' is no different to "no such that the Conservative Big Society=Big Business=Big Tax cuts for the RICH ideas. I quite like Cameron's idea of a 'Big Society'. We should be doing more load_of_bull wrote: Not sure about the Big Society from the Tories where was once provided by local govt. his "big society" So iam to expect more Government should provide. And this 'Big Society' works well in affluent areas.
Figure 3. Concordance for **broken** in the thread How should society work?

Concordance

1. Each party trying to enter the debate on really mean are less clear and are only each party trying to enter the debate on
2. They cannot combine their ideas as each party has something to offer. If
3. How we interact with each other and how we join together.
4. In their sad lives and compromise with each other for the best of us all, if they
5. If we were hearing some positive news each day instead of just economy,
6. For races in the country. We should love each other and put heads together to
7. By distributing vouchers to parents each year for the purchase of the

Figure 4. Concordance for **each** in the thread How should society work?

Concordance

1. Really mean are less clear and are only each party trying to enter the debate on
2. Pity they cannot combine their ideas as each party has something to offer. If
3. Sleep and play; how we interact with each other and how we join together.
4. In their sad lives and compromise with each other for the best of us all, if they
5. If we were hearing some positive news each day instead of just economy,
6. For races in the country. We should love each other and put heads together to
7. By distributing vouchers to parents each year for the purchase of the

Figure 5. Concordance for **fair** in the thread How should society work?

Concordance

1. Vote. We need a society that is fair and of benefit for ALL, not just those
2. That first past the post system is truly fair. Unfortunately like his buddies in the
3. On 03 May 2010, Wideboy wrote: A fair society, which need change at the
4. Monopsony – the denial of free and fair competition through the exercise of
5. Pie in the sky dreams about ‘a future fair for all’ ignore the fact that the UK’s
6. Spoon in their mouth. Society should be fair, a society that should bring rewards
7. Not. The UK was once a tolerant and fair society, but sadly this has been
8. Systems put in place that reflect truly fair and democratic local government, i.
9. Freedom of opinion and expression Fair: - distribution of opportunity and
10. A clue about what is right or what is fair. If you don’t earn/work for it, you
11. Now can get a pension? Hardly sounds fair does it? A new body of internal
12. Without work, talent or endeavour, in a fair society everyone is equal, and as the
Figure 6. Concordance for honest in the thread How should society work?

N Concordance
1 bring rewards by what you achieve by honest endeavour, a society that is not unfairness. A society where we have an honest open media not controlled by
2 wrote: The parties are not being entirely honest on the level of cuts necessary.
3 of David Cameron if he would be honest and forget forget he was a spin

Figure 7. Concordance for little in the thread How should society work?

N Concordance
1 : Cameron's "Big Society" seems to be little more than an activist's charter to
2 , the long term unemployed in areas of little work (and so forth)? Complain
3 big 3 know what it is like to have very little & have to fight to get the support
4 - it's ours! So the state should take as little as possible from us. Second, the
5 Conservatives seem to be promoting little more than a rebadged Thatcherite
6 individuals and organisations that give little or no return. This needs to be
7 left alone to get on with their lives with little interference from the state, they

Figure 8. Concordance for poor in the thread How should society work?

N Concordance
1 tax the rich and to give benefits to the poor. However, an additional mechanism
2 sought to transfer wealth from rich to poor. The principle mechanism devised
3 taxing the rich and giving benefits to the poor is a "Revenue" rather than a
4 transfer wealth, not just benefits, to the poor. The sale of council houses to their
5 . State benefits will never enrich the poor; they just institutionalise the
6 services (looking after the genuinely poor and disabled in our society, not the
7 their own schools will be terrible for the poor families who will be excluded from
8 so that the gap is narrower between the poor and the super rich??? Cameron,
9 will attest, bureaucrat choice is a very poor substitute for the judgement of
10 you can have everything, if you're poor you just have to make do with
Figure 9. Concordance for **real** in the thread *How should society work?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>. For those in marginal seats to be the <strong>real</strong> important decisions makers as to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>a working Society where we have a <strong>real</strong> voice, we can start by reforming our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>open the doors to positive voting and <strong>real</strong> representation of everyone's views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>provided; empower the citizen with <strong>real</strong> choice rather than bureaucrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>the first in my lifetime that provides that <strong>real</strong> opportunity to get away from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>engineering projects which can have a <strong>real</strong> negative effect on the quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>wrote: There should be far more <strong>real</strong> democracy regarding local issues,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>a headline catching phase that has no <strong>real</strong> substance. I would be more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>lot of wasted money and setbacks for <strong>real</strong> change. This 'Big Society' notion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. Concordance for **sensible** in the thread *How should society work?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>fairly loose constraints - through <strong>sensible</strong> regulation – true choices are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>, wearing of hoods in hot weather, (not a <strong>sensible</strong> fashion statement and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>crazy rulings and laws from the EU, a <strong>sensible</strong> decision for a very local issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 24. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread papers’ support for parties.

Figure 1. Concordance for afraid in the thread papers’ support for parties.

Concordance
1 for the independence of the BBC but I'm afraid if the Tories get in and it comes to
2 just a case of the media being no longer afraid of the NuLab bully-boys, and what

Figure 2. Concordance for big in the thread papers’ support for parties.

Concordance
1 . Papers are mostly privately owned by big business people; and which party do
2 about "well who do you expect big business to support" etc. rather
3 than a year ago, and in my opinion a big stratigic failure as it did nothing to
4 Times now. However, my main really big disappointment and disgust is with
5 prominance they are given makes a big difference to the perception. Having
6 that the newspapers are currently in a big financial pickle - including Murdoch!

Figure 3. Concordance for certainly in the thread papers’ support for parties.

Concordance
1 to his reserves. Murdoch is most certainly NOT acting in our interests.
2 that were of no interest. I would certainly not base my vote on the
3 be subjected to political indoctrination, I certainly do not want to pay for it.
4 on 01 May 2010, Warren G wrote: They certainly do. As (one kind of ) evidence,

Figure 4. Concordance for clever in the thread papers’ support for parties.

Concordance
1 never get left behind while the not so clever , already rich dont get all of the
2 and champion selection in education so clever people from poor backgrounds

Figure 5. Concordance for dangerous in the thread papers’ support for parties.

Concordance
1 and that says something about the dangerous and pathetic attitude of Tory
2 of us, since all lab, con, talk about how dangerous it would be if it was more
3 government owned press would be dangerous but its not really clear that
4 seem to despise. The Liberals are quite dangerous, more so than the other two

[Type text]
Figure 6. Concordance for **good** in the thread papers’ support for parties.

N Concordance
1 Obviously the Sun has not heard of the gambling that caused the recession. A good reason for wondering why I
2 Labour” - what the hell is the Sun? A good reason for never voting Labour” -
3 they think it will do the electors the best good! Complain about this comment 74.
4 and then on HYS you can have a good laugh. So Nick Robinson has gone
5 political party? Well, it's always good to know the most patronising are
6 I still think that this election might be a good one to lose for the Conservatives,
7 views. I even view the TV guide with a good deal of circumspection! My spell
8 . Hang on a minute! We don't have good government, do we? Thank
9 of information & freedom of choice. A good government must therefore raise
10 particular paper, should already have a good idea of its political standpoint.
11 clever, already rich dont get all of the good jobs because of the brand of
12 do if left unopposed. The Daily Mail is a good example of what would happen if
13 wrote: The Daily Mirror is a very good argument to never vote Labour

Figure 7. Concordance for **happy** in the thread papers’ support for parties.

N Concordance
1 make a statement true, but we're happy to reinforce our prejudices. We
2 public how to vote? they are quite happy making there own minds up? like
3 election where as they were perfectly happy when they were supporting

Figure 8. Concordance for **impartial** in the thread papers’ support for parties.

N Concordance
1 than the broadcaster. They do try to be impartial however they fall into the trap
2 bias,force political reportage to be impartial for the sake of fairness
3 can betray a reporter's bias. Nobody is impartial. We are each tainted by our

Figure 9. Concordance for **obviously** in the thread papers’ support for parties.

N Concordance
1 gambling that caused the recession. Obviously the Sun has not heard of the
2 i wont be voting they are all flawed and obviously not willing to work together for
3 01 May 2010, ROBERT EVANS wrote: obviously newspapers have some effect
4 he wants the Tories to win,he is obviously going to gain in some way.
5 obvious party support and skewed, even obviously untruthful reporting. Any

Figure 10. Concordance for **unbiased** in the thread papers’ support for parties.
N Concordance
1 - was Labour ITV - reasonably unbiased - sort of veering towards
2 got to be joking News - Sky -reasonably unbiased - now Conservative - was
3 significant In any event i prefer to get as unbiased a view as possible from my
Appendix. 25. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread sensible drinking.

Figure 1. Concordance for **bad** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for **brilliant** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for **effective** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Concordance for **expensive** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5. Concordance for **great** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>introduction of cheap cigarettes in the Great War), binge drinking is mainly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>:57am on 02 Jun 2010, Richard wrote: Great! This should bring the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>and the poor working class go thirsty. Great - I thought life was for enjoying -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Concordance for **irresponsible** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>to this one, and once again it is the irresponsible few who are causing the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>of the few - instead of dealing with the irresponsible abusers with adequately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>submission. Instead of treating us like irresponsible children, perhaps they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>submission. Instead of treating us like irresponsible children, perhaps they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>to this one, and once again it is the irresponsible few who are causing the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Concordance for **moderate** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>the effect on my expenditure as a truly moderate drinker would just be a few</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>be a few pounds per year. However, if moderate drinkers insist on asking why</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>will be a bit more if their drinking is truly moderate - to help safeguard society as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>elsewhere! I think it's not fair to us very moderate drinkers though, because we</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>have to compete on quality. Which as a moderate drinker I would see as a good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thirdly, what's all this about 'penalising moderate drinkers on low incomes’?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Concordance for **stupid** in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>truth is that drinking to excess is stupid, weak and antisocial. Perhaps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2010, Donnerstag wrote: Let's kill a few stupid ideas. Firstly, the amount people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>don't cause harm to others. If they do stupid things while they're druk, then</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>get falling down, fighting drunk, abusive, stupid or aggressive so why should I be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>law-abiding citizens resentful of our stupid, lazy government. Complain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. Concordance for **unhealthy** in the message thread sensible drinking.

[Type text]
Figure 10. Concordance for *widespread* in the message thread sensible drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]

Figure 1. Concordance for **good** in the message thread London Olympics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>heritage, the Olympics can only be a <strong>good</strong> thing for the British economy and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>work, not Olympic or world cup babble. <strong>Good</strong> luck to Team GB, I wish them all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>monies will disappear never to return to <strong>good</strong> causes again. From the beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>people having their moment of glory. <strong>Good</strong> luck to them all. As for my hopes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>it can it be judged to be a success or <strong>good</strong> use of money. Complain about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>make them stay!) and ultimately that's <strong>good</strong> for the entire economy, with all of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I'm sure lots of people do enjoy it so <strong>good</strong> luck to them. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>derelict and unused. Would it not be a <strong>good</strong> idea if it was a permanent olympic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>had already? Are the Olympics a <strong>good</strong> use of taxpayers' money? Check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>what is just a jolly for the rich and the <strong>good</strong> and as many people have already</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>scheme for the supposedly Great and <strong>Good</strong> that could ever have been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>08:27am on 27 Jul 2010, hetup wrote: <strong>Good</strong> to see all that much needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for **great** in the message thread London Olympics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>the mystic babblers pronouncing how 'great' they 'feel' about it now its only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>listening to Boris about the Olympics, <strong>great</strong> stuff. My suggestion would be why</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the Olympic's would turn out to be a <strong>great</strong> success if we put Boris IN A BOX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>will stop moaning and realise what a <strong>great</strong> thing The Olympics is. But there's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>it on home soil?? True, the timing isn't <strong>great</strong> with the crisis, but you could</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>most ardent nay-sayers would have no <strong>great</strong> objection to them. This could very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>25% will be positive, national pride, <strong>great</strong> world event, regeneration of a run</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>London! Im sure the Olympics will be a <strong>great</strong> boost to the economy of London</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>job creation scheme for the supposedly <strong>Great</strong> and Good that could ever have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>and suburbs? (like they need it), With <strong>great</strong> facilities for Londoners afterwards!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for **horrible** in the message thread London Olympics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>in London during the summer, it's a <strong>horrible</strong> windless polluted overpopulated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Concordance for **incredible** in the message thread London Olympics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>it on! Let's show the world what an <strong>incredible</strong> city London is, and what a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 5. Concordance for **much** in the message thread London Olympics.

\[
\begin{align*}
N & \quad \text{Concordance} \\
1 & \quad \text{I just don't want to hear about it this **much**, this soon in advance. Complain} \\
2 & \quad \text{athletes, other country’s athletes, how **much** we are wasting on it and} \\
3 & \quad \text{able to get a ticket and it would create **much** support for the project once} \\
4 & \quad \text{marvel at what London can show off, **much** like the world marveled at China’s} \\
5 & \quad \text{No. The money being spent on them is **much** needed elsewhere. The Games} \\
6 & \quad \text{a high performance target without so **much** as a word from a boss. And if} \\
7 & \quad \text{and cycling heroes returning here? How **much** better will it be if they repeat it on} \\
8 & \quad \text{of pounds for doing so. You see **much** more on the TV anyway. I really} \\
9 & \quad \text{, it would not take long to calculate how **much** to charge for things like corporate} \\
10 & \quad \text{appear and make them realise just how **much** of our money is being poured into} \\
11 & \quad \text{2010, hetup wrote: Good to see all that **much** needed money and resources} \\
12 & \quad \text{embarrassed I promise not to weep too **much**. Complain about this comment *} \\
13 & \quad \text{to disassociate myself from this as **much** as possible, it is going to be a} \\
14 & \quad \text{dont so we shouldnt be spending so **much** on a sporting event that wil only}
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 6. Concordance for **normal** in the message thread London Olympics.

\[
\begin{align*}
N & \quad \text{Concordance} \\
1 & \quad \text{display of wealth and the disruption of **normal** life. Complain about this} \\
2 & \quad \text{just look how many people are at a **normal** meeting, the stands are empty,}
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 7. Concordance for **really** in the message thread London Olympics.

\[
\begin{align*}
N & \quad \text{Concordance} \\
1 & \quad \text{bill. Very few people in this country are **really** interested in athletics; just look} \\
2 & \quad \text{see much more on the TV anyway. I **really** can't see what the point is but of} \\
3 & \quad \text{many different directions, Seb? Do you **really** need a five figure income, a} \\
4 & \quad \text{I looking forward to the Olympics? Not **really**. Not that I object though. I feel the} \\
5 & \quad \text{far as Ireland are concerned you should **really** ask Thierry Henri and FIFA, they} \\
6 & \quad \text{silly on the olympic games, You have **really** given yourself a white elephant} \\
7 & \quad \text{their tickets to a true sports fan who **really** wants to be there but cannot} \\
8 & \quad \text{and I live in Manchester so it doesn't **really** bother me. I doubt I could afford to}
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 8. Concordance for **skint** in the message thread London Olympics.

\[
\begin{align*}
N & \quad \text{Concordance} \\
1 & \quad \text{skint this time around. But then there's **skint** and there's skint, it's all relative.} \\
2 & \quad \text{. But then there's skint and there's **skint**, it's all relative. Complain about} \\
3 & \quad \text{on 27 Jul 2010, ady wrote: We were **skint** the last time we held the} \\
4 & \quad \text{time we held the Olympics and we'll be **skint** this time around. But then there's}
\end{align*}
\]

[Type text]
Figure 9. Concordance for quaint in the message thread London Olympics.

N  Concordance
1   popularity masquerading as a quaint English - London centric

Figure 10. Concordance for terrible in the message thread London Olympics.

N  Concordance
1   are already here planning something terrible. Complain about this comment *
2   here, the sooner they're over. They're a terrible waste of money, particularly now
Appendix. 27. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread New technology.

Figure 1. Concordance for **awful** in the message thread new technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  &gt; and it's a good one too. The TV is just...awful...(infantile was one description) So</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  &gt; were deemed to make property look awful...now we have dishes...unless you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  &gt; much time in your room listening to that awful loud music - you'll be deaf by the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for **bad** in the message thread new technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  &gt; to think, technology is neither good or bad its how we choose to use it that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  &gt; 20 Aug 2010, th3_0r4c13 wrote: Bing, bad idea i dont like being told how to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  &gt; doesn't even carry a footnote on the bad news. I find I have to check the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  &gt; improves. (HD can't make a bad script any better) Oh yes and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  &gt; going to school ..it is addicting and so bad . as for Gaming consoles ? also a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  &gt; to take over. The tele in the UK is bad, very poor, too many stations and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  &gt; and getting closer. It wouldn't be so bad if we learned something from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  &gt; defines its acceptability Is technology a bad thing was flint tools or the wheel or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  &gt; and technology are not good or bad it is as with anything else its what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &gt; this effect. They now pile a heap of bad news together and expose it to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 &gt; Well we certainly use it a lot. Is that a bad thing though? Not if our intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 &gt; people who claim that technology is a bad thing are simply ignorant to its uses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for **every** in the message thread new technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  &gt; be back in the dark ages' all part of every day life today. But What will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  &gt; listening to music on my iPod shuffle every working day during my commute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  &gt; so little to do they will play any and every game they cross, others have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  &gt; family abroad who i can only get to see every other year ( price of the air ticket),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  &gt; of President OBama for being a Muslim, every question was framed; is he a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  &gt; enjoys the unique position of reaching every nook and corner of the globe in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  &gt; done the fantastic job of not paying us every week, like our fathers were, in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  &gt; , fivestarhillbilly wrote: I use technology every day. for work, entertainment and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  &gt; would not like you to know about. For every piece of software that is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &gt; area. I as a responsible Parent monitor every single website and friends request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 &gt; , Graham wrote: No it becomes normal every day life. What is new technology?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 &gt; staring at them, snatching them up every time they beeped &amp; completely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 &gt; what we read, but in practicality our every thought. More terrifying, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &gt; else except check their mobiles every five minutes. Also, if it weren't for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 &gt; now although I do watch the news every evening. Only use radio in the car</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 4. Concordance for **few** in the message thread new technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>of living now as compared with just a <strong>few</strong> decades earlier, then we have all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>state of panic and I've even had quite a <strong>few</strong> break down in tears when they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>in Australia, all at the touch of a <strong>few</strong> keys - Its and amazing technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Concordance for **good** in the message thread new technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>habit, and unfortunately its not always a <strong>good</strong> thing... Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug 2010, citizen42 wrote: i think it's a <strong>good</strong> thing.we have been given the tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2010, Peter Bridgemont wrote: It's not a <strong>good</strong> thing, people are getting less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>told how to think, technology is neither <strong>good</strong> or bad its how we choose to use it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>all this 'entertainment media' is quite <strong>good</strong>, but it can get to the point where it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>life. It is still very important to keep a <strong>good</strong> balance with all this media,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>follow it some hours later with some <strong>good</strong> news. If they time it right then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>far as comunication goes, it can be a <strong>good</strong> thing. On the other hand, when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Private and Confidential, it isn't so <strong>good</strong>. The same can be said of several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>is rather like the curates egg. <strong>Good</strong> in parts. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>the pizzazz of journalistic skills. The <strong>good</strong> that has come out of HYS is the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>a Yellow Ribbon' loudly as a protest... <strong>good</strong> for him! We seem to need a printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>age. Multi channel tv is soooo <strong>good</strong> isn't it?Well, maybe the kids think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>is trying to do his best to get as much <strong>good</strong> for USA as possible but for the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>sure all this interactive technology is <strong>good</strong> for cognitive development, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>too many indepedent brainwaves - aka <strong>good</strong> citizens. Bookmark with: del.icio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>shopping channel&quot;, and it's a <strong>good</strong> one too. The TV is just...awful...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>the govt want you to believe it is for your <strong>good</strong> to enhance and educate but what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>. Knowledge and technology are not <strong>good</strong> or bad it is as with anything else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>TV daily - maybe more if there's a really <strong>good</strong> film or documentary. I use a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>wrote: Yes and No. Technology is <strong>good</strong> but it makes me fed up when I see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1973 I remember, it was really very <strong>good</strong> and no doubt a forerunner of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>to popularity - why? just listen to a <strong>good</strong> LP on a really good hi-fi system,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>just listen to a good LP on a really <strong>good</strong> hi-fi system, and compare the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>thing though? Not if our intentions are <strong>good</strong> and we use wise judgement. I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Modem Warfare 2 online. If someone is <strong>good</strong>, people will tell them. It doesn't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>white, old, young, male, female, you are <strong>good</strong> at the game and that's all that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>instead of staring out the window. Its all <strong>good</strong> to coin a phrase. One day I may</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6. Concordance for modern in the message thread new technology.

N Concordance
1   we all have 'learned from our past', our modern corrupt leaders evangelise in
2   enough to do in life and do not need modern science to take over. The tele in
3   to replace, and since most parts for modern vehicles are expensive, vehicles
4   the young impressionable generation of modern Britain vulnerable to their
5   those people who sift through and use modern technology for my own benefit.
6   wrote: i drive to work in a fairly modern car, taking into account various
7   their hunting weapons, and it's true for modern man with all their gadgets. It is
8   For example, a group of people playing Modern Warfare 2 online. If someone is
Figure 7. Concordance for new in the message thread new technology.

N
Concordance
1 a sort of pioneering spirit to it, so many new technologies were coming in and
2 Aug 2010, AnotherRichard wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives?
3 being more quickly lost in the mire of "new" news. So I don't think that there's
4 on 20 Aug 2010, teedoff wrote: Is this a new advert for Bing.com? I ask because
5 ones call a silver surfer, and I love it. New iPhone soon on my 70th birthday :
6 19 Aug 2010, Mascotman wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives?
7 method. I do get too much email with new tasks but its getting better now that
8 to by a quick google search, I can learn new techniques on the job by the same
9 , you may be obsessed with media, but New Technology does not equate to
10 , enabling me to filter out and discover new sources of thankfully diverse
11 modern corrupt leaders evangelise in new ways, charlatan commercial
12 52pm on 20 Aug 2010, Pete wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives?
13 6:10pm on 20 Aug 2010, zrzavy wrote: New technology does help in many ways
14 what one wants. technology, and the new twists make the rich richer, do the
15 on 20 Aug 2010, mocambique1 wrote: new tecnology cannot take over our
16 2010, TheGrassAintGreener wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives? No,
17 generation .. not much YET.. but for New Generations that are 13 years old
18 wrote: It is an obvious fact that most 'new' technology is designed to make
19 not are given the resources you need!! New technology is for people not
20 becomes normal every day life. What is new technology? Complain about this
21 young, my daughter aged 22 bought a new car and had several free gifts with it,
22 same time. However, despite the rise in new technologies, the report says we
23 new technology taken over our lives? 11:
24 on 19 Aug 2010, U14366475 wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives?
25 all the media outlets or do you find the new technology has helped your life?
26 :58am on 19 Aug 2010, Nok wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives?
27 on 19 Aug 2010, BluesBerry wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives?
28 , GUNGHOBUNGADIER wrote: Q - Has new technology taken over our lives? A -
29 19 Aug 2010, The Ace Face wrote: Has new technology taken over our lives? I
30 : I never gets too excited by all this new stuff. When the world starts to run
31 you one of those people? The thing with new technology is that it is addictive,
32 to all. As for social networks this is a new and potentially dangerous area. I
33 five years and we are still waiting. Most 'new' technology is actually pretty
34 cheques. Not everyone has access to new technology or is able to use it, but I
Concordance for **old** in the message thread new technology.

```
N Concordance
1   the rich richer, do the same as the old so why all the impatience - why the
to news and information. It also leads to "old" news being more quickly lost in
even have a land-line telephone, so the old red telephone boxes were well used,
to go. I love the fact that I can find old friends via facebook and we can
and trains like an office either.'Grumpy Old Man' Rory Mcgrath's solution is to
Gambling is not allowed for 13 years old right? ALL online Games , sell you
for New Generations that are 13 years old or so now .. yes and it is Dangerous
, Yes, Fifty years ago (I'm now a retired old dinosaur) many people didn't even
dish on the side of the house...once the old aerials were deemed to make
, memory etc are all over 30 years old. The only thing thats changed is
. Your keyboard is over 100 years old, the screen is over 70 years. The
and reams of repeats...just like the old days with programme after
It doesn't matter if you are black, white, old, young, male, female, you are good
were spent talking face to face! (20 year old) Email is still best for me as I can
, swipe in (clock in) and boot up the old PC getting cracking on some
```

Concordance for **sad** in the message thread new technology.

```
N Concordance
1   doesn't overwhelm me at all. Poor sad me, you may think. Well, actually
2   . Like i'm really interested in your sad life ..i mean can you just talk a bit
3   They're all very useful tools - but all a bit sad if it takes over your life. Complain
4   , probably exceed the 7 hours. How sad is that, when there is so much to
5   rather than necessity. It is also sad that my partner's children have
```

Concordance for **simple** in the message thread new technology.

```
N Concordance
1   of the Church and its pastor. Pure and simple intolerance. He is trying to do
2   2010, markus_uk wrote: If you consider simple telephones and stuff like that
3   not read a printed book in years, for the simple reason that i can purchase it
4   got a mobile phone but i don't carry a simple hankerchief so i'll just sneeze in
```

[Type text]
Appendix. 28. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread Weddings.

Figure 1. *Concordance for exorbitantly in the message thread Weddings.*

N Concordance
1 naive to say that individuals arrange *exorbitantly* expensive weddings

Figure 2. *Concordance for expensive in the message thread Weddings.*

N Concordance
1 wedding two years ago was not overly *expensive* (nowhere near the national add 10% service charge to the already *expensive* drinks). 6. The entire hotel . I dumped canopies, over the top cars, *expensive* favours, and swaping out of , so did. It might not have been big and *expensive*, but we enjoyed ourselves. AT ME! LOOK AT ME! I'm in obscenely *expensive* hired clothing spending are the tackiest bit, and by far the most *expensive*. Best advice I could give to on the cake (another friend)! The most *expensive* was the meal, buffet and to go through some cumbersome and *expensive* legal activities to reverse it! if you love someone, you dont need an *expensive* wedding to make it special. say that individuals arrange exorbitantly *expensive* weddings because they want that celebrity weddings are obscenely *expensive*. The Clinton's spent $10 000 that celebrity weddings are obscenely *expensive*. The Clinton's spent $10 000 , great venue and all that, not massively *expensive*, but we fed and watered most is an outdated concept. I don't need an *expensive* piece of paper to tell me that of the spectrum, I have been to laxishly *expensive* weddings and have never wrote: These overly large and *expensive* weddings are such a waste and I have to say I prefer the least *expensive* option. It seems more decided that, rather than have some *expensive* affair they opted for a

Figure 3. *Concordance for great in the message thread Weddings.*

N Concordance
1 meet each other. Let's get together for a *great* day and here is an excuse for (but the caricaturist after dinner was *great* fun and a massive success!). We, of the last two will give the marriage a *great* start, even if the wedding goes things. It is perfectly possible to have a *great* day without going to the excesses wrote: I read this article with a *great* deal of interest, as I have been friends and a good time was had. I have *great* memories of the day. Mostly , I had the most amazing wedding, *great* venue and all that, not massively cost of following the fashion of the *great* unthinking. And of course, newly day of excess. The reality is that its *great* to celebrate a marriage but what's

[Type text]
Concordance

people should do whatever makes them happy. Complain about this comment *
be interesting to find out just how many "happy" couples think to themselves on
happy when your not, or even if you are happy why does the 'big day' need to be
look at me; more likely to say we are happy and we want you all to meet
pressure of having to be exceptionally happy when your not, or even if you are
"So - is that it?" and "what about Happy Ever After?" Complain about this

. Posers have posy weddings; happy, warm people tend to have happy,
happy, warm people tend to have happy, warm functions; unpretentious
what makes a marriage healthy and happy, you should ask the people out
glamorous wedding photos without a happy marriage? We had a small
experience no guarantee of a long and happy relationship. I think if you really
Of course the wedding day is about the happy couple and they should have
go to ensuring a better chance for a happy and successful marriage as well
proportionate, and I think she looks very happy, as does her husband. Complain
marriage has lasted that long, that the happy pair will not have seen or heard
a wedding be celebrated? However the Happy Couple' want it to celebrated
, and it really was the most wonderful, happy, joyous day of our lives. We just
at her mothers new boyfriend...... O happy day! Complain about this
£700. And £700 we paid and were very happy with the ring until a stone came
parents and our 40 guests all have very happy memories of an intimate and
she was fed up and left. Parents not happy but apparently all she wanted
has told us (even the photographer) how happy we looked. Isn't that what it
'event' all adding to the sense that the happy couple are too precious in their

any point in starting married life with a huge debt to pay off, so we were cutting
invite to our wedding we looked at the huge cost of inviting over 250 guests.
If your answer is anything but d) then a huge overpriced spectacle of a
and the Prince can always afford a huge palace wedding. I agree with the
heads with the nonsense of making a huge scene or grand gesture. It is
home and furnish it. Given that debt is a huge factor in marital break up it seems
modern-day weddings? Are they a huge expense without meaning? Or are
down to the last detail, often at huge cost, which puts them and their
at all - if people can afford it and want a huge party to celebrate their
is being gradually eroded not by huge celebratory bashes - or even
Figure 6. Concordance for **lavish** in the message thread Weddings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>for the parents that have to fund these <strong>lavish</strong> events. Its okay if its your money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>daughter and her fiancé decided on a <strong>lavish</strong> beach-wedding in Antigua, so all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>together. Some weddings may appear <strong>lavish</strong>, some modest, some outrageous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>. If someone has the money for a <strong>lavish</strong> wedding then let them have it. It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>my Dad's friend was very insistent on a <strong>lavish</strong> £35k wedding including a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Concordance for **most** in the message thread Weddings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>at rock bottom prices but that would, for <strong>most</strong> suppliers, mean reducing the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>a lot of jobs in the hospitality sector. <strong>Most</strong> people would be better off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>are frankly the least flexible and <strong>most</strong> demanding customers a business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>something always does) and cheap too! <strong>Most</strong> of the cost was the church fees,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>are only planing on spending at the very <strong>most</strong> £1000. There will be only close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>wrote: Its largely a waste of money as <strong>most</strong> marriages end in divorce. <strong>Most</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>flowers and vehicles. By far the <strong>most</strong> over-priced bit of excess is the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>on the cake (another friend)! The <strong>most</strong> expensive was the church, buffet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>that are the tackiest bit, and by far the <strong>most</strong> expensive. Best advice I could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>as most marriages end in divorce. <strong>Most</strong> companies charge more when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Aug 2010, binghillpark wrote: Actually <strong>most</strong> people see it as a celebration,“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>, Tory Bankers Stole My Cash wrote: <strong>Most</strong> weddings are naff and cheesy -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>flash ceremony is irrelevant - love is the <strong>most</strong> important thing. Complain about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>an idealised lifestyle unobtainable to <strong>most</strong>. In other words we often make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>wrote: 2nd time around, I had the <strong>most</strong> amazing wedding, great venue and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>expensive, but we fed and watered <strong>most</strong> of our friends and a good time was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>salary on a celebration that will at <strong>most</strong> last 3 days. It is ridiculous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>rudeness to your guests, the vicar, and <strong>most</strong> importantly - the poor guy at the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>each other, in front of those who matter <strong>most</strong> to them. The rest of it is a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2010, Anarcho-libertarian wrote: The <strong>most</strong> important thing is to make sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>:49am on 05 Aug 2010, sean56z wrote: <strong>Most</strong> weddings are satires by those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>over by midnight, and it really was the <strong>most</strong> wonderful, happy, joyous day of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Concordance for **ridiculous** in the message thread Weddings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>British law. Civil unions have shown the <strong>ridiculous</strong> right that unions between two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>that will at most last 3 days. It is <strong>ridiculous</strong>. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>closest to you. In that sense, it is a bit <strong>ridiculous</strong> that such gatherings that are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 9. Concordance for *romantic* in the message thread *Weddings*.

| Concordance | N | when they want children. I know it's not *romantic* to say this, but around 50% of | 1 |
|            |   | the industry to rip you off. I know it's not *romantic* but neither is losing you | 2 |
|            |   | that the intimacy makes it all the more *romantic* and sincere? Complain about | 3 |
|            |   | small, so it was small. It was intimate, *romantic*, all the guests laughing and | 4 |

Figure 10. Concordance for *serious* in the message thread *Weddings*.

| Concordance | N | had to say should be listened to with *serious* reflection. We live in a glitzy, | 1 |
|            |   | because we wanted to make that *serious* commitment to each other. Get | 2 |
|            |   | stag do and pretty soon we're talking *serious* money. I must say though, | 3 |
|            |   | only there for the party. A wedding is a *serious* commitment and the more it is | 4 |
|            |   | Diana appeared more as a spoof than a *serious* ceremony. Too many of the | 5 |
Appendix. 29. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread Did God create the universe?

Figure 1. Concordance for *absurd* in the thread *Did God create the universe?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>spontaneous creation of the universe is <em>absurd</em> why is the spontaneous creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>the creator, which is more complex, not <em>absurd</em>? Complain about this comment *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>nothing on the face of it seems pretty <em>absurd</em>; the idea of a creator seems to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>nothing on the face of it seems pretty <em>absurd</em>; the idea of a creator seems to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for *basic* in the thread *Did God create the universe?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Universe is orders of magnitude beyond 'basic' and very few people understand it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>it. It should also be pointed out that the <em>basic</em> knowledge of science many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>rocks (museums, books, internet). Study <em>basic</em> Geology. (the way rocks are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>from nothing goes against my <em>basic</em> scientific understanding of equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>from nothing goes against my <em>basic</em> scientific understanding of equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>from nothing goes against your <em>basic</em> understanding of science is a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for *benevolent* in the thread *Did God create the universe?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>push. However, a sentient, omnipotent <em>benevolent</em> being...? I see no evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>if &quot;God&quot; is some kind of (supposedly <em>benevolent</em>) being that judges us for not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Concordance for *complex* in the thread *Did God create the universe?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>, the religious one requires the most <em>complex</em> thing to create itself in an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(on this planet at least), is just a highly <em>complex</em> chemical reaction which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>creation of the creator, which is more <em>complex</em>, not <em>absurd</em>? Complain about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>, was a way to explain a <em>complex</em> environment when he had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>because we don't understand the <em>complex</em> science behind it. It should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>intelligent design, and so is even more <em>complex</em>, simply popped into</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 5. Concordance for *current* in the thread Did God create the universe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or instead believe physicist that work on <em>current</em> evidence, and who are happy to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even necessarily correct), but it is our <em>current</em> &quot;best&quot; understanding based on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exist....&quot; arguments, and I am sure the <em>current</em> forum on the subject will not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preclude the existence of a deity by any <em>current</em> definition of the word. So,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. There is so much that science in its <em>current</em> forms cannot explain and we</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Concordance for *eternal* in the thread Did God create the universe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>that's dandy. Although, there is still that <em>eternal</em> question of how did your creator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matter are undissoiable, the unknown <em>eternal</em> and infinite &quot;space&quot; that existed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creator? If you say that the creator is <em>eternal</em>, then it seems like an awful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Concordance for *fantastic* in the thread Did God create the universe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. Creating the Universe is pure chaos, a <em>fantastic</em> concept...so perhaps the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the universe and all in it is simply too <em>fantastic</em> and diverse to have been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Concordance for *great* in the thread Did God create the universe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>this life and be able to share it with the <em>great</em> consciousness, the collective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in sky gods or pixies&quot; crowd would have <em>great</em> difficulty taking in some of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proximity (intra-molecular) and at very <em>great</em> distances (inter-galactic) these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proximity (intra-molecular) and at very <em>great</em> distances (inter-galactic) these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Universe? --Yeah, why not! Its a <em>great</em> place and frankly I am bored with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it, feed from it! We have been afforded a <em>great</em> privilege in being able to, for a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. Concordance for *probably* in the thread Did God create the universe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never actually reach the big bang. I'm <em>probably</em> wrong but it works for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that existed &quot;before&quot; the universe could <em>probably</em> not not give birth to the universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But it hasn't been proved either way and <em>probably</em> wont be either because there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our resources? Earth's minerals are <em>probably</em> pretty much the same as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 10. Concordance for *spontaneous* in the thread "Did God create the universe?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>anyone else. The idea that Universe is a <em>Spontaneous</em> creation from nothing on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>and a priest, I am not a Deist. A <em>spontaneous</em> creation merely describes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>of the universe is absurd why is the <em>spontaneous</em> creation of the creator,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>way beyond the average person's. If the <em>spontaneous</em> creation of the universe is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>anyone else. The idea that Universe is a <em>Spontaneous</em> creation from nothing on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In the past things that we thought were <em>spontaneous</em> turned out to have a cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>aswell. The only system that supports <em>spontaneous</em> creation is quantum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>universe is the same as saying it was <em>spontaneous</em> as the question of how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>turned out to have a cause. <em>Spontaneous</em> is not an explanation but</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix. 30. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread Airport security.

Figure 1. Concordance for bad in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. potentially bad people, and not bad things; and the squeamishness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. needs to focus on identifying potentially bad people, and not bad things; and the ill intent when I travel, but I do mind the bad management and lack of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. as examples. Those are particularly bad examples because those &quot;are&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A hijack at an airport is bad but not as bad as a bomb exploding onboard at 35, the problem. A hijack at an airport is bad but not as bad as a bomb exploding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. passengers. 3. To hopefully catch any bad guys. roughly in that order. It's the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Oct 2010, UKcerberus wrote: Its not so bad being subjected to all the searches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for completely in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. and wheeled me through a side gate completely bypassing security?? Don't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. airport checks should be scrapped as completely useless and only for show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. said some airport security checks are &quot;completely redundant&quot; and should be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for dangerous in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. measure. It is not because belts are dangerous and need to be screened that leads to these senseless and dangerous situations. Complain about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. about 8mm long which I do not consider dangerous while being allowed to carry from duty free and break it: presto, dangerous weapon used in many bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. my shoes. Why, are boots particularly dangerous or threatening? She was</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Concordance for effective in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. constant review to make sure they're effective and necessary. Those that security checks aren't actually all that effective. They're only there to make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. and six inches long and could be a very effective weapon. Transparent appearance of security. The only truly effective tools are the chemical sniffers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. instituted if they have been shown to be effective and then implemented in such</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5. Concordance for **excessive** in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   absolutely right that the measures are excessive and should be scrapped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   , Tory Bankers Stole My Cash wrote: Excessive security checks belong to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3   absolutely right that the measures are excessive and should be scrapped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4   think some airport security checks are excessive? Or do you think the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5   in bothering and upsetting travelers with excessive checks. Moreover, we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6   wrote: Absolutely they are excessive. In flying OUT of the UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Concordance for **good** in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   and Paris, security has been been very good-the difference...the individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   people in a queue in a cavernous area; good separation of processes so that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3   officials as clueless (IMHO actually a good thing). Example 1: liquids. Provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4   . Example 2: sharp objects. Take a good whiskey bottle from duty free and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Concordance for **nice** in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   to buy those little bottles instead. A nice little earner for toiletries companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   , heavy metal watch has no effect on it. Nice to see that’s working well. Most of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3   to walk off the plane in agony a very nice security lady realised I was in a lot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Concordance for **pointless** in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   , MiffedOfReading wrote: I am sick of pointless security, and flights to the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   shows you that this is all pretty pointless. The rest of the world is not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. Concordance for **ridiculous** in the message thread Airport security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   that really make a mockery of these ridiculous checks. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   a point when it becomes too much - the ridiculous liquids rule is one such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3   basis &amp; the UK system is simply ridiculous. Apart from comments made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 10. Concordance for safe in the message thread Airport security.

1. put on sale just to make sure they're safe and to make sure getting rid of
2. of the airport to keep everyone else safe. I'm all for profiling in airports, but
3. that all travellers and air crew are safe but I do find the security checks
4. x 100ml bottles of "liquid" are any more safe than one 250ml bottle. Its just a
5. motions" just to impress that flying is safe from attack. If he does mean that
6. any concerted effort to keep people safe. It's fair to say that additional
7. into a plastic bag makes it any more "safe" or "Secure". Its just a money
Appendix. 31. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread Child benefits.

Figure 1. Concordance for crazy in the message thread Child benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>. The only people profiting from this crazy coalition's economic &quot;policies&quot; and their children does? Another crazy example of rather stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>04 Oct 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote: Crazy isn't, a footballer or banker/etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for good in the message thread Child benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>people who pay tax to fund them? It is a good idea, and it probably is fair, but I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>on 04 Oct 2010, Chris wrote: A very good start. Next step should be to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>to make some cuts. However, there is a good chance that this decision has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>people are not rich they just earn a good wage. They are not undeserving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>get told I am too successful for my own good so the government will offer me no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>on 04 Oct 2010, Ipswichred wrote: Good to see that the foolish middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>now independently wealthy? If you did, good luck to you; if you didn't you have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>and in most cases they all go on to be good adults in better paid jobs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for hard in the message thread Child benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>those who are not rich but work really hard all their lives. They are not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>. What we are talking about here is hard working family men and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>people with nothing who had fallen on hard times, not for bribing middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>people with nothing who had fallen on hard times, not for bribing middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>but with four children in education its hard to get a term time job and feel the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>tax contributions of all of the honest, hard working people of this country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>without being knocked down. I work hard, build up my experience and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>one FOURTIETH of the impact on a hard working key worker. At the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>by making that choice you are forcing hard working people who pay tax to fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>wrote: PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED HARD AND PAID THEIR TAXES ARE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Concordance for honest in the message thread Child benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ITS ONLY THE BEGINNING, TO BE HONEST IM GETTING FED UP RE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>on the tax contributions of all of the honest, hard working people of this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>than the higher rate payer. Too be honest about it I would do away with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 5. Concordance for **most** in the message thread Child benefits.

Concordance

1. I think the undeserving are the place are what funds this country the **most**. I think the undeserving are the that was a bad decision is due to that **most** exact but useless of investment. They are undeserving. The rich pay the **most** tax and so really are not when a government implements the **most** cost effect away of implementing a numbers game. The bottom line is the **most** important thing. It would cost too states and when they will achieve the **most** money - gold was sold at its : I posted this elsewhere however it is **most** appropriate to this forum. I see the the low earners and those need help **most**. How's about they go after the with 2 School age children (Hardly **most** peoples idea of a high earner) who deficit, this has got to be one of the **most** palatable and sensible. The stealing or behaving obnoxiously and in **most** cases they all go on to be good

Figure 6. Concordance for **probably** in the message thread Child benefits.

Concordance

1. I have never seen so many twisted, and **probably** jealous, "I am childless so why state will be able to provide care for me- **probably** not the way things are going, sounbite for now but by 2013 we will **probably** have forgotten. One thing I say off middleclass families who **probably** use it for the weekly wine incomes do not need child benefit [and **probably** don't notice it]. I do feel I have never seen so many twisted, and **probably** jealous, "I am childless so why to fund them? It is a good idea, and it **probably** is fair, but I do not know yet

Figure 7. Concordance for **reasonable** in the message thread Child benefits.

Concordance

1. does my partner in what i regard as a **reasonable**, non professional job which week gets child benefit. £44,000 is a **reasonable** income or joint income, you
Figure 8. Concordance for **right** in the message thread Child benefits.

```
N Concordance
1 wrote: I think it is a step in the **right** direction, There are those that
2 : i think in someway they are doing the **right** thing as long as they dont get
3 Oct 2010, 1stTopic wrote: A step in the **right** direction, now we need to gradually
4 child benefit. Is that fair?" Yes you are **right**, it isn't fair. However, it would be
5 is the reason pension funds are trashing **right** now due to long term (lack of)
6 wrote: I think it is a step in the **right** direction, There are those that
7 fails the fairness test. It cannot be **right** that a single earner on higher tax
8 testing": Osbourne has made the **right** decision, in my opinion. The
9 with no such responsibilities ? Is it **right** that they lose the only extra
10 2010, AndyC555 wrote: A step in the **right** direction. It would be typical
11 04 Oct 2010, Albert wrote: Absolutely **right**. This ridiculous benefit has meant
12 2010, AndyC555 wrote: A step in the **right** direction. It would be typical
13 2010, PompeyOops wrote: Yes, it is **right** that they should cut out this
14 so at least Osborne has got it half **right**. People seem to think the
15 TWO OR MORE people , is it really **right** and fair that they are still expected
16 luck to you; if you didn't you have no **right** to criticise for not being able to
17 wrote: Trust Osborne to do something **right** for a change. But then ooops, only
```

Figure 9. Concordance for **sensible** in the message thread Child benefits.

```
N Concordance
1 2010, smilingparrotfan wrote: Sounds a **sensible** venture. I've always thought it
2 wrote: I agree with this reform it appears **sensible**.Only one question, why can 1
3 you get. I always thought I was the **sensible** one. Obviously not. How
4 got to be one of the most palatable and **sensible**. The payment of Child Benefit
```

Figure 10. Concordance for **twisted** in the message thread Child benefits.

```
N Concordance
1 wrote: I have never seen so many **twisted**, and probably jealous, "I am
2 from to "serve" them in their lonely, **twisted** and bitter dottage? Presumably
3 wrote: I have never seen so many **twisted**, and probably jealous, "I am
4 from to "serve" them in their lonely, **twisted** and bitter dottage? Presumably
```

[Type text]
Appendix. 32. Concordance lines in the table for the message thread Parenting boys and girls.

Figure 1. Concordance for astonishing in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>, prophet_samuel wrote: &quot;I also find astonishing that 49% of mothers did not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hmmm, why is it astonishing though? Boys and girls are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charlton wrote: I think that the most astonishing thing about raising children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>negative personality traits. I also find it astonishing that 49% of mothers did not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for cheeky in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>be seen as negative traits, or &quot;cheeky&quot; be seen as a positive trait. All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>with positive traits such as funny, cheeky, playful and loving, while girls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for critical in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>mothers were twice as likely to be critical of their daughters than their sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>gender is a legitimate basis to be more critical? Complain about this comment *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>and much worse way that men are critical of other men. It's depressing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>male. I think parents are more readily critical of the child which is of their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>my own children to heal. I know I can critical of my own daughter but more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>the findings. I know my mum was very critical of me growing up that it led to a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>they grow up. Therefore boys are in a critical need for the tough treatment not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>mothers were twice as likely to be critical of their daughters than their sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>women has asked if mothers were more critical of daughters.... and this is the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>mothers were twice as likely to be critical of their daughters than their sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>my son over my daughter and was less critical of him than of her, especially in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>accurate to say mothers are more critical of their daughters. It's a sad fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>the contrary, I think parents are more critical of boys than girls. Mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>the contrary, I think parents are more critical of boys than girls. Mothers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4. Concordance for **different** in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1 my son or daughter (they may feel different of course, but I don't think so).
2 are all boys and they are all different in terms of affection, personality
3 trait. All those words are open to a lot of different interpretation. I think my
4 daughters - now adults - but they are different in character and the younger is
5 manner they still grow up completely different. Complain about this comment
6 upbringing should be approached in different ways. I suppose it depends on
7 girls differently than boys. They are a different species after all. Some boys
8 their sons. In my opinion girls need a different treatment from boys. However
9 astonishing though? Boys and girls are different, it seems logical to suggest
10 bounce from drama to drama having a different set of close friends each month
11 two older sons. Everyone's going to be different, aren't they? Is there no other
12 wrote: My parents treated me different from my brothers and my Dad
13 first minutes after birth they showed different character traits - one was
14 show the same traits - which still elicit different responses from me. Complain
15 up in my family boys were treated different to girls - boys could do nothing,
16 years as a teacher. Mothers have a very different relationship with their sons, no
17 wrote: I have raised three daughters, all different, one is a single mum, one a
18 love to have a go at other women, in a different and much worse way that men
19 . May I suggest another? 'Are women different to men?' Complain about this

Figure 5. Concordance for **good** in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1 it usually relates to her needing to set a good example to her brothers. Complain
2 thought of me - no one will ever be good enough for her! My mother on the
3 on 06 Oct 2010, ziggyboy wrote: I had a good relationship with my mother but a
4 the time by my mother. My dad was a good cook and if it hadn't been for his

Figure 6. Concordance for **happy** in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1 , reassurance than others. Some are happy in isolation others need
2 chores etc. My dad, meanwhile was happy to teach his girls to change a fuse
3 teenagers) but more self sufficient and happy to spend a whole day fishing on
4 the 'findings's she is fun, easy going & happy, he on the other hand is grumpy,
Figure 7. Concordance for *pretty* in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1 not to a child of the opposite gender... *pretty* simple stuff really as some
2 my son to realise the world will be *pretty* merciless to his actions- he will
3 women?" A recent survey based on *pretty* much nothing has found that

Figure 8. Concordance for *probably* in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1 in their late thirties/early forties and I *probably* did favour my son over my
2 2010, bigsammyb wrote: I think this is *probably* because on the whole little
3 crying and moaning most off putting). *Probably* not allowed to say that these
4 Sadly, what Netmums has found out is *probably* true. My son and daughter are
5 to instill RESPECT. Similar study would *probably* prove Fathers dolting more on
6 .." Very modern and PC of you, but *probably* a huge mistake. Men and
7 mall when heavily out-gunned by the (probably all-male) opposition. Consider

Figure 9. Concordance for *ridiculous* in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1 of Britain wrote: Who makes up these *ridiculous* surveys and thinks they are
2 my daughters.... I have no daughters. A *ridiculous* and poorly conducted

Figure 10. Concordance for *totally* in the thread Parenting boys and girls.

N Concordance
1 of their mother. Daughters are treated *totally* the opposite. As a result, the
2 on 06 Oct 2010, BOOBA wrote: Yes, I *totally* agree with the findings... Really
3 2010, Alan Baker wrote: Netmums! A *totally* pointless organisation of coffee
4 empathy for anyone but herself. She is *totally* 100% selfish. She is obsessed
Appendix 33. Concordance lines in the table for the thread University fees & elitism.

Figure 1. Concordance for **bright** in the thread University fees & elitism.

| N | Concordance | 1 | to be a way of allowing exceptionally bright people of whatever background to live on. How on earth is a bright-but-poor student at Oxbridge loan to live on. | 2 | be more scholarships available for the poor-but-super-bright kids, just so these | 3 | will be a disaster. There are many very bright people out there who could give | 4 |

Figure 2. Concordance for **confident** in the thread University fees & elitism.

| N | Concordance | 1 | are likely to be much more confident about future earnings and they should only bother if they are confident they will get a better job. But | 2 | to throw away or are actually gifted and confident of their abilities. Who would | 3 |

Figure 3. Concordance for **expensive** in the thread University fees & elitism.

| N | Concordance | 1 | . They will probably fund these expensive options by increasing tuition 2010, john3626 wrote: Yes it will, its too expensive now when you have to add on | 2 | more attractive hybrid system than the expensive, free-market offerings in the | 3 | the government having to explore more expensive options in order to 'plug' the | 4 |

Figure 4. Concordance for **fantastic** in the message thread University fees & elitism.

| N | Concordance | 1 | backgrounds yet they are intelligent, fantastic at what they do and above all | 2 | environment. Which is fantastic news, because now the world | 3 | backgrounds yet they are intelligent, fantastic at what they do and above all |
Figure 5. Concordance for good in the message thread University fees & elitism.

N Concordance
1  good assumption that 25% would an income stream from students it is a reasonable lifestyle once they leave earn enough to pay the debt and live a reasonable quality of education to
2  good start in life. What has happened to good parenting and planning ahead?
3  the cash on their 21st birthday for a good start in life. What has happened to
doctors and scientists but we also need good designers. Please do not let
generating for the country? Without good design and the highly skilled
it is merely an excuse to go and have a good time for far too many of them. I
other phoons should be caged for the good of us all Complain about this
factories. We need to go back to the good old days when the rich had their
privillaged few get a good education and good jobs. We've tried basing our
only right that the privillaged few get a good education and good jobs. We've
for those that do. The Tories are very good at manipulating the public to blame
did, and unless you get a 1st or a very good 2:1 then no employer will look at
taxes to provided services for the public good. Providing world class universities

Figure 6. Concordance for irrelevant in the thread University fees & elitism.

N Concordance
1  say: "The subject matter of a degree is irrelevant; the mere fact that an

Figure 7. Concordance for massive in the thread University fees & elitism.

N Concordance
1  Public sector. It detracts from the massive bonuses the Bankers are going
2  income in taxation, have to make such massive changes to the university
3  enough to get themselves into massive debt on the promise that they
4  enough to get themselves into massive debt on the promise that they
5  , but far fewer will be willing to run up massive debts with which to start their
6  put millions of students in the future into massive debt? Which is it? This is the

Figure 8. Concordance for reasonable in the thread University fees & elitism.

N Concordance
1  an income stream from students it is a reasonable assumption that 25% would
2  earn enough to pay the debt and live a reasonable lifestyle once they leave
3  from poorer background to have a reasonable quality of education to
Figure 9. Concordance for **useful** in the thread University fees & elitism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>of one or more languages would be a <strong>useful</strong> addition to that end. Complain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>if universities concentrated on teaching <strong>useful</strong> courses to those who deserve to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>degree, but it seems that now even <strong>useful</strong> degrees will have to be paid for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NO Bankers bonuses would be very <strong>useful</strong> to the Universities and benefit the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. Concordances for **useless** in the thread University fees & elitism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>the holder of a degree, no matter how <strong>useless</strong> the qualification or where it was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>wrote: If a young person wants a <strong>useless</strong> degree then that person or the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Complaining about 'useless media studies' on the BBC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>high because nobody is paying for the <strong>useless</strong> &quot;media studies&quot; and other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>, if somebody is willing to pay for a 'useless' degree, might it be assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>high because nobody is paying for the <strong>useless</strong> &quot;media studies&quot; and other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>employment. If a young person wants a <strong>useless</strong> degree then that person or the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>to argue about what constitutes a <strong>useless</strong> degree, but it seems that now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>employment. If a young person wants a <strong>useless</strong> degree then that person or the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Appendix 34. Concordance lines in the table for the thread Snow and weather.

Figure 1. Concordance for bad in the message thread Snow and weather.

Concordance

- snow then, they weren't considered bad - for us youngsters they were a bad winters in the 60's. Certainly there was insufficient preparation for bad weather on the bridge and sliproads - I rarely missed a days work due to bad weather. If people dont turn up for scientists but I believe the current bad weather is due to the Jet Stream . What I have noticed though, is the bad driving skills of some road users! as it's quite early for it to be so bad. Complain about this comment * 22. had been insufficient preparation for bad weather

Figure 2. Concordance for easy in the message thread Snow and weather.

Concordance

annual leave. People have things too easy these days. If my 65 year old possibly these: Most people lived within easy walking distance of where they in snow more than six inches thick isn't easy. You also need to know the way - annual leave. People have things too easy these days. If my 65 year old , you sign up and get a card. Also easy. It's still a mystery to me how you my car using a soft floor broom, its so easy to just push it all off one side, on ice - it's part of their driving test. It's easy to laugh at the UK, but if winters just remember, it's not a race so take it easy and don't ruin your or some other snow, as I did when younger, its EASY to make £100.00 a day in got a kitchen at the moment so its not easy. On the way home I stopped off & was around 10 inch deep, it wasnt easy trying to use the same steps on

Figure 3. Concordance for extreme in the message thread Snow and weather.

Concordance

, they are prepared for it. It would be an extreme situation for a school not to utilise volunteers, ESPECIALLY when extreme conditions arise. I'd hate for
Figure 4. Concordance for extremely in the message thread Snow and weather.

N Concordance
1  network of roads around London can be extremely confusing, and following a
2  there are delays, but that is extremely unusual, a train crash here
3  and this had everything to do with extremely poor road management and

Figure 5. Concordance for hard in the message thread Snow and weather.

N Concordance
1  the course of a year, I'm sure a little hard graft isn't too much to ask. It seems
2  also lorry drivers were parking on the hard shoulder because their driving time
3  or indirectly, but for the vast mass of hard working folk there will be no benefit.
4  that it's colder inside. So if you find it hard to believe that an increase in
5  . A few generations ago in the UK hard winters were the norm and people
6  winter. Of course snow hits the SE UK hard, and of course the Councils aren't
7  meals on wheels or whatever is just so hard, time consuming & ultimately
8  was, was not interested. Too much like hard work. When I reached home I

Figure 6. Concordance for incapable in the message thread Snow and weather.

N Concordance
1  the Beb why not. No wonder we are so incapable of doing anything these days.
2  the Beb why not. No wonder we are so incapable of doing anything these days.
3  what to do and when because they are incapable of making such decisions

Figure 7. Concordance for normal in the message thread Snow and weather.

N Concordance
1  Most of Poland continues to function as normal as they are used to severe
2  , still started work 30 mins earlier than normal, and finish the day at 5pm,
3  away) was moving fluently at close to normal speeds. I only saw one gritter
4  not helped by my boss who thinks that normal hours should be worked for no
5  it. In some spots, 33 inches of snow is normal. What do I and a lot of other
6  the roads but everyone just drove like normal. Everyone on the motorway was
Figure 8. *Concordance for severe in the message thread Snow and weather.*

N Concordance
1 like this, to walk to work in the most severe of weathers. I think the main
2 50 this year and I can remember very severe winters in the 60s that went on
3 , but nothing compared to the UK in severe winter conditions. Trucks, vans
4 50 this year and I can remember very severe winters in the 60s that went on
5 function as normal as they are used to severe winters, but even they are
6 wheels completing their rounds without severe difficulties, especially due to
7 for a month and was 50 times more severe and the vast majority

Figure 9. *Concordance for total in the message thread Snow and weather.*

N Concordance
1 fridge being warmer. If you consider the total energy of the system, the fridge
2 of snow, everyone seems to go into total meltdown and panic. we coped fine
3 last night trying to get home and it was total chaos with little information and
4 today. Wonderful!!! What gets me is the total lack of effort that is the staple

Figure 10. *Concordance for vast in the message thread Snow and weather.*

N Concordance
1 of sport directly or indirectly, but for the vast mass of hard working folk there will
2 and was 50 times more severe and the vast majority experienced high level
3 . It just seems to me that the vast majority of people, want a nany

[Type text]
Appendix 35. Concordance lines in the table for the thread Neighbours from hell.

Figure 1. Concordance for **bad** in the message thread Neighbours from hell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>beating! but how dare we do something <strong>bad</strong> to bad people that deserve it!</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>over the years is consequences for <strong>bad</strong> actions have been watered down to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>but how dare we do something <strong>bad</strong> to bad people that deserve it!</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>wrongs create any more no-go ghetto areas. It's <strong>bad</strong> enough when you have one problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>something approaching Gaza City on a <strong>bad</strong> day. Where they've stayed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>resulting in possibly worse violence as 'bad' tenants would be huddled together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>resulted in the parents being as <strong>bad</strong>. The final spark led to public fighting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>, no as no retribution was taken on the <strong>bad</strong> family but a settling of the position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>the help given to those living next to <strong>bad</strong> neighbours in private housing was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>evidence. If the neighbours are that <strong>bad</strong>, then the community will be happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for **certainly** in the message thread Neighbours from hell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wales. In my experience most towns - <strong>certainly</strong> the ones I knew about - had</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>of no-one but the pinko councillors <strong>certainly</strong> no surprise to the inhabitants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>in need of a good hug and a cuppa, and <strong>certainly</strong> not the violation of their human</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>we deal with neighbours from hell? <strong>Certainly</strong> not by evicting them and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It may not work in every instance, but it <strong>certainly</strong> can make a difference.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>we deal with neighbours from hell? <strong>Certainly</strong> not by evicting them and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for **every** in the message thread Neighbours from hell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
<th>Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>as a society we need to have police on <strong>every</strong> corner. Complain about this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>night out smashing off wing mirrors from <strong>every</strong> car in the street. (Police weren't</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>concrete mixer thingy &amp; spin it around, <strong>every</strong> now &amp; then a big vacumm sucks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>problem brigade. It's not that difficult. <strong>Every</strong> tenant must sign a contract. Add</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>off some cabbage by helicopter <strong>every</strong> now &amp; then so they dont stare. It</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>in their houses they get the rent paid <strong>every</strong> week by the social. Complain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>our money, squeezing the system for <strong>every</strong> penny, getting caught fiddling the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>door, a window and for my petrol for <strong>every</strong> visit to him i made. she was gone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>the people involved. It may not work in <strong>every</strong> instance, but it certainly can</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4. Concordance for **good** in the message thread Neighbours from hell.

N Concordance
1 the neighbours. They are now very **good** neighbours and the son even calls
2 people in their communities. Sound **good** in theory but it won't happen
3 flaming dog poo on the doorstep trick is **good**. The only thing the people were
4 the perpetrators as 'victims' in need of a **good** hug and a cuppa, and certainly not
5 to 48. It'd make good entertainment and **good** causes would benefit, and you
6 on, numbered 1 to 48. It'd make **good** entertainment and **good** causes
7 wrote: I do think in general this is a **good** idea. I had a terrible experience
8 House arrest/curfew would be a **good** deterrent. Complain about this
9 #20. Paul @ 11:08am - Some **good** ideas but think of the cost to the
10 on 11 Jan 2011, scotty1694 wrote: a **good** beating! But how dare we do
11 how to be a good citizen. Even in **good** neighbourhoods how many times
12 be part of the curriculum how to be a **good** citizen. Even in good

Figure 5. Concordance for **incapable** in the message thread Neighbours from hell.

N Concordance
1 of the population who are so mentally **incapable** of grasping basics, such as
2 was behaving in such a way was made **incapable** of undertaking such threats

Figure 6. Concordance for **much** in the message thread Neighbours from hell.

N Concordance
1 be dealt with as fast as possible. Too **much** time is currently wasted on
2 They are neither. They are often **much** better off financially than their
3 houses & families, hence probably NOT **much** change. MAYBE, this is where
4 , just DONT CARE Basically there isn't **much** we CAN do directly, and there
5 say this is only going to become a **much** more serious issue. We have a
6 this sense of community is still very **much** alive there. I believe it is also very
7 conclusion and social workers etc and **much** of the system put the
8 what doesn't effect them. It costs to **much**. As this gov sets about
9 Jan 2011, ruffled_feathers wrote: Treat **much** of this behaviour for what it is -
10 . My theory was i would annoy him as **much** as they were annoying us all. My
11 11 Jan 2011, surfingkenny wrote: Not **much** can or is done with problem
Figure 7. *Concordance for natural in the message thread Neighbours from hell.*

N Concordance
1 to such a threat as is built into my natural survival instincts. If you kick a
2 to my family I maintain my ENDEMIC NATURAL RIGHT as a living creature to
3 criminal behaviour then the victim has a natural RIGHT to respond in just the

Figure 8. *Concordance for noisy in the message thread Neighbours from hell.*

N Concordance
1 the landlord next door to deal with our noisy neighbours and even then we had
2 and they are really busy. So if the noisy party stops at 3am and they
3 to them! The solution is to put all the noisy, selfish morons in one place. I
4 simply those who rail against this in a noisy or violent way. They feel excluded
5 socialised with him and were a bit noisy but other than the nuisance of

Figure 9. *Concordance for nuisance in the message thread Neighbours from hell.*

N Concordance
1 that I believe that people who ARE the nuisance neighbours should bear
2 were turned into 'dealing with' nuisance neighbours. I thought it was
3 those who've experienced the hell of nuisance neighbours can truly
4 wrote: It is very difficult to deal with nuisance neighbours quickly. We tried
5 to go in and deal with the source of the nuisance. Complain about this
6 that people should "deal with" nuisance neighbours directly? Having
7 that people should "deal with" nuisance neighbours directly? Having
8 and were a bit noisy but other than the nuisance of litter/junk ending up on his

Figure 10. *Concordance for probably in the message thread Neighbours from hell.*

N Concordance
1 want to evict my neighbour. (No. 8's probably OK though). Complain about
2 - it doesn't. In fact, council tenants probably have far more recourse than
3 , move a nice family into their house (probably have to clean/fumigate it of
4 in just a few houses & families, hence probably NOT much change. MAYBE,
Figure 1. Concordance for beneficial in the message thread Bus services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Obvious cctv in all carriages would be beneficial for commuters. Complain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Concordance for convenient in the message thread Bus services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. no-one up. People complain that it's not convenient to use, they have to own a link. People complained that it's not convenient to use, they have to own a from 6am to midnight. Its frequent, convenient and probably costs the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Concordance for hideous in the message thread Bus services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. exist alongside each other, not in a hideous public funded, privately run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. who work flat out all day doing the most hideous of jobs, bringing work home,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. exist alongside each other, not in a hideous public funded, privately run</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Concordance for huge in the message thread Bus services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. very large, and the accumulated debt is huge. Cuts in expenditure HAVE to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. last Government dug this country into a huge financial black hole (or should that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. - not an edifying spectacle. After all, the huge national debt has to be paid off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 3) In fact, why do buses have to be so huge in cities too? 4) Smaller buses do buses in rural areas have to be so huge - or is that question too obvious?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. - not an edifying spectacle. After all, the huge national debt has to be paid off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. will not pay for these routes, despite the huge profit that they make on other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. , anotherfakename wrote: There are huge problems here: a) 'Today’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. , government are trying to facilitate HUGE job creation via creating a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Someone somewhere was taking a huge rip off, far more than the cost of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
Figure 5. Concordance for **important** in the message thread Bus services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Concordance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>, Brianlancashire wrote: Buses are not <strong>important</strong> to me - however they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>a taxi, the cost to the passenger is as <strong>important</strong> as the service itself, these are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>, Brianlancashire wrote: Buses are not <strong>important</strong> to me - however they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 2011, in_the_uk wrote: Buses are <strong>important</strong> for people who can't drive. I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2011, luckybeagle wrote: I think it is <strong>important</strong>. I used to commute by bus to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>can't drive, local bus services are quite <strong>important</strong>. How can they move from a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>, Brianlancashire wrote: Buses are not <strong>important</strong> to me - however they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feb 2011, in_the_uk wrote: Buses are <strong>important</strong> for people who can't drive. I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2011, corum-populo-2010 wrote: &quot;How <strong>important</strong> is your local bus service&quot;? is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>, Brianlancashire wrote: Buses are not <strong>important</strong> to me - however they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>my local bus and train services are very <strong>important</strong> to me as I live in the London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Feb 2011, in_the_uk wrote: Buses are <strong>important</strong> for people who can't drive. I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>, Brianlancashire wrote: Buses are not <strong>important</strong> to me - however they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>: Local buses are obviously extremely <strong>important</strong> to all who use them,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Feb 2011, teedoff wrote: I'd say it's very <strong>important</strong>, but I also understand how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>neighbours have either. So, no, it's not <strong>important</strong> to me. Complain about this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>49am on 03 Feb 2011, Wyn wrote: How <strong>important</strong> is your local bus service? It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>important</strong> is your local bus service? 11:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>bus services would not be affected. How <strong>important</strong> is your local bus route and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>: if you cannot afford a car it is very <strong>important</strong>, that is not including those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Biscuits wrote: Local buses can be very <strong>important</strong> to many people, especially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>, Brianlancashire wrote: Buses are not <strong>important</strong> to me - however they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>03 Feb 2011, doomjeffs wrote: Not at all <strong>important</strong>. I've used my local bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>that because of this the services are not <strong>important</strong> to you. Please wake up and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>wrote: The bus 'service' is very <strong>important</strong> for the many rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>of responses suggesting buses aren't <strong>important</strong>. I'd like to disagree. They may</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>, I'd like to disagree. They may not be <strong>important</strong> for people who can afford to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Type text]
The circuit, change like often have not the a car. Government is often forced to drive. More cars on the road, more congestion, more duty for the restrictive and cheaper fuel would allow more people to drive and so produces a and people switched to using cars as a more enjoyable form of transport. Myself have escaped your notice but there are more Tony Councils than any other of the law-abiding public to use buses more often? 5) The same could be said driving costs this could be made even more accessible! If you want to fix they are full. Otherwise it is pushing more pollution than cars! Maybe a new Government. I would prefer to see more Councils cutting their top change to another bus and fight through more traffic jams to get out to the edge. cost...This needs to be explored more. I believe that money can be saved Government. I would prefer to see more Councils cutting their top country lanes are going to be put under more traffic pressure. In these days of the savings be made? Tax the bankers more perhaps? Either that will yield a mentioned, in cities you may get a bus more often but otherwise, they dont, then public transport becomes a much more viable alternative than relying on a not 'all in this together', some of us are more 'in it' than others. Complain about . Whilst I would be willing to pay more for this marvellous service I council-run buses. It is a little more expensive, but it is comfortable a car for my own use although it costs more than using public transport. But for and you are allowing them to be cut more by your laissez faire attitude. . It is a rural service and seldom has more than a few people on it (unless a like this locally though so you can't say more at the moment Complain about subsidised bus routes after it was found more than two-thirds of councils buses should be prepared to pay a lot more for the service if they wish to keep get the last bus back! 1:30AM would be more like it.... Complain about this removing cars from our roads? It seems more to me that the government wants travel on a train that was more modern, more comfortable. Make so I could travel on a train that was more modern, more spacious and B, it is relatively frequent and costs no more than driving, then people should and people switched to using cars as a more enjoyable form of transport. Myself Government. I would prefer to see more Councils cutting their top . Make civic busses warm, comfortable, more of an 'experience' and half the sector it was supposedly to create more competition and better services, CORRECT that government is more GREATLY responsible as their to the public at one time, but not any more. Now it's all run to make a profit - The busiest services have rarely got any more than 8 or 10 people on it though, the government is allegedly trying to get more people using public transport! This circuit with next to no people on. Put on more services at peak times for
Concordance for **necessary** in the message thread Bus services.

```
1 A decent public transport system is necessary to any civilised country. I
2 or when - some adult thinking on what necessary services are needs to take
3 when it comes to non-jobs and cuts the necessary services are the first to go.
4 wrote: SOME form of public transport is necessary, but buses clearly are not fit
5 and understand that these services are necessary to many people and you are
6 as my partner) because driving is a necessary life skill. People need it, the
7 when it comes to non-jobs and cuts the necessary services are the first to go.
8 as my partner) because driving is a necessary life skill. People need it, the
9 when it comes to non-jobs and cuts the necessary services are the first to go.
10
```

Concordance for **quite** in the message thread Bus services.

```
1 between villages on the the route. I do it quite often, but I wouldn't even consider
2 than 8 or 10 people on it though, and quite often picks no-one up. People
3 car or can't drive, local bus services are quite important. How can they move
```

Concordance for **small** in the message thread Bus services.

```
1 perhaps? Either that will yield a very small amount (too few of them), or the
2 Society!!), using their own cars, on a small profit basis. Stay at home people
3 from home, help others out and keep a small fee without running the risk of
4 a lifeline to many isolated villages and small towns. These are precisely the
5 in North Lincolnshire but our Town is small and on the border of South
6 border of South Yorkshire. The town is small and like many others you have to
7 The ones that run every 10-15 mins in a small circuit with next to no people on.
```

Concordance for **uncomfortable** in the message thread Bus services.

```
1 75 minutes in a cramped, worn out and uncomfortable carriage was not
2 . Civic busses are fairly hateful things - uncomfortable, noisy and really not
3 buses and trains are overcrowded and uncomfortable. Sadley, we have no
```

[Type text]
Should the 'Three Rs' be replaced?
10:32 UK time, Wednesday, 24 February 2010

The government's flagship "Three Rs" strategy for improving literacy and numeracy in primary school children has been criticised. Should the Three Rs be replaced?

The £4.5bn strategy was the backbone of Labour's school reforms in England. But teachers' unions have complained of too much government meddling during implementation - a claim which is backed up by a new Ofsted report.

Ofsted says schools have suffered because of the "frequent introduction of initiatives, materials and guidance" which led to "overload" and diminished the effectiveness of each initiative. The government said it was not sorry for focusing on the Three Rs.

What do you think of the Three Rs? What three words do you think sum up the key to a good education? Do you have a child at primary school? Has the education system improved recently?

This debate has now been closed. Thank you for your comments.

Bookmark with: del.icio.us | Digg | Newsvine | NowPublic | Reddit

What's this?

Comments Sign in or register to comment.

Previous 1 2 3 4 Next

1. At 12:48pm on 24 Feb 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:
They already have been replaced with lots of other meaningless subjects haven't they? I thought that was the point of the whole news story.

By the way - not liking the new-look HYS.

Complain about this comment

2. At 12:51pm on 24 Feb 2010, pzero wrote:
Are they insane? I regularly meet graduates who can barely write a coherent sentence, cannot do the most basic arithmetic without a calculator and who cannot spell. Education needs to go back to basics and stop wasting time and money on whichever trend is currently in fashion.

Complain about this comment

3. At 12:51pm on 24 Feb 2010, Brian wrote:
How about Tony Blair's moto for the 1997 Labour election campaign - "Education Education Education".

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
4. At 12:52pm on 24 Feb 2010, druid2002 wrote:
So trying to replace the 3 R's by the government is going to give 
credence to the current claim that the government is meddling too 
much. Typical!

The 3 R's will work and have worked over many generations. The 
recent decline in standards can only be down to poor pupil 
discipline which i am sure is now the source of many ills in this 
country and will no doubt be a future problem, however there is 
still time to change this trend by addressing the parents 
mentality that their kids behaviour is THEIR problem and noone 
elses to fix.

Sort this out and you'll get better 3 R's results.

Complain about this comment

5. At 12:53pm on 24 Feb 2010, Hugh Morley wrote:
Reading, Writing and Arithmetic are all well and good, but where 
is the Reason that comes from studying the sciences? The Natural 
and Earth Sciences need to be more prominent in primary curricula 
than they presently are. I don't even recall starting geography 
or science classes until secondary school, which is pretty poor 
given the relevance that both Natural and Earth science subjects 
have in modern society.

Complain about this comment

6. At 12:56pm on 24 Feb 2010, Mike wrote:
Children are being failed by the education system. They quickly 
develop an aversion to subjects like mathematics because the 
teaching of it is so bad in many primary schools. Once children 
have fallen behind, it is very difficult for them to catch up and 
this only makes them fear mathematics even more.

The reason teaching is poor is because many teachers and parents 
were put off maths during their childhood and this feeds on to 
the current generation - it's a vicious cycle. 25% of adults have 
the maths ability of an 11 year old. If this statistic worsens, 
the long term economic damage will be huge and I can easily 
foresee the UK falling out of the top 20 economies within a 
generation.

Complain about this comment

7. At 12:58pm on 24 Feb 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:
The Three Rs have been good enough for generations of children 
why change.

Complain about this comment

8. At 12:59pm on 24 Feb 2010, brad wrote:
i for one would like to see the "three R's" replaced with the 
other "Three R's"
~ Respect
~ Responsibility

[Type text]
9. At 12:59pm on 24 Feb 2010, spamspam wrote:
If they stuck to teaching the Three Rs and did it properly then we wouldn't be in half the mess we are now.,
Stop all these "initiatives" and just for a change leave the teachers alone and let them teach

10. At 12:59pm on 24 Feb 2010, UKcerberus wrote:
The educational system in the UK is absolutely appalling, and has been since I was a kid. I'm now 64.
UK establishment sees education running in 2 streams; the leaders of the future get taught how to lead us, and we peasants are given the most basic functional education.
Sounds Dickensian, doesn't it? I believe it to be true. We have been a member of the EU for years, but do we have compulsory foreign language lessons? why not? Because it further isolates us from the rest of the EU, and keeps us nicely in our place.

11. At 12:59pm on 24 Feb 2010, teapotpolly wrote:
Too many educationalists make a name for themselves by making unnecessary changes.
It is highly unfashionable, indeed it is career suicide, to praise the status quo.
Change for change's sake is the rule.

12. At 12:59pm on 24 Feb 2010, FlashMagski wrote:
I think they should keep the 3Rs it has long been the format for our educational system for years, why mend something that isn't broken.

Sorry, BBC I do not like the new HYS format it will be interesting to see how many HYSers will pass a comment.

13. At 1:02pm on 24 Feb 2010, tmfyorks wrote:
£4.5 BILLION to do a 3Rs strategy, what on earth?

for that amount of money we should be able to give every school child a full time secretary

14. At 1:03pm on 24 Feb 2010, ColinWhinger wrote:

[Type text]
If i was a teacher, i think that i would have already gone nuts, there is precious little discipline along with change upon change upon change. The three R's are the baseline of all else in education, for goodness sake leave it alone.

Complain about this comment

15. At 1:03pm on 24 Feb 2010, Jo wrote:
I have to wonder why the government doesn't actually validate its policies with Ofsted BEFORE it implements them, or do they deliberately not do that in case its not agreed with?

Unbelievable, but not surprising, Ed Balls gives the impression he is not to be crossed if you disagree with him.

Complain about this comment

16. At 1:05pm on 24 Feb 2010, frankln wrote:
Which 3 words? History, literacy, numeracy.

Complain about this comment

17. At 1:05pm on 24 Feb 2010, Wage_Slave wrote:
One reason that the subjects fail to inspire is that they have become divorced from the rest of the teaching day. They need to be part of something more fun / interesting and be shown to be relevant to the whole of learning. Long lessons on just one topic are really off putting for any child who struggles in these areas.

Complain about this comment

18. At 1:07pm on 24 Feb 2010, cka2112 wrote:
I have a 7yr old grand-daughter who can read quite well but is having difficulty doing her homework!! which ranges from last night researching Boudicca (on the internet supposedly) who was she - what did she do etc!

The trouble is this government has meddled in the education system too much and our methods of training teachers and assessing teachers has failed! 7 year olds should be learning basic skils as I did and my 35 yr old daughter did - they must oncentr ate on reading writing and arithmetic.

Another homework last week was metaphors and similes and she had to find a poem and give examples - my daughter was completely perplexed and my feeling is that they are not teaching in the classroom but are setting parents home work - why? We know some primary school teachers are horrified by this so who is responsible for setting the homework - the teacher - the head or the education dept - can someone answer this please!

Complain about this comment

19. At 1:07pm on 24 Feb 2010, General_Jack_Ripper wrote:
"frequent introduction of initiatives, materials and guidance"

This could be summed up as "constantly moving the goalposts", something the government has been doing in respect to education for generations.

The main problem we have with our education system is that it has become so over-politicised, every new education minister wants to leave their mark on the education system and every government thinks they have the answer to our education problems. The reality is that every new government/minister only ends up making things worse because they're constantly trying to change everything and never give schools enough time to adapt to the new system before it gets changed again, this leaves teachers with no solid foundations from which to build up their lesson plans and educational programs and leaves the children lost in a system that never stays the same for long enough.

My solution to this would be to make all state owned schools independent trusts and then to give them to a non-profit organisation made up of the teachers, parents and governors at the school. This trust would own the buildings and land that the school occupies and would be funded directly from the treasury, they would also be able to set their own curriculum that was tailored to the needs of the children attending their school. The trust would also have the power to appoint the head teacher and a general manager for the school.

The government's role would be in setting minimum legal requirements, inspecting schools, setting exams and providing funding from general taxation. We would do away with the department of education and the local education authorities as they are irrelevant to our education system and add nothing to the education we provide to our children. The government/opposition would then be able to say that they would provide £x per child if they got elected but they wouldn't be able to say how that money got spent, that decision would be left to the head teacher, general manager and the trustee's of the school, just as it is with our private schools.

This system would vastly reduce costs as all of the money being spent on education would be spent on front line services instead of funding hundreds (maybe even thousands) of non-jobs for civil servants and consultants as well as giving parents and teachers the power to decide how they run their school and how best to spend the money they have.

Parents and teachers know more about educating our children than politicians do so lets take the power away from the politicians and give it back to the parents and teachers!

Complain about this comment

20. At 1:09pm on 24 Feb 2010, androstempest wrote:
1. At 12:48pm on 24 Feb 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:

[Type text]
They already have been replaced with lots of other meaningless subjects haven't they? I thought that was the point of the whole news story.

By the way - not liking the new-look HYS.

I wish I could recommend your comment, but in their wisdom HYS have removed that facility so I will quote you and say, I totally agree. Yet another debate which misses the point of the news story.

The "3 R's" need REINTRODUCING, as it is clear from the terrible English I see on HYS it is not being learnt, whether it is being taught or not.

And I also agree, I'm not liking the changes to HYS either.

Complain about this comment

21. At 1:11pm on 24 Feb 2010, Hisnibs wrote:
You would think after all the years of teaching that the Government would actually have a good idea what methods work. Stop making it complicated and teach the children.

Complain about this comment

22. At 1:13pm on 24 Feb 2010, grazel wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

23. At 1:13pm on 24 Feb 2010, jonbanjo wrote:
Why can't the government stop using education as a political tool, quit the interference and let schools get on with their jobs?

My parents (1930s) and I (1960s) received a decent mixture of the 3 Rs and other subjects in our primary schools without any of this nonsense.

Complain about this comment

24. At 1:13pm on 24 Feb 2010, PaulRichard2 wrote:
Discipline seems to me to be one major problem in British schools at the moments, although possibly not such a major issue in primary schools (feel free to correct me).

I'd like to see more support and diagnosis of learning disabilities, mine wasn't diagnosed until adulthood.

So long as the essential skills are not left out I’m happy for a reform of the education system if it's really needed.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
25. At 1:14pm on 24 Feb 2010, Breakfast-Maker wrote:
You dont need much more in life than a good grasp of the 3r's.
Simple.
Cant stand the new look HYS. Bring back recommendations.
Complain about this comment

26. At 1:15pm on 24 Feb 2010, Sue Denim wrote:
Half the problem is that things keep changing and by the time teachers and pupils have adjusted, they change them again! Stick with the three Rs, mix in some science and history and you'll have the core education people need to get along in life. They can study other subjects at A-level or higher, they don't need them in the compulsory age.

"What three words do you think sum up the key to a good education?"

How about "Leaving it alone"?
Complain about this comment

27. At 1:16pm on 24 Feb 2010, Mrs Vee wrote:
When I was at school in the 60s, teachers taught with the children listening properly, sitting at desks in rows, facing a blackboard. Old-fashioned, but it worked. Teachers didn't chase targets and follow top-down directives, because they didn't need to; they were good at their job and they knew what they were doing.

So, train the teachers properly and let them get back to actually teaching. Allow them to discipline children, stop the endless paperwork, the initiatives, the targets and directives and give them a break!
Complain about this comment

28. At 1:17pm on 24 Feb 2010, Spirit_of_Iona wrote:
Given that I very rarely use a pen at work nowadays it is all keyboard and printing out... writing is a dying art. The ability to spell is becoming redundant as well in that the English language is being reduced to text speak. The ability to undertake mental arithmetic has been replaced by calculators and computers which are not only widely available but are small portable and cheap

The only skill needed in today's society is reading...that is until the power goes off
Complain about this comment

29. At 1:17pm on 24 Feb 2010, Olaf the Blunt wrote:

[Type text]
I'm just so pleased that my two kids are coming up to the end of their education. Education is like a scab that both parties will keep picking and picking at. Leave it alone or it will never get better.

Complain about this comment

30. At 1:19pm on 24 Feb 2010, Onevoice wrote:
I live in Northern Ireland and think primary schools there are focused too exclusively on the 3 Rs. It's not that they're not important but there's much else which is very important as well. My son looks like he's going to be a brilliant engineer but he's given no chance at school to either develop or be recognised for those skills.

The early school starting age in the UK, combined with the general focus in UK primary schools on the 3 Rs, can also lead kids who develop literacy and numeracy skills a bit later to feel failures.

Complain about this comment

31. At 1:20pm on 24 Feb 2010, chrisk50 wrote:
2+2 still equals 4 no matter how you try to change it.

Trying to change a proven system why, if it aint broke dont fix it.

Similar to HYS is this new system going to be read, I doubt it, I already feel that this comment will be ignored along with the others.

Complain about this comment

32. At 1:20pm on 24 Feb 2010, Jimmy wrote:
Well, since only one of them actually is an 'R', I reckon they should probably rename it...

Complain about this comment

33. At 1:24pm on 24 Feb 2010, TominExeter wrote:
The three r's cannot be replaced for the simple reason that they are the building blocks for all education. If you don't have them, you are not, and never will be, educated. With them, you can acquire whatever level of education you like, when you like - I know, I've done it.

BTW the new HYS format is a disaster. It looks awful and is tedious to use. The beauty of the old system was that it was very simple for everyone who had anything to say. Why insist on registration? Some bloody Jobsworth I'll bet! I'll have to register several times to use multiple IDs. Can't be bothered, I won't be back.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
34. At 1:25pm on 24 Feb 2010, Patty wrote:
The 3 R's must stay. They are the core to everything else. These skills lead to an ability to reason and understand.

I missed out a lot on the 3 R's at primary school and, consequently, 'slipped through the net' at secondary school. I left school thinking I was stupid. Later, I educated myself somewhat and eventually got a good Degree. The first year of the Degree course was extremely difficult because I had missed on basic education.

There may well be an overload of material. This is unnecessary and a waste of time and money. To teach the 3 R's all that's needed is a good teacher. One who actually cares about all the pupils and not just the high-flyers.

Complain about this comment

35. At 1:27pm on 24 Feb 2010, Martin1983 wrote:
The 3 Rs worked for children for years, apparently. What's changed?

Complain about this comment

36. At 1:27pm on 24 Feb 2010, TominExeter wrote:
Oh dear! And to compound the stupid makeover, it now lists all the messages awaiting moderation. How pointless is that? The Beeb has really lost the plot, and me!

Complain about this comment

37. At 1:29pm on 24 Feb 2010, LORD LINDLEY wrote:
My last comment due to the changes on this site. (That's why they have changed it of course)
The only thing to be learnt in schools, according to this govt, is mind control, brain-washing & do as you are told. Don't forget your homework, 'I LOVE SOCIALISTS, I LOVE TREES, I LOVE CHARITY'
Now you are a proper EU member of the EU club. Love everything & everyone, oh you're paying for it!

Complain about this comment

38. At 1:30pm on 24 Feb 2010, thelevellers wrote:
The education system is fine as has improved immensely in the last 13 years, mainly due to increased investment by the Labour government.

One thing I would change is the term "the Three Rs". It is not reading riting and rithmatic, it is reading, writing and arithmatic. It is strange that we should be using this when we are talking about education.

Complain about this comment

39. At 1:31pm on 24 Feb 2010, NaillPF wrote:

[Type text]
Another dreadful decision by this unelected, discredited bunch of liars.

And by the way - dreadful new HYS.

Complain about this comment

40. At 1:32pm on 24 Feb 2010, Joanna wrote:
There is nothing wrong with teaching the basics. All children should be taught basic maths and English. The trouble is that everything taught in schools in directed towards SATS targets to the exclusion of common sense. SATS have sucked the creativity and fun out of teaching and learning. The English papers are dull and anything challenging on the maths paper can be done on a calculator.

Complain about this comment

41. At 1:33pm on 24 Feb 2010, Wreck-O-Mend wrote:
While the "three Rs" in school matter, there are "three more Rs" which matter and pave the way for one's overall quality of life. They are Reward, Recognition and Respect. These "3 Rs" as just as important as Reading, Riting and Rithmetic. Sorry if I appear to be a pain in the "Rs".

Complain about this comment

42. At 1:38pm on 24 Feb 2010, Silver-lady wrote:
The 3 R's is misleading in itself. Reading, wRiting, aRithmetic!?! Confused me as a child in the 1950's. Having said that I don't think anyone left the village primary wout being able to read or do maths with a variable degree of competency. It has amazed me that the teaching profession & government do not seem to see that unless a child can read, write & do maths then almost everything else (except maybe art) is going to be difficult if not impossible for them to make any progress. What good is humanities if you can't read the books? How can they do physics or chemistry if they can't read well, express well and do maths? We need to remove the liberal leftie thinking and go back to getting basics right so the children are standing on firm ground to build their confidence and future.

Complain about this comment

43. At 1:40pm on 24 Feb 2010, darkvalleysboy1978 wrote:
Based on the shocking spelling and grammar on some of these posts perhaps the initiative has not gone far enough?

Complain about this comment

44. At 1:43pm on 24 Feb 2010, suzie127 wrote:
Surely basic reading, writing and arithmetic are the basis of all education and not just a government bandwagon.

[Type text]
If schools are unable to teach these then we really do have problems.

Complain about this comment

45. At 1:43pm on 24 Feb 2010, Joanna wrote:
This new HYS is really boring!

Complain about this comment

46. At 1:43pm on 24 Feb 2010, Silver-lady wrote:
For Hugh Morley, How can the reasoning of sciences be applied if they have not been taught to read what's there? Without understanding the written word and to be able to compose a coherent argument (a sentence would be good these days) or the maths to be able to calculate the area for a crop or how much rain-forest is being lost, it can't work. The basics have to be there first the rest will follow.

Complain about this comment

47. At 1:44pm on 24 Feb 2010, CaptainJameson wrote:
I read a question from a GCSE maths exam in the paper a couple of days ago and almost cried. A five year old could have answered it. A generation of young people have had their futures all but erased by the system in this country.

Being able to read, write and perform good arithmetic forms the backbone of all good education systems. Why does this country struggle so much? Let's look at countries like Singapore, Norway and Germany who are producing armies of highly skilled and capable young people. Look at their methods and exam standards and copy them, or large parts of them. And remove the political meddling!!

Complain about this comment

48. At 1:44pm on 24 Feb 2010, Atomtrasher wrote:
If we take all the hype away and use our personal experiences then we can certainly see a downward trend in ability. Basic mental arithmetic is going down hill. I used to be a barman. I could add 20 to 30 £ rounds in my head (and i am no maths wiz) but now they struggle with two drinks. No seriously. Spelling has also gone down and if you talk to the kids you realise it is the way they have been taught. If you need modern technology to do basic maths or to correct spelling, then you DO NOT KNOW THE SUBJECT. The basics are important because basics are the foundations that everything else is built on. Labour need to stop being so target driven. It is harming all public services.

Complain about this comment

49. At 1:45pm on 24 Feb 2010, Thom wrote:
I dont think the government should push for teaching of the 3R's, primarily because they fail in spelling it right in the first place: Reading, Writing and Arithmetic - RWA.

[Type text]
50. At 1:46pm on 24 Feb 2010, RuefulRupert wrote:
The three 'R's are of course essential— but I'm sure the Teachers have a point about education being used as a political football, vulnerable to Labours 'slogan of the month' approach to everything. If 'R's are old hat, how about 'weeding ,righting and withmatic'?.

Its a sad day--no more readers recommendations, just a long list of comments. Can't be bothered to read them, presented in this form. The Beeb expect everyone to accept this after a few days of moaning, but I for one will not be back.

51. At 1:47pm on 24 Feb 2010, MrHaveASay wrote:
'. The reason teaching is poor is because many teachers and parents were put off maths during their childhood and this feeds on to the current generation... '

What utter rubbish. Its not the teaching that's poor the difficulty with maths is that you have to THINK, something most young people are incapable of.

52. At 1:48pm on 24 Feb 2010, Clive Hamilton wrote:
As a parent of 2 shilden under 11 I feel that I can offer a contribution to this valuable HYS. 

Schooling has been completely hijacked by Politicians and their ever growing band of statistics gathers.

My son has difficulty with literacy (as do a large number of other boys in his year) and their difficulty can't all be down to their intelligence. I think it says more about the way the lessons are run and the enormous variety of topics and subjects they are supposed to learn.

Bottom line : spend more time on the basics, this will set up children more effectively than making sure that they understand so much about "diversity" as they do.

PS - I do not like the new HYS. Can we have a subject on "the new have your say"?

Also, I won't be reviewing it like I used to as its impossible to gain a "short list" of the popular posts!

53. At 1:51pm on 24 Feb 2010, displeased wrote:
The key to a good school?

Independence from a meddling central government and its resource wasting initiatives.

So exactly the same answer as 'what is the key to a good hospital', a good police force, etc etc.

p.s. I am not anti-change, when it is for the better, but DO NOT LIKE THE NEW HYS - Bring back Recommendations, or some form of reader feedback.

54. At 1:51pm on 24 Feb 2010, wvpTV wrote:
Part of the declining 3R's standards problem seems to have been created by government.

Talking to numerous teachers over the last couple of years we find that most think the demands made by government (stats, set curriculum timetable, tick boxes etc) prevent them from nurturing children in the best way.

Put another way, the demands of the current system decensitise teachers or make it difficult to teach with sensitivity for actual pupil need.

The Sunday Times tells us 20% of current maths teachers can't do combined addition and multiplication which indicates a much larger percentage can not do more complex maths required by the curiculum.

How is it a vast number of teachers are qualifying for things they can not do? again it's down to governments management of the system.

1 in 3 children leaving school can not read properly and have a limited vocabulary (texting), this problem is clearly structural, eg: demise of reading, too much TV (soaps).

55. At 1:52pm on 24 Feb 2010, antibarbie wrote:
Literacy and Numeracy are what school is for but unfortunately they have fallen by the wayside for a number of decades.

56. At 1:53pm on 24 Feb 2010, NorthernLad wrote:
Replace them with what exactly?

Media Studies????????

Get a grip. The three R's underpin everything that goes afterwards ... and they need to be taught in a traditional way.
Sort this out HM Gov...let teachers teach and stop meddling.

Complain about this comment

57. At 1:53pm on 24 Feb 2010, LippyLippo wrote:
But surely, with the exam pass rates for GCSEs at a record high - so high that we need an A* grade that we never had before - our children are already super-intelligent? Record numbers are at university. Why fix a system that is producing such well-read, thoughtful and eminently employable young people who are the envy of the world?

My three words? 'I'm a tangerine'

Complain about this comment

58. At 1:54pm on 24 Feb 2010, whowouldthink wrote:
The three Rs are central to a good education. Too many kids are leaving school innumerate and barely literate. Not only that but the CVs of many university students are appalling; they can hardly string two sentences together.

By the way, I hate the format of this new HYS and the absence of a 'Recommendation' button. Why did the Beeb change something that was working perfectly well?

Complain about this comment

59. At 1:55pm on 24 Feb 2010, polcirkel wrote:
My daughter came home from school one day, many years ago, and said that they were doing "mapping" in maths, I asked her to explain.

She said that 2 plus 2 no longer equaled 4

no, new maths now said that

2 plus 2 maps to 4.

WHY DID THEY LET THE NEW THINK NEW SPEAK IDIOTS OUT OF ASYLUMS?

Complain about this comment

60. At 1:56pm on 24 Feb 2010, Nascimento wrote:
chrisk50 wrote: '2+2 still equals 4 no matter how you try to change it.'

Not necessarily. In some instances 2+2 = 1.

Complain about this comment

61. At 1:58pm on 24 Feb 2010, suzie127 wrote:
I am afraid this all goes back to parents complaining that their children are stressed out by schoolwork and forcing successive
governments to dumb down education so the children don't feel stress.

Parents need to take a lot of the blame for this. The average child would not understand the meaning of stress if their parents didn't pander to them too much and taught them that education is the most important thing in their young lives.

Complain about this comment

62. At 1:59pm on 24 Feb 2010, Plymno wrote:
My friend has just returned to Cape Town from London and her two young sons are struggling as the standard in South African schools is much higher. This is despite having started school two years earlier than the SA children.

Complain about this comment

63. At 2:03pm on 24 Feb 2010, Gom123 wrote:
Er -Excuse me!
Please could we have the Three "R’s" brought back?

Complain about this comment

64. At 2:03pm on 24 Feb 2010, Pancha Chandra wrote:
The three Rs reading, writing and arithmetic have long thought to be the most important parts of a child's education. They are the basic building blocks, strong foundations upon which children are taught to extend their knowledge on a broad range of fascinating subjects like science, mathematics, computing, accounting, geography, history, astronomy, space etc. Fascinating tools like computers, videos, camrecorders, video-cameras, telescopes, laser printers, television empower children in their quest for the truth. A optimal combination of methods should be used to enhance the level of teaching and education. The education authorities should encourage teachers to use practical and pragmatic models to inculcate children with the thirst for knowledge. Children should be encouraged to put questions to experts who would be willing to give on the spot practical demonstrations. For example children should be allowed to visit proto-types of space-crafts, aeroplanes. Curiosity is the essence of life and once tapped opens fantastic new visions.

Complain about this comment

65. At 2:04pm on 24 Feb 2010, spacekadet wrote:
The three R's worked perfectly well for my generation (50's / 60's) - as the government increased it's interference in Education, standards have declined. And are getting worse.

Complain about this comment

66. At 2:04pm on 24 Feb 2010, barryp wrote:
Just a Simple question,, 'Why'.

[Type text]
Complain about this comment

67. At 2:08pm on 24 Feb 2010, englandrise wrote:
I listened to the "Prime Ministers" lengthy speech about education. Being as he was such a vocal proponent of the Scottish Parliament he must know that Education is a devolved matter - and that due to devolution he can't influence education in his own constituency.

Why then did Mr Brown say "Britain" nine times and England not at all? He was talking exclusively about education in England. Why won't Mr Brown call England - England?

Complain about this comment

68. At 2:13pm on 24 Feb 2010, sapper434 wrote:
Of course the "Three Rs" should be replaced.

Everything that fails should be changed.

Targets which are not met should be made less exacting.

Exams which are too difficult should be made easier.

Get my drift?

Complain about this comment

69. At 2:15pm on 24 Feb 2010, clovisguy wrote:
Going by what I have seen in recent years, they need to reintroduce the '3R's'. Today's school leavers often cannot spell properly, don't know the meaning of grammar, and are incapable of any form of arithmetic, either written or mental. What are the schools teaching them? By the way, I am another who does not like the new HYS.

Complain about this comment

70. At 2:16pm on 24 Feb 2010, angryauntie wrote:
Of course the 3Rs must be kept - unless anyone thinks the next generation ought to be illiterate. But not the 3Rs to the exclusion of everything else! Perhaps government interference causes teachers to concentrate on the mechanics of reading to get pupils through the tests. If standards of literacy are falling after a certain age, it could be because there is no time left in a crowded curriculum for teachers to inspire children and instil in them a love of literature. If children love stories, they will read.
Please, please, can we have the old HYS format back???

Complain about this comment

71. At 2:17pm on 24 Feb 2010, AuntieLeft wrote:
Anyone who is above 40 knows the standard of people coming out of the the education system has fallen rapidly over the last twenty
years (even though the state tries to misinform us). A basic lacking in reading and maths is endemic. This is what the neo Marxist want, all equal, all poor, easy to control. Stalinism in the UK.

PS why no recommendation button on the new HYS? Getting too close to an election and running scared?

Complain about this comment

72. At 2:21pm on 24 Feb 2010, Megan wrote:
I'm feeling slightly unwell - sensible comments from OFSTED!

They are quite correct in identifying the core problem: continuous micro-management from government, continuous 'initiatives' and interference in professionals doing their job.

Yes, all children ought to have a good grasp of the basics by the time they ENTER high school, never mind when they leave - and I think one of the problems is the manic insistence that all students move in age-based lockstep rather than progressing (or being held back to repeat a year) based on individual ability and achievement.

And I am a teacher... :)

Complain about this comment

73. At 2:21pm on 24 Feb 2010, banda78720 wrote:
Absolutely ridiculous. Half the nation cannot spell correctly and perform simple arithmetic as it is and it gets worse by the year. We need to adhere to the three 'R's more not less. It is so painful watching the country crumble.

Please note that I do not like the new site either. I can see what the BBC are trying to achieve in depleting the power of the established HYS moaners but 'Readers Recommended' was a useful sounding of the nation having discounted the loony left and radical right.

Complain about this comment

74. At 2:24pm on 24 Feb 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:
I don't know how the 3 Rs are being taught - but they should not be replaced. When people complete CVs for jobs and are turned down because they contain poor grammar (guess what, employers look for things like this) what favours have we done them in failing to teach properly? I am still looking for the item that belongs to "potato's". Why are apostrophes so difficult? I remember the amazement of a shop assistant when I purchased five identical items, was charged for six and challenged her - how could I tell? Knowing a "times table" helped me out. Personally I would add onto the 3 Rs a basic first aid course.

Complain about this comment
75. At 2:24pm on 24 Feb 2010, doomjeffs wrote:
And does anybody wonder why education standards have fallen in
the last 10 years or so?
Complain about this comment

76. At 2:24pm on 24 Feb 2010, ExpatKS wrote:
Socialist Governments can't stop themselves from continously
meddling in every aspect of peoples lives. They change
established policies on a whim and education is a sound example.
Since 1997 there have been regular policy changes, sometimes
enacted before the last one has filtered through.
No wonder teachers in this case and the public at large get so
frustrated with this constant & destabilising interference by
ministers.
Complain about this comment

77. At 2:30pm on 24 Feb 2010, Thom wrote:
You want 3 words that sum up a good state education system?
Fund Not Control.
After 40 years we have managed to gradually erode the education
system to the point where grades are practically worthless and
the all-must-have-prizes mentality of political meddling has led
to children going to university when they were much better suited
to a trade or work outright.
Fund Not Control.
BTW HYS where is the recommend function? Dont want people to
exhort a consensus view and shoot right to the to eh?
Complain about this comment

78. At 2:30pm on 24 Feb 2010, DH Wilko wrote:
I think the three Rs should replaced with RWA{Reading Writing
Arithmatice and obviously more emphasis needed on S for spelling.
As well maintaining a broad range of subjects. so the RRR should
be replaced with RWAS+.
I like this new format by the way. The recommend button was
rubbish wasn't it.I suspect it was fiddled and Totally
misrepresented public opinion and its so much easier to spot the
party spammers.
Complain about this comment

79. At 2:30pm on 24 Feb 2010, Sarah wrote:
It could be good to concentrate on the 3 Rs but it depends on how
it's done. In my childrens' state primary school, it does not
seem to be done in an effective way. My daughter, who I believe
has normal or above average intelligence, has struggled with
literacy, but the school's answer to this is for her to go over the same things (easy words) over and over again, and this doesn't help her to progress at all, it makes her go round in circles. She's actually good at Maths, but the school doesn't seem to notice and keeps giving her easy Maths work, again not helping her to progress. I'm sure there are better ways of teaching with higher expectations but our school doesn't seem to have found the better ways.

Complain about this comment

80. At 2:32pm on 24 Feb 2010, Ray Evans wrote:
Replace with what?
Up until the 1960's Reading, Righting (writing) and Rithmatic (arithmetic) were the very basics of education and everyone benefited from being able to use these skills to improve themselves.
Even more effort should be made to to teach these three R's, other 'initiatives' should be reduced considerably.

Complain about this comment

81. At 2:34pm on 24 Feb 2010, Nic121 wrote:
No, I don't believe the three r's should be replaced, but I do believe that we need to stop introducing new initiatives all the time, I can imagine this does create extra work for teachers the distracts them from the most important task... 'teaching' funnily enough. These initiatives are often well-meant, but never given enough time to make any difference before the next one comes in.

By the way BBC - I DO like the new look HYS, especially doing away with knee-jerk 'most recommended' comments that often skew the debate all out proportion.

Complain about this comment

82. At 2:36pm on 24 Feb 2010, nynaeve2k wrote:
My primary education focused on the 3 Rs, using other subjects (such as the sciences) to promote these key basics. The standard of work I see my nephews doing 15 years on from my time at school is appalling. Unless a child understands the basics of English grammar, how can they be expected to understand French grammar? Without understanding basic mathematic principles, how can then interpret historical data or learn to read music correctly? These basics are the key to understanding every subject put in front of us and are tools for life. Too much focus is now given to the 'IT world'. More often than not, my nephews' homework is simply replicating what has been done during class on the computer and not actually developing their learning any further. IT has a place in the curriculum, but it shouldn't dominate it. As a result, we are turning out poorly educated children with illegible hand-writing and a poor grasp on most subjects because they haven't had a good grounding in the basics.

My education in the 1980/90s seems much better than today's education - but when I talk to my sisters and my boyfriend
(educated in the 1960s/70s, it appears that my education fell short of theirs. Something to do with the introduction of the national curriculum in c.1986/7 that immediately dumbed down the level of education (my teachers refused to move me over to the approved texts and maths books for my age as I, along with a number of my class mates, was far more advanced than expected for my age).

So, reading, writing and arithmetic are the basic tools of life and all primary school children should be given a good grounding in these. Without these, what hope do they have?

Complain about this comment

83. At 2:37pm on 24 Feb 2010, suzie127 wrote:
No. 71 you need to get your facts straight. I was in school in the 80's and education was already in a decline, mainly because the right wing government of the time decided to dumb down from O Level to GCSE so that everybody, no matter how non-intellectual managed to get a qualification, looked good on the figures.

Complain about this comment

84. At 2:39pm on 24 Feb 2010, Ray Evans wrote:
P.S. Please bring back 'Recommendation' If you do not you will quickly lose HYS posters.

Complain about this comment

85. At 2:40pm on 24 Feb 2010, DT 1975 wrote:
Another example of a poor quality HYS. The report does not criticise the three "R"s, it criticises the large number of initiatives which are continuously being introduced before there has been time to be properly assess the existing strategy.

If anyone watched the last two Dispatches programmes on Channel 4, they'd know that the current quality of maths teaching in some schools is woefully inadequate, and improving teacher's capability in teaching basic maths is 15 years overdue.

Complain about this comment

86. At 2:42pm on 24 Feb 2010, doomjeffs wrote:
I recently sat down one evening with my 18 year old daughter & 19 year old boyfriend to watch the film 'The League of Extraordinary Gentleman'. They asked me what it was about, I explained that it was action/fantasy film based on several famous fictional literary characters. Alan Quatermaine....blank look from both & slight shake of head. um...Mina Harker...same response. er...Dorian Gray...same response. er...Captain Nemo...same... Tom Sawyer...same. Dr. Jekyll Mr Hyde...blank.
I know....lets watch 'Wallace & Grommit'

Complain about this comment

87. At 2:44pm on 24 Feb 2010, Stewart wrote:
Maths and English are the most important tools in life. Any child who is not equipped is destined to fail both in their search for a career and in their finances.
Yet our children are being taught by teachers who do not know the subjects they are teaching. To be a teacher you will need GCSE (or standard equivalents) at Grade C or above in English language and mathematics, it used to be O Levels in Literacy and Numeracy, when did this change?
You must be Politically Correct to teach, thus part of the ignorant minority who will teach our kids anything but what they really need to know. No child should leave primary school until they know Maths and English and parents should sue if their children are failed.
Dislexia has been used to often to cover bad teaching and teachers and it's time for teachers to teach, not to babysit a conveyor belt of children into ignorance.
Children are not failing society, society is failing children!

Complain about this comment

88. At 2:46pm on 24 Feb 2010, Mary Chambers wrote:
I think the three Rs should be replaced with lessons in 'How to organise message boards'. Then perhaps we'd have a search facility, a simple way of quoting another message and a reply facility so that it's clear which message we are commenting on.

Complain about this comment

89. At 2:49pm on 24 Feb 2010, Nic121 wrote:
Thank you BBC HYS for doing away with 'most recommended' comments. Many comments often get recommended not because they're true or factual, but because they happen to be popular with a certain group of extreme HYSers...take this debate for example:

"I regularly meet graduates who can barely write a coherent sentence, cannot do the most basic arithmetic without a calculator and who cannot spell."

The above is purely anecdotal evidence with no attempt to back up the claims with facts. I work in training for the construction industry, and I have also met a large number of graduates over the years, and most have had a good level of numeracy and literacy. Occasionally the odd one is quite poor, but only occasionally.

Complain about this comment

90. At 2:49pm on 24 Feb 2010, Alfred Penderel Bright wrote:

[Type text]
When I was at kindergarten/primary school our teachers used to do three things to promote the three 'Rs' which seem to have gone completely out of fashion - but which were nevertheless really worthwhile.
1. Start all Maths lessons with some quick fire mental arithmetic.
2. Encourage pupils to practise copper plate writing on special lined paper with the script to be copied printed above. Excellent for all pupils to develop a steady and legible handwriting style.
3. Encourage all pupils to read out loud either individually or as a group during English lessons. Worked wonders for the slow readers and the dyslexic who benefitted tremendously in the process.

Complain about this comment

91. At 2:52pm on 24 Feb 2010, Pamela Read wrote:
The three Rs are the cornerstone of education. If students can't read, can't write, and are innumerate, it would be a waste of time and money trying to teach them anything since they lacked the basic skills needed for study and learning. Their ability to exist in today's society would be almost impossible; all branches of Science and Art would be closed books to them. Unless you want to create an underclass of moronic workers doomed to a lifetime of joyless heavy labour, ignore the importance of the three Rs at your peril.

Complain about this comment

92. At 2:54pm on 24 Feb 2010, SSnotbanned wrote:
No, we need more 'R's...wait a minutey.
What are the three 'R's??
reading,
-witing,
-and -arithmetic.

Typical. Not really the three 'R's at all. No wonder the kids are revolting.

Might as well as been the 5 'I's, or 2 'A's + 1 'W', 'RAW' e.t.c. ...the Foolocracy Remains(always someone, somewhere who can make an 'R's of it).

Complain about this comment

93. At 2:54pm on 24 Feb 2010, DH Wilko wrote:
marychambers@88

"I think the three Rs should be replaced with lessons in 'How to organise message boards'. Then perhaps we'd have a search facility, a simple way of quoting another message and a reply facility so that it's clear which message we are commenting on."

I know this looks complicated but it isn't really.
This is what most people do on the blogs.

94. At 2:54pm on 24 Feb 2010, One in a million wrote:
When will this government stop poking its nose into places it has no expertise to comment in? Bring on the election!

95. At 2:55pm on 24 Feb 2010, We_Are_All_Utd wrote:
They still teach the 3 R's?? Wow!

Note to HYS - If it's not broke, don't fix it!

96. At 2:57pm on 24 Feb 2010, Steve Day wrote:
Judging by the standards of job applicants I have dealt with over the last 5 years its pretty clear the three Rs have long since been abolished or ignored. They know their rights but not responsibilities, they know what they can demand from employers, but dont think smart appearance, good time keeping and good manners are neccessary.

97. At 3:00pm on 24 Feb 2010, recrec wrote:
It would be nice to think that schools taught Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. On the evidence of the graduates I have met recently I have some doubts!

Incidentally the new HYS is not very good.

98. At 3:01pm on 24 Feb 2010, Virtualvalkyrie wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

99. At 3:02pm on 24 Feb 2010, Jesus the Teddy Bear wrote:
Changing something just because they can?

Sounds somewhat similar to the BBC with HYS.
100. At 3:03pm on 24 Feb 2010, We_Are_All_Utd wrote: This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
Appendix 38. All messages in the message thread Young people & countryside.

Are young people priced out of the countryside?
11:19 UK time, Thursday, 4 March 2010

A lack of jobs and affordable housing is driving young people out of the countryside. What is the best way to tackle the problem?

The government's rural advocate Stuart Burgess found that "deep concerns" over work, training, housing, transport and social exclusion existed across the English countryside.

Dr Burgess has called for planning rules to be loosened and broadband access improved if rural communities are to survive. The government says it is working with its Commission for Rural Communities to address young people's needs.

Do you live in the countryside, what are your views on this report? Are you a young person who has been forced to leave the countryside? What measures should be taken to help vulnerable rural communities? Should planning restrictions be loosened?

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What's this?

Comments Sign in or register to comment.

Previous 123 Next 1. At 12:19pm on 04 Mar 2010, Clive Hamilton wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

2. At 12:23pm on 04 Mar 2010, Sick of anti-social behaviour wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

3. At 12:26pm on 04 Mar 2010, erfalaswen wrote:
Yes. I currently live in Lancaster and I would love to move to a more rural area because I want to live a more eco-friendly lifestyle - having compost plots, growing my own produce and being able to collect rain water for my own supply. However I can only afford a cramped city house because the countryside rents are too high and there's no way I could get a mortgage for a country place. Even though my boyfriend and I both work full time, we're both professionally qualified and both hard working, we simply can't save enough for the deposit.

Complain about this comment

4. At 12:26pm on 04 Mar 2010, icewombat wrote:
No gas so we need to use heating oil, £6.40 a return bus ticket to our local town, £6.80 a day to park at the station and over £30 pounds return ticket to london yes living in rural kent is very expensive!

[Type text]
5. At 12:27pm on 04 Mar 2010, Andy Smith wrote:
The problem is that the countryside prides itself on it's farmer-based heritage and unfortunately, times have changed. Perhaps grants should be offered to re-develop delapidated barns and other disused farm buildings into hi-tech, environmentally friendly businesses.

Complain about this comment

6. At 12:33pm on 04 Mar 2010, citizen42 wrote:
of course young people are being systemetically cleared from there homes so the rich can have there weekend retreat, thats a fact.ever since thatcher denounced the end of society, its been the i'm alright jack pull the ladder up attitude.i've a great deal of sympathy for the young of the countryside and it's village life but i fear thats all they can expect is sympathy.sorry.

Complain about this comment

7. At 12:35pm on 04 Mar 2010, italia90 wrote:
In the country there is no work and unaffordable housing. In the cities badly paid work and unaffordable housing. This is no reason to kill our green belt. The root cause is ignorant, greedy and dysfunctional local councils and the government who stifle businesses by their financial demands, neglect infrastructure despite collecting huge taxes and through petty bureaucracy driven by the nimby set impede the private building (in brown sites) of affordable housing.

Complain about this comment

8. At 12:39pm on 04 Mar 2010, Robin Goodfellow wrote:
The decline in rural jobs has been part of a long term strategy to move people from the towns to the countryside. This is not really new news, just re-highlighting another of the many challenges to the rural way of life.

There is a big disparity between the wages on offer for young people, and cost of living. In part this is because of greed on the part of estate agents and landlords who seem to equate 'rural' with 'loaded' and therefore charge enormous rents and fees.

Not everyone in the rural areas is loaded. Not everyone drives 4X4s whilst wearing green wellies. Most people are just trying to make ends meet.

Complain about this comment

9. At 12:43pm on 04 Mar 2010, Tony Shaw wrote:

[Type text]
It not just the young who are being priced out. My wife and bought our house just before the labour victory in the 90's when the prices in the Lakes were high but not ridiculous, and neither was the council tax. Now the house prices are silly, the council tax (for what we get) silly and although the services, fuel and utility cost have rocketed, the pay in rural areas (which has always been a low) simply has not kept pace meaning more and more of the older residents are leaving. My wife and I would love to have started a family, but with a mortgage we simply could not afford it, so thanks Mr Brown and hopefully goodbye in a few months!

Complain about this comment

10. At 12:44pm on 04 Mar 2010, ian cheese wrote:
It is a sad reflection of &, a reproach & disgrace of our Society, that housing & the means of living a decent life is beyond the reach of many people.

Complain about this comment

11. At 12:44pm on 04 Mar 2010, Ug wrote:
I don't think it has anything to do with coming from the countryside just that country dwellers tend to have more of an affinity with their fields and things. Virtually all skilled people have to move to find appropriate jobs - and let's face it - very few of them are on farms.

Complain about this comment

12. At 12:45pm on 04 Mar 2010, Bryony wrote:
I live in Norfolk as a 22 year old, and personally am screaming to get away from the countryside into the cities because of the lack of jobs, lack of cosmopolitan life, lack of 'buzz'. The transport links are shocking, and overpriced; it is cheaper to drive in to Norwich and face the carparking hell than bus it in (though the train is better because of Young Persons card).

I do love the countryside, and do love the peaceful life I have been brought up in but I haven't looked to see if I could afford a place to rent in Norfolk, because I don't want to live there anymore. I'm going to find my cheap housing and beautiful scenery over in Canada. Initial start up costs to get out there are high, but it is well worth the move.

Complain about this comment

13. At 12:48pm on 04 Mar 2010, englandrise wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

14. At 12:48pm on 04 Mar 2010, Tony Shaw wrote:
Andy Smith wrote: Perhaps grants should be offered to re-develop delapidated barns and other disused farm buildings into hi-tech, environmentally friendly businesses.

[Type text]
This has been said for years but until the communications and utility infrastructure is there to support a hi-tech eco friendly economy unfortunately it just a pie in the sky idea. As no one in their right mind would set up a tech business in an area with the services we have in the lake's!

Complain about this comment

15. At 12:48pm on 04 Mar 2010, Ben Essada wrote: Problem is there are just too many people chasing too little space in this country, especially the SE corner. This is the root cause of most of our social and environmental ills. The only solution is population control. By force if necessary.

Complain about this comment

16. At 12:51pm on 04 Mar 2010, Virtualvalkyrie wrote: I live in a large rural district & have worked in the housing sector for 30 years. I have 2 adult children. One works locally and lives at home. The other lives locally in private rented and travels daily to London for work. I definitely think public transport needs to be improved and the cost reduced. There are large towns near here that are virtually impossible to get to by public transport. You have to go to London and get a train out again! The bit that concerns me is 'loosening planning rules'. We have had a huge amount of development in this district in recent years, and much more in the offing. As both a resident and a housing professional my observation has been that all this development principally benefits the developers, private landlords and buyers moving in to the district from outside. All this has the effect of pushing prices up to the detriment of local people. There is no way my well educated and hard working children can afford to buy and renting is impossible unless you have a partner or share with someone else. Either way, unless you are on a fantastic salary, you need parental help with deposits etc.

Complain about this comment

17. At 12:51pm on 04 Mar 2010, Apple-Eater wrote: So after so many years, the government's just woken up to rural problems, eh. Brilliant. The big issue is immigration. Immigrants have been taking the rural jobs, and competing for housing in rural areas - whatever Evan Davies thinks. And with increased population pressure - also due to immigrants - more and more people are moving to the countryside to escape our overcrowded, 'vibrant' multicultural cities.
So the rural people are being hit by a double whammy.

The irony is, many liberal pc brigadistas are happy to preach the virtues of multiculturalism and immigration, but they do move to the countryside - odd that. Billy Bragg, Hugh Denis, for example.

18. At 12:52pm on 04 Mar 2010, Johnnyrichmond wrote:
Labour doesn't care about the country. As the country is traditionally conservative they see no need to help people in the country, as it will not generate them any votes.

Also there is the perception by the left that everyone one in the country lives in a mansion house and bathes in the tears of the poor - despite the fact that the trade union movement started in the country.

This can be seen by the differing reactions to the police handling of both the countryside alliance march to the G20 march. Apparently it was ok to beat the participants of the former but not the latter.

19. At 12:54pm on 04 Mar 2010, Ossie wrote:
As the world grows so do the complaints. We always want more but never want to give more!
Where are all the 70million people in a few years meant to live?
My question is this when do you think Slums will arrive in BRITAIN?? if we dont give land over to housing thats what will happen.

20. At 12:57pm on 04 Mar 2010, diversion wrote:
The decline in rural areas is complex and multi-faceted but results in a steady exodus of young people from those rural areas and an influx of older people who see rural areas as a nice, quiet place to retire and are willing to pay a high price for housing which younger people born in those areas cannot easily afford.

21. At 12:59pm on 04 Mar 2010, Lewis Fitzroy wrote:
"The countrysid is off limits to all but the few very rich people in Wales All the property have been bought, years ago as 2nd homes for short breaks?There are very few rural commuities now because of this? all the country pubs and small business and post offices' have long gone in many areas' What jobs are left? the farmers Today with factory farming and such like , dont need many workers' if any ? there is only seasonal work for gangs' of Eastern european {Cheap} work force picking veg and fruit on min wage.

[Type text]
22. At 1:00pm on 04 Mar 2010, Greenman wrote:
The problem is that the countryside prides itself on it's farmer-based heritage and unfortunately, times have changed. Perhaps grants should be offered to re-develop dilapidated barns and other disused farm buildings into hi-tech, environmentally friendly businesses.

Where do you think your food is going to come from Andy when all the farms have been converted. Or maybe importing it by air/sea is environmentally friendly.

23. At 1:03pm on 04 Mar 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
"Are young being priced out of the countryside?" Sadly this is nothing new and has not been addressed by Government.

Some young people living in rural communities find and love employment involved in local farming, conservation, animal care or country sports etc. But, unless accommodation comes with the job it's impossible for them to buy a home on income earned from that unless they have professional qualifications?

Some young people are unsuited to above occupations, but want/need to live with, or near their families. They want to pursue other opportunities/jobs, but cannot afford to travel to other areas, or that travel is unreliable or unavailable too?

More 'light/clean industry' and permanent work in rural communities should be subsidised by government. More share ownership schemes for housing too? There are architects, ignored by Government, who have designs that integrate with existing rural infrastructure.

24. At 1:06pm on 04 Mar 2010, grainsofsand wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

25. At 1:07pm on 04 Mar 2010, ColinBattle wrote:
If there were jobs, but no housing, or housing but no jobs, there would be an obvious problem for people living in the countryside. However, as it now seems there are neither jobs nor houses there, the simplest solution is surely to move to towns, where there's a much better chance of finding both, along with better access to all services.
Artificial measures to keep alive communities that have lost their reason to exist are rarely effective in the long term – this is true of isolated rural hamlets just as much as of former industrial areas.
26. At 1:10pm on 04 Mar 2010, Calaba wrote:
Well, yes, price is a factor. But poor internet and mobile phone connectivity and lack of other young people to socialise with is also a serious problem, since everyone just goes to university and never comes back.

If you enjoy living out in the middle of no-where, with horrendously poor communications and enjoy being the only young person for MILES, then sure, go and live in the countryside!

As for me, I'm never going back there. Ever. I'm hopefully moving into a flat in Stoke-on-trent next month. It might not be much, but it's better than living in the mind-numbingly boring countryside. I'll be near my friends, and I'll even be able to get a super-fast cable internet connection!! haha!!

27. At 1:10pm on 04 Mar 2010, pa_broon74 wrote:
Rubbish, the exact same problems exist where ever you live North or South of the border. The main problem is, in solving the rural problem, you ruin the rural setting. Cheap housing takes the form of pastel shaded faux clad shoe boxes that completely jar with the rest of the scenery.

The Barnett formula split is as such because in Scotland (for example)although there are less people, a higher percentage of them live away from main infrastructure nodes than in England. So it costs more to maintain communications, transport and services.

Its got nothing to do with the rural housing/employment problem which is only going to get worse anyway due to the government's cack-handed handling of the economy. Another example of the city shafting the countryside.

28. At 1:11pm on 04 Mar 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:
"The problem is that the countryside prides itself on it's farmer-based heritage and unfortunately, times have changed. Perhaps grants should be offered to re-develop delapitated barns and other disused farm buildings into hi-tech, environmentally friendly businesses"

That does not solve the problem of young people born in the country, the only people who can afford these barn conversions are rich city types who want a weekend home in the country then complain about the smells and noises of the country.

29. At 1:13pm on 04 Mar 2010, barryp wrote:
I grew up in the countryside, went to a rural Primary school and dearly wanted to be able to stay there, live there and work there. I quickly found that every house that came up for sale the price was gazumped by Townies. Retiring old people and highly paid City dwellers could always overtop my attempts to buy a house near where I had be brought up. In the end I had to move to a town and leave my preferrred home. As for building a home in the country, the planning office just laughed! The time was mid 1960's. Nothing really has changed in spite of the pious words spoken by a succession of Parliaments and Ministers.

Complain about this comment

30. At 1:16pm on 04 Mar 2010, ulteriormotive wrote: #2. So everyone that lives in social housing is guilty of "anti-social behaviour, verbal abuse, vandalism, theft, drug dealing/taking, littering, etc" are they? What a repugnant view you have of people less well off than yourself.

The truth is it's people like you that are the problem. Forcing up property prices in pursuit of some ridiculous rural idyll, and thereby excluding the youngsters from their own communities by making it unaffordable to live there. Then blaming them for being poor!

Complain about this comment

31. At 1:17pm on 04 Mar 2010, Luke wrote:
Not just the countryside, the city too...I live on the south coast and unless I move north of London, and away from my friends, family and life, I will never be able to afford a property of my own without someone in the family dying and me getting the inheritance, or what's left of it after tax.

Such a terrible system that has allowed house prices to inflate massively above the rate of pay and price people out of getting what I see as a basic need, a home, just so people can make profit. I can't wait until the next property price crash.

Complain about this comment

32. At 1:17pm on 04 Mar 2010, dogswhistle wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

33. At 1:23pm on 04 Mar 2010, Adrian Boliston wrote:
We need to find some way of ensuring that someone who works in the country, such as a farmer, can afford to live where they work.

The problem is that wealthy people who work in the towns & cities like to commute each day to their expensive country house, unusually in a very expensive 4x4, but with the two fold effect of driving up house prices and polluting the environment.
Perhaps we need a tax relief system for people who actually work near where they live and a "super tax" for people who live in the country but work in the city.

Complain about this comment

34. At 1:23pm on 04 Mar 2010, Phillip of England wrote:
• I lived almost my entire life in rural Somerset and I can tell you that 13 years of Labour and their focus on the "Inner-cities" and the urban way of life have pretty much destroyed the rural aspects and life in this country. I have friends who are farmers who are struggling. Pensioners in remote villages stripped of their one bus a week. The closure of rural pubs post offices and other businesses.

My personal view as someone from a rural background is that this government in its attempts to appease the city-folk have raped beyond repair the rural existence.

Vast sums have been channelled into the cities, funding community centres, sports facilities etc, all for the benefit of people who frankly do not deserve them. Whilst those in the country have seem their funding reduced to cater for this.

People from the city, with no clue or experience of life in the rural areas of this country have sought to impose their will, what with the outlawing of fox hunting (I don't care if you dislike this sport, it is a rural way of life and keeps vermin under control - Yes! Foxes are vermin) Unrealistic quotas, brought in by the EU and enforced by spineless government have seen farmers having to shoot their livestock as they can't afford them.

I sincerely hope that the next government address this heinous wrong and ensure that those young who wish to remain in the countryside are able to do so with better prospects and living conditions.

13 years of focusing on the inner cities with little or no achievement, it's time to focus your efforts on those in the country side.

Complain about this comment

35. At 1:24pm on 04 Mar 2010, Tim wrote:
People working in cities shouldn't be living dozens of miles away in the countryside. It's unsustainable and is destroying our rural communities.

People doing such should be ashamed.

So many of our once great towns and villages have been converted into anonymous commuter estates, utterly lacking of any culture,
because most the inhabitants never even see the town during the day. They don't really "live" in the town/village, they simply own a home there (thereby driving out people which actually do want to live in the town/village).

Complain about this comment

36. At 1:25pm on 04 Mar 2010, ForceCrag wrote:
It's partly a symptom of young people being priced out of houses everywhere as a result of a ludicrous debt-fuelled housing bubble, which may finally be showing some signs of correcting a little after a promising start but stuttering a bit last year. However, outside of the cities second home ownership has added an additional burden which needs addressing. Loosening the planning rules is not the solution; that'll just encourage more places to become urban, which is not what we need in this already over-developed country. In the areas with the worst issues with who owns the homes (e.g. national parks) quite often a lot of the now horrendously-priced housing was originally built as cheap housing for local workers (e.g. Glenridding in the Lake District was a mining village). Building more will just result in making a mess of the place and letting in the next tier of townies' second homes rather than helping the people actually from there to stay there.

Complain about this comment

37. At 1:29pm on 04 Mar 2010, ForceCrag wrote:
#17 - "The big issue is immigration."

Not true. Tourism seems to be a bigger issue. Cumbria has some of the highest house prices and the lowest numbers of immigrants in the country. Increasing centralisation is also a big issue, with facilities getting more and more concentrated in cities, leaving the market towns that the surrounding villages rely on suffering.

Complain about this comment

38. At 1:32pm on 04 Mar 2010, JohnH wrote:
I am sick and tired about this endlessly repeated myth of the 'countryside'. We get it all, no services, no public transport, no jobs etc. etc.

There are no jobs in the countryside because there is no work to be done. Farming is bankrupt and has been for over 100 years. Housing is so expensive because town people want to retire to an idyllic place they have dreamed about for years (and has never existed). Try building new houses and newcomers scream about spoiling their view.

What we need is a new positive approach that throws away all the old sacred cows.

1 Forget farming, it only works with endless subsidies.
2 Build new housing, if someone complains that their house price has fallen, tell them tough luck and stop them going to court.

3 Encourage people to own cars, yes CARS, they are cheap, easy to use and NOWHERE IN THIS COUNTRY IS MORE THAN 15 MILES FROM A MOTORWAY!

4 Tell people who moan that the countryside is our 'heritage' etc that they are living in a dream world, a buscuit-tin-lid-land that never existed.

5 Stop all the yokelisation, this ONE COUNTRY not two. We all live side by side with no difference whatsoever in our needs, wants, aspirations.

6 Open up the countryside to leisure activities. When my children were young we had to travel for miles to have picnics, activities, something to do. The country side is EMPTY, lets fill it up more with things young and old can do.

Complain about this comment

39. At 1:33pm on 04 Mar 2010, James wrote:
To Post No 13 - Get a life!

No-one is interested in hearing your foul racist bile. We are all children of the UK and should be fighting on the same side to ensure we ALL get a good deal from the government.

Just to put you straight though, using your own figures for funding per head of population:

* Northern Ireland £9,385 - (population 1.7m) = £16bn
* Scotland £8,623 - (population 5m) = £43bn
* Wales £8,139 - (population 3m) = £24bn
* England £7,121 - (population 51m) = £363bn

So, as you can see, England actually receives £320bn more than Scotland and when you consider much of this money is used for shared services (roads, transport, infrastructure etc) the English get a very good deal as most have access to these. I'll bet spending per head in England as a whole will be higher in Cornwall than in the Midlands for example, purely because there are less people and the roads, railways etc. all still have to be paid for. This is called fairness.

Anyway, to answer the question, of course young people are being driven out of the countryside, due to townsfolk with good jobs buying up all the property at unaffordable prices. The way to resolve this is to relax the planning regulations and let people born and bred in the country build their own houses or re-use delapidated barns etc.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
40. At 1:34pm on 04 Mar 2010, John Adair wrote:
This country as got so expensive, that only the unemployed can afford an home. Oh and bankers and politicians who can afford several each.

Complain about this comment

41. At 1:34pm on 04 Mar 2010, ravenmorpheus2k wrote:
I live in a commuter town (Braintree, Essex, UK) not far from London, very little of the population works in Braintree as there is no work, instead 90% (guestimate) of the population works in Chelmsford/London and places in between.

As a result I'm being priced out of Braintree, Essex, UK.

God help me if I ever tried to move to the countryside!

"2. At 12:23pm on 04 Mar 2010, Sick of anti-social behaviour wrote:

My view on this is that I don't want the countryside concreted over so the government can build more social (council) housing. I am trying to move to the countryside right now to get away from those sorts of people as I'm sick of the anti-social behaviour, verbal abuse, vandalism, theft, drug dealing/taking, littering, etc.

The last thing I want is another estate full of these people being built near me."

-------------

I (along with my family) rent a council house and frankly, I take offence to those remarks. Lets hope I don't get a private estate built near me...

Complain about this comment

42. At 1:35pm on 04 Mar 2010, ting wrote:
I feel partially sorry for the young people as they did not choose to live there - their parents did. However, they will just have to accept the facts and move on. I had to move to London to get a job. However one of the downsides of that is that I too am being priced out of London now. This is because I am considered too rich to obtain a council house/benefits and too poor to afford my own place. I feel that as a young person, who has always paid taxes and behaved herself, I have had to struggle financially. Whereas, those people who never work, get all the assistance.

Complain about this comment

43. At 1:36pm on 04 Mar 2010, bigotry_is_also_a_diversity wrote:
"The government's rural advocate Stuart Burgess found that "deep concerns" over work, training, housing, transport and social exclusion existed across the English countryside."

Yet more irrefutable proof (as if any were needed) that Labour have been so hell-bent on their undemocratic programme of social engineering for the past thirteen years, that they haven't even spent the time looking at concerns of the voters.

Strange how Labour claims to be interested now, just prior to a general election, isn't it? Still, as anyone who takes the slightest bit of interest in politics now knows full-well, Labour will promise the Earth before an election, and then fail to deliver on every single policy.

Complain about this comment

44. At 1:36pm on 04 Mar 2010, Graphis wrote:
I have been priced out of EVERYWHERE. At this rate, I soon won't be able to live in tree house. When will we have someone in power who can put a stop to this madness in house prices? It's not demand or the free market driving up prices, it's estate agents making figures out of thin air.

When my father bought his house in 1960, it cost £4000: the average wage then was just £25 per week. So his house was the equivalent of 4 years pay. Today, the average house costs 7 or 8 years pay, or 15 years pay if you live in London. Our wages haven't gone up to match the cost of living in this country. This bubble needs to burst as quickly as possible, it cannot sustain itself, and anyone who has just bought a house prior to the burst will find themselves with a huge debt and a house worth 25% of what they've paid for it.

Did you know we could each build our own house for as little as £50,000? That's all the materials/labour actually costs. If our town planners and councils actually let more of us buy land this could be feasible. Instead they're all in league with the big housing developers to screw us for as much as possible. The whole situation needs sorting out, instead of just letting the market run away with itself.

Complain about this comment

45. At 1:37pm on 04 Mar 2010, DisgustedOfMitcham2 wrote:
I'm not sure the government should be doing very much about this at all. It's called market forces. History tells us that when governments try to interfere in them, it usually doesn't end well.

Having said that, I can see that it's unhelpful when people buy second homes. I don't think it would do too much harm if council tax on second properties were to be increased to the point where it made a few people think twice.
Complain about this comment

46. At 1:38pm on 04 Mar 2010, John from Poole wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke
the House Rules.

47. At 1:39pm on 04 Mar 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:
"My view on this is that I don't want the countryside concreted
over so the government can build more social (council) housing. I
am trying to move to the countryside right now to get away from
those sorts of people as I'm sick of the anti-social behaviour,
verbal abuse, vandalism, theft, drug dealing/taking, littering,
etc.

The last thing I want is another estate full of these people
being built near me"

Pathetic. It people like that are making the countryside to
expensive for young local born people to live. Its always a sad
day when they move the cows out of barns and move the pigs in.

Complain about this comment

48. At 1:42pm on 04 Mar 2010, BBC_HaveYourSay Host wrote:
Bernadette at HYS here. Hope you're all finding this debate
interesting. If you would like to listen to the government's
rural advocate Stuart Burgess talking about the report on Today
follow this link
http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8548000/8548976.stm

Complain about this comment

49. At 1:43pm on 04 Mar 2010, mofro wrote:
To all those who seem to think that this problem is the fault of
the Labour government.

This is a problem that has been plaguing the countryside for more
than just 13 years. When I was in the Girl Guides some 45 years
ago and used to go camping in the countryside, the locals were
complaining of exactly the same things. As far as I can see there
is no answer. You cannot stop people buying up second homes in
the country (which puts the prices up beyond that which the
locals can afford), and many farming communities are having to
diversify in order to eek out an exisstance.

Complain about this comment

50. At 1:45pm on 04 Mar 2010, typicallistener wrote:
I live in the countryside. My children have moved to the city.
Nothing to do with housing etc, it's just more fun for a young
person in a city. They'll probably move back to the country when
they have families and good jobs.

Complain about this comment

51. At 1:46pm on 04 Mar 2010, Should be Working wrote:
This is hardly a new issue. I am almost 50 and grew up in the countryside. I left to find work. I would love to move back but there's no way I can afford the property prices. I can count on one hand the number of people I went to school with who remained in the area. Don't know what the answer is but to blame Labour policies for the situation, as many are, is ridiculous.

Complain about this comment

52. At 1:49pm on 04 Mar 2010, Andy wrote:
I'm not sure why people are insistent on blaming immigration for young people being priced out of the countryside. It is not immigrants who are driving up the house prices out of out of town areas, buying up all the £300k properties. When you hear about 10 immigrants living in one property trust me, they are not living in a 6 bedroom house. The owners of the countryside properties are not not immigrants, greedily raising the by 10k for every 1k they spend on it. Do you really think that someone earning less than minimum wage (a year) could afford the mortgage on a £300k house?

We need more houses build to drive down price, but people don't want there house prices going down so they campaign against it. People who already own a home have a vested interest in there being no more houses built.

Much of our economy was based on the invisible money generated by people artificially increasing the price of there homes, taking out loans on the artificial money.

Complain about this comment

53. At 1:49pm on 04 Mar 2010, potatolord wrote:
Meh, we're due a second round of house price drops over the next 18 months, so that should make property more affordable for the young. You can already see the evidence in the press, though the BBC persists with increasingly bizarre statistics and graphs to hide this from first time buyers.

Complain about this comment

54. At 1:50pm on 04 Mar 2010, suzie127 wrote:
Migration from the countryside to the towns and cities in search of work is hardly a new issue. This has been happening for most of history throughout the world. Why does this generation think that a government can solve all their issues, especially when they complaint so much about paying tax. When are we going to learn to live without always wanting more.

Complain about this comment

55. At 1:51pm on 04 Mar 2010, confusus wrote:
This NEW problem has been happening since the industrial revolution.

[Type text]
Deftly spotted Nu-Lab! Quick off the mark as always!

The reasons are simple, mechanisation and the increase of size of farm means fewer are needed to labour. Labouring is not a job many people want, they want inside warm, dry, comfy, offices at better rates of pay. Quite reasonably really!

Large farms, improved crops (improved by selective breeding, which is — genetically modifying the crops), mechanisation are more efficient and we want cheap food. Therefore, as machines are cheaper than people in the long run, fewer people!

Faster internet will be nice for those with a home in which to use it! But without decent public transport it is a pointless vote catching exercise! Hang on there isn’t an election in the offing is there?

Complain about this comment

56. At 1:55pm on 04 Mar 2010, Dlgger5 wrote:
Houses, whether in the town or countryside, are now way above the affordability of the local average wage.

Those of us that bought up to say 2003 are lucky but if I have to move than I could not afford anything like my current home. My place (home and a roof over my head) is now probably 12 times my current salary if I had to purchase it whereas it was about 6 times my salary in 2002.

House prices have rocketed to the unaffordable values through the past 10 years and whether it is existing stock or new build start at a minimum cost of 8 times national average salary.

Whatever governments do, the builders will not build affordable (circa 5-6 times national average salary) in order for key workers to purchase. When they do the buy-to-let carpetbaggers gazump the first time buyer. As has been stated, the rich purchase their weekend country retreat which also forces up the prices.

Building social (council or housing association) homes only occurs within towns an not in the countryside. I feel sorry for those struggling to raise a deposit whilst living in rented accommodation (housing association or private landlords) as the rents are on par with mortgage payments (at 5% interest).

Whichever government gets in should provide:
- No council tax exemptions for second/third/etc homes.
- A scheme whereby key UK workers (including those working on the land) can get their own affordable housing local to their employment.
- Houses cannot be vacant for a set number of weeks in the year (part of my local council wants people to contact them over vacant properties). If they are vacant for say four months then
someone from the housing waiting list should have the opportunity to move in with the council taking charge of the occupation.

The nearest farm to my property has not been lived in for 12 months and the landlord is quite happy to leave it to fall down. That landlord is getting money from a farmer to use the land but the 5-6 bedroom property would benefit from some money spent on it which will allow a family on the housing waiting list to move in. I am sure it will never happen though which is a shame.

Politicians and landlords are in the mentality from the 1980's of "me, me, me" and "I'm alright Jack".

RANT OVER

Dlgger5

Complain about this comment

57. At 1:55pm on 04 Mar 2010, MARTNAL2 wrote:
You can't move in the country for herds of cows beching out noxious gases. It's just like London.

Complain about this comment

58. At 1:56pm on 04 Mar 2010, JPM44 wrote:
Why is this considered a new issue? Surely people have been leaving the countryside to find jobs in the cities since industrialisation! Don't think we can blame the current government for this one...

Complain about this comment

59. At 1:57pm on 04 Mar 2010, Tony273 wrote:
Looks like the government are now looking at what they swept under the carpet 12 years ago. Finding anything to occupy them from from the big issues and make it look like they are doing something - must be an election coming up...

Complain about this comment

60. At 1:58pm on 04 Mar 2010, John from Poole wrote:
I live in Poole Dorset where most of the best, seaside properties are bought as second homes, retirement homes by rich Londoners or in the case of Sandbanks, by the glitterati with prices in millions of pounds.
It's bad enough that the vast majority of young people growing up around here could never aspire to have the kind of wealth that these buyers have, but what makes it worse is that rich people spoil it for everyone else.
I don't want Poole to become a retirement town.
It has become clear to me that the root of the problem is disparity of wealth, the stupid and unecessary sums paid to people in the financial sector, and the huge range of salries within all organisations- too many years of percentage pay increase perhaps.
Time to even things up a bit methinks, and create a level playing field. Remove the whole concept of inheritance, ban private schools, increase the minimum wage, tax all income over £100k pa at 75% and ban the vile idea of buy-to-let. How have people become so base as to think it's ok effectively make people work for their benefit by paying a big proportion of their income to them as rent? If the few won't change there is no future for any of us.

Complain about this comment

61. At 2:05pm on 04 Mar 2010, SR4Z wrote:
Like many city dwellers, I'd love to live in the country, but a combination of artificially low interest rates and NIMBY planning regulations make this unattainable. The one thing we must not have is positive discrimination. Just because someone was born in the country doesn't entitle them to a better quality of life than the rest of us.
Things change. Firstly, the government can't go on rewarding debtors and punishing savers for ever, so the housing bubble will eventually burst. Secondly, there is actually plenty of room for more houses, it just requires courageous planning decisions. For example, there is clearly a surplus of dairy farms (since they are always complaining about the price of milk) - why not allow them to sell some land off for housing?

Complain about this comment

62. At 2:06pm on 04 Mar 2010, Megan wrote:
I was raised in a rural village and went to the village school, the sort where you were all in the one classroom and given differentiated tasks, and the teacher lived in a house that was part of the building. Now I live in a town, albeit near enough to the edge to get into fields (and have occasional whiffs of a 'fine agricultural smell' when they've been muck spreading).

There were good things and bad things about village life. Everyone knew your business... but two youths were stopped by neighbours when they were spotted strolling down the road with my parents' lawnmower! The bus service was infrequent and expensive even then, and getting to university in the nearest city was an exercise in logistics each day, careful planning required and a good few sprints from bus station to campus to catch lecturers just about to open their mouths.

Would I go back? Maybe... but dearly beloved is more of a 'townie' and I don't think he'd be happy. Not quite sure what he'd miss, not the peace and quiet - hedgehogs mating make just as much noise as a passing ambulance, and if you've ever heard a vixen's cry you never forget it.

Complain about this comment

63. At 2:08pm on 04 Mar 2010, Foolfighter wrote:

[Type text]
This topic occurs with monotonous regularity. Yes, less well off people (generally younger people) are prevented from living where they want by better off people moving into an area they perceive as a nice place to live. Get over it. This is true in rural situations, in city centres, and in attractive suburban areas. It is only relatively recently that people have believed they have a right to move out of mummy and daddy's rural thatched cottage/Chelsea apartment/5-bed detached Surrey House etc and move in directly next door. The young always start in the 'poxy' areas of town, the poor areas, the undesirable areas and work their way up (as their parents did). Nevertheless the countryside is still overpopulated compared to the towns and cities in terms of provision of jobs. As more and more rural businesses can be conducted with fewer people and more machines there will be less employment possibilities to support incomers.

Changing the mindset of people who think they need to live in towns is a different topic altogether - but one that needs consideration. Given electronic communication systems currently available there is very little need for a significant number of businesses to congregate in towns and cities. They could operate equally well (and more pleasantly for their staff) in rural locations and help to remove road congestion and commuting problems.

Complain about this comment

64. At 2:10pm on 04 Mar 2010, fisher85 wrote:
Andy Smith:

Re-develop barnes and other farm buildings ? That's been going on for years and would hardly constitute 'social housing'

Small housing estates would be better - note the work 'small' - and would be more affordable to those less well off

Complain about this comment

65. At 2:14pm on 04 Mar 2010, darkvalleysboy1978 wrote:
It's only natural as the countryside houses tend to be larger and more luxurious than the average townhouse. Added to which if affordable housing is planned in the area the local residents refuse it due to "reducing the character of the area". Sorry but you can't have it both ways.

It's not only the young priced out of these areas. I'm 31 and single so not considered to be "young" yet I can barely afford a small terraced house in town due to being taxed to hilt to provide benefits for every other demographic.

Complain about this comment

66. At 2:16pm on 04 Mar 2010, Apple-Eater wrote:
44 Graphis
"Did you know we could each build our own house for as little as £50,000? That's all the materials/labour actually costs. If our town planners and councils actually let more of us buy land this could be feasible. Instead they're all in league with the big housing developers to screw us for as much as possible. The whole situation needs sorting out, instead of just letting the market run away with itself."

Well put. There is something very fishy about the government's housing policies. They are committed to adding huge amounts of new housing, to provide accommodation for the growing population - the result of the immigration they've encouraged.

And they've ensured that the people who really do well out of it are the big housebuilders, property developers etc.

The rest of the population, and the environment, bear the negative consequences.

There are many solutions to the rural economic crisis, and a major one would be to encourage small-scale, local housing, built by local companies or individuals, for local people.

But that's not what will happen. Instead, the politicians' friends in the construction industry will get to build huge swathes of poorly constructed, identikit suburban sprawl, and people will carry on migrating from the big cities to the 'countryside', to complain about the noise and smells, and whinge that the whole place is getting a bit too built up.

Complain about this comment

67. At 2:16pm on 04 Mar 2010, Nic121 wrote:
Great, so even though I earn a reasonable wage I can't afford to live in decent area in a town or city, and now I can't afford to move into the rural countryside for a better life. I guess i'll end up in some sink estate where house prices remain at reasonable levels due to high crime.

Do we not think there is a serious problem when young adults on reasonable incomes can't afford a reasonable house/flat in a reasonable area? My parents continue to profit from a massive property price boom that saw their 4 bed house rocket from the buying price of £125K 17 years ago to it's current approximate value of £500K. My generation has been well and truly shafted with regard to buying property, unless the average wage is suddenly going to start increasing by 200%?

My girlfriend and I earn about £40K a year between us, yet it currently doesn't look like we're going to be able to afford a reasonable sized house in, around or just outside of London where we've both lived all our lives. Unless we want to start a family in a 1 bed flat, our alternative is to buy somewhere further north and a little more rural...but it now seems that plan has been scuppered if this report is accurate.

[Type text]
What are we to do??

Complain about this comment

68. At 2:20pm on 04 Mar 2010, lovelyonthewater wrote:
I agree with post 3.

Buying in the countryside in the South East would be hard even for the older generation.

However, I think young people (and even the not so young) are being priced out of everywhere particularly in the South East where I am. The simple fact seems to be, if you don't have rich parents you're looking at being in your mid 30s before you can even think about buying. This is made harder by people buying up the 'cheaper' housing as an investment denying younger people the chance to buy a family place they can call their own.

To save the required tens of thousands of pounds for a mortgage is near impossible when the rents are so high for even a tiny place (and, indeed are more expensive than mortgage repayments.)

Complain about this comment

69. At 2:20pm on 04 Mar 2010, LeftieAgitator wrote:
Too many townies have an idyllic view of the countryside. It's not all Midsommer Murders, James Herriot land. It's noisy and dirty, all those farm animals and farm machinery you see. Narrow roads, poor shopping, virtually no public transport and the house prices are ridiculous. All those townies buying up the property, driving to the nearest supermarket for their shopping, rural depopulation had got worse in the last 30 years. Increased mechanisation and bigger farms means less employment for locals.
Councils forced to sell their housing stock, the legislation doesn't allow them to build more, free market in housing, large numbers of homeless.
Our political classes doctrinaire adherence to free market ideology ensures rural depopulation.

Complain about this comment

70. At 2:21pm on 04 Mar 2010, General_Jack_Ripper wrote:
This has been going on for hundreds of years, anyone trying to blame this, or any, government hasn't got a clue what they're talking about.

There are far too many factors contributing to this problem that it is also unlikely that any government will be able to reverse the trend very quickly.

Industrialisation caused the loss of the vast majority of rural employment opportunities in the early 1800s and every technological advancement we've made since has lead to a further reduction in the jobs available. This caused many people living
in rural areas, especially the young people, to leave for the cities where they hoped they'd be able to find work.

The fact that the vast majority of our rural areas are owned by a handful of individuals, the Monarchy, MoD, National Trust and other groups means that there is also a lack of suitable space to allow rural areas to grow in order to accommodate any extra domestic, retail, business and community buildings that are needed to support an increased population.

Then we've got the National Parks and Greenbelt that have had unsustainably stringent regulations regarding what can be built, how it can be built and where it can be built in many of the rural areas that have wanted to expand over the past fifty years. While we all want to protect our countryside the balance between conservation and progress has been too far on the conservation side for far too long, talk to anyone who lives and works in a National Park and they'll be able to bore you at length about the near infinite number of forms they have to fill in to be able to make even the most minor changes to their property while building something new is almost impossible.

Instead of protecting the National Parks from destruction the policy seems to have been to keep them stuck in a time warp, almost like a living museum, for far too long. While this makes these areas great to visit for those of us who live in cities it is making it virtually impossible for enough housing to be built in order to accommodate the natural growth of these areas while also blocking business opportunities and therefore jobs.

Complain about this comment

71. At 2:21pm on 04 Mar 2010, UKcerberus wrote:
With the UK already carved up by robber barons, nothing has changed.
Unless we take back the land, the wealthy will continue to "look after" it for us - courtesy of the National Trust, of course.

Complain about this comment

72. At 2:22pm on 04 Mar 2010, grainsofsand wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

73. At 2:24pm on 04 Mar 2010, JezzaSW wrote:
I live in Cornwall and yes employment and housing issues are a constant concern.

Then there are those who wish to have a retreat into the countryside.

Complain about this comment

74. At 2:28pm on 04 Mar 2010, mskarena wrote:
"Sick of anti-social behaviour" wrote:
"I am trying to move to the countryside right now to get away from those sorts of people as I'm sick of the anti-social
behaviour, verbal abuse, vandalism, theft, drug dealing/taking, littering, etc."

For your information, those of us who were born in the countryside, grew up in the countryside and want to stay here actually have a lot more respect for it than you give us credit for. What we want is the option to stay where we grew up instead of being priced out.

Complain about this comment

75. At 2:34pm on 04 Mar 2010, Paul wrote:
Surely the answer to this is simple. Change the law so that you cannot own a property in designated areas without being resident in it. This would stop spiv city boys using their bonuses to buy up country properties then using them solely for the occasional weekend. Rental properties could then be registered with the local council and must demonstrate that they have real bona fide tenants for at least 75% of the year. This problem is a function of the wealthy buying up properties for occasional use at prices that the local community simply cannot afford.

Complain about this comment

76. At 2:34pm on 04 Mar 2010, SgtPatrickHarper wrote:
People who own land should be allowed to build on it to construct a house for owner occupation like you can in spain.

All the planners seem to be achieving is keeping beautiful countryside for the rich to enjoy.

Complain about this comment

77. At 2:35pm on 04 Mar 2010, webboffin wrote:
Sick of anti-social behaviour wrote:
My view on this is that I don't want the countryside concreted over so the government can build more social (council) housing. I am trying to move to the countryside right now to get away from those sorts of people as I'm sick of the anti-social behaviour, verbal abuse, vandalism, theft, drug dealing/taking, littering, etc.
The last thing I want is another estate full of these people being built near me.

I live in the countryside. I was born and raised in the countryside. I live in social housing in my village which is a brand new development.
The last thing we need is arrogant, high horsed snobbish townies coming over and wrecking the peace we enjoy here. If that is your attitude then stay where you are, we don't need you wrecking our country way of life.

Complain about this comment

78. At 2:39pm on 04 Mar 2010, Mike Thomas wrote:

[Type text]
So many of you are saying the young cannot afford to live in the countryside. Well who was it exactly that sold these houses at high prices in the first place? Who priced the young out of the area?

And as for older people moving to countryside, are they mad, so many houses round my way where cut off for days at a time during the snow. Really good if you need doctor or ambulance or medication is it not.

Just goes to show the older generation are not as intelligent as they think they are. Oh but of course I forgot, they are not living there during the winter are they, what a waste of housing.

I don't suppose it even occured to you that maybe Evan Davies did some good solid research before he filmed the BBC programme 'The Day the Immigrants Left'? I guess it's far easier to carry on perpetuating the immigration myth and branding any evidence to the contrary as 'propoganda' becuase it doesn't agree with your own perceived view. Far easier to do this than challenge your own opinions.

Immigrants that work in rural areas do very low paid jobs, such as fruit picking. The 'indigenous' population (as is the popular term now), largley don't want these jobs, and even if they did they wouldn't be able to afford a house on the wages. Many immigrants will rent (paid for by themselfs and not the state) small bedsits while they work. This is not some made up story but fact (based on evidence such as produced by Evan Davies) whether you like it or not.

Rural housing is no longer cheap because reasonabley well off people who made lots of money from their city/town houses during the property price boom can afford a bigger place in the country to live, or a second home or holiday let. That's exactly what's happened in places such as Cornwall and the Lake District. So please, spare me the tired old 'it's the immigrants!' rants.

The majority of people are going to live in towns - that's where the jobs are, and it's more environmentetally friendly to live close to work.

People wanting to move to the country for a more 'eco-friendly' lifestyle are fine, as long as they are going to work close to
their home. If they have a 'zero emissions' house, but have to drive 40 miles each way to work, it sort of defeats the object...

As fuel prices continue to rise, this will become even more important.

Also, the government needs to invest heavily in the train network - new stations in small towns, re-open branch lines, and build bigger (& cheaper) car parks for the stations that already exist so people can get to the stations to use them.

Complain about this comment
81. At 2:50pm on 04 Mar 2010, Skarjo wrote:
In fairness, it's not just pricing driving the young out of the countryside. The bright lights of the big cities have been drawing kids out of the countryside for years, and poor phone reception and utterly awful internet coverage are only worsening the feeling of being 'cut off' from where it's all happening in the countryside.

You could give the homes away, and most youngsters would still want to spend their twenties in a big city.

Complain about this comment
82. At 2:50pm on 04 Mar 2010, geezershoong wrote:
If you're worried about sink estates being built near you in the countryside, I can assure you retired Londoners are the biggest threat.

If you own a cockerel who likes to crow, expect a visit from the police with their complaints that the bird is crowing at 'anti-social' hours...

Complain about this comment
83. At 2:51pm on 04 Mar 2010, vexed voter wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

84. At 2:52pm on 04 Mar 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
Since my first post, and reading others' I looked at originators of this report: about what BBC describe as "are the young being priced out of the countryside"?

Commission for Rural Communities or 'CRC' instigated this report? If you want another reason to be angry about lack of rural work/education/business/home opportunities etc., go to this site, and get more more angry!

Go to this site and enter into search: funding .. OMG? So much money/grants for CRS available for all the HIGHLY paid EXECUTIVES, ADVISERS etc.

[Type text]
There is so much money to be made commissioning reports about rural community problems, that there is no money left to help rural communities?

Complain about this comment

85. At 2:59pm on 04 Mar 2010, vexed voter wrote:
We are all being priced out of houses and jobs at the moment. The only ones to be able to afford to live in the country are MPs and Millionaires.
MPs have the luxury of having thier mortgage paid by the tax payer and to carry out any modernisation.
If life gets too tough they can buy that second house in London.
Not forgetting MPs have their council tax paid by the tax payer so all is a bed of roses for the guys and gals in the Commons.
Moral of the story. Become a MP get every thing paid for and when you get voted out in the next election you will get the golden good bye.
Of course there is the added perk of becoming a consultant and lobby your mates who did get voted in, or borrow from the party to set your self set up in your business with no interest payments.

Complain about this comment

86. At 3:02pm on 04 Mar 2010, englandrise wrote:
New HYS system - same old thought policing.
Comment deleted for pointing out that it's government funding for England (or the lack of it) that is leading to problems in the English countryside.
Yes I'm talking about the English countryside - the subject of the original report.

@James

* Northern Ireland £9,385 - (population 1.7m) = £16bn
* Scotland £8,623 - (population 5m) = £43bn
* Wales £8,139 - (population 3m) = £24bn
* England £7,121 - (population 51m) = £363bn

That might be what you call "fairness" James, but I think it's treating the English as fourth class citizens in their own country. If we're a "United Kingdom" we should get equal or at least close to being equal funding.

Complain about this comment

87. At 3:08pm on 04 Mar 2010, Paul wrote:
#44 "It's not demand or the free market driving up prices, it's estate agents making figures out of thin air."
No, it is demand and the free market.
If people didn't want the houses, and weren't able to buy them, no one would buy them, and the prices would go down.

The problem is that there are too few houses, and it's too hard for people to build their own houses.

It doesn't cost much at all to build a reasonable house, but there are too many planning rules & building regulations to make it practical for the average person. This gives the big companies a virtual monopoly, meaning they can control pricing and supply.

Let people build houses for their own use with minimal regulation, and the problem will pretty much vanish in a couple of years.

Complain about this comment

88. At 3:10pm on 04 Mar 2010, Tim wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

89. At 3:11pm on 04 Mar 2010, ian cheese wrote:
One way out of this dilemma is to look for entrepreneurial openings in the country.

Complain about this comment

90. At 3:11pm on 04 Mar 2010, Mustafa Beer wrote:
Yes. Look at parts of Wales and Norfolk for example. In Wales locals in some areas are unable to compete with rich outsiders in the housing market, the result is empty weekend/summer properties vacant 9 months of the year. In Norfolk at lot of Londoners sold up there, made money on the sale and bought top houses in Norfolk compared to what they had in London pound for pound. The results, the house prices in the county increased well beyond the local wages in the area.

Complain about this comment

91. At 3:26pm on 04 Mar 2010, Dan Cochran wrote:
Let's not beat about the bush; The young are being priced out of EVERYWHERE.

Complain about this comment

92. At 3:28pm on 04 Mar 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
Just click the links in the question. The 'Commission for Rural Communities' = 'CRC' are well-funded and are obliged to report as they will continue to be highly paid to report until the cows come home?

I don't live in the 'countryside' nor a city. But do KNOW and understand that our British farmers are being undermined by weasel-worded labeled meat via supermarket imports?

[Type text]
Stop it now. Imported meat is not British just because it's being manipulated or industrialised in Britain?

Complain about this comment

93. At 3:32pm on 04 Mar 2010, Grumpy_Old_Fool wrote:
We moved to rural Herefordshire in order to enjoy a peaceful, tranquil, retirement. Because of the pressure on housing, the Govt is planning that 5000 more houses must be built in Herefordshire, and, in some cases, the plans entail building on existing farmland.

I sympathise with young rural residents who can't afford a house, but houses are in short supply throughout England, not just in rural areas. It seems crazy to damage our ability to feed our people, whilst ruining our environment, in order to house a constantly expanding population. It would make much more sense to take steps to encourage a reduction in the population. We live in one of the most densely populated countries in the world, and we can't continue to consume the world's resources at the current rate. How about limiting immigration, whilst encouraging emigration?

Complain about this comment

94. At 3:34pm on 04 Mar 2010, Idea wrote:
More houses in the countryside - No, no, no! The countryside is not an urban amenity and it is more than just an agricultural resource or what one goes through to get to another town. It is our country. Leave it alone. Save the Green Belt and no building on greenfield land. Get it?

Complain about this comment

95. At 3:53pm on 04 Mar 2010, Taz Devil wrote:
Young people aren't being priced out, they just can't be bothered to save and want everything now.

If they tried saving and stopped moaning they might be able to buy a house.

Complain about this comment

96. At 3:54pm on 04 Mar 2010, katharines wrote:
I live in the country and no my parents aren't farmers (this seems to be the job everyone thinks country people do) and have suffered as a result of infrequent, unreliable and expensive public transport to a very limited number of destinations that stops at 6pm. This has meant being late for jobs, unable to get there/back etc due to cancelled buses, ones that just don't turn up and ridiculous timetables. I am trying very hard to move to London however this is also a problem as the unpaod internships I need to get the careers I want are impossible to get as I live too far away for employers to pay my expenses. Therefore I can't
get a job in London due to the distance and lack of experience I have and can't get one at home due to lack of transport.....so yes there is a problem

Complain about this comment

97. At 4:01pm on 04 Mar 2010, anncalba wrote:
The "Government's Rural Advocate"? Who he? Another useless non job. More MPs who understood the needs of rural society, rather than the usual lawyers and PR wonks, would be helpful.

Complain about this comment

98. At 4:11pm on 04 Mar 2010, ForceCrag wrote:
#38. "I Forget farming, it only works with endless subsidies."

Erm, in case you aren't aware WE NEED TO EAT! Food doesn't magically appear in supermarkets, you know, and a pretty large chunk of our basic foodstuffs are produced in this country, particularly short life products like milk. Farming may not be economically significant but why do so many people seem to forget that it exists for rather more important reasons than that - we need it to survive. This ignorant attitude is the reason the countryside is being so badly damaged, both physically and socially.

Complain about this comment

99. At 4:12pm on 04 Mar 2010, ForceCrag wrote:
#95. "At 3:53pm on 04 Mar 2010, Keith5485 wrote:
Young people aren't being priced out, they just can't be bothered to save and want everything now.

If they tried saving and stopped moaning they might be able to buy a house."

Please look at the average rural house price to the average rural wage before making such inaccurate statements.

Complain about this comment

100. At 4:18pm on 04 Mar 2010, ExpatKS wrote:
There are hundreds of thousands of empty properties across the UK, some of which have been MT for decades. I suggest that, if any property is left empty by the owners for more than 5 yrs then, except in special circumstances, the Local Authority/Social Housing Association be allowed to compulsory purchase it for the going rate and use it for social housing. This should include houses and individual or blocks of flats. Why look to build so many new houses when there are existing ones that are just left MT? It would also cut property purchase as a pure investment vehicle and houses/flats will return to what they are meant for - living in. This would help stabilise prices too as purchases would be made purely for homes, not speculation.
Appendix. 39. All messages in the message thread April fool.

Have you been fooled by an April Fool?
09:38 UK time, Thursday, 1 April 2010

This debate has now been closed. Thank you for your comments.

Today is April Fool's day and in many parts of the world people are playing tricks on their friends and colleagues. Have you fooled somebody or been fooled?

It's still uncertain about the origins of celebrating April 1st as April Fools Day or All Fools Day although it is now generally accepted that it originated in France in the 16th century.

One of the most famous April Fool's day joke is the Swiss Spaghetti Harvest which was shown on the BBC news programme, Panorama, in 1957. Huge numbers of viewers were taken in by footage of Swiss peasants pulling strands of spaghetti down from trees.

Have you fallen for or played an April Fool's joke on someone? What is the funniest joke you have ever played on someone? Have you fooled somebody or were you the April fool yourself? Send us your stories.

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Previous12Next1

At 10:02am on 01 Apr 2010, pb wrote:
I rigged up my model radio control to my father's shop doorbell and had great fun every time he tried to get to our flat upstairs to get his coffee. At one point he crept out of the rear of the flat and hid around the corner to pounce on whoever was causing the shop bell to ring. I was the picture of innocence - how could it be me? I was upstairs all the time!

Complain about this comment

At 10:03am on 01 Apr 2010, grainsofsand wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

3. At 10:05am on 01 Apr 2010, joshua goldblum wrote:
Yes I have been fooled on April 1st.

Continually by the brainwashing that consecutive govs telling us the tax has to rise, tighten our belts, domestic spending has to be cut when all they have to do is stop overseas spending which will bring in almost £trillion.

Complain about this comment

4. At 10:12am on 01 Apr 2010, TheWalrus999 wrote:

[Type text]
Isn't the Libertines reunion an April Fool? They sound awful.

Complain about this comment

5. At 10:14am on 01 Apr 2010, scarlerow wrote:
Yes i got caught this morning by David Cameron saying 23 captains of industry back him over his plans to scrap nat ins when he has no credible way of funding that move just trying to please the general public,when will he learn you can not please all the people all the time just some of the people some of the time,first rule of goverment and he,s failed before he has started.
If we know that what chance has he got?
p.s labour will probs get 40 captain lol to get back at them.all very chillish really.

Complain about this comment

6. At 10:17am on 01 Apr 2010, Tactical Nuclear Penguin wrote:
#2 - Spot on.
Some lad told me he was going to give us a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.
Stitched me up good and proper.

Complain about this comment

7. At 10:18am on 01 Apr 2010, telecasterdave wrote:
Yes fooled by labour for the last thirteen years, but not for much longer.
Vote labour, vote for liars.

Complain about this comment

8. At 10:18am on 01 Apr 2010, Biscuiteater wrote:
Cue lots of pithy and utterly tedious anti-Labour comments.
Please guys, just funny stories

Complain about this comment

9. At 10:18am on 01 Apr 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:
Even infants don't get taken in by this april 1st rubbish anymore.

Complain about this comment

10. At 10:19am on 01 Apr 2010, Pea Eye wrote:
Can we have an embargo on people saying, 'yes i've been fooled by Brown/Cameron etc?'
Its just so excruciatingly obvious.

[Type text]
11. At 10:21am on 01 Apr 2010, wizmyrddin wrote:
Man I was really caught out this year, I am always aware something odd will be published in the press to try and fool us. But NuLabour been written about been caring and wanting to control immigration is the best one I've seen since the People will vote on a EU referendum.

12. At 10:23am on 01 Apr 2010, boodnock wrote:
I think I was April Fooled by Alistair Darling and Peter Mandelson on TV this morning....the problem is im not sure if I was or not simply because you can't trust a word they say at any time of year let alone on April the 1st !!!

13. At 10:24am on 01 Apr 2010, Shaunie Babes wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

14. At 10:26am on 01 Apr 2010, john wrote:
The scary thing is, if the BBC run that Panorama program about the Spaghetti today, I actually think even more people would believe it than did when it was show in the 60's, such is the backward progression of the knowledge of many people today.

15. At 10:26am on 01 Apr 2010, Sylvia D wrote:
Wasn't that an early April fools day ..or was it really Tony Bliar we saw ? then again this goverment saying they are going to be tough on immigration i laughed in my morning cuppa .

16. At 10:28am on 01 Apr 2010, Jamie wrote:
I was fooled by Tesco putting their petrol price up yesterday for the extra lp duty rather than today when it was supposed to come in. Oh how I laughed, whilst muttering something about "thieving custards" or similar.

17. At 10:28am on 01 Apr 2010, Coplandrdloyal wrote:
i have been pretending i joined the army! so funny haha

18. At 10:29am on 01 Apr 2010, john wrote:
I was fooled when Gorgon Brown announced that his hated arch nemesis, forced to resign through sleaze accusations and dodgy
mortgage loans and rejected by his electorate Peter Mandelson, was being brought back into government undemocratically.

At first I laughed now I just cry.

Complain about this comment

19. At 10:32am on 01 Apr 2010, thomas wrote:
My April Fool's Day came a little early this year - so I wasn't expecting it.

I turned on my TV and saw what I can only describe as an alien being.

He was introduced as Tony Blair but the person on the screen was like no Tony Blair I ever knew. A strange orange glow eminated from his skin and he spoke with an American accent. Strangest thing of all was that he spoke fondly of Gordon Brown - a man he patently disliked just three years ago.

It was as though a boil I thought had been lanced had reappeared ten times bigger and twice as painful. Please tell me it was just a dream/nightmare!!

Complain about this comment

20. At 10:34am on 01 Apr 2010, in_the_uk wrote:
Cmon people whats with all the gov comments. There are and will be many occasions to mention your political views and while you cant be wrong calling a arty a bunch af liers, its because thats what they do. So lets get back to the light hearted topic of april fools day.

I did get someone this morning. Told family I had won money on the lottery (I dont ever play). Made her laugh when I told her the truth. Cheered someone up, my quota for the day ;)

Complain about this comment

21. At 10:35am on 01 Apr 2010, paul tapner wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

22. At 10:39am on 01 Apr 2010, thomas wrote:
Many years ago my son, bless him, fooled me into believing that he had heard that a 'dog's toilet' area was to be placed on the green directly in front of my house. I was incandescent with rage and phoned my local council to complain only to find they had no idea what I was talking about. Don't you just love kids?

This is the same child that on another occasion took the wheels from his father's new vehicle and left it standing on bricks. They do say that your grandchildren are your reward for putting up with you children. I can well believe that.
23. At 10:39am on 01 Apr 2010, rjimmer wrote:
Most governments are elected by fooled people.

Complain about this comment

24. At 10:42am on 01 Apr 2010, in_the_uk wrote:
Last year I read a great article (not BBC) about a woman in Florida driving into a body of water and being violent with the police who had to taser her to get her out before the crocs got her. It was very well written and nobody guessed it was false until it was revealed after mid day. 'The reg' got us good and proper.

Complain about this comment

25. At 10:43am on 01 Apr 2010, igmaciabaaw wrote:
No.

Complain about this comment

26. At 10:43am on 01 Apr 2010, DMsView wrote:
Not me personally but one colleague of mine had just got her pride and joy car back from the garage of hitting another car in a supermarket car park.

One of my other colleagues came running into the office looking all flustered and apologising to her, saying he'd hit the accelerator, not the brake and run in the back of her.

Her face was an absolute picture as she charged outside to see her car in perfect condition. Luckily she saw the funny side.

Complain about this comment

27. At 10:47am on 01 Apr 2010, LippyLippo wrote:
We told a work experience kid one April Fools Day that the big rolls of bubble wrap in the packing department had to be pumped up because the air leaked slowly out of them over time and made them unusable. The whole department watched in stitches as he tried to re-inflate them with an air hose!

Another popular one when working in a pub was for a customer to ask for a 'Guinness Shandy' and then watch as a new barman tried in vain to make one (you can't!!).

Complain about this comment

28. At 10:48am on 01 Apr 2010, Tom Southern wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

29. At 10:49am on 01 Apr 2010, BBC_HaveYourSay Host wrote:
Hi, Victoria, Have Your Say host, here. Please join our political debate by clicking on this link:
We would like to know what April Fool's jokes have been played on you. Did you fool somebody this morning? Thanks.

Complain about this comment

30. At 10:49am on 01 Apr 2010, Johnnybgood wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

31. At 10:52am on 01 Apr 2010, 30BucksAnHour wrote:
Google appear to have released a new app - Animal Translator - has to be an April Fools.

And just to add, I share the sentiment of other posters - all this whining about the government, the election, immigration....blah blah blah

Complain about this comment

32. At 10:56am on 01 Apr 2010, starlinguk wrote:
Yes, I was fooled into thinking this would be a funny HYS but it's just full of people whining about the government.

Anyhoo.

My bet is on the French Shakespeare story.

In the forums I frequent the avatars are suddenly sporting hats (or parrots), and they've programmed an evil very realistic-looking bug that runs across your screen.

Complain about this comment

33. At 10:57am on 01 Apr 2010, pb wrote:
The best April Fool I've ever heard was the young apprentice mechanic sent out to get a length of Falopian Tube. When he arrived at the usual supplier he was asked 1/2 inch or 3/4 - so he phoned his employer who said 1/2". "Ah" said the employer "we only have 3/4 in stock - but you might get it down the road". A morning was spent running around suppliers. It may be an apocryphal story but this beats by a mile the age old 'sky hooks', 'long stands' and 'sparks for the grinder'.

By the way, have you noticed how many budding politicians are on HYS... plenty of people on HYS have lots and lots to say, but often without actually answering the actual question. Maybe HYS shoud take a leaf out of Radio 4's "Just a Minute" and cry foul at deviation and repetition.

I did like #14's comment on the Spaghetti April fool - it is sad to say that this is spot on. When kids are brought up with no idea where or from what animal their food comes from how could the possibly know. When asking where are the avocados in my local supermarket the young girl asked What's an avocado"
34. At 10:59am on 01 Apr 2010, Arsene Wengooner wrote:
Someone told me Rolf Harris was dead. Who would do such a thing?!?

35. At 11:01am on 01 Apr 2010, androstempest wrote:
I'm lying low till lunch time, I hate practical jokes.

36. At 11:02am on 01 Apr 2010, LippyLippo wrote:
Just remembered another one! We once told an apprentice that the computer that ran the bar-code printer worked on voice recognition, and that to get it to print a new barcode, you had to tell it the sequence of lines by reading them from the proof. So the poor guy sat there with a microphone that we connected to the back of the PC with tape saying 'thin, thin, thin, thick...' for about 20 minutes before someone asked him what on earth he was doing!

37. At 11:02am on 01 Apr 2010, Grubastuba wrote:
Someone text me that Gordon B had been to see Liz last night to abolish government to call a snap election, an email telling me that Mandelson had been forced to resign after being photographed taking a brown paper envelope off of Movie boss David Geffin, a note through the letterbox saying that Cameron had been found out to have been born in a council house in a sink hole estate and finally via word of mouth that the Lib Dems are favourites to win the General Election....

What a day....

38. At 11:03am on 01 Apr 2010, Megan wrote:
Perhaps not really April's Fool, but my husband is a maths teacher and trundled off to school today with a lot of mathematical jokes and puzzles - it's the last day of term as well as April 1st.

Here's one for you:

Five men are stranded on a desert island. Their resources consist of one coconut palm and a stray monkey. They gather up all the coconuts in a big pile and settle down for the night. The first chap on watch decides to divide the coconuts between the five of them and to take his share now. When he divides them into five equal piles, there's one left over so he gives it to the monkey, before taking his portion away. Each successive person does the
same, and each time there is one left over and the monkey gets lucky.

What is the minimum number of coconuts required to achieve this?

Complain about this comment

39. At 11:04am on 01 Apr 2010, Clevor Trever wrote:
I have always enjoyed the media April fool stuff. Years ago the Guardian did a 4-page spread about a spoof pair of islands called "Sans Serif" shaped like a semicolon. Four pages...

I have been on the lookout today but my biggest source of amusement is that on so many occasions I thought I had spotted one, only to realise it was serious. Really funny but a sad reflection on our times...

Just to see what I mean I invite readers to make a start by looking at any story containing the words "brown", "balls", "mandelson" or "government".

As far as personal April fool jokes go, I'm enjoying glorious sunshine after expecting the rain that those mischievous Met Office April Fool Department folks predicted. But am I complaining?

Complain about this comment

40. At 11:08am on 01 Apr 2010, MizzJShaw wrote:
My naughty son phoned me this morning and said that he and his wife had decided to vote Labour. I nearly had a heart attack, and hung up on him. Five minutes later he phoned back to say that it was only an April Fool, and that his brother and sister had not been fooled at all, so what was wrong with me? The problem was that I had forgot that is was the 1st of April today, due to the freezing cold weather. Now, if anyone had phoned to say that we were going to get heavy snow at the beginning of April, I really would have thought it to be an April Fool.

Complain about this comment

41. At 11:11am on 01 Apr 2010, zinzari wrote:
What a sad lot you are thinking that April fool is just about government - Over 40 years ago we had a zoo in our town, and on April fools days we used to leave a message on the newest office juniors desk that a Mr.C.Lyons had telephoned and would you ring him back on the number given.
It's amazing just how many times they kept asking the operator to speak to Sea Lions and never heard the bored operator keep repeating in a droll voice.....this is the zoo.....this is the zoo.....this is the zoo..... Only after many attempts did the penny drop and a very red faced junior leave the room..............& everybody went HAW! HAW! HAW!
AH! What innocent days they were back then.

Complain about this comment

42. At 11:15am on 01 Apr 2010, ForceCrag wrote: When everyone in any position of authority or power in the world is mad, greedy, or both, it's hard not to think that every news story is a possible April Fool.

Complain about this comment

43. At 11:16am on 01 Apr 2010, Webb of Deceit - Beckham The Overrated Hasbeen wrote: This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

44. At 11:18am on 01 Apr 2010, B Anderson wrote: I've got 4 points so far this year. Not my best haul but not bad. I sent out a text message to my still sleepy friends saying that Barack Obama had resigned as president and was going to reveal the truth behind the 'Roswell Conspiracy'.

Worked like a charm because all my friends know I think conspiracy theories are total ****

Complain about this comment

45. At 11:21am on 01 Apr 2010, Phillip of England wrote: This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

46. At 11:23am on 01 Apr 2010, U14366475 wrote: I sure was! By the HYS Comment 'Prisoners are being kept in jail because society is "too risk-averse" to allow them to be released on licence'.

No one in their right mind would believe what this guy said.

Complain about this comment

47. At 11:25am on 01 Apr 2010, Mark_WE wrote: I don't think I have been caught out yet (if I have been caught out I won't know until the great reveal) - and I think I have found the April Fools on the Guardian and the Telegraph sites. I do miss the days of living with my parents where every year my dad would put the clocks forward and swap the breakfast cereal boxes - we all played along as he loved feeling he had "fooled" us.

Although, I always thought that the famous Spaghetti Harvest April Fools wouldn't have been official - as to my knowledge the "Fool" needed to be done before noon?

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
48. At 11:28am on 01 Apr 2010, batman2504 wrote:
Last year some of my chums played an hilarious April Fool's joke on me that still makes me laugh until I am sore. They all hid in my room in the dark, and when I walked in they flicked on the lights, screamed "SURPRISE" and then held me down and beat me mercilessly for about half an hour before changing their tactic and becoming very tender for a further two. How I laughed when they told me it was just a joke.

Dave
HMP Broadmoor

Complain about this comment

49. At 11:29am on 01 Apr 2010, henrytheturkey wrote:
Long long ago, the rat who wired up the horn on my treasured Austin Healy Sprite to the brake light circuit. He got his comeuppance though he's as bald as a badger and suffers from piles now!

Complain about this comment

50. At 11:34am on 01 Apr 2010, FrankandTomsDad wrote:
I'm a bit suspicious of this particular thread, maybe it's not actually April 1st!!

Complain about this comment

51. At 11:36am on 01 Apr 2010, BBC_HaveYourSay Host wrote:
Hi! Thanks for sharing all your April Fool experiences. Here's one from a member of the HYS team:

A friend called me pretending to be an agent saying she'd seen my work in Rome and wanted me to attend a casting for a film starring Sean Connery (my crush).

I called my parents and my friends to tell them I'd made it, I was going to achieve my dream. My so-called friend called after 1pm to tell me it was an April Fool.

Complain about this comment

52. At 11:36am on 01 Apr 2010, stotheg wrote:
almost... i switched the tv on this morning and found mandleson on it (more in it).. he was saying how we are all gonna suffer in poorness and misery at the hands of the evil cons.. i almost believed him...

Complain about this comment

53. At 11:36am on 01 Apr 2010, Clevor Trever wrote:
Here's a good un' which just arrived in my mailbox.
Face media Group are releasing bubblegum business cards. Blow up the gum to reveal card content. This trumps the Sun’s lick the square spoof...

Did it fool me? Well yes it did for a few minutes until I scrolled down to the picture.

I'll get me coat...

Complain about this comment

54. At 11:42am on 01 Apr 2010, BBC_HaveYourSay Host wrote: April Fool's stories in today's newspapers:

Complain about this comment

55. At 11:46am on 01 Apr 2010, Shaunie Babes wrote: Gordon Brown is already in hot water, so I don't see the point of coming up with the same old boring stuff in a discussion about April Fools Day

Complain about this comment

56. At 11:47am on 01 Apr 2010, Mr Jones wrote: April foolery is one of the silliest and childish traditions that this country has to offer.

Complain about this comment

57. At 11:59am on 01 Apr 2010, Harwode Magna wrote: In late March 2005, we lost one of our pet ferrets, who had climbed the ivy on the garden wall and legged it away. We put up a few "lost ferret" posters, but a week went by, we heard nothing, so we thought him long gone. I had mentioned this sad event in the operating theatres, where I worked as an anaesthetist, but thought no more of it. On the morning of April 1st, my wife received a call, supposedly from a neighbour in a nearby street, to say that she had found a ferret, matching Buster's description, in her garden. My wife put the ferret-box over her shoulder and virtually ran, joyously, round to the neighbour's house. Needless to say, the bemused housewife knew absolutely nothing about Buster and pointed out to my embarrassed and angry wife, that it was April Fools Day. The next day, a work colleague let it slip that a female medical student had been persuaded to act as the bogus housewife, by one of the consultant surgeons. To be fair to the guy, he did send my wife a bouquet of flowers and a note of apology. It was either that, or be verbally torn to shreds by a very angry woman.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
58. At 12:02pm on 01 Apr 2010, Skarjo wrote:
One of my favourite message boards has, since the new year
developed a war-like split between the people who like the show
Glee and the people who loathe it. When I signed in, they've
completely redesigned the site, covered it in pictures of the
cast and renamed all the sections after characters.

I'm not sure who's having more fun, the fans posting Youtube
videos of their favourite songs all over the place, or the
loathers winding themselves up into an apoplectic rage.

Complain about this comment

59. At 12:04pm on 01 Apr 2010, HOMO wrote:
I'm reminded everyday by an April fool, when ever Nu Labour open
their traps about anything. What's the betting this get's
moderated for being honest?

Complain about this comment

60. At 12:08pm on 01 Apr 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:
Told my colleague that he had a telephone enquiry while he was
away from his desk. He quickly telephoned and asked to speak to
Mr Lyons ............. at the zoo.

Complain about this comment

61. At 12:10pm on 01 Apr 2010, peterwsm wrote:
Now after Midday - too late!

Complain about this comment

62. At 12:11pm on 01 Apr 2010, BBC_HaveYourSay Host wrote:
10 stories that could be April Fool's tricks ... but aren't:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8598637.stm

Complain about this comment

63. At 12:12pm on 01 Apr 2010, Mark_WE wrote:
"54. At 11:42am on 01 Apr 2010, BBC_HaveYourSay Host wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke
the House Rules."

Is this an April Fool? Or is there a Host/Moderator rivalry going
on that we don't know about?

Complain about this comment

64. At 12:15pm on 01 Apr 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:
The best of all, the "Apollo G" golf club (driver). With a shaft
shaped like a car starting handle. It was guaranteed to give any
golfer an extra 50 yards...........if you were lucky enough to hit
the ball. Thousands of naive golfers wanted one, a manufacturer
was even prepared to make a golf bag to fit it.
As others have mentoined, it's a shame that even the most light-hearted threads are ruined by the politically-obssessed. Don't these people realise how wretchedly tedious they are?

Shaun, are you devoid of any sense of humour? Humour and irony is a thing the British use to let off steam in a situation where they are unable to influence the situation directly. Smile you might get to like it...

She then told us that there was something else as well. We feared the worst as she went to speak...

"April Fools!"

I think some of us actually did burst into tears at that. My mental state has officially been wrecked, and its taking me longer to get it back then it took to destroy it in the first place.

On the one hand, it's really funny. On the other hand, I am now a quivering wreck who may never regain her sanity.
68. At 12:25pm on 01 Apr 2010, chiptheduck wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

69. At 12:26pm on 01 Apr 2010, gingerheroine wrote:
I really am getting bored with HYS forums now - not because of the topics (which are usually interesting and varied) but because of the display of oh-so-predictable human behaviour. This is a classic example. We have the people who:

- bring every SINGLE topic (and i mean EVERY ONE) back to labour being terrible. GIVE IT UP YOU'RE ALL LIKE A BROKEN RECORD.

- hijack light-hearted topics to tell people how they don't care and everyone's silly to discuss it, but they're leaving a comment anyway (one example: 'April foolery is one of the silliest and childish traditions that this country has to offer'. Silly and childish is sometimes good - life's short and hard. Lighten up!

- get unnecessarily angry/horrible/sour for absolutely no reason. Funnily enough I only see this kind of relentless pessimism/anger on the BBC forum. On other sites, users appear to be more pleasant human beings.

- and just a few, lovely individuals who are like a breath of fresh air, who join in the spirit of things, and are serious when necessary, angry when it's warranted, and use humour when that is the point of the discussion. We need more of these people on HYS.

Complain about this comment

70. At 12:28pm on 01 Apr 2010, thomas wrote:
Here is a good one to fool a friend.

You get someone to ring their number and ask for Herman. Obviously you will be told that no-one of that name lives there. The call gets repeated several more times before the caller rings for the final times and says 'I am Herman - have there been any calls for me?'

It never fails.

Complain about this comment

71. At 12:31pm on 01 Apr 2010, Darren wrote:
Yes.... I was april fooled when I went to the PETROL pump this morning and found it to be £1.18 a litre...now thats a JOKE in its self..

Complain about this comment

72. At 12:32pm on 01 Apr 2010, es1212 wrote:
My 6 year old son played a joke on his Grandad (who used to be a plumber). He came running down the stairs saying there was water dripping from the ceiling in the upstairs bedrooms, Grandad ran upstairs and indeed found water on the ceilings and puddles on
the floor so went into the loft to investigate. An hour and half
later and all pipes and the water tank painstakingly checked he
was none the wiser so came down to see my little monkey waving
his super soaker water pistol around!! The little monkey had
been spraying water on the ceiling - grrrr ;o)

Complain about this comment
73. At 12:33pm on 01 Apr 2010, Pea Eye wrote:
59. At 12:04pm on 01 Apr 2010, SINNU1000PVD wrote:
I'm reminded everyday by an April fool, when ever Nu Labour open
their traps about anything. What's the betting this get's
moderated for being honest?

----

It's more likely to be moderated for being utterly boring &
cringe-makingly predictable...

Complain about this comment
74. At 12:33pm on 01 Apr 2010, chiptheduck wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke
the House Rules.

75. At 12:36pm on 01 Apr 2010, idratherbefishing wrote:
I was making a cabinet for my wife and I told her that I needed a
"Piano Hinge" So she called out to say that she was going up to
the town to get one, She apparently walked into our local musical
instruments shop and asked the assistant for a Piano hinge, The
assistant went off to his boss and asked him about the Piano
hinge and he was laughing his head off, My wife was infuriated by
him laughing at her, and he explained that she would have to go
to Diy store to get it.
She came home slightly miffed and I burst out laughing and told
her what a piano hinge was, She did see the funny side.

Complain about this comment
76. At 12:40pm on 01 Apr 2010, John Sparks wrote:
Yes - I believed the Labour government was for real.

Complain about this comment
77. At 12:42pm on 01 Apr 2010, Khuli wrote:
"56. At 11:47am on 01 Apr 2010, Mr Jones wrote:
April foolery is one of the silliest and childish traditions that
this country has to offer."

So? What point are you making, Mr Misery? I would call it a good
thing to have silly and childish traditions.
78. At 12:49pm on 01 Apr 2010, Antiochean wrote:
Not fooled by the garbage spat out by 'Lord' Mandleson!

Complain about this comment

79. At 12:50pm on 01 Apr 2010, Antiochean wrote:
69. At 12:26pm on 01 Apr 2010, gingerheroine

oh dear - had a bad day?

Complain about this comment

80. At 12:51pm on 01 Apr 2010, slapheadblue wrote:
Sellotaped the button down on a colleague's phone so it carried on ringing after she'd picked up

Childish I know but ....

Complain about this comment

81. At 12:51pm on 01 Apr 2010, Gillian wrote:
Gordon Brown is an April fool.
Election please!

Complain about this comment

82. At 12:51pm on 01 Apr 2010, Len Day wrote:
My trade is photography & printing. One April fools trick we used to play on juniors was to send them over to the chemist to buy some 'sharpo' powder to sharpen up prints that were out of focus! Worked every time!

Complain about this comment

83. At 12:52pm on 01 Apr 2010, Shaunie Babes wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

84. At 12:54pm on 01 Apr 2010, icewombat wrote:
"16. At 10:28am on 01 Apr 2010, Jamie wrote:
I was fooled by Tesco putting their petrol price up yesterday for the extra 1p duty rather than today when it was supposed to come in. Oh how I laughed, whilst muttering something about "thieving custards" or similar."

I must go to Tesco's if they only added 1p due to the duty change as the duty and VAT on fuel went up 2.35p over night (1p duty, lup removal of bio-fuel rebate and .35VAT)

Complain about this comment

85. At 1:02pm on 01 Apr 2010, pffft wrote:
With regards to #41 then unfortunately I fell foul of the same prank, ringing London Zoo's number and asking for Mr C Lyons. I got my revenge by leaving a message on the pranksters desk saying
'Please call Duncan Goodhew on #######' and put down the number of the local swimming pool.

Complain about this comment

86. At 1:02pm on 01 Apr 2010, ColinWhinger wrote:
It is more appropriate for each political party when they write their manifesto's to add a footnote, simply saying "APRIL FOOL".

Complain about this comment

87. At 1:05pm on 01 Apr 2010, BluesBerry wrote:
We’ve all been fooled; on top of that, most of the time, we go around fooling others.
Here is a baby – totally innocent & newborn. Some church tells you unless you pour water over its head, the child is condemned to a special Purgatory, called "Limbo" where s/he will never see God. This seems ridiculous, but most Christian Churches that I know hold this mandate to be true, and that makes it believable. April Fools!
What if we had been told from the beginning that God is within us and we are within in God; seperation is an illusion? We point there and say “That’s a beautiful car!” We point here and say “Wow, look at the size of that tree.” We name things and thereby make them concrete, but in fact, all things are the same thing: energy/ light - The slower the energy the more concrete the object seems, shape differentiated only by DNA. I am this but I am also that: All is one, and ALL is God. Who fooled us into believing that peoples were seperate, segregational, artifically differentiated - some even more important to God than others? Who caused us to hate ourselves and forget that we are ONE.
This generation, each generation, is fooled into believing that "WE" are the most sophisticated, technologically-gifted, knowledgeable; and yet not one person can tell another person what was the true use of they Pyramids? How were The Pyramids built? How did the Stonehenge stones get from faraway places to the place where they now stand?
Why can’t we smart, modern people duplicate even the most mundane of these feats.
Those who voted for Obama were lulled into a false sense of security and then dropped into the absurdity of trillion-dollar debt, two-digit unemployment, towns all but deserted, immigration out-of-control, old Bushites dragged out and dusted off to run Obama's key positions. Obama changed nothing, we believed he’d change everything. April Fools!

Complain about this comment

88. At 1:05pm on 01 Apr 2010, rich p wrote:
I woke uo this morning and read in the newspaper that the United States had a balanced budget, that Obama's health care initiative was fiscally sound and reasonable and the president himself
admitted that there would be no more shady deals done in Washington, but then I turned the page and it read "April Fools".

Complain about this comment

89. At 1:05pm on 01 Apr 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:
There was a story in our local newspaper some years ago regarding the plan to make cars available for public use, free of charge, rather like the bicycles that were used in the same way at that time, the idea being to use the car for your own purposes for the day, then leave it for the next person. The photograph in the newspaper showed a row of cars in the scheme, and there was our old one heading the line in the Town Hall car park. Much impressed, and having fond memories of the vehicle, we made a special trip to see it. Needless to say, the car park was empty, and we quickly sidled away in case anyone saw us. To this day, we get amused looks from the editorial staff.

Complain about this comment

90. At 1:06pm on 01 Apr 2010, HOMO wrote:
73. At 12:33pm on 01 Apr 2010, Pea Eye wrote:
59. At 12:04pm on 01 Apr 2010, SINNU1000PVD wrote:
I'm reminded everyday by an April fool, when ever Nu Labour open their traps about anything. What's the betting this get's moderated for being honest?

----

"Its more likely to be moderated for being utterly boring & cringe-makingly predictable..."

A predictable reply from yet another deluded NuLab follower. You can join the April fool list too.

Complain about this comment

91. At 1:09pm on 01 Apr 2010, DisgustedOfMitcham2 wrote:
Top marks to The Guardian for their April Fool story. At least I think it's an April Fool, but it could just be real...

Complain about this comment

92. At 1:13pm on 01 Apr 2010, Peter Nunn wrote:
"#8. At 10:18am on 01 Apr 2010, Kevin wrote:
Cue lots of pithy and utterly tedious anti-Labour comments.

Please guys, just funny stories."

Yes because we all know there is nothing funny about 13 years of Labour!

OOPS!
93. At 1:14pm on 01 Apr 2010, James Rigby wrote:
www.dogw.co.uk It's an April Fool - but then again, it's not!

94. At 1:16pm on 01 Apr 2010, DoleBoy wrote:
Yes, I happened to catch Cameron on the Today programme, Radio4, and what a joker he is, certainly made an April fool out of me!!!

95. At 1:17pm on 01 Apr 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:
My first job on leaving school was in a garage. The day was 1st April. The job was helping to change a tyre, for which I was told to get the rubber hammer. Confusion and embarrassment ensued as it was gently pointed out that there is actually a tool known as a rubber hammer, and that my disbelief didn't alter the fact of the matter. It's nearly 60 years ago, but still fresh in the mind.

96. At 1:21pm on 01 Apr 2010, omegapoisonivy wrote:
I love the dog toilet one... clever child. I'm sure I heard somewhere that in France everyone runs around chucking fish at each other... sounds quite good, certainly better than all the posters using it to continue whingeing about politics... April Fool's Day is for fun, and life is fun you know!

97. At 1:28pm on 01 Apr 2010, Ben Essada wrote:
Can we please return to celebrating foolery on 'The Day of Mad Hares', at the end of March, instead? The fact that Queen Victoria once got the date wrong, and put a whoopee cushion under Disraeli a day late, is no reason for messing up hundreds of years of prior tradition.

98. At 1:30pm on 01 Apr 2010, Pea Eye wrote:
90. At 1:06pm on 01 Apr 2010, SINNU1000PVD wrote:
73. At 12:33pm on 01 Apr 2010, Pea Eye wrote:
59. At 12:04pm on 01 Apr 2010, SINNU1000PVD wrote:
I'm reminded everyday by an April fool, when ever Nu Labour open their traps about anything. What's the betting this get's moderated for being honest?

"It's more likely to be moderated for being utterly boring & cringe-makingly predictable..."
A predictable reply from yet another deluded NuLab follower. You can join the April fool list too.

-----

Touche.

That's why I come here, for the witty repartee.

Complain about this comment

99. At 1:33pm on 01 Apr 2010, bigotry_is_also_a_diversity wrote:
Someone emailed me this morning to say that the Unite union takes guidance and influence from the British Communist Party, and then use this to influence the Labour party.

I replied, saying "You won't get me with that April fool."

He replied back to me saying that sadly it's not an April fool, it's actually true.

Complain about this comment

100. At 1:34pm on 01 Apr 2010, CamberwellBeauty wrote:
New job, learning "stuff" - working on a computer data entry thingy.....went to lunch, came back, a glaring message on my monitor, words to the effect (can't remember verbatim) basically, "you have screwed this up royally and ruined this programme, please close down everything....."
I sat staring at the monitor, in absolute panic, my blood running cold, pulse at 300 bpm, and I'm sure my BP was at gasket blowing point, nearly lost my lunch.
Finally, a burst of laughter from co-workers.....oh, the relief, then I wanted to throttle them!
Appendix 40. All messages in the message thread Do aliens really exist?

Do aliens really exist?
11:17 UK time, Monday, 26 April 2010

Renowned astrophysicist Stephen Hawking says aliens almost certainly exist but warns it would be a bad idea to contact them. Are we ready for them if they exist?

In a series for the Discovery Channel, Professor Hawking said it was perfectly rational to assume intelligent life exists elsewhere, but warned that aliens might simply raid Earth for resources and then move on.

He said "The real challenge is to work out what aliens might actually be like."

He said that if extraterrestrials visited the planet the outcome would be similar to when Christopher Columbus landed in America, which, he added, didn't turn out well for the Native Americans.

Are there aliens out there capable of communicating with us? If they exist, should we avoid making contact with them?

This debate is now closed. Thank you for your comments.

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CommentsSign in or register to comment.

Previous1234567Next1. At 11:38am on 26 Apr 2010, pzero wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

2. At 11:40am on 26 Apr 2010, mo_czar wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

3. At 11:48am on 26 Apr 2010, ian cheese wrote:
In order to answer this question correctly we need to know: a) the definition of existence; b) the definition of what we understand by the term 'reality; c) are we also a form of aliens? & if we are, to whom/what?

Complain about this comment

4. At 12:14pm on 26 Apr 2010, chronocompos wrote:
Well I'm not into all the latest technology, don't twitter, don't have a facebook page etc. Seem to be too honest for modern society and have learnt by the way I've been treated by other people all my life not to trust anyone as everyone only seems to be out to see what they can get out of you. I'm beginning to think I'm an alien as there doesn't seem to be anywhere I fit in current society.

[Type text]
Beam me up Scotty - I've had enough!!

Complain about this comment

5. At 12:16pm on 26 Apr 2010, PwnStar wrote:
If space is infinite, then it is infinitely likely that aliens do exist.

Complain about this comment

6. At 12:17pm on 26 Apr 2010, HabitualHero wrote:
Well, it seems fantastically unlikely that Earth is the only planet in Creation that contains sort-of-intelligent life. The question that intrigues me is how common it is; is it found on one planet in every hundred, a thousand, a million, a billion......

I was going to request that people not poison this debate with dreary political references but I see that I'm already too late.

Complain about this comment

7. At 12:23pm on 26 Apr 2010, Megan wrote:
Oh goodie, a conversation about the real world of ideas rather than the artificiality of politics!

As to aliens, there are only 3 alternatives when it comes to sentient life in the universe.

1. There isn't any.
2. It's very rare.
3. The place is heaving with sentient beings.

Option 1 is generally regarded to have been disproved by our presence.

Option 2 is possible, although WHY should it be so? Some people have speculated that you need a very specific combination of circumstances to bring about 'life' at all (although they usually mean carbon-based lifeforms who breathe oxygen and like their water in liquid form - who says aliens are anything like that?). The Moon may be the culprit here: not only the right primordial soup of chemicals on a planet just the right distance from its star, but something to stir it up... and we have an uncommonly large moon, as such things go.

Option 3 is likewise possible. Trouble is, the universe is so big that even if it's crawling with aliens they are unlikely to drop in... and if they don't, does it really matter much if they are there or not. That light speed limit is a real problem here: we (or they!) need to figure out a way past that, be it warp drive Star Trek style or wormholes or whatever.

I'd like Option 3, though. It would be nice to have neighbours!

Complain about this comment
8. At 12:23pm on 26 Apr 2010, Neil Probert wrote:
There is a higher probability that aliens exist than 'god'.

Complain about this comment

9. At 12:23pm on 26 Apr 2010, Khuli wrote:
Leaving aside the usual pointless posts that are invariably first up, the first question is whether aliens exist. Mathematically and logically, they certainly do. Or more accurately, have done, or will do.
Many worlds will have come and gone, or life not yet evolved sufficiently, so the chances of them coinciding with our 100-years of radio capability is slim.
Secondly, their world as to be in reasonable proximity to us, and most stars are not. The chances are that if we ever detect a signal, it is likely to have originated 100 or 1,000 light years away, so it's not going to make for much of a conversation.
Thirdly, if anyone has the technology (or inclination) to cover such a distance for resources, they are going to have to have vastly superior technology to us - in which case they will detect us long before we detect them.
Which leaves the question of whether advanced aliens will be peaceful, or conquering. If they are peaceful, they may have already visted, and it's not a problem.
If they are conquering, they haven't got here yet.. but could be on their way!

Complain about this comment

10. At 12:24pm on 26 Apr 2010, Yorkshire_Pudding wrote:
Oh please don't let this debate turn all political as well!
Im sick of hearing it

Complain about this comment

11. At 12:25pm on 26 Apr 2010, BewilderedMark wrote:
I doubt any alien intelligence out there would want to communicate with us.

Complain about this comment

12. At 12:33pm on 26 Apr 2010, mo_czar wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

13. At 12:35pm on 26 Apr 2010, RobinTheBoyWonder wrote:
If space is infinite as we believe, then statistically there MUST be intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.
Whether that life has the ability or desire to communicate with us is a different matter.....

Complain about this comment

14. At 12:36pm on 26 Apr 2010, Karl Flavell wrote:

[Type text]
I don't actually see why not. Thinking inside the box, the planets we've had a look at show humans can't live there. However on our own planet fish live underwater whereas humans can't. So what evidence is there to say that aliens cannot live on planets inhospitable to humans. None. Species adapt for survival. Thinking outside the box says that no matter how inhospitable a planet is something will survive there. Maybe by our standards its inhospitable but for another species maybe not so? Personally I think its a bad idea trying to contact other forms of life. We've been trying to kill our own species for thousands of years as we have animal species. It would be poetic justice is something in the outreaches of space did the same to us. Maybe it's not a good idea poking about?

Complain about this comment

15. At 12:38pm on 26 Apr 2010, coastwalker wrote: Intelligent aliens do exist because the size of the universe and the odds say that they do. Unfortunately we will never meet any of them and its unlikely that we will ever see any evidence of them. This is precisely for the same reason. Space is big, unimaginably big.

Complain about this comment

16. At 12:39pm on 26 Apr 2010, paul tapner wrote: The odds are good, but the chances of proving it are remote. Then again alien is a broad definition. You could have sea creatures living under the ice on europa. They may not be intelligent or something we could communicate with, but they would still be aliens and thus they'd exist.

Complain about this comment

17. At 12:47pm on 26 Apr 2010, John of Weston-super-Mare wrote: Why should we pay any attention to Professor Hawkings` views on this?. Anyway I thought he was preparing to go into space. Perhaps he should concentrate on that.

Complain about this comment

18. At 12:47pm on 26 Apr 2010, Richard wrote: This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

19. At 12:48pm on 26 Apr 2010, doctor bob wrote: In a series for the Discovery Channel, Professor Hawking said it was perfectly rational to assume intelligent life exists elsewhere, but warned that aliens might simply raid Earth for resources and then move on.

Hah!!! What resources? We've almost used the wretched planet up!
It would be foolish to continue the religiously inspired belief that we're the only planet to contain what we define as "life" and an "intelligent species".

Considering the time and scope of the cosmos it's possible that countless intelligent civilisations have come and gone. Perhaps they passed us by in their flying saucers when they saw the huge neon sign in orbit, saying, "Welcome to Earth, a subsidiary of Microsoft Corp!"

Once it was heresy to claim the sun didn't revolve around the Earth, or that Earth wasn't the centre of the universe. Now we have to reckon that there are billions of planets out there, mostly undetected by our current technology, and it would be weird indeed to claim that none contained intelligent life.

Complain about this comment

20. At 12:49pm on 26 Apr 2010, doctor bob wrote:
What convinces me that alien life has already invaded is a look at some of our politicians.

Complain about this comment

21. At 12:55pm on 26 Apr 2010, Jon wrote:
If space and time are infinite then yes, all the possibilities will also be infinite.

I believe that space may go on forever, however not all of that "space" has stars, planets and life. It's like a bubble expanding outwards if you will. In this respect and the size of space then there is a very high chance of life, I'd be very surprised if bacteria isn't found elsewhere outside Earth.

I do not believe in UFOs or spacemen coming to visit us and that even the most weirdest things you see in the sky can often be explained.

Complain about this comment

22. At 1:01pm on 26 Apr 2010, jimmy_the_shoe wrote:
"If space is infinite, then it is infinitely likely that aliens do exist."

Space time isn't infinite though. It has a beginning (the big bang) and an end.
I don't understand why anybody (even Stephen Hawking) can say that given the huge number of stars in the universe life on other worlds is likely. Nobody yet understands how life formed on this world and how likely it was to happen. You can't make a pattern out of a single occurrence. Even if you could assign a number to this variable you would then have to know the probability of intelligent life forming and then intelligent life capable of interstellar
communication and the chance that that civilisation will not wipe itself out through its own technology. You end up with a load of unknowns stacked on top of each other. Possibly we are the only civilisation within our own event horizon.

Complain about this comment

23. At 1:01pm on 26 Apr 2010, Gary Partis wrote: Exist?! Of course we do! We have ventured to other bodies in space (the Moon), therefore WE are aliens.

Complain about this comment

24. At 1:02pm on 26 Apr 2010, Ossie wrote: I realy dont think we have anything to worry about. The only reason an alien would come here is to take bets on the outcome of this planet.

Complain about this comment

25. At 1:03pm on 26 Apr 2010, Slave to the System - I am not a number wrote: There is a greater chance of Alien Life, than a religous deity created this world. Would an intelligent life form really want to contact us ? It would be like us talking to apes in a zoo.

Complain about this comment

26. At 1:05pm on 26 Apr 2010, rich p wrote: Communicating with aliens? I thought that's what elections are for.

Complain about this comment

27. At 1:06pm on 26 Apr 2010, Peter_Sym wrote: The hitchhikers guide to the galaxy had a nice logical argument: the chances of life evolving on a planet is virtually zero. However the universe contains an almost infinite number of other worlds and virtually zero multiplied by almost infinity means that there must be thousands of civilisations out there.

Fortunately they are almost certainly many, many light years away because I agree with Stephen Hawkins. Any alien with technology so advanced that they can get here will not come in peace. To them we'll be like rats... a much lower order of life.

Its worth remembering that every radio wave, TV signal or wireless internet transmission we make goes into space and travels at the speed of light. Our first TV broadcasts are now 70
light years out. The human genome and details of all the things that kill us (like the Ebola virus) are ten light years out and travelling. It doesn't strike me as a terribly good idea to be broadcasting our vulnerabilities to the rest of the universe.

Complain about this comment

28. At 1:07pm on 26 Apr 2010, Peter_Sym wrote:
17. At 12:47pm on 26 Apr 2010, John of Weston-super-Mare wrote:
"Why should we pay any attention to Professor Hawkings`s views on this?."

Because he's far, far cleverer than you?

Complain about this comment

29. At 1:07pm on 26 Apr 2010, powermeerkat wrote:
In the U.S. we have about 20 millionos of undocumentated aliens.

Why do they all come here what do they have to gain from this relocation

is a common knowledge among American voters.

Complain about this comment

30. At 1:08pm on 26 Apr 2010, PaulRichard2 wrote:
I'd be amazed if they didn't. Countless billion other planets in our universe and only ours supports intelligent life (well fairly intelligent), doesn’t seem likely to me.

Avoiding contact with them just because they MIGHT attack us seems a bit silly to me, they could just as easily turn out to be friendly, spirited types willing to share technology with us.

Complain about this comment

31. At 1:13pm on 26 Apr 2010, cfccheers wrote:
If they do they are obviously staying well away from Earth!
They may on the other hand already be living amongst us!
Interesting thought.
I think there must be more living things out in that vast landscape.

Complain about this comment

32. At 1:15pm on 26 Apr 2010, Velid wrote:
Professor Hawking comment that aliens would colonize/use earth is most likely based on his belief that alien would have the same intellect as humans do, and the fact that space exploration might become private sector tool to expand.
I do believe that we might have been previously visited or even monitored by aliens. Something like laboratory experiment....

[Type text]
As for natural resources, aren’t we looking for off-earth resources already... meaning that we already are running low on our own resources?!

Complain about this comment

33. At 1:15pm on 26 Apr 2010, RayDOhead wrote:
I, like everybody else, do not know if there is intelligent life out there but, we should certainly look for it: were we to have taken the same attitude in previous times, America would never have been discovered, and we wouldn't have the cultural delights of the nations of the World open to us.

Complain about this comment

34. At 1:18pm on 26 Apr 2010, Leviticus wrote:
There is a rather famous equation that correlates the liklihood of life existing on other planets, and of our detecting it, called the Drake Equation.

Basically it states that by multiplying together the chance of life developing, becoming intelligent and creating a technological civilisation you get a very small number - lots of zeros after the decimal point.
If you then work out the number of planets/ large moons that probably exist (a very large number with a huge number of zeros on the end) you can multiply this with the previous small number and get a reasonable estimate of how much intelligent life is out there that we have the potential to encounter.

This number, incidentaly, is significantly big.

But there is one problem.
We have been 'advertising' our presence with radio/televisison broadcasts since the early twentieth century. The first we considered powerful enough to have left the heliosphere (the edge of the influence of our sun) was the Berlin Olympic games. The one opened by Hitler. Hmm, possibly not putting our best foot forwards there...
These signals were analogue. We are now going digital and using less powerful signals.

Chances are that any culture out there could be broadcasting on systems we have yet to discover, and/or are unable to pick up and understand our broadcasts as to them it is about as advanced as smoke signals!

So, is there life on other worlds?

Undoubtedly.
I daresay we will find primitive life in the form of microbes/mould on Europa and under the surface of Mars in the not too distant future.
Will we ever communicate with intelligent life on other worlds? Now that is a harder one to predict— even if we do discover some we may well find that we are so far away that one or both of us goes extinct from self destruction before we are ever able to reply to the first message received!

35. At 1:20pm on 26 Apr 2010, Len Day wrote: Every time I come away from a visit to the in-laws I'm convinced alien life exists.

36. At 1:20pm on 26 Apr 2010, chronocompos wrote: Firstly apologies for my first post. Having a bad day and I'm surprised it got past the moderators.

Anyway, back to the question.

Probability laws suggest that with the number of stars out there that there are likely to be a huge number with planets. Of those there is also the potential for there to be a huge number that bear life. One question is what defines life?. Just because we're carbon based doesn't mean all life forms will be. Also just because we exist in a certain temperature band doesn't mean life doesn't exist outside of that or even on planets without water (which is obviously a pre-requisite of life on our planet).

Prof. Hawkins comments that we shouldn't contact them as they may raid us for resources. This seems a reasonable viewpoint given the way that we raid each other for resources. Would an alien race have the same sensibilities as us, can't see why that would be a valid assumption, but you never know.

However, whenever this type of thing is discussed it's always that alien races will be more advanced and will either ransack us or pass us by. My question though is, what makes anyone think we're not the first?

Maybe that's why we've never found any sign of it (although we could have a separate discussion on why else that could be).

37. At 1:21pm on 26 Apr 2010, normal-thinker wrote: Aliens with sufficient technology to have star-travel will not "raid the Earth and move on". What's the point? From the knowledge we have of our own solar system plus the fact that most other stars appear to have planets, physical resources are not an
issue (by this I mean water, oxygen, metals, hydrocarbons etc etc).

A star faring society will more than likely have advanced terraforming technology at their disposal (the ability to turn dead worlds into living ones), so a lack of Earth-like planets should not be an issue.

Of course there may be aliens out there who could wish to hunt us for fun, sport or food, or some which believe all life apart from theirs is inferior and must be exterminated. Still, what are the odds of that happening against the odds of us wiping ourselves out?

Complain about this comment

38. At 1:27pm on 26 Apr 2010, Dave wrote:
Consider this...
Say there are one billion stars, if 1% of them have planets orbiting them (10 million) and 1% of those with plants have some form of life (1 hundred thousand), and just 1% of those contain sentient life then there would be a thousand sentient life forms in the universe.

Now we know there are more than one billion stars out there so the probability we are alone is incredibly slim. This is what Hawkins is on about.

Plus who is conceited enough to think we are so special that in an immense universe we are the only sentient life form?

Complain about this comment

39. At 1:27pm on 26 Apr 2010, drogas1966 wrote:
if they exist, and they are capable of sucking the earth of our resources, then it would be feasible that they would be the ones who contact us, not us contacting them, as of yet, they haven't, and if they do exist, why would it be took for granted that they would be more advanced than us, if we was to make contact with aliens, maybe its the aliens who should worry, as mankind has a tendency to be the species that plunder and destroy,

Complain about this comment

40. At 1:28pm on 26 Apr 2010, Timmy C wrote:
If the Universe is what modern science thinks it is, then it's very probable that extraterrestrial life exists. However:
1. The Universe is estimated to be over 13 billion years old.
2. Even the most lethargic species would spread throughout a galaxy such as ours within a hundred million years or so after achieving spaceflight. Our Galaxy is old enough to have been completely populated and repopulated many times over.
3. We haven't found any traces of extraterrestrial civilizations (signals, megastructures, etc). Why is that? If there is or was
an intelligent species somewhere in our Galaxy, it seems very strange we haven't seen any evidence of them.

Conclusion: there is a lot we don't know. Either life is incredibly rare and fragile... or the Universe is not what we think it is.

As for Stephen Hawking, I disagree with his views on this. An advanced space-faring civilization wouldn't need any resources Earth has. There is plenty of water and minerals in the Galaxy. The only seemingly rare thing Earth has in abundance is life.

Complain about this comment

41. At 1:28pm on 26 Apr 2010, Elias Kostopoulos wrote:
Yes, sometimes I feel like one.

Complain about this comment

42. At 1:30pm on 26 Apr 2010, Daisy Chained wrote:
I think Hawking's reference to "intelligent" aliens is an oblique reference that we know of forms of life from other than Earth already. It may be unsafe to regard all of these as being microscopic either, since I have it on good authority that not all intelligent life is able to prevent itself from watching X Factor, Eastenders, or even the Simpsons.

Now I must return to my X Files DVDs.

Complain about this comment

43. At 1:30pm on 26 Apr 2010, barryp wrote:
For proof, read the comments on most HYS sites.

Complain about this comment

44. At 1:32pm on 26 Apr 2010, Rasputin wrote:
Before Columbus the Europeans didn’t knew of America. And Hawking exactly made the logical point comparing it with our own history colonising America, Australia and N Zealand. But if they do exists and have observed us for long being highly advanced and haven’t yet attacked us for recourses etc., may well prove we are way lover intelligent form not fit at all amongst those far more advanced out there.

- It may be also true their evolutionary development wasn’t at all based on our values of greed.

- It may be also they didn’t start with informal Gods as us.

- It may be also they don’t worship gold and material things but solely interested in knowledge and live in societies of equality, what we refer to as communism.

- It may be also some intergalactic ethics not to interfere into the development of others.
And if so why would they be interested contacting us?

Look at the Hollywood productions; star wars, etc. We already brought our wars into the universe and even concurred it before being able to travel through, and imagine if we do what a disaster for the universe we might become.

Complain about this comment

45. At 1:36pm on 26 Apr 2010, MagicKirin wrote:
Considering the differences in mindsets on the planet there is no way to predict even for someone as brilliant as Hawking, to know what a first contact would be.

A book I read several years ago speculated one of the few avenues to communicate would be mathematics.

Complain about this comment

46. At 1:37pm on 26 Apr 2010, chewster wrote:
I believe we are naïve to think that here on Earth humans will be the only intelligent life to spawn from it. This short sided thinking will ultimately be our demise. The Earth is 4 billion years old, millions of species have come and gone, more than 2/3 with no trace, completely undiscovered. It is estimated the Earth has another 4 billion years before our sun runs out of fuel. The possibility that the Earth will spawn another higher intelligence is statistically very high and there may already be species inhabiting the Earth’s crust that we are unaware of. The universe is estimated to be 13.5 billion years old, and is probably much older. It is not the size of the universe that is the problem, it’s the age of the universe. All species come and go, that time span could be several million years, an intelligent alien species would have to live within our time frame as well as in close proximity such as within the Milkyway for us to detect their presence. The odds are against that we are close enough and within the correct time frame. Bacteria traces have already been found within meteor fragments that have struck the earth. That should tell us something about the nature of solar system formation. Life is abundant.

Complain about this comment

47. At 1:37pm on 26 Apr 2010, Human0Bean wrote:
Read Ikabod Gelaty's epic "The Ninckles of Bot" for the answer to this question.

Complain about this comment

48. At 1:37pm on 26 Apr 2010, CJ Vasani wrote:
"8. At 12:23pm on 26 Apr 2010, Neil Probert wrote:
There is a higher probability that aliens exist than 'god'. "

[Type text]
Or it could be that God or Gods are themselves alien? Always a possibility, no?

Complain about this comment

49. At 1:38pm on 26 Apr 2010, Peter Nunn wrote:
Statistically it is unimaginable that we are the only intelligent life in the universe.

The likelihood of us bumping into each other depends on how close together we are positioned and the degree of technological advance.

Given how hostile we still are to one another, life more advanced than us might either be hostile too, or have the good sense to steer clear until we settle down.

Complain about this comment

50. At 1:38pm on 26 Apr 2010, LippyLippo wrote:
Apparently the chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one. So no worries there then.

Complain about this comment

51. At 1:42pm on 26 Apr 2010, BertieBobbins wrote:
I reckon it's more likely that there are aliens than it is that there aren't, if that makes sense! Can't believe we're the only ones. Yep, I'm with Prof Hawking. Hope they don't try and colonise us though. :o)
Though one could argue that there is already alien life that tries to colonise us, in the form of viruses? Just a thought.

Complain about this comment

52. At 1:44pm on 26 Apr 2010, Rogerjohn wrote:
I believe that it is inevitable that different forms of life exist within our Universe. I also believe that they could be even more alien than some of the forms of life that exist in the extreme places on our planet. With regard to hostility, most if not all forms of life on Earth eat, dead or alive, other forms of life, including ourselves - little fleas have smaller fleas and so on, infinitum. The saving grace could be that Gaia is a closed system that could be too complex and toxic to any invading species. As human beings, for example, we have evolved complex immune systems over the millennia and are constantly under attack by bacteria and viruses. An alien species would have a huge challenge, as probably would we were we to enter an alien equivalent to Gaia. I agree with Stephen Hawking that there would be no profit in attempting to contact alien species, even if at our stage of development we are capable of recognising them!

Complain about this comment

53. At 1:44pm on 26 Apr 2010, ERM wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

54. At 1:45pm on 26 Apr 2010, S C MEHTA wrote:
So, in a way it is good that we're unable to make that mistake of contacting the aliens and vice-versa.

Complain about this comment

55. At 1:46pm on 26 Apr 2010, ONE-SICK-PUPPY wrote:
I agree with Dr. Hawking who certainly has a fertile mind, but I don't think this is any great revelation. I mean there are more stars in the Universe than grains of sand on the beach and it is only common sense that other star's or world's will be occupied by life forms in various states of development. As far as it being dangerous to contact them, that has been the stuff of Science Fiction since War of the Worlds was published and before.

Complain about this comment

56. At 1:46pm on 26 Apr 2010, J-Me wrote:
He's absolutely right. We used to do a back of the envelope calculation at college that showed these 'Generation Ships' could be used to colonise the whole galaxy in a few hundreds of thousands of years. That's no time at all in cosmic terms. There's lot's of really special life bearing features about this particular planet, and I'm sure an alien species would happily take it off our hands and respect it more than we currently do given half the chance.
If we want to survive, it's also time we had our own long term plan of generation ships and colonisation of the galaxy. It'd be far more productive than building weapons to kill each other and putting rubbish plastic toys into landfill.

Complain about this comment

57. At 1:56pm on 26 Apr 2010, northernbelle wrote:
It would be presumptuous of us to think we are the only intelligent beings in the universe and beyond. One has only to look at this world and the great differences between races and religions to cause one to think that there are some here from other planets! Were we the 'penal colony' of the universe in past times? Surely the Taliban fanatics are not from this world.

Complain about this comment

58. At 1:57pm on 26 Apr 2010, Sue Doughcoup wrote:
I should imagine that there is other life in space. But if there was I doubt very much that they would want to communicate with us. Intelligent life would have sent out a reconnaissance party, assessed the situation and reported back. There are probably outward facing warning beacons around Earth saying avoid at all costs, any contact with these people will wreck your world as much as they have irreparably wrecked theirs. Did you see the article on the floating Pacific Garbage area. Point proven methinks.

[Type text]
At 1:59pm on 26 Apr 2010, skamble wrote:
It would have been cruel for aliens (or alien, since they do not necessarily have separate minds) to reveal their presence to people.

The result would be a deep feeling of inadequacy and despair since all we know would turn out to have been known to them hundreds of millions of years ago, and all our thoughts would be as simple to them as a couple of letters is to us.

The conclusion that there is a moral reason for aliens to keep people unaware of them.

At 2:03pm on 26 Apr 2010, Len W Brown wrote:
We need only look at ourselves to answer this question. Our motivation to venture into space is to assure the survival of our own species. And once we've left our little blue marble our top priority will be to find somewhere else we may colonize. So if intelligent beings exist out in the void, then it's pretty likely when they do find our planet their top objective will be - their own survival - at the cost of our own. Or at the very least, enslave us to do their work for them. So yeah, trying to contact intelligent life out there doesn't seem to be a very logical initiative, to me anyway.

At 2:03pm on 26 Apr 2010, its_dave_here wrote:
chronocompos wrote:
Well I'm not into all the latest technology, don't twitter, don't have a facebook page etc. Seem to be too honest for modern society and have learnt by the way I've been treated by other people all my life not to trust anyone as everyone only seems to be out to see what they can get out of you. I'm beginning to think I'm an alien as there doesn't seem to be anywhere I fit in current society.

Beam me up Scotty - I've had enough!!
--------------------------------------
---
I feel the same.
Live long and prosper!

At 2:06pm on 26 Apr 2010, Ateekster wrote:
There is simply too much space out there for nothing intelligent to exist. Then again, it is called SPACE for a reason.

Complain about this comment

63. At 2:11pm on 26 Apr 2010, its_dave_here wrote:
I've believed in alien existence for some time. Whether they've visited earth is another matter altogether.
I second Stephen Hawking's cautious approach to aliens. Perhaps that's why they're keeping a low profile?

Complain about this comment

64. At 2:12pm on 26 Apr 2010, JohnH wrote:
Monty Python summed up this question completely:

The Universe Song

Our universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding,
In all of the directions it can whiz;
As fast as it can go, at the speed of light, you know,
Twelve million miles a minute and that's the fastest speed there is.
So remember, when you're feeling very small and insecure,
How amazingly unlikely is your birth;
And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere out in space,
'Cause there's bugger all down here on Earth!

Complain about this comment

65. At 2:15pm on 26 Apr 2010, lacerniagigante wrote:
Of course aliens exist. They're invading Britain on May the 7th at 00:00. Watch out.

Complain about this comment

66. At 2:16pm on 26 Apr 2010, panchopablo wrote:
Billions of solar systems and trillions of planets i would assume that we are not alone.

Complain about this comment

67. At 2:16pm on 26 Apr 2010, Patty wrote:
I suppose aliens do exist somewhere, at least I like to think. I wonder though, if we can't get on with each other and have awful wars and have to suffer terrorism, how we could possibly get along with aliens.

Complain about this comment

68. At 2:17pm on 26 Apr 2010, Stootwarbler wrote:
Why would intelligent aliens want to descend into a gravity well to raid our resources when there are many more easily accessible sources within the solar systems in the Asteroid and Kuiper belts as well as the Oort cloud.
The asteroid Ceres alone contains more water than is on Earth (if it ever hit us, we really would be a waterworld!), while all the minerals on this planet are readily accessible in smaller asteroids and comets.

Some scenarios call for our nickel-iron core to be raided. As iron is one of the most common elements in the galaxy, this is unlikely to happen.

About the only reason alien lifeforms capable of interstellar travel would want to visit would be to subjugate humans (either in order to prevent destruction of the planetary ecosystem or to prevent us getting out of the neighbourhood), or to exchange information. Given our documented xenophobia, it's more likely to be the former than the latter.

It's worth pointing out that the universe is rather large and rather old. The odds of any 2 spacefaring species being near the same place at the same time are slim to negligible, let alone one taking an interest in us...

Complain about this comment

69. At 2:18pm on 26 Apr 2010, confusus wrote:
I always wonder why the “aliens” are always technologically advanced to us? The possibility that they missed, or made better use of the various ages, that did not advance us to “their” level, beggars the question why would they want to engage with primitives? For resources? Rubbish, exactly, space rubbish, asteroids would provide that without the hassle. For food? How do they know we taste good? For slaves? If they are that technologically advanced they have robots! (Cheaper and less lazy, argumentative and disruptive) So they only aliens we are likely to bump into are microbes, the very primitive, or the dopey! The rest will simply avoid us until we mature!

Complain about this comment

70. At 2:22pm on 26 Apr 2010, Rinc3wind wrote:
This whole thing is nothing new and has been discussed many years ago. Yes there are other forms of life and Yes we should very very careful.

Complain about this comment

71. At 2:22pm on 26 Apr 2010, Jonathan Semple wrote:
I'm afraid that Prof. Hawking's mathematical brain has overlooked the basics of probability; It is exponential. You don't have to multiple many 1 in a few thousand probabilities (Such as having protection from solar radiation or long intervals without asteroid collision) to end up with a very big number indeed. It quickly makes the likelyhood of other intelligent life existing at the same time as us, doubtful.
As for the massive space ships business. Total Sci-Fi nonsense. Why would a race with such advanced technology have to travel
round the the universe to find resources. The universe is full of
them!

Complain about this comment

72. At 2:25pm on 26 Apr 2010, Peter_Sym wrote:
50. At 1:38pm on 26 Apr 2010, LippyLippo wrote:
"Apparently the chances of anything coming from Mars are a
million to one. So no worries there then"

Prog rock refs apart 1 million to 1 is 14 times more likely to
tappen than winning the lottery and people win that every week.

Complain about this comment

73. At 2:27pm on 26 Apr 2010, LeftieAgitator wrote:
Science's view of the conditions necessary for life changed with
the discovery of the life around the undersea hyperthermal vents.
They are now looking at the moons around Jupiter & Saturn.
It looks as if life can exist using different chemistries, this
opens up a multitude of possiblilities.
However if by life we mean sentient life, there the argument
continues.

Complain about this comment

74. At 2:28pm on 26 Apr 2010, NewSuspect-Smith wrote:
The notion, expressed by some in HYS that in an infinite universe
all things are possible is misguided. If this were so then not
only would we be in contact with an infinite number of
intelligent aliens but there would be some who would be queuing
up to meet us dressed identically. Any absurdity would be
possible where statistics determines existence. As for mutual
contact, science reveals that the Universe depends as much upon
some things being possible as it does upon others not being
possible. Even in a relativistic universe, distances are such
that we can never travel millions of light years across space and
anything made of matter that could would not require the material
resources of this planet. The 'wormholes in space' arguments are
fatuous as they are mathematical phenomena only. Accepting their
existence would also mean accepting the physical constraints that
would come with the theory, namely, their proximity to a near
infinite mass. There is no such mass anywhere near us. Such as do
exist (black holes) would tear apart anything made of matter
before it came out 'the other side' if there was one. Contacting
aliens would also be a protracted business indeed.
Professor Hawking refers to 'simple microbes' but it is not at
all obvious how those found on Earth developed. The simplest
free-living bacteria are, biochemically, extremely complex and
virtually as complex as our own. Not even the most basic self-
replicating system can yet be made in the laboratory using
intelligent guidance so there is no way of knowing how rare are
the conditions required by 'blind' Nature to make life.
Complain about this comment

75. At 2:29pm on 26 Apr 2010, Tree wrote:
I'm in agreement with pretty much everybody on here in saying that, based on probability, it is highly likely that we are not the only sentient species in the universe.

However, the main thing that a lot of us seem to assume is that they are going to be "human" in some way, shape or form - people mention communication, but how do they communicate? People mention resources, but do they need what we need, or indeed, if they need resources at all? Do they eat? Drink? Sleep? Any of those functions that we consider to be basic to us may not be to them - the answer is that we don't know, and we may never find out in our lifetime.

Also, everybody mentions the idea that they haven't communicated with us yet, if they are at a sentient stage - maybe they already have, but we don't understand the messages that they have sent to us.

It's easy to assume these things, but it's possible that there are alternative explanations for it all.

Complain about this comment

76. At 2:30pm on 26 Apr 2010, Allan Clarke wrote:
We have been looking on and off for intelligent extra-terrestrial life since Frank Drake first postulated his famous equation, back in the 60's. We have been looking for extra-terrestrial planets for roughly half that time.
Within our admittedly-limited present knowledge, it seems that our Earth is unique in two different ways:-
1) It harbours abundant land life, and (at least) one of those species has evolved intelligence.
2) It has a uniquely-large Moon, so much so that the Earth-Moon system has been described as a double planet.
It is certainly within the bounds of possibility that these two facts are connected. It may be that in order to have life, at least the macroscopic land-based life which most biologists seem to think is necessary for intelligence (and no, dolphins are not an exception - their ancestors were land-dwelling), you have to have a large moon, to strip away much of the prehistoric atmosphere; otherwise you end up with a planet like Venus. A large moon also means larger tidal forces, which might provide the impetus for life, which must originate in the sea, later evolving to conquer the land.
If this is the case, then Drake's equation is likely significantly over-estimating the probability of intelligent life evolving. Microbial, or possibly marine life, may be common on worlds with temperatures consistent with liquid oceans (not necessarily water - some astronomers think methane might do the job on Saturn's moon Titan), but intelligent life may be so much rarer that statistically it would be beyond the range of our current radio telescopes.
And surely, all the more precious here on Earth for that!
Complain about this comment

77. At 2:32pm on 26 Apr 2010, U14366475 wrote:
I have absolutely no idea. I also have absolutely no idea if God
or Dark Matter/Energy exist or whether Chelsea or Man U will win
the 2009/10 Premiership.

Complain about this comment

78. At 2:33pm on 26 Apr 2010, leviut wrote:
one theory is that humans are already a slave race to highly
intelligent alien beings. that humans are programmed and used for
energy.

if you have ever seen the movie 'osmosis jones,' its a good
example of what i think life is like. we are a part of a MACRO-
cosm which breaks down infinitely into smaller MICRO-cosms.
there's stuff living in us, that has stuff living on and in it,
that has stuff, living on it... so... it goes on forever like
that.

so- the earth is a giant living and breathing 'alien' that bleeds
lava!!

Complain about this comment

79. At 2:35pm on 26 Apr 2010, jdennis_99 wrote:
I'm with Stephen Hawking. Even if you just take into account the
number of Sun-like stars in our galaxy alone, the odds of Earth
being the only planet capable of supporting life as we know it,
without even going into other possibilities, are very small.
Therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that aliens do exist.

However, there are a couple of questions raised by that - would
said aliens be more technologically advanced than us, and what
are their intentions?

If they're less technologically advanced than us, then we have
little to fear from them, but they have a great deal to fear from
us. As a species, we're aggressive, hostile and wouldn't blink at
exploiting other races for our own benefit. For that reason, we
should be seeking to avoid contact, so that we don't screw them
over.

If they're more technologically advanced, then their motivations
for space exploration need to be questioned. There's only really
two reasons for space exploration:
1. For peaceful means, simply seeking to expand knowledge of the
cosmos;
2. By requirement, i.e. to hunt for resources to ensure their own
survival.

Any aliens in the first category probably wouldn't be interested
in us - we're far too primitive and hostile, and not worth

[Type text]
troubling with. Any in the second category would be seriously bad news. They wouldn't hesitate to exploit us, and you can bet it wouldn't be pleasant.

So, generally, we really should be avoiding contact, in case we run into trouble we can't get out of, or until we're sufficiently mature so that we wouldn't interfere in other species' natural development.

Complain about this comment

80. At 2:38pm on 26 Apr 2010, crowshadow wrote:
Oh! BBC, you've opened a can of worms here!
My reality, using probability and taking into account the amount of galaxies (millions), stars in each of those galaxies (billions), and applying those figures rationally allows me to accept the possibility as plausible. So yes, I do think that life on other planets is a reality.

Complain about this comment

81. At 2:41pm on 26 Apr 2010, andre wrote:
How come we think that "aliens" need the same conditions to survive as we do? As far as I'm concerned they might live on thin air and be invisible to us... and they might already live on this Earth. It's only possible.

Complain about this comment

82. At 2:49pm on 26 Apr 2010, tonyh110 wrote:
If you mean sentient life at our level or below its academic as space and time is a solid brick wall barrier. If life has evolved elsewhere that can 'warp drive' anywhere in the universe they may not recognize us as 'worth the effort'. Until we can overcome space and time all we can do is watch and wait - even light speed is slow compared to the size of the universe.

Complain about this comment

83. At 2:50pm on 26 Apr 2010, P J Walton wrote:
The aliens should watch out for us humans!! We have a known history of exploitation. If we discover them, then they are in trouble. Yes, if they discover us first and visit out territory, then we should simply hike the visa fees for them. Insist on full-body scans as they enter! Charge huge parking fees for their spacecraft. If they need fuel, put a heavy surcharge on that. Bury them in red tape! If they are indeed technologically superior it would still not be a given that we would capitulate.

Complain about this comment

84. At 2:50pm on 26 Apr 2010, Martin wrote:
The possibilities are NOT finite in an infinite universe if the laws governing said universe are finite.
Despite the almost certain probability of intelligent life existing out there, the vast distances of the cosmos would greatly limit the possibility of any contact. One must also remember that time creates an equal obstacle. Not only would two intelligent civilisations have to exist within a small distance from each other (on a cosmic scale at least), they would also have to evolve within the same time span. Considering the fact that human existence has only lasted for literally the last seconds on the last day of the universal calendar, the chances of two civilisations sharing both a common space AND time greatly diminishes the probability. And even if two species did exist in the same space and time, there's no guarantee that both them would have developed the technical sophistication needed to communicate with each other. With these factors, the chances become almost nil. It's not impossible, just improbable.

"Space time isn't infinite though. It has a beginning (the big bang) and an end."

The Big Bang marks the beginning of our Universe. Not Space.

I think the accuracy of our mathematical guesses about the likelihood of intelligent life elsewhere would certainly be helped by the proven discovery of any form of life somewhere else in the solar system. So let's take a look in the likely areas. That'll take 30-50 years and who knows, maybe in that timeframe we'll detect evidence of intelligent life in deep space. Or intelligent life will detect us...

Some great comments on here about the variables to consider. An advanced civilisation has to be close enough in space to detect, and close enough in time too!!

The chances of an alien civilisation being even vaguely close to our level of technology is tiny. They'll either be massively ahead of us or massively behind. So either still swinging in the trees, or the galactic empire has already been defeated.
A long time ago in a galaxy far far away........

Right up there as the best opening line to a film! But also quite profound in a 'just think what could be out there' kind of way.

Complain about this comment

88. At 2:55pm on 26 Apr 2010, BernardW wrote:
At 12:23pm on 26 Apr 2010, Neil Probert wrote:
There is a higher probability that aliens exist than 'god'.
At last! Something I can believe in.

Complain about this comment

89. At 2:56pm on 26 Apr 2010, Steve wrote:
Most people seem to think aliens need a physical form and a actual physical presence to exist. I believe this to be a rather large error. Any advanced alien civilisation able to reach us would not do it initially via a large flying saucer or via any other physical object geared towards interstellar transportation. Traveling through the medium of none physical space, if you have the know-how, is much easier plus the impact at your destination is much less evident. The only reason a alien race would physically arrive at planet Earth would be to clean up the place and turn it into either a holiday resort or a high security prison.

Complain about this comment

90. At 2:56pm on 26 Apr 2010, Muhammad Zaman wrote:
Intelligent aliens observe all the political, environmental, religious and all the other interspecies conflicts we have on Earth, and would likely have an utter lack of respect for us, and would either destroy us or avoid us altogether.

If they themselves or their machines are capable of landing on this planet, they would also be far technologically advanced than we are today.
What could we offer them - our art? That's usually a matter of taste. Religion? Culture? Unlikely, we don't even like each other's, never mind expecting aliens to do so.

Perhaps they could eat us? Brings new meaning to having Indian, Chinese, Italian, Tex-Mex, Japanese, French or Thai tonight. (At least the Germans, Poles, Russians and the British will be safe).

Complain about this comment

91. At 2:58pm on 26 Apr 2010, Valeriia wrote:
Sometimes it’s so difficult to understand a person, just like you, a human being... Imagine how would it be to meet (and what is more, to try communicating) aliens that can be so unlike us. We can only presuppose that they exist. In our imagination they’ll
either contact us, or destroy us, or enslave us, or vice versa(!)
It is mysterious, that is why frightening. To my mind, meeting
aliens is inevitable, however, it is a prospect of a distant
future. Our civilization is not ready for such a welcome yet;
we’ll just be confused and start making rash steps. We need more
scientific ground, more knowledge about extraterrestrial worlds
to have at least the smallest notion of what to expect.

Complain about this comment

92. At 2:58pm on 26 Apr 2010, Peter Galbavy wrote:
Unless you are self-absorbed religious nutter then the answer is
"there must be". Probably the more pertinent question is one of:
"Is there alien life out there we can ever hope to interact with
and, like Hawking implies, is it advisable to do so ?"

Complain about this comment

93. At 3:00pm on 26 Apr 2010, brazilwatcher wrote:
I think professor Hawkings is right. Logically, if aliens were to
arrive on earth, the technology they would need to travel from
another solar system, would mean that they would be far in
advance of us, and may well have malevolent intentions. Either
that, or they could end up here by accident and be in a "District
9" situation. Either way, they and we, would probably be much
better off if they avoided contact with the human race!

Complain about this comment

94. At 3:00pm on 26 Apr 2010, Martin wrote:
Star Travel:

It's not viable at sub-light speeds because it takes too much
time.

It's impossible at faster-than-light speeds since time reverses.

So, forget space ships.
But there is another way.

Quantum teleportation through micro wormholes via Bose-Einstein-
Condensate-generated spooky action at a distance.

I'm currently working on a prototype.

Complain about this comment

95. At 3:00pm on 26 Apr 2010, Lewis Fitzroy wrote:
"EARTHLINGS to understand This Question, you must know "What life
is"

Complain about this comment

96. At 3:02pm on 26 Apr 2010, FawltyPowers wrote:

[Type text]
My bet's on that; they do exist and that they're not celibate either and that they'd quickly wipe that stupid little pretentious smile we carry on our faces.

Complain about this comment

97. At 3:03pm on 26 Apr 2010, laura wrote:
I read somewhere that the greatest thing alien contact would achieve is that...in the blink of an eye...we on Earth would cease to be British or Chinese or African, and would be suddenly, and unitedly, simply HUMAN.

Complain about this comment

98. At 3:03pm on 26 Apr 2010, AM wrote:
First of all - There is a higher probability that aliens exist than 'god'. Maybe 'god' is an alien! God is most likely alien in many ways to humankind so your argument makes the probability of god very high.

Second - When Dr Stephen Hawking states if or when extraterrestrials visited the earth this assumes extraterrestrials are highly intelligent and light years ahead of humankind's technology. Yet I see no spaceship or little green aliens with laser guns flying above my head. Which would bring me to these conclusions:1 - Aliens are very intelligent, 2 - we will never know, 3 - there are no such things, 4 - they only exist existentially in our own human minds.

Complain about this comment

99. At 3:04pm on 26 Apr 2010, D wrote:
Well im guessing there is! I dont think anyone in the modern age really doubts this! unless they still think God created the earth 6000 years!

Complain about this comment

100. At 3:05pm on 26 Apr 2010, NuttyGooner - The Ultimate Spud Masher! wrote:
I think it is arrogant to believe that Earth is the only planet with the capability of supporting life in the cosmos. There must be other planets which have the capabilities of supporting other life, who is to say that other lifeforms need oxygen?

Considering that even bacteria can be classed as a form of life, then the possibilities out there are endless!

With regards to making contact with aliens? I don't know, I don't want to shatter my Trekker brother's dreams by telling him that there are no beautiful alien women out there, but merely an army of toasters hell bent on wiping out cheese on toast.

Hmm... on that note, I think I will follow Prof. Hawking's advice :o)

[Type text]
Appendix 41. All messages in the message thread How should society work?

How should society work?
09:50 UK time, Monday, 3 May 2010

Labour, Tory and Lib Dem representatives have been setting out their vision for British society. What do you think of their ideas?

Speaking on the Radio 4's Today programme, Communities Secretary John Denham defended the idea of active government, saying that the system was now moving to one of public rights to certain standards of service.

Conservative shadow education secretary Michael Gove spoke of a "big society", saying the issue was for public services to stop doing things "in a bureaucratic pattern" and harness "the idealism of volunteers."

Liberal Democrat education spokesman David Laws argued for a combination of proper resourcing of public services by Whitehall and a devolvement of "much more power down to the people who actually run public services."

How active should national government be in providing local services? Would you like more say on how your public services are run locally? What are your experiences of how things are run in your area?

This debate is now closed. Thank you for your comments.

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Comments Sign in or register to comment.

Previous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Next 1
At 11:52am on 03 May 2010, sssmith wrote:
In Gwynedd we have a Plaid led council.

They think that they can spend our money as they see fit and we will just keep on paying the bill.

There needs to be a much tighter control on there petty bureaucrats

They are supposed to work for us, not the other way round

Complain about this comment

2. At 11:55am on 03 May 2010, Toxic Tel wrote:
The one thing this BIG society needs is the return of Fox Hunting ask David Cameron.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
3. At 11:56am on 03 May 2010, meanstreak wrote: we should respect one another and if you commit a crime you should be punished and not let off with a slap on the wrist! the rich should be taxed more and schools should make learning more fun.

Complain about this comment

4. At 11:59am on 03 May 2010, wiltshire Old Codger wrote: We really do need a fairer society, one that is not influenced by Media moguls and oversea party paymasters. We need a Government that will work much closer with local government and come up with a policy that creates a fairer society. I firmly believe that we need a hung government that will make our politicians to work in closer harmony and in the interest of our Country and NOT party dogma. As I live in a marginal seat I can influence that which is why I shall vote tactically to bring about change.

Complain about this comment

5. At 12:01pm on 03 May 2010, notfooledsteve wrote: The liberal idea of more power locally means "post code lotteries", the tory view of a "big society" means rely on charity and of course Labour believes in some control of where money goes to. All of the parties are trying to dole out their "motherhood and Apple pie" visions to the electorate, what they actually really mean are less clear and are only each party trying to enter the debate on society as if there is a right or wrong way of dealing with the mixed society we live in.

Complain about this comment

6. At 12:03pm on 03 May 2010, steve wrote: I have news for Mr C Our society (Big or Small) isn't broken! There are hundreds of incidences every day of generosity and kindness towards neighbours and strangers. The bleak Orwellian nightmare that Lord Snooty likes to imply for narrow political purposes is a figment of the fevered imagining of The Daily Mail and Tory Party Central Office.

Complain about this comment

7. At 12:03pm on 03 May 2010, Cyclops1000 wrote: Not a lot! It's up to the 'People' to change Society! (US!) All Government can do is tell 'us' what we can't 'do'. Not what we 'Can' For all that, and all that! Come 'what may and come it will for all that etc etc. The only command that came from Parliament, that did any good was......'Action this day' or else! Cyclops
Complain about this comment

8. At 12:04pm on 03 May 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:
The Tories "big society" sounds like if you have enough money you can do what you want. I think the idea of wealthy parents setting up their own schools will be terrible for the poor families who will be excluded from these private schools.

Complain about this comment

9. At 12:05pm on 03 May 2010, The truth is the greatest enemy of the state wrote:
The Tories' "Big Society" idea is just a thinly-veiled ruse to enable the wealthy and the privileged to abdicate any responsibility for those less well off than themselves through taxes.

In the Conservatives' big vision, if you want public services and believe in a co-operative, mutualistic society then in the future don't expect any support from government. You'll need two jobs just to keep your head above water, and be expected to moonlight as a part-time unpaid teacher, healthcare worker and road sweeper.

On social issues the Liberal Democrats are essentially Tory-lite.

And Labour? Who cares what they think any more? They sold their core voting support up the river years ago.

The bottom line, then, seems to be that tomorrow's society is going to be a tougher, meaner, more self-centered place where everyone is looking out for nobody but themselves. So back to the nightmare that was the 1980s.

Complain about this comment

10. At 12:06pm on 03 May 2010, grainsofsand wrote:
You can be sure that whatever party gets in they will follow their own agenda and the very last thing that they will be doing is listening to the voters.

Complain about this comment

11. At 12:06pm on 03 May 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:
Government and public services are there to serve the people, not the other way around. I like the Tory ideas regarding the 'big society' but remain unconvinced they can put it into practice fully.

Complain about this comment

12. At 12:07pm on 03 May 2010, The Prince_of_excess wrote:
It should work based on the harm principle. "If one of sane mind is causing harm to another, that is reason to legislate. If one
of sane mind is harming oneself, that is not a reason to legislate".

Or to quote the original definition by John Stuart Mill "That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others."

Complain about this comment

13. At 12:07pm on 03 May 2010, alan mark bush wrote:
I am with the idea that public services need to be delivered effectively without waste and by those who know how to deliver, not civil servants or politicians. The idea that the public have rights to minimum standards of service is good but will not be delivered by people who have no idea what services need to be delivered but THINK THEY DO. The Tories and Labour have had three decades in absolute control and look at where we are, hospitals failing, benefits failing, councils failing, society failing employment rising all because traditional "class" Governments thought they had the answers. People - the electorate - have the needs and can, given the tools by a caring and compassionate government, deliver a Society in which they are proud to be part of understanding the balance between positive and negative prejudice and act accordingly. The State has told us what to do for too long, the time to take a risk has come, we know what we have had and we know that if we don't change it we shall just get more of the same whether the face is Cameron or Brown. The electoral system can work to our advantage if we just VOTE. The 40% or more of those who think that their vote can't change the system CAN CHANGE THE SYSTEM if they decide to VOTE, just look at what has happened in the last three weeks. YOUR destiny in in YOUR hands: so Nanny State, Capitalist State or Caring State I don't mind and will accept the decision, as long as the Nation chooses and not the mindless sheep who have voted for Tories or Labour since Noah was a boy! YOU have the power USE it: please, please use it.

Complain about this comment

14. At 12:10pm on 03 May 2010, chrislabiff wrote:
Oooh lets see... FAIRLY? Is anyone actually "worth" 10x anyone else? Transparently? DEMOCRATICALLY? And remember Keynes' response when it was pointed out that uncontrolled capitalism has to collapse:

"Yes, but I won't be around to see it."

Complain about this comment

15. At 12:10pm on 03 May 2010, Morad Mir wrote:
Respect:
- for the Law (above all)
- for all the people

[Type text]
- freedom of opinion and expression

Fair:
- distribution of opportunity and ultimately wealth
- contribution from all citizens
- and open debate on major issues

Complain about this comment

16. At 12:10pm on 03 May 2010, BulletMonkey wrote:
No more exorbitant taxing on the working middle class to support those who choose not to work (no problems subsidising those genuinely looking for work).

No more open door immigration.

All illegal immigrants deported - 'making them legal' is not a solution.

No more positive discrimination or affirmative action.

Absolutely no privatising of the NHS.

Complain about this comment

17. At 12:12pm on 03 May 2010, RichYork wrote:
In broadbrush terms I believe that the state has become far too big and far too involved in our lives. Over the past twenty years or so every time there has been a social problem people have asked what the government is going to do about it, this is the wrong question. The government is merely our representative, nothing else, they are not our rulers but out servants.

I completely agree with the NHS and state schooling, so I am not suggesting that we should reduce those but i think that there are so many laws and rules we have to live by now, which, frankly, have nothing to do with MPs. People say we get the government we deserve, if that is the case then we are lazy, ignorant and uncaring. Too lazy to do anything about the problems on our doorstep, too ignorant to find out what is going on and doing anything about it and too uncaring to help out in our own neighbourhoods.

Complain about this comment

18. At 12:13pm on 03 May 2010, Tom Dolan wrote:
To harness "the idealism of volunteers" - hmm, I bet they do.

Complain about this comment

19. At 12:13pm on 03 May 2010, Jon wrote:
I think I'd prefer an active government to profit driven market forces. The Conservatives seem to be promoting little more than a rebadged Thatcherite ideology. I'd like to see much less
bureaucracy, but let's not forget the seeds for what we have now came from the Thatcherite distrust of non-business professionals, and favour for 'professional' managers. So all in all, it seems the LD vision of properly funded public services, not run by managers whose only experience is profit driven private sector management, seems the most desirable.

This does seem to be an election where the people's voice has been heard more loudly than usual (via the twitter/blogosphere), and the clearly biased print media - and the polls they appear to own, have not had it entirely their own way. Let's remember that who ever wins a free press is vital for democracy to operate.

Complain about this comment

20. At 12:15pm on 03 May 2010, ticktickticktickboom wrote:
There should be far more real democracy regarding local issues, especially concerning building projects funded by the council taxpayer. As in the case with this Central Government seeking to micro-manage every aspect of our daily lives, it seems to me that local government officials also believe that the taxpayer exists for their benefit rather than the other way around. In particular, local housebuilding and other civil engineering projects which can have a real negative effect on the quality of life for many are often bulldozed through with no consideration given to legitimate objection. Housing estates are springing up all over the place where we live, yet the local road, school and healthcare infrastructures are not being developed to suit. The result? Overcrowding and gridlock. Meetings may be held at which lip service is paid to dissenters but ultimately developers' money talks and these projects proceed regardless. I would like to see systems put in place that reflect truly fair and democratic local government, i.e. the opportunity for council taxpayers to vote against excessive development and for local councils merrily spending OUR money to be forced to listen to and act on the majority view.

Complain about this comment

21. At 12:15pm on 03 May 2010, Rob jones wrote:
in the first 60 days

A written constitution
1.5 million redundancies in the public sector
Closure of job centres
No means testing for core benefits
No locking up of the longterm unemployed in detention centres
this is human rights abuse
Access to the courts for the 16 million who are excluded from the justice system
citizenship qualifying period 15 years very limited immigration from the EU only work permits up to two years in five.
Allow unemployed people to have a pension
A new body of internal affairs to sack and prosecute civil service corruption currently running at 33% in some departments.
Human Rights abuse by government to be made a criminal offence

[Type text]
Those earning over 50k in the civil service to have a maximum time in government of 8 years. All government contracts let must have a quota of 10 % senior long term unemployed.

Complain about this comment

22. At 12:16pm on 03 May 2010, load_of_bull wrote:
Not sure about the Big Society from the Tories where volunteers can set up free schools. It is being dropped by Sweden as a failure due to low performing pupils.

I think this will be indicative of most services that the Conservatives want to pass on to volunteers, rather than the state running it. Is there enough volunteers with time on their hands to do this?

Complain about this comment

23. At 12:16pm on 03 May 2010, walkingboots wrote:
Society will not work unless we have the economy sorted out.

The economy is the main issue in this election. All polls suggest Alastair Darling will not be the next chancellor. The choice is therefore Vince Cable or George Osborne.

Need I say more?

Complain about this comment

24. At 12:17pm on 03 May 2010, solomondogs wrote:
I notice all the ideas pretty much came down to how much money there is going to be for this or that. To improve this something else down the line has to suffer. Nowhere have I seen anyone tackling our appalling birth rate especially amongst single parents and the always visible 'yummy mummies'. Nowhere have I seen that whichever party gets in at the next election a return to teaching manners might be on the cards. As a nation we have become incredibly rude, arrogant, impatient and petulant, all four traits can be observed if you take a car out for half an hour, especially around school time.

Good behaviour and good manners is what make societies, and ours is failing, has failed, and the worse culprits are those who think because they have 'chuldrun' they're special. Special in a way that allows them to run roughshod over all and sundry, this is not the society I was brought up in and it is most certainly not the society that I wish to be part of.

Complain about this comment

25. At 12:17pm on 03 May 2010, Ash wrote:
The parties are not being entirely honest on the level of cuts necessary.

[Type text]
Committing to conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq has crippled the country in my opinion. I could see the reasons with Afghanistan but failed to see the reasons for Iraq. I do not blame the Labour Government as such but the Cabinet, led by Tony Blair have a lot to answer for.

I quite agree with Clegg about the need for Parties to work together for the good of the country instead arguing over things to win cheap points.

Whatever the result on Thursday, Politicians must never forget their greatest duty is to our country, not their respective parties.

I think Clegg's proposal of all the parties coming clean on the scale of the problems we face is a good starting point.

In principle, all the parties have some good ideas and some bad but at this point they have to defend their manifestos. After the election, I hope a degree of cooperation and common sense can prevail so that we can choose most of the best ideas.

I quite like Cameron's idea of a 'Big Society'. We should be doing more to make the country a better place and locally, we all understand our own communities better than national politicians. However, I am sceptical that Cameron will use it to reduce services that Government should provide. And this 'Big Society' works well in affluent areas. But in deprived areas people face daily struggles. I am also against his tax break for the wealthiest whilst the rest of us will have to struggle.

Gordon Brown has some good ideas on the economy and Clegg has the right idea regarding 'Trident' as we have to accept we cannot afford it.

Some compromise between the parties could be beneficial to everyone!

Complain about this comment

26. At 12:18pm on 03 May 2010, CWRW wrote:
How should society work? For the good of all not just the ones that the top. If we don’t?
What’s next?
Crisis riots on our street this generation will not put up with unfair cuts letting the wealthy and the bankers the ones that cased off ..What they going to set the troops on them the police will not do it. Can’t afford the overtime like in the 1980s then they did it for treble pay
Before long we will all be singing THIS SONG
WE ARE THE PEAT BOG SOLDIERS MARCHING WITH OUR SPADES TO THE WAR
This was sung by British & allied prisoners of war (1939 -45) in working parties

[Type text]
27. At 12:19pm on 03 May 2010, chasmcn61 wrote:
Let me get this right Dave is going to slash our public services , then wants those ppl whose public sector jobs he has scarped to do those lost services voluntary ?, and also that charity's pick up the pieces that was once provided by local govt . his "big society"
So iam to expect more door to door collections,?

Complain about this comment

28. At 12:19pm on 03 May 2010, Lucy Clake wrote:
Michael Gove says the Conservatives will let the public have more say in how things are run, but Cameron says he will see that there are more women bosses. How are they going to do this without intervention by Govt.? Here in our constituency we have felt the effects of the Tory pc agenda with threats from Central Office if we didn't toe the line. How does this action fit in with letting the public have more say. At least the Labour party are open about Govt. involvement

Complain about this comment

29. At 12:21pm on 03 May 2010, Simon Attwood wrote:
The most important thing is to find out where all the money is going;
Over £500 billion a year is raised by the government as taxes under the pretence of paying for services to the UK population. And to make matters worse, this is not enough, the government still borrows a further £160 billion for this year, using the UK population as collateral.
We are not getting value for money!!
The vast majority of public money goes towards individuals and organisations that give little or no return. This needs to be turned around immediately.

Complain about this comment

30. At 12:21pm on 03 May 2010, Derek Wellman wrote:
How should society work?
With the minimum of interference from the state.

Complain about this comment

31. At 12:26pm on 03 May 2010, billyhano wrote:
Our "broken society" is going to fixed by politicians? Once the election is over they will be far too busy getting their snouts back in the trough.
32. At 12:26pm on 03 May 2010, Mark - Hove wrote:

We all know that the Conservative
Big Society=Big Business=Big Tax cuts for the RICH

Cameron’s “Big society” is no different to “no such thing as society”.

I would only trust Labour to be on the side of working people.

Cameron and Clegg may do the spin better, but I would not trust them not to side with the rich against the majority of the population.

Under the Conservatives “society” would be run for the profit of big business, not for the good of the many.

33. At 12:27pm on 03 May 2010, stothege wrote:

I would love to be able to write what I truly believe, but fear it would be stolen by the corrupt governments who control us....

BBC can email me if you like... I'll show you something you have never seen b4.

34. At 12:27pm on 03 May 2010, greade wrote:

It's a pity they cannot combine their ideas as each party has something to offer. If they could we would have a much better country.

35. At 12:30pm on 03 May 2010, Retro Knight wrote:

I'd be for letting people be involved in local decision making, if I felt that we, the people, had all the facts at our disposal.

Right now, we do not. So, to pick an example, if we are asked what we think about a new road connecting us to the nearest motorway, we make emotional decisions, based on how it affects us individually. Will the new road go near my house? Will it make it harder or easier for me to get to my (shops/work/school/pub)? What's in it for me?

If we were given access to all the facts, we might actually find that we can answer those questions ourselves, as well as ones like:
Will it benefit the local economy? Generate more jobs? Make it easier for local businesses to receive and sell their goods? What other options were investigated? Why were they dismissed in favour of this one? Are there cheaper (safe) ways to achieve the same goal? Who had the idea in the first place, and what was their motivation? You get the idea.

But, until we have a government that is able and willing to give us ALL the facts, I'd be very reluctant to allow everyone to be involved in local decision making - because that always boils down to he who makes the most noise gets to play with the toys.

Complain about this comment

36. At 12:30pm on 03 May 2010, EnochS wrote:
Society is made up of people, some are decent others are not. The UK was once a tolerant and fair society, but sadly this has been destroyed over the past years, either by government or through world influences.

Idiotic political correctness is probably the key to a great deal of legislation. Instead of retaining our hard won freedoms, we have sleeped walked into an intruding Big Brother society, cameras and ID cards will be the outcome. Plus the ever increasing power of those in Brussels who are now 'running this country'.

It is still not too late to demand a referendum on Europe.

With an important election imminent for the first time in decades we have an opportunity to try and reverse some of these gross legislative blunders, it will be a hard road, probably one of the hardest since the last War.

Wake up England, and importantly use your power of the vote so we can get to work and correct the errors of the last 13 years.

Complain about this comment

37. At 12:30pm on 03 May 2010, milvusvestal wrote:
Rarely have I heard so much waffle.

These people are so detached from local issues and the needs of the general public that the very last thing we want is more reams of red tape than we have already. The abolition of hundreds of overlapping laws brought in by Labour is a priority, followed by delegatory powers to responsible people on the ground - not at Westminster.

On a grander scale, the only powers that should remain with central government are those that affect society as a whole, such as the national economy, law and order and transport, with the proviso that the local authority has the power to over-rule. This might give parliament more time to debate essential issues affecting society such as the return of power to adults rather
than children, anti-social behaviour, and the restoration of capital punishment and flogging.

Complain about this comment

38. At 12:31pm on 03 May 2010, Bickers wrote:
We need to realise that there's no such thing as a free lunch - we have to pay our way in the world. That means the private sector has to make products and deliver services that the rest of the world wants to buy. If we're successful then we can afford to provide public services. However those services should only be the ones we actually need and not what Government thinks we need. Government needs to remove itself from large parts of our lives and only providing a basic range of public services (looking after the genuinely poor and disabled in our society, not the hangers on and scroungers) on a much lower share of GDP (our money) i.e. 30%

And shareholders and boards need to get a grip of the growing disconnect between directors and staff salaries - the gap is unsustainable and doesn't reflect the actual 'value add' that different levels of staff add to a company. Directors have been at the trough as much as the public sector fat cats.

Complain about this comment

39. At 12:32pm on 03 May 2010, Lord Elric wrote:
Labours "big government" approach is nothing short of Marxism. More laws have been passed during the past 13 years than all of the previous 700 years of British history.

We're photographed, catalogued, observed, referenced, cross-referenced and checked at every turn by a government that has grown vast in a very short time. This utter dependance on a bureaucratic system of quango's; ministries and levels of departmental red-tape has strangled society, business and the economy.

Government and local councils have forgotten who they work for and seem to think that they are a presence unto themselves. No amount of failure, error or stupidity on the part or councils or government departments will be held against them - they are impervious to any need to provide justification for their actions or decisions.

Bogged down by health and safety and political correctness; the needs of society at large are being ignored. When someone holds a job and knows that only by the protection of the system around them can they retain that job (being incompetent) while the rest of us have to put up with it, then is it any wonder that society is up in arms?

I've dealt with situations with the local council where a simple failure of one member of staff to do the job they are being paid
for leads to a huge waste of time and money being expended unnecessarily to put things right. Formal complaints go unanswered and the matter fades away but those making the errors remain in their jobs regardless.

When society is presented with this sort of situation over and over again, and then has to deal with being handed fine after fine for one infringement or another in the constantly changing quagmire of national, regional and local legislation being cooked up every day.

Society needs to be treated fairly, not to feel that it is simply there as pockets for goverment and councils to reach into whenever a failure on the part of the government or council leaves them short of cash and they need to pick those pockets.

It's not even about "fairness"; it's more about value for money. Our cars are being damaged by roads that are not properly maintained - we have to pay for those repairs; then the council announce they have no money and they increase council tax to pay for the road maintenance; so the tax-payer gets to pay twice; actually three times if you then include road tax; or four times if you consider parking restrictions, the plethora of motoring offences and speeding restrictions - this is one example but there are hundreds of similar situations plaguing the lives of society every day.

Society is being dumbed down, government and councils want to make every decision about how we live, work, eat, sleep and play; how we interact with each other and how we join together. Government and councils are incompetent at doing the job they are paid to do so they devise easy target scenario's which they then monitor and publish statistics which tell us all "what a good job" they are doing.

Society needs less big government, less incompetent councils and a return to the days when we could make mistake and possibly learn from them - councils never learn from their mistakes and they make the same ones over and over again and then expect society to pay the cost of those mistakes - it needs to change.

Complain about this comment

40. At 12:33pm on 03 May 2010, Lynn from Sussex wrote:
Central government whould not have any say in local government except in areas such as an integrated public transport system.

Rural areas have Parish councils, the very bottom layer of government, councillors are not paid, it is purely voluntary. These councils deal with very local issues but the problem comes when the next level, ie District councils do not have the jurasdiction to be of help, the next step is Central government and owing to so many crazy rulings and laws from the EU, a sensible decision for a very local issue is doomed to fail.
A good example of this is not being able to grit badly iced areas in order to prevent both pedestrian and driver accidents!

Society generally is fractured and this is a failure of families whatever their make up to take responsibility for themselves instead of looking to the State to provide.

Single teenage career mother should be looked after by their family, if this is not possible then some form of hostel arrangement should be the alternative, not free but with financial support backed with the mother taking on some form of paid work.

Parents should fined for their disruptive and in some cases criminal children, if the children continue their behaviour, they should be removed and placed in accommodation that will provide an education, instil some manners and respect for themselves and others.

The only party that will improve society, give back respect and opportunity for the individual to perform to his or her best is the Conservatives.

Complain about this comment

41. At 12:33pm on 03 May 2010, Claire Herbert wrote:
I'd say we need to get away from this liberal lefty view that everything is acceptable. There are rules to a society and we all should follow them.

Complain about this comment

42. At 12:35pm on 03 May 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote:
Labour, Tory and Lib Dem representatives have been setting out their vision for British society.

LOL

What a complete and farcical pretentious joke.

Who gives a monkeys what they think, they are but a very tiny minority of just a few dozens in comparison to 60 million UK citizens who ALSO have views and opinions and ideas of a vision of British society.

This bunch of muppets cannot even provide the electorate with facts and figures and details of their policies, to add yet MORE unadulterated drivel just ADDS yet further insult to an already outrageous situation.

People just want to be left alone to get on with their lives with little interference from the state, they want to provide help to the needy, and DON'T want to be taken for a ride by the lazy, the criminal the greedy and also especially by politicians.
Unfortunately, I think politicians are the main and central problem to most of the UKs ills.

For every reasonable policy or law brought into being, politicians inflict numerous other negative and pathetic policies and laws.

Who would have thought that labour would have brought in restrictive laws and regulations which basically label every adult as a potential peadophile and criminalise parents/adults for transporting their childrens friends to activitys.

Who would have thought that anti-terrorism laws would be used by councils to spy upon local people.

Who would have thought that anti-terrorism laws would be used by the police to apprehend and detain and stop legitimate demonstrators.

I would ask these political muppets what their vision is for UK prisons, of which NONE are drug free, and that if these political muppets cannot even control or implement basic standards of compliance and decency in a contained prison situation they how on earth can they presume to be able to implement social "vision" on the WHOLE population.

As with so much stated by politicians, it is just pure and utter unattainable fantasy. They think they can tinker with society as if it is a simplistic substance in a test tube in a laboratory.

They think that everything can be defined and managed in one or two simple words or expressions or policies.

The lunatics are TRUELY running the asylum.

Complain about this comment

43. At 12:36pm on 03 May 2010, Dr Malcolm Alun Williams wrote:
We all — including the politician's — have it easily in our power to increase the sum total of this world's happiness now. How? By just giving a few words of sincere appreciation or to do a good deed for someone who is lonely or discouraged. Perhaps you will forget tomorrow the kind words or deeds you do today but the recipient may cherish them over a lifetime.

Complain about this comment

44. At 12:37pm on 03 May 2010, load_of_bull wrote:
Things to come under Conservatives 'Big Society'
www.daily-news.org.uk/video

Complain about this comment

45. At 12:39pm on 03 May 2010, Ngauruhoe wrote:
Socrates 'The Republic' sets out one way to organise things.

Complain about this comment

46. At 12:46pm on 03 May 2010, Lynn from Sussex wrote:
29 Simon Attwood, history will tell you that the country has never had value for money from a Labour government.

32. Where have you been for the last 13 years?

Complain about this comment

47. At 12:47pm on 03 May 2010, John Charlton wrote:
First, it is not the Government's money - it's ours! So the state should take as little as possible from us.
Second, the Government cannot solve every problem or save every individual from his/her own mistakes.
So a bit more of standing on our own feet and "judgemental" allocation of benefits by the Government will be welcome.

Complain about this comment

48. At 12:48pm on 03 May 2010, antonyp wrote:
How about the mp's actually work for us for once in their sad lives and compromise with each other for the best of us all,

if they don't we should have public flogging of mp's, i don't think anyone would disagree with that.

Complain about this comment

49. At 12:48pm on 03 May 2010, Tom Dolan wrote:
32 Cameron’s “Big society” is no different to “no such thing as society”.

I'm 27, fairly sane and kinda on the fence about who to vote for on Thursday. Edging Lib Dem probably, though I wish people would stop only selectively using that Thatcher quote to berate the Conservatives. In the full context of that statement she made, I perfectly agree with her.

"I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand "I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!" or "I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!" "I am homeless, the Government must house me!" and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbour and life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations.."

What exactly is so wrong with this?

[Type text]
Complain about this comment

50. At 12:49pm on 03 May 2010, CWRW wrote:
Claire Herbert @41
Ok so you would like a right wing dictatorship.
With Cameron’s blue shirts army. Brown shirts Blue shirts they are all the same.
All the work of the three wise monkeys

Complain about this comment

51. At 12:50pm on 03 May 2010, exlabour wrote:
I visited a French village with a twinning association.

That village had several community centres, sports halls, orchestras of various kinds, even a music school as well as village associations which all made use of the many facilities.

All of this was paid for through taxes levied on the local nuclear power station.

Most of the buildings were donated to the village by the power station as were many council houses all of which had been built for the original construction workers.

Many local people had jobs at or connected with the power station.

The power station even used the heat produced by cooling towers to heat local greenhouses and swimming baths.

We have a nuclear power station. We get nothing from it but radioactivity.

Local communities are best suited for running their own affairs. Unfortunately local councils tend to be controlled by long time serving and self serving politicians taking their orders from the central party manifesto.

They claim to be local but are far from it in spirit. They see themselves as mediaeval barons and squires and look on the rest of us as serfs to do as we are told.

Complain about this comment

52. At 12:50pm on 03 May 2010, Implementing similar expenses wrote:
I would love to see the public having more of a say in things, such as the running of departments on my local council.

I have picked up on a few things that if they were run differently, they would save money. It seems to me that some of these staff are in "part time" jobs, but make their own long winded systems to create "full time jobs" for themselves!

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
53. At 12:54pm on 03 May 2010, Lord Rant wrote:
I havn't a clue BUT ! I am ABSOLUTELY sure that a society should not sell it,s car factories to China , it's steel industry to India , its food industry to USA, its Banking to Spain. etc;etc:

Then allow mass immigration to take place.....

Anything has got to be better than that !

Complain about this comment

54. At 12:54pm on 03 May 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
'How should Society work'? is the HYS question. Listened to the interviews underlying this HYS report and many other political interviews before.

Conservatives want more 'private' schools yet, at the same time Conservatives want those unaccountable private schools to be publicly-funded?!?!? Charities will, randomly take the place of public services?

Labour admits they had to intervene in all public services after almost 20yrs of neglect of last Conservative administration. But they have gone too far on targets and quangos?

Liberal Democrats want neither of these two mad extremes and will allow all areas between Whitehall, Local Government and the people. So more accountability for everyone who spends taxpayers income and council tax?

Complain about this comment

55. At 12:56pm on 03 May 2010, roddy wrote:
How should society act? With openness, tollerance, dignity and care of course.

However such public activity is impossible with all the government legislation over public life.

In regards to the BIG SOCIETY, some people here think this is designed to provide free services, if they realy listened to Cameron they would know that he is talking about profit making schools, therefor private education for the well off, whilst funding for these businesses would be gained by cutting funding to the free state schools that are already struggling.

Yes society should do more for itself and stop relying on our welfare system so much, but how can we; when all our money and therefore ability to invest in society is taken through government taxation?

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
56. At 12:57pm on 03 May 2010, CWRW wrote:
Implementing similar expenses @ 52
Very true same for Westminster. No moonlighting

Complain about this comment

57. At 12:58pm on 03 May 2010, Alfred Penderel Bright wrote:
Although the major policies of the three main parties seem to be converging there are still issues which divide rather than unite public opinion - such as how and when to start dealing with the HUGE economic deficit; what is really best for the U.K. when it comes to our place in the EU; how to deal with the level of immigration and more importantly what to do about ILLEGAL immigrants; how to build a fairer society with wealth redistribution so that the gap is narrower between the poor and the super rich???
Cameron, Clegg and Brown all need to swallow their pride and work together which is why I believe that a hung parliament is the best solution for uniting Great Britain once again.

Complain about this comment

58. At 12:58pm on 03 May 2010, Scott wrote:
A society in which government isn't a stifling 50% of the economy would be a good start.

Complain about this comment

59. At 12:59pm on 03 May 2010, syd vaughan wrote:
society should work for the benit of all not just the few, we need to understand that everyone deserves a decent standard of living, where everyone contributes to the benifit of all, we seem to have accepted that a monarchy is right and that the bed you are born in gives you special privledges, without work, talent or endeavour, in a fair society everyone is equal, and as the same rights as their neighbour, without fear and without intimidation.

Complain about this comment

60. At 1:03pm on 03 May 2010, TheGrassAintGreener wrote:
Rob jones wrote:

A written constitution
1.5 million redundancies in the public sector - Increases unemployment to 3.5 - 4 million people.
Closure of job centres - No public job outlets, only greedy private ones.
No means testing for core benefits - increase in fraud
No locking up of the longterm unemployed in detention centres this is human rights abuse - Does this actually happen?!
Access to the courts for the 16 million who are excluded from the justice system - legal aid? I'd say means tested legal aid to the financially vunerable only.
citizenship qualifying period 15 years very limited immigration from the EU only work permits up to two years in five. - Currently stands at 13 years. Any ever increasing time period. That flexibility should be left to the employer, and they should be solely responsible for sponsorship. Allow unemployed people to have a pension - So those who already sponge off the system now can get a pension? Hardly sounds fair does it?

A new body of internal affairs to sack and prosecute civil service corruption currently running at 33% in some departments. - Prosecute at whose expense? The taxpayers?

Human Rights abuse by government to be made a criminal offence - Amnesty is already available in the UK, and when's the last time the government abused a person's human rights?

Those earning over 50k in the civil service to have a maximum time in government of 8 years. - Increases the level of employment turnover rates, therefore makes the service less efficient. If limited, should be for long term, like 15 years, and conducted under regular review.

All government contracts let must have a quota of 10% senior long term unemployed. - As above.

Doesn't sound like a society I'd like to live in at all!

Complain about this comment

61. At 1:06pm on 03 May 2010, PAUL WILLIAMS wrote:
The thing is, British society has 'evolved' to where we are now, so we probably are more 'broken' than a third world country. People need some control over their own lives but also to see themselves as part of a big society. Yes, I can see where Cameron is coming from. I think society is 'broken' to some degree; people obviously are opting out of the 'big bit' because of their behaviour. (e.g. cycling on pavements, wearing of hoods in hot weather, (not a sensible fashion statement and the zombie like appearance of headphone wearing commuters...normal? Talk to people for heavens sake!) I personally don't think life is fun enough in the UK. It's easy to look back through rose coloured specs. but people in Britain dressed better, behaved better, looked healthier generally in the past. There isn't as much optimism about as in the seventies I know that, so what are we going to do about it? Do we really think this is as good as it gets? Maybe we need to look back and rediscover what worked years ago, try to recreate a post war 'euphoria'. Olympics might do that locally in London but it needs to be national and TV 'events' is not the answer to that. I think that if we were hearing some positive news each day instead of just economy, economy all the time life would be happier. Politicians never seem to mention the arts these days ....So, clock back, acknowledge the good things from the past and how we achieved them. Jamie Oliver teaching us about nutrition in 2010 really sums up where we have got to, when we knew and local authorities knew about this stuff years ago. I mean did the ancient Greeks have a problem eating? It's all very much like that kind of thing... evolving backwards and people making big money out of reinventing amongst other things FOOD and fitness!

Yeah, money corrupts, that's the whole problem, difficult to deal
with that one really. What's worrying is that society appears to be 'de-educating' itself but is in denial over this, and you have to be a certain age to recognise that.

Complain about this comment

62. At 1:08pm on 03 May 2010, jml1970 wrote:
Cameron's "Big Society" seems to be little more than an activist's charter to me.

Who do you think is going to step in and fill the gaps if the Tories get in and start saying "it's up to you to sort it out if you don't like it"?

Yes, of course, people or organisations with a self-interest agenda.
People or organisations with religious, political or financial motives.

People who simply want a half-decent public service untainted by self-interest or profit will get brushed aside.

As far as I am aware, No Tory politician can tell anyone how any of these mooted "rights" will actually work in practice.


Same with the other examples the Tories quote, like nominating/electing police chiefs and setting up schools.

Complain about this comment

63. At 1:14pm on 03 May 2010, Jethro wrote:
I have a message to Nick Clegg - you are not voted into POWER you are voted into OFFICE! It is that notion of 'power' that bothers me about our politicians and why our society is so wrong. It's about money, money, and POWER, Mr Clegg is a reason not to elect YOU!

Complain about this comment

64. At 1:15pm on 03 May 2010, U14366475 wrote:
A society where the people make more of the decisions, not the corrupt politicians. There should more referendums in which people decide the outcome, not the lobbyists who bribe the corrupt MP's in order to vote/support their way. Rotten to the core is Government, which governs how society works.

Complain about this comment

65. At 1:15pm on 03 May 2010, Mike from Brum wrote:
Government should be there to serve the people. The've lost their way if they think they should be actively trying to do anything other that provide a few services.

[Type text]
The labour mantra of trying to mollycoddle people from the cradle to the grave is fundamentally flawed - just look at how they've mismanaged the economy in the name of active government.

3 days to go, I'm staying up to celebrate the final demise of the failed experiment that was nu-liebour.

Complain about this comment

66. At 1:19pm on 03 May 2010, UKLibertarian wrote:
For all the people who want Britain to have a fairer, more tolerant society, wake up. To demand that the government use force and violence in the name of promoting 'virtue' is at best hypocritical and at worst, immoral, counter-productive and fascistic. Government cannot and should not play at being a grand social engineer, it only causes problems when it sticks its snout in.

As for what I want: less regulation of the economy; an end to corporate welfare; an end to income tax; massive devolution of tax powers, sentencing guidelines and budget issues to local governments; massive public sector cuts; an end to the firearms ban; legalisation of all drugs; withdrawal from the European Union; reform of the electoral system to a Single Transferable Vote system; the election of all Police Superintendents by public vote in their policing areas; an end to the quasi-nationalised rail system that currently runs and a move to a fully private system; the construction of new nuclear power stations to cope with Britain's future energy demands.

There's more, but I really don't have the time to list them.

Complain about this comment

67. At 1:21pm on 03 May 2010, pzero wrote:
We have had more than 12 years of interference from Government dictating what we shoud eat and drink, how we should think, how we are supposed to welcome asylum seekers and change our ways in order that we do not offend anyone who may sue the Government.

What all the parties need to realise is that their vision of society is not what the people want! They should be asking US what we want not telling the same old lies in the hope of a few votes.

Complain about this comment

68. At 1:22pm on 03 May 2010, CWRW wrote:
It's OK the Pope will fix it (somebody who has great authority or status) He’s visiting but will need more than the beatitudes to help us

Complain about this comment

69. At 1:22pm on 03 May 2010, billyhano wrote:
The "big society" encourages groups of individuals to take over the running of schools, hospitals, post offices etc. The argument is that if we have a stake in these services they will produce better results and they will be more efficient. Does this argument sound familiar? The last Tory government encouraged us to become stakeholders in the utility companies, gas, electricity and water. The argument then was that we would have a say in how these companies were run and we would have cheaper bills. What happened in reality is that most of these companies are now foreign owned and make huge profits while we pay extortionate bills. The trouble with the "big society" idea is that most of the individuals who become stakeholders will be like those who bought shares in utility companies, motivated by making a fast buck.

Complain about this comment

70. At 1:23pm on 03 May 2010, chris911t wrote:
If someone finally does something about the spongers on the dole it would be great, but I'll believe it when I see it.

On elections, I think we need to see a change to electoral boundaries so that the current situation is not repeated whereby Labour can be 3rd with about 28% of the vote and end up with more seats than any other party.

But PR... no. There has never been a winner with 50% of the vote so we would end up with the Lib Dems permanently in power supporting either Labour or the Tories (since we would never see an Con/Lab coalition). How can that be good?

Complain about this comment

71. At 1:26pm on 03 May 2010, HalfaWebsite wrote:
Is no journalist going to ask David Cameron something probing about his 'Big Society' idea?

The Conservative Party's website says:

'We will establish National Centres for Community Organising. We will fund the training of 5,000 independent community organisers over the lifetime of the next Parliament. This national army of community organisers will have the skills needed to raise funds to pay for their own salaries, help communities to establish and operate neighbourhood groups, and help neighbourhood groups to tackle difficult social challenges. In the US, the community organising endowment established by Saul Alinsky has trained generations of community organisers, including President Obama.'

I believe SAUL ALINSKY wrote a book called: 'Rules for Radicals', and that he was in reality a very controversial figure. They are not my cup of tea but many US Republicans (i.e. US Tories) hate Alinsky, seeing him as a 'crypto-communist'. I think we deserve some journalistic probing on Alinsky and his influence in the US.
I also want to ask the following question:

What makes anyone think that what amounts to entryist trained 'change managers' coming into local communities, will enhance already hard-working and committed local volunteers and activists. As I see it Cameron's plan my be more controlling (and cost-cutting) than enabling.

Some answers please, before we wake up on fine morning to discover an iron fist beneath the velvet glove.

Complain about this comment

72. At 1:27pm on 03 May 2010, Jeggy wrote:
Society isn't broken - it just doesn't care anymore. There are far too many people who take what they can get - they don't have a clue about what is right or what is fair. If you don't earn/work for it, you shouldn't have it. A fairly simple mantra I think we should all adopt. We wouldn't be in this mess if we did.

There should be NO tax credits, just better taxation. Tax credits gives you the illusion that you are getting something back.

There needs to be more responsibility - what you choose to do you own and are responsible for. If you choose to have children, you should be accountable for what they get up to because obviously they haven't learned appropriate behaviour from you. If you choose to spend all your money and not have a pension, then you deserve what you end up with and have a basic lifestyle when you retire. If you choose to immigrate to the UK then you need to assimilate the best you can and NO, you cannot expect to be financially supported or be able to live in your 'ghettos' of a different society.

There needs to be greater justice and honesty - that includes politicians. Justice needs to be more strict, build more prisons if you need to - yobs and criminals should not be given the illusion that they can do what they want. People are tired of policing their own communities - put Bobbies back on the street not behind the desk.

Bring back national service - it need not be the military. National service could be in the local community, be part time but a contribution is mandatory for those between 16 and 21. It will not only instill discipline but a greater understanding of our society and what is expected of them. If they are not happy with our society as a result, they are welcome to migrate.

Just a few ideas...

Complain about this comment

73. At 1:29pm on 03 May 2010, Wideboy wrote:

[Type text]
A fair society, which need change at the moment.

equal pay for women who do the same jobs, but equal rights for a fathers at the work place, mother and father have very different un written rules.

equal retirement age for men and women ie 65 for both, something that no government has not got the guts to do, but are happy to increase it for men despite dieing on average 5 years earlier.

equal rights for fathers to see their children not just financial responsibility.

end discrimination and that includes '+ve discrimination'

do just invest in public services, they are not the holy grail of the economy, invest in private sector.

stop manufacturing jobs going to germany because it's easier to make people redundant in the uk

Complain about this comment

74. At 1:30pm on 03 May 2010, Anthony wrote:
I would like a Government that did not try to run my life, make decisions for me or one which tries to force me to accept its own biased political views as being the only acceptable ones.

e.g. Foreign wars
e.g. Immigration.
e.g. Europe referendum.
e.g. Political Correctness.
e.g. Feral children.
e.g. Benefits culture.
e.g. Police state mentality.

Complain about this comment

75. At 1:31pm on 03 May 2010, Clear Incite wrote:
No matter how much the Conservatives might like too they are not going to turn society's clock back. As a Agnostic I believe that the dumping of religion or living without religion has jolted the moral compass of society, also didn't the Conservative start the removal of local powers to Central Government in the 80's because most Socialist Councils wouldn't play ball.
It might surprise you that I believe Labour councils should be banned by law along with, this won't surprise you Conservative Governments. My personal views is that nice people need to live next to nasty people and the laws regarding the behaviour of individuals needs to be tightened.
I'm all for the socially ignorant spending vast amounts of their time picking up Dog excrement and Litter in bright orange clothes.
And I'm a Liberal.
I'm also not a Nimby, the street I live in contains both the nice and the nasty, thanks to a brilliant community Police Officer, she has knocked (figuratively) a lot of these people into shape.

Complain about this comment

76. At 1:32pm on 03 May 2010, roddy wrote:
70. At 1:23pm on 03 May 2010, chris911t wrote:
If someone finally does something about the spongers on the dole it would be great, but I'll believe it when I see it.

On elections, I think we need to see a change to electoral boundaries so that the current situation is not repeated whereby Labour can be 3rd with about 28% of the vote and end up with more seats than any other party.

But PR... no. There has never been a winner with 50% of the vote so we would end up with the Lib Dems permanently in power supporting either Labour or the Tories (since we would never see a Con/Lab coalition). How can that be good?

Not that I disagree about cracking down on benefit cheats, but the spongers on the bonuses cost us more.

Regarding a majority vote, when was the last time this entire system got 50%+ of the public vote, even if you do count all the fraudulent votes toward voter turn out which they do.

Complain about this comment

77. At 1:36pm on 03 May 2010, HalfaWebsite wrote:
David Cameron's 'BIG SOCIETY' ideas are based on the ideas of a long-since dead American called SAUL ALINSKY (just search for his name in the Conservative Party's website).

Are the many, many people working to bring about a better life for people in local UK communities really have trust in thousands of 'trained' change managers coming into their areas packed full of officially sanctioned and financed ideas taken word for word from someone whose ideas came out of American (not British) experience, and in particular conditions, circumstances and ways of life, finance, income and laws in the Chicago area. I fear a mighty mis-match, a lot of arm-twisting, disillusionment and an awful lot of wasted money and setbacks for real change.

This 'Big Society' notion needs the glare of a spotlight on it before it is too late.

Complain about this comment

78. At 1:37pm on 03 May 2010, CWRW wrote:

[Type text]
Complain about this comment

79. At 1:37pm on 03 May 2010, Prymuz wrote:
Society is top down - those at the top set an example to those below. There is a correlation between the dishonesty demonstrated by our political leaders and the eroding and selfish attitude of society. Until those at the top set an example then the society will continue to fall apart and spilt into different social and economic groups.

Our failing is due to failure of state policy and the actions of political groups for short term gain at the cost of long term people success.

This is the reason and all other reasons and causes spilt from this. This debate is over but the problem continues.

Complain about this comment

80. At 1:38pm on 03 May 2010, jml1970 wrote:
#70 -

But PR... no. There has never been a winner with 50% of the vote so we would end up with the Lib Dems permanently in power supporting either Labour or the Tories (since we would never see a Con/Lab coalition). How can that be good?

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But First Past The Post... no. There has never been a winner with 50% of the vote so we would end up with the minority (35-40%) of those who voted holding 100% of the power (since we would never see a Con/Lab coalition).

It's a vastly smaller minority if you measure it on those ELIGIBLE to vote - many of whom don't vote simply BECAUSE they know their vote won't count for anything under the current system.

How can that be good?

Complain about this comment

81. At 1:38pm on 03 May 2010, Bryan White wrote:
As much as i would like a better society rather than a bigger society. It just cannot be achieved without adequate finance being provided by central government. Whilst Education is suppose to be delegated to a local level it is governed by the level of funding provided my the national government. The same
goes for roads, health & care even the police, so please don't let the politicians try to spin a headline catching phase that has no real substance.

i would be more supportive of David Cameron if he would be honest and forget forget he was a spin doctor and admit we need a fairer society where all citizens are equal and that their vote `is based on equality and not the marginal seat you might live. I just cannot believe that he really believes deep down that first past the post system is truely fair. Unfortunately like his buddies in the shadow cabinet he is ruled by his inner instict that his party would never be able to get the majority of the electoral vote. We need a society that is fair and of benefit for ALL, not just those born with a spoon in their mouth. Society should be fair, a society that should bring rewards by what you achieve by honest endeavour, a society that is not moulded or rewarded by greed and unfairness. A society where we have an honest open media not controlled by bigots.

Yes, lets have a society that works by ensuring that the Country and its people comes before Party dogma. Lets give it a try by voting for a hung parliament where Brown, Cameron and Clegg are forced to work for the benefits of all and not their party paymasters or the whims of the media moguls. I know I am looking for utopia, but this election is the first in my lifetime that provides that real opportunity to get away from the dreadful corrupt two party system that has split our society for years. Yes, lets vote for a new society that really works in the interest of us all.

I urge all voters to vote tactically for change

Complain about this comment

82. At 1:39pm on 03 May 2010, Scott wrote:
"PAUL WILLIAMS wrote: The thing is, British society has 'evolved' to where we are now, so we probably are more 'broken' than a third world country."

Paul, have you ever actually BEEN to a third world country? Have you ever seen hundreds of people living in "houses" made out of old rubbish? Have you ever watched someone slowly starve to death?

You can debate exactly where the UK lies on a scale of "brokenness" but a country that provides the vulnerable with free healthcare, council housing, income support and old age pensions is NOT, in my opinion, a society that is "more 'broken' than a third world country"

And whilst some things have gone awry, don't forget all the positive evolution like reductions in discrimination and introduction of the minimum wage.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
83. At 1:41pm on 03 May 2010, Paul J Weighell wrote:
How should society work?

Rationally and with foresight.

Promising free biscuits to passengers on the Titanic would not have stopped it sinking.

The UK needs to look up, forward and outwards not down, backward and inwards as it has during this entire election campaign.

Government large or small is useless if it faces the wrong direction. It needs to ignore all voters pleas about 'services' and focus instead on reorganising the UK to better compete in the global marketplace.

The last 13 years have been a well-meant but misplaced and shortsighted focus on state welfare of the people at the expense of long-term future.

Pie in the sky dreams about 'a future fair for all' ignore the fact that the UK's share of global business is shrinking and if you ain’t got no cake then you ain’t got nothing to share, fairly or otherwise.

Growing the UK cake is the priority and all else needs to be subordinate to that, especially low international business priorities like publicly provided social services, in their widest sense, that the UK cannot afford for the foreseeable future.

Complain about this comment

84. At 1:44pm on 03 May 2010, mgaved wrote:
"How should society work?" - we should judge society on how it treats its weakest, not its strongest. That's my question for the politicians. How will you help the elderly, the mentally ill, the asylum seekers escaping from torture, children with learning difficulties, the long term unemployed in areas of little work (and so forth)?

Complain about this comment

85. At 1:45pm on 03 May 2010, John wrote:
A read of the www.EADT.co.uk (East Anglian daily times) is worth a read and you can see just what the CEO of Suffolk County Council thinks. It appears as rate payers we are investing £6.5 million to keep the regulator happy and employed in there jobs. It seems that this cash could have been better spent repairing some 600k pot holes in Suffolk Roads.
Just how important are we people in Suffolk? Not so Gordon Brown would think he left Ipswich this morning drove through Suffolk Coastal constituency, or flew over, to Waveny and by doing so not only ignored the constituents there but also his young hopeful
Adam Leeder. Perhaps at this coming election we should ignore him. So clearly GB thinks society stinks.

Complain about this comment

86. At 1:45pm on 03 May 2010, wiltshire Old Codger wrote:
We need a working Society where we have a real voice, we can start by reforming our outdated and unfair electoral system.

For those in marginal seats to be the real important decisions makers as to who forms our next Government is crazy. In fact, it only highlights by supporting such an outdated and unfair system you are not really interested in a fairer working society, but just your own selfish party interests.

Complain about this comment

87. At 1:45pm on 03 May 2010, roddy wrote:
I am a (self funded) volunteer worker and have been on and off (between working hard to raise the funds) since the early 90s. I would be happy to volunteer on schemes that would aid or serve my local community given that I received basic housing, food and some support during the projects period.

However, like any other socially minded volunteer (and I expect unlike the idealistically motivated ones which are the majority) there is no way that I would work on a Tory proposed scheme. This greedy political party is expecting the common people to do their work whilst they continue to take our money and provide tax cuts to the least needy in society.

Given that we get a hung parliament I would advise that the Greens are given the job of recruiting the unemployed into semi-voluntary workers groups, I am not an avid environmentalist but feel they would be the best minded people to run such an organisation. That organisation could help with any need within their community for which they are suitably experienced and convert waste ground into community gardens that they can use to help sustain their group.

Complain about this comment

88. At 1:46pm on 03 May 2010, 24 years and counting wrote:
The fact that politicians from all over the spectrum seem to think society is something that can be enforced from the top down suggests that none of them are fit to oversee society.

Complain about this comment

89. At 1:46pm on 03 May 2010, The Boss wrote:
Didnt that wicked witch Thatcher once say that there is no such thing as society ?
All David Cameron wants to do is bring back is fox hunting for his rich chums "Tally ho"
Those toffs that like hunting defenceless animals might want to try and hunt something that will fight back.
294

Complain about this comment

90. At 1:46pm on 03 May 2010, Donald wrote:
As an American who is well aquainted with the dangers of ideological conservatism, I fear for the British people. In America, Corporate America has done a great deal of damage to our social and political processes as it attempts to turn America into one large Corporation, replete with an education system designed to turn children into non thinking uncreative machines. Corporate America is aided by the propagadist Rupert Murdoch, from whose Fox News conglomerate (Sky news in the UK)he issues buzz words, spins and talking points that attempt to make ideological conservatism acceptable. The Tea party is an example. In Cameron I hear echos of Murdochianism, which boiled down is the effort to sell the idea that that the value of money is money itself, and to reject the idea that that value can only reside in what money can buy, which often means things that cannot be summed up in terms of cash. While Cameron often sounds reasonable, behind his words a great darkness lurks.

Complain about this comment

91. At 1:47pm on 03 May 2010, dannymega wrote:
How should society work?
Fairly! Unfortunately it can't happen under a monetary system in which greed is a virtue.

Complain about this comment

92. At 1:49pm on 03 May 2010, UZOMA UGOJI wrote:
The British society in which i belong as a citizen should be made free for all to belong without racial restrictions on unwarranted modalities to create favour for a few at the detriment of many. Things i will the Lib dems, conservatives and labour to do is to rectify certain principles that will make every citizen and resident more adaptive to government policies despite ones race. Blacks are so unfavoured in this country raely but a few you see a black man in the police force, fire brigade, ambulance crew(paramedics), Prison Officers. Were you see more blacks is on retail shops as guards on the shop floor, cleaners, school cover supervisors etc. Its too bad and their should be a change to this situation. Equal opportunity for races in the country. We should love each other and put heads together to keep our country the greater.

Complain about this comment

93. At 1:53pm on 03 May 2010, Queen_Becchi_B wrote:
We are always being told that support services are available for parents or carers, but I have yet to see these support services actually support the people rather than league tables. I don't believe anyone in the big 3 know what it is like to have very little & have to fight to get the support that you need. In my experience if you have money you can have everything, if you're poor you just have to make do with whatever they are willing to
give, which isn't necessarily what you need or have asked for. They country is broken in terms of government, but society is not. I see many instances of the community making up for the diabolical lack of government care for the elderly & disabled. It is thanks to the many charities & volunteers that any support services are running at all.

I fundraise for a charity Action for Children. One of the things they do is contribute to the running of Sure Start centres. These government initiatives are only part government funded. If these centres start showing promise of being good the government withdraw their portion of the funding with the excuse 'you're doing well enough'. Basically forcing them to cut much needed services to bring the centre back down to the level of government funded centres. I don't see any different attitudes on the horizon, in fact I can see far more support services being reliant on charitable donations & voluntary workers.

Complain about this comment

94. At 1:53pm on 03 May 2010, exlabour wrote:
If politicians really want to 'listen to the people' we should help them.

Everyone on the electoral register to have a computerised connection to the parliamentary voting system.

After they've debated their latest bright idea and shuffle off to say aye or nay, we all vote for home on the debate.

The result will then be a democratic result. No more westminster manipulation. The ayes have it: twenty million to three.

Now that would be democratic.

Complain about this comment

95. At 1:57pm on 03 May 2010, tombolina wrote:
How should society 'work'? I'm a bit fed up of work. Seems to make a lot of people pretty miserable. Suggest we stop doing so much of it.

Complain about this comment

96. At 2:05pm on 03 May 2010, downshep wrote:
Government should be a big as is needed to deliver the public goods that it is tasked with providing... but no bigger. I am disappointed by competing ideologies and successive governments firstly centralizing powers and then decentralizing them. Both processes just add cost and neither is 'right'. Should we define the purpose of government first and then decide the ratio of government to private sector or population? If we could establish a relationship, then perhaps we would stop this see-saw effect, it might 'right-size' government.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
97. At 2:06pm on 03 May 2010, HAVERTON HILLBILLY wrote:
Not one of the parties offers everything to anyone. We should
have a coalition, proportional representation - anything that
doesn't throw the majority of votes in the bin simply cos they
weren't first past the post.

Complain about this comment

98. At 2:06pm on 03 May 2010, Richard Holmes wrote:
Britain's society, as a whole, is broken. In the developed world,
Britain is among the top 3 worst countries on all the following
indicators: teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, alcohol abuse,
crime rate relative to the population, violent crime, obesity,
divorce, single parenthood, child abuse, child fatalities in car
accidents, depression, suicide. It's pretty clear that something
is wrong.

Much of the entire resources of the NHS, police, courts, and
Local Councils are now devoted to keeping a lid on this broken
society, to cleaning up the mess it leaves behind. I work in a
Local Council and we estimate that about a third to a half of all
our revenue (that's your Council Tax) is spent dealing with
crime, preventing crime, or dealing with its consequences. It's a
VERY expensive way to run a society, the way this country is
doing it.

Complain about this comment

99. At 2:09pm on 03 May 2010, NigelRHolder wrote:
It seems as though the Tory Party has lost the courage of its
convictions. Whilst it remains true that a successful Tory Party
must appeal to the centre ground in politics, it is wrong, then
to assume, that innovative and radical policies must be abjured.
The ideal policy - and one policy is better than ten - would be
radical, far-reaching, grounded in conservative values and of
appeal to all but the most reactionary parts of the electorate.

In the current debate it seems that everyone has lost the will to
advocate significant reductions in taxation. It is as though
victory has been conceded to socialism on the battlefield of the
public services. Is it not now the time for a "Progressive Tory"
to state a few self-evident truths? Given that Daniel Hannan has
detached himself from the constraints of Cameron's march to the
centre ground - and has done so on the issue of liberty - perhaps
he should elucidate these truths?

Taxation is evil - it may in some cases be a necessary evil - but
it should be minimised at all costs. Why? - because taxation
involves the sequestration of wealth from the citizen by the
politician so that the bureaucrat may then exercise choices,
notionally on behalf of the citizenry, in how that wealth is to
be disbursed. In practice, the public sector is parasitic on the
public purse, as it will always feed itself before it feeds the
citizen. Furthermore, in taking choice away from the citizen and
exercising it by proxy, the public sector regularly commits
monopsony – the denial of free and fair competition through the exercise of monopoly purchasing power within a rigged marketplace. And this amounts to an assault on the most fundamental conservative value – freedom of the individual.

Freedom is only evidenced when the individual can exercise choices in what they do and how they do it. It is true that we have much freedom in many aspects of our lives – travel, speech, diet and association to name but a few areas. But, even in those areas where the State exercises fairly loose constraints – through sensible regulation – true choices are only available to those who possess what economists call effective demand or discretionary spending power. When the State sequestrates wealth through excessive taxation it shrinks the discretionary spending power of the citizen to such an extent that the taxation itself amounts to an assault on basic freedoms. Further, when the state arrogates unto itself the right to administer the delivery of essential services, then the assault on freedom of choice is even clearer.

The has been much talk of late about the role of the State a commissioner of services, with competition being provided through a multiplicity of providers, some of whom may be in the private sector. It is important to recognise that true competition only exists when an individual citizen freely can make a value for money distinction between providers that are vying for trade in a free market place. As anyone who has seen the public sector tendering process at work will attest, bureaucrat choice is a very poor substitute for the judgement of individual citizens about those choices which are in their own parochial and immediate best interests.

Socialism has always sought to transfer wealth from rich to poor. The principle mechanism devised to achieve this has been to tax the rich and to give benefits to the poor. However, an additional mechanism, the arrogation by the State of power over the delivery of essential services, has somehow become enshrined as an essential component of wealth redistribution policies. Both of these socialist nostrums should be challenged.

First, taxing the rich and giving benefits to the poor is a “Revenue” rather than a “Capital” solution. State benefits will never enrich the poor; they just institutionalise the poverty trap. Conservatives, as believers in capitalism, should seek to transfer wealth, not just benefits, to the poor. The sale of council houses to their tenants was a classical example of compassionate capitalism and we should urgently search for new ways of wealth creation for the poorest in society.

Second, if we believe that true freedom is only achieved when individuals have the wealth to exercise free choices about all the goods and services that they might wish to purchase, then the purchasing decision must be transferred from the bureaucrat to the citizen in every feasible circumstance.
Third, if we believe that capitalism is the preferred method for the delivery of goods and services - because the profit motive moderated by competition is the best mechanism for delivering quality at the lowest cost - then conservatives have an obligation to ensure that, in every practical circumstance, public services should be delivered by profit seeking private enterprises operating freely within a competitive marketplace.

These ideas can be unified under a single policy strap-line - "Transferring Wealth from the State to the Citizen". We should set out a programme to transfer ownership to our citizenry, of all those state enterprises which cannot be defended as "Natural Monopolies". Every hospital and every school should be incorporated as a limited company with share capital distributed to all in the relevant catchment area. It would be important to transfer the shares to citizens rather than sell them - millions of citizens would become capitalists at a stroke, able to trade their shares or to retain them as profitable investments.

Equitable education funding would be achieved by distributing vouchers to parents each year for the purchase of the national curriculum from any school of their choosing. By moving every school to the private sector, the damaging class-divide between the state sector and the independent sector would be removed - all schools including those in what is now called the independent sector would take these vouchers. A continuum of provision from independent schools would emerge, with some charging nothing, some charging for extra curricular activities and some charging significant top-up fees.

Healthcare, free at the point of need, would be preserved for all emergency and acute conditions, and in a highly subsidised form for all treatment of chronic conditions, by the introduction of a hypothecated tax that funded insurance payments to all patients. Citizens could choose their insurer from within a competitive marketplace. Emergency and acute care would be paid for directly by the insurer according to locally agreed schedules of rates for specified healthcare interventions. These rates would be negotiated between insurers and hospital companies within a free market. Chronic care would be subject to citizen choice of provider and basic care would be reimbursed by their insurer with "Optional Extras" paid for out of advance voluntary contributions or ad-hoc top-up fees. Thus the principle of free healthcare at the point of need would be retained for all accident and acute care, whilst a regime of differential insurance premiums would disincentivise the adverse lifestyle choices that require greater reliance on the healthcare system.

In summary, we privatise all healthcare and education, eliminate the sclerosis of state control, introduce competition into those marketplaces and thereby significantly reduce the costs of service delivery and simultaneously increase the quality of the services provided; empower the citizen with real choice rather than bureaucrat mediated choice, and give every citizen - even the very poorest in society - a first step on the capitalism ladder. Together, these policies would reduce the tax burden and
more fairly distribute the benefits of taxation throughout society. Who would dare to oppose such policies? Or should I ask—who would dare to advocate them?

Complain about this comment

100. At 2:10pm on 03 May 2010, Newbunkle wrote:
Proportional representation, compromise, and as much freedom as possible. :)

Decades of "us vs them" politics leads to so much waste. Look at the National Identity Register for one example. Both the Tories and Lib Dems would scrap it, but Labour have spent billions on it already. What a waste of money! How many other schemes do we keep starting and stopping, throwing money down the toilet? If we had a truly representative government, these things could be negotiated and decided on in advance.

The "worm" tool on the last debate clearly showed the public reacted better to positive talk and the idea of working together. I think people really are sick of wasted votes, tactical votes, and voting for the "least worst". Reform would open the doors to positive voting and real representation of everyone's views in parliament.
Appendix 42. All messages in the message thread Papers’ support for parties.

Does a paper's support for a party make a difference?
09:35 UK time, Saturday, 1 May 2010

Two broadsheets have both ditched their support for Labour. Do newspapers have any influence over voters?

The Guardian and its Sunday sister paper, The Observer, are backing the Liberal Democrats, with the former saying it supported their stance on electoral reform.

And The Times and The Sunday Times have switched support to the Conservatives, saying leader David Cameron was ready to govern.

In 1992 The Sun newspaper famously declared "It's The Sun wot won it" on the morning after John Major's election victory.

Have you ever been influenced by the papers? Should papers remain neutral? How much influence do newspapers have?

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

Previous123456789101112Next1. At 10:10am on 01 May 2010, Newbunkle wrote:
I haven't been influenced by the papers, but I expect some people will be. Some are shameless in their twisting of facts to influence the election.

Complain about this comment

2. At 10:23am on 01 May 2010, rifra wrote:
The whole lead up to the debates by the largely R.Murdoch media heap should and will be ignored. Speaking of propaganda, there was a Tory poster stuck on the outside of a telephone box with the curious lie "Bye Bye Bureaucracy" and somebody had scrawled "Hello 20% VAT". So you see the public are beginning the fightback!

Complain about this comment

3. At 10:26am on 01 May 2010, Ron Bowdery wrote:
Who are these self-appointed unelected Kingmakers, such as 'The Times & the The Guardian' King making is as anachronistic as Neville the King maker in the Wars of the roses period. Even worse these two - in my opinion - previously respected publications have sunk to level of 'The Sun' and the 'News of the world', lets not forget the UK branch of Fox News - Sky News. Judging from many of the comments from slightly less powerful people than these up a dark place Editors, Gordon Brown seemed to do well on the last debate, whereas Cameron was the smarmy moneybags, who didn't answer vital questions when put on the spot

[Type text]
by Nick Clegg & Gordon Brown. How come these Ivory tower dwellers
i their editor chairs are so out of touch?

Complain about this comment

4. At 10:29am on 01 May 2010, stopthespin wrote:
I think the papers can influence undecided voters by raising
particular issues. What I think the main parties fail to realise
is the strength of feeling many individuals have for specific
causes. That said, most political parties, by definition retain
an outdated approach of projecting their historic stance of left,
right or centrists policies. This increasingly doesn't fit the
way the public now think. The whole of our constitution needs to
reflect the public opinion of how we are governed and what we
want of a democracy. The anachronistic first past the post tribal
party politics model is deeply flawed and unrepresentative and
that is I suspect why the Guardian has abandoned Labour.

Complain about this comment

5. At 10:29am on 01 May 2010, Andrew Lye wrote:
I read the Sun, but ignore most of their political coverage as
its bilge and so pro-Cameron.

I have ALREADY voted by postal vote, Lib Dem as I am intelligent
down to make my own decision and am sorry there could be sheep
who will vote because of the paper they read.

The Sun's political coverage is almost hysterical and you can
only laugh at it.

Complain about this comment

6. At 10:30am on 01 May 2010, ronnie wrote:
the guardian is only jumping ship to try and save labour,
leapords can never change their spots

Complain about this comment

7. At 10:30am on 01 May 2010, sledger10 wrote:
No not really - not for me anyway.
Isn't it true that most people now don't actually physically BUY
newspapers? - They might look at them in shops/cafes or on the
internet instead! That's the truth. And they cost a bit too! £1
for The Times now.
However, my main really big disappointment and disgust is with
The Times, who must have just lost 000s of readers by making
their political allegiance with the Tories!!
They just lost me.
I have just written to The Times and told them that what they
have done is totally unnecessary and taken this paper back
towards the gutter press!!
That's very sad for me as I will not buy/read this paper
anymore, now that I know where they really stand - visibly
politically biased - so what's the point of reading it anymore?!
It's Murdoch's influence sinking to new and desperate depths!
Complain about this comment

8. At 10:31am on 01 May 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote: 'Does a paper's support for a party make a difference'? Financially - probably. Ethically - occasionally. Brainwashing - definitely. Seriously - very encouraging to see any newspaper supporting electoral reform and proportional representation. Simply because, anything that gives power back to voters, has to be an advance in the democratic process in 100yrs? Majority of the population are more politically 'savvy' than many papers give them credit for. Personally, I would worry about any form of media (directly or indirectly) owned and run by Murdoch et al?

Complain about this comment

9. At 10:32am on 01 May 2010, john wrote: no today people use the internet plus tv news programmes show the main story at least once every 15 minutes the only points the public will remember is when which ever party makes major mistakes such as if we go into recession, immigration, or a referendum.

Complain about this comment

10. At 10:32am on 01 May 2010, jd wrote: I don't care who the papers support. I will make my decision on the policies of the parties not what they think.

Complain about this comment

11. At 10:35am on 01 May 2010, Cynosarges wrote: At least the papers state their political preferences *OPENLY* Furthermore, if I don't buy a paper, I don't have to pay for their party propaganda. Unfortunately, the BBC claims 'neutrality' despite its pro-Labour predjudices. I can point to some BBC programmes that are more partizan than Labour party political broadcasts. Furthermore, I am forced, under threat of prosecution, to pay for the BBC's Labour party propaganda. So am I concerned about the papers? No. Am I concerned about the BBC's failure to meet its duty of political neutrality? YES!!

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
12. At 10:35am on 01 May 2010, Alfred Penderel Bright wrote:
It is a FACT that all forms of publicity will impact on the
general public to some extent - either consciously or
subliminally - which is why there is a HUGE advertising industry
of which newspapers play a significant part. Of course people
will react in many different ways but the press only reinforces
their political views one way or the other.

Complain about this comment

13. At 10:38am on 01 May 2010, stanblogger wrote:
The important thing is how a paper presents the news and any bias
in the comment that it prints, day in day out. Any statement that
the editors may make about party preference should be taken as a
warning to readers that there may be some bias in that direction.
A reader who uses other sources of information, as well as a
particular paper, should already have a good idea of its
political standpoint.

Personally I never buy newspapers which appear to be promoting a
political viewpoint different from my own, though I will read the
them, if I can do so for free. If I am to be subjected to
political indoctrination, I certainly do not want to pay for it.

Complain about this comment

14. At 10:39am on 01 May 2010, Gillian wrote:
I think the public has the brain to vote for a party regardless
of whether a paper is pro tory or labour. It is the idiots of our
society who are very easy to lead that worries me.

Complain about this comment

15. At 10:39am on 01 May 2010, Graham Harris Graham wrote:

Newspapers as indeed most news media are biased to some degree,
it's human nature. That's why it's important to read a broad
spectrum of media so one can develop a reasoned opinion rather
than one based on the will of a single person (magnate, owner,
proprietor, editor etc)

Unfortunaelty, many feel aligned to the dogma of left or right
wing papers because of social indoctrination. And newspapers
editors know this which is why they have influence over the
electorate.

The antidote is literacy, education, freedom of information &
freedom of choice.

A good government must therefore raise reading & writing
standards, open their filing cabinets & prevent monopolies in
media & broadcasting.

[Type text]
Hang on a minute! We don’t have good government, do we?

Thank goodness then we have The Beano.

Complain about this comment

16. At 10:39am on 01 May 2010, yon_willis wrote:
I’d prefer to make my own decisions about who to vote for, rather than have them influenced by the media. That is why I rarely read newspapers and get my news from politically neutral media sources, such as the BBC.

Complain about this comment

17. At 10:40am on 01 May 2010, chiptheduck wrote:
I expect Sun readers will be influenced.

They’ll vote for the leader with the biggest ones.

Complain about this comment

18. At 10:41am on 01 May 2010, ian cheese wrote:
The papers should simply give a balanced view of the issues and leave the voters to make up their own minds.

Complain about this comment

19. At 10:41am on 01 May 2010, Webb of Deceit - Beckham The Overrated Hasbeen wrote:
The Daily Mirror is a very good argument to never vote Labour

Complain about this comment

20. At 10:41am on 01 May 2010, MoJo-chan wrote:
The problem is that newspapers don’t contain much news any more, only opinions. People would like to think that they are above being influenced by the papers but the reality is that if you get your news for a constantly biased source and mixed in with opinion rather than just the straight facts you can’t help but have your world view skewed as a result.

Complain about this comment

21. At 10:41am on 01 May 2010, HPledge wrote:
Why do the papers have to so overtly support anyone?

We need to understand that it is almost impossible to report news without introducing some kind of bias - simply deciding what stories to report introduces bias. (Why, for example, is the BBC not reporting todays rallies against public sector pay cuts which are being reported on Sky News?). Even if stories are reported what prominence they are given makes a big difference to the perception.

Having said that it is a whole lot worse that papers come out and start recommending how people should vote. People always say (and
I agree) that having totally government owned press would be
dangerous but its not really clear that having the press owned by
very rich corporations with very strong vested interests is
really any better.

Complain about this comment

22. At 10:42am on 01 May 2010, Singletaxpayer wrote:
Yes, newspapers are politically biased, even the Independent -
which is trying to position itself as having no political
allegiance (and in my view failing - just look at its website and
compare its headlines of political stories compared with other
media).

However, part of freedom of speech is being able to express bias.
It doesn't concern me which political party one or other
newspaper supports - as we choose to buy newspapers or visit
their websites. They also declare their allegiance to one party
or other - so you know what you're getting when you buy them.

Many people buy particular newspapers expecting a particular
political bias. So I wonder whether it's the readership who
influences the newspaper, as much as the newspaper influencing
the readership.

Unfortunately, the BBC demonstrates political bias too.

Even a journalist who aspires to maintain political impartiality
may fail to do so. Even tone of voice and body language can
betray a reporter's bias.

Nobody is impartial. We are each tainted by our upbringing,
social demographic and personal circumstances.

It does dishearten me to hear some of the electorate declare
allegiance to one party based on their parents' political
persuasion or habitual practice ("I've always voted X.") without
considering what is best for the country, rather than their own
pocket. But hey - that's my political bias!

Complain about this comment

23. At 10:44am on 01 May 2010, Newbunkle wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke
the House Rules.

24. At 10:44am on 01 May 2010, sledger10 wrote:
I think one of the problems is that the newspapers are currently
in a big financial pickle - including Murdoch!
The public are sick of him and his "Pay" for everything culture.
He now wants to charge for online content - but nobody wants to
pay for it!!
If you look in The Times now, you'll find it's Tory biased anyway
- the Leader Column is now a joke - whereas it used to be the
pride of journalism - now, it's a Tory fashion parade! Look at
yesterday's, for example!
It's also full to the brim of "trashy" advertising - who wants to read (or more importantly PAY for) that stuff?! Basically, we don't need newspapers anymore so they're becoming an irrelevance!

Complain about this comment

25. At 10:45am on 01 May 2010, David Cheshire wrote:
Of course it matters. There are two aspects; one stinks. It is perfectly acceptable for papers to openly weigh pros and cons and come out at election times. What stinks is when a built-in editorial line spills over into and pollutes reporting. Then it becomes a steady drip, drip, drip of poison in the form of chronically biased, vituperative, highly selective "reporting" of the news itself. Papers are mostly privately owned by big business people; and which party do most of this group instinctively support? This built-in bias distorts public perception and undermines democracy.

Complain about this comment

26. At 10:46am on 01 May 2010, Newbunkle wrote:
"I have ALREADY voted by postal vote, Lib Dem as I am intelligent enough to make my own decision and am sorry there could be sheep who will vote because of the paper they read."
- 5. At 10:29am on 01 May 2010, Andrew Lye

Same here. I read the manifestos, made my decision, and voted Lib Dem as soon as my postal vote form arrived.

Complain about this comment

27. At 10:46am on 01 May 2010, aristotles23 wrote:
The number of people who get their political views from tabloid "news"papers is frightening. I know that Murdoch has decided he wants the Tories to win, he is obviously going to gain in some way. Just the idea that he has the power through his ownership of the Sun and the Times and Fox "news" as well as Hello! etc., that he can influence millions through his media concerns, it's wrong that he, or anyone else in his position should be allowed to use media outlets to push a political bias, or viewpoint. We are all familiar with the power of suggestion, and people sometimes seem to forget about vested interests, and vote for their regular papers choice, maybe not even fully realising it. Murdoch and all other media should be banned from pushing ANY political party forward in their various media, with whopping great fines for any breach of the rule. I truly believe that this should be the case, Ban them from peddling ANY political bias, force political reportage to be impartial for the sake of fairness especially but also out of a desire to limit the power and influence of media moguls such as Murdoch, the Guardian should know better as well, shameful propagandist tactics. It is getting more like thirties Germany every day, we need to legislate against this blatant manipulation and engineering of public opinion, which is all too easily swayed by the Machiavellian subterfuge used by
Murdoch in pursuit of power. Ban political bias from the front pages of all "news" papers, and from the inside as well. The owners political opinions have nothing to do with "news", his political affiliations are a matter for him and him alone, not to put ideas in peoples heads.

Complain about this comment

28. At 10:47am on 01 May 2010, U13667051 wrote: I thought the 'respect' party would be more to the Guardian's liking.

They have certain core subjects that both obsess about.

Complain about this comment

29. At 10:52am on 01 May 2010, marscentral wrote: I think newspaper support is more indicative of opinion than formative. The papers want to be read, so catering to existing opinion is better (financially) than trying to convince people of a view and risk rejection. Neither paper's change of loyalty is surprising. The Guardian has become increasingly critical of Labour and is far too left leaning to go Tory, as of course are many traditional Labour voters. The Times is more conservative, like those attracted to New Labour and I'd like to think that's it's reasoning for Tory support and not Murdoch's influence.

In an ideal world, papers wouldn't have a party loyalty. But, since they do, I prefer them to be open about it so we know their bias.

Complain about this comment

30. At 10:53am on 01 May 2010, mitchurchin wrote: The level of bias and mistruth is incredible in this election with the Murdoch papers almost hysterical in their desperate bid to get Cameron and his cronies into power. Perhaps other people might see through their obvious bias and make their own decisions based on their experiences of life here.

Life really is getting better and nearer a stable normality, the NHS is better, crime levels are dropping, and Camerons broken society was of his party's making. Make your own decision, not swayed by some corrupt newspaper editor.

Complain about this comment

31. At 10:53am on 01 May 2010, Queen_Becchi_B wrote: What ever happened to non biased reporting?? I don't think any news agency can claim to be neutral anymore, they're all pushing one piece of propaganda or another. I would welcome a return to FACTUAL reporting, but that doesn't sell papers.

Complain about this comment

32. At 10:54am on 01 May 2010, angry_of_garston wrote:
I am surprised any paper supported the labour party. They would be seriously limiting their readership to the small section of society which is no longer socialist yet not quite Tory

Complain about this comment

33. At 10:55am on 01 May 2010, makar wrote:
Papers print the news that people want to hear, the things that will get them the most money.

The same principle applies when talking about political party allegiance. They are purely showing their support (or lack of) in a strategic way to make the most paper sales and get them the most money.

It just all comes down to money.

Complain about this comment

34. At 10:56am on 01 May 2010, Freda Peeple wrote:
absolutely I always vote for who the papers tell me to vote for.

I also like the statistics they publish on issues like immigration, especially the The Mail, The Telegraph and The Spectator. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't know anything about such things.

Complain about this comment

35. At 10:56am on 01 May 2010, charleyfarleigh wrote:
People have Power, simply do not buy these comics, do your own research, to arrive at your own conclusion.

The written word is only somebody else's opinion, usually a Bigot!!!OOPS now I've said the B word.

Complain about this comment

36. At 10:57am on 01 May 2010, scotbot wrote:

Simply put, the Times decision is less to do with reflecting supposed popular opinion, than it is do with adhering to publishing guidelines from News International HQ.

For anyone who believes otherwise, I have a very nice bridge to sell you.

Complain about this comment

37. At 11:00am on 01 May 2010, nat201944 wrote:
I read daily mail everyday but I am not a david cameron supporter I read it because its a more interesting read, They will never get me to vote for cameron
38. At 11:01am on 01 May 2010, Antony Forst wrote:
I am not swayed at all by the papers. I just do not need them to
tell me who to support at all. Have never been a floating voter
and have supported the Tories all my life, come hell or high
water. Let them stick to exposing crooked MPs and others, they're
best at that!

39. At 11:01am on 01 May 2010, David Cheshire wrote:
One little newspaper bombshell, broadcast by the BBC after the
last leaders' debate, yet hardly noticed. The BBC reporter told
us - from the offices of the Financial Times - how both the FT
AND the City have zero faith in Osborne - they all trust and
would greatly prefer Darling!! The FT and City of London have no
faith in the man who'll soon be Chancellor. Why isn't this
headline news? Or are the views of a Bolton pensioner more
important? Let's hope, as the best Chancellor we've had prepares
to hand over to the worst, the headlines in a few week's time
WON'T be "UK explodes in Greek-style unrest; voters too late
regret Tory victory".

40. At 11:02am on 01 May 2010, Jim Paris wrote:
My concern is about News International and its desire to
influence directly by lobbying politicians and through its TV and
Newspaper subsidiaries, policy and politics across the world. They
reflect a vehemently neo-conservative view of the world, the view
that generated the policies that caused the bank crisis, the wars
in Afghanistan and Iraq and those that have increased injustice
and inequity across the world. It comes as no surprise therefore
that the Times now supports the Tories. News International knows
it has influenced election results before through its newspapers -
why else did Tony Blair and then Cameron court their favour. So
yes the papers do influence some. I suspect that TV and the
internet is now more of an influence. This explains News
Internationals frenetic desire to get rid of the BBC and publicly
funded broadcasting where balanced reporting is the required
ethic. As yet I have not identified its strategy for controlling
the internet! For me they provide an excellent reason not to vote
Conservative!

41. At 11:03am on 01 May 2010, Doc Richard wrote:
Of course newspapers affect opinion. Readers may claim to not
believe what they read, but the steady day-by-day drip of opinion
and information must have an effect of some magnitude. However,
this effect is offset by common sense. The Sun, Mail, Telegraph,
Express and Times have a combined readership of 18 million, which
is 10 (ten) times the combined readership of the Guardian and the
Independent, so it is a tribute to the resistance of the human
mind to propaganda that electoral opinion is so evenly spread. A more neutral media would result in a far more progressive Britain.

Complain about this comment

42. At 11:07am on 01 May 2010, David Cheshire wrote:
Sky news is leading with the Times' decision to back Cameron - "another blow for Labour's campaign". As the Sun did of course weeks ago. Now who owns the Times? The Sun? Sky News?

Complain about this comment

43. At 11:09am on 01 May 2010, Warren G wrote:
They certainly do.
As (one kind of ) evidence, a lot of the posts on online forums just seem to rehash the discourses spoken about in the newspapers - and in other media, of course. Either the paper's social media managers are very active, or people are absorbing and restating these opinions. I would not like to cite this forum as an example, as of course the self-referential nature of the question we're all answering means we ought to have more sense...and then, this is the BBC website, of course ;). I would agree with many of the posters that the internet and growth of new media have had an increased influence, and I'm sure we'll read about the analyses from our political-networking gurus after the fact...

Complain about this comment

44. At 11:09am on 01 May 2010, rjaggar wrote:
My generation (the 45 and below) pretty much knew that newspapers weren't the truth, they were a party line, when we grew up. So I think that newspapers are less influential than they once were.

When the internet came around, it became possible to answer them back. With email, you can email party leaders and complain. I did twice this campaign.

1. When the Right Wing Press smeared Clegg, LibDem support went up. Because people saw a hatchet job and didn't like it.
2. Murdoch supports the winner. He always has. He's interested in staying in with those in power. He's shifted to the Tories if he thinks they will be closer to winning than Labour, so they'll likely be a minority or a coalition.
3. Many Guardian readers were LibDems years ago. Some preferred that to the Independent which was really the only other choice they had. I doubt the Guardian's readers are following the newspaper, it's more likely the other way around.
4. The most danger is when papers commission opinion polls which are clearly tilted. The danger is greatest when a momentum is created using false polls.
5. What the media owners fear most is stable coalitions. Because they lose power and influence which returns to the electorate.

If we want people not to be influenced by the media so much, we educate our children about how the media works.

[Type text]
Complain about this comment

45. At 11:09am on 01 May 2010, laughingdevil wrote:
When the Sun changed a few months ago we had this debate, great use of tax payers money having it again!

Also when the sun changed the BBC did an article on who the papers supported. It listed only one paper supporting Labour (The Mirror) so either

A - the previous article was badly researched/plain wrong
B - this article is badly researched/plain wrong

As a former reader of the Times I personally never felt they supported Labour, they were pretty harsh on Brown since almost his first day and have been swooning over Cameron since his first day - like the rest of the media who love the though of another media orientated PM ala Blair!

In an ideal world the papers and the rest of the media should be neutral
but since even those who claim they are neutral aren't perhaps there is somthing to be said for the american system where at least you know where everyone stands! The UK papers are simply more honest (and not bound by law) than the TV stations, everyone knows that certain channells generally take a certain view, but it is ignored as it is not "declared support"

Personally I think the Media should be banned from doing any sort of opinion pieces on politics for at least the duration of the election, they should go back to doing what they were formed to do

Find out FACTS!

If any of them remember what facts are!

I am so sick of the constant wishy-washy opinion lead journalism of all the papers and tv news channels, the fact that they call themselves journalists is, quite frankly, a disgrace. They are not, they are gossip-mongers!

Complain about this comment

46. At 11:11am on 01 May 2010, suchan104 wrote:
I find it incredibly amusing how Labour supporters are attacking the Murdoch press for supporting Tory in this election where as they were perfectly happy when they were supporting Labour in the last three elections. This makes a lot of the snide comments about "well who do you expect big business to support" etc. rather invalid.

It's an election campaign. Everybody who cares about politics tries to influence/persuade everybody else. You only have to look at the number of party hacks who flood these HYS "debates" to try
and convince everybody that their party is doing better than the rest. There are undoubtedly a number of people who are swayed by what they perceive as being "popular" or "fashionable". Try standing in amongst a large group of Labour supporters and declare your support for the Conservatives or vice versa. For some people it's easier to fall in with the crowd. However, I believe (I hope!) that when individuals are alone in the ballot box they will vote with what they think is right and not what their mates/the papers/bloke in the pub/HYS posters tell them they should vote.

Complain about this comment

47. At 11:16am on 01 May 2010, gereatricgeorge1932 wrote:
yes? and it should not? all media can have an effect? and these stupid polls? newspapers should print news? and not have opinions on how people vote? many people believe what the papers say? " i don't) the oppiste in fact? i dont need the media to tell me how to vote? the telegraph? sky? etc have there own axes to grind? and should stickto news? and not try to influence the british public how to vote? they are quite happy making there own minds up? like some crimial who's going on trial the papers are not allowed to say anything? so they should not be allowed to on peoples votes? (im'e not saying they are criminals? he he) we want the goverment to run the country? not the media ? so but out? taking the opinion of a couple of thousand people and judging it on how the country feels is utter rubbish? and theres so much rubbish on tv and newspape that people are relieved when it's all over? as for the poltitions spoutin of ontv and media? talks cheap? actionspeaks louder than words? and that's why i voted for mr brown "gereatricgeorge" have a nice day

Complain about this comment

48. At 11:16am on 01 May 2010, MaxG wrote:
32. At 10:54am on 01 May 2010, angry_of_garston wrote:

I am surprised any paper supported the labour party. They would be seriously limiting their readership to the small section of society which is no longer socialist yet not quite Tory

Do you really think that everyone who buys the Sun/Times/News of the World supports the Conservatives?

Complain about this comment

49. At 11:17am on 01 May 2010, asamatteroffact wrote:
I wouldn't be influenced by Newspapers, the BBC or any other mainstream. Journalists have their own vested interest in manipulating "public opinion", just as politicians do, which leads to a bias.

To answer the question though, yes, some people are influenced some of the time.
50. At 11:17am on 01 May 2010, Trina wrote:
I haven’t bought a paper in years - if I do get to read one I am always amazed at how they report their own contained world. I am offended by the red tops as much by their bias as their stereotyping. They seem to belong in an episode of Life of Mars or Ashes to Ashes.

Complain about this comment

51. At 11:18am on 01 May 2010, Andrew MacGregor wrote:
It is terribly important for some MP's. Take Oxford for instance where two parties have queried the use of funds for anti-radicalism being used by another party to prop up their vote through shopping trips for voters. The local paper recognised as having a bias is not interested in the story. Is it because it would damage the vote for the party they back - undoubtedly. It’s a disgrace.

Complain about this comment

52. At 11:21am on 01 May 2010, U13667051 wrote:
scotbot wrote:

==========
And left wing parties have the mother of all media on their side, the BBC.

Paid for by all, benefiting a minority.

Complain about this comment

53. At 11:23am on 01 May 2010, ferryfergie wrote:
I have my own mind. Rampant right winger on some issues and liberal leftie on others. But newspaper-wise I tend towards the relatively central quality papers, and indeed am more influenced by the sport section, the crossword or the freebies that often go with the paper

But for every person who thinks for themselves, there's another who doesn’t. And both votes count

The Times going for the Tories is no real shock. The Guardian going for the Lib-Dems is more significant

In any event i prefer to get as unbiased a view as possible from my media - and some papers, and indeed TV like Sky - are
reflective of their owners' views. So I tend to stick to the terrestrial channels and especially BBC for my politics.

Complain about this comment

54. At 11:24am on 01 May 2010, Mary wrote:
I think people are affected by what they read. In the have your say 2 days ago several posts mentioned a recording of David Cameron shouting down a woman who was trying to get her questions answered - and saying this was not in the media anywhere. This is what I object to, someone else deciding what we can/should read about. Best advice I can give, if you must believe what the papers say, please, just once, splash out and buy 10 different papers on the same day, and even just a look at the front pages will show you they are all saying different things, but claiming they are right. I would rather see a clip of front pages on BBC news website each day, would tell us reams more than all the analysis.

Complain about this comment

55. At 11:24am on 01 May 2010, myneerkop wrote:
I enjoy reading a newspaper if it has a decent crossword, and prefer broadsheet. I ditched The Times when it changed format, having said broadsheet would remain available. There are are some dire newspapers about, so The Telegraph is the only option left - if that goes tabloid I'll save my £1.

Clearly there's obvious party support and skewed, even obviously untruthful reporting. Any reader knows that ink doesn't make a statement true, but we're happy to reinforce our prejudices.

We can't change that.

What should be stopped is use of taxpayers money to provide ad revenue to one overtly govt supporting paper. The govt now being shown the door has spent massively on publicity - is press expenditure transparent and fairly placed?

Complain about this comment

56. At 11:25am on 01 May 2010, Paul wrote:
I suppose they do influence the naive types who believe everything in print, but as for myself they have no influence whatsoever.

Complain about this comment

57. At 11:27am on 01 May 2010, rjc1008 wrote:
I think this time as much if not more than ever. If people are as torn as we are led to believe between voting Tory to avoid a hung parliament and voting Lib Dem then so much can swing depending on confidence. If the papers portray Lib Dem as having a chance to
get in then more voters will vote for them. If the papers play up the risk of hung parliament then some of those voters will switch to Tory out of fear.

Complain about this comment

58. At 11:30am on 01 May 2010, irrelevantdotcom wrote:
I bought a paper a week or so ago. But only for a coupon that was in it - the paper went in the recycle bin unread! I can't remember the previous time I bought one. It was at least a couple of years ago.

Instead, I keep an eye on the news by reading a variety of news websites, both national and local. It's interesting how different sites cast a different light on the same story.

However .. I've always kept in mind the following observation: when the papers/websites report on something I have personal knowledge of, be it a particular incident, or something technical that is in my area of expertise, it is without exception full of errors, misleading, or otherwise inaccurate. I have to then ask myself, if that is the case for the items I know something about, why then should I accept that anything else they print isn't similarly distorted? So I take everything with a pinch of salt.

Complain about this comment

59. At 11:31am on 01 May 2010, clare wrote:
The newspapers are becoming increasingly irrelevant. Everyone is saying that this should have been the first internet election but nothing has happened, only to then ignore anything that does happen on the internet. For example, a facebook poll put Clegg the winner of the third debate with 42% of the vote. This hasn't been reported at all. The fact is the mainstream media is ignoring what's happening on the internet because it is at odds with their perceptions of what is happening. If Clegg got 42% of the national vote, according to the BBC graphics, he'd be prime minister. But not a whisper of that on the main stream media.

Complain about this comment

60. At 11:31am on 01 May 2010, barwick19 wrote:
I think we should be more concerned about TV than newspaper bias, the BBC is so pro Labour, Nick Robinson and Andrew Marr must be fully paid up members of the Gordon Brown appreciation society.

Complain about this comment

61. At 11:32am on 01 May 2010, Commander Gooner Shepard wrote:
Yes. I will never vote for anyone supported by The Sun!

Complain about this comment

62. At 11:33am on 01 May 2010, The Boss wrote:
What a set of turncoats The Times and The Guardian are shame on you both. But having said that I haven't bought a newspaper for
nearly 10 years so the gutter press wouldn't influence my vote anyway.

Complain about this comment

63. At 11:34am on 01 May 2010, alec neville wrote:
I will not vote for the conservatives because:

1) The NHS would be used as a money spinning operation by the drugs company's to make money on un-proven drugs.

2) Making state schools into sodo-private schools by handing them over to parents. Who then will be able to dislin the children of those parents?

Complain about this comment

64. At 11:37am on 01 May 2010, Emzdad wrote:
I don't care who the papers support. I will make my decision on the policies of the parties not what they think.

Would that be in a manifesto which is not legally binding and which the party, once in power, can discard at any moment?

Complain about this comment

65. At 11:37am on 01 May 2010, Matt Robinson wrote:
Do what I do and read them all, your views will eventually balance out.
The Sun and NOTW spurred me to get educated as to not become one of their readership. The Mirror and the Guardian are both excellent examples to never vote Labour and a valuable insight what the socialists would do if left unopposed. The Daily Mail is a good example of what would happen if the country went too far too the right, if anyone has friends that are 'not white, straight etc ', be fearful for them if these guys were in charge.

As a result, my views are thus

Socialism is a failed experiment currently administered by lunatics with no sense of the value of money or the sheer hard work that a lot of people have to do to make it. They just want to equalise everybody (a la communism)and will do it by dragging everybody down to the lowest level possible. I am not quite Tory either as the capitalists have only self interest at heart. A true Tory government would just capitalise all profits and socialise all losses but at least social mobility would be better under them as they do possess meritocratic values that labour seem to despise. The Liberals are quite dangerous, more so than the other two combined as they have absolutely no idea of the value of money

[Type text]
and how fragile even a booming economy can be. They would sacrifice everyone for the sake of someone. Until a party comes along that enforces capitalism, a true free market but with distinct red lines as to where the money is allowed to be made from (i.e. NHS, water, electricity, housing all under public domain) as to not ever profit from human misery. I want one that would have let the banks fail and let the shareholders lose money but would have spent the billions helping the people that would directly lose out (savers, homeowners). I also want one that would bring back grammar schools and champion selection in education so clever people from poor backgrounds never get left behind while the not so clever, already rich don't get all of the good jobs because of the brand of school they went to.

I could go on forever but their is not one single party that currently offers this.

Complain about this comment

66. At 11:38am on 01 May 2010, wind-blown wrote:

God they do influence voters! The lady referred to as a bigot by GB, even though she was a natural Labour supporter, came out with bigoted language on immigration and 'scroungers' which was lifted straight from tabloid newspapers. eg "All those immigrants coming from Eastern Europe", when we know most have gone back.

Sky newspapers, particularly, have provided the language and the sound bites for this election for sheeplike populations to echo. Remember, thought is internalised speech. The Tory / Sky newspapers axis has brainwashed decent folk using serial lying and repeated bigoted language. Sky couldn't believe their luck when they hit target with Brown. The poor deluded lady came out with their sound bites and got called bigoted in the most destructive way by Brown. 'Bull's Eye' they must have said. Their arrows found their target.

This will not happen now, but I think our newspapers should not be allowed to be owned by foreign capitalists. Also TV and internet providers should not own newspapers. There is too much of a monopoly, in this country, of self-interested capitalists. ie Murdock

Complain about this comment

67. At 11:40am on 01 May 2010, Theslamlesswonder wrote:

Does a paper's support for a party make a difference?

Not much difference, I think. A person has only to read the LibDem policies quickly for themselves to know that they are very poor policies.

Complain about this comment
68. At 11:41am on 01 May 2010, taunton-hobbit wrote: I gave up reading newspapers years ago. No one with half a brain cell really believes anything printed in a newspaper do they? - If they do we really are all in serious trouble!

Complain about this comment

69. At 11:45am on 01 May 2010, KenTucky wrote: The sad fact is that most of the papers are so biased it's impossible to get a balanced view from them. If you are a Daily Mail reader you know they will bash Labour even though their king-elect Cameron has performed poorly in the campaign. Like many, I thought he was the slick, articulate, dead-cert for PM, but Clegg has out-done him and now Cameron looks hunted now. It's fascinating. What concerns me is that serious argument gets lost in the biased reporting. For example, if the Conservatives get in it's said that they will make immediate cuts in public spending which will cost tens of thousands of jobs in the public sector. They say they can save money immediately. But the fact is, if they shut down your local tax office, benefit office, Jobcentre, Passport office etc most of those losing their jobs will be entitled to 2 to 3 years severance pay which will cost many millions. So where are the savings?

Complain about this comment

70. At 11:47am on 01 May 2010, Loftgroov wrote: #5 - so why do you read the Sun at all? Its basically a comic.

Complain about this comment

71. At 11:48am on 01 May 2010, Neil Holmes wrote: I do not tend to buy papers, as they have over the years proved to be full of mainly lies, exaggeration and extremely bias views. I even view the TV guide with a good deal of circumspectness! My spell checker did not like that word!

Complain about this comment

72. At 11:49am on 01 May 2010, Loftgroov wrote: There is little point a newspaper aiming itself at Labour voters. The majority can't read.

Complain about this comment

73. At 11:50am on 01 May 2010, Merv Rogers wrote: Have we not been subjected to rip-off Britain long enough to realise that newspapers are businesses too. As such they will always but their own bottom line interests before anything else including the interests of those who buy their papers. They will be pushing for you to vote for a particular party because they think that will be best for them businesswise and not because they think it will do the electors the best good!

Complain about this comment
74. At 11:51am on 01 May 2010, RichYork wrote:
Of course it makes a difference, most people would agree that it works as follows

Times - usually non committal - now Conservative
Guardian - usually fiercely Labour - now LibDems
Independent - Labour, but bizarre
Mail - sort of old fashioned strange Conservative ish
Express - Depends on house prices
FT - whatever business thinks is best
Mirror - Labour
Sun - Conservative
Sport - You've got to be joking

News - Sky -reasonably unbiased - now Conservative - was Labour
ITV - reasonably unbiased - sort of veering towards Cons/LibDems
BBC - anyone but Conservatives/ quasi Marxist

If it didn't make a difference the political parties would not work do hard to get their points across.

Complain about this comment

75. At 11:53am on 01 May 2010, southern_jools wrote:
No they make no difference, their bias is obvious in virtually every word each of the papers write. The way the papers have behaved in their coverage of this election is irresponsible. I have given up buying papers as a result.

Complain about this comment

76. At 11:55am on 01 May 2010, David Cheshire wrote:
Dear Web-of-Deceit - if the Daily Mirror is "a good reason for never voting Labour" - what the hell is the Sun? A good reason for wondering why I bothered to learn to read?

Complain about this comment

77. At 11:56am on 01 May 2010, Tom Bombadil wrote:
Murdoch thinks the Conservative Party will break up and weaken the BBC, reducing competition and allowing him to make more money. He has no interest in democracy. His only interest is in his own power and adding yet another £Billion to his reserves. Murdoch is most certainly NOT acting in our interests. We should do the same as USA and insist that our media can only be owned by citizens of our country.

Complain about this comment

78. At 11:59am on 01 May 2010, RayDOhead wrote:
Have you not noticed, we no longer live in a World where, even supposedly intelligent people are left to make up their own minds upon ANY subject.
The Times has a pull out today (Saturday) telling me that they have backed the winner of every election since 1900. This is linked to their "vote Cameron" pitch so, I would be foolish to waste my vote on anybody else!

The Leaders' Debates, on television, had to be linked to "the worm" so that I would know what to think.

Arrrrghhh!! The thought police have arrived.

Complain about this comment

79. At 11:59am on 01 May 2010, Wakeupthesheeple wrote: 
Sadly the answer is yes, newspapers do influence people's opinions. In fact there are a large number of people who are completely unable to think for themselves and so their "opinions" come directly from their newspaper.

The issue is not so much about whether newspapers should remain neutral, but the enormous right-wing bias in the UK's press. That has affected election results in the past and will continue to do so as so many people can't think for themselves.

Complain about this comment

80. At 12:02pm on 01 May 2010, rjimmer wrote: 
Funny how the left-wingers didn't complain all the time that The Sun was backing NuLab. 
I think it's just a case of the media being no longer afraid of the NuLab bully-boys, and what could happen if they spoke out against them. 
People tend to love winners!
I still think that this election might be a good one to lose for the Conservatives, apart from a LibLab coalition diving headlong into Europe, with VAT on food etc., and changing the voting system so that we have hung parliaments for ever more.

Complain about this comment

81. At 12:04pm on 01 May 2010, lordbrecon wrote: 
I don't read newspapers because they are biased towards the tories! They bend the truth, say lies, why would I buy such rubbish? I will never buy "news"papers that are in effect propaganda sheets for the tories.

Complain about this comment

82. At 12:06pm on 01 May 2010, ROBERT EVANS wrote: 
obviously newspapers have some effect on voting intentions, if they didn't editors would not pin their colours to a political party. Most voters are not stupid; they know that newspapers have their own agendas e.g the Sun has jumped on the Tory bandwagon because it thought it was backing the party that would romp to victory as they did with Labour in 1997. Most of us will not vote for a particular party because the papers tell us to. We will
vote based on our own circumstances and perception of the party policies and their leaders. All I would ask is that people vote on May 6th. It would be tragic for democracy e.g if the Cons win because of the apathy of Labour voters or vice versa. Let us hope that the results on May 7th reflect the will of the majority of voters and not the prejudice of the Newspaper Barons

Complain about this comment

83. At 12:08pm on 01 May 2010, Wakeupthesheepie wrote:
52 SystemF wrote:

"And left wing parties have the mother of all media on their side, the BBC. Paid for by all, benefiting a minority."

How many times have you accused the BBC of being left-wing? Repeating the same accusation ad nauseam doesn't make it true, especially when you provide no evidence whatsoever.

The BBC is objective and is not influenced by a right-wing owner as virtually all media outlets are. That is the truth.

Complain about this comment

84. At 12:08pm on 01 May 2010, cecilia_p wrote:
I agree with the Guardian's stance on this occasion - the way I read it is that they are backing Lib Dems in the hope that this will result in proportional representation being introduced for Westminster elections. This in turn may lead to different and more sophisticated voting patterns, as in elections for the Scottish Parliament where we have 2 votes, one for an individual MSP and one for the regional list. I think this has worked well - although I didn't particularly want an SNP government, it seems to me that Scottish politics have become more consensual and more grown-up than before.

Complain about this comment

85. At 12:09pm on 01 May 2010, Ken B wrote:
Does anybody read the papers ?????????? dont follow sheep make your own mind up , luckily on holiday next week to miss all the hype and garbage . Have fun everyone !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Complain about this comment

86. At 12:11pm on 01 May 2010, Lynn from Sussex wrote:
I stopped buying a newspaper, The Timss not because of it's news content but the incredible amount of paper I was recycling, ie all the supplements that were of no interest.

i would certainly not base my vote on the endorsement of any paper, red top or otherwise.

I have always voted, always for the same party and will do so again next week.
I shall vote for the party that will do its best for the country, deal with the debt that Brown has saddled us will, reform education, help small businesses, maintain frontline services whilst tackling the overmanagement problem, supports our armed forces, supports our farmers, gives freedom back to the individual and does not integrate any further with the EU.

Complain about this comment
87. At 12:12pm on 01 May 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
Reply to post #46 @ 11:11am on 1st May - 'suchan104'.
Are you a 'party hack'?

Do HYS posters have to be party hacks or Labour supporters to be suspicious of Murdoch/News International in their support of ANY particular political party?

Well, it's always good to know the most patronising are the most amused?

Complain about this comment
88. At 12:13pm on 01 May 2010, Norman Brooke wrote:
If the BBC is quasi marxist then the Sun and the Express are quasi Fascist. Both the latter have shamelessly along with the Mail on occaision twisted facts and reality on issues. The Sun came up with a total lie recently when they claimed, 'taxes on the Rich were attacking success'. Wrong. A Robin hood tax which many now support is to help cut our debt and prevent serious cuts which will have a devasting effect on the economy as many economists agree. Furthermore taxes and regulation are to prevent the sort of greed culture and shameless gambling that caused the recession. Obviously the Sun has not heard of the 1929 crash or what caused it but the Sun and the Express have the morals of a toilet and people who read them need serious help though I suspect in the case of the Sun its the titilation and gossop that they like rather than the sorry politics they now support. If we went along with the Sun's mentality then we will have another devastating economic crisis very soon. Even the USA wants tougher regulation on the markets and that says something about the dangerous and pathetic attitude of Tory england.

Complain about this comment
89. At 12:13pm on 01 May 2010, forwardpasser wrote:
There are always the gullible types who follow the papers - all I can say is if a Murdoch paper goes one way, its highly likely I'll go the other.

Complain about this comment
At 12:14pm on 01 May 2010, Wakeupthesheepde wrote:  

"I am surprised any paper supported the labour party. They would be seriously limiting their readership to the small section of society which is no longer socialist yet not quite Tory"

That comment says more about your narrow world view than you could ever imagine. Despite being denigrated and victimised by the right-wing press since the days of Thatcher, there are still many socialists around. The truly sad thing is they no longer have a socialist party to vote for.

Complain about this comment

At 12:16pm on 01 May 2010, 2nd_trombone wrote:  
Yes, of course the newspapers make a huge difference to British politics but in this instance the change of support has come so late that they are merely following their readership rather than leading it.

Complain about this comment

At 12:19pm on 01 May 2010, Wakeupthesheepde wrote:  

"There is little point a newspaper aiming itself at Labour voters. The majority can't read."

It is little wonder that the Conservatives have been out of power for so many years if this reflects the intellect of their supporters.

Complain about this comment

At 12:20pm on 01 May 2010, Lord Rant wrote:  
No, it doesn't matter what the papers say.. Newspapers give the readers what the reader wants, else it losses readers. simple as that

Do you honestly think that if newspaper backed a loser in this election that the paper's credibility would suffer After the election!!!

Complain about this comment

At 12:21pm on 01 May 2010, Implementing similar expenses wrote:  
I guess it has cuts both ways really.

I should imagine a papers support is vital, but if the leader you are endorsing messes up like the other day, then I guess it is a risk distancing yourself from.
Complain about this comment

95. At 12:21pm on 01 May 2010, DeepBlueTwo wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

96. At 12:21pm on 01 May 2010, SNARK wrote:
I am over 60 and therefore cynical beyond belief. I think what I think and believe what I believe. I never believe anything I glean from just ONE newspaper.
Many years ago I managed a Newsagents. I remember an horrific plane crash which was described in detail by the 8 or 10 newspapers we offered for sale the next day. EVERY SINGLE ONE differed in the number of casualties!
I rest my case...

Complain about this comment

97. At 12:22pm on 01 May 2010, Lucy Clake wrote:
74. At 11:51am on 01 May 2010, RichYork wrote:

BBC - anyone but Conservatives/ quasi Marxist

Every now and then on HYS you have can have a good laugh. So Nick Robinson has gone from being the Leader of the Young Conservatives and a member of the Bullingdon club to a Marxist, quite a leap.

Seriously all papers have their political bias but largely how the BBC is viewed says more about the politics of the viewer than the broadcaster. They do try to be impartial however they fall into the trap of reporting news largely concocted by the papers.

We are relatively naive in this country in the States were the media is dominated by the right wing many are becoming a little more suspicious. Murdoch spreads his web and many are caught. The Brown gaffe picked up by Sky when they normally agree not to broadcast private conversations. A car crashing the next day near the Labour poster launch! The BBC repeat these antics and are sucked into the Murdoch mire. In the States you just have to watch Fox news to see how pernicious it can get.

We must fight for the independence of the BBC but I'm afraid if the Tories get in and it comes to pay back time the right wing media bosses will expect their pound of flesh

Complain about this comment

98. At 12:22pm on 01 May 2010, antonyp wrote:

Doesn't matter one single bit, most papers peddle propaganda so this isn't any different i wont be voting they are all flawed and obviously not willing to work together for the best of us, since all lab, con, talk about how dangerous it would be if it was more BALANCED, they sound like arrogant, power hungry, and when
parliament is back they will officially act like children as they have always done.

Complain about this comment

99. At 12:23pm on 01 May 2010, Emma wrote:
When The Sun changed alliances from Labour to the Tories, everyone thought a Conservative landslide was inevitable. Although that was more than a year ago, and in my opinion a big strategic failure as it did nothing to build momentum for the Tories in the election.

If indeed the Tories do fail on election day, it will be a massive 2 fingers up to the print press as we the people won't vote for a particular party just because they say so.

Complain about this comment

100. At 12:26pm on 01 May 2010, Martin wrote:
I have long been aware of the party political bias in national newspapers and am savvy enough to recognise it when I see it.

The extent of which it has an impact of course depends on the circulation of the rag in question, which can therefore be either quite limited or quite extensive.

It does seem odd to me however that the major broadcasters and radio, such as the BBC, can be fined under election rules if they say something 'pro' a particular party during campaigning.

However the traditional press do not come under the same regulations so if they say anything to support their 'chosen one', to my knowledge they are not fined. If someone attacks them for this they then usually cite 'freedom of the press', etc.

Time for a consistency review, methinks.
Appendix 43. All messages in the message thread Sensible drinking.

What would encourage sensible drinking?
09:41 UK time, Wednesday, 2 June 2010

A health watchdog is calling for a minimum price per unit of alcohol in England. Would this make you a sensible drinker?

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) says about one in four adults is drinking too much and damaging their health. Its guidance recommends banning advertising and making alcohol "less affordable".

These ideas have strong backing from doctors and health campaigners, and the Scottish government is already trying to introduce a minimum price. However, the coalition government agrees that alcohol misuse is a problem but does not support a minimum price.

Should there be a minimum price on alcohol? Should advertising be banned? What measures would be most effective in encouraging sensible drinking?

This debate is now closed. Thank you for sending your comments.

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What's this?

CommentsSign in or register to comment.

Previous1234Next1. At 11:05am on 02 Jun 2010, Steve wrote:
What a brilliant idea - you could try the same idea for other drugs. Make heroin legal but then make it so expensive that people can't afford to buy it - then, hey presto, the drug problem is solved! Back in the real world, alcohol abuse is an addiction and putting up the price will not reduce consumption by addicts, simply make the financial consequences of their addiction worse. Education, education, education is the only solution so that people do not grow up treating alcohol irresponsibly - once that behaviour has started it is too late to deal with it effectively. It was the last government which thought that all problems could be solved by hiking taxes (which is effectively what this is) - I hope we are not going to be treated to more of the same.

Complain about this comment

2. At 11:05am on 02 Jun 2010, Rob Greenhalgh wrote:
Yesterday evening when I saw the headline that 60% of people think binge-drinking is a British thing I had to write a blog...

http://robgreenhalgh.wordpress.com/2010/06/01/binge-drinking-is-a-british-thing/

Please read it but more importantly I am trying to find out whether the public think alcohol packaging should have health warnings like on cigarette packets?

[Type text]
Please Vote in the poll on the blog above

Complain about this comment

3. At 11:06am on 02 Jun 2010, Delirium wrote:
What would encourage sensible drinking?

It requires a sea-change in the attitude of certain sections of British society.

Personally I'm hoping we will soon get a younger generation who exhibit a kind of new puritanism as a reaction against the excesses of their elders.

I do feel that increasing alcohol prices will act as a regressive tax on the poorer elements in society - maybe in future all our alcoholics will be rich.

Complain about this comment

4. At 11:07am on 02 Jun 2010, philin wrote:
They say it's to make alcohol less affordable but alas, people who really want to drink will find the money, even if it means cutting back elsewhere! I think it's not fair to us very moderate drinkers though, because we get penalised too! I agree something should be done, like stopping supermarkets offering cheap booze and ditch the happy hours in pubs, and the buy one get one free shots culture.

Complain about this comment

5. At 11:08am on 02 Jun 2010, maledicti wrote:
What people drink and how/when they choose to drink it is a matter of personal choice and bodies like NICE should butt out and leave us to responsible drinkers to enjoy the last pleasure open to us without nannying us into submission.

Instead of treating us like irresponsible children, perhaps they should instead be looking at the reasons why people drink and why this problem exists in the first place. Minimum pricing is not going to be the answer to this one, and once again it is the irresponsible few who are causing the sensible majority to suffer.

Complain about this comment

6. At 11:09am on 02 Jun 2010, presario wrote:
Restore the old traditional pub drinking hours and punish heavily anyone who misbehaves. Alcohol should only be available from Off-licences. Any purchaser of alcohol at an off licence should require a licence to do so; and the licence should be revoked if anyone consuming alcohol at that licence-holders address is guilty of a drink related offence. Similar rules to those in force in Manitoba in the mid 1970s.
7. At 11:10am on 02 Jun 2010, Hoodie wrote:
The best way to control drinking and its subsequent violence outside pubs and clubs, is to charge the full cost of police attendance to any premises. The owners, managers would then be forced to control the level of drinking. As it is, all they want is people drinking loads of alcohol and giving them a huge profit margin.

8. At 11:10am on 02 Jun 2010, David wrote:
A change in society's attitude so that it was unacceptable to get drunk in public, and harsher penalties for those that commit criminal acts when under the influence of alcohol. I frequently see minor criminal acts being committed when I am out in the evening, and it seems we as a society are prepared to tolerate it.
Minimum pricing will not work, as most of the people who I see drunk on the streets pay whatever it takes to get drunk. They go out with the sole intention of getting hammered and will do so even if it costs £50. If price was the main factor we would all be drinking at home and the centres of our towns and Cities would be deserted, which they aren't.
The problem with minimum pricing, whilst it might have a slight impact and reduce some people's drinking, it will have devastating impact on pubs, particularly in rural areas. I now struggle to find a nice country pub to go out for a quiet drink, as most have gone out of business. The only ones that survive are the expensive Gastro pubs, and the big chains which rely on food rather than drink.

9. At 11:11am on 02 Jun 2010, enatheta wrote:
Alcohol is as addictive and as damaging as heroin and government advisors recommend that it be classified as a drug. Given its addictive nature it is not possible to encourage sensible drinking and an increase in price will be followed by a proportionate increase in crime for it is primarily to obtain alcohol that assaults and thieving is carried out.

10. At 11:12am on 02 Jun 2010, Mr Jones wrote:
Stopping the additional benefits to alcoholics for them to buy alcohol.

11. At 11:16am on 02 Jun 2010, Chris wrote:
We go through the same ritual every couple of months, making suggestions on how to curb the alcoholic tendencies of a minority. The answer is staring us in the face - RAISE THE LEGAL AGE FOR DRINKING TO 21.
I have made the same comment every time the matter is raised by HYS, and I have been contributing since 2007. It must have been raised about 40-50 times, which would indicate the problem has not gone away. Sooner or later I will be proven right.

Complain about this comment

12. At 11:20am on 02 Jun 2010, Webb of Deceit - Beckham The Overrated Hasbeen wrote:
How long is it until the British Al Capone emerges from the backlash against these fascists

Complain about this comment

13. At 11:20am on 02 Jun 2010, Fencebound wrote:
I am not sure charging more would make for sensible drinkers. Poorer punters and richer supermarkets, perhaps?

Really, a battery of approaches is needed...

Yes: ensure alcohol is not routinely sold at cheaper prices than soft drinks and bottled water.

Charge for drinks related attendances at A&E.

Place a levy on establishments where the police are required to attend at a rate above an agreed norm (I am sure a level could be agreed).

Ensure rigorous enforcement of licensing laws.

Continue educating people, and ostracising drink drivers.

However, please never expect to stop us Brits drinking! We like it...

Complain about this comment

14. At 11:22am on 02 Jun 2010, steve wrote:
Smaller Glasses Bottles with sealed tops.
Ring pull-less cans.

Alternatively a little self restraint might be appropriate.

Southern European countries with far lower alcohol prices have far less alcohol related issues than Northern European Countries.

Finland with one of the highest alcohol prices in the World also has the highest incidence per capita of alcoholism!

Complain about this comment

15. At 11:22am on 02 Jun 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:
Certainly not a minimum price or a high price - doesn't work in Scandinavia and won't work here.

It is cultural and only a cultural shift will change it. It's so deep-rooted though. Other countries like France just raise the recommended maximum limits to something much higher. So long as no-one gets hurt (which sadly does happen a lot) and it doesn't cost the NHS too much, I can't see what the problem is. It's the headline 'problem' violent drinkers who cause nearly all of the trouble.

Complain about this comment

16. At 11:23am on 02 Jun 2010, druid2002 wrote:
What would encourage responsible drinking? A better way of life for people, a better outlook on life and a responsible upbringing in a country that has lost most values since noone cares anymore.

Also intrusive policing from the government to find more revenue is not going to work. I will simply do what the Norwegians did in response to this kind of action - brew my own beer and wine.

Penalising the masses because of the action of the few sounds like a siege to me.

Complain about this comment

17. At 11:23am on 02 Jun 2010, geezershoong wrote:
'A health watchdog is calling for a minimum price per unit of alcohol in England. Would this make you a sensible drinker?'

Excuse me, I AM a sensible drinker because I have this built in thing called common sense.

Complain about this comment

18. At 11:26am on 02 Jun 2010, LoftyScaffold wrote:
If the thinking is that we should introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol, the effect of which on problematic drinking is debatable, it ought to be introduced exclusively in pubs where undesirable drinking is more easily controlled. This would boost the pub trade and serve to make our streets more habitable after dark at the same time removing the commercial advantage that supermarkets that now enjoy.

Complain about this comment

19. At 11:27am on 02 Jun 2010, Pure Evil wrote:
Can someone please tell NICE, the medical profession, the government and all the other patronising paternalists that we do need people to die and that death is actually a good thing?
Death is necessary because it helps to keep the population at sustainable levels. If people didn't voluntarily do things that are dangerous to their health such as smoking, drinking, over eating, dangerous sports or other risky activities then the planet and its ever decreasing resources will soon be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of people living ever longer life spans.

Considering that the world is already over populated then the government should actively be promoting unhealthy life styles. Most unhealthy people already pay Income tax and National Insurance that entitles them to medical treatment anyway but the VAT on alcohol, smoking, etc pays for each of their respective medical treatments times over (the facts and stats are very easy to find on the Office of National Statistics website) so isn't encouraging unhealthy life styles a very good way to raise revenue for the NHS whilst bankrupt Britain is bust?

It's quite obvious the puritanical health fascists haven't thought through any of these issues at all so isn't it time that someone in government actually represented the interests of the so-called "unhealthy" and challenged this orthodox idiocy?

20. At 11:30am on 02 Jun 2010, SaveourCountry wrote: I am really annoyed that the cost are going to be more, so as to discourage kids from drinking. I am 43 year old sensible drinker. Since the smoking ban I only drink at home and I have a measure on my bottle so I know exactly how much I am drinking. Life is difficult enough in these times and its nice to realx in the evening with a drink. This pleasure will soon become unatainable if costs are to rise. The government need to tackle the problem of why kids drink so much and not penalise the rest of us sensible drinkers.

21. At 11:32am on 02 Jun 2010, Peterplucker wrote: If people could be fined for exceeding a defined blood alcohol level IN PUBLIC (i.e. in the street) then people would immediately drink less in bars and pubs.

22. At 11:33am on 02 Jun 2010, clint75 wrote: This is nonsense! Some people do have a problem with alcohol, but increasing the price will not solve anything. Look at those people who smoke. Even though the price of cigarettes has almost doubled in the last 10 years smokers will always find the money for them. This will punish those who enjoy a drink but who can do so sensibly. Are these people saying that those with money can be trusted to drink sensibly but those who are worse off cannot? Whatever happened to personal responsibility? There are countries in Europe where alcohol is cheaper than the UK, but without the
level of misuse. This problem is a cultural one, not an economic one.
Why on earth should I pay more for something I enjoy just because there are other people who misuse it?
If price is the issue, why does the House of Commons have a subsidised bar?

Complain about this comment

23. At 11:33am on 02 Jun 2010, waofy wrote:
It's complete discrimination against the rich and well off! Why are only the poor being encouraged to stop drinking? Equality now! Stop the persecution against the rich!

Complain about this comment

24. At 11:34am on 02 Jun 2010, Mr Meggo wrote:
The enforcement of exisitng laws against establishments that sell to underage people. Proper fines and punishments for violent offenders not a slap on the wrist.
Why should I, someone who can control myself and drink sensibly be punished with highly priced products because of those who have no self respect or self control.
A breach of my Human Rights I reckon

Complain about this comment

25. At 11:35am on 02 Jun 2010, peirre4027 wrote:
Once again the nanny state is trying to run our lives for us. Why should everybody be penalised just because a minority drink too much

Complain about this comment

26. At 11:36am on 02 Jun 2010, warriorsottovoce wrote:
The relaxation of licensing laws from the last Government is certainly one of the reasons contributing to problem. The "cafe culture",with longer opening times for bars and wider availability of cheap alcohol in supermarkets has essentially been an expensive governmental failure. The booze lobby has also been very effective in promoting their industry and keeping prices low and availability high. If the country does not take a "nanny " approach to this, I fear there will be more strains on the NHS as a whole generation of people need medical treatment with alcohol being the underlying root problem. Bring back stricter licensing,cut advertising,punish booze related crime more severely, ban alcopops and increase taxation.I've never been one to advocate strict government controls over the electorate but in this case I make an exception.

Complain about this comment

27. At 11:36am on 02 Jun 2010, JustExtreme wrote:

[Type text]
Whereas I do enjoy consuming tasty alcoholic beverages myself occasionally, I fail to see that there is any form of drinking that can be considered 'sensible'.

I say this because the only reason alcohol remains legal is because of tradition and the social convention inferred from that. It has been proven to be far more dangerous than a lot of other drugs out there, even many of the banned ones. The government likes to ignore their researchers and advisors when they give results supporting something that has been considered bad for a long while so think it should remain that way, a somewhat laissez-faire attitude.

The only reason I drink (or should I say TAKE?) it myself is because it is easy to get hold of legally in an unlikely to be contaminated form.

If other drugs were available with such ease legally and in uncontaminated form, I would see no problem in using those.

It needs to be realised that consuming alcohol is RECREATIONAL DRUG USE.

If you consume alcohol, you are a DRUG USER or, depending on your use, a DRUG ABUSER.

Complain about this comment

28. At 11:37am on 02 Jun 2010, Jonny Mayle wrote:
When will you people in the media get off our backs about alcohol. WE ARE ADULTS!!!

Complain about this comment

29. At 11:38am on 02 Jun 2010, Mark wrote:
So yet another nanny organisation wants to interfere in my life and dictate what I should and shouldn't do whilst at the same time imposing another stealth tax.

Beer and wine is expensive enough as it is. Those that drink themselves into oblivion will do so whatever the price so why penalise the rest of us?

Complain about this comment

30. At 11:39am on 02 Jun 2010, SophiaT wrote:
So all the rich toffs can all afford to carry on binging and the poor working class go thirsty. Great - I thought life was for enjoying - that's the premise for why I get up in the morning anyway! In my opinion, alcohol is expensive enough already, and I am not a heavy drinker. Oh well, I guess at least I'll have my health!!

Complain about this comment

31. At 11:39am on 02 Jun 2010, Matt wrote:
So, once again, the silent majority to act within the limits of the law are punished for the relatively few who don't. I enjoy alcohol in moderation and already find it too expensive.

Complain about this comment

32. At 11:41am on 02 Jun 2010, shendor wrote:
So basically the government is saying "poor people" are idiots and need protecting from their peasant ways, whilst the rich are sensible and can carry on drinking? Everyone across the social spectrum drinks, this is just a further tax on those who can least afford it. Look for ways to make the world a less stressful, fast-paced nightmare, with unrealistic expectations on success and permenant happiness, then people wouldn't feel the need to get so smashed to try to forget the horror of 21st Century life!

Complain about this comment

33. At 11:41am on 02 Jun 2010, Jim wrote:
If manufacturers could no longer compete on price they would have to compete on quality. Which as a moderate drinker I would see as a good thing. There is too much awful, cheap booze on the shelves at the moment.
I would like to see, in particular, more beer with better flavour and lower alcohol content available.

Complain about this comment

34. At 11:44am on 02 Jun 2010, john3626 wrote:
Sort out the opening hours, too many places still close early or require people to be in before a certain time. To meet such entry deadlines, people often have to gulp down their drinks.
Also change pints to 500ml servings so people drink 10% less.
Both of the above systems work fine in Europe, it's just in the UK that drinking seems to be a never ending out of control issue.

Complain about this comment

35. At 11:45am on 02 Jun 2010, john wrote:
What would encourage sensible drinking? How about enforcing the laws which already exist to tackle it? How about stopping being gutless, making excuses and actually crack down on those who cause all the trouble instead of taking the cowards way out and penalising everyone. How about taking the hardworking voter into consideration while accepting that middle-class Doctors on £120,000 a year can afford higher prices.

This is NOT about price but culture.

Blueprint for changing culture:

ENFORCE THE LAW SO PROSECUTE;
Those who sell or supply drink to underagers.
Those who sell drink to drunk people.
Those people who are drunk and disorderly.
Those who cause violence or trouble.

MAKE THEM PAY;
Those who are taken to hospital for drinking too much should pay the costs.
Those who cause damage while drunk should pay for it.
Those who are sick should pay to clean it up.

ALL should pay police and prosecution costs.

These laws already exist. They are there to be used in order to keep drinking in check. These latest plans are dreamt up by doctors frustrated over the governments and police's lack of willingness to really tackle what is a cultural not financial problem. Doctors who earn enough not to care.

Implement the law rigidly. Advertise you are doing this and do it and culture will change.

Stop celebrating being drunk. Make it socially unacceptable not something to be boasted about.

Teach the people in our country to have some "class".

As for Tesco's calling on minimum pricing, they would, wouldn't they? Reduces their need to compete on price and if every retailer has to do then they will make more profit on their largest sellers. Tesco care no more for our health than anyone else. They like the sound of money.

Complain about this comment

36. At 11:45am on 02 Jun 2010, pzero wrote:
A life where we do not have to seek solace in alcohol, where we are not worked into early graves, where we are not taxed into oblivion, where OUR human rights to live are more important than a terrorists.......  

Rant over.

So the health Nazi's want to make our one remaining pleasure more expensive - just one question: Did we elect these people?

Complain about this comment

37. At 11:48am on 02 Jun 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
1) Advertising of alcohol should be banned. Simply because advertising of all alcoholic products today is so sophisticated;
too 'glamorous' and subsidises so many popular and 'entertaining' programs?

2) Alcohol should not be depicted in British television and soaps as a 'solution' to a bad day. So relentlessly subliminal.

3) No minimum price - but raise alcohol duty paid direct to UK Treasury - but not VAT (because we all know where that goes)?

Complain about this comment

38. At 11:48am on 02 Jun 2010, Daisy Chained wrote:
What would encourage sensible drinking?

Don't even try to encourage it, that is what. Well not until someone defines "sensible" any ways.

The old adage about "horse and drink" is entirely apposite here. Let people be themselves BUT try to work out why it is that every so often "society" goes off the rails. It normally happens when people are generally and profoundly unhappy and a "bunch" discover how to numb the pain that entails. Normally the "bunch" have it just right as long as they have the means to do whatever it takes to numb the pain.

Long suicides are always preferential to short, sharp, no mistake death. After all the rest of the world may suddenly become enlightened too.

Complain about this comment

39. At 11:53am on 02 Jun 2010, Wideboy wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

40. At 11:56am on 02 Jun 2010, Alan Baker wrote:
Here we go again, first it was the smokers and now it’s the drinkers.

Firstly I am 56 and I drink at home, I like a drink, I do not get falling down, fighting drunk, abusive, stupid or aggressive so why should I be penalised for the moronic idiots that do.

Secondly this will not work, booze is to easy to make, or I can do a day trip to France or Belgium and buy what I want or I could just ask the local black market baron to get me what I want cheaply.

Trying to price people off booze is not the way to go; it only hits ordinary people who are already financially stretched.
The way to deal with this is for the Police and courts to come down like a ton of bricks on those who abuse it, 3 strikes and your out, massive fines and prison for repeat offenders who refuse to learn their lesson.

But I suspect this is more about the control seeking health fascists trying once again to assert their views and authority on the rest of us, why oh why can't these self righteous prigs just disappear and leave the rest of us alone.

Complain about this comment

41. At 11:56am on 02 Jun 2010, Stan Pomeray wrote:
It is not the job of this or any other government to instruct me on what is or is not "sensible".

If you are over 18 you have the right to drink if you so desire, and if there really is a problem with people drinking just to get completely blotto, then increasing prices is a pathetic idea which simply (attempts to) tackle symptoms and not causes. I would suggest that one way around this could be to ensure that people don't have such shoddy existances that they need to drink and fall over to escape their horrible lives. Maybe that is why we have a problem in the UK when other, far more pleasant countries don't.

Of course if you're drinking under the age of 18 that is a different issue altogether, and the simple solution there is to have much stiffer penalties for shops who allow under age people to purchase alcohol.

Complain about this comment

42. At 11:57am on 02 Jun 2010, Richard wrote:
Great! This should bring the holier-than-though brigade out if force! As a smoker and, due to the ban, now a non-drinker all I can say is bring the restrictions on. I'm going to enjoy every minute of this thread - who goes around, comes around and now it's your turn. Deep joy.

Complain about this comment

43. At 11:58am on 02 Jun 2010, riyannah wrote:
1. make it more expensive
2. raise the age of drinking to 21 like in the USA
3. make everyone with a drink related sickness pay for their treatment rather than get the nhs to sort them out.
4. Pay a hefty fine if caught drunk and causing trouble/violence
5. Free help for people who want to be drink free again( I think that already exists)

A&E is fully of drunkard idiots waiting to be treated, on weekends in specific , wasting resources and valuable nhs staff time as if the nhs is not being snowed under already.
Enough is enough!

Complain about this comment

44. At 12:00pm on 02 Jun 2010, iancoady wrote:
The simple answer is you won't change drinking culture in this country. When I entered University 10 years ago my sole purpose was to drink my way through the first year (as was everybody elses). This wasn't the result of bad up-bringing or living in a deprived area (as I didn't do either) but quite simply it was fun. It was fun to drink until I vomited. It was fun to drink until I didn't know what I was doing and it was fun to go out and spend £200 in a single night being as hedonistic as possible. There were often consequences (hospital or police station visits were an occasional occurrence) but these became battle scars, a story to bring out with your peers to get respect. Looking back it was immature and dangerous but we live in such an over-protective society where youth and childhood is replaced by education, tests and health and safety that is it any wonder that young adults want the opportunity to let loose, enjoy themselves and inject a small element of danger into their lives?

Raising the price of alcohol is not the answer as people will continue to drink but at the expense of other things such as rent, food etc and we may see more debt being taken on as young people to look to maintain their lifestyle. Politicians (egged on by health campaign groups) always seem quick to tackle excessive drinking but never seem to look at what factors may drive people to drink in the first place. The heaviest drinkers I know are young professionals working in repetitive, low level office jobs in London which suggests to me that the boring repetitive nature of low paid office work may be a key driver in drinking culture but until we have a report into the causes of drinking instead of preaching about liver disease in later life to people who barely care about tomorrow we will never tackle drinking culture in the UK.

Complain about this comment

45. At 12:00pm on 02 Jun 2010, Takingabreakfromwork wrote:
Are the idiots in charge of the asylum again?

Why the hell should I, a responsible drinker, be forced to pay more for drink because the government can't be bothered to enforce the existing laws in this country? If someone is drunk and disorderly, assaulting someone or causing vandalism whilst drunk, then send them to jail. We can't just ignore the crime and say 'it's ok, pints are more expensive so we can do nothing about the crimes'. LOCK UP THE TROUBLEMAKERS - what is so difficult about that?

Don't make me pay more for a pint because you're too lazy to make police and the courts sort out the troublemakers. Your job is to
see that the law is enforced, not to financially penalise the many for the sins of the few.

Lock the scum away and they will learn their lesson and serve as an example to others. Charging everyone more will achieve nothing but make many law-abiding citizens resentful of our stupid, lazy government.

Complain about this comment

46. At 12:01pm on 02 Jun 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
BTW - this HYS question mentions 'N I H C E' 'NICE' - as this 'agency' has so little respect from the population - it's 'use' by new government may be immediately be recognised as a cynical manipulation?

Such 'media' releases by new gov will only alienate the general population who are sooo much brighter, more intelligent and know when they are being 'softened up' before the Budget.

We had hoped that brainwashing and treating the electorate like children had left the stage with Labour?

Complain about this comment

47. At 12:01pm on 02 Jun 2010, Neil Williams wrote:
"Personally I'm hoping we will soon get a younger generation who exibit a kind of new puritanism as a reaction against the excesses of their elders."

Why? Why not merely a sensible moderation, as practiced in France or Italy?

Complain about this comment

48. At 12:02pm on 02 Jun 2010, markmyword1949 wrote:
There should be a minimum price, no advertising and all cans, bottles should have in large print the number of units of alcohol they contain. The current situation where outlets can sell alcoholic drinks at below cost is ludicrous.

Having said that it will not be an overnight panacea to the problem. It will take years "educate" drinkers that their couple of glasses each evening has long term effects on your wellbeing. Most "problem drinkers" are not the young ones who binge a couple of nights a week but the ones who for years imbibe the bottle of wine per day or three or four shorts.

I see this as similar to the introduction of the breathalyser where at the begining friends and relatives had some sympathy with those who got caught. Now we accept that they are fools or worse.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
49. At 12:03pm on 02 Jun 2010, teedoff wrote:
What would encourage sensible drinking?

Education and good role-models.

Of course we first have to define what "sensible" drinking is. Using measures like alcohol consumption to still drive safely is absurd. And tackling this in isolation is also absurd.

First try to answer questions like "Why do we have such a problem?"

Peer pressure plays a part, as does advertising, but the way that our children are educated, by both schools and parents, leaves them to try out alcohol with their friends in some dark alley late at night whilst underage. So educating parents is a good first step. Knowing that they can offer small amounts of alcohol with a meal might help - if the family actually sit together for their meals. Showing the "tipping point" between a sociable drink and overindulgence might also help. And changing our drinking establishments to reflect more of a social atmosphere instead of a drinking one can't be bad. Living in Scotland I have nowhere where I can take my family to have a relaxing afternoon with a (perhaps alcoholic) drink and some relaxation. I have to purchase food in most establishments that near the atmosphere I want, or put up with sawdust and foul language (though, thankfully no smoke any more) in a drinking establishment. Abroad is a very different system, even in Eastern Europe - where I always assumed vodka drinkers were the norm. It might be the steadier weather throughout the summer, but you can sit outside with a cold drink and watch the world go by. You see many more families there - the family unit must be stronger - and even the busy thoroughfares are filled with people who are not rushing too much.

I think our entire way of life - the way we work and our lifestyle - is set toward a self-destructive mode of "live fast, die young" instead of enjoying life and slowing our whole pace. If we can learn to do that then we can maybe solve our problem.

Complain about this comment

50. At 12:03pm on 02 Jun 2010, Caz wrote:
As I understand it, the maximum 'safe' units of alcohol limit is a fairly arbitrary figure and not based on any type of reliable scientific study (as with the '5 fruit and veg' and '8 glasses of water' a day figures!) I'm not inclined to pay any attention to some quango who pulls fantasy figures out of the air, however I digress...

I'm aware that the Scottish parliament were proposing a minimum price of around 40p a unit. Well, as far as I can see the drinks considered to be 'problem' drinks are already pricier than that. This will hit people who enjoy picking up a couple of bottles of whatever with their weekly shopping, not the people who want to go out and get blitzed - who will continue to do so whatever measures parliament decide to impose. Besides, I believe there is
a piece of EU legislation that probably makes minimum pricing illegal.
It's enough to drive you to drink.....

Complain about this comment

51. At 12:08pm on 02 Jun 2010, Andrew Partridge wrote:
Sadly communities are being destroyed as pubs close due to people not being able to afford to drink in them. Landlords are strictly regulated and can lose their licenses if they do not keep control of their drinkers. Today, young people consume bottles of cheap alcohol before going out and are often drunk before entering a pub or club. They consume the minimum in that pub or club but it is the pub or club that gets the blame for their behaviour. People who drink in public are regulated by their peers. People who drink at home are not. A minimum charge on supermarket alcohol is a good idea. Whilst the age limit for drinking should not be changed, maybe increasing the age when you can buy alcohol should be increased and those that buy alcohol held responsible for those they share their drink with.

Complain about this comment

52. At 12:08pm on 02 Jun 2010, K D Hutchinson wrote:
Yet again another knee jerk reaction with little or no thought about what they are actually doing. There is no justification for a price increase, indeed this would simply drive people abroad for their purchases rather than waste money here in the UK. If you want to control binge drinking, then like every other crime that takes place freely here in the UK START TO PUNISH THE OFFENDERS. No punishments, then the scumbags of this country will simply ignore you and putting the price of alcohol up will have no effect whatsoever, other than to possibly increase the crime rates as more people take to stealing to pay for it.

Complain about this comment

53. At 12:10pm on 02 Jun 2010, Roger Smith wrote:
Alcohol consumption was higher between 1900 and 1915 than it is now (it only reduced because of the introduction of cheap cigarettes in the Great War), binge drinking is mainly carried out by the young who, if they are working, earn a minimum of £400/week and give their mothers £10/week for keep, leaving a large disposable income. This proposal will hit me and many others like me, PENSIONERS and UNEMPLOYED who are already finding the cost of masking this badly managed country (by a few drinks), prohibitive. Pubs are already shutting and people are buying cans and taking them home to drink where they can happily smoke the kids to death too. This 'do good' interference will cause more death and heartache among the poor and disenfranchised, illicit distillation, bootlegging and home brewing will occur, can’t we see this or are 'nice' too wrapped up in their own little world of PC committees and like minded narrow thinkers.

[Type text]
54. At 12:13pm on 02 Jun 2010, Mal wrote:
Putting alcohol prices up will not solve the problem of abuse or binge drinking. Alcoholics will do anything to get the money to buy, whatever the price or they will turn to other methods. Education is the key to getting the message home in schools prior to the legal drinking age. Get rid of 24hr drinking and restrict the opening hours in pubs to what they were in the 70's. This means that establishments have to close between 3pm and 6pm and 11pm and 11am. Allow well managed and well controlled establishments to open Thursday to Sunday until 03.00 if they obtain permission. ID anyone who is buying alcohol who looks under 30.

55. At 12:17pm on 02 Jun 2010, Mike from Brum wrote:
It'd make me more likely to binge drink because instead of a pint or maybe two every other day, I'd not be able to afford to drink like that anymore. I think I wouldn't drink at all for weeks on end then be more likely to go on a bender.

56. At 12:18pm on 02 Jun 2010, teedoff wrote:
There's a fine line to walk if the Government want this to work.
If the tariff is set too low it's ineffective and becomes a non-penalty.
If the tariff is set too high then it becomes almost like prohibition.
I remember my parents making their own wine and beer from home-brew kits. It was vicious stuff sometimes, and often much more alcoholic than was safe, but it was much cheaper than purchasing from a retailer. Then the supermarkets came along and cheap booze put a stop to most of the home-brewing.

In countries I've visited in Eastern Europe home production still takes place. In Ukraine and Russia you might be given "samagon" - home-made vodka - and in Bulgaria blindness might come to you through "rakia" - a substance akin to meths, I think. People who want alcohol will look for the cheapest method of obtaining it, and I can see demi-jons becoming popular purchases in the near future. And watch out in the peat-bogs for the tell-tale smoke of an illicit still or two.

Or the government can look at better ways of changing our behaviour instead of the old New Labour system of hiking taxes on everything.

57. At 12:21pm on 02 Jun 2010, David Mackay wrote:
This is ridiculous. Once again, the nanny state strikes back. Who honestly think's they have the right to tell me how to live? Who has the power to make my life choices for me? People seem to in these governing bodies that the general population are idiots that need to be feed, watered and led 24/7.

Raising the price of Alcohol is not going to solve the problem. By this you just extort those who already have a problem, because they will spend the money to get drunk. It's a bit like Cigarette's, they are now completely over priced but you still see hundred's of people smoking.

The only reason I can see Tesco supporting this, is for profit. They sell quite a large amount, so a minimum price would make them money. Honestly £3.50 for a pint of beer is too high already.

Complain about this comment

58. At 12:21pm on 02 Jun 2010, Claire Herbert wrote:
Price is not a factor in people drinking too much. If a packet of cigarettes was raised by £2 how many peopel would really stop smoking? By raising alcohol prices you are penalising the many for the faults of a few.

People often drink too much because they have emotional or mental health issues and help on the NHS for these is almost non existent.

Complain about this comment

59. At 12:22pm on 02 Jun 2010, AM wrote:
It is not about having new laws to regulate prices of alcohol else where do we stop? Should we bring in a minimum price for biscuits, chocolate, or cakes because people who eat too many of these become obese and this costs the NHS.

It’s about enforcing existing laws correctly, fining or closing down landlords who serve alcoholic drinks to those who are clearly intoxicated. Make the fine so large £20,000 each time they will soon stop serving drink people. Does also mean not serving those who may have started drinking at home before going out!

Complain about this comment

60. At 12:24pm on 02 Jun 2010, lfb_uk wrote:
The Fact's.

1. The "limits or Units" for binge drinking are false. They were made up under the "We have to be seen to be doing something remit".
2. The alcohol related "incidents" reported by the NHS and the Police have only increased since the method of calculation was changed. This gives a false impression of an increase.

3. The EU, by whom we are ruled does not allow minimum pricing, so any attempt to do so would be illegal.

4. The cost of the NHS and Police to deal with alcohol related problems is more than met by the revenue to the tax coffers from drink.

5. The Alcohol is cheaper than water myth is just that a myth, Tesco's own brand cheapest lager £1.89 for 4 cans (1.6 Litres) against Tesco's own brand bottled water 2 Litres @ 40 pence.

The bottom line is, why should the approx 89% of drinkers (who do not cause any trouble at all) be forced to pay more for their drink. The laws already exist they ARE RARELY Policed or used.

With the change of government, one would have thought we had moved away from forcing the majority to pay for the sins of the few!

The only reason Tesco, Asda et al, are jumping on the bandwagon is they can see a massive increase in profits as more people drink at home, forcing even more pubs and clubs to close.

As if that is not enough, please remember that the Houses of Parliament bars, gets through roughly £5,000,000 worth of beers and spirits per year, paid for by we taxpayers. This smacks to me as do as we say, not as we do!

Complain about this comment

61. At 12:26pm on 02 Jun 2010, johnnyb2312 wrote:
While it's true that increasing the price would probably have little effect on alcoholics, this measure isn't aimed at them. It's aimed at the vast majority of so called 'responsible drinkers' who are ignoring the damage that excessive alcohol intake is doing to them, and who will continue to disregard all the surveys, public health announcements, and probably the advice of their own GPs. They will take notice of the effect on their wallets.

Complain about this comment

62. At 12:26pm on 02 Jun 2010, James Rigby wrote:
I thought we voted out the nanny state several weeks ago.

If adults want to drink at lot, then they must be allowed to do so provided they don't cause harm to others. If they do stupid
things while they're drunk, then they should be punished in the same way as if they were sober (Sarah Ferguson take note).

I'm sure the existing duties on alcohol cover the NHS costs of alcohol problems. Putting up prices to try to reduce consumption is just wrong: If I want to buy something, and a retailer wants to sell me something, if we agree on a price it's nobody else's business.

Complain about this comment

63. At 12:27pm on 02 Jun 2010, Jim Stone wrote:
So now only rich people are considered sensible enough not to abuse booze?!!!

Complain about this comment

64. At 12:27pm on 02 Jun 2010, Phil Davies wrote:
If NICE were to concentrate on the core job of approving medicines it would be nice.
The nanny state is dead, did they miss the election? Instead of taking people drunk on the streets to hospital why not use our existing laws, lock them up and put them in front of a magistrate. Really inconvenience them and maybe they will get the message. If the don't, jail them.

Complain about this comment

65. At 12:29pm on 02 Jun 2010, Newsman_face wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

66. At 12:29pm on 02 Jun 2010, Slave to the System - I am not a number wrote:
1. Revoke labour 24hr pro drinking laws.
2. Stop supermarkets selling booze.
3. Any child caught drunk, drinking, is arrested and the parents must collect them from the station and pay a fine on the spot.

Actually enforce the current law and prosecute shops that sell to underage children.

As a parent I don't see any problem with just enforcing common sense.

Complain about this comment

67. At 12:30pm on 02 Jun 2010, luskentyre wrote:
I'm not convinced by minimum pricing in the slightest. You have to examine why people drink excessively.

Raising the cost of alcohol will change very few habits. More likely it will create additional financial demands on those on
low incomes and probably cause them to drink more! Those who can afford it won't care.

Complain about this comment

68. At 12:30pm on 02 Jun 2010, Enny2012 wrote:
I always wonder where the educative ability of the British gone. Why do we always assume that educating children will expose them to bad habits. To educate our children very early in life will caught them young. Let us educate the children about drugs, alcohol, sex, social and even political responsibilities. Education, education, education and more education.

Complain about this comment

69. At 12:31pm on 02 Jun 2010, The truth is the greatest enemy of the state wrote:
The problem is summed up quite nicely in your headline: "encourage sensible drinking". Choosing not to drink alcohol at all never seems to be an option. To abstain from drinking is to be a social pariah.

Instead, we're all encouraged to drink, but with restraint. Unfortunately, the last thing that drinking encourages is restraint. There seems to be a belief in this country that drinking to excess is part of what defines us as a nation, to the extent that it has almost become a patriotic duty to consume until we're unconscious. Anyone who prefers not to indulge is letting the side down or is a traitor to the cause of national self-determination. It is no accident that heavy drinking has become associated with overt displays of nationalism, particularly the England football, rugby and now cricket teams.

The unpalatable truth is that drinking to excess is stupid, weak and antisocial. Perhaps that's why it defines our national character so well.

Complain about this comment

70. At 12:31pm on 02 Jun 2010, starlinguk wrote:
A change of culture. Currently the general consensus in Britain is that drinking too much is something to boast about. Until you change that attitude, you won't get anyone to drink less.

Complain about this comment

71. At 12:31pm on 02 Jun 2010, PaulRichard2 wrote:
Didn't we have this debate like a week ago?

I don't think that cheap alcohol is the sole cause of binge drinking or other drink related problems by any means but I also don't think it helps. For one having cheap alcohol available is hardly encouraging people to be sensible and well behaved.

To be honest though if we want to tackle our alcohol problems we need to look at the cultural attitudes behind it, more
specifically the peer pressure and social status type of drinking that creates a mentality of "if you don't drink you're weak, boring and not worthy of our time".

Also what needs to be tackled is this attitude of looking to cause trouble, again for street credit and peer pressure. Unfortunately some people have an attitude of "a weekend spent away from a police van is a wasted weekend"!

Complain about this comment

72. At 12:32pm on 02 Jun 2010, coastwalker wrote:
A reduction in ill health brought about by drinking too much alcohol could be achieved overnight by legalizing cannabis, a much safer alternative recreational drug. But its not reducing ill health that drives our society so don't expect it any time soon.

Complain about this comment

73. At 12:32pm on 02 Jun 2010, LeftieAgitator wrote:
Beware the law of unforeseen consequences.
1. The tobacco smugglers will add beer, cider & wine to their container loads.
2. The home brewing industry will get a boost.
3. Binge drinking WILL not be reduced.

Complain about this comment

74. At 12:33pm on 02 Jun 2010, The Real Mark Smith wrote:
This is not the answer, the problem is more complex than that.

1 - Increasing the price of alcohol won't stop people drinking too much. People will still drink however much they want, they'll just spend more money on it.

2 - For many people, it's a sort of a tool for escapism so people can 'forget their woes', 'drown their sorrows', etc. 'I've had a hard day/week, so I can do whatever I like, because I deserve it'.

3 - There SEEMS to be this attitude among SOME people (not all) that you can only 'party' and enjoy yourself or relax if you're 'off your face', and for those people, that ends up being the main focus and pursuit of the evening. When discussing the issue of changing licensing hours, those people argued that it's bad for pubs to close at 11 because they are 'drinking against the clock'... as if they had set themselves a target of how much to drink by closing time!... 'never mind the socialising, good food, entertainment and witty and intellectual conversation, my evening is incomplete, unless i've had 10 pints'.

[Type text]
If we can address the underlying social and cultural causes, we might be able to solve the problem, but I don't think that's going to happen because nobody likes to be told that what they're doing is wrong or bad for them.

Complain about this comment

75. At 12:33pm on 02 Jun 2010, Newsman face wrote:
"At 11:08am on 02 Jun 2010, maledicti wrote:
What people drink and how/when they choose to drink it is a matter of personal choice and bodies like NICE should butt out and leave us to responsible drinkers to enjoy the last pleasure open to us without nannying us into submission.

Instead of treating us like irresponsible children, perhaps they should instead be looking at the reasons why people drink and why this problem exists in the first place. Minimum pricing is not going to be the answer to this one, and once again it is the irresponsible few who are causing the sensible majority to suffer."

Thank goodness for the voice of reason. These are my thoughts exactly. Give me drink and jovial company over a bunch of spoilsports any day.

Complain about this comment

76. At 12:33pm on 02 Jun 2010, Takingabreakfromwork wrote:
A simple way to vastly reduce alcohol consumption in this country overnight - legalise cannabis.

Complain about this comment

77. At 12:35pm on 02 Jun 2010, rational_thinker wrote:
Should there be a minimum price on alcohol?

Yes, because it would limit the widespread availability of ridiculously cheap alcoholic drink at supermarkets and corner shops where it is easily accessed by teenagers.

Should advertising be banned?

Yes, because advertising reinforces the view that you can only have fun or attract the opposite sex or be happy with your mates if you drink

What measures would be most effective in encouraging sensible drinking?

1. Education, education, education throughout school years
2. Good parental guidance and example
3. Parents fined if their under-age children are found drinking
4. Heavy fines for any outlet that sells to underage children

[Type text]
5. Marked reduction in the number of licensed premises in city centres
6. Restoration of sensible licensing hours
7. Licensed premises charged the full cost of policing in city centres
8. Drunks charged the full cost of treatment at NHS facilities

Complain about this comment

78. At 12:35pm on 02 Jun 2010, Rog D Man wrote:
So, yet again put up the price and penalise the majority for the actions of the minority.
Fine drunks a significant amount and bump it right up on the second offence. Also stop free NHS treatment for self-inflicted alcohol related injuries.

Complain about this comment

79. At 12:35pm on 02 Jun 2010, shy2406 wrote:
Honestly, I think the alcohol restrictions are too tight. Before people jump up and down let me explain. I was brought up in the UK by Greek parents. In Greece, there isn't the same culture of "you must not drink until you are 18", it is something that is allowed in moderation as people. When I was 5-6 I was allowed a sherry glass with a spot of wine in it, topped up with lemonade. Gradually as time went on, I was allowed more and stronger, so when I actually started going out, alcohol wasn't a mystery and really didn't bother me.

At 30 years old now, I rarely drink and am quite happy going out stone cold sober as being able to drive home is so much more important to me.

I think the licensing laws should relax on underage drinking, because if you aren't allowed something that is perceived as being grown up, then as a teenager, the thing you are most likely to do it try your upmost to test the boundaries and appear grown up. At 16 years old, a person is old enough to decide whether they want to have sex and potentially be a parent; they can decide whether they want to move out of home, providing they can prove that they can support themselves - its a sad fact but true. So you have to ask yourself if teenagers can legally make decisions that will affect their whole life before they are 18, why can't they decide if they want to have a drink.

Another quick point - 16 year old has £10 and wants to go out at night a) go to the pub, have 2-4 pints (depending on location) spread out over whole night. Behaves themselves as doesn't want to get kicked out and also door men keeping an eye on them b) can't get into pub, still has £10 so gets someone else to go to off license. Get 4x3lts of white lightening (if not more) and sit in park with pals. Get bored, get into mischief, not in control of their actions and leaving themselves more exposed to crimes of violent or sexual nature.

[Type text]
I know which one I prefer

Complain about this comment

80. At 12:37pm on 02 Jun 2010, Allan wrote:
What would encourage sensible drinking?

What is sensible drinking?
So many units a week
Is what their thinking

But not everyone is the same
So the limits change
Or so they claim

Do we increase the price so it costs more?
Do higher costs
Even the score?

Is it our culture that’s to blame?
If we were French
Would it be the same?

Why do we have a celebratory drink?
A bottle of wine for Christmas, Think

Does the way we drink cause the confusion?
Would cutting back be a solution?

Why do people drink to destruction?
why get blitzed and cause a ruction?

I don’t have a clue about the answer
But if some does,
Be sure to thank her.

Complain about this comment

81. At 12:37pm on 02 Jun 2010, darkvalleysboy1978 wrote:
Alcohol in pubs is expensive enough as it is! I used to go out
with friends every weekend but can now only afford once a month.
Us responsible drinkers are yet again being penalised for doing
nothing wrong.

Those who binge drink and go on to cause Anti-Social behaviour
are the ones who should be penalised. The current punishments are
simply too lenient to stop drinking beyond your capability

Complain about this comment

82. At 12:37pm on 02 Jun 2010, Phillip of England wrote:
7. At 11:10am on 02 Jun 2010, Hoodie wrote:
The best way to control drinking and it's subsequent violence
outside pubs and clubs, is to chrge the full cost of police
attendance to any premises. The owners, managers would then be forced to control the level of drinking. As it is, all they want is people drinking loads of alcohol and giving them a huge profit margin.

The problem with your proposal is that like most others what you have done is to absolve those who actually cause the problem of their responsibilities.

It's all well and good suggesting a hike in pricing or making venues, pubs etc cover the costs of clear ups and policing, but you are a fool if you think that these costs are not then passed onto the drinkers.

Call me old fashioned, but I am of the firm belief that those who are drinking and behaving irresponsibly should be the ones who pick up the tab, via fines.

If you take a drinker who is causing trouble and fine them an excessive amount i.e. £1000 for being arrested while drunk and disorderly. With additions added to this for police assistance, lock up over night court processing fees (no access to Legal Aid for drink related offences) etc. you could viably make back the costs of covering these peoples behaviour and the rest of us who are able to behave ourselves can get on and enjoy a night out or a few drinks without having to remortgage a kidney in order to do so.

Under Labour we had 13 long years of everyone being penalized because of the actions of a few. I for one have had enough and want to see those who actually cause the problem, dealt with and made to pay for this. I can assure you that once some brazen little nare-do-well has had to stump up a few thousand pounds in order to cover a transgression whilst on a night out, they will be less inclined to behave in a way that is likely to get them arrested and fined in future.

A blanket hike in pricing, be it through the pubs or via taxation is in effect the laziest way of indirectly tackling this issue and I for one am sick of being treated like a child and being collectively punished because the police and government are too feckless to deal with this issue in an adult and intelligent manner.

MAKE THE TRANSGRESSOR PAY FOR THE TROUBLE THEY HAVE CAUSED!!!
Complain about this comment

84. At 12:40pm on 02 Jun 2010, Lewis Fitzroy wrote:
"Better education on social drinking, in schools for a start, and greater enforcement of the law to stop under age children and young people buying alcoholic drinks from supermarkets and corner shops. There is much less legal drinking in pubs and clubs, that there was a few years ago? the prices are far too high, and the smoking ban are all to blame for the pubs and clubs that have closed all around the U.K.

Complain about this comment

85. At 12:40pm on 02 Jun 2010, Gary Partis wrote:
I am pretty fed up of being punished for other people's views, problems and habits!
Why not raise food prices too, to cut down on the number of fat people?!!!
Or charge for a license to have children?!
Anyhow, no, a minimum price will have no effect on those who really want to drink.
Education is the solution; minimum pricing is a punishment.

Complain about this comment

86. At 12:40pm on 02 Jun 2010, U14366475 wrote:
What would encourage sensible drinking? Simple, the thought of having to pay for, or go without, treatment for alcohol abuse related illnesses and the thought of ever increasing jail sentences for those who commit crime and/or antisocial problems while under the influence of alcohol. Taxing us decent, law abiding drinkers even more, is not the answer.

Complain about this comment

87. At 12:41pm on 02 Jun 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:
Oh the same old leaks and hypocritical spin before a Budget?

So, let's have more UK duty tax on alcohol going straight to UK treasury (not VAT) to help pay off UK deficit.

Abolish advertising of alcohol anywhere in UK and on any media in UK. What is the problem? Cigarette advertising was banned - yet people still smoke? However, smoking a cigarette does not make people violent; cost billions in police costs every weekend; or causes attacks each other or be vulnerable to rape while drunk?

Well, Chancellor - you can't be poacher and gamekeeper - you either care about public health and public costs as regards to alcohol, or not?

As Chancellor you have the usual lobbying from the usual big boys on alcohol pricing. Be a bigger man than any of the usual suspects?

[Type text]
Complain about this comment

88. At 12:42pm on 02 Jun 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:
Everything Labour did failed so that all needs to be reversed.

Complain about this comment

89. At 12:42pm on 02 Jun 2010, VikingView wrote:
I agree with David's post earlier
"A change in society's attitude so that it was unacceptable to get drunk in public".

The reason we do drink is also probably something to do with the reserved nature of most brits and the fact that this reduces in proportion to consumed alcohol....and the fact that alcohol consumption is still seen badge of honour by many males.

btw we're not talking about alcoholics here...we're talking about trying to stop people becoming alcoholics.

Complain about this comment

90. At 12:48pm on 02 Jun 2010, theoldgoat wrote:
"NICE" but not very bright....
Let's see, the price of a packet of fags has never deterred anyone from smoking.
The cost of illegal drugs doesn't stop addicts buying them.
Rising fuel costs has not dramatically cleared roads of cars.

So, why do they think setting a minimum price on a unit of alcohol is going to do anything other than making it look like the government is doing something, when in reality they are not?

Changing social attitudes, educating entire generations, changing drinking cultures. That's the only thing that will have the slightest effect on this, and that will take 20 years to change, perhaps?

Complain about this comment

91. At 12:49pm on 02 Jun 2010, Martin1983 wrote:
I'm sceptical as to whether placing a minimum price on alcohol would encourage sensible drinking. More money for the government perhaps. What is really required is a change in attitudes, a change in education and a change in culture.
In France, it's customary to drink wine every now and then - even for children. Germany has its beer culture. In neither of these two countries do we hear about a widespread drinking problem. Maybe such a problem does exist in those countries and it isn't reported here, I don't know, but there definitely does need to be some programme of re-education on responsible drinking.

Complain about this comment

92. At 12:49pm on 02 Jun 2010, polly_gone wrote:

[Type text]
I always believed in moderation. That was until I met with the BBC's HYS pedestrian moderation. Now I am going to stock up and unleash my furies (well the repeatable ones) all in one go.

Now what was it I was going to say about binge drinking...?

Complain about this comment

93. At 12:51pm on 02 Jun 2010, Donnerstag wrote:
Let's kill a few stupid ideas. Firstly, the amount people drink is *not* a matter of 'personal choice' if your 'personal choice' causes you to behave in a way which any reasonable person would find objectionable, whether that entails (to choose a few from many possible examples) vomiting in the street, starting a drunken argument or groping a work colleague. Secondly, the idea that we need to remove the so-called 'reasons' people get drunk is utter rubbish; if life is so terrible, why are you blotting it out with something as ineffectual as alcohol? Heroin, cocaine or suicide would all do a much better job. The reason, of course, is that alcohol is cheap, legal, widely available and socially sanctioned. Thirdly, what's all this about 'penalising moderate drinkers on low incomes'? This is just part of the assumption that alcohol needs to be such a central part of our lives that those on low incomes 'deserve' to be able to drink it along with everyone else. So it'll become something that a lot of people can't afford, just like other unnecessary luxuries; so what? Those on low incomes will simply be too sensible to waste money on it except in genuine moderation.

I enjoy beer and wine occasionally, but it really is that: an occasion. I wouldn't care if bottles of wine started at £8 and supermarket beers at £3 per can or bottle, as the effect on my expenditure as a truly moderate drinker would just be a few pounds per year. However, if moderate drinkers insist on asking why they should be 'penalised', I'd suggest it's not a penalty, it's them doing their bit by paying a bit more - and it really only will be a bit more if their drinking is truly moderate - to help safeguard society as a whole from the problems of excessive drinking. Surely they'd be happy to do that?

Complain about this comment

94. At 12:56pm on 02 Jun 2010, Tez wrote:
"What measures would be most effective in encouraging sensible drinking?"
Nothing but very severe penalties for the abuse of Alcohol that leads to any kind of crime or anti-social behaviour - that MUST include the parents of under-age drinkers. But of course in this 'progressive' Government, are some who would feel faint if they were asked to make people responsible for their actions.

On the Health side of alcohol-abuse, Doctors could possibly check their patients regularly on say, a yearly basis, log the results, and warn them accordingly. This alone would deter many from such abuse and ease the pressure on the NHS.
Raising the cost of alcohol is not acceptable - it penalises the VAST majority who do not abuse. We already have too many Laws that penalise EVERYONE for the actions of the few - instead of dealing with the irresponsible abusers with adequately STRONG penalties. Raising the price will only lead to more crime as abusers seek the means to continue their habit - just as with drug-takers.

Government must stop 'pussy-footing' with offenders - we want strong governence - no more of the PC that has put the UK in this position...

Complain about this comment

95. At 12:56pm on 02 Jun 2010, LancashireLass wrote:
Alcohol should not be on sale in supermarkets. We had a system of off-licence premises years ago (usually attached to/or through a window at a local pub). It worked well, people generally drank in moderation, and the price was proportionate.
So - revert back to this off-licence system
Raise the legal age for alcohol to 21
Apply the letter of the law properly.
And for goodness sake -------stop listening to 'experts'

Complain about this comment

96. At 12:57pm on 02 Jun 2010, James wrote:
These "prohibitionists" in Government only want to squeeze the public more and more. So I have rebelled. I make my own beer and wine. If more people would make their own, then the tax theiving polticians would have to move elsewhere to get their greed on!

Complain about this comment

97. At 12:57pm on 02 Jun 2010, chronocompos wrote:
Would this make me a sensible drinker?

No - but then I already am.

Maybe these people should do what I've said a number of times on these forums. Advise us as to what the medical profession is telling us is sensible (although that appears to change with the wind) and then let us make our own mind up.

Might I suggest that they should focus less on what and how much people are drinking and focus more on why. It's not cost. I don't go out and binge drink just because it's cheap. Could it possibly be something to do with the 'must do everything now and have everything now' society we've created that puts people under too much stress and this is becoming a more and more common way of dealing with that.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
98. At 12:58pm on 02 Jun 2010, Phil Coulthard wrote:  
As no one reads these comments except those letting off steam it is pointless to express any opinion. However, for those letting off steam I would like to add that, if every scientist writing papers backs the conventional theory they are more likely to get their paper accepted. Then of course we will see a body of evidence in favour of putting up the price to reduce alcohol consumption. Could this be government softening up the population to accept a hike in price?  
Well..what about stress as a cause of increased alcohol consumption? 

Dont suppose that would suit the backers of such tripe to find a link between working hours / financial strain / student loans they cannot pay / buy a house and feed the kids . God I would turn to drink if I was a young fella today. We ask too much of them. 

Complain about this comment 

99. At 12:59pm on 02 Jun 2010, Sadie Carr wrote:  
I think many good people try and fail at this one.  
In the Med area, families eat together and responsible drinking is seen to be done.  
In the UK, the family unit seems to have broken down somewhat so we don't have that kind of culture.  
Raise the age limit to 21 and try and find out why these youngsters are getting off their face with frightening regularity-it's scary.If they are the future, I am scared. 

Complain about this comment 

100. At 12:59pm on 02 Jun 2010, Dr Llareggub wrote:  
Usual solutions to problems - charge more for the alleged cause. In this case drinking. We have a problem with knife crime. Why not make knives too expensive?  

Why not look at the many causes. Here is a suggestion. People are being bullied, pushed around, in work or when unemployed. A few drinks and you feel back on top of the world.  

One comes home from work, hounded by bureaucrats, reach for the bottle or down to the pub. Fortunately I go to sleep after a few drinks, some people become a nuisance. Never mind HYS comments will have the solution - higher taxes . Bah.

Appendix 44. All messages in the message thread London Olympics.
Are you looking forward to the London Olympics?
00:10 UK time, Tuesday, 27 July 2010

The London Olympics will begin in exactly two years. What are your hopes for the 2012 games?

Lord Coe and London Mayor Boris Johnson launched their appeals on Tuesday for thousands of Olympic volunteers to get involved in the London 2012 Olympics.

Events have been taking place at the Olympic site. Gold medallist Chris Hoy was the first to cycle round the new velodrome and former Olympic gold medallist Michael Johnson ran a race on a special track against a group of young children.

What do you think of the progress of the London Olympics? Do you live in the area? What impact has the project had already? Are the Olympics a good use of taxpayers' money?

Check out our new Olympics website.

This debate is now closed. Thank you for your comments.

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Comments

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* 1. At 00:52am on 27 Jul 2010, grainsofsand wrote:

   The olympics must be the biggest waste of money of all time - for which I am being forced to pay out of a concealed hike in my council tax. We will be saddled with the debt for the Olympics for years to come.

   I am looking forward to them being over.

   Complain about this comment

* 2. At 00:58am on 27 Jul 2010, The truth is the greatest enemy of the state wrote:

[Type text]
I, for one, am already sick and tired of hearing about the 2012 Olympics. My only hope is that it will be over quickly.

Complain about this comment
* 3. At 00:59am on 27 Jul 2010, SeasideSteve wrote:

Fortunately I will have retired by the time the games start so will not need to find a parking space in Hackney Wick, (on the edge of the Olympic site). Mind you I can think of plenty of other reasons not to go to Hackney Wick!

Sorry, this is the only significance the games have for me. I think they are an outdated and tarnished institution which has more to do with jingoism than human achievement. I am also heartily sick of being told how environmentally friendly the London games will be.

Complain about this comment
* 4. At 01:11am on 27 Jul 2010, Icebloo wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

* 5. At 01:19am on 27 Jul 2010, legb wrote:

I fail to see why we're pouring money into an event that will last only days and leave a legacy that in the main is unlikely to show any return to the tax payer; especially after the cost of the opening and closing ceremonies and security have all been taken into account.

If the sponsors and others promoting the event are so keen on doing so, why aren't they entirely dependant on the private markets for funding, perhaps then the cold sword of reality might appear and make them realise just how much of our money is being poured into the potentially bottomless pit to appease the Olympic organisation.

Moving on to the attempts to win the right to stage the world cup, let the football clubs upgrade or build their own new stadiums and the football association finance the entire logistical operation, receiving hopefully some very realistic bills from the applicable Police authorities and other bodies they will expect access to, that the rest of us will be taxed even greater to finance.

At the time of one of the greatest recessions I find pumping this amount of money into sport to be a gross waste of money.

Cancel all future plans to host international sports events unless privately financed 100 percent and finish the projects for the olympics that are actually in progress and make do with what they have.

The rest of the country is having to make do, why can't this project?
Complain about this comment
* 6. At 02:00am on 27 Jul 2010, Charlie Patey wrote:

Yes I am - I have my doubts and complaints like everyone but I'm determined to put them aside and enjoy it - we'll show the world what a broke (or is that broken) Britain can do!!!

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 02:10am on 27 Jul 2010, AMIN786x wrote:

The London Olympics will begin in exactly two years. What are your hopes for the 2012 games?

The Olympics should be a time of national and international joy ... but this is rarely the case.

Why?

The global influence of capital will mean that the majority of people will be bystanders in their own country.

Local business - shops, taxis etc will find themselves sidelined. The Big Boys will ensure that they get every drop of benefit.

Proof - just look at South Africa.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 03:22am on 27 Jul 2010, angry_of_garston wrote:

No

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 03:29am on 27 Jul 2010, Jacques Bouvier wrote:

How many average Londoners will attend the games? Ticket prices at the Olympics are generally so high that the very people whose taxes built the venues will not benefit from them. But that is not what the games are all about. Oh no. The games are all about the rich foreigners who have to eat, be housed, transported and supplied with souvenirs. They will spend large amounts that will enter the local economy. That is what the Lord Mayor wants. That is what the bookies want. Isn't that what you want?

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 03:34am on 27 Jul 2010, Jacques Bouvier wrote:

Isn't it ironic? A country in the throes of recession, cutting back civil services, health care, defense, even police, still spends itself silly on the Olympic games. You have really given yourself a white elephant this time.

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 03:39am on 27 Jul 2010, devilzadvocate1 wrote:
Let me guess - the posts will be about 75% negative, what a waste of money, time, tv schedules trashed, taxpayers money etc etc. The other 25% will be positive, national pride, great world event, regeneration of a run down area, better facilities for all when they are finished etc etc. The reason I know this is because you keep asking this question in a variety of ways and the answers are always the same. Why bother to ask the question again or if you insist on doing so why not just cut and paste the answers from last time?

Can someone explain why we are being asked this question at all - this whole website is supposed to be a discussion forum for events that are in the news. There is no reason for the olympics to even be mentioned other than it is exactly 2 years away - why is this considered to be newsworthy

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 04:04am on 27 Jul 2010, panchopablo wrote:

I wonder what percentage will be for people claiming asylum in Britain will be in 2012?.

I wonder how many poorer countries will leave with full squads?.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 04:12am on 27 Jul 2010, devilzadvacatel wrote:

How many average Londoners will attend the games? Ticket prices at olympics are generally so high that the very people whose taxes built the venues will not benefit from them. But that is not what the games are all about. Oh no. The games are all about the rich foreigners who have to eat, be housed, transported and supplied with souvenirs. They will spend large amounts that will enter the local economy. That is what the Lord Mayor wants. That is what the bookies want. Isn't that what you want?

Ideally, what I want and what I suspect many people want is for the amount of money spent by these 'rich foreigners' to at least equal and preferably surpass the amount of taxpayers money being spent to host them. If they were totally self financing I'm sure that even the most ardent nay-sayers would have no great objection to them.

This could very easily be achieved - we know the cost of hosting them, it would not take long to calculate how much to charge for things like corporate entertainment, ticket price, TV rights etc to cover the cost. If that means a ticket price of more than 100 pounds for certain events then so be it. Those who wish to pay it do and the rest of us do not have to subsidise it.

What we currently have is that all Londoners are being forced, whether they like it or not to subsidise others desire to watch sporting events. I'm sure that if it were anything other than sport, a two week long music festival for example, there would never be a suggestion that it should be paid for by Londoners council tax.
Complain about this comment
* 14. At 04:20am on 27 Jul 2010, devilzadvacatel wrote:

The Olympic Games started in Greece; it should return there. We currently have the situation that every 4 years the venue moves around the globe and each country that hosts it tries to 'out-glitz' the ones that went before. This is a huge waste of everybodies money.

Greece recently hosted the games and their olympic site in the main is now derelict and unused. Would it not be a good idea if it was a permanent olympic site used all the time for every subsequent games? Apart from anything else it would be a more meaningful competition. I'm sure that running a marathon in Athens is totally different to running in Berlin, London, Seoul, Paris etc. If it was always Athens at least everybody would be on a level playing field (pardon the pun)

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 04:23am on 27 Jul 2010, abserloooootly wrote:

that its cancelled.

Complain about this comment
* 16. At 04:53am on 27 Jul 2010, Bon Qui Qui wrote:

My hope is to understand how the UK can have four football teams and exclude three of them from the competition without kicking a ball.

Complain about this comment
* 17. At 05:14am on 27 Jul 2010, devilzadvacatel wrote:

16. At 04:53am on 27 Jul 2010, Bon Qui Qui wrote:
My hope is to understand how the UK can have four football teams and exclude three of them from the competition without kicking a ball.

.........................
Not sure about Scotland or Wales but as far as Ireland are concerned you should really ask Thierry Henri and FIFA, they might have the answer.

Complain about this comment
* 18. At 05:19am on 27 Jul 2010, James wrote:

The fact that this absurd, media driven frenzy, which has little or nothing to do with sport, should be brought to our capitol city is one that makes me cringe and can only to serve to show the rest of the world what, after 13 years of a socialist government led by liars cheats and thieves, what a second rate nation we have become.

The only ones to get any benefit from this nonsense are those whose personal fortunes have been made by duping the games selection committee by under-calling the cost of staging 'The Games' in London.
Complain about this comment
* 19. At 05:38am on 27 Jul 2010, Sachidananda Narayanan wrote:

Are you looking forward to the London Olympics?

Yes. But not "looking forward to go to London to see
Olympics. 
London is not any attractive place for a sports meet when
compared to cities across Japan or the USA.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 05:58am on 27 Jul 2010, who2believe? wrote:

Should I? This is the London Olympics and I live in
Manchester so it doesn't really bother me. I doubt I could afford
to go even if they gave away the tickets with the price of travel
to and accommodation in London being out of my reach. However if
history is anything to go by availability of tickets for the best
events will be restricted to those who are in the know or priced
so high most of us couldn't afford them.

I just don't feel any connection to the games it is out of
my area and out of my price range.

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 08:11am on 27 Jul 2010, Jaywat wrote:

Complete and utter waste of time and money. Roll on 2013,
because I'm already sick to death of hearing about it.

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 08:16am on 27 Jul 2010, Mike wrote:

Are you looking forward to the London Olympics? - NO

Hopefully I will be as far away as I can get.

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 08:17am on 27 Jul 2010, ady wrote:

I feel sorry for all those people who are supposed to be
competing at the top level of their sport, especially the more
stamina orientated disciplines.

Everyone chokes in London during the summer, it's a
horrible windless polluted overpopulated environment.

I went round the world the equivalent of 5 times in the
1980s and worked in some pretty crummy hot places.
The two worst most unforgettable places in the world I was
in for humidity and general muggyness were the Sudan and London.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 08:18am on 27 Jul 2010, Icebloo wrote:

[Type text]
After watching all the undercover TV documentaries on the International Olympic Committee and their shady dealings I stopped supporting the Olympics about 15 years ago. I refuse to be part of it.

The London Olympics will be just like the others. The rich and famous will breeze in and take the best tickets leaving the less desirable tickets for everyone else and a huge bill for the UK taxpayer.

The organisers will, again, give the Queen and the Royal Family excellent seats for the best events and they will sit there, again, with not one smile or spark of pleasure. It's clear they don't want to be there. We should leave them at home and give their tickets to a true sports fan who really wants to be there but cannot afford to buy a ticket.

25. At 08:20am on 27 Jul 2010, Menedemus wrote:
No. It is a complete waste of time and money.

26. At 08:21am on 27 Jul 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:
I'm personally not interested in going to watch people running and jumping about, and spending hundreds of pounds for doing so. You see much more on the TV anyway. I really can't see what the point is but of course I'm sure lots of people do enjoy it so good luck to them.

27. At 08:23am on 27 Jul 2010, suzie127 wrote:
Well the moaners are out in force. Personally I am looking forward to the Olympic games, I expect I am one of the few sports fans that actually post here.

28. At 08:23am on 27 Jul 2010, Togodubnus wrote:
Yes, we could moan, whine & rail about the cost of the olympics.

We all know that the UK would never have bid had we known the state the country's finances would be in at theis point in time.

But hell, there's no chance of it being cancelled know, so rather than moaning about the waste, I for one intend to sit back, kickback and enjoy.

29. At 08:25am on 27 Jul 2010, Prymuz wrote:
No - It will be a colossal failure and what's worse if the regeneration, jobs and growth promised has gone to non-UK citizens and corporate companies who are creaming the wealth off.

I feel sorry for the poor suckers of London who are lining the before mentioned pockets and bearing a large proportion of the cost, pollution (including noise) and travel inconvenience.

Complain about this comment
* 30. At 08:27am on 27 Jul 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:

The biggest sporting event in the world is the football world cup and they spread the events round the country. The Olympics is a London event so nothing to do with the rest of the country I've got no interest in it.

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 08:27am on 27 Jul 2010, hetup wrote:

Good to see all that much needed money and resources being spent in London!
I'm sure the Olympics will be a great boost to the economy of London and suburbs? (like they need it), With great facilities for Londoners afterwards!
I doubt if people north of Watford Gap will benefit as usual.

Complain about this comment
* 32. At 08:28am on 27 Jul 2010, Robertloa wrote:

Not particularly, it's two years away I have other things to think about.. However as you have brought it up. I guess I hope that are Athletes put up a better performance than our, (English,) footballers did at the World Cup.

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 08:28am on 27 Jul 2010, thedukeofhunslet wrote:

I know people are worried about the money...but tell me a country that hosted the games that didn't benefit from it in the long term?

Personally I can't wait - I'm looking forward to taking my elderly father to watch the athletics.

Complain about this comment
* 34. At 08:33am on 27 Jul 2010, deanarabin wrote:

I'm only looking forward to them to the extent that the sooner they're here, the sooner they're over. They're a terrible waste of money, particularly now we're in massive economic crisis, but then they always have been.
Whatever they may say, the 'legacy' will be a millstone round our necks for years to come, and as a London Council Tax payer I fear the worst. If they'd wanted to regenerate that part of East London (and how it was needed!) the Government could have
done so, purpose-built, for half the cost, and for example have provided proper homes instead of a refurbished Olympic Village built for an entirely different job. If they'd wanted to spend the other half of the billions there are plenty of places outside the South East that need it more.

The 'legacy' will be a major headache and in place of a collective Aspirin I think we can look forward to hearing quite a number of names of the overpaid Delivery Authority for years to come. It's been the most successful job creation scheme for the supposedly Great and Good that could ever have been envisaged; the next thing we'll hear about is the Pension Scheme.

I love sport and played more than one Olympic sport for about 30 years. But this is nothing but Showbiz.

Complain about this comment
* 35. At 08:34am on 27 Jul 2010, Alan Baker wrote:

I live in Essex and work in the City and have already told my employer's that I will be taking at least 3 weeks off when the Olympic Games start.

Commuting into London is already a nightmare and will be unbearable for the duration of the games.

I have no interest in athletics or the Olympics at all, I will not be watching any of it and I do not want my taxes wasted on what is just a jolly for the rich and the good and as many people have already said those that want it should fund it and not expect others who have absolutely no interest in it to pick up the tab for years to come.

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 08:34am on 27 Jul 2010, Chris wrote:

I was looking forward to the Olympics until we were informed that all non-Visa credit cards were not acceptable to pay for anything. Now I will not pay any attention whatsoever to the whole event, not even on TV.

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 08:36am on 27 Jul 2010, Mrs Vee wrote:

We can't afford it, the coffers are bare, we have no money, the country's finances are in a massive hole of debt which we will not have climbed out of by 2012.

So....in a word - NO.

Complain about this comment
* 38. At 08:37am on 27 Jul 2010, spellbindingjussie wrote:

We should be setting an example and not plowing masses of money into this. Why not start a competition on which country can do this the cheepest. That wont happen because the competition is
who can spend the most. The UK doesn't have excess money and taxpayers certainly don't so we shouldn't be spending so much on a sporting event that will only have a return for a limited time.

I like the Olympics but I worry that it's just another payment that this country doesn't need.

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 08:38am on 27 Jul 2010, Les Acres wrote:

No, total waste anytime, let alone austere ones. Who wants to watch a bunch of drug addicts competing with each other? Countries making it political it becomes more like the Roman Games every time.

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 08:39am on 27 Jul 2010, AGnomeCalledJimmy wrote:

I would be looking forward to them if I knew that Britain was going to be well represented and it was going to bring about any change in UK sport.

However it obviously isn't. The government is still going to remain totally apathetic about the importance of exercise and sporting participation and the next generations adding to the obesity statistics will remain oblivious to it as well.

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 08:41am on 27 Jul 2010, No Victim No Crime wrote:

Nope in fact I'm dreading it never wanted it held here still don't and when its all over the poor will not see the benefits of what's left behind, its another excuse for the rich to get richer just look at what the so called expert advisors get paid.

I don't know how running around in a circle qualifies to be an "expert" on anything except running around in a circle or the same for running a short distance then jumping forward, wow how that must improve society.

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 08:41am on 27 Jul 2010, Togodubnus wrote:

16. At 04:53am on 27 Jul 2010, Bon Qui Qui wrote:
My hope is to understand how the UK can have four football teams and exclude three of them from the competition without kicking a ball.

Because 3 of them, Scotland, Northern Ireland & Wales have refused to participate, despite assurances from FIFA that it would not affect their status as independent footballing nations.

Or are they more worried about the potential humiliation of none of them having players selected for a British team.

[Type text]
Complain about this comment
* 43. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, Phillip of England wrote:

What are your hopes for the 2012 games?

I suspect the games are going to be more cringe inducing than anything.

The closing performance by the Chinese when they had the Olympics was well choreographed and as such breathe taking, truly breathe taking that people could be organised to perform something so awe inspiring.

In contrast the acceptance by the English of the Olympic torch for the 2012 games was embarrassing to the point of cringe educing and I had to turn over. Bar the London bus and Jimmy Page there was nothing remotely English about it. It was a multi-cultural, urban, scruffy, awkward, hip-hop, angular, street dance mess. It was disjointed, amateur and thoroughly unpleasant and those who organized this travesty should hang their heads in shame for the dishonour they have brought to this country.

If this is what we have to look forward to as the overriding theme for our Olympics – an inner city youth club hocked up on caffeine drinks and Ritalin and as devolved from anything even remotely English as its possible to get then I intend to disassociate myself from this as much as possible, it is going to be a mess.

Where did we go so wrong?

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, Syni_cal wrote:

New Labour were so desperate to get this circus that they claimed that no taxpayers money would need to be spent on it, then they said that "because of a small economic downturn, private enterprise might not be able to cover all the costs" Next lie was "it just needs a small top up to ensure that the facilities are ready for 2012. And so it continued until the taxpayers commitment was more than £9000000000. We have seen these drip by drip lies by New Labour many times over many different issues but we now have a government that claims that it is committed to cutting waste, let them prove this commitment by blocking any more requests for money. If this results in the circus organisers being embarrassed I promise not to weep too much.

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, Megan wrote:

I hope for some proper coverage - UK media reporting of the last Olympics was appalling, focussed solely on 'team GB' instead of on the best that WORLD athletes can display. I do not care about nationalities, I want to see sporting excellence.
Complain about this comment
* 46. At 08:43am on 27 Jul 2010, Amanda Moody wrote:

I have been listening to Boris about the Olympics, great stuff. My suggestion would be why don't the Olympic committee and Boris, (because he thinks outsided the box) organize people to come and see the build, they would pay a small fee and be supplied hats and jackets and put on a land train. They did this at the Eden Project which helped to pay for the project and it wasn't difficult, and it was exciting. They stayed on the train and the tour took about 10 mins. They finished one section where people could buy snacks and refreshments before leaving. It would allow people to see the project before the Olympics as most of us will not be able to get a ticket and it would create much support for the project once people saw what was going on and how spectacular it will look.

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 08:47am on 27 Jul 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:

The police will be able to boost the crime numbers, all those drug users in one place for two weeks.

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 08:48am on 27 Jul 2010, AJ Fraser wrote:

I won't go near the olympics, the people behind the NY bombings would like nothing better than topping that and they'll have 6 years to plan it, they hate the UK so it's a logical target for them. During the recent world cup the South African police, in Pretoria, arrested some persons who was selling a "dirty bomb" they actually had it, how many may have slipped through? Did this make the news?

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 08:49am on 27 Jul 2010, No Victim No Crime wrote:

Will any housing built to house the athletes be handed over to the people as social housing when the games are over? No they'll be sold off to the highest bidder or a mate (wink wink nod nod) and the monies will disappear never to return to good causes again.

From the beginning it's been a rip off and will continue to be so the Olympic Logo is about right with the country being on the left and those running the olympics on the right, in MY OPINION.

Complain about this comment
* 50. At 08:51am on 27 Jul 2010, The Ghosts of John Galt wrote:

According to the BBC I am 30% more positive about the London 2012 Olympics now than I was yesterday! I am puzzled because, despite all the mystic babblers pronouncing how 'great' they 'feel' about it now its only two years off - I still have this nagging feeling it is going to be a complete disaster - In
fact, I 'feel' positively negative by at least 70% at the thought
of Boris and Coe and their London Olympic triumph of tac and
crasr patronising popularism masquerading as a quaint English -
London centric exploration in to cultural ignorance and
stupidity!

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 08:52am on 27 Jul 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back
and regret.

Complain about this comment
* 52. At 08:52am on 27 Jul 2010, D Johnson wrote:

The Olympics are the biggest waste of money this country
will endure. We shall now get two years of droning on, on TV,
about our athletes, other country’s athletes, how much we are
wasting on it and numerous other subjects surrounding it, which I
and my family have no interest in at all.

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 08:53am on 27 Jul 2010, anthony_r wrote:

No I am most certainly NOT looking forward to the 2012
Games and I am already making plans to be out of the country on
holiday for the duration.
The whole concept has the smell of hypocrisy and corruption
and I honestly feel the Games should return to Athens and stay
there.
Quite how anyone has the confidence that we can succeed on
a 9.3 billion budget when China's final bill was in the order of
21 Billion with forced expropriation of land with little or no
compensation and endless poorly paid workers, is beyond me, but
then of course, we, the Public will likely never know the final
cost, will we. There will be obfuscation throughout. Suffice to
consider the plight of Montreal and Athens where they are sill
paying for their games.
Oh and please don't talk about the philanthropic and
humanitarian benefits; if these had any more import than mere
words, the next Games would be in the middle of Black Africa with
hugely simplified facilities but then there would be no 6 star
hotels for the exclusive use of the IOC officials - humbug and
hypocrisy!

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 08:53am on 27 Jul 2010, Alan Baker wrote:

• 27. At 08:23am on 27 Jul 2010, suzie127 wrote:
Well the moaners are out in force. Personally I am looking
forward to the Olympic Games; I expect I am one of the few sports
fans that actually post here.
No Suzie you are not one of the few sports fans here, I
along with millions of others enjoy watching football, rugby,
cricket, boxing, martial arts etc (but to old to take part these
days) I also play golf, go shooting, (Clay pigeon), go swimming, cycle etc.

The only difference being that I fund all of these activities I enjoy myself out of my own pocket and I do not expect the taxpayer to pick up the bill.

Very few people in this country are really interested in athletics; just look how many people are at a normal meeting, the stands are empty, and those that are there are mostly family and friends anyway.

The point is that those of us who are not remotely interested in athletics are still being forced to pay for it.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 08:54am on 27 Jul 2010, The Ghosts of John Galt wrote:

43. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, Phillip of England wrote:

//Where did we go so wrong?/

Boris and Coe!

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 08:56am on 27 Jul 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:

45. At 08:42am on 27 Jul 2010, Megan wrote:

I hope for some proper coverage - UK media reporting of the last Olympics was appalling, focussed solely on 'team GB' instead of on the best that WORLD athletes can display. I do not care about nationalities, I want to see sporting excellence

.......................................................

If you want to see sporting excellence give the olympics or any athletics a miss. Its turned into a competition in pharmacology the ones who don't get caught get medals those that do get caught get a must try harder next time mark.

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 08:56am on 27 Jul 2010, Cydevil wrote:

NO WAY!

The OG has become a big financial scam just to allow a few to run round a track or chuck something into the air. I can see the same at the Sports Day of the village school where the interest is not to make money. Monsieur le Baron de Coubertin must be having a very restless time in his grave.

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 08:57am on 27 Jul 2010, meanstreak wrote:
i'm sick of hearing about the olympics tbh!!

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 08:58am on 27 Jul 2010, The Ghosts of John Galt wrote:

46. At 08:43am on 27 Jul 2010, Amanda Moody wrote:

//My suggestion would be why don't the Olympic committee and Boris, (because he thinks outsided the box)//

Thinks 'outside the Box', Boris? Are you sure about that? I 'think' the Olympic's would turn out to be a great success if we put Boris IN A BOX and set him adrift in the Thames - maybe he would float off to a 'new' airport in the middle of the North Sea or some such other nonsense!

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 09:00am on 27 Jul 2010, GeologyRocks wrote:

Am I looking forward to the Olympics? Not really. Not that I object though. I feel the money could have been spend better elsewhere and London will be chaos for the weeks surrounding the event but many will enjoy it. Why is it front page news now though? Perhaps coverage should be kept to the sports news channels so only the people who are interested can watch. I for one, want to see the 'real' news when I turn on the TV in the morning when I'm getting ready for work, not Olympic or world cup babble. Good luck to Team GB, I wish them all the best! I just don't want to hear about it this much, this soon in advance.

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 09:01am on 27 Jul 2010, tomwc wrote:

Like the Queen and English heritage, the Olympics can only be a good thing for the British economy and should be supported – it is a chance for business people and entrepreneurs to make money for a captive market all with a common interests and needs.

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 09:03am on 27 Jul 2010, thelevellers wrote:

My hope is that is will be cancelled.

The fact is that it was too expensive at the time of bidding and certainly too expensive during this global recession.

They also talk about the olympics being inclusive and having the power to bring people together, which is a complete lie. Just look at the events, rowing, horse riding, fencing, swimming and hockey. They are sports played by white upper class toffs. What is inclusive about that.

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 09:04am on 27 Jul 2010, starquin10 wrote:
Are you looking forward to the London Olympics? Nope

Bread and circuses for the masses. Of course, they'll need distracting from the ongoing Depression.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 09:10am on 27 Jul 2010, jaytirth wrote:

I am surprised to see so many Britons opposed to hosting the Olympics. It is exactly the opposite in India. Indians supported the commonwealth games whereas the corrupt and inefficient government failed to build the necessary infrastructure in time. We think these games if properly hosted will attract tourists and encourage children to take up sports.

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 09:10am on 27 Jul 2010, LondonPhil wrote:

It's a shame that moaning isn't a national sport, because we would have that sport licked!

I can't believe some of these comments... guys up north complaining that investment is only being made in London, whereas those in London can only see doom and gloom and the cost of it all. Spread over all the population in London, wasn't the cost something like a pint of beer once a week?

It will give the chance for the rest of the world to hopefully marvel at what London can show off, much like the world marveled at China's effort. Have we also forgotten how many gold medals we won? Has everyone forgotten how proud Londoners were seeing their swimming and cycling heroes returning here? How much better will it be if they repeat it on home soil??

True, the timing isn't great with the crisis, but you could hardly foresee that and jobs ARE being created, and hopefully London will have a better infrastructure afterwards. A better infrastructure should entice companies to London (or at least make them stay!) and ultimately that's good for the entire economy, with all of the UK benefitting.

So stop wingeing and look forward to some sport and gold medals!

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 09:11am on 27 Jul 2010, polly_gone wrote:

The Olympics was once a wonderful set piece for amateurs. Now it is a travesty of over-hyped and over-paid wannabe 'celebs', many of whom will stop at nothing to have their glory moment. The misplaced heroism afforded to medal winners is an affront to any hard working member of the public who daily meets a high performance target without so much as a word from a boss. And if they do not meet the target EVERYDAY they are fired.
We have become immersed in the superlatives of those, like Lord Coe, who seem obsessed with pretending that his sport is clean, open, and driven by the right reasons. So why is the money been thrown around in so many different directions, Seb? Do you really need a five figure income, a multi-person team to run fast or is it something you once did because you loved it?

Money and sport. When are our media people ever going to admit they just do not mix? Watch the Olympics in 2012 and you'll see just why. BBC are you reading this? You are one of the biggest offenders.

Kid yourselves all you want, but it isn't sport.

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 09:13am on 27 Jul 2010, Dave1506 wrote:

No if you work in London the best thing to do is book your holiday when its on and don't go near the place

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 09:16am on 27 Jul 2010, angryauntie wrote:

No, I'm not looking forward to the hype, the display of wealth and the disruption of normal life.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 09:22am on 27 Jul 2010, JohnH wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 70. At 09:23am on 27 Jul 2010, forwardpasser wrote:

Complete waste of money - while ordinary folk suffer and lose their jobs, we spend money we can't afford on sporting events, unwinnable wars, and filling up the offshore accounts of corrupt leaders in developing countries......shameful.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 09:34am on 27 Jul 2010, littletenter wrote:

Like a hole in my head!

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 09:37am on 27 Jul 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

I am looking forward to looking back on it, only by looking back on it can it be judged to be a success or good use of money.

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 09:38am on 27 Jul 2010, Out for Lunch wrote:

62. At 09:03am on 27 Jul 2010, thelevellers wrote:
"Just look at the events, rowing, horse riding, fencing, swimming and hockey. They are sports played by white upper class toffs. What is inclusive about that."

I have to say, this is one of the most ignorant comments I have seen here. Anyone can go swimming, play hockey, join a fencing or rowing club, or learn to ride horses.

I wasn't aware that track and field events have been excluded from the Olympics? Last time I looked, there were people of all colours and nationalities participating in them, and many doing considerably better than your "white upper class toffs"?

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 09:41am on 27 Jul 2010, Frenske wrote:

A big YES! I definitively will go there one day to see something; just to soak up the atmosphere and just to be there. It is the biggest event in the world and off course I cannot missed.

Unbelievable this forum is full of whiners and "lethargists".

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 09:41am on 27 Jul 2010, Out for Lunch wrote:

65. At 09:10am on 27 Jul 2010, LondonPhil wrote:

"Spread over all the population in London, wasn't the cost something like a pint of beer once a week?"

I didn't realise it was so expensive - that's about £12 a month, or £144 a year per person!!

Glad I don't live in London.

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 09:43am on 27 Jul 2010, DibbySpot wrote:

This over priced folly will sadly result in a "white elephant" like the "Dome" where the people pay through their taxes for elite venues only for them to fail. We then sell them at "knock down" prices to entreprenuers.

Better we do not waste the money in the first place.

Complain about this comment
* 77. At 09:43am on 27 Jul 2010, Johnnybgood wrote:

Myself, I could care less about the `games`.
Will it benefit the ordinary-out-of-work people? Will it benefit those whose taxes are paying for this (seemingly unwanted) Olympics? There are a lot of negative comments on HYS towards the games. So does this not send a message out, that people don’t care. Will the man/woman/child on the street be able to afford the entrance tickets? It will be interesting to see how many of the overseas visitors to this country.................actually go home after the games!

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 09:44am on 27 Jul 2010, ady wrote:

We were skint the last time we held the Olympics and we'll be skint this time around.

But then there's skint and there's skint, it's all relative.

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 09:46am on 27 Jul 2010, ady wrote:

For example, in 1948 both bread and potatoes were rationed. So we've made improvements and are struggling by this time around.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 09:47am on 27 Jul 2010, markmyword1949 wrote:

No. A complete and utter waste of money for a two week jamboree that will leave no lasting benefit for the majority of those who participate in sports in this country. The money should have been spent at grassroots level to improve access and training.

We've just seen a football World Cup where the difference in the number of coaches and the system followed in a country make all the difference to the outcome. If the UK want world class numbers of participants in any sport the lesson is that money needs to be spent at the bottom, not the top.

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 09:48am on 27 Jul 2010, HonestMP wrote:

This question should have been ask before it was brought to Britain.
Why should we support this without being asked. Why spend money on minority sports and Seb Coe's ego

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 09:51am on 27 Jul 2010, FlashMagski wrote:

[Type text]
We are in one of the worst recessions ever recorded, and still billions are poured into a venture that will last 2 weeks. A complete and utter waste of money, time, manpower. Coe and Johnson have a lot to answer for, while the rest of the country pay for their 'Baby'

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 09:51am on 27 Jul 2010, CladinBlack wrote:
Yes and No.

It's costing a lot of money at a time when so many public services are under threat. Of course we have to put on a 'show' for the world!

Also, security is going to be a nightmare - which will put me off from actually going up to London so I'll watch most of it on TV.

Another factor is our unreliable weather - nothing worse than running, cycling or boat-racing in the rain.

Hopefully it won't be a huge embarrassment to us all and London will be able to pull it off.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 09:53am on 27 Jul 2010, tokolosie wrote:
Fantastic. I cannot wait for the Olympics. Can we ban all the miserable people from the UK for the few weeks please?!

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 09:56am on 27 Jul 2010, brummieterry wrote:

No

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 09:57am on 27 Jul 2010, Neil Probert wrote:

Having worked on the 2006 winter olympics in Turin, I discovered that the olympic 'movement' has nothing whatsoever to do with sport. It is purely a promotional vehicle and money-making exercise for McDonalds, Coca Cola, Visa and the mobile phone technology companies; end of story.

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 09:57am on 27 Jul 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:

Am I looking forward to the Games? No.

The money being spent on them is much needed elsewhere. The Games will not bring in large sums of money as people flock to the events, as has been shown to be the case in all other Olympic Games - the cities holding them are left with massive debts.
Out of work, still paying full-rate council tax which partly goes towards the Games. So not happy.

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 09:58am on 27 Jul 2010, HonestMP wrote:

Why does Boris want volunteers? Shouldn't the foreign firms which will make the profit from the Olympics pay people a proper wage and not get cheap and free labour.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 10:04am on 27 Jul 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:

55. At 08:54am on 27 Jul 2010, The Ghosts of John Galt wrote:

//Where did we go so wrong?/

Boris and Coe!

It's a tad unfair to blame Boris as he was 3 years away from being the London Mayor by the time the games bid was won! I'm still waiting to see if the cost per Londoner is the same as the 'price of a 'walnut whip' as Ken Livingstone so proudly announced. I thought at the time he's probably talking about the world's most expensive walnut whip.

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 10:05am on 27 Jul 2010, ticktickticktickboom wrote:

My only hope for the 2012 Olympics is that we as the host nation can manage to get through it without any form of logistical, organisational or political lash up.

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 10:06am on 27 Jul 2010, LondonPhil wrote:

"Spread over all the population in London, wasn't the cost something like a pint of beer once a week?"

I didn't realise it was so expensive - that's about £12 a month, or £144 a year per person!!

Glad I don't live in London.

-----------------------------------------------

I had a check, it was even less. It was estimated at 38p a week. Let's say that was hopelessly out and it's 50p a week. It's still peanuts when most people spend 20-30+ quid going out and over-boozing.

And at the end you get some infrastructure out of it! I wonder how our society would ever build something like the pyramids ever again? I can imagine the wingers (spelling?) complaining about the cost already!

[Type text]
Complain about this comment
* 92. At 10:07am on 27 Jul 2010, cold_dead_hands wrote:

33. At 08:28am on 27 Jul 2010, thedukeofhunslet wrote:
I know people are worried about the money...but tell me a country that hosted the games that didn't benefit from it in the long term?
Greece?

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 10:09am on 27 Jul 2010, 24 years and counting wrote:

My hope for London 2012 is that one day I'll wake up and realise this was all just a bad dream, and that Paris actually won.

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 10:10am on 27 Jul 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:

No, why did we ever get involved. Because it is a chance for demented architects to build those structures they imagined while smoking pot, and for members of the old boys club to pocket a few bob for having their photo taken. For joe public, we are just waiting for the stadia, built with the aid of sky hooks, to collapse.

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 10:10am on 27 Jul 2010, scotbot wrote:

42. Togodubnus wrote:

Or are they [Scotland, Northern Ireland & Wales] more worried about the potential humiliation of none of them having players selected for a British [football] team.

Whose to say there would be any English players in the side? It is, after all, an U23 side and your mega-stars which are carried by their illustrious foreign team-mates at their club sides won't be selectable.

Of course, given the failure of England's iron pyrites generation at this year's World Cup, that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Anyway, if the foot was on the other foot and all the best players were say Scottish or Welsh, you can bet your bottom dollar that you wouldn't get a completely Scottish or Welsh side.

Somehow I doubt England's football-supporting fans would have been prepared to cheer on an all-blue side where the majority of the fans would be singing Flower of Scotland.

Complain about this comment
* 96. At 10:11am on 27 Jul 2010, deleted wrote:
I'm hoping that a lot of people will stop moaning and realise what a great thing The Olympics is.

But there's more chance of me winning the 100m against Usain Bolt than that happening.

Complain about this comment
* 97. At 10:14am on 27 Jul 2010, Dr Llareggub wrote:

I think the overall Olympic project is a waste of money. Although I do not object to a number of young people having their moment of glory. Good luck to them all.

As for my hopes: I pray that it will not be scarred by any terrorist outrage, which has happened in the past. I am worried that intelligence from Smiley's people will be inaccurate and that certain people whose cultural beliefs are over protected by the PC crowd and the BBC are already here planning something terrible.

Complain about this comment
* 98. At 10:16am on 27 Jul 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:

73. At 09:38am on 27 Jul 2010, Out for Lunch wrote:
62. At 09:03am on 27 Jul 2010, thelevellers wrote:

"Just look at the events, rowing, horse riding, fencing, swimming and hockey. They are sports played by white upper class toffs. What is inclusive about that."

I have to say, this is one of the most ignorant comments I have seen here. Anyone can go swimming, play hockey, join a fencing or rowing club, or learn to ride horses.

I wasn't aware that track and field events have been excluded from the Olympics? Last time I looked, there were people of all colours and nationalities participating in them, and many doing considerably better than your "white upper class toffs"?

..........................................................

It's not "white upper class toffs" but it is middle class sports its rubbish to say anyone can play tennis, hockey, fencing or rowing if some kid from a run down estate turned up at an athletic club or tennis club they would not be let past the main gate. The only working class people and young people off the run down estates in London at the olympics will be selling hot dogs.

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 10:22am on 27 Jul 2010, RedandYellowandGreennotBlue wrote:
I can't wait. London and the rest of the country needs this to show we are still an influential member of the global community.

If done right, the benefits gained from increased tourism will be felt for decades (something which may be hard to measure).

Bring it on! Let's show the world what an incredible city London is, and what a fantastic country we live in.

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 10:39am on 27 Jul 2010, tiernon wrote:

This is no longer news. We've had the games driven down our throats for the past few years already with another two to go. Personally I'm sick of the whole thing.

The money being spent is shameful, it's grotesquely over budget, over funded and uninteresting. With our country (and the world in general) in such a mess, the best thing to offer globally would be an amnesty on events like this. Hold off for a few years until we can afford the facilities. Hire former olympic stadiums or use the facilities we have throughout the country already. Surely it would be cheaper to transport the athletes and supporters around the UK for a few days than to spend billions on a new swimming pool and playing field.

There is no shame in being broke, admitting it, then fixing it.

Complain about this comment
Appendix 45. All messages in the message thread New technology.

Has new technology taken over our lives?
11:16 UK time, Thursday, 19 August 2010

With the development of mobile phones and the internet, there are now more ways than ever to access media. We now spend almost half of our waking life viewing content. Is this your experience?

Media regulator, Ofcom, surveyed 1,138 adults and found that people in the UK spend seven hours a day watching TV, surfing the net and using mobile phones. It is also thought we may spend more time than that because we multi-task using more than one appliance at the same time.

However, despite the rise in new technologies, the report says we still rely more heavily on traditional radio and TV.

Is there a media overload? Do you spend more time multi-tasking? Do you find it stressful keeping across all the media outlets or do you find the new technology has helped your life?

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

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Comments

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* 1. At 11:34am on 19 Aug 2010, U14366475 wrote:

  Has new technology taken over our lives? Pretty much, although it's led to a more shallower existence for many. Many people today would be lost without their mobile phone, sky tv and games consoles. Technologies help create a better world, so long was we don't forget we are all human beings, this is not a problem at all.

  Complain about this comment
* 2. At 11:34am on 19 Aug 2010, ill1lg08 wrote:

  Technology helps, but I am glad that my non-work life is not evolving around a certain product or virtual environment. I...
still prefer reading a book, watch a movie and go to see places and people. There will always be more technology. It just depends on how the individual choose to live his or her life.

Complain about this comment
* 3. At 11:35am on 19 Aug 2010, Chris wrote:

7 hours a day!!!! I wish I had 7 hours spare. I spend about 40 mins a day on this BBC Site (at work!) and that's about it. 20 mins of TV news in the evening, then out with the dog, off to the gym, out for a meal or off to the pub. Walking or travelling at weekends. My house is somewhere to lay my head at night.

My children, nephews & nieces (all grown up or teenagers), on the other hand, probably exceed the 7 hours. How sad is that, when there is so much to do outdoors. I multi-tasked for 28 years in the Armed Forces, as you do when you are not given the resources you need!! New technology is for people not creative enough to turn off their PCs and get out there.

Complain about this comment
* 4. At 11:39am on 19 Aug 2010, JohnH wrote:

It is an obvious fact that most 'new' technology is designed to make our lives easier. However, this ease of use comes with a downside. It is far too easy to access the internet and to spend too much time doing things that, if we stood back and looked hard, we would say are not the best use of our time.

Although I am not young, I still would never use a social website like facebook or this twit thing. I know I would not be using my time to my best advantage.

One comment from the young, my daughter aged 22 bought a new car and had several free gifts with it, one was a mobile phone which she declined. The garage couldn't understand why. She told them that all her girlfriends phoned her at home and at work, constantly. If she had a mobile phone she would have no time to herself. Now twelve years later she has a phone given to her by a friend which she still rarely turns on.

She may be difficult to contact but she does have plenty of freetime.

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 11:46am on 19 Aug 2010, Graham wrote:

No it becomes normal every day life. What is new technology?

Complain about this comment
* 6. At 11:53am on 19 Aug 2010, paul tapner wrote:

Personally no but I do wonder about the people who walk down the streets head down looking at their mobiles whilst ipod
headphone chords dangle from each ear. What vital messages are sending to people?

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 11:58am on 19 Aug 2010, Nok wrote:

Has new technology taken over our lives?

When I was a student we used to laugh at people with mobile phones, and the internet, although extant was incredibly slow and had very little entertainment value.

So, in the last 17 years the way we live and interact with the world around us has changed immeasurably.

I, on the other hand am regressing, i do have a moblile, but its very basic and i can't use half the features. I can just about browse the internet, but i could probably get more from it.

Mainly i spend more and more of my time reading real physical books - although that probably has more to do with the fact that the quality of television has declined to a level that would have been unimaginable even 10 years ago.

Celebrity Ballooning with Stephen Tompkinson anyone?

Sounds like an Alan Partridge idea from a decade ago...

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 12:00pm on 19 Aug 2010, Wheelies wrote:

It's not taken over my life, though I do make use of it.

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 12:07pm on 19 Aug 2010, Muddling Through wrote:

I go onto the internet at lunch time from work (because there is not a lot else to do), I have my mobile switched off when I am at home and I only watch TV when there is something specific I want to watch. I am a big fan of the original 'red-button' as in the big one that turns things off. I do however spend many hours listening to the radio. Technology only enters my life when I chose to let it and (other than being forced to listen to other peoples innane telephone conversations in public places) I can quite happily avoid it when I want to.

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 12:12pm on 19 Aug 2010, Eddy from Waring wrote:

For some people, the more neurotic young, social software and computer games present this risk.

But for many it is a great, liberating, timesaving and educational advance.
Why should anyone try to keep across more media platforms than they find suits them? Are people really that scared of being thought not to keep up? Dear me. (Then again if you go to any pub round here on a sunny day and see the rows of beetroot red, shaven-headed partially bald middle-aged men sat outside, all dressed the same, with not one daring to show the non-conformity of even wearing a hat if you please, then perhaps people are that frightened of not fitting in these days).

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 12:20pm on 19 Aug 2010, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:

Most definitely and for the better too, the Internet is a tremendous source of information Wikipedia is a fantastic website that i feel is the most beneficial, Anyone with an internet connection is now capable of finding out the COMPLETE picture, rather than a state approved source such as a highly biased text book.

For those detractors of wiki i would say the reason your paper was rejected when you sited or failed to site it in a paper was because copy and pasting information from wikipedia does not demonstrate that you understood the task that you had been set. If you had taken the time to rewrite it in your own words you would have gotten an A rather than a F for plagiarism.

Knowledge is a powerful tool and it should be freely available to all.
As for social networks this is a new and potentially dangerous area.
I as a responsible Parent monitor every single website and friends request and email that my children send or receive or view, we have had situations where my child has had friends requests of adults from all over the globe that she did not know and they were binned straight away.

There are a number of freely available software packages that allow you to protect your children( this is not advertised and large companies and their affiliates the retailers that sell these packages would not like you to know about. For every piece of software that is available to buy there is an equivalent and usually better free ware open source one available.

Knowledge and technology are not good or bad it is as with anything else its what we CHOOSE to do with them that defines its acceptability
Is technology a bad thing was flint tools or the wheel or throughout history any advancement in technology. I Have not read a printed book in years, for the simple reason that i can purchase it online and have my computer read it to me. Allowing me to get on with other things at the same time.

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 12:24pm on 19 Aug 2010, smilingparrotfan wrote:

Not taken over but has become part of. Even a silver surfer like me enjoys using a computer. Not too keen on mobile phones, though. I have one for " emergencies" as I've no wish to waffle away to someone whilst doing the shopping. Prefer to talk sitting comfy. I'll never stop reading. Only this morning I was nearly
mown down by three different people who were walking along fiddling with their phone, oblivious to anything. One had a fag on and nearly burnt my hand. Obsession has crept in to some. They have to prattle, come what may.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 12:33pm on 19 Aug 2010, think_green wrote:

I think a large proportion of 14-40 year-olds are far too reliant on things like social networking sites and mobile phones. I use the internet when I need it, and probably spend 1 hour per week on my mobile. I blame mobile technology i.e. people now use mobile phone conversations for entertainment rather than necessity. It is also sad that my partner's children have become so reliant on PC online gaming that they don't know how to amuse themselves when it is taken away. But we can't blame the individuals, it is the media giants that are thrusting these reasonably cheap gizmos in our faces, and telling us that we must have them. As usual our natural thirst for information and technology is being used against us by big companies to make money.

Complain about this comment
* 14. At 12:34pm on 19 Aug 2010, 24 years and counting wrote:

Technology exists without prejudice: what you as an individual get out of it is up to you. If you decide it is going to enrich your life, that's what will happen. If you decide it's going to consume it, that's what will happen. As a self-confessed misanthrope I value immeasurably having an alternative to human communication that, all things considered, is a hell of a lot more dependable.

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 12:37pm on 19 Aug 2010, George wrote:

When a plane lands and you are standing in the aisle, don't look at your phone look up, look at the other people, see how they are all staring at their phones, mesmerised, hypnotised, are you one of those people?

The thing with new technology is that it is addictive, someone looks at their phone and then so do you, like a yawn it's a natural reaction almost.

At work you have a pc, does it really help you get work done or could you easily use it for just half a day?

The thing is that technology exists and we waste a lot of time using it to gather information, there is no overload we probably did the same when we were primitive humans, scanning the grasslands for antelope.

But yes it seems to be taking over many lives, especially my wifes with facebook.[but really....is that just a woman thing?]
Complain about this comment
* 16. At 12:43pm on 19 Aug 2010, Allan wrote:

VCR, beta max, Digital revolution
HDMI, blue ray, mega confusion
DVD, watch and see
Listen to your MP3

Nothing to watch on satellite TV
900 channels are insufficient for me
I remember when TV closed down
We got the test card and a girl with a frown

Now kids are easily unamused
They get so much that is not used
Games that only last them hours
They must have mighty techno powers

Are you on facebook, you have to be
To keep in touch with the likes of me
You cannot afford to be left behind
In the digital future, so I’ll remind

You to do it online, without the human touch
No interaction no cuddle or clutch
Just living in a world of gloom
Watching the same programme in a different room

Complain about this comment
* 17. At 12:49pm on 19 Aug 2010, wwinstonsmith wrote:

I'm concerned about the increasing depersonalisation of the financial services, for example the proposed abolition of cheques. Not everyone has access to new technology or is able to use it, but I foresee a time when it will be the only way of accessing one's money. It seems that the financial sector is already sufficiently remote from its customers to do pretty much what it likes.

Complain about this comment
* 18. At 12:51pm on 19 Aug 2010, RubbishGirl wrote:

Nope, If I don't want to be contavted I turn my phone off, If I don't want to game I don't put Warcraft on & if there's nithing I'm interested in on TV I read a book ( still my preferred choice of solo entertainment)
I am able to spend a lot of time online ATM as it's extremely quiet at work but that all changes in 2 weeks when enrollment starts & I'm doing 50 hr weeks so my use of tech is generally dictated by what ever else I happen to be doing at the time.
I have, however, been sat at the pub with previous work colleagues who got their blackberrys out when we arrived & then sat there staring at them, snatching them up every time they
beeped & completely ignoring the people they were sitting with! (not a very long drinking session that) If this is the state of your life you probably need to have a chat with yourself.

Complain about this comment
* 19. At 12:58pm on 19 Aug 2010, Slave to the System - I am not a number wrote:

Technology has certainly improved my life, I can talk to friends across the globe Research any subject within seconds Choose what I want and when I want.

With this techno driven freedom has come greater responsibility that I don't use such it for negative activities.

Remember that Technology is a tool and its up to use to use or abuse.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 12:59pm on 19 Aug 2010, Wyn wrote:

"Taken over our lives?"

I don't believe so. Become an useful part of it? Yes!

I watch about 2 - 3 hours of TV daily - maybe more if there's a really good film or documentary.

I use a computer in the workplace - no other choice in my job. And I use a PC at home for about 1 hour per day. I have a SatNav which I use in conjunction with a road atlas (and usually only in large towns and cities). I have a (non-smart) mobile phone which I hardly ever use. I don't have an e-reader (yet), but as reading is one of my major hobbies there's a distinct possibility that I'll be acquiring one very soon.

They're all very useful tools - but all a bit sad if it takes over your life.

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 1:06pm on 19 Aug 2010, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:

I would add that i do not watch tv programs on a tv i watch them on my laptop, i enjoy it because of my broadband connection i have already watched next seasons True blood from a catchup tv network in the usa .

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 1:16pm on 19 Aug 2010, Paul wrote:

Certainly through my lifetime it has always been the same. I am 45 now and as a teenager I was often told I "spend too much time in front of the TV - you'll end up with square eyes" or "you spend too much time in your room listening to that awful loud music - you'll be deaf by the time you're 21". Now I am 45 I
cannot imagine life without the Internet via my laptop and would be lost without my mobile. I still watch TV and listen to music, not quite so loud and my tastes have changed. I drive a car and have many mod cons which my parents didn't have and to be honest, if my microwave, dishwasher, washing machine, tumble dryer, surround sound, iPods and docking stations of various sizes vanished tomorrow I wouldn't really give a damn!

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 1:17pm on 19 Aug 2010, Tio Terry wrote:

Without knowing more about the very small sample number of 1,138 people the results are meaningless. What "Industry Sources" where used, where did they come from, are they likely to be biased? What age group(s) were they in, most seem to be between 16 and 34 according to the article, hardly representative? Where did they live? What is their occupation?

I certainly don't spend anything like 7 hours a day accessing "media" (although there is no precise definition of what "media" is). Use of TV is rapidly reducing as far as I am concerned, there's not much of interest to me shown now although I do watch the news every evening. Only use radio in the car and that's not much. Never walk around with earphones plugged in, it's not safe not being able to hear what's going on around you, just use them on the train to learn another language. Is that classed as "accessing media"?

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 1:20pm on 19 Aug 2010, RubbishGirl wrote:

LOL just read my previous post & apart from the typos (SHAME) "my preffered choice of solo entertainment" sounds decidedly dodgy!
I like reading. Nuff said.

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 1:25pm on 19 Aug 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

Technology is ruled by two types of people: those who manage what they do not understand, and those who understand what they do not manage.

Complain about this comment
* 26. At 1:32pm on 19 Aug 2010, Megan wrote:

Um, while I probably spend in excess of your 9 hours a day accessing media, in particular the internet, I don't spend much of it 'consuming' content - I'm far too busy creating it!

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 1:35pm on 19 Aug 2010, JohnH wrote:

My first computer course was in 1985, then the tutors spoke about the next generation of computer language and what it would do.

[Type text]
Twenty five years and we are still waiting.

Most 'new' technology is actually pretty ancient.

Your keyboard is over 100 years old, the screen is over 70 years.

The computer hardware, silicon processor, motherboard, memory etc are all over 30 years old.

The only thing that's changed is software and that is still not reliable. We have two servers in our office and one has been down since yesterday.

We process 100 times more data in 100th of the time and we still cannot make decisions or find 'stuff' when we want it.

Is it all a bit of an illusion really?

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 1:54pm on 19 Aug 2010, CladinBlack wrote:

Yes and No.

Technology is good but it makes me fed up when I see young people constantly on their mobiles - they don't seem to do anything else except check their mobiles every five minutes.

Also, if it weren't for so much technology more of us would still be in employment.

There are positives too such as advances in surgery etc.

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 2:02pm on 19 Aug 2010, Martin Swift wrote:

Yes we have a sort of 'Media Overload'...We can have a 'SKY' box with a dish on the side of the house...once the old aerials were deemed to make property look awful...now we have dishes...unless you have a cable link!

Either way we have a multitude of channels and yet nothing of worth to watch at times...unless you want to watch reams and reams of repeats...just like the old days with programme after programme being repeated over and over again...

We have a vast array of computers which when connected to the internet - allows you to also watch television programmes...thanks to i-players another avenue of watching repeats...

Oh! Let us not forget that the latest phones can allow you to access the internet and guess what...you can view repeat programmes there as well...

Oh! Technology is a wonderful thing...What's next then?
* 30. At 2:09pm on 19 Aug 2010, Jaywat wrote:

It certainly hasn't taken over mine in the way that it apparently has zombified the rest of Britain. I don't own a mobile phone. I don't have a Facebook account. Naturally, most people I know have forgotten I exist because I'm not right there ROFLMAO at their SMS texts or LIKEing their latest status update on Facebook.

I do stare at a computer screen for most of the day, but I don't have a lot of choice if I want to earn a living. So I don't feel too left out.

Complain about this comment

* 31. At 2:13pm on 19 Aug 2010, Jeff Martin wrote:

This could well be another flawed survey of course...

Ofcom the media regulator, who surveyed just over 1,000 people. How did they do that? I wouldn't mind betting they did some sort of online questionnaire. Who would have responded to it? People who spend a lot of time online I would guess. Ask people face to face in the street and I bet the result would be very different.

Complain about this comment

* 32. At 2:47pm on 19 Aug 2010, I_amStGeorge wrote:

I cant believe how guillable people are. before PC ruled our lives then computer logic what was the one thing your mother warned you about?? The goggle box the one eyed monster taking over your lives. Sure the govt want you to believe it is for your good to enhance and educate but what it does is control people they can now enter your homes and monitor they can subjugate your brain And get you to pay for the priveledge Its called crowd control where they control the masses Its aout time we took stock of our position on this planet and said NO NO NO to a lot of these technological inventions. believe me there is Nothing since 1966 that has been invented or re invented that is to the betterment of mankind

Complain about this comment

* 33. At 2:49pm on 19 Aug 2010, GUNGHOBUNGGADIER wrote:

Q - Has new technology taken over our lives?

A - No more than HYS.

Complain about this comment

* 34. At 3:02pm on 19 Aug 2010, Jaywat wrote:

32. At 2:47pm on 19 Aug 2010, I_amStGeorge wrote:

believe me there is Nothing since 1966 that has been invented or re invented that is to the betterment of mankind

---

[Type text]
You are undoubtedly Karl Pilkington and I claim my prize.

Complain about this comment
* 35. At 3:31pm on 19 Aug 2010, Rabbitkiller wrote:

If people want to waste their life with all these gizmos let them get on with it. Their brains will surely wither. For me, there are more important things to spend time on (meeting friends, visiting attractions, reading, walking, playing sports, travel, hobbies, local societies, concerts, gardening, shopping, charitable work, etc., etc. ...)

I watch TV on average for less than one hour a day. I have a mobile phone for making/receiving calls & texts only. I use the computer for perhaps an hour or two a day, but not to play games or watch videos. That seems a satisfactory balance to me, and I have a life.

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 3:32pm on 19 Aug 2010, Graphis wrote:

Before computers became "personal", we were told that they would save so much time that we would all be working only 1-2 hours a day, and we would have so much more leisure time. In fact, the "experts" were actually worried about what we'd all do with the huge increase in leisure time. They lied to us! Instead, we now do in one day or less what used to take one person several days to do. The only people who have gained are employers, by the increase in speed and productivity. The rest of us are merely like the early factory workers in the cotton mills, slaves to the loom...

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 3:46pm on 19 Aug 2010, Rabbitkiller wrote:

By the way, remember that TV, computers, the internet, e-mail, mobile phones, CDs, DVDs, digital recorders, laser printers, satnavs etc. are all quite recent inventions. Without them we built (and lost) an empire, fought two world wars, designed advanced ships and aircraft, created great buildings, bridges, works of art, and made huge advances in medicine. Our educational standards were the envy of the world.

The danger of the present electronic-digital age is that we finish up spending the entire time processing information and losing the ability actually to get anything done.

Complain about this comment
* 38. At 4:05pm on 19 Aug 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:

Recommend 37 and 36.

Now when systems crash the workplace grinds to a halt.

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 4:06pm on 19 Aug 2010, Life is Complex wrote:

[Type text]
Personally I think technology is changing the way we think, I am currently a teacher and students are obsessed by mobile phones, the internet and computer games. I am not sure all this interactive technology is good for cognitive development, the question must be whether students are developing the emotional and social skills required to deal with what they have to do in life?

Personally I am shocked by the lack of social and emotional development of students, especially male students, concentration levels seem to be getting worse. I can not prove what I am saying, it is just an observation, what needs to happen is serious research into the effect of a vast amount of electronic media on people and their cognitive, social and emotional development, if something is changing our overall behaviour we need to know about it and understand it.

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 4:06pm on 19 Aug 2010, I_amStGeorge wrote:

Jaywat Message 34.

Precisely. I rest my case

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 4:10pm on 19 Aug 2010, Moderator Friendly Unoffensive Nickname wrote:

I drive to work in a fairly modern car, taking into account various traffic light systems while listening to the radio. I get to work, swipe in (clock in) and boot up the old PC getting cracking on some systems design and posting here. I take lunch, sometimes using my credit card to make my purchases. After work back in the car, more radio, mobile phone, home security system, TV, internet, alarm clock.

Nope, technology doesn't make a blind bit of difference to my day to day tasks

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 4:41pm on 19 Aug 2010, BluesBerry wrote:

Has new technology taken over our lives?
Almost and getting closer.
It wouldn't be so bad if we learned something from the endeavor - something truthful, maybe wise, but never spinning. Sometimes, I think Governments like the US must be terribly pleased with all this technology; not only do they get to know where we are (geolocation), what we access (and therefore our likely stance on several issues), they also compile humingours data banks for whatever use the Government may deem neccessary.

I remember it wasn't so long ago that a big stink waas raised about the Government wanting access to library cards i.e. what we read. Now big brother has access to not only what we read, but in practicality our every thought. More terrifying,
the Government can gather people towards a cause for which the average person may have very little real understanding (i.e. Iran green Revolution).

All this technology has great potential to make homo sapiens into shleeps - people who sleepwalk through life following the leader without too many independent brainwaves - aka good citizens.

Bookmark with: del.icio.us | Digg | Newsvine | NowPublic | Reddit - What's

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 4:59pm on 19 Aug 2010, factoryworker439 wrote:

I never gets too excited by all this new stuff. When the world starts to run out of oil and other energys then most things what we has built will be worth nothing. If we got no electric then they wont work.

People what will be worth something then will be those what can grow things and make things with there hands like pots from clay and the like.

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 6:44pm on 19 Aug 2010, The Ace Face wrote:

Has new technology taken over our lives?

I don't know, but I'd like to have a girlfriend that doesn't have her hand permanently clamped to her ear.

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 7:38pm on 19 Aug 2010, fivestarhillbilly wrote:

I use technology every day. for work, entertainment and contact. But what have i spent most nights this year doing? reading. there is noting on the tech that is as entertaining, certainly not on the TV. radio on the till 7pm bit more work then sink into a thriller and a comfy sofa, wearing elastic waisted trousers, now theres an invention!

Complain about this comment
* 46. At 8:23pm on 19 Aug 2010, Mr Wonderful wrote:

I work in an industry that is totally dominated by the most highly developed and expensive technology, but at home I never use a mobile phone - I only possess one for emergencies.

I use the net all the time for just about all purchases except food and fuel - and save a fortune. I never play computer games and certainly don't multi-task - I'm a man. My experience of 'multi-tasking' is that it's mostly a female activity, which consists of starting several activities simultaneously, then finishing either only one or none of them.
Complain about this comment
* 47. At 8:50pm on 19 Aug 2010, Mascotman wrote:

Has new technology taken over our lives? Yes thank you, it has taken over my life, I'm what the young ones call a silver surfer, and I love it. New iPhone soon on my 70th birthday :-)

Maybe :-(

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 8:57pm on 19 Aug 2010, Ann Sykes wrote:

No, it hasn't taken over my life, but there are things I find useful. I have a mobile [rarely switched on unless I want to use it or I know my husband may call me]. My computer is very handy for e-mails and sometimes ordering things like groceries from one of the main supermarkets and having them deliver, especially the heavy and awkward things. I watch tv like most people but that's because my husband likes tv. Usually if I'm on my own in the house and there's nothing I want to see [and that's quite often] I like to read a book or use the computer for writing articles, poetry, even a novel - all for my own entertainment. I don't have an Ipod or anything like that and I've never gone on to Facebook or Twitter. I suppose I'm one of those people who sift through and use modern technology for my own benefit.

Having said all that, my favourite site on the computer is HYS - not to openly flatter whoever is in charge of the site, but to genuinely read what people think about the issues of the day and then form my own opinion. I enjoy some of the discussion programmes on tv and I suppose HYS is a bit like that.

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 9:12pm on 19 Aug 2010, NethLyn wrote:

It goes in cycles, yesterday I contacted a friend thinking of visiting him, he replied that he was already out with another mutual friend and just turn up for a drink - when I got lost, we used our mobiles for him to give me directions - to a social event! But those two text messages and two calls took up barely ten minutes, then almost 2hrs were spent talking face to face!

(20 year old) Email is still best for me as I can think about what to say in reply. I'd have to cut down on my four hours per week of listening to the radio to cram in much else, I would be overloaded. Linking in with your other HYS going on, it would be too easy to be ashamed of your past online if you spent too much time glued to the net. If your job doesn't require net access then that's one way of keeping control.

Complain about this comment
* 50. At 9:48pm on 19 Aug 2010, Daisy Chained wrote:

The BBC performed a major service to the public thirty years ago when it ran its Computer Project. It created a large
number of people with computer literacy, and basic skills in using technology.

Unfortunately the labour necessary to obtain those basic skills have been swept aside by a market that has divided into several strands, giving us so many options but none with the comprehensive potential of a single computer. Open a box and use a gadget straight away; you do not even have to have reasonable literacy skills.

Perhaps the market place is crying out for cheap 'build it yourself' opportunities, especially during a recession. Skills are larned much more quickly when there is something desirable at the end of it.

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 9:52pm on 19 Aug 2010, Alasdair Campbell wrote:

We have become the slaves of technology, and must now be more discerning and selective in employing the benefits it can provide. We have made ourselves the victims of a veritable data deluge and so have become imprisoned in an ever shorter decision loop in our daily lives. Complex problems require careful thought to reach a right solution, whereas technology presses us to come up with instant answers. Technology must be made our servant, to be used on our terms, not the other way round.

Complain about this comment
* 52. At 10:16pm on 19 Aug 2010, Having_a_word wrote:

YES! AND I LOVE IT!

The irony is, those who say 'it's terrible blah blah blah' are debating to people they can't see on the internet. HYPOCRITES!

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 00:22am on 20 Aug 2010, ady wrote:

I've regressed, and don't even watch TV anymore.

The net wastes too much time and is unfulfilling...only took me 15 years to find that out...

It's all been corporatised now anyway, those wild west days are gone and now it's all big government and lawyers, was fun at the start though, but too regulated and boring now, and infested with advertising bloatware.

The net is now the "interactive shopping channel", and it's a good one too.
The TV is just...awful...(infantile was one description)

So an ancient mobile, a 1990s pooter and a monsterous pile of DVDs will just have to keep me going.

Complain about this comment
54. At 01:54am on 20 Aug 2010, Jaker wrote:

It has taken over our lives; but more blatantly...it has taken over most our minds. Even rigor mortis mocks us in kind.

Complain about this comment

55. At 07:02am on 20 Aug 2010, chrislabiff wrote:

Yes and no.
Maybe, maybe not.
Could be?
That should cover it...

Complain about this comment

56. At 07:41am on 20 Aug 2010, abome wrote:

Pros to Technology are improved medicine, improved cars, great video games.
Cons to Technology are due to massive improvements in communications you are expected to always be available and therefore have no down time from the stress of the office. The Pros help with this esp the cars!

Complain about this comment

57. At 08:43am on 20 Aug 2010, theopeneye wrote:

I don't own a mobile phone. I don't want or need one. I no longer watch TV. I can't remember the last time I watched a DVD. Obviously I have the computer but I don't belong to any social networks, don't run a blog and don't use electronic messaging systems other than email. Media content doesn't overwhelm me at all.

Poor sad me, you may think. Well, actually I'm very happy without these things. The dual nature of life means that technology has its benefits but also its downside. You see, governments assume that we are all addicted to technology; which is why we are facing the approach of a cashless society, for example....God help us, because then all our personal transactions will be up for scrutiny, with no exceptions. Also, you can be tracked everywhere you go, through your mobile phone. Your car number-plate is also tracked everywhere. In fact, that's the trouble; technology has become so efficient that we have lost all our privacy. Almost everything about you is "known" by some authority somewhere and you've got nowhere to hide (even if you've done nothing wrong).

Technology is an excellent servant, but a cold, brutal and unthinking master that reveals all, knows everything.

Complain about this comment

58. At 08:55am on 20 Aug 2010, leecong wrote:

The other day on a 20 min bus journey a teenage girl was sat in front of me chatting to her mate when she got off she
found out her mate had been on the upper deck of the bus the whole time.

Technology has its benefits but only if used with intelligence.

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 09:07am on 20 Aug 2010, oakwoodbank wrote:

I wouldn't call it 'taken over', but it is of considerable help to older people like me who live away from centres of population or in remote country districts.

I only use a mobile phone in emergencies or if I am expecting a call. The Internet is another matter. I have found it a wonderful resource for banking and shopping not to say information and it is easy to organise important aspects of life around it when previously that meant travelling away from home. That saves money and lessens CO2, so it benefits others as well.

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 09:31am on 20 Aug 2010, chezza100 wrote:

Not sure about taken over but its definately changes my life.

I met my husband online and there is no way we would have met otherwise.

Communications around the world have improved and I do wonder how the World coped without it for so long.

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 09:36am on 20 Aug 2010, The_Hess wrote:

Firstly I shall assume that technology refers to the sort of everyday items such as phones, computers etc. as opposed to things like hospital life support machines and the likes that are far more obviously beneficial.

All those people who claim that technology is a bad thing are simply ignorant to its uses. Computers have vastly improved the work rate of employees, and enable faster access to information from places such as the BBC etc. The internet has given voice to millions of previously unheard people, and has enabled us to question the status quo far more readily than any previous generation. To those who say they rarely turn their phone on except for an emergency, what if the emergency involves someone that isn't you, and you need to be contacted? Sites such as Facebook have enabled me to talk in real time to my friends who have moved away, as well as share pictures of all the excitement in our lives. The perils of video games have been commented on since their inception, with many people discussing the violent content that children can see. This simply shows the ignorance of those critics. Video games have an age grading system similar to the film and TV industry. Therefore, if a game is unsuitable for children, then it will be aged accordingly and
any parent who ignores this has only themselves to blame. Besides, look at the violence on the 6 o'clock news whenever there is a report from any warzone. As for games causing social problems, many games offer people somewhere to interact with people they would otherwise not, through online play. Games offer people a chance to make an impression with no prior impressions. For example, a group of people playing Modern Warfare 2 online. If someone is good, people will tell them. It doesn't matter if you are black, white, old, young, male, female, you are good at the game and that's all that counts. In many ways it is the fairest peer assessment possible.

Technology has improved my creativity. Using a computer program I can create sound files of the riffs that I have written on guitar, then add bass guitar music and drums. Then, when the rest of the band come round for a rehearsal we have already practiced the music and can start tweaking it based on what sounds best. Then we can record the music onto the computer. We can share lyrics via MSN and work on things far more efficiently than without a computer. Essentially, we could record an entire album using the computer in my bedroom if we wanted to. Even 10 years ago this would have been far harder, if not impossible, to do.

In response to comment 17, most of the time you can speak to someone in branch if you require face to face contact. The use of cheques has largely faded because it is far quicker to use a debit card. The only time I handle cheques is collecting money for trips/fees at Beavers. Online banking is much easier these days, especially if you work and can't make it to the bank for closing time.

I wouldn't consider myself reliant on technology, but it does make life so much easier. If it's there, why not use it?

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 10:33am on 20 Aug 2010, coastwalker wrote:

depends what you mean by media overload. I dont feel overloaded, I feel distinctly empowered. I can answer questions that I have forgotten the answer to by a quick google search, I can learn new techniques on the job by the same method. I do get too much email with new tasks but its getting better now that I delete 80% of it. I can waffle on HYS for five minutes whilst drinking a cup of tea instead of staring out the window. Its all good to coin a phrase. One day I may even be able to avoid wasting the best part of a week to attend a short meeting in America by teleconferencing, who knows.

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 10:36am on 20 Aug 2010, AnotherRichard wrote:

Has new technology taken over our lives? Well we certainly use it a lot. Is that a bad thing though? Not if our intentions are good and we use wise judgement.
I am waiting for the do-gooder-lefty-humanist bureaucrat to appear to propose a law to discriminate against on-line, say, shopping, and limit my internet access to no more than n hours a day. At that point I start turning the ploughshare back into a sword.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 11:18am on 20 Aug 2010, RWWCardiff wrote:

I have, at last, this golden opportunity to make my views, such as they are, known. Previously this would have involved letter writing to people who couldn't really be bothered and most of the time would have binned it without any hesitation. Now I have to substantially annoy someone to be excluded. So three cheers for this multi media world. As a full time carer well passed my prime this has become well nigh essential to enhancing my life.

Regards, etc.

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 11:30am on 20 Aug 2010, Johns the Man wrote:

With the development of mobile phones and the internet, there are now more ways than ever to access media. We now spend almost half of our waking life viewing content. Is this your experience?

To a degree, Yes, Fifty years ago (I'm now a retired old dinosaur) many people didn't even have a land-line telephone, so the old red telephone boxes were well used, I can remember our first telephone being installed by 'Post Office Telephones', the engineer turning up in the ubiquitous Post Office Green Morris Minor van, to me it was amazing being able to speak to friends at the other end of the country, of course when you wanted to speak to someone in Australia, it would take perhaps an hour or longer for various international telephone exchanges to link up to your chosen number, all this had to be done through the operator of course. Watching TV, BBC1 and 2 and ITV, listening to the Light Programe, Third Programe, Home service, now radio 2,3 and 4, the equivalent of radio one was the pirate radio station 'Radio Caroline', or if you wanted to be really daring you'd tune to Radio Luxembourg in the evening on your little tranny, or play a record - LP, on my fathers radiogram.

So, yes, I have seen a lot of changes in my time in the way we use the media, listen to music, watch TV, Now it is so different. One uses a mobile phone without even thinking about it - although I rarely text, and use the internet quite frequently - as now - and of course 'video skype' our daughter in Australia, all at the touch of a few keys - Its and amazing technology that we all take for granted nowadays!

As a retired electromechanical engineer I have seen a lot of the changes happening first hand.

In the audio industry - hi-fi, progress and the advance in reproduction of music has been staggering, the late 1960's and
1970's had a sort of pioneering spirit to it, so many new technologies were coming in and being developed, when I first started in Hi-fi, it was LP's, reel to reel tape recorders or FM/AM radio - that was your lot! Interesting was the BBC's Radio 3 collaboration with Sansui of Japan in broadcasting four channel stereo FM late at night around 1973 I remember, it was really very good and no doubt a forerunner of today's multi-channel audio and home theatre - a great pity it wasn't further developed - we'd all be listening to standard four channel stereo.

The late 1970's to early 1980's saw a plethora of musical recording and replay equipment come on the scene, compact cassette - taken to the limit of performance with the massively over-engineered and superb Nakamichi Dragon, soon followed by the Pioneer Elite compact cassette decks, Sony went one stage further with their 'Elcassette', a cassette tape, about 2/3 the size of a standard video tape, but failed to catch on enough to make it commercially viable. JVC introduced four channel LP's replayable with their four channel cartridge - another development that failed commercial.

Then came Digital Audio Tape, first in the professional arena, this soon followed by the release of the first CD players and disc's for audio reproduction (now of course we have CD, SACD, DVD & DVDR, DVD-Audio and Digital Audio Tape in the domestic hi-fi domain) Mini-disc followed in the 1980's but again failed to catch on in a big way although it lingers on.

The amazing thing here is that the humble LP, which amazingly has been around for over 120 years now, first introduced by Emielle Berliner, a German migrant in America who turned out to be an amazing and very prolific inventor in not just the early audio industry, but in mechanical engineering, is enjoying something of a very considerable return to popularity - why? just listen to a good LP on a really good hi-fi system, and compare the performance with a CD, SACD or even a DVD-A, preferably in the same system, there is just no comparison, a well recorded and produced LP is far and away superior in sound performance than any other home hi-fi reproduction medium.

Now of course we have such viewing mediums as Sky, so we can all be boggle-eyed with the plethora of interesting, and some not so interesting TV channels, and with the choice of storing this information in 'Digi-boxes' a God knows how many terrabytes hard drive recording and playback device, watching one of your chosen DVD's or even a video if you still have one, then of course you can have home theatre 7.1, or even link it up to your hi-fi multi-channel surround system, entertain yourself - or the whole street if you like to be deafened.

Now of course we have digital radio and even digital movie camera's which some record directly onto DVD-R discs to play through your home theatre system, or via digital tape, so yes there is an absolutely mind boggling array of media equipment to view, use, play-on (computer games) listen to.
Of course all this 'entertainment media' is quite good, but it can get to the point where it takes over your life – computer games over the internet – 'warcraft' or what ever, for example.

Often families never sit down to eat dinner together and discuss the events of the day, this can and sometimes does lead to separate existences upsetting the balance of home life.

It is still very important to keep a good balance with all this media, everything in moderation.

It'll be interesting reading comments to this.

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 11:56am on 20 Aug 2010, David Cunningham wrote:

Just walk along a street in the city of London and see how many people knock into you as they are using their mobile phones! Just think if they were DRIVING!!!

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 12:03pm on 20 Aug 2010, Icarus_5000 wrote:

Has it taken over our lives? Not everyone.

Although I work on a Phone/Broadband Helpdesk and over the past couple of years I have come across a growing number of people who genuinely get into a state of panic and I've even had quite a few break down in tears when they potentially have to go 24/48 hours without internet access. And these are not people who rely on it for work; I am talking about those who are lost without their facebook or World of Warcraft.

The two most common things I have found as well is their lack of real life social interaction, for example I also deal with enquiries by e-mail and I am seeing more and more people writing in their e-mails things like, 'only reply by e-mail as I don't like speaking on the phone'.

Also their apparent inability to now think for themselves, such as when I have to tell them their broadband will of off for 24 hours they ask, 'what should I do now?'. And this isn't them asking what they should as in wait for a phone call from us to confirm it's working, etc but as in what should they do in general while their broadband is being fixed. I feel like saying; 'do you really need some guy who works in a Call Centre of all places to tell you how to live a life without internet access?'.

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 12:08pm on 20 Aug 2010, teedoff wrote:

Is this a new advert for Bing.com? I ask because this is basically their catch-line.

Yes, there is more electronic media available, which lends more immediacy to news and information. It also leads to "old" news being more quickly lost in the mire of "new" news. So I don't think that there's too much information being given, but that the volume has changed the way we interrogate that
information. Politicians are getting particularly sleek at using this effect. They now pile a heap of bad news together and expose it to the light, then follow it some hours later with some good news. If they time it right then tomorrow's chip-paper doesn't even carry a footnote on the bad news.

I find I have to check the BBC website several times a day, because otherwise a news story has been and gone and it's as if it never was.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 12:31pm on 20 Aug 2010, Rob wrote:

BBC, you may be obsessed with media, but New Technology does not equate to More Media.

Humans are little more than a big brain with opposable thumbs. We've evolved to make and use tools, and our tools are what defines us.

It's true for cavemen and their hunting weapons, and it's true for modern man with all their gadgets.

It is not fair to say that tech has taken over. You have a choice of what tech you carry. Some people will prefer to carry a gun over a phone.

The only people that tech has taken over, are the folks that are willing to queue up for hours, to spend hundreds of pounds on an inferior phone that doesn't even do as much as their previous version. Because it looks different. Because others will have it.

They're also the people that believe everything the news tells them.

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 12:49pm on 20 Aug 2010, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:

Bing, bad idea i dont like being told how to think, technology is neither good or bad its how we choose to use it that can be detrimental to lives, especially when it comes to young'uns teenagers growing up thinking that socialising is sitting infront of a laptop posting comments on a wall or sending a text message to check out this cool thing i found online is not going to help develop the social skills needed to be a full player in the game of life. As so many have said moderation is the key and for children supervision is the key. I wouldnt let my tv raise my children nor would i allow the internet to do it either.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 1:20pm on 20 Aug 2010, mocambiquel wrote:

new tecnology cannot take over our lives unless we wish it to. so many have so little to do they will play any and every
game they cross, others have enough to do in life and do not need modern science to take over. The tele in the UK is bad, very poor, too many stations and the majority are repeats. Do I care if one can text a message in 3 or 10 seconds, 30, who cares, it (the message) still gets there. Do we need regular updates of cricket, tennis, rugby - if at work we should be working anyway, if at home then watch what one wants. technology, and the new twists make the rich richer, do the same as the old so why all the impatience - why the rush. If it rains, it rains, nothing changes that or the majority of our lives, but, a brolly does help.

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 1:25pm on 20 Aug 2010, chiptheduck wrote:

This is the future. Live with it!

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 1:39pm on 20 Aug 2010, SeasideSteve wrote:

"Multitasking"? It's a myth, you can't actually do it, otherwise you would be able to use a phone and drive safely at the same time.

So my theory is that anyone who has promoted the concept of multitasking probably has blood on their hands.

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 1:43pm on 20 Aug 2010, Andrew Kerr wrote:

All technologies are mere tools which we can choose to use or not. I wouldn't take hold of a shovel unless I was planning to dig or a telephone unless I had a need to communicate.

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 1:50pm on 20 Aug 2010, Burt Cobain wrote:

Why has no one replied to my letter?

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 2:14pm on 20 Aug 2010, U8860545 wrote:

I spend about 12+ hours a day on my computer.

What do I do?
- search and apply for jobs
- read up on news and BBC
- watching iplayer and football on the sky site
- go on football forums
- tear americans apart in the youtube comments
- selling stuff on ebay and play, making whatever money I can
- read stuff on wikipedia, knowing that as each day goes by its a blatantly biased site favouring americans
- check out women

[Type text]
Complain about this comment
* 77. At 2:33pm on 20 Aug 2010, E wrote:

I read classical and out-of-copyright literature on my mobile phone while listening to music on my iPod shuffle every working day during my commute. With a bus and a train ride in and back, that adds up to about an hour and a half of quality reading time per day - I've read over 50 books in the last 6 months. I would never otherwise have the time to read so much!

I love technology - I love the fact that I can put my dishes in a dishwasher and in about 2 hours, they're clean without any effort on my part. I love that I can get clothes washed and dried while I'm at work. I love the fact that I can get news all through my day just by popping onto the bbc website, and can stay in touch with my spouse all day via email and texts, in a way that wouldn't be allowed by my job if it were phone calls instead. I love the fact that I can go somewhere I've never been before and not worry about getting lost - I've travelled to strange cities and google-streetviewed my hotel so I knew exactly where to go. I love the fact that I can find old friends via facebook and we can catch up on each other's lives, 10 years later and a continent away.

Technology is, in a word, awesome.

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 2:33pm on 20 Aug 2010, andy1305 wrote:

Its the same situation as for the internet. People look at content because they can. The more accessible it is, the more they look. Natural curiosity.

Ten years ago one of my pet hates were people walking and barging their way along the streets bearing coffee cups, assuming and often arrogantly insisting that others made way for them. Today the coffee cup has been replaced by the smartphone. Natural curiosity has given way to habit, and unfortunately its not always a good thing...

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 2:50pm on 20 Aug 2010, SNA wrote:

for the current generation .. not much YET..

but for New Generations that are 13 years old or so now .. yes and it is Dangerous and is destroying everything.

The Worse thing is online Games .. what 7 hours ? they play all day even at work in free times .. they wake up wash face and open online games and say oh i have 30 min will goto school I will do this and that I hate going to school ..it is addicting and so bad .

[Type text]
as for Gaming consoles ? also a game needs hours to finish .. and the more stunning the game is the more addicted and stuck to it they become.

add to that they are only producing shooters and Violence games ... u see the kids very aggressive and losing peace u see it in their way of talking.

Health Problems .. OFC !!! but not now ! wait till u are like 40 and they will hit u one after another . it wont give warnings it will happen so fast.

the helarious thing also is Internet TV .. who said we have 900 channels?

we have all the channels in the world. people and kids are watching Chinese Drama , Korean DRAMA , Indian , Russian , Middle Eastern .. and thats not only Movies it includes shows and Series .. and while watching they download in background ... they ARE living on internet TV.. and is not controlable.. they are wasting their time on REAL TV and Internet TV and Downloading ..
Torrent Download? the download is automatic yes .. but the search for the items takes time ... and later on to use that item..

ofc we will turn into big fatty balls on chairs with broken back and blurry eyes very soon

what I usually say to others . turn it of and go out ..

wanna see a movie ? make your own movie .. be the hero your self .. get out and LIVE ..

wanna play a game ? Play sport and enjoy life and nature and build up also while u do this .. instead of loosing health !

there is another issue also .. Gambling!
most of parents dont know they their kids are Gambling in online GAMES .. and Gambling is not allowed for 13 years old right ?

ALL online Games , sell you items for real money .. and to earn more money they make it Random success .. that is u buy item for 2 euro and u get nothing like 90% of time , they put low success rate so kids end up paying 100+ euros to get what they want. you fool parents YOUR KIDS ARE IN CASINOS GAMBLING ...  

I can go on and on ...

I dont hate technology .. I hate the ways people use technology ...
and it IS dangerous the way it is now ...

Take care of your children wake up

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 3:06pm on 20 Aug 2010, Lewis Fitzroy wrote:
"Yes" in many areas {Mobile phones} {Computors} Cars D.V.Ds. and all white goods without them we would be back in the dark ages' all part of every day life today. But What will happen when the oil runs out???

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 3:17pm on 20 Aug 2010, Turpin69 wrote:

  In short - Yes - You just have to look at the drivel thrown out by the 24 hour news circus when it is a quiet news day !

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 3:27pm on 20 Aug 2010, citizen42 wrote:

  i think it's a good thing. we have been given the tools to reach the corridors of powers with our opinions and to share our feelings with our fellow countrymen, this cannot be a backwards step, this his a leap forward
  i see high/tech innovations in the field of health becoming the next big step, this will help to ease the pressure on NHS funding the right wing will be pleased to hear, as will we all. we have still, (in my humble opinion) a long way to go on education on the internet as a universal college where great numbers can gain access to a first class education, being taught by the best in there accredited field. of course there his the open uni which is available now but this is early days, i'm sure, with the right investment this can be greatly improved upon.

  voting can be revolutionised by the internet, maybe PR might become the norm, it might start to bring a goverment which is on par with public conscience instead of it's own overbearing pompous image of it self, maybe.

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 3:28pm on 20 Aug 2010, TheGrassAintGreener wrote:

  Has new technology taken over our lives?

  No, it has become integral. The common incorrect notion is believing technology is just a computer, or anything with a chip. Big mistake, as technology is any and everything we use in our life that is not a part of the human body. Since we picked up a stick and stuck a sharp stone to it, we relied on technology.

  There is absolutely nothing wrong with technology. The fault lies with the users and abusers. The mass media has long used it as a tool to broadcasting messages, however irrelevant in our daily lives. For me, this is where the down fall of humankind began.

  Giving the power to someone who is corrupt, and allowing them to spread their ill-conceived propaganda is what gave power to the Nazis. Although it is no longer so obvious since we all have 'learned from our past', our modern corrupt leaders evangelise in new ways, charlatan commercial entities manipulate media to spread their cancerous products and factory belt
'streamlined' services in the name of profits, and media puppets such as 'celebrities' fill our airways with their useless sound-bites and public exhibitions, leaving the young impressionable generation of modern Britain vulnerable to their ignorant and self-absorbed lifestyles.

I often disconnect from the sheepish masses, and whilst I exist in the daily grind and inescapable metro-pole that is London, I am fortunate enough to be capable of manipulating technology for my own gain, enabling me to filter out and discover new sources of thankfully diverse enough channels of interests parallel to my own and seclude myself away from stupor inflicted on this society.

Technology is brilliant to the eyes of the beholder, but to the ignorant, it is blinding!

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 3:32pm on 20 Aug 2010, Peter Bridgemont wrote:

It's not a good thing, people are getting less connected with realities, and also getting too used to computer thinking, it doesn't help flexibility and perspective, especially for kids. We'd at least need a far better education system, creative, broad and high quality, to give the next generation a better start. Another problem is that the internet doesn't respect privacy much, the younger generation are much less aware of that right.

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 3:42pm on 20 Aug 2010, sizzler wrote:

This is just the beginning. Within 50 years most of us will work and study at home, supplement our incomes with garden grown vegetables, cities will be abandoned, travel largely local, professional services provided by databases, surgery by robots attending your home, income disparity a thing of the past, active life expectancy in the 100s of years, genetic modification commonplace, genetically perfected children, licensed parents. The danger is we fail to crack faster than light travel and end up dying from boredom.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 3:48pm on 20 Aug 2010, ian cheese wrote:

There should be a study into the long term effects of electro-electric-magnetic-micro waves being radiated from installations & through us eg. walls, human bodies, etc. in order for us to receive our communications online. I was, for example, able to send a signal through my cordless laptop in my garden to my printer located two floors above!

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 4:05pm on 20 Aug 2010, Rabbitkiller wrote:

76. At 2:14pm on 20 Aug 2010, RockingTheJoint wrote:
I spend about 12+ hours a day on my computer.

[Type text]
What do I do?
- search and apply for jobs
- read up on news and BBC
- watching iplayer and football on the sky site
- go on football forums
- tear americans apart in the youtube comments
- selling stuff on ebay and play, making whatever money I can
- read stuff on wikipedia, knowing that as each day goes by its a blatantly biased site favouring americans
- check out women

Presumably you eat and sleep, so you don't have time to get out, keep fit, interact with real people, or to create or invent anything? You'll soon be forgotten, then. What a waste of a life.

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 4:26pm on 20 Aug 2010, Sylvia D wrote:

I love my computer it keeps me in touch with family abroad who i can only get to see every other year ( price of the air ticket), on the other hand the use of mobile phones and the iphones etc are a pain, you can no longer sit on a train or bus or anywhere without someone shouting down a phone. its gone to far.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 4:47pm on 20 Aug 2010, Pugin wrote:

NO.

Its up to the individual and their personal circumstance as to how much or to how little they use the available technology.

The more the better = cheaper, access for all, technology mobility for the poor and handicapped.

Bring it on...........

75 Burt Cobain.................What letter dude ??

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 6:10pm on 20 Aug 2010, zrzavy wrote:

New technology does help in many ways, but it also de-skills on traditional skills.

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 6:49pm on 20 Aug 2010, PAUL WILLIAMS wrote:

..well it has taken over some people's lives, mine more than i would wish, but i fight it. I like horror movies, but I am alarmed by the number of zombies now waking the streets ,with mobile phones glued to their ears and headphones on. They'll be
growing antennae next. People are just ruder nowadays as result too, talking into their phones at bars, shop counters, on trains, even in public toilets and worse of all in company. Like i'm really interested in your sad life..i mean can you just talk a bit louder then the whole carriage can hear!(and often they can) Act like a grown up, not a puppet.. insecure or what? Give yourself some space and well, just shut up please! "Yes, i've got a mobile phone but i don't carry a simple handkerchief so i'll just sneeze in your face then". I'm not impressed by people using the tables in coffee bars and trains like an office either. 'Grumpy Old Man' Rory McGrath's solution is to sing 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon' loudly as a protest.. good for him! We seem to need a printer in the home now because firms cannily like to save money (their own) by e-mailing contracts etc. so that i have to do the printing of it at home myself, at cost to me! Technology has done the fantastic job of not paying us every week, like our fathers were, in cash and actually not shortening the working week for many people and now higher the retirement age. Multi channel tv is sooo good isn't it? Well, maybe the kids think so. Yes, well done technology. I think traditional tv and radio will survive if the number of channels are reduced. We can't afford channel controllers' salaries AND reasonable drama budgets long term. Terrestrial tv, back to four channels, showing no dross, likewise radio then they might survive...if the quality of programmes improves. (HD can't make a bad script any better) Oh yes and the postal service really has improved with technology hasn't it?? Not. Less collections less deliveries. Advances in medicine would be really valuable if people looked after themselves a bit better. Technology's ok, it's the human interface that is forced to use it that's the problem. Now, were's that really essential sandwich toaster...?

Complain about this comment
* 92. At 7:48pm on 20 Aug 2010, Artemesia wrote:

36. At 3:32pm on 19 Aug 2010, Graphis wrote:
"Before computers became "personal", we were told that they would save so much time that we would all be working only 1-2 hours a day, and we would have so much more leisure time. In fact, the "experts" were actually worried about what we'd all do with the huge increase in leisure time. They lied to us! Instead, we now do in one day or less what used to take one person several days to do. The only people who have gained are employers, by the increase in speed and productivity. The rest of us are merely like the early factory workers in the cotton mills, slaves to the loom..."

Yes, I remember the 1970s, even then advances in technology, automated production etc were going to give us so much leisure that we wouldn't know what to do with ourselves. It was mooted that we'd all have to attend special classes to help us cope with all this leisure-time

I would not accuse the 'experts' at the time of lying, that was genuinely what they expected to happen

[Type text]
Of course, it didn't turn out that way because no-one can see into the future with any accuracy

As you say, there has been an enormous increase in speed and productivity as compared with earlier decades but surely it is not only the employers who have gained?

If you compare the general standard of living now as compared with just a few decades earlier, then we have all gained, in a material sense

Whether we are any more content or in general happier for it I'm not too sure but nevertheless I don't think 'they lied to us'

There is a difference between lying and being mistaken

Gordon Brown once told us there'd be no more boom and bust, in retrospect it was a foolish thing to say but he was not lying, simply mistaken

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 7:58pm on 20 Aug 2010, 1stTopic wrote:

I worry about technology overwhelming disadvantaged and older people, they will be disadvantaged tremendously when you get the likes of the previous government pushing forward and saying that everything will be accessed by computer and the internet, we must leave easy loopholes for this type of person to access services and to pay bills etc.

This is one reason I am so against having to pay extra for not using direct debit, as this disadvantages and is a great cost to those who are on limited income and those that are trying to control their outgoings so has to balance when a bill is paid etc.

Also the talk of doing away with cheques is a worry, these large utility companies seem to have no concern for individuals and only take notice when large numbers of people go to another company, although with direct debits there is no choice between them.

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 8:32pm on 20 Aug 2010, Im RIGHT your WRONG wrote:

Has technology taken over our lives?

Whay a stupid question, look from the begining of time, since the stone age technology has been a major part of our lives.

Thats why we have a huge brain, or some of us anyway.

Nah we dont need technology.....get rid of them life saving drugs lol

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
Not one iota. Fortunately, BBC has a channel for knowing the opinions of the readers, since BBC enjoys the unique position of reaching every nook and corner of the globe in various languages, it has to be respected and honoured for permitting the readers as to what they think, though some are venting lies, anger and abuses. For the past two days the American channels are getting on the goat of President OBama for being a Muslim, every question was framed; is he a Muslim, what was he doing in Indonesia, what madrassa he attended, is he a loyal President, does he and his wife attend the church on Sunday, the affiliation of the Church and its pastor. Pure and simple intolerance. He is trying to do his best to get as much good for USA as possible but for the strings. Did any one go into the embezzlers, crooks, financial institutes, insurance companies who devoured Trillions of dollars from the hard earned savings of the middle class Americans. Look at their names, and it will tell a lot. Listen to Naom Chomsky, Naoma Klien and the other learned, the medical doctors who spoke out against the practices of pharma companies, the arms industries, Hanz Blick and Albaraadi who warned there are no WMDs yet US invaded to destroy Iraq and stir up Shia-Sunni strife. Count Folk Bernadotte’s report of 1948 to the UNO. Invasion of Afghanistan has no legitimacy, the rising issue of minorities in EU and Great Britain essentially directed towards home grown Muslims of second and third generation. These are issues which are raising the emotional temperature of the world. Certainly BBC is aware, and can serve humanity immensely by asking its learned staff to explain and expose the realities before they are scrambled in the pan of interest groups. Reluctance and digging out the facts are time consuming and as a Physicist I do not have the pizzazz of journalistic skills.

The good that has come out of HYS is the indifference of quite a lot towards facts and lack of knowledge, and a frame of mind that is propelled by hatred and poor taste.

Complain about this comment

* 96. At 9:05pm on 20 Aug 2010, Ron C wrote:

Should ask the North Koreans this question, oh yea they can’t excess the www.

Complain about this comment

* 97. At 9:52pm on 20 Aug 2010, Pete wrote:

Has new technology taken over our lives?

That would depend on the technology.
In motor vehicles it is expensive, and short lived. You can no longer reparer, you have to replace, and since most parts for modern vehicles are expensive, vehicles become obsolete over a shorter time. No more future classics.

As far as communication goes, it can be a good thing. On the other hand, when there are incompetents in places like Dr’s
surgeries who have no idea of the meaning of the words Private and Confidential, it isn't so good. The same can be said of several local authorities.

Technology is rather like the curates egg. Good in parts.

Complain about this comment
* 98. At 10:10pm on 20 Aug 2010, MaxWax wrote:

It definitely has, I nearly knocked over a pedestrian this evening who was more interested in reading her text messages than looking where she was going as she crossed a busy main road. Of course its her right to do this and the text message was no doubt more important than her safety.

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 10:39pm on 20 Aug 2010, Dros wrote:

What there is is a trash overload. Take science, for example. I used to browse many of the peer-reviewed journals and write online articles for a wider audience, but when the government challenged publishers to increase open access the exact opposite happened - the government paid them so that institutions could gain access from grants and the public and freelance professionals like me were cut-out. The publishers ended up profiting from taxpayers whilst science became more removed from the tax-payer! Now I find it very hard to do my research. This is just one example of what has gone wrong with the Internet - it has gone from being an open source of quality information to a closed-source where everyone has to pay for everything. I find it particularly ironic that the WWW was created by scientists to diffuse scientific information, and now all the fat-cats and governmental institutions assume ownership of the Net. Technology was beginning to change peoples' lives for the better, but now capitalism is choking progress.

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 11:17pm on 20 Aug 2010, markus_uk wrote:

If you consider simple telephones and stuff like that "technology" then yes, this is one of the symbols of deteriorating quality of life in the early 21st century...
Appendix 46. All messages in the message thread Weddings.

How should a wedding be celebrated?
10:57 UK time, Thursday, 5 August 2010

Weddings are self-indulgent and over-blown vanity projects according to the Reverend Giles Fraser, Canon Chancellor of St Paul's speaking on Radio 4's Today programme. Have we lost sight of the true meaning of marriage?

The Reverend went on to say that celebrity weddings featured in magazines have damaged the true meaning of the marriage ceremony.

Catherine Westwood, editor of Wedding Magazine, responded by calling the Reverend "old-fashioned". She says that a wedding should be a party and it is still a way of celebrating a life-time commitment.

What are your feelings about modern-day weddings? Are they a huge expense without meaning? Or are they a way of proving enduring love? What was your budget like? Have you been a guest at a wedding and felt under pressure to spend a lot of money on transport, accomodation and a gift?

This debate has now been closed. Thank you for your comments.

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Comments

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  * 1. At 11:15am on 05 Aug 2010, JOE BLOGGS wrote:

    He is correct in that celebrity weddings are obscenely expensive.
    The Clinton's spent $10 000 on a cake for goodness sake, while there are people in the US starving.
    Do these people have no moral conscience?

    Complain about this comment
  * 2. At 11:30am on 05 Aug 2010, FrankandTomsDad wrote:


[Type text]
2nd time around, I had the most amazing wedding, great venue and all that, not massively expensive, but we fed and watered most of our friends and a good time was had. I have great memories of the day.

Mostly though, my wife was there. It doesn't matter how and what you do, unless it's only for show, in which case, don't bother. That money would be better spent helping the young couple through financial storms that all too regularly break marriages these days, flash ceremony or not.

Ceremonies don't prove love, they prove purse, or ability to get credit, but not love. In fact, if you feel you need the over extravagant all spinning and dancing show, then there's probably an insecurity already there. Love doesn't need to show it's wallet, but it often does.

Love is about staying together, not getting together.

Complain about this comment
* 3. At 11:31am on 05 Aug 2010, Nok wrote:
How should a wedding be celebrated?

However the Happy Couple' want it to celebrated obviously.

Is someone seriously trying to suggest that there should be a homogenous 'one-size-fits-all' approach?

I know its silly season, but HYS has a distinctly light-weight feel about it at the moment...

Complain about this comment
* 4. At 11:32am on 05 Aug 2010, Hastings wrote:
A wedding should not be celebrated in any particular way - it should be up to the people who are getting married.

So, the Reverend should not say how we should celebrate, and neither should Catherine Westwood.

Up to us - plain and simple.

(Oh, and mothers should keep out of it if the couple have a particular desire too)

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 11:35am on 05 Aug 2010, in_the_uk wrote:

This is an interesting question and the answer is personal preference. The act has different meanings for different people-

For those believing a religion it is a union under god. Yet still blow a load of money on the event (sounds against god to me but anyway). Some people are pressured into having a wedding by religious relations who somehow feel they can dictate how someone
else should live. I know this because I am pressured by my
partners mother and grand parents (I dont believe in marriage)
but I wont give in.

To other people it is an excuse to have a party and have
fun (such as a wedding in klingon) which excuses the expense.

The saying is that a wedding is the womans day. For the men
who watch women go on a spending spree we know why a wedding
costs so much (all smile now)

Complain about this comment
* 6. At 11:37am on 05 Aug 2010, Cydevil wrote:

As modestly as possible with only the immediate families
present.

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 11:37am on 05 Aug 2010, jimmy_the_shoe wrote:

I think its pretty naive to say that individuals arrange
exorbitantily expensive weddings because they want to express them
selves or fulfil some cherished dream.

The reality is we live in an increasingly mediated society
where people feel under pressure to match an idealised lifestyle
unobtainable to most.

In other words we often make judgements about our own worth
and the worth of others based on very shallow and material values
( I am not religious by the way )

Maybe its ok if you've got pots of money, but I think that
in the past people realised that the priority was to set up a
home and furnish it.

Given that debt is a huge factor in marital break up it
seems weird that people want to start the hardest part of
lifelong relationship paying for one day of excess. The reality
is that its great to celebrate a marriage but what's important is
the feelings you have for each other not the gratification you
might get from feeling `special`, ie being extravagant.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 11:38am on 05 Aug 2010, DoleBoy wrote:

Like all things it’s about consumerism and image and
nothing to do with a lot else. Ooh guess how much our wedding
was? Pass me the vom bucket please.

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 11:39am on 05 Aug 2010, suzie127 wrote:

My own wedding was very small, immediately family and
closest friends only. I refused to spend a fortune on people who
were only there for the party. A wedding is a serious commitment
and the more it is treated like a stage show the more unlikely
the participants are to take the occasion and the vows seriously.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
10. At 11:40am on 05 Aug 2010, Tory Bankers Stole My Cash wrote:

Most weddings are naff and cheesy – people allow themselves to be brainwashed by tradition, and the wedding industry's emotional blackmail.

If two people really love each other, having a big flash ceremony is irrelevant – love is the most important thing.

Complain about this comment

11. At 11:46am on 05 Aug 2010, smilingparrotfan wrote:

Far be it from me to tell anyone how to celebrate their nuptials. It really is all relative how much people spend. And some people get horribly in debt. Others have money to burn. I'm afraid that's life.

Complain about this comment

12. At 11:48am on 05 Aug 2010, sackofpotatoes wrote:

Money is a fantastic way to alienate those closest to you. In that sense, it is a bit ridiculous that such gatherings that are meant to bring people together often drive them apart instead. You should not spend a year's salary on a celebration that will at most last 3 days. It is ridiculous.

Complain about this comment

13. At 11:49am on 05 Aug 2010, sean56z wrote:

Most weddings are satires by those who commit to gay lifestyles and others despising monogamy. Ceremonies are parodies for mocking stable, emotional relationships. Churches tire from performing rituals for couples really looking for a quick divorce or open sexuality. The wedding of Charles and Diana appeared more as a spoof than a serious ceremony. Too many of the couples suffer from one spouse not wanting the other spouse or those laughing-off the idea of commitment to one person.

Complain about this comment

14. At 11:50am on 05 Aug 2010, Maddy wrote:

This is fed by the industry; when I got engaged I bought one magazine that told me I needed to start a fitness regime 18 months before the big day and that it would cost at least £18000 (including, of course, dancing lessons and a going away outfit). I never bought another magazine, we arranged our wedding in 3 months for a total cost of £5000 and had a beautiful ceremony, dinner and games with 60 family and friends. It started at 4 and was over by midnight, and it really was the most wonderful, happy, joyous day of our lives. We just wanted to show our friends our love for each other, and make sure they enjoyed being there, and that's exactly what I think we achieved.

Complain about this comment

15. At 11:50am on 05 Aug 2010, Mrs Vee wrote:

[Type text]
"Weddings are self-indulgent and over-blown vanity projects according to the Reverend Giles Fraser, Canon Chancellor of St Paul's"

I find this comment a bit rich coming from a minister of the church, where of course there is no self-indulgence or over-blown vanity at all. The words pot, kettle and black spring to mind. Given that more people choose civil marriages rather than church marriages, Giles Fraser may want to reflect on why that might be.

Some people like big showy weddings and some don't; it's called 'choice'.

Complain about this comment
* 16. At 11:50am on 05 Aug 2010, Hastings wrote:

JOE BLOGGS wrote:
He is correct in that celebrity weddings are obscenely expensive.
The Clinton's spent $10 000 on a cake for goodness sake, while there are people in the US starving.
Do these people have no moral conscience?

###

Quite often the same people that spend obscene amount on a cake ALSO spend obscene amounts on charity.

The Clinton family have personally given something like $6 million in charitable donations and the William J Clinton foundation has been responsible for distributing over $10 billion in corporate and private money to slow the spread of aids.

So questioning their moral conscience seems somewhat trite.

Complain about this comment
* 17. At 11:51am on 05 Aug 2010, pzero wrote:

Like so many other displays of wealth, celebrity weddings prove that you cannot buy taste!

But why stop at weddings? Look at the spectacle some parents make of their children at first communions etc.

Surprised at the church though, surely if people can afford such displays of wealth, the church has missed an opportunity to bump up its charges!

Complain about this comment
* 18. At 11:51am on 05 Aug 2010, deleted wrote:

I agree with #4.
However, when my daughter gets married I hope that she feels that what's happening is more important than how much it costs!

Complain about this comment
* 19. At 11:52am on 05 Aug 2010, Russell Jones wrote:

What is the point of a wedding? You spend £20,000 to be with the person you were with yesterday, in the same house, with the same problems... except with a £20,000 debt and a hangover. Does the marriage-focussed tax system really compensate that much? And if you break up, it's another £20,000 in legal fees. Frankly, the whole concept of marriage seems outdated and pointless to me. It's a contract between two people and the state. And I don't need the state to tell me who I love.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 11:58am on 05 Aug 2010, Mr Cholmondley-Warner wrote:

Catherine Westwood, editor of Wedding Magazine, responded by calling the Reverend "old-fashioned". She says that a wedding should be a party and it is still a way of celebrating a life-time commitment.

Hmmm. What else would one expect the editor of Wedding magazine to say?

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 12:02pm on 05 Aug 2010, rational_thinker wrote:

I was married in 1978 and ours was a very quiet and modest affair in a small chapel followed by lunch in a nice restaurant for about 8 people - pretty minimalist really!

My recent experience suggests that there is a tendency for couples to worry enormously about achieving perfection down to the last detail, often at huge cost, which puts them and their marriage under strain for some time afterwards. The fashion to fly themselves and guests out to exotic places seems to me to be well over the top and can often lead to total disaster if things go wrong, quite apart from carbon footprint issues.

There is a strong 'me-too' effect, where couples feel they have to compete with others in their circle. The celebrity culture and the growth of wedding planners and websites only makes this worse.

Regrettably, the concentration on outward display rather than the underlying meaning of the event, is a reflection of modern consumerist society.

When my daughters get married (if they do), they will be encouraged to keep it simple and only spend what they can immediately afford. I will give them a sum of money on the basis
that it is spent on setting up home rather than lining the pockets of the wedding industry.

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 12:02pm on 05 Aug 2010, Jo E wrote:

I actually cancelled my wedding because I was worried that I was getting more caught up in the "Big Day" than in the idea of being married. This is one day at the beginning of a lifelong commitment. The service is the commitment & should be treated as such, the party after is the celebration.
I should add that we did marry in the end - 11 years in September!

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 12:03pm on 05 Aug 2010, adanarama wrote:

Humanist weddings put the couple's own outlook on marriage and their own words of affirmation at the heart of the ceremony, requiring them to give due thought to what marriage means to them. Ironically, such weddings are not legally valid in England and Wales (though they are in Scotland). Couples who want their marriage to be legally binding have to have a minimal register office ceremony before going on to have the humanist ceremony of their choice. It remains to be seen whether the coalition government will change the present antiquated and discriminatory law in favour of one that is more inclusive and fair.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 12:05pm on 05 Aug 2010, Anarcho-libertarian wrote:

The most important thing is to make sure your guests have a good time. Don't keep them waiting while you have endless photos taken of you with Auntie Doris etc between service and reception; serve gallons of real Champagne and give them edible food. If you are on a tight budget, spend less on the dress and flowers etc and invite fewer people. That way everyone will remember what a good time they had.

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 12:05pm on 05 Aug 2010, JohnH wrote:

Well my middle daughter gets married at the end of the month (after living with partner for 16 years) and so far......

The wedding dress was easy, but the choice of bridesmaids dress was left to a 12 year old and is in total meltdown.

My daughter is struggling to keep the numbers of her friends and their hangers on down to the maximum allowed to comply with the fire regulations.

My daughter (she is 34) wants ballons (ballons for gods sake!) on the tables. A choclate sponge for the wedding cake, (my wife makes a fantastic fruit cake and has done cake decorating
classes so much she could turn professional). Almost all her friends have 'offered' to help and as she cannot say no, her mum who does a lot of design has been excluded to only do the table flowers (and find the venue). (At one point there was going to be chocolate lollipops until I said I would throw mine away).

My daughter just really wants a party, has no idea about 'ceremony'.

The only advantage I can see for me is that my wedding speech is to be no longer than 5 min and has to have none of my favorite (embarrassing) anecdotes about her childhood.

My daughter now realises that events like this do not organise themselves and given the choice again would have had something much smaller, probably overseas (like daughter No 1).

Still, my daughter will be beautiful, surrounded by loving family and friends and I will cry my eyes out.......
with it at all - if people can afford it and want a huge party to celebrate their commitment, then so be it. As long as the reasons for marriage aren't a wedding itself!

It is, however, sad that it is becoming increasingly difficult to have an even modest party without paying through the roof for it.

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 12:07pm on 05 Aug 2010, Chris wrote:

Marriage proved to be a logistic and bureaucratic nightmare for me. I was serving my country in the Armed Forces in Kiev, Ukraine, awaiting orders to ship out on active service. My wife is Ukrainian and we had to prove temporary residence in the UK borough in which we wanted to marry (we lived in an apartment in Kiev)!!!! This would enable us to secure the blessing of the church and assist with compliance with UK visa entry regulations.

You cannot begin to imagine the hassles we went through, including the cost, the organisation of a UK wedding (from overseas). The church authorities were probably the biggest hurdle, with their archaic and out-of-date rules. No wonder people are flocking away from the church in droves!

Outcome: Lesia was 100% worth it and we have been happily married for many years.

Complain about this comment
* 30. At 12:10pm on 05 Aug 2010, Jigsy wrote:

In my person opinion, marriage is an outdated concept.

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 12:10pm on 05 Aug 2010, Elizabeth wrote:

A wedding is for a day; marriage is for a lifetime. Enjoy the day, but don't get too focused on it . . .

Complain about this comment
* 32. At 12:15pm on 05 Aug 2010, GUNGHOBUNGADIER wrote:

These days weddings have become an exhibition of the pretentious. But the best weddings are those without guests. This enables the prospective man and wife to focus on their commitment to each other and avoid the stupidity, bling and unnecessary cost of following the fashion of the great unthinking. And of course, newly weds would find a much better use for their hard earned cash that funding the profits of the "Wedding Manager" the florist, the dress, the clothes hire, the disco, the food, the stretched limo etc etc. Try a drive-through wedding in Nevada.

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 12:16pm on 05 Aug 2010, Phillip of England wrote:
I have been to so many weddings from the obscenely extravagant to the sparsely budgeted and I have to say I prefer the least expensive option. It seems more personal.

Friends of mine who were keen to maximize the money they had for a deposit on a house decided that, rather than have some expensive affair they opted for a wedding where, instead of gifts, everyone participated in the wedding. Some friends were chauffeurs, some caterers, some ushers, some flower arrangers. I was both best man and master of ceremonies at the reception.

Frankly that will go down as the greatest wedding I have ever been to. Everyone was involved, everyone felt included, it was never about money, it was about a group of friends and family coming together to join in the celebrations of two people who wanted to marry.

At the other end of the spectrum, I have been to lavishly expensive weddings and have never been so bored in all my days. Sitting there like some kind of spectator, it was just so impersonal.

Save your money, get your friends and family involved — it’s the best way to do it.

Who has the right to define how a wedding should be celebrated? It is (or should be) entirely a matter of choice, decided on by the bride and groom. Our civil ceremony was a modest affair. We made and decorated our own cake, did not bother with special wedding cars, (my wife to be stayed in the hotel venue overnight in a wonderful suite with an adjoining room where the hair was done on the morning of the ceremony), and we invited only immediate family with a few close friends. We did not have a wedding list, considering the company of our guests as the real treat, no disco (who really enjoys them anyway?), no free bar (funny how there was no hint of drunken misbehaviour), no evening do, and no limo to travel to another secret hotel for the night. And do you know what? It was perfect. Our only extravagance was a pro-photographer and what a gem he turned out to be. The money we saved on unnecessary fripperies we spent on the honeymoon, and we were not left with the feeling that we had been at any stage exploited or ripped off. So how should a wedding be celebrated? With common sense, within financial limitations and with honesty.

The Canon of St. Paul's is berating people for self-indulgence and vanity?

Has he not looked at the building he works in, or the thousands of other churches and cathedrals? And that's just in
this country, there are millions of places of worship around the

world.

Religion is more guilty of ostentation than anything, this
man should shut up about people that are following that example.

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 12:19pm on 05 Aug 2010, SimpleOldSailor wrote:

These overly large and expensive weddings are such a waste
and often serve as a platform for the display of grossly bad
taste, over indulgence in food and alcohol. The sad thing is that
where one sees hundreds gathered for some of these events it is a
pretty safe bet to say that ten or twenty years down the line, if
the marriage has lasted that long, that the happy pair will not
have seen or heard during the intervening period from 80% of the
guests. If at least some of the money expended on such events was
instead invested towards the provision of a family home or the
university education of any off-spring it would go to ensuring a
better chance for a happy and successful marriage as well as
reducing the demands placed on the taxpayer for more affordable
housing.

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 12:19pm on 05 Aug 2010, Cheshire Cat wrote:

The man is spot on!

I find that the more money you spend on a wedding in
relation to your income, the less likely the marriage is to last
the distance. 5 of the weddings I have attended in the last 15
years have ended in divorce. I must admit, not one single divorce
was a shock, the writing was on the wall at each wedding, which -
yes you guessed it - was massive and showy!

I've been happily married for 13 years, and until today, I
thought I was a bit weird because I was never really that
invested in the big day - I just wanted my husband! I didn't want
to be late for church because I think that is the height of
rudeness to your guests, the vicar, and most importantly - the
poor guy at the altar! As for princess dresses; they are for 7
year olds, not grown women.

I don't see anything wrong with the cost of Chelsea
Clinton's wedding though, she is the daughter of a head of state,
there are massive security implications, and as you would expect,
a lot of guests. The cost was proportionate, and I think she
looks very happy, as does her husband.

Complain about this comment
* 38. At 12:20pm on 05 Aug 2010, tossacoin wrote:

Clergymen should realise by now that they don't have any
right to express their opinions on marriage as if all marriage is
an act of union under God. If he think marraige is becoming tacky
then he should just address his flock rather than the population at large.

People can have any kind of ceremony at whatever cost they choose to. Personally I wouldn't want to spend very much, but I'm not going to attack people who do - it's their perogative.

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 12:21pm on 05 Aug 2010, think_green wrote:

Post #2 is exactly right. The emphasis should be on staying together, and marrying for love. Marriage is seen by many people now as the next fasionable thing to do, and many younger couples seem to want to copy the trashy and materialistic ideals of celebrities. Look how much money and hype went into Jordan and Peter Andre's wedding, and where has it got them? They have split up and and have been bickering about it ever since, whilst even more crudely making a TV show out of it and raking in the money. Funny how 50 years ago there weren't any trashy celebrities and the divorce rate was nearly half what it is today. Not coincidence.

    Complain about this comment
* 40. At 12:24pm on 05 Aug 2010, Graham wrote:

How can a man who lives his life in gowns, surrounded by alterboys, with flunkies shaking insense and goes through ceremonials every day have the audacity to talk about weddings?

    This man is employed by a church that only exists because, at the time of it's inception, it had a randy king that had a distinct love of weddings.

    If someone has the money for a lavish wedding then let them have it. It may be a waste of money, in some peoples eyes, but it is their money. For someone that makes a living out of ceremonies to make a comment on this is daft.

    I suppose to many on HYS, anyone that can afford a wedding is a blood sucking capitalist and they should donate all their spare money, that is the money left over from their 99% tax, to Somalian women's hostels, Palestian relief, another Jaguar for Lord Prescott or any other loony left project.

    If Bill Clinton has $10000 for a cake then he can send the remains to Africa and they can enjoy it too, as it must be very tasty.

    Complain about this comment
* 41. At 12:24pm on 05 Aug 2010, think_green wrote:

It's all very well saying "no-one should tell me how to get married" but it is the Church that marries you, so it IS their right to comment. If you don't like it, get married in Las Vegas and stay away from our respectable Churches
To me a wedding should be an expression of love and commitment, not to be confused with material wealth. Does an unostentatious quiet wedding mean that this love is any less — or could it be that the intimacy makes it all the more romantic and sincere?

I film weddings for a living, and there is a steady trend to the "look at me" aspect. Couples are spending more time on the rehearsals of the dance or ensuring they get the cool picture as they are on the arrangements for the main part of the day.

That's fine and it keeps things interesting, but anyone that says the "look at me" approach isn't on a massive increase doesn't go to a lot of weddings.

I think the worst aspect is the cost. £20k seems to be the average, but you can cut that massively with a few compromises.

I managed to cut mine from £18k to £6k, but swapping to a venue not tied into a catering company. I dumped canopies, over the top cars, expensive favours, and swapping out of date photographers for a photo/video combination.

The venue, dress and meal was still stunning. And the £12k I saved went into our pension. Afterall, we promised to look after each other till death do us part.

You only have to look at the ridiculously overblown affairs that certain footballers and other 'celebrities' have, to see where a lot of this comes from.

At the end of the day, a wedding contains a marriage ceremony, where the couple are making a public statement of commitment to each other, in front of those who matter most to them. The rest of it is a celebration of that.

Spending even a few thousand pounds on it seems overblown to me. Perhaps you have to ask who are they trying to impress? Whose ego is getting the once-over?
I think it's not a proper wedding unless there is a punch-up.

One wedding I was at in the 1970's I had to hold the bride back from punching the lights out of some trollope who was making eyes at her mothers new boyfriend......

O happy day!

Complain about this comment
* 46. At 12:32pm on 05 Aug 2010, Sarah wrote:

I got married this May, and we wanted it small, so it was small. It was intimate, romantic, all the guests laughing and smiling and everyone has told us (even the photographer) how happy we looked. Isn't that what it should be about? We love each other, wanted to get married, so did. It might not have been big and expensive, but we enjoyed ourselves.

However, some people do want the bigger wedding for whatever reason, it can be a real confidence booster, or maybe your family is big, and I think they should be able to celebrate their day the way they want to, I certainly did!

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 12:34pm on 05 Aug 2010, Voice_of_commonsense wrote:

Fully agree with Rev Fraser. My daughter has succumbed to the 'me, me' wedding next week, unfortunately supported by her mother. Programmes such as 'Four Weddings' and magazines on the 'perfect wedding' just support the idea of it being an event with no decorum or propriety more a chance for a party (which you can have at any time) and not a life changing event that can still be for life (or is that too old fashioned now?). The so called friends invited (many have not had the decency to reply) are invited in place of family, now considered too passe for such an 'event' all adding to the sense that the happy couple are too precious in their own eyes to have any self worth - they are just having to be seen by peers to be 'in with the crowd', all of whom have no idea of life and the world in which they live is only here by sacrifice and hard work. When did society lose its own self esteem?

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 12:34pm on 05 Aug 2010, Feel_Bad_Factor wrote:

A daughter of my Dad's friend was very insistent on a lavish £35k wedding including a chartered private jet experience which basically went up in the air, circled Birmingham a few times and came back down.
3 months later, yes 3 months she was fed up and left. Parents not happy but apparently all she wanted was the 'big day' and not him.

I love my partner dearly and after 12 years of being together she knows only too well that I would never marry her. If she loves me she will stay and if she wants the 'big day' then she can find someone else.

Incidentally, did anyone catch the ground-breaker on divorce law that can prevent women obtaining financial information underhandedly in an effort to increase entitlement? Does anyone know if this extends to home ownership? I would love to marry her in all honesty but I have always told her that my home is rented.

Women are beautiful and wonderful but never underestimate how clever they are when it comes to entitlement and asset transfer.

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 12:36pm on 05 Aug 2010, KL wrote:

Being recently married - and having been lucky enough to have had the perfect day that was everything my husband and I wanted - it makes me feel rather irritated that people feel the need to judge and comment on a couple's decision of how they would like to celebrate the start of their married life together.

Some weddings may appear lavish, some modest, some outrageous and some completely bizarre depending on your viewpoint. However, is it not the freedom of choice in holding your wedding day the way you want to, that makes marriage so wonderfully personal and cherished to the couple involved?

Complain about this comment
* 50. At 12:39pm on 05 Aug 2010, ziggyboy wrote:

After writing a list of those we should invite to our wedding we looked at the huge cost of inviting over 250 guests. As we were paying for the wedding ourselves we realised the money could be better spent on things we needed rather than satisfying the needs of others.

We opted for a much quieter wedding with all the trimmings. We invited 30 must have guests and got exactly what we wanted and paid for everything comfortably. We were married in the Registrars and booked a local restaurants barge for the reception giving us the benefit of their extensive Menu. The feedback we received was excellent and we are still complimented on how much our guests had enjoyed themselves.

Couples don't need to spend a fortune to have a very memorable day.

Complain about this comment

[Type text]
I suppose I can see where he is coming from, especially when you see the celeb couple get divorced in the same mags a few years later.

Just had my 1st anniversary. We had small country wedding in our own village. Practically every thing like flowers, cakes, bridesmaid dresses, photographer, hair and make up for the girls were wedding presents from friends and family. The wedding dress was a bargain to boot.

Perfect day in every way (including the things that went wrong because something always does) and cheap too! Most of the cost was the church fees, buffet and disco!

I read this article with a great deal of interest, as I have been putting off my plans to get married because of the prohibitive prices around it. It seems it is very nearly impossible to get married and not spend massive amounts of money on doing it. I have absolutely no intention of spend £17,000 - £20,000 on a big party and I feel this is very much down to the "industry" that has grown up around the modern wedding. Just the experience of getting engaged was enough to get our fingers burnt by this so-called service industry. All providers of services and products that are related to engagement and marriage seem to think they have the right to hike up their charges by adding a grand onto everything that involves weddings. The jeweller from who we ordered the engagement ring is a case in point. The first jewellers we approached with the specifications of this ring we wanted was going to charge us £1,300 for the design and production of the ring (which, I might add, contained no diamonds, so the cost was not in the quality of stones etc). When we approached a second jeweller with the same specifications, but explained the ring as a birthday present, the price quoted to us was £700. And £700 we paid and were very happy with the ring until a stone came out of it and we sent it back for repairs upon which, the jeweller objected to the fact that we were using this ring as an engagement ring "because it had not been designed as an engagement ring to be worn every day". Clearly my statutory rights as a consumer state that if he has manufactured a ring for me to my specifications he should have made it durable enough to be worn regularly. (I don't know many people who can afford £700 for a ring only to be worn occasionally!) It was clear to us that upon finding that we had not informed the jeweller that he was making an engagement ring for us, he now feels hard done-by that he was therefore not able to whack his extra £1000 charge on top of the £700 we paid him.
I'm planning my wedding for next year. We are only planning on spending at the very most £1000. There will be only close family there no more than 20 guests. The dress will be from ebay - you only wear it once why spend lots? Belfast City hall for wedding - Not religious Restraunt for a meal - Just off the menu so everyone gets a choice and not paying wedding prices. Topped off by a reception with family and close friends in my grandparents backgarden under a hired marquee.

That's all I want. I don't understand why anyone would spend thousands of pounds on one day and party for their friends (well I'm not drinking on my wedding night) It should just be about proving and showing your love for someone and wanting to spend the rest of your life with them.

I will say though I will be spending a bit more on the honeymoon but only because it will be our first holiday together but also we are planning on starting a family so it may be our last.

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 12:41pm on 05 Aug 2010, 6024kingedward1 wrote:

I know I will be shouted down (because people don't like hearing the truth) but the creation of marriage is recorded in Genesis 2:23-24: "The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." God created man and then made woman to complement him. Marriage is God's "fix" for the fact that "it is not good for the man to be alone"

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 12:41pm on 05 Aug 2010, Elvis 77 wrote:

"But if you want to point a finger at a group exploiting soon-to-be married couples, says Catherine Westwood, point it at the venue owners, caterers and wedding suppliers, who push up their prices as soon as the word "wedding" is mentioned."

Hmmm maybe there is a reason suppliers "push up the prices as soon as the word wedding is mentioned" That would be because as a supplier you have one shot to get it right, if you get it wrong you will get sued and brides (and to a lesser extent grooms) are frankly the least flexible and most demanding customers a business is ever likely to encounter. All these little touches that "make our wedding so individual" make life for the vendors that little bit more difficult... and so the cost goes up.

Catherine Westwood wants the brides and grooms to get their products and services at rock bottom prices but that would, for most suppliers, mean reducing the customisation... moving to more of a one size fits all. And from my experience that is exactly what brides and grooms are trying to avoid, whether they express that as a full-on-fairytale wedding with 100 white doves or an
oh-so-down-to-earth-eco-chic-low-key-organic-locally-sourced-nettle-wine-we-did-it-all-for-50-quid-type-affair.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 12:43pm on 05 Aug 2010, David wrote:

I have to agree a lot of couples spend far too much on their weddings, but at the end of the day it is their choice, and it does create a lot of jobs in the hospitality sector. Most people would be better off spending a lot less on a wedding and using the money saved to get on the housing ladder, or put money away for when they want children. I know it's not romantic to say this, but around 50% of the marriages will end up in divorce, so why waste so much money.

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 12:45pm on 05 Aug 2010, techpolicyexpert wrote:

Our traditional wedding two years ago was not overly expensive (nowhere near the national average), although we did it all in fine style and it was a wonderful day. We had a church wedding and dinner in a beautiful local hotel - no disco, extravagant table settings or fireworks (but the caricaturist after dinner was great fun and a massive success!). We, our parents and our 40 guests all have very happy memories of an intimate and joyful occasion and spending more money would not have improved things one bit.

I absolutely agree with previous comments that getting married is easy, staying married requires work. A good reality check might be: is marrying this person so important to you that you would be quite content with an undistinguished registry office with two witnesses?

Yes, the Big Day and the party are fantastic but, if that's the focus and not the marriage vows you're making, there's a strong chance you will have problems later.

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 12:46pm on 05 Aug 2010, Dave H wrote:

We did a lot of our wedding stuff ourselves. My wife found a pre-made dress she liked, she baked and iced the wedding cake, I made the cake stand, we went to the local garden centre the day before the wedding and bought pot plants that were in bloom instead of spending a lot on cut flowers and we spent the afternoon with friends and family decorating the pots. We did have a formal sit-down dinner after a ceremony with the local registrar (no church) which was the biggest expense, but hired the local village hall for the evening entertainment and had a ceilidh band. Evening food was once again home-prepared.

Neither of us saw any point in starting married life with a huge debt to pay off, so we were cutting costs as much as we could.

Complain about this comment
59. At 12:49pm on 05 Aug 2010, The truth is the greatest enemy of the state wrote:

For once I agree with the God botherer. I can't understand why people spend such obscene amounts of money on what is effectively a theatrical performance. My daughter will be lucky if she gets a pork pie salad and a crate of brown ale when she gets married. If she wants music, she'll have to put money in the jukebox herself. (Do they still have jukeboxes in pubs?)

Complain about this comment

60. At 12:49pm on 05 Aug 2010, Bertulla wrote:

We had a fantastic wedding with no relatives (although we love them dearly), no friends (ditto), but with just two random witnesses and a minister to do the wedding on a beach in the Seychelles. We did this to avoid hurting those who couldn't make it for various reasons (health/finances etc). It was the best day of our lives and all our relatives and friends loved the idea that we had 'eloped' even though we've been together for 18 years! We have nothing to prove aside from our love for each other.

My mother used to sing for big weddings and sometimes she would have 6 in a day. It was like one big long procession of one in one out. Even at a young age it really did make me realise that having a wedding was more about a union of love and not about how big your dress/cake/hair/guest list could be!

Complain about this comment

61. At 12:49pm on 05 Aug 2010, BewilderedMark wrote:

I've been to several weddings in the last few years that have been highly extravagant. They've also cost me a fortune to attend.

Of course the wedding day is about the happy couple and they should have everything they want the way they want it but I've noticed a few things about weddings recently:

1. You're notified so far in advance (more than a year in many cases) that it's impossible to find a good reason not to attend.
2. The wedding ceremony has to be in a quaint little church in the middle of nowhere and is inaccessible using public transport (other than a taxi).
3. The wedding reception is usually on the other side of the nearby town, necessitating a cadged lift or another taxi of some 15 to 20 miles.
4. Lots of guests will be using their 'weekend' 2 seater convertible cars and will be unable to offer lifts to anyone without inconveniencing their partner.
5. The reception will be in an enormous banquet hall in a hotel in the middle of nowhere which hasn't got any cash machine facilities forcing you to buy drinks on a tab (to which they add 10% service charge to the already expensive drinks).
6. The entire hotel will have been booked by the wedding party for family and overseas guests so I'd have to stay elsewhere overnight.

7. The venue chosen is just far enough away to require an overnight stay before and after the wedding.

8. Local B&Bs and hotels know there is a wedding nearby and have inflated their prices for that particular weekend.

9. There's a 'dress code' for the wedding with very clear instructions for friends of the groom to be dressed similarly (we weren't even ushers or groomsmen).

10. The wedding list inevitably has been circulated to family members first so the cheapest gifts remaining when I get a chance to look at it are around £60.

Of course the wedding will also be highly enjoyable; the bride will look stunning (always), the best man's speech will have an entertaining yet seemingly innocent reference to the stag do, funky chicken dancing will be inevitable and the band/DJ will be possibly the worst entertainers ever (but no one will care).

It still smarts when you shell out 500 notes for your friends' big day. Add in all the expense of the stag do and pretty soon we're talking serious money.

I must say though, midnight bacon sandwiches was a genius addition to one particular wedding reception. Fantastic.

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 12:52pm on 05 Aug 2010, SaraJW wrote:

I work at a printers and the latest 'trend' is to include a ditty with the invitation, saying something along the lines of "We already have everything we could possibly want in our beautiful home, etc. etc" then asking guests for a 'donation' to their honeymoon! I would call this a begging letter. If couples already have everything, then surely guests could be asked to donate any money/presents to a charity at their discretion.

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 12:53pm on 05 Aug 2010, Wilberfalse wrote:

I have always admired Giles Fraser's contributions to the TFTD slot on the Today Programme. He is well read, writes and delivers excellently and often provokes interesting debate, no less so than on this occasion. (Mind you, I was more comfortable with him at Putney than I am with him at St. Paul's, but that's a purely personal matter.)

In my humble opinion weddings should be celebrated (word used advisedly) primarily as the married-to-be couple would desire. However, a compromise is usually necessary since parents and grandparents from different generations have their own ideas in these matters.
During my fifty years of adulthood I have witnessed many weddings (as a photographer) and their aftermath (as a voluntary worker with a certain organization that shall remain nameless).

A good deal of what Giles had to say should be listened to with serious reflection. We live in a glitzy, disparate world, one in which presentation and the media play an important part in the rise and fall of the “status” of individuals. Moreover, in a predominantly (?) secular society attitudes to relationships have changed dramatically. On this point I invite Giles to comment on “sex before marriage”. That should open up a hornet’s nest or two!

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 12:53pm on 05 Aug 2010, North West wrote:

Our wedding cost no where near the suggested average amount, yet we still had touches that were special to us and hopefully enhanced the day for those we had chosen to join us to celebrate our marriage.

For the weddings of others I have attended, they have largely had the same attitude, except one, who thought bigger was better as you would receive more gifts...strangely this couple also had an engagement party, large christening party for their child, etc, etc.

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 12:54pm on 05 Aug 2010, Julian wrote:

The Rev is absolutely right. But what really concerns me is the social pressure to spend tens of thousands on a big wedding that could be better spent on something else, like the deposit for a house. Young people today have enough financial pressures what with student loans and getting on the housing ladder. Blowing such a large sum of money on a one day extravaganza just makes no sense at all.

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 12:54pm on 05 Aug 2010, coastwalker wrote:

I have to say that I enjoyed mine but 15 years after the divorce it is a fading memory..

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 12:56pm on 05 Aug 2010, 711honved wrote:

Some of the recent D List celeb weddings and those of footballers have turned into a carnival of the grotesque. Hello magazine seems to love them though & in many case picks up the bill for the whole show.

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 12:57pm on 05 Aug 2010, KIM wrote:

[Type text]
A wedding brings families together so it can't be all a bad thing.
I don't think everyone gets married so they can say look at me; more likely to say we are happy and we want you all to meet each other. Let's get together for a great day and here is an excuse for everyone to come from far and wide.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 12:59pm on 05 Aug 2010, Megan wrote:

Way back in 1984, the sole reason that I and my husband (STILL my husband, I hasten to add!) chose to get married was because, being god-botherers, we wanted our deity's blessing on our decision to spend the rest of our lives together.

So my parents put an engagement announcement in The Times, and a flood of advertising material from all and sundry arrived, along with a stack of gifts (many from people I'd never heard of but who were, my parents said, distant relatives... ones so distant they hadn't even made the Christmas card list). I put my foot down about venue, the church where I worshipped each week, and fought to get some of OUR friends on the guest list as well as all these people I didn't know. And lessons read by the then Archdruid of Wales (the first public reading of the new Welsh translation of the 23rd Psalm) and my university chaplain, who at that time was an Anglican Deaconess (she's now a priest, but ladies were not eligible for ordination then, else she'd have been officiating!).

And then a big formal reception... one of my husband's friends bought me a pint because he thought I looked like I needed one, and one of my friends took a photo which in later years amused staff at Whitbread's Brewery where I was installing a computer system because you could see their logo on the pint pot! (Never did tell them that it was a pint of Brain's actually!).

So whatever sort of wedding you choose, one of the best things is the memories — I could fill the page, but you lot would get bored!

So do as you feel best, but do it because you want to stand up and say with and to the individual of your choice, "I love you," out loud and where everyone else (and your god if relevant) can hear.

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 12:59pm on 05 Aug 2010, Slave to the System — I am not a number wrote:

It's largely a waste of money as most marriages end in divorce.

Most companies charge more when "Wedding" is mentioned, its just a chance for hotels and the industry to rip you off.
I know it's not romantic but neither is losing you children, house, job, income and life to divorce.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 1:00pm on 05 Aug 2010, Anne Naylor wrote:

As a wedding celebrant who creates and conducts ceremonies for people from all over the world, I find that people are much more thoughtful and mature in approaching marriage than they ever were. Couples I work with get to reflect on what the marriage really means for them and how they want to commit to it through choosing their own vows. These days, people are much freer to say what they mean and not rely on words given from a traditional format if they wish.

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 1:02pm on 05 Aug 2010, Some other person with a comment wrote:

LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT ME!

I'm in obscenely expensive hired clothing spending obscene amounts of money to show my "love and compassion" for another person by pouring money down the drain of an outmoded yet legally binding ceremony originally designed to show that women are nothing but property.

I'll probably spend the next 10 years paying emotionally for this nonsense once the illusion has worn off, and I probably don't even particularly like the person I'm with, so I'll have to go through some cumbersome and expensive legal activities to reverse it!

LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT ME!

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 1:03pm on 05 Aug 2010, NellR wrote:

There's a focus on planning and arranging the wedding day (possibly the honeymoon too) rather than on preparing for the marriage. Wedding magazines seem to add to this, emphasising dresses, gift lists, flowers, wedding venues and suchlike rather than suggesting cheaper options. A registry office wedding and d-i-y reception needn't require vast sums of money (when brides and grooms have student loans to repay, car loans and aspirations of mortgages, let alone children).

When we married, we knew my husband only had a few days left to live. But if we'd wed a decade earlier, I doubt we'd have spent much more!
Complain about this comment

* 74. At 1:03pm on 05 Aug 2010, Slave to the System - I am not a number wrote:

I feel sorry for the parents that have to fund these lavish events.

It's okay if it's your money you're wasting but wasting your parents' money or inlaws is not acceptable.

Surely if you love someone, you don't need an expensive wedding to make it special.

£20,000 on one day is really a waste of money when you could do so much more with it and have more fun.

Complain about this comment

* 75. At 1:04pm on 05 Aug 2010, Harwode Magna wrote:

In 2007, a friend's daughter and her fiancé decided on a lavish beach-wedding in Antigua, so all their close friends and family, none of whom are remotely wealthy, were forced to spend thousands of pounds merely to attend the ceremony, which my wife and I thought an act of immense selfishness.

Three years later, the golden couple are separated. She is living with her parents; he dosses on a friend's sofa. There is a toddler and divorce is pending, largely because of the financial and emotional stress of being unable to keep up the mortgage interest payments on their over-ambitious first home.

Would things have been different with a more modest wedding, and a more affordable first home?

Well, at least they might have got their priorities right, and set the marital cross-bar just a little lower.

Complain about this comment

* 76. At 1:05pm on 05 Aug 2010, Dr Nick wrote:

I much prefer a funeral to a wedding.

I hate the pressure of having to be exceptionally happy when your not, or even if you are happy why does the 'big day' need to be the happiest day of your lives? If that's the best then it's only down hill from there.

Complain about this comment

* 77. At 1:06pm on 05 Aug 2010, Ann M Phillips wrote:

My partner and I are getting married next year. We have managed to keep the cost of the whole thing down to just over £4,000, and it will be a small ceremony for immediate family and best friends, with a big party in the evening for extended family and friends to come along and celebrate with us. I am purposefully avoiding anything 'unnecessary' or adopting any traditional things that have no relevance to me. Our union will be about just that, and will be personalised - a reflection of us
as a couple. I am horrified by the expense many people go to on their weddings - if I had that much money to throw about I would use it as a deposit to buy a house. I am looking forward to the day itself, and especially to being married, but I am so far not enjoying the preparation and the expectation of others with regard organising this event. If there is anything about your wedding that is not personal to you, then why have it included in the day? My friends and family are coming along on the day to help affirm the commitment that my boyfriend and I are making to eachother: nothing more, nothing less.

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 1:06pm on 05 Aug 2010, Julian wrote:

#29 Chris wrote: "Marriage proved to be a logistic and bureaucratic nightmare for me. I was serving my country in the Armed Forces in Kiev, Ukraine, awaiting orders to ship out on active service. My wife is Ukrainian and we had to prove temporary residence in the UK borough in which we wanted to marry (we lived in an apartment in Kiev)!!!!"

You should have got married in Ukraine, Chris. My wife is also Ukrainian. We got married in Kharkov (her choice), a registry office (ZAGS) ceremony followed by a restaurant party for selected friends and relatives. Cost: less than £1K. It was also much more fun and the food was far better than you'd get in the UK. And we're still married - 8 years this month!

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 1:08pm on 05 Aug 2010, binghillpark wrote:

Actually most people see it as a celebration," says Catherine Westwood, editor of Wedding magazine.

"If the celebration is throwing a big party and having that public declaration of love then I think it should be treated that way."

Well, yes, but there is more to it than that. Whether a marriage is religious or secular it involves exchange of vows and promises and signifies a commitment. Solemnity and celebration used to be the two elements of a wedding - but it seems that the latter now overshadows the former.

Let's have moderation all things. It is perfectly possible to have a great day without going to the excesses that, sadly, now seem to be part of many mainstream weddings.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 1:10pm on 05 Aug 2010, RoyaltyinTheChampionship wrote:

Agree with other posters it's entirely individual and each wedding should be different.

Since the Reverend Giles Fraser is so concerned about the amount of money being spent on weddings is he prepared to ask the
Church Of England to cut their church fees (which can be anything from £200-600) and to start waiving their extra charges such as Organ maintenance or allowing a camera into the church (I think my sister was charged over £100 for these two together)?

Next to your kids being born your wedding day should be the happiest day of your life so I think people should do whatever makes them happy.

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 1:10pm on 05 Aug 2010, Farquhar wrote:

My recent wedding was £500 all in. I avoided the nightmare of who to invite by not inviting anyone...

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 1:12pm on 05 Aug 2010, Margs wrote:

After all the fuss, palaver, arguments, stress - not to mention the staggering amount of money involved - it would be interesting to find out just how many "happy" couples think to themselves on the day after the ceremony "So - is that it?" and "what about Happy Ever After?"

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 1:14pm on 05 Aug 2010, SSnotbanned wrote:

The average wedding costs around £15k to £20k depending what figures you believe.

I wonder how people on the dole can afford a wedding.

If we are a Christian nation we would give to/help out these people who clearly cannot afford the costs of an average wedding.

David Cameron, Leader of the 'secular' government, believes in the 'Big Society' and helping people who are married couples.

People who have children, but not necessarily in marriage, receive Child Benefit/Allowance.

Therefore,

I look forward to a raft of measures/aids for assisting low income couples enjoy what is a very important day.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 1:14pm on 05 Aug 2010, Craig Macdonald wrote:

Terrible behaviour at weddings these days. All dressed up in extravagant clothes, dripping with gold and jewellery, demanding that the whole event is all about "me, me, me", pretending to be "celebrities" we should all look up to...

I'm talking of course about the clergy and god. Hypocrisy abound!

[Type text]
Of course, I'm getting married in 3 weeks. Hooray!

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 1:15pm on 05 Aug 2010, freegreenlondon wrote:

My husband and I focused on the marriage, not the wedding day. It seems that many do not, but what point are amazingly glamorous wedding photos without a happy marriage?

We had a small wedding of close friends and family, a small but lovely reception and a lot of fun. It was a perfect day.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 1:19pm on 05 Aug 2010, KRL7 wrote:

We got married almost 6 years ago. Our day was very much about each other and whilst we wanted it to be perfect for both ourselves and our guests it was about having a relaxed, intimate and fun day full of joy and love rather than creating a 'show'. Our whole day plus our 2 week honeymoon cost about £4,500 and we had everything that we wanted (including having many friends involved in the making, planning etc). Our day was perfect - as is our marriage. It certainly does not all have to be about the money.

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 1:20pm on 05 Aug 2010, STIG wrote:

Each to their own I suppose but a church wedding should be formal and the vows taken in earnest. Registry weddings can in their simplicity be more dignified and profess a greater commitment without all the excess. Won't be able to change anything as there is an industry dependent on it. And relationships formal or not are easy come easy go these days. People are simply too fickle.

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 1:20pm on 05 Aug 2010, Farquhar wrote:

41. At 12:24pm on 05 Aug 2010, think_green wrote: "It's all very well saying "no-one should tell me how to get married" but it is the Church that marries you, so it IS their right to comment. If you don't like it, get married in Las Vegas and stay away from our respectable Churches"

I just love how god botherers always show themselves to be less charitable and christian than atheists.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 1:21pm on 05 Aug 2010, Daddage wrote:

He's right.
I got married in a registry office, with 3 guests. Why?
Because we couldn't stand the thought of what has become a "normal" wedding now. And we'd had enough of our families telling us who to invite, and what to do to conform to this illusion. And getting married in a church when you don't subscribe to that religion, or just paying lip service to it so that you can, is shallow beyond words.

We wanted to get married because we wanted to make that serious commitment to each other.

Get married for yourselves, not for other people's sake, or for show.
It's about that commitment. Parties can be done any time. Want to show off? Take the 20 grand avg wedding spend, and buy a sports car. At least if you then split up, you can sell it.

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 1:24pm on 05 Aug 2010, shrimpkebab wrote:

Unbelievable comments from Reverend Giles Fraser...........I have always had the view that weddings should be for religious people who feel the need to have their relationship blessed in the eyes of God. However, it now seems that a wedding (whether that be in a church, registry office, hotel or wherever) can be a celebration of two peoples relationship and a way of showing the world exactly how they feel about one another.

I actually think now that the less "religious" the wedding ceremony, the better - although im not sure what is more irrelevant these days, christianity or marriage......

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 1:25pm on 05 Aug 2010, Tracey Dixon wrote:

It's like Christmas - the true meaning is lost in bling, vanity and selfishness.

Personally I've never had the urge to dress like a puffball and humiliate myself by leaking makeup all down my face in front of thousands of people when I cry.

Personally, I've never wanted anything more than a registry office. I want a marriage, not a wedding!

And no, I don't celebrate "demand a lot of presents day" in December either!

Complain about this comment
* 92. At 1:26pm on 05 Aug 2010, Joe wrote:

Why do people get married these days?

a) Is it a joining of two souls in the eyes of God?

b) Is it for legal reasons such as a person needing citizenship in another country?
c) Is it simply because it is the next step in a relationship according to customary traditions?

d) Or is it to keep up with the Jones's?

If your answer is anything but d) then a huge overpriced spectacle of a ceremony should not be important; this whole notion of 'every girl dreams of their wedding is very mythical, Americanized and out-dated now. The prospect of divorce is putting many off the total idea of marriage, whilst others just prefer something modest and low-key amongst close friends and family, and those are usually the marriages that last.

I blame royalty and idiots with 'celebrity status' (I use that term very loosely as I'm not celebrating them, I don't know about anyone else) like Jordan and Victoria Beckham for filling peoples heads with the nonsense of making a huge scene or grand gesture. It is unnecessary, vain and totally overpriced.

Love cost's nothing.

Another thing. Apart from obvious legal advantages why do atheists get married? The whole spiritual idea of marriage is not applicable to their beliefs, it makes no sense to me and is a little hypocritical in my opinion.

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 1:27pm on 05 Aug 2010, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:

There is no news, we have to talk about something type your comment here!!

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 1:27pm on 05 Aug 2010, BluesBerry wrote:

What do you expect in a culture of Cinderella and Camelot? Little girls await their Prince Charming and the Prince can always afford a huge palace wedding.

I agree with the Reverend Giles Fraser, Canon Chancellor of St Paul's. I feel that we have lost sight of the true meaning of marriage, the bonding of two people until death do them part; there appear to be a lot more people divorcing than dying.

The advertising/wedding industry is not helpful - the ideal dress, the ideal flowers, the ideal wedding scenario, the ideal everything - except the idealic commitment of love through the bad & the good until death do them part.

Catherine Westwood, editor of Wedding Magazine, says that a wedding should be a party and it is still a way of celebrating a life-time commitment. Indeed, but since when did a party, celebrating a life-time commitment, need to cost so much materially when it buys so little spiritually. The wedding has become more a life-time commitment to debt than to love.

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 1:28pm on 05 Aug 2010, lizb wrote:

[Type text]
People should celebrate their wedding as they want, within reason, as long as they also plan and prepare for the marriage that follows. When I go to a wedding, I'm celebrating the fact that the couple have chosen to commit to spending the rest of their lives together, not that they've chosen a big dress, a fancy meal and a pretty venue.

I also say celebrate within reason, as big weddings have their downsides - the potential disappointment if something on the day doesn't go to plan; the financial burden of paying off thousands of pounds of debt; and the return to "normal" life post honeymoon seeming an anticlimax. Neither of the last two will give the marriage a great start, even if the wedding goes without a hitch.

Complain about this comment
* 96. At 1:29pm on 05 Aug 2010, Icebloo wrote:

Yes I think far too much importance is placed on weddings these days. Funnily enough it seems the more elaborate the wedding, the shorter the amount of time the marriage lasts.

I think it's now time that marriage was introduced for gays and lesbians. It's time for our politicians to stop being so spineless and stand up to organized religion and make them comply with British law. Civil unions have shown the ridiculous right that unions between two people of the same sex does not actually bring the world tumbling down so now it's time to sweep away the last bit of hatred and bigotry and let them get married in church if they choose to.

Bigoted Britain needs to end.

Complain about this comment
* 97. At 1:29pm on 05 Aug 2010, Alixandrea Corvyn wrote:

I'm sorry but Oliver James' mother is wrong. My soon-to-be-ex husband and I had a very understated wedding that cost around one tenth of the average. Two and a half years later we split up.

Marrying without love is also in my experience no guarantee of a long and happy relationship. I think if you really want to know what makes a marriage healthy and happy, you should ask the people out there who have remained married through thick and thin, rather than people like Oliver James and Dr. Fraser.

Complain about this comment
* 98. At 1:30pm on 05 Aug 2010, LancashireLass wrote:

Celebrity types dont have a wedding - they put on a show. When will the chavs of the UK realise that they cant afford to keep up

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 1:30pm on 05 Aug 2010, Nattyblog wrote:

[Type text]
Weddings are an extension of the personalities of those getting married as well as their attitudes towards social conventions. Posers have posy weddings; happy, warm people tend to have happy, warm functions; unpretentious non-conformers might keep it special but unconventional (e.g. service at top of Blackpool Tower).

And it's usually the receptions that are the tackiest bit, and by far the most expensive.

Best advice I could give to those wanting to keep the budget tight is concentrate on the key things - dress, venue and food - and worry less about the massive amount of over-priced, dull and exploited stuff - e.g. cakes, excessive flowers and vehicles. By far the most over-priced bit of excess is the photos.

Get an army of 2-3 trusted ones to take photos throughout instead.

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 1:31pm on 05 Aug 2010, Memyselfnii wrote:

People tend to spend thousands that they don't have on a wedding and then spend years after arguing over money problems. Our wedding cost more than expected, but was still only 10k (including honeymoon!) and relatively simple. My dress and my bridesmaids cost half of what seems to be the 'norm', the ceremony (conducted by a friend) and premises (our place of worship) were free, the photographers were friends so we had a 90% discount, and we only got charged for ingredients on the cake (another friend)! The most expensive was the meal, buffet and party afterwards at a hotel which accounted for nearly half the amount. In the end it was what WE wanted, and it was fully paid for within 2 months of the day. It was fantastic and people are STILL calling our wedding the best they've ever been to. It doesn't need to cost a fortune, the memories make it priceless.
Appendix 47. All messages in the message thread Did God create the universe?

Did God create the Universe?
11:25 UK time, Thursday, 2 September 2010

There is no place for God in theories on the creation of the Universe, leading physicist Professor Stephen Hawking has said. Do you agree with him?

Professor Hawking had previously argued belief in a creator was not incompatible with science but in a new book, he concludes the Big Bang was an inevitable consequence of the laws of physics.

The Grand Design, part serialised in the Times, says there is no need to invoke God to set the Universe going.

Do you think God created the Universe? If not, do you agree with Prof Hawking's assessment? What is your Big Bang theory?

This debate is now closed. Thank you for your comments.

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Comments

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* 1. At 11:49am on 02 Sep 2010, Jason_Overthinker wrote:

I don't think anybody truly knows if God created the universe or not. I don't really believe in God but I can't disprove his existence.

So all in all I'd have to say. I don't know.

Complain about this comment
* 2. At 11:51am on 02 Sep 2010, Queen_Becchi_B wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 3. At 11:57am on 02 Sep 2010, paul tapner wrote:

1. I don't think so
2. Yes.
3. I'll leave that one to the professor. He's better at physics than me

Complain about this comment
* 4. At 12:01pm on 02 Sep 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

All logic, and common sense, points to science creating the Universe so therefore I agree with Professor Hawking's assessment. However, if certain people feel the need to believe in a God then that is their choice.

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 12:01pm on 02 Sep 2010, Nakor wrote:

Are you kidding me? Talk about a topic ripe for rampant flaming and trolling from both sides.

To answer the question "Do you think God created the Universe?"

I like to think so, even if it was God "pushing the button" to see what would happen.

But it hasn't been proved either way and probably won't be either because there could always be a higher divinity no matter how far science goes. That's what faith is all about.

But to put a question to the Agnostics, Aethists & Scientists who say not..

Why shouldn't there be a "divine power" who created the universe?

Complain about this comment
* 6. At 12:02pm on 02 Sep 2010, Waterski Buddha wrote:
If God created the Universe, it's makeup and the different laws applying to it, was also created by him. The law of natural selection of the species too.

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 12:02pm on 02 Sep 2010, theoldgoat wrote:

I have the greatest respect for Professor Hawking, and he is exactly right. Man's need for and creation of God, or gods/goddesses, was a way to explain a complex environment when he had nothing else to work with.

This does not invalidate faith even now, and these ideas can happily cohabit (and should) but you'll never convince those who don't want to see/hear this.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 12:03pm on 02 Sep 2010, General_Jack_Ripper wrote:

No

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 12:03pm on 02 Sep 2010, Tony Harrison wrote:

Yes.

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 12:03pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:

No

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 12:04pm on 02 Sep 2010, RubbishGirl wrote:

Wow, This ones gonna turn nasty quick! In a word, NO. (because he is imaginary) ok, that was some words, not just one :)

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 12:05pm on 02 Sep 2010, Serendipo wrote:

Personally I am quite content with the idea of a Godless creation as I have always felt that the universe and all in it is simply too fantastic and diverse to have been created by a God.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 12:06pm on 02 Sep 2010, Reasoned Rants wrote:

The laws of physics quite simply preclude the existence of a deity by any current definition of the word.

So, although I find Stephen Hawking's writing style fairly impenetrable, I am happy to agree with him on this point.
14. At 12:07pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:

Why are we no getting the chance to comment on the big stories, and only drivel that polarises people because of belief.

15. At 12:08pm on 02 Sep 2010, Khuli wrote:

Personally I agree with Stephen Hawking, but as it's (currently) only a matter of opinion, it's not a useful topic for HYS.

Religious bun-fight to follow i expect.....

16. At 12:09pm on 02 Sep 2010, KarenZ wrote:

There is no place for God in Steve Hawkin's theories but I am not so arrogant.

There is so much that science in its current forms cannot explain and we know so little about the Universe and how it was created that it is wrong to discount the possibility of god(s).

17. At 12:09pm on 02 Sep 2010, stevehello1234 wrote:

no

18. At 12:11pm on 02 Sep 2010, Billy wrote:

Of course not! Creationist theory is deeply flawed. I'm sure you've heard the argument: If you see a table it must have been created by a joiner, the joiner was created by his parents, they were created by their parents etc. until "logically" you get back to a single creator of everything. But following the same logic this 'creator' must have been created aswell.

The only system that supports spontaneous creation is quantum physics which precludes the existence of God.

19. At 12:11pm on 02 Sep 2010, pablex75 wrote:

Reasons why I think Hawkins et al are just plain wrong, the following would have to occurred by chance rather than design. The life cycle, the rock cycle, the orbit of the earth which sustains life, the elements of life all being in the same place at the same time in the right environment to create life. Then we have the proximity of the moon which provides the tides, the plants which provide our food and oxygen. The proximity of the sun, not too close not too far.
Oh and $E=mc^2$. No intelligent design behind all these things? Come on get real.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 12:12pm on 02 Sep 2010, HabitualHero wrote:
I don't know. Neither do you. The God debate is utterly futile.

Stop wasting your time.

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 12:12pm on 02 Sep 2010, RitaKleppmann wrote:
For thousands of years (the Jewish tradition plus most of the Christian tradition), people have believed that all that is exists because it is part of God’s plan. That means that the universe has a purpose, our world and all that is in it has a purpose and human life has a purpose.

God has been eliminated from science for the past couple of hundred years resulting in the philosophy that the world, and all life are just there - with no purpose.

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 12:13pm on 02 Sep 2010, Nok wrote:
Did God create the Universe?

No Theist can currently prove that god exists.

No scientist, including Hawking, can provide a coherent scientific explanation as to how something, specifically the universe, can be created from nothing.

So let's just call it a score draw & live & let live.

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 12:14pm on 02 Sep 2010, David wrote:
Logically there isn't a god as the creation of the universe is clearly explained by science, and a lot of the pillars on which religions were based have been proved to be wrong since various religions were founded. However you will never end the debate as people who believe in god will continue to do so until someone can prove he doesn't exist. It is impossible to prove that something does not exist, so people that believe will be able to continue to hope.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 12:14pm on 02 Sep 2010, Mike Gogan wrote:
Did he say there was no place for God in theories of creation or that there is no need to invoke God? These are not mutually exclusive - if you believe in God you can still hold that he had a part in creation. This doesn't necessarily conflict
with the science. If God is all powerful, etc etc he could quite
easily have created gravity, evolution and so on. Conclusion: no
real need to get wound up.

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 12:14pm on 02 Sep 2010, N0661N wrote:

Well of course evolution is the answer. As if there WAS
ever 'someone' sitting somewhere 'invisible' sculpting all this
mess is a farce. But inevitably 'the believers' have to have
their crutch to get them through life, or to be told how and what
they were meant to do, because 'it was written' Sad really.

Complain about this comment
* 26. At 12:15pm on 02 Sep 2010, StopPoliticalCorrectness
wrote:

I have to agree with the "I don't know comment". Something
from nothing goes against my basic scientific understanding of
equal and opposite reactions. If people want to have faith then
fine, I personally don't. And to the people that are getting all
sensitive about this being another opportunity for the atheists
to feel superior, I'd say, being a lifelong agnostic / atheist,
everyone is entitled to their views, but it is difficult to agree
with "organised religion" such as catholocism, judaism, islam,
scientology, as they really have little to do with faith and more
to do with power and controlling the masses through fear....I
think if religions were truly peaceful, then I doubt atheists
would be so vocal.....Believe what you want, just don't condemn
or kill people that disagree, and don't blindly follow
octogenarians with dubious sexual tastes, who seem to continually
ask for forgiveness, if they followed the commandments they
preach, there would be no problems.

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 12:15pm on 02 Sep 2010, Matt wrote:

I agree that a God or Gods are not necessary for the
creation of the Universe. If you accept that an entity created
the Universe, then you have to contend with the question of who
created the creator? If you say that the creator is eternal, then
it seems like an awful cop-out to me to contend that there was a
creator but somehow the creator is immutable and outside of time
and space and all laws of physics.

The problem with all this is that the conditions before the
big bang are unknowable at present, and while science does not
have a concrete answer to why the big bang occurred yet, neither
does religion.

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 12:17pm on 02 Sep 2010, think_green wrote:

As usual the religious or faithful person has taken the
idea of creation out of context. God is not a man sitting on a
cloud, God is the IDEA of creation. One could call the IDEA of
creation "God" or "Nature" or the "Big Bang", it is not really important. What is important is that we do not apply these silly mythical labels to the most immeasurable events in our existence. Finally the likes of Prof Hawkin and Richard Dawkins are being taken seriously, because they are scientists who actually measure and predict based on real evidence. I'm all for Christianity and religion, but please don't apply a self-serving bias by saying that "My God created the Universe".

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 12:17pm on 02 Sep 2010, AndyC555 wrote:

"14. At 12:07pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:
Why are we no getting the chance to comment on the big stories"

Well, I'd have thought the existence or non existence of God was quite a big story.

Complain about this comment
* 30. At 12:17pm on 02 Sep 2010, redrobb wrote:

In terms of passage of time we (human race) are but a nano spec of dust! If you like a freak of nature, certainly not created by any divine being. I don't have a PH'd or am an expert theologian or whatever, I think its more to do with delusions or simply because of a deep rooted fear within most humans that have to believe in something divine, suppose its self-therapeutic and nothing more.

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 12:17pm on 02 Sep 2010, Donald wrote:

I should study Hawking's argument in more detail before making a judgement of his logic, but it seems to me arrogant to pretend to know what might or might not have occurred 13 or whatever billion years ago. His theories may be of interest to some 'scientists' (is it 'science' to make suppositions about that which can never be proved?) but to most of us they are as helpful as saying 'god done it'. I wonder what fraction of the human population actually cares about how it all began? Do any other species ponder the imponderable? The fascination with 'knowing' is in some ways more homocentric than believing the universe was created just for us. When you accept that you are not important you can accept it is not important for you to know about the origin of the universe.

"Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing."

Is it not now well accepted that there is no 'law of gravity'? There are a set of rules which work over 'medium distances', but in very close proximity (intra-molecular) and at very great distances (inter-galactic) these rules no longer apply. And even at medium distances, unless I missed that episode, gravity is barely understood. What is the speed of gravity, for instance? Or the mechanism by which it works? To replace 'god' with 'gravity' in the argument about the origins of
the universe I think is just silly. If we're going to blame gravity we may as well blame god, though I must admit that as a force gravity is a bit more predictable. But can it exist without the matter that it supposedly created?

It would be foolish to suppose there are no alien beings out there somewhere, and I suppose it is possible they have learnt to surf gravity waves or something, but as was superbly illustrated in 'Wild Blue Yonder' the possibility of them reaching earth is negligible, and anyway, why would they want to harvest our resources? Earth's minerals are probably pretty much the same as those found anywhere else in our galaxy, and if they're not, what use would they be to a species that has evolved without them? Organic matter on our planet is unlikely to be of any interest to them. Maybe they'll steal Jupiter for the gas? Won't that upset our horoscopes!

Complain about this comment
* 32. At 12:18pm on 02 Sep 2010, captainarmchairhero wrote:

To answer the question you first have to define what you mean by "God" and "create".

If "God" is a bunch of natural laws that govern the way that things behave, then most scientists work as if "God" exists, even if they cannot fully justify this notion.

If "God" is some kind of (supposedly benevolent) being that judges us for not eating things in a particular way, or for not going to a building on certain days of the year, or for not behaving according to a set of dogmatic rules about sexual behaviour, or for being born to parents that have committed "sinful" acts, then I sincerely hope that Prof Hawking is right.

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 12:20pm on 02 Sep 2010, James Bailey wrote:

I believe that God created the universe for too many reasons to list on this page. So i'll just explain a few.
What came first the chicken or the egg? The book of genesis states quite clearly that God created all life including those what "walketh upon the earth" - so one question that alot of people cannot answer is solved in Genesis. If the universe did create itself (which to me sounds ridiculous) then A) how do we know right from wrong? - we all know that its wrong to steal, murder, lie - three of the 10 commandments. and B) If the universe did create itself and there is no God, then there is no purpose to life so I could go out tommorow and kill someone, then kill myself and get away with it scott free? And i know thats wrong because there is a sense of justice in the world.

Complain about this comment
* 34. At 12:20pm on 02 Sep 2010, ticktickticktickboom wrote:

Hmmm...tough one. By the way, who created God?

Complain about this comment
35. At 12:20pm on 02 Sep 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:
Which God are we talking about here?

Complain about this comment

36. At 12:21pm on 02 Sep 2010, GovernmentBoffin wrote:

God did not make the universe

God did not make Man in his image - Man made up God to explain the Universe...
...And justify his inhuman behaviour towards his fellow man.

Complain about this comment

37. At 12:21pm on 02 Sep 2010, rustle wrote:

Nothing new! Bertrand Russell said pretty much the same thing in "Why I am not a Christian" and he wasn't the first by a long chalk! However, what surprises me most is that anyone believed it in the first place!
"In the beginning all was darkness" but there was nobody around to notice it, never mind the six-day week!

Complain about this comment

38. At 12:22pm on 02 Sep 2010, Dancin Pagan The Mad Kiltie wrote:

I think using the word "God" confuses the issue as people interpret the meaning of the term "God" in a way that they relate to. i.e. a christian has a different interpretation of what God means to an Islamist or Buddhist.

For me the question is, is there an intelligent awareness inherent within the Universe or is all that exists merely mindless matter and energy with no consciousness.

There are a couple of givens that give clues to answer this,

(1) Human beings have consciousness / awareness and it is likely that many living creatures also have this, so this is something that exists within the Universe.

(2) Chaos theory suggests that order & chaos are part of the same process, i.e. order turns into chaos and visa versa. Water between freezing point and boiling point is in a stable condition as a liquid, it is in order and will follow set rules of physics & chemistry. When water reaches boiling point, it goes into a state of chaos where the condition of the water molecules are between a liquid and a gas. When it becomes a gas it is again in a stable state, in order.

So a consciousness of the continuity of existence is a known reality and it is also generally accepted that order and chaos are two parts of the same process.
To me this suggests that there is an intelligence possibly with consciousness that is inherent within the structure of the Universe, if you want to call this God then let it be.

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 12:24pm on 02 Sep 2010, rustle wrote:

14. At 12:07pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat tire wrote:
"Why are we no getting the chance to comment on the big stories, and only drivel that polarises people because of belief"
Why waste time and space with this kind of tripe?

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 12:25pm on 02 Sep 2010, bob bobwell wrote:

"What is your Big Bang theory?"

Seriously? You want the genii of the HYS community to add value to the theory of creation?

I'm going to stop work now and wait for the life-changing revelation that I knew this forum would eventually provide.

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 12:25pm on 02 Sep 2010, jacko wrote:

We attribute the big bang to a point in time.
But if the mass of the universe was created in an instant from a single point then a few milliseconds later that mass would be concentrated in small space so would this not warp space-time and therefore prevent us calculating back in time linearly to the Big Bang?

So I have this picture that the Universe has always existed, like an asymptotic curve on a graph of x against 1/x. We can calculate back linearly to the big bang but as we approach it, time warps and we can never actually reach the big bang.

I'm probably wrong but it works for me.
Wish someone would explain to me in simple terms where, if the Big Band did happen, the energy came from and how in an instant the complexities of subatomic physics and chemistry were created. OK so all the mass of the Universe is created but what about the detail - zero point energies, atomic structures and molecules, elements (why not just make 100% Iron - the most stable binding energy per nucleon option)

Perhaps God was created by the Big Bang and not the other way round.....

Etc.

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 12:26pm on 02 Sep 2010, Stefane wrote:

The thing is: How could a God not be consistent with the Laws of Physics?
Hawking's theories does not contradict the idea of a God. Indeed, a God could not not be in harmony with Its World.
As time started with the universe, in other words, as time and matter are undissociable, the unknown eternal and infinite "space" that existed "before" the universe could probably not not give birth to the universe.

In fact, to use the phrase "before Time started" conjures up a concept that is ungraspable. In this may lie the idea of a supreme "order", governed by a God... or not.

In my opinion, it is simply a question of Faith.

Now, the important thing is: the more we discover about the universe, the more we get to know how harmonious, and above all, how fertile, this universe is...

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 12:26pm on 02 Sep 2010, RedwoodRon wrote:

This subject always brings out the "You cannot prove god doesn't exist..." arguments, and I am sure the current forum on the subject will not disappoint.

For me, the choice could not be simpler. Believe in a being that no-one has seen, no-one has heard, no-one has photographed, and who only exists in tales written/spoken about thousands of years ago (when people also worshipped the moon and the sun), or instead believe physicist that work on current evidence, and who are happy to modify their theories based on new evidence as it arrives.

No competition really!

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 12:26pm on 02 Sep 2010, SpacedOne wrote:

Of course not! It was jump-started by Dave Lister using jump-leads from Starbug. Everyone knows this.

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 12:26pm on 02 Sep 2010, Richard Smart wrote:

I'm glad Stephen Hawking was not afraid to say this. There should be no fear in rejecting the concept of a god or creator. The universe does appear to be a naturally occurring thing.

"Where did god come from? If we decide that this is an unanswerable question, why not save a step and conclude that the origin of the universe is an unanswerable question? Or, if we say that god always existed, why not save a step and conclude that the universe always existed?" - Carl Sagan

Complain about this comment
* 46. At 12:27pm on 02 Sep 2010, littletenter wrote:

For sure something directs it all and its much more likely physics than God.

If it were God he couldn't have kept this quiet for so very long about the mess we made of everything could he?
We all need an anchor of some sort, whatever floats your boat. I just wish the various factions wouldn't keep trying to push their particular anchor down my throat.

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 12:28pm on 02 Sep 2010, Jon wrote:

Perhaps the human race will split like that predicted by HG Wells in the time machine into those who don't believe and those that do - for me belief is fine but the name God no matter what religion you come from if replaced by the word Earth in all the writings still works - God is purely another term for the Earth and is a way to explain that which people did not understand centuries ago into a concept that people can grasp. Yes God exists - God is the Earth itself. Though God as some bearded bloke in the clouds watching us - no way and there is no need to wind him up on sundays as a certain song lyric a few years ago stated. Creating the Universe is pure chaos, a fantastic concept...so perhaps the concept of chaos is actually God?

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 12:29pm on 02 Sep 2010, Cliff wrote:

In the past things that we thought were spontaneous turned out to have a cause. Spontaneous is not an explanation but perhaps we are still too ignorant to understand the actual causal forces that were behind the creation of the universe. Saying that God created the universe is the same as saying it was spontaneous as the question of how God came into being is still left unexplained.

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 12:29pm on 02 Sep 2010, Nina wrote:

Only if you believe in God.

Complain about this comment
* 50. At 12:30pm on 02 Sep 2010, Darwins Chimp wrote:

19. At 12:11pm on 02 Sep 2010, pablex75 wrote:

Reasons why I think Hawkins et al are just plain wrong, the following would have to occured by chance rather than design. The life cycle, the rock cycle, the orbit of the earth which sustains life, the elements of life all being in the same place at the same time in the right environment to create life. Then we have the proximity of the moon which provides the tides, the plants which provide our food and oxygen. The proximity of the sun, not too close not too far.

Oh and E =mc2. No intelligent design behind all these things? Come on get real.
And your evidence for intelligent design is?

All the evidence that humankind has gathered points to a scientific explanation. There is nothing that points to anything in our environment being designed. As to why we are here, I'll paraphrase David Attenborough "We're are here because the conditions for life happened to be right " no other reason required we were lucky that all. It's a shame that some flaw in the Human Psyche wants to believe in spirits and such.

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 12:32pm on 02 Sep 2010, AndyC555 wrote:

So that's both Stephen Hawking and Richard Dawkins who say God doesn't exist.

Such brilliant minds, such amazing thinkers.

It surely can't be down to just fate that such genius is created?

Complain about this comment
* 52. At 12:32pm on 02 Sep 2010, InvalidSyntax wrote:

@5: "Why should there be?" is a more valid question, as we have no evidential basis for believing in the existence of a creator, non belief is the default position. Faith is assuming the existence of a creator because you want to believe in one (usually because people want to believe in an after life), not because it is the most likely explanation, THAT is what faith is all about.

We may never know for sure how the universe began but that does not mean we should just assume the existence of a creator. Describing what we don't yet know as "a higher divinity" sounds like a desperate attempt to keep a god in the picture somewhere, no matter what.

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 12:32pm on 02 Sep 2010, SussexRokx wrote:

The question should really be "what is God?"

If you believe God to be an omnipresent, omnipotent but amorphous power, then the laws of physics would come within this category.

If however you believe God to be a being, with a likeness akin to that of man, then there is no place for God in the creation of the universe.

As for the Big Bang theory:

[Type text]
"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Sounds pretty much like the Big Bang to me. Let's have a look at the rest by replacing some of the words used in the Bible...

The first part states: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." OK the heaven bit is fine, but not the earth, unless of course we reinterpret earth as matter, earth is written with a lower case "e" not capitalised as in "the Earth" (referring to the planet). Then it would be fine.

This is pretty much backed up by the second part which states: "And the earth was without form, and void; and the darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." However, use of some words becomes a little confusing. So let's look: that the earth or "matter" was without form works. That the Spirit of God or "laws of physics" moved upon the face of the waters or "the void, space or whatever you want to call what is beyond the universe", can then work as well.

We've covered part three: "Let there be light" as the Big Bang.

Part four is pretty obvious: "And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from darkness." Yes the Big Bang would produce a lot of light, yes the surrounding area would be dark, so yes this all works.

So was the book of Genesis (def: the origin or mode of formation of something) really trying to tell us that the Big Bang did actually happen? And indeed was known about well before the advent of modern science. It was just written in a way that its contemporary readers could understand.

After all the concept of space, the universe etc. would be well beyond the comprehension of readers at that time.

So now we should really refer to the Big Bang as the Genesis of the Universe...

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 12:32pm on 02 Sep 2010, Tony wrote:

It's all down to perception of 'What is God'. To say that the laws of physics created the universe is insufficient as then you can ask what created the laws of physics. Something did - and if you want to put a name to it - you call it God.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 12:33pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:

29. At 12:17pm on 02 Sep 2010, AndyC555 wrote:

"14. At 12:07pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:

[Type text]
Why are we no getting the chance to comment on the big stories"

Well, I'd have thought the existence or non existence of God was quite a big story.

=====================================

They have been trying to prove it for the last 2,000 years at least and have so far not succeeded. I cannot see how this forum will get any closer. Unless God has been posting and may choose to unmask himself (or herself)

The Pakistan cricket scandal, The resignation of William Hague's special adviser, further job cuts at the State owned bank. These are real stories.

God is just a good way to polarise opinion based on religion as a starting point.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 12:33pm on 02 Sep 2010, Dr Llareggub wrote:

I would think that any group of scientist who believe that they have the ultimate answer to what are basically philosophical questions have forfeited the right to call themselves scientists.

Come on BBC you are just giving space to atheists and theists who think God is some kind of mechanical engineer. Nothing like indulgence in superstition disguised as either scientific or spiritual debate.

I wonder whether the BBC has a motive in downgrading the substance of religious discourse. Preparing the population for some fundamentalist religion perhaps?

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 12:34pm on 02 Sep 2010, luskentyre wrote:

It has to be said that religion encourages you to absolve yourself of your own responsibilities, and those of others. That's not healthy.

Society has reached a stage where now, more than ever, we need to be personally responsible and not put it all in the hands of some "higher power".

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 12:34pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:

14. At 12:07pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:
"Why are we no getting the chance to comment on the big stories, and only drivel that polarises people because of belief"
Why waste time and space with this kind of tripe?
What has cooking animals stomach's got to do with pointing out that the debates are becoming less and less newsworthy?

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 12:35pm on 02 Sep 2010, Tim Holton wrote:

There are lots of Theologians and Scientists who are Christians, who agree that there is no need to invoke God in the gaps of our understanding but clearly they still manage to retain a belief in God.

So, for example, it might be quite correct to say that 'The kettle has boiled because of the heating effect of the element', but wrong to then deduce that 'Therefore it did not boil because you wanted a cup of tea.' It is not sufficient to claim that physics has explained something, when all it has done is describe something.

The biblical (Christian) view is that God has indeed revealed Himself already (in creation, in the bible, and most crucially by His Spirit). This 'revelation' is Spiritual.

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 12:35pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:

You have just perpetuated it

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 12:37pm on 02 Sep 2010, SpacedOne wrote:

"StopPoliticalCorrectness wrote:
I have to agree with the "I don't know comment". Something from nothing goes against my basic scientific understanding of equal and opposite reactions."

I agree with the anyone who said "I don't know" simply because it's totally impossible to prove one way or the other (at the moment). However to then say you don't know because something from nothing goes against your basic understanding of science is a strange thing to say. The science behind the creation of the Universe is orders of magnitude beyond 'basic' and very few people understand it. Much of physics doesn't make any sense to the layman simply because we don't understand the complex science behind it.

[Type text]
It should also be pointed out that the basic knowledge of science many people have is usually wrong in a totally factual sense. A lot of science gets simplified when explained to a general audience. It's known as 'lies told to children' because the full facts are too complicated for most people to grasp.

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 12:37pm on 02 Sep 2010, Sat_tire wrote:

35. At 12:20pm on 02 Sep 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:
Which God are we talking about here?

Exactly, shows the utter futility of this debate.

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 12:39pm on 02 Sep 2010, Jamie wrote:

The only fictional story of Creation that I'm willing to believe is Andy Hamilton's version in Old Harry's Game. Hawking's version may not be complete (or even necessarily correct), but it is our current *best* understanding based on observation and deduction, not trying to fill in the gaps with things we do not know.

The concept of a god is only relevant to science if it appears in any equations. If it is indeed omnipotent and *unpredictable*, then there is no point in trying to model it, except for assigning it a small part of the randomness in the variance in our models.

However, do not let that stop you from enjoying life.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 12:39pm on 02 Sep 2010, Bibi wrote:

Don't be ridiculous! We live in the age of science and whilst anyone has the right to believe whatever fanciful nonsense they wish, I expect - no, in fact I demand - that an august organisation such as the BBC be more enlightened than to run HYS threads pandering to the zealots.

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 12:39pm on 02 Sep 2010, RedwoodRon wrote:

And another thing...

Suppose that you really cannot believe that all this we see on Earth and in the universe could come about without the intervention of a creator of some kind (let's call him God), why the heck would you choose to follow one of the established religions? These were created thousands of years ago, and handed by word of mouth for centuries, then written down in a language of thousands of years ago, then translated many times through
further languages. All the "appearances" and "documented" actions of these religions happened thousands of years back and none in recent and more reliably documented years, isn't that peculiar? Perhaps not.

If you feel that everything we see is too much to happen by evolution and physics and that there must be a creator, then design your own one. It will have no less validity. You will get no more nor no less response when talking or praying to him/her than you would with the established gods.

If it helps solve the riddles of the universe for you, then that's dandy.

Although, there is still that eternal question of how did your creator come into existence, but hey, we can just gloss over that one...

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 12:39pm on 02 Sep 2010, Wheelies wrote:

Reasons why I think Hawkins et al are just plain wrong, the following would have to occurred by chance rather than design. The life cycle, the rock cycle, the orbit of the earth which sustains life, the elements of life all being in the same place at the same time in the right environment to create life. Then we have the proximity of the moon which provides the tides, the plants which provide our food and oxygen. The proximity of the sun, not too close not too far.

Oh and E =mc2. No intelligent design behind all these things? Come on get real.

Yet you have no problem at all in believing the being that did that intelligent design, and so is even more complex, simply popped into existence?

At least the scientific explanation has vast timescales and creeping progression to allow these things to happen, the religious one requires the most complex thing to create itself in an instant.

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 12:40pm on 02 Sep 2010, Phillip of England wrote:

Do you think God created the Universe?

--Yeah, why not! Its a great place and frankly I am bored with the ever increasing politicisation and social interference of science (seems to be growing more unpleasant as time passes), I am actually gonna side with the belief in the creation of everything by a divine being. I suppose with the idea of omnipotence, that any God is generally beyond human comprehension in its infinite wisdom and ability that I doubt a mind as brilliant as Hawkings is even able to comprehend such a thing nor its abilities and motivations.

[Type text]
If not, do you agree with Prof Hawking's assessment?

--Not really, given my answer above

What is your Big Bang theory?

Okay, how about this. God is Everything! Science, selection, life, death, movement, space, time, light, dark, conscious, unconscious, history, humour, conversation, sadness, happiness, animals, bacteria, hair accessories, the elements, the planets.... everything. Everything comes from God, everything, at some point, will return to God. Indeed, we are part of God! God is also a collective of every single consciousness that has ever been, is now and will ever be, they are all a part of it, feed into it, feed from it! We have been afforded a great privilege in being able to, for a moment, step away from it, to experience independence, the ability to make choices for the benefit of fellow individual consciousnesses as well as ourselves. Given the ravages of time etc, our bodies will deteriorate and when our bodies die, if we are lucky we will return to that collective, retaining all that we have experienced in this life and be able to share it with the great consciousness, the collective. That contribution aids the continuous development of everything in the universe.

You might think it a little far fetched or perhaps I smoked too much pot in college, but I like it.

The bottom line is (unless you’re Buddhist or a Hindu) you get one shot a life and whether a religious person or a follower of science, wouldn’t it be so nice if we could just..... get along. We're as bad as one another with the ability to be so much better.

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 12:42pm on 02 Sep 2010, webboffin wrote:

Steven Hawkins is just another fallible man on a rock hurtling through the universe as we all are. His views are all that they are - views.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 12:42pm on 02 Sep 2010, Poddy100 wrote:

Nope, everything will be eventually explained by science it is only time

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 12:43pm on 02 Sep 2010, MattStoke wrote:

The common argument religion takes is that you can't prove God doesn't exist, therefore we'll believe in him. In that case, you can't prove fairies don't exist, or Aliens don't exist....
Do I believe God created the universe? No, not until he reveals himself or is discovered.

Do I believe the science? I think its the most likely explanation so far.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 12:44pm on 02 Sep 2010, Toothpick Harry wrote:

At last, someone that is well respected has come out with the truth, NO God, in fact no anything only infinity. If that scares you tough, you're surrounded by it and you can't do a thing about it. Just a thought, the died in the wool religious when they think of heaven assume (because they look up towards space) that it's up there. Sorry to dissapoint you all but we all know now that it's space, it has no end, a bit scary really if you hope that when you pop it you go to heaven or the promised land, only infinity beckons.

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 12:45pm on 02 Sep 2010, bbbarabus wrote:

Man has created God in his own image.

The Universe IS God !!!

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 12:45pm on 02 Sep 2010, grainsofsand wrote:

One rather suspects that at the end of the day Hawking has as much idea on the matter as anyone else. The idea that Universe is a Spontaneous creation from nothing on the face of it seems pretty absurd; the idea of a creator seems to make more sense.

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 12:46pm on 02 Sep 2010, David_L wrote:

Humans are too intelligent and not intelligent enough at the same time.

We are so intelligent that we have discovered that we are simply one small planet in an enormous universe, and we are clever enough to ponder big questions like "why are we here" and "what created this universe".

However, we are not intelligent enough to work out all the answers.

We therefore created God and religion.

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 12:46pm on 02 Sep 2010, Desiderius Erasmus wrote:

" Jason_Overthinker wrote: I don't think anybody truly knows if God created the universe or not. I don't really believe
in God but I can't disprove his existence. So all in all I'd have to say. I don't know."

Equally none of those who believe in a supreme being can prove its existence either .... Superstition is just an attempt to explain what we don't understand, and it makes no more sense to say that there is only 'one god', as opposed to a 'pantheon of gods'. Why not worship Zeus or Odin and their sub gods, as say Jehovah or Allah, when it makes no difference either way?

If you believe in the supernatural, then why does it have to be in just one form?

If you believe in science, and man's attempts to explain phenomena via theory and experiment, then there is no need to worry about godheads ... or such questions as who created God?

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 12:47pm on 02 Sep 2010, coastwalker wrote:

Personally I find religion to be an objectionable mental illness so I'm quite pleased that Stephen finds no god in his models.

Complain about this comment
* 77. At 12:48pm on 02 Sep 2010, Mark wrote:

Short aswear.

No

Long aswear.

Of course not.

Any reasonable logical mind puts its belief in things that can be proven beyond reasonable doubt.

Just by simply saying that something is true or exists does not make it so.

I'll give you an example.

Unicorns are real.

I believe in unicorns.

You can't disprove me as unicorns work in mysterious ways.

Gravity exists.

Water exists.

Animals exist.
Con-men who like to take advantage of other human beings by creating fault deities in which to obtain a degree of control over there fellow man also exist.

Either unicorns exist because I say they do, along with god.

Or neither do.

We have equal evidence for both (none AKA faith)

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 12:48pm on 02 Sep 2010, Introversial wrote:

If God did create the universe then he also created homosexuality, abortion clinics, discos, Miaow Miaow and religious people who in my experience are the most judgemental and least forgiving folk around.

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 12:48pm on 02 Sep 2010, angry_munkey wrote:

"Why shouldn't there be a "divine power" who created the universe?"

I guess the laws of physics could be explained as divine powers... at a push.

However, a sentient, omnipotent benevolent being...? I see no evidence whatsoever for that. Faith can be acceptable where there is a lack of evidence for any side of the debate, but to persist in extolling (Blind) faith when there is clear evidence to the contrary could be described as ignorant.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 12:48pm on 02 Sep 2010, pasters34 wrote:

"In the beginning matter created heaven and earth". What's the matter with that? The matter with that is matter. Nuf said.

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 12:48pm on 02 Sep 2010, Daniel wrote:

If the definition of God and Nature are one and the same thing, then yes, I think that Nature created the Universe. I'm a scientist, and although I do not believe in God, I do have respect for Nature.

Nature, or more accurately, evolution (on this planet at least), is just a highly complex chemical reaction which started on a barren piece of rock billions of years ago. There's no intelligence behind it all, but it is undeniably very, very clever.
My big bang theory = our Universe started from a super massive supernova, from which all of the debris which makes up our visible & ever expanding Universe was created. I think we'll one day find that what we call the Universe, is in fact just one of many, we've simply not reached the next level of understanding yet. Just as galaxies like our own Milky Way are now understood to be plentiful and widely dispersed I think we'll come to understand Universes in much the same way.

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 12:49pm on 02 Sep 2010, virtualOldlearner wrote:

Personally, I believe GOD is a scientist and not by himself. I feel there are others not as accomplished as the lead being. They may also have deliberately spoiled his experiment (us). I believe that the different religious factions on the planet are the spoil.

I am a big follower of NASA and listen with interest to the worlds leading scientists. I have a theory that the original centre of the creation of the universe, is from a singularity with a DNA, stabilized by something and waiting for something to trigger it to develop.

Like others who follow science with optimism E.G. the LHC, and look on with anticipation at other experiments. I'm no religious one sider. Considering how old the universe is, I don't conceive it possible, for another branch of beings to have evolved so quickly, to be so far in front of us, without having a major advantage over us.

For the few of us who see both sides, it's a case of 'watch this space'

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 12:51pm on 02 Sep 2010, Cav wrote:

As many have said - we can't know. It is a matter of what you believe. All science can tell you is how our universe works. It tells us nothing about where that universe comes from or what existed before the start.

Contrary to what many here believe there is a lot of uncertainty in the premises of cosmologist theorising. It only takes a couple of the foundations to be proved incorrect for the whole house of cards to collapse.

There are as many scientific controversies over the origins of the universe as there are theological debates. Many specialists, who know far more about the physics involved than most posting here, have theories completely in contradiction of the "Big Bang" hypothesis, for example.

Even if we know everything there is to know about the physics of the universe that doesn't tell us where it actually came from, and we are far from that knowledge. Much of the
scientific explanation of physics is based on the premise of so far undetected particles and energies. Despite looking for decades with hugely expensive equipment these are taken as given even though no trace has been found. They are stated as existing because it must be so to fit the predictions of the theorists. That seems rather like faith to me.

Those here who take Mr Hawkings statement as gospel (forgive the pun) are no different to those following many another prophet. If you delve into the subject of physics you find a lot of controversy and fudge that is used to make the theories and calculations of physics fit observed reality.

Personally, I'm a Christian. I believe in God but I can't prove the existence of God, but neither have I seen anything yet in science that proves God's non-existence. We each have our own faith, in either God or science. Live and let live.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 12:51pm on 02 Sep 2010, Dai the Tie wrote:

God is the subject of ones own faith, and faith is the substance of things "hoped for" which is evidence of things not seen.

As for the question: Did God create the Universe? Pass!

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 12:52pm on 02 Sep 2010, Graham wrote:

The Bible (The Old testament) starts with Genesis and gives a pretty good description of what scientists think existed before the "big bang". The Bible describes this as a void. It then states that God said "Let there be light and the light shone forth". The universe came out or was created out of nothing and the scientists are only speculating about how this was possible. The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is still not fully operational and only then, after experimentation and observation can the researchers explain, or not explain, how this could happen. Until then who or what created the universe is a matter for speculation and will only result in a polarised discussion like this with "smart" athiests and "brainwashed" religious people arguing.

From my very limited knowledge of quantum mechanics I would say that some of the "non-believers in sky gods or pixies" crowd would have great difficulty taking in some of the theories. These theories if found to be true could pave the way to time travel and travelling enormous distances. Now would a better topic not have been "What a magical place the universe is what do think created it?". This question could only be answered by true scientists, the religious and not the "bash the christians" crowd.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 12:52pm on 02 Sep 2010, totallyunbiased wrote:
I guess there is an assumption that there is some psychological experience which truly reflects not just the experience itself but also something else, a 'deep truth of/is the universe', and even just those few words are problematic, but for me personally it all seems to break down to the point where there is not really anything there to explain anyway (once explained :)). There is a mode of thinking where we think of matter as somehow 'physical', but it seems to me that this is just a useful interpretation and there seem to be other approaches, other feelings to use to be a person. Science is not this though as far as I understand it and science seems better for us than hocus-pocus and subjective interpretations.

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 12:52pm on 02 Sep 2010, 45minutewarning wrote:

One thing that strikes me is that scientists have never provided a comprehensive or convincing theory about the origin of life or the Universe. Ask them what was before the "Big Bang" and they will tell you "nothing". So they expect us to believe that everything suddenly appeared out of nothing (magic?), but they ridicule people who prefer to believe in a supernatural being and a creative force. Evolution may have been part of that creation process but the questions about what life is go beyond the realms of biochemistry. Indeed, according to the laws of physics, chemistry, entropy, etc., there seems no reason why life should exist at all. If we did come from random molecular collisions in the sea producing a mixture of successful and unsuccessful chemical concoctions, shouldn't we be seeing this process today?

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 12:52pm on 02 Sep 2010, Jason wrote:

Many people have already touched on this point but I feel that the idea of the Big Bang is just as illogical as God creating the universe. Stephen Hawking says that the existence of such laws as gravity prove that the universe can and will create itself from nothing. But it proves no such thing.

Since everything in the universe is essentially energy, and since physics already tells us that energy cannot be created or destroyed then this suggests the universe has always existed. And within it, as others have said there is definitely consciousness. Some people might interpret that as 'God' since it would appear to be separate from 'matter'. But in no sense can 'God' be said to be the creator of the universe. 'God' and the universe are the same thing.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 12:52pm on 02 Sep 2010, Chris Haley wrote:

Doesn't the fact that there are laws of physics/nature point to something higher? What determined that there would be certain laws and not other and what their settings would be? Even if the Universe was started spontaneously by gravity—what determined that there would be a law of gravity?

[Type text]
There is compelling evidence that there is no God. All you need to do is rationalise your existence with the evidence there is around you. Use fact not fiction. Man has gone into space & telescopes allow us to see 100's of light years away (& by default, light from the past). Look at fossils in rocks (museums, books, internet). Study basic Geology. (the way rocks are formed, radio-carbon dating & the overall concept of geological time) If you still believe in a God that will be your choice (based on individual reasoning after studying scientific facts). The evidence for a God is non-existant. It relies on blind faith.

This is a classic case of an atheist/former agnostic not knowing much theology. The "God-who-lit-the-blue-touch-paper" is the Deist god .... completely incompatible with most of the worlds major religions ... particularly those which subscribe to the creation 'ex nihilo' (out of nothing) belief.

The Deists, who came to prominence after the Enlightenment, believed in a god who kick-started the Universe but who then left it to its own devices having given it laws to regulate itself. Unsurprisingly these people rejected any form of interventionist god ... so prayer, miracles and the Incarnation (for Christians) went out of the window. The Deists, however, still THOUGHT they needed their god to start the whole thing off.

All that Stephen Hawking is saying is that this is unnecessary .... and I agree with him .... because, although I am an Orthodox Christian and a priest, I am not a Deist.

A spontaneous creation merely describes and explains HOW the Universe came into being. The favourite explanation today is that a quantum irregularity in the substrate vacuum superinflated and the resultant energy field eventually condensed into the baryonic matter that each one of us is made of.

Now, only a Deist god would be needed to nudge that quantum irregularity UNLESS superinflation was built into the irregularity itself. So the "nothing" of which Hawking speaks is not the "nothing" of which (primarily) monotheists speak. Strictly speaking (and here words are inadequate) we believe in "being" from "non-being," ... and whatever that seething quantum vacuum is, it is not "non-being."

So, sorry Stephen, get to grips with the theology please. At least I make an effort with the science.
The BBC seem to constantly live in their own "Created Universe" ~ Regurgitated topic formulas, for just about every other HYS !

As for the rest of us, well aren't we all just; brains in glass jars in some heavenly laboratory somewhere ?? Who knows if "life is just a dream within a Dream or not" ~ as for myself I will just take the Red-pill (no i meant the blue-pill, no the ... arghhhh !

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 12:54pm on 02 Sep 2010, yeahbutnobutyeah wrote:

If god created the universe he is very wasteful. Creating billions of galaxies, billions of stars (and still to be proven fully) billions of planets, just for one species on one planet to have something to do on Sundays. You really are having a laugh aren't you!

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 12:55pm on 02 Sep 2010, scotty1694 wrote:

At 12:17pm on 02 Sep 2010, Donald wrote:
I should study Hawking's argument in more detail before making a judgement of his logic, but it seems to me arrogant to pretend to know what might or might not have occurred 13 or whatever billion years ago. His theories may be of interest to some 'scientists' (is it 'science' to make suppositions about that which can never be proved?) but to most of us they are as helpful as saying 'god done it'. I wonder what fraction of the human population actually cares about how it all began? Do any other species ponder the imponderable? The fascination with 'knowing' is in some ways more homocentric than believing the universe was created just for us. When you accept that you are not important you can accept it is not important for you to know about the origin of the universe.
"Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing."
Is it not now well accepted that there is no 'law of gravity'? There are a set of rules which work over 'medium distances', but in very close proximity (intra-molecular) and at very great distances (inter-galactic) these rules no longer apply. And even at medium distances, unless I missed that episode, gravity is barely understood. What is the speed of gravity, for instance? Or the mechanism by which it works? To replace 'god' with 'gravity' in the argument about the origins of the universe I think is just silly. If we're going to blame gravity we may as well blame god, though I must admit that as a force gravity is a bit more predictable. But can it exist without the matter that it supposedly created?

yes you should study more about SH before coming out with this load of TRIPE
look up terminal velocity and then look into how black holes are created then go get a bed sheet put it on 4 posts corner to corner put some oranges and plums and grapes on it and theres your explanation of gravity; theres alot more to it than that but chatting on about how god and gravity are the same? this is why people annoy the hell out of me about "god" most athiests will look at it from a scientific view go out get data or as much reasearch as they can. people who belive in god just have a worthless opinion without DATA or STATS your just another person with an opinion. theres more proof to discredit a "god" existing than there is to prove it infact ive never seen anyproof to suggest any of the gods exist only science proving it and the church knows there right know they will lose followers and money so they try to discredit science.
i mean come on your telling me that god would want everyone to catch AIDS etc? for the sake of wearing a condom and if you do that you will burn in hell blah blah how many times in the last 3000 years did something people couldnt understand so blamed it on god, well guess what we understand alot more now and know it actually had nothing to do with god. seriously people WAKE UP! the fundamentals of all religions have so many flaws in its unreal and lets suppose a god exists how do you know that islam isnt right or mormons or scientology see my point? you cant prove allah doesnt exist so does that mean if a cristian belives in god because he cant prove allah doesnt exist he therefore from his own logic should belive allah exists? because he cant prove otherwise.

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 12:56pm on 02 Sep 2010, Wheelies wrote:

73. At 12:45pm on 02 Sep 2010, grainsofsand wrote:
One rather suspects that at the end of the day Hawking has as much idea on the matter as anyone else. The idea that Universe is a Spontaneous creation from nothing on the face of it seems pretty absurd; the idea of a creator seems to make more sense.

---------------------------

Hawking is one of the world's most respected physicists, so his understanding of natural laws is way beyond the average person's.

If the spontaneous creation of the universe is absurd why is the spontaneous creation of the creator, which is more complex, not absurd?

Complain about this comment
* 96. At 12:56pm on 02 Sep 2010, chongma wrote:
It is unlikely the universe was created in a single large event, but rather evolved over time into what we see now. It is possible that each galaxy has formed independently of the event which formed the matter at the centre of the universe.

Space time may have started off "smooth" and some event started "waves" in space time which over billions of years have led to what we perceive as matter to form by some as yet not understood mechanism. The universe is getting bigger and expanding more rapidly as more matter forms and more waves (or ripples) are being generated.

Energy is not finite but rather is being created all the time and through projects like CERN we may one day find out how.

It is unlikely this mechanism was started by a supreme being unless he was first created naturally by some similar process of evolution otherwise it is hard to imagine how else he was created.

Complain about this comment
* 97. At 12:57pm on 02 Sep 2010, HalfaWebsite wrote:

Maybe there is a God, and He was so plagued with people who spent all their time making hate figures of 'atheists', 'people on benefits' and 'immigrants', that in a fashion similar to that used to get rid of unwanted hairdressers, management consultants and telephone sanitizers in 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy', he created this universe and packed them off here, telling them that they were the advance guard for a new civilisation. Who knows? It is as good an explanation as any.

Complain about this comment
* 98. At 12:58pm on 02 Sep 2010, SR wrote:

Somebody mentioned earlier that the non believers don't have a purpose for the universe and that's the problem they have. What's the point of life, of morality and the many things that perplex life nobody, Hawkins, Dawkins or otherwise can say that God doesn't exist just like the overwhelming part of planet earth that does believe can prove that he does exist. Please stop this nonsense, faith is something believed not seen and scientists go fact only so the whole topic can't be resolved but please can the Hawkins of this world stop coming out with drivel when they aren't in a position to prove things one way or the other. There's almost a conspiracy that if you bang on about something long enough people will start believing you.

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 12:58pm on 02 Sep 2010, makar wrote:

So, Mr Hawking, who created Science?

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 12:59pm on 02 Sep 2010, Farquhar wrote:
33. At 12:20pm on 02 Sep 2010, James Bailey wrote:

"The book of genesis states quite clearly that God created all life including those what "walketh upon the earth" - so one question that alot of people cannot answer is solved in Genesis. If the universe did create itself (which to me sounds ridiculous) then A) how do we know right from wrong?"

*****

Perhaps the person who wrote Genesis didn't have a clue what he was on about?

Knowing right from wrong? Even monkeys, horses and cats follow rules when living in a group, but I don't think they were ever handed tablets of stone.

I'll never alter someones blind faith, but still feel obliged to point out errors of logic which are portrayed as fact.

My opinion is that there may well be a god, but he really doesn't care one jot about our day to day lives, so you would better spend you time enjoying this life than fantasing about the next.
Appendix 48. All messages in the message thread Airport security.

Should some airport security checks be scrapped?
07:37 UK time, Wednesday, 27 October 2010

The chairman of British Airways has said some airport security checks are "completely redundant" and should be scrapped. Do you agree?

Martin Broughton said the UK should stop "kowtowing" to US security demands and called for practices such as forcing passengers to take off their shoes to be abandoned.

He also criticised the US for imposing checks on US-bound flights but not on its own domestic services.

Do you think some airport security checks are excessive? Or do you think the current level of security is necessary? What are your experiences of airport security?

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

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* 1. At 07:46am on 27 Oct 2010, steveol29a wrote:

Whilst there is a need for security checks however use your judgement sometimes they are just ridiculous I was in Glasgow two months ago travelling overseas and security spent 5 minutes searching an 85 year old scottish woman travelling to england on an internal flight!!! get real will you!!!!

Complain about this comment

* 2. At 08:01am on 27 Oct 2010, Dr Prod wrote:

[Type text]
The reason we are all subjected to rigorous security checks is because of political correctness. Profiling of passengers would mean the vast majority would pass through security unhindered. Because profiling would disproportionately target ethnic minorities, every granny and small child ends up being checked out. Madness.

Complain about this comment
* 3. At 08:01am on 27 Oct 2010, Pete wrote:

If it means a plane I am travelling on stays in the air then I am happy for as many security checks as deemed necessary. This reeks of Martin Broughton putting commercialism above security and profit above safety.

Complain about this comment
* 4. At 08:03am on 27 Oct 2010, Chris wrote:

Travelling by air is a nauseous and stressful mode of travel as it is! Watching the time-consuming stripshows as you pass through airport security just adds to the awful experience. No common sense is applied to airport security and we just cave in to whatever the US tells us we must do. Surely modern technology can come up with some form of system that allows us to transit security checkpoints fully clothed!!

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 08:04am on 27 Oct 2010, wind-blown wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 6. At 08:08am on 27 Oct 2010, Poddy100 wrote:

No, they should not. If some were to be scrapped and then there was an incident on board I wonder what everyone's reaction would be if it could of be prevented by the current system...........

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 08:11am on 27 Oct 2010, ian cheese wrote:

We know that as far as the US is concerned, there is one rule for them and one for the rest. However, we cannot compromise on Security & I believe it is more likely that any breach will come from Airport workers with affiliations to Terror groups. I wonder if they go through rigorous screening when applying for a job & when they come to work each day.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 08:23am on 27 Oct 2010, nuclear_glow wrote:

It needs two things: reality and transparency.

Reality stops the current security "theater" where some official knee jerk reaction of "being seen to do something"
cannot be undone because it would show up the officials as clueless (IMHO actually a good thing). Example 1: liquids. Provide evidence or stop this nonsense. Example 2: sharp objects. Take a good whiskey bottle from duty free and break it: presto, dangerous weapon used in many bar fights.

Transparency because putting stop & search powers into the hands of the ignorant inevitably leads to abuse, which leads to resentment. Most passengers don't mind security. They DO mind if someone abuses it. Case in point: TSA (with extra bonus points for helping with US economic espionage by "examining" laptops - leave that to the Feds, when there is probable cause so there is some control and track record).

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 08:23am on 27 Oct 2010, Cronkist wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 10. At 08:26am on 27 Oct 2010, Kim55 wrote:

Security checks shouldn’t be scrapped, but we shouldn’t exaggerate in bothering and upsetting travelers with excessive checks. Moreover, we shouldn’t bow to the demands of America to tighten these measures in the name of combating terrorism. We can catch terrorists and disrupt their plans with normal checks.

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 08:27am on 27 Oct 2010, Daisy Chained wrote:

Perhaps Mr Broughton means security should not be "going through the motions" just to impress that flying is safe from attack. If he does mean that then maybe he has a point. And, to be honest, if someone really wants to commit terrorism they will find a way.

But the delays caused by security do have a very different usefulness which means a "potential problem" is locked up in a high risk situation for a considerable time. For observers delay is quite a tool.

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 08:28am on 27 Oct 2010, InertiaStalls wrote:

. At 08:01am on 27 Oct 2010, Dr Prod wrote:
The reason we are all subjected to rigorous security checks is because of political correctness. Profiling of passengers would mean the vast majority would pass through security unhindered. Because profiling would disproportionately target ethnic minorities, every granny and small child ends up being checked out. Madness.

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[Type text]
Assuming they were canny enough not to mention their faith on their travel documents, all of them would have walked straight through any checks based on religious or ethnic profiling.

There are no shortcuts to safety.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 08:31am on 27 Oct 2010, Dr Prod wrote:

12. At 08:28am on 27 Oct 2010, InertiaStails wrote:
. At 08:01am on 27 Oct 2010, Dr Prod wrote:
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Assuming they were canny enough not to mention their faith on their travel documents, all of them would have walked straight through any checks based on religious or ethnic profiling.

There are no shortcuts to safety.

Who mentioned anything about ethnic or religious profiling? I stated passenger profiling. Get your facts right.

Complain about this comment
* 14. At 08:32am on 27 Oct 2010, Simon wrote:

Most of the security checks are there for the appearance of security. The only truly effective tools are the chemical sniffers and the bag scanners. I'm a frequent flyer and it's only too obvious how to fool any particular security system if you're determined and smart.

What I'd like to know is why it takes longer to get into this country than it does to get out.

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 08:34am on 27 Oct 2010, U5755491 wrote:

Of course some of the checks should be dropped, mostly they're nothing but security theatre, doing nothing but making people feel safer.

Just like the liquids things seems to have been based on a plot to blow up a plane that could never have worked (according to UK army munitions experts no less).
Complain about this comment
* 16. At 08:37am on 27 Oct 2010, yuumei wrote:

There is absolutely no reason for these security checks. Why are planes deemed extremely delicate when anyone could hop on a bus or train that has more people on? The only reason for these security checks is so that we can be tracked and profiled.

By making us all suspicious of each other means that the terrorist win and we loose all of our freedoms.

Complain about this comment
* 17. At 08:37am on 27 Oct 2010, Tom Rax wrote:

The system would have more credibility if there was consistency within the UK airports or even sometimes within an airport. Depending which airport you are going through in the UK the checks vary - whether you need to take your shoes off or not being one of the most common. Even going through the same airport wearing the same shoes I am sometimes asked to take them off and sometimes not. Either its extreme sloppiness by the security staff in implementing procedures or the rules are being made up locally and there is no UK standard.

Complain about this comment
* 18. At 08:37am on 27 Oct 2010, Dodo56 wrote:

US security paranoia makes me unwilling to visit there or use their carriers knowing I am going to be treated like a potential terrorist every step of the way. They seem to have the knack of responding in an extreme manner to every threat, but only after it happens. Today it's shoes, tomorrow do we get our Y-fronts inspected?

Complain about this comment
* 19. At 08:38am on 27 Oct 2010, Neils wrote:

We're between a rock and a hard place on this one...

...we either have strict airport policies and succeed or we loosen them up until something untoward occurs.

However these strict policies are draconian, intrusive and time consuming making flying an awkward experience for anyone travelling with children.

Its the 'something untoward occurring' thats the problem. A hijack at an airport is bad but not as bad as a bomb exploding onboard at 35,000ft.

There is the chance to do something about the former but not the latter.

And would you want to be on board in either situation?

Complain about this comment
20. At 08:39am on 27 Oct 2010, UKcerberus wrote:

It's not so bad being subjected to all the searches. What really gets up my nose is that there are ALWAYS queues, so the endless waiting is what I want to get rid of. If the airlines want a comprehensive security system in place, they should take on some more people, and stop using these huge waiting periods to cover up their deliberate short-staffing!

The other side of this of course is the continued paranoia of the UK and US governments. They continue with the Bush/Bliar story knowing that they can spend huge amounts of our money and not be accountable for it.

Complain about this comment

21. At 08:39am on 27 Oct 2010, InertiaStalls wrote:

13. At 08:31am on 27 Oct 2010, Dr Prod wrote:

12. At 08:28am on 27 Oct 2010, InertiaStalls wrote:

. At 08:01am on 27 Oct 2010, Dr Prod wrote:

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-------------


Assuming they were canny enough not to mention their faith on their travel documents, all of them would have walked straight through any checks based on religious or ethnic profiling.

There are no shortcuts to safety.

-----

Who mentioned anything about ethnic or religious profiling? I stated passenger profiling. Get your facts right.

-----

Fair enough, please explain the kind of profiling you had in mind which would have caught these men without inconveniencing the rest of the passengers?

Complain about this comment

22. At 08:39am on 27 Oct 2010, callaspadeaspeda wrote:

Absolutely they are excessive. In flying OUT of the UK some 2 years ago for a simple, pre-booked package holiday I went through what felt like more scanners than a package of toxic waste and had even to take my shoes off so they could be scanned too.
On the way back however, where I could have been carrying all manner of illegal substance we all breezed through.

I vowed never again to fly anywhere.....and I haven't

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 08:40am on 27 Oct 2010, I_want_to_emigrate wrote:

Dress appropriately for air travel ie. slip-on or easy to remove shoes etc & it's no problem. I have no issues with the current security, I'd much rather be subjected to that than a large blast in a aeroplane at 40000 feet. Sounds like a bit more commercialism to me. I'm all for making some of the H&S laws redundant (like letting kids play with conkers etc.) but this isn't an H&S issue as such it's a fight against nutters who think it's the way to a hundred virgins (I like to think butt ugly ones. LOL) to blow up a plane full of tourists.

Leave the security as it is for once I kind of like the American OTT approach.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 08:40am on 27 Oct 2010, John Laverty wrote:

As someone who flies quite regularly it becomes quite annoying when the standard of checks varies from place to place and seems more about the whim of the security staff on duty rather than any concerted effort to keep people safe. It's fair to say that additional checks might make travel safer but to facilitate the smooth running of airports, additional security staff and equipment needs to be installed, rather than attempt to shoehorn several thousand through a system designed for several hundred. I also believe that passengers themselves can be more helpful, removing laptops BEFORE you reach the security barrier and also removing your coat in advance of reaching the barrier speed the process up. Airlines don't help, I have always been told that hand luggage is limited to ONE bag, why do I see so many using airlines with three, four or five bags? Security is everyone's business but we all need to understand the rules that are being applied and can then decide whether we think they are necessary or not

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 08:41am on 27 Oct 2010, JCB wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

* 26. At 08:42am on 27 Oct 2010, imustbeoldiwearacap wrote:

Security before you board an aircraft is all very well, but what if terrorists with large cases of explosives blew themselves up at the check-in hall? Currently there is no check on people walking through the airport entrance!

We need to take a step back and not adopt the knee-jerk reactions we have at the moment. A more intelligence based
approach is needed, and if we upset some religious/ethnic groups, TOUGH!

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 08:42am on 27 Oct 2010, cojon wrote:

What do you expect from a country that describes people from other parts of the Earth as 'aliens'.

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 08:42am on 27 Oct 2010, Dodo56 wrote:

@ian cheese: Airport workers are subjected to security checks far stricter than you may be aware. Not only the full transit checks when going airside but also extensive background checks before they can get an airside pass. Of course, that may not identify "sleepers" like the 7/7 bombers but short of 24/7 surveillance on every pass holder you can only do what's reasonable.

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 08:44am on 27 Oct 2010, grainsofsand wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 30. At 08:45am on 27 Oct 2010, Jessica wrote:

Taking off your shoes is pretty redundant and not all countries follow this procedure so it seems ineffective for us to, i once was asked to take my flip flops off what could i hide in there? originally taking your shoes off was because some shoes mainly boots have metal parts in them, like in the heel and set the machines !!! I think if we are going to have security procedures like this they should be international and not just a few countries. If terroists or drug smugglers are going to carry things they will use ways that we have not seen yet.

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 08:46am on 27 Oct 2010, Jonathan_Kelk wrote:

I think a lot of people are missing an important point here. The current checks cannot stop an attack. You simply cannot do that. It is perfectly possible to circumnavigate the checks, in many ways, and I'm sure the terrorists are planning it already. But at least people feel safer, that is what these checks are about.

What will people accept next, full rectal cavity searches for all passengers after a terrorist hides liquid explosives there? No toilets on any plane (ideal detonation zone)?

Complain about this comment
* 32. At 08:47am on 27 Oct 2010, orgogliojuventino wrote:

Simply put, security checks at present are over the top. Not only that, but as a consumer I am severly affected. Things
like not being allowed to take water with you. Apart from the fact that I question the point of the rule anyway, but water now costs almost triple beyond security, as it does before. How is this right? Similarly, there is no consistency on what you can take on a plane which might be deemed a "weapon". A friend of mine had a stone easter egg confiscated because it could have been used as a weapon – but by that logic, so can my pen, my belt, my shoe lace. How is this right? I think there needs to be more consistency, and better use of technology. Right now, it all smacks of "we want to look like we're protecting you, so nobody tries anything".

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 08:48am on 27 Oct 2010, teedoff wrote:

Security, or the perception of security has three purposes:

1. To stop the opportunist from attempting to "smuggle" stuff on board.
2. To give confidence to passengers.
3. To hopefully catch any bad guys.

...roughly in that order. It's the perception of being secure that keeps our safety-conscious do-gooders happy in their innocent and naïve belief that it's a catch-all system. Yes, it DOES stop many people from carrying "banned" goods and substances, but the real security measures are hidden within the overall checks - the ones that actually count.

I've occasionally had my bag and hands swabbed for chemical traces, or been patted down by a security guard, and I'm sure the hold baggage gets checked out by sniffer dogs. This is the real security, and removing belts and shoes, and not being allowed more than 100mls of any single liquid was simply knee-jerk political spin designed to appease and not to protect.

So, to answer the question, yes, some airport checks should be scrapped as completely useless and only for show.

Complain about this comment
* 34. At 08:51am on 27 Oct 2010, Frank Kirkton wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 35. At 08:51am on 27 Oct 2010, NonLondonView wrote:

It's really hard to see how putting a bottle of liquid into a plastic bag makes it any more "safe" or "Secure".

It's just a money making ploy to sell bags at £2 to unfortunate travellers.

It's hard to see how 3 x 100ml bottles of "liquid" are any more safe than one 250ml bottle.
Its just a money making scheme to make passengers discard bottles and buy new ones after passing security

Money, not security, is the driving factor of some checks.

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 08:52am on 27 Oct 2010, The Trough wrote:

Martin Broughtons' comments are slightly misdirected as very often travellers leaving Europe for the UK are subjected to second security check at the request apparently of the UK government.

For that matter checks in the UK are overdone - removing belts at BAA airports for instance which is not strictly "required" for security and instead appears to be a commercial move by BAA to reduce their required resource.

I would rather have seen him complaining about the attempted commercialisation of the security process in the UK

For instance BAA and Liverpool John Lennon at least, are charging for fast track = queue jumping.

Liquids ban allows airport businesses to charge rip off prices for water etc.

Yes making passengers jump through hoops to travel is damaging the industry. I prefer to drive over domestic flying in some cases and returning from the US is indeed easier security wise, at least until arriving at T5 and queueing five times between one plane and the other.

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 08:55am on 27 Oct 2010, barrystir wrote:

In August I travelled through Pisa airport- inadvertently I had left a carton of liquid in my hand luggage- it was not discovered. In September I travelled through Pisa airport, having made quite sure I had no liquid in my hand luggage- my bag was emptied, because the scanner insisted I had liquid in it. How useful are these checks?

Complain about this comment
* 38. At 08:55am on 27 Oct 2010, Imaniceberg wrote:

Traveling through Southampton this weekend, my wife was force to remove her boots but I was allowed to keep wearing my shoes. Why, are boots particularly dangerous or threatening?

She was then hand-searched after making the metal detector bleep. A body search revealed that the cause was the under-wiring in her bra. Chatting to other passengers later, it seemed that all the ladies who had under-wired bras were hand searched.

Hardly a proportionate response to pick one one gender only, who choose to wear a particular sort of underwear!

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 08:55am on 27 Oct 2010, T Daquin wrote:
Any competent security officer will recognise suspicious behaviour at a hundred yards. It does not require overt and infantile procedures to identify criminals. Dedicated terrorists always have a way of circumventing formal security systems. Give the professionals some credibility and let them do their job.

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 08:55am on 27 Oct 2010, stiffpilchard wrote:

Yeahhhhhhhhh. Great idea. Stop the security checks until there is a bomb or weapon of some sort carried on board and a plane is brought down and then we can all complain about the lack of security checks at airports.

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 08:55am on 27 Oct 2010, HonestMP wrote:

Yes. I have stopped flying to America because of the degrading so called security checks. I used to go on holiday in America at least once a year but now I have changed destination and go to Europe by Eurostar or go cruising instead. It is no skin off my nose.

My sixty year old wife was once put in a cage in New York for a personal search all because of a bra wire so no more cowardly America for us.

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 08:55am on 27 Oct 2010, Ushita wrote:

Living abroad and flying frequently back to the UK from other destinations shows you that this is all pretty pointless. The rest of the world is not interested in the degree of nit-picking that the British airports have made a way of life. That means that anyone coming into a British airport has not undergone the degree of checking the British seem to need and they can wander round at will.

If the US and the UK are so interested in this degree of security then keep it on flights between their two countries.

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 08:56am on 27 Oct 2010, Crack of Dawn wrote:

Don't ask for Common Sense in today's world !! Why for e.g. at Heathrow do they ask one row of passengers at the security screening for each to take their belts and shoes off and in the parallel aisle the colleagues don't and people just walk through with shoes on ?? Most of the visible security screening is to give a feeling that something is being done but the true terrorist are as usual always one step ahead of the game just as they were on 9/11 and other events. I don't believe I feel any safer by knowing all passengers are being asked to take their shoes off at a security check !

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 08:56am on 27 Oct 2010, JohnH wrote:
I worked in Belfast during the first IRA cease-fire. Talking to a senior protestant with regard to terrorism he admitted that everyone knew that if they wanted to the IRA could 'take-out' the centre of Belfast in a day.

I do not believe that the current security measures would stop an intelligently planned terrorist organisation from taking out a plane. The current measures are there to stop the 'do it in the garden shed' type of terrorist. My wife is a hairdresser, she knew immediately after the event why the second lot of london bombers failed. If she, a hairdresser, knows how to handle the chemicals involved it would take a not too savvy looney terrorist little time to do the job right, as we found on 7/7.

Am I concerned? No, travelled by plane twice last week without a care. Yes some of the security is a pain, but hey, I'm the guy who takes the advice and arrives at the airport 2 hours before my flight and have no problems standing in a short line for the checks. It's the people who arrive at the last minute, havn't bagged their liquids correctly and packed everything away without understanding that they will have to undo all that packing during check-in.

Yes I know that some of the american procedures are stupid. If the shoe bomber had had a lighter (which is now allowed) rather than a box of matches (which is still banned) he would have succeeded. If the USA wants to throw it's weight arround and remain the nation that EVERYONE loves to hate, then let them get on with it, (I read recently a criticism of the USA by an american as to why their own actions generate loathing of them around the world).

So I say look at security objectively, keep out the speculation and the tabloid headlines and please, please stop the politicians grand-standing on this (and all other) issue.

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 08:58am on 27 Oct 2010, Adam wrote:

The security checks at airports add little to our safety, and seem intended only to give an impression of security. The ban on potential weapons is over the top. My wife used to enjoy doing embroidery on long flights, but is now prevented by not being allowed to carry small needles in her hand baggage.

Complain about this comment
* 46. At 08:58am on 27 Oct 2010, Leanne Evans wrote:

@27 Cojon

Hmm...the word 'alien' in that context is a legal one. It's used worldwide to describe a person who comes from a foreign country, an individual who does not have allegiance to the country of his or her current environment.
As far as the airport checks go, I really have no problem with them. Get to the airport in plenty time, have a coffee, wander up to security. Just be relaxed about the whole thing. I really don't see what the big deal is!

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 09:01am on 27 Oct 2010, benevolentbroadmind wrote:

Unfortunately we can not say enough is enough. I am really more afraid with security measures and security powers than the so called terrorism danger. I am beginning to think that all this training and power given and freedom repressed is not for the terrorist from outside but dissidents against the despot clict. I am not sure if that is elected members or the chosen members that got elected by the untouchable clict that decide for us how we should live or how much we deserve.

When police and law stops protecting weak and the right and starts protecting the the people that take advantage of the simple public is the time when those anti terrorism laws will start to be implemented. Against the common people.

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 09:02am on 27 Oct 2010, A Rahman wrote:

Some level of security check is obviously required and necessary. But this must be proportionate and measured. The knee-jerk approach on security checks taken by the USA in response to 9/11 attack and imposed by them on almost every country in the world is designed, to a large extend, to punish the general public. The proportionate amount of security check can be done in a much more humane way, not the aggressive stance taken now.

The BA Chairman is absolutely right that the measures are excessive and should be scrapped. In fact, they should have been scrapped or modified ages ago.

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 09:04am on 27 Oct 2010, heraldnomore wrote:

There is now no pleasure in air travel. Endless queuing, several times over to catch one flight, interminable waiting and hanging round mind-numbing shopping arcades, and then total discomfort once allowed to board. This of course is after doing all the online stuff beforehand, from finding flights, booking them, paying for all the odds and sods that result in the fare being doubled, then printing the boarding passes before arriving hours early to do all the queing thing. It is utterly exhausting. Let the train take the strain, if only we had a decent rail service and investment in infrastructure.

Security? Yes there has to be some, but please standardise the procedure across all UK airports. Currently we have to try and remember which ones need shoes off, laptops out, tiny bottles in clear bags; oh and while we're on the subject what about those queues to get back in again, with that border agency mob that sprang up from nowhere? Landing at Edinburgh last week it took one full hour to get from tarmac to car park exit, and that's
without any baggage reclaim - then we had the farce that is Edinburgh's prepaid parking arrangements, queuing again to get ticket validated by one man with an antiquated manual system. Time to lie down in a darkened room........

Complain about this comment
* 50. At 09:04am on 27 Oct 2010, Simon Harpham wrote:

Airline security checks have so far failed to catch any terrorists. They were (and continue to be) a misguided over-reaction to the September 11th attacks (misguided because they wouldn't have caught the 911 hijackers as they hijacked US domestic flights where these checks aren't implemented).

One presumes the "separate screening process" that liquids on sale inside the terminal go through involves checking each and every single bottle before they're put on sale just to make sure they're safe and to make sure getting rid of liquids before boarding isn't just a futile waste of time designed to extract maximum revenue from passengers?

One presumes there is also some logic to the rule that you can't take non-safety matches with you but you can take a lighter, that you can't take a pair of scissors with blades longer than 6cm but you can take a pair of scissors with blades no longer than 6cm, that you can take knitting needles but not a corkscrew, that you can't take a cigarette lighter in your hand luggage but you can carry one on your person (as long as it's not a gun-shaped cigarette lighter).

The whole thing's a farce designed to make you think terrorists are everywhere, that if it's not you at least you could well be a suspect, that the people next to you are even more under suspicion, and that the security guards could never be suspects because I bet any terrorist worth their salt has never thought of that one.

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 09:05am on 27 Oct 2010, Techrod wrote:

Security, all security, is a weakest link problem - why break down a front door when you can break the glass pane on a back door? It's the same with airport security. Regardless of whether authorities check shoes or laptops separately, if a terrorist knows this in advance, s/he will put a bomb in their underpants (which won't be checked) or disguise the bomb by breaking it into separate parts, which screeners will miss - they already miss 70% of knives, 60% of mock-up bombs and 30% of guns according to one study. The answer as one person has already noted is profiling supplemented by highly trained security personnel looking for people that meet profiles and out of the ordinary behaviour - take lessons from the Israelis who have never ever had an incident with airline security. Apart from utilising the machines as best we can, and introducing uncertainty to deter professionals, the rest is theatre and much
(including time-consuming separate checks for shoes, laptops, belts) is pointlessly redundant as Broughton correctly asserts.

Complain about this comment
* 52. At 09:05am on 27 Oct 2010, xyz wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 53. At 09:06am on 27 Oct 2010, Gordon wrote:

Coming from Northern Ireland in the height of the troubles - and there fore clearly a terrorist to anyone working in an airport - I have been subjected to heightened security measures for years, from additional searches, completing "landing forms", and being stored in the furthest wing of the airport to keep everyone else safe.

I'm all for profiling in airports, but some of the other measures (100ml bottles in a clear plastic bag) are nonsense. A determined terrorist will find a way when they need to.

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 09:06am on 27 Oct 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

I agree with post number 20 regarding long queues. It's not as though the number of passengers at any time is unknown, after all. Security checks would possibly feel less of a burden if passengers could get through quickly, not an hour or more, as I have occasionally been subjected to. In fairness, the wait is more often in the realms of ten to fifteen minutes. As to how necessary all the security measures are, I can only say that it was a bit easier moving around during the last World War, though admittedly those flying had a rather different purpose in mind than tourism or business trips of a conventional kind.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 09:07am on 27 Oct 2010, Simon Hill wrote:

A simple guideline would be 'If Israel don't do it, then we probably shouldn't bother' - surely if anyone is going to be targeted by islamist terrorists (by far the most common affiliation at the moment) then it will be Israel.

Most of these security checks would actually be far better off being replaced by simply googling every passenger as they arrive and using that as the basis for 'profiling' who to search more diligently.

Unfortunately, it is in the interests of the airport owning companies to promote as much delay as possible during transit through their airports - the longer you are held in there, the more money they can extract from you (especially if you do things like banning people from bringing their own drinks through security and then immediately sell them loads more at huge mark ups).
There is some small competition against this for short-haul flights as it becomes quicker to go by train (hence the fact that domestic flights are often exempt from many security checks - why? is it any less likely that a terrorist will want to blow up a flight from Manchester to London than Manchester to Paris? I doubt it.) but for long-haul flights there is no other choice but air travel so passengers are at the mercy of these security measures.

As an example of this - if we are required to arrive at the airport 2-3 hours before we fly so our bags can be checked through and loaded but we cannot take any liquids through security then why can't we arrive at the airport 3 hours before flight, check through our bags and then wait outside security for 2 1/2 hours eating our own food and drink? When our flight is ready to board, then we go through security, leaving all our empty drinks and such behind and get straight on the plane. Same security level but no captive audience for the overpriced airport concessions and 'Duty Free' (which I take to mean 'We pay no duty on these goods but you still pay us pretty much the normal price as we then rake in an extra 20-80% profit').

In reality, security measures should only be instituted if they have been shown to be effective and then implemented in such a way as to minimise transit time.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 09:08am on 27 Oct 2010, skinnygreekbloke wrote:

Whilst most people would agree there is a need for security and vigilance not only in airports, but also ferry terminals, and city centers etc.

I think when passing through security especially at airports and I am asked to remove my shoes, empty my pockets and remove my trouser belt it makes you feel like a second class citizen.

Last year I was coming back from France and injured my legs in a car accident, I struggled onto the plane for a flight back to Bristol international airport whereupon trying to walk off the plane in agony a very nice security lady realised I was in a lot of pain and promptly put me in a wheel chair and wheeled me through a side gate completely bypassing security??

Don't get me wrong I was very grateful but the system can be flexible!

I don't know what the answer is but I would prefer to have security than not.

Thanks skinnygreekbloke.

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 09:10am on 27 Oct 2010, editing56 wrote:
This comment by the airport chief is proof, if it was needed, that the UK has a much more confident and mature approach to security than the US, arising perhaps from its long experience with the IRA. I am a dual national and experience US airport security on a regular basis. I never cease to be amazed by the idiocy, not only of the rules, but the way they are applied. Once I had medicine confiscated at JFK, even though it was the right size and in a see-through plastic bag, because it had been decanted into a travel-size bottle and did not have a brand label, so they said didn't know what it was. Another time, I travelled with some Christmas crackers in my hand luggage (to prevent them from being crushed) and at the x-ray stage it turned out there were a couple of small scissors and nailclippers. Heathrow applied common sense and waived it through; the US airport that screened it on arrival (another odd arrangement) did not. Americans complain about this all the time, but think there is no alternative.

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 09:10am on 27 Oct 2010, Tory Bankers Stole My Cash wrote:

Excessive security checks belong to a past era, the era of the so-called "war on terror", which any sensible person knows, was a mere figment of George Bush's paranoid imagination.

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 09:11am on 27 Oct 2010, Mischiefmaker wrote:

Of course we all want to fly safely, but the policy on liquids and sharp objects is absurd with no application of common sense. I have had cuticle clippers removed whose blades are about 8mm long which I do not consider dangerous while being allowed to carry through a metal cased biro pen which was stiletto-like and six inches long and could be a very effective weapon. Transparent containers of cosmetic creams which were 200ml which are half full (so only 100ml then) are removed. Suspiciously it is always the expensive brands which are confiscated. Being made to taste my granddaughters baby food in front of the queue seems a little over the top too.

Can anyone tell me where all this stuff goes?

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 09:12am on 27 Oct 2010, Khrystalr wrote:

Not sure "should checks be scrapped" is the right question to ask. Of course we need security checks at airports; and of course these checks should be under constant review to make sure they're effective and necessary. Those that aren't, should be scrapped.

Mr Broughton certainly has one thing right, though - security measures at British airports should be under British control, not America's or any other country's. I can't see the US "kow-towing" to any security demands we might make - they already
refuse to provide anywhere near as much information on their own citizens travelling abroad, as they demand about ours when they visit the 'States - so I don't see that they can justifiably expect us to defer to their paranoia.

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 09:13am on 27 Oct 2010, the_Sluiceterer wrote:

At last some common sense from someone in authority. I travel by plane on a weekly basis & the UK system is simply ridiculous. Apart from comments made by BA chairman there are other insane regulations. On arriving at UK with ongoing internal flight at Heathrow, you pass through a boarding card check in - then a passport check in - then another boarding card check in - then at the gate a further boarding card check in and 3 yards after that another boarding card/Passport check in. Then you have to show boarding card again on the plane. This is basically what you would exopect in an assylum. Pure and total nonsense, a waste of time & it annoys both staff and passengers. Lets get some common sense back. 1 total screening (boarding card/passport)is all that is required.

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 09:14am on 27 Oct 2010, tarquin wrote:

Of course there is a place for security - but there comes a point when it becomes too much - the ridiculous liquids rule is one such example, the brief banning of all liquids after the failed plot likely hit only passengers

And the new body scanners being rolled out have not been tested for long-term health problems - we are exposing people to years of background radiation, and we don't know if in a few years frequent flyers may start to have problems

As with all things it is risk and reward - using x-rays seems like too much of a risk to me when you consider you are safer on a plane than any other form of transport, buses and trains have no security

And what really annoys me, as Broughton says, is that US domestic passengers don't undergo much of this nonsense - yet which planes were hijacked?

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 09:14am on 27 Oct 2010, MiffedOfReading wrote:

I am sick of pointless security, and flights to the US are by far the worst.

I used to visit Florida regularly, i have voted with my feet, i no longer take holidays in the US. Nor go there for any reason. I now holiday more in Europe.

Even took a coach holiday this year just to avoid flying.
Complain about this comment
* 64. At 09:17am on 27 Oct 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

At 09:02am on 27 Oct 2010, A Rahman wrote:
Some level of security check is obviously required and necessary. But this must be proportionate and measured. The knee-jerk approach on security checks taken by the USA in response to 9/11 attack and imposed by them on almost every country in the world is designed, to a large extend, to punish the general public. The proportionate amount of security check can be done in a much more humane way, not the aggressive stance taken now.

The BA Chairman is absolutely right that the measures are excessive and should be scrapped. In fact, they should have been scrapped or modified ages ago.

_________________________________________________________________

Absolutely agree. However, for the USA to impose security checks on the rest of the world effectively implies an acceptance of that imposition. Perhaps it would make a difference if nobody travelled by air to the USA under current restrictions. Difficult perhaps, but maybe money talks after all. The sticky question is what measures of security would be commonly accepted as proportionate and measured, and given the human ability to disagree on almost anything...!

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 09:17am on 27 Oct 2010, rjstotQJ wrote:

Security checks would be more popular if they ever caught anyone. Where is this vital proof of deterrence and capability.

Slightly off subject but relevant is the problem of armed police with automatic weapons. Just think of the carnage if they ever open fire on anyone in a crowded airport. And if they wouldn't then what use are they other that foolish puppets?

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 09:18am on 27 Oct 2010, Bradford wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 67. At 09:18am on 27 Oct 2010, Merlin98 wrote:

Yes...security staff, through my experience, have been incapable of using their common sense. BRISTOL AIRPORT is right up there with the worst...
I agree with Stevel29a, I have seen exactly the same thing happen on several occasions at Bristol Airport, causing undue stress for elderly individuals—ABSOLUTELY NO COMMON SENSE.
When I have travelled through Dubai, Johannesburg and Paris, security has been been very good—the difference...the individuals about their jobs simply have had more common sense and have used their discretion.
Complain about this comment
* 68. At 09:21am on 27 Oct 2010, SPEEDTHRILLS wrote:

I am a regular passenger with a regional airline and recently my attention was drawn to another passenger of a certain ethnic origin. This in itself was unusual in my part of the world and so was his behaviour. It was either his first flight or he had ants in his pants. I couldn't help it, it was not PC etc but I am only human and I was unsettled by him and his actions. My only comfort was that all passengers on the flight had undergone a thorough security process. So no, if anything we need to retain security checks and improve them whenever necessary. If any one is responsible for this inconvenience it is terrorism, NOT the government.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 09:22am on 27 Oct 2010, pkay wrote:

I think it is a misconception that the airports go through these stringent security checks in stead of profiling lest it targets the ethnic minorities disproportionately. When I went through the security checks at Heathrow a couple of weeks ago they waived me through even though I was wearing a lace up shoes yet the middle aged couple in front of me had to take their shoes and belts off and the lady's handbag was searched thoroughly. Ironically I am dark skinned and they were white!

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 09:23am on 27 Oct 2010, Blaster wrote:

I'm a licensed explosives manufacturer who also travels abroad quite frequently.

Every time I go through the security checks I observe how useless they are - only reacting to what has been attempted before, and ignoring the alternative ways of placing a bomb on a plane.

I won't go into detail, but it is frighteningly easy.

Airline security needs to focus on identifying potentially bad people, and not bad things; and the squeamishness over racial profiling has to be set aside.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 09:24am on 27 Oct 2010, Rachel-Jane wrote:

I think it is important that security checks are kept in perspective. It is important to ensure that all travellers and air crew are safe but I do find the security checks frustrating and incredibly time consuming.

I regularly fly between London and Dublin for business and every time I go through security I have to remove my shoes!! Is this level of security really necessary? - especially on short haul flights??
Complain about this comment
* 72. At 09:24am on 27 Oct 2010, David Richerby wrote:

Martin Broughton says that we should only do the security checks on US-bound flights that the US authorities require on internal flights. He then cites removing shoes and scanning laptops separately as examples. Those are particularly bad examples because those *are* requirements on US internal flights!

Removing belts is a perfectly sensible measure. It is not because belts are dangerous and need to be screened separately but because many belt buckles are big lumps of metal that will set off the metal detector. If that happens, the wearer has to take it off and pass through the detector again, delaying everybody else in the queue. We all get through security faster if everyone takes their belt off. Likewise, women's heeled shoes usually have metal-reinforced heels so women were often asked to remove them even before Richard Reid turned shoes into a direct security threat.

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 09:24am on 27 Oct 2010, saxacat wrote:

In 2008 I was on my way back to Afghanistan after R&R, travelling in my desert combat uniform. When boarding a BA flight from Newcastle to Heathrow I found it midly amusing that I had to remove my boots and belt for security checks. Fortunately I didn't have to repeat the process when boarding the RAF Tristar for my flight to Kandahar.

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 09:25am on 27 Oct 2010, louismc44 wrote:

I have come to think about this very carefully.
1st
I don't like the yanks and I don't like them telling us how to run our own country here in the UK.
2nd
But I have to say this from a personal point of view, if the yanks did not tell us about taking our shoes off at the airports, then I think we should have thought of this a long time ago.
3rd
I know you can't always stop these nutter when they want to do some harm to us, but we've got to plug any gap that we can to stop these nutters getting through...

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 09:26am on 27 Oct 2010, Phil wrote:

@Stevo129a

Airport operators employ people to "test" Security Officers on a regular basis. The kind of people they employ are exactly the opposite of the "usual suspects". Middle aged business men,
elderly women etc. Security Officers who fail these tests can be disciplined and for repeat failure dismissed. The testers are trained to lie, cheat, double bluff etc to see how far they can get before they are caught out. For all you or I know that elderly woman could have been one of the testers.

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 09:26am on 27 Oct 2010, Bob wrote:

Security checks have been shown to be necessary because of the activities of fanatics of certain religious faiths. The senior clerics of these faiths are actively encouraging foul behaviour by targeting all forms of public travel. Until these fanatics and clerics are eliminated then enhanced security is needed. Obviously our cowardly politicians are unwilling to take the hard decisions. If the people of any nation are not prepared to stand up to their leaders who support terrorism then those people are just as guilty as the terrorists. They in turn should suffer the consequences by any and all means available.

As to the actual security measures in place they should stay but be performed by national agencies and not by foreigners imported by airport operators who want the job done by the cheapest means available.

Complain about this comment
* 77. At 09:27am on 27 Oct 2010, Jason_Overthinker wrote:

I go on holiday in two days so I'll have an opinion then. All I know is my mother accidentally took a 2inch flip knife on her keyring on holiday to America in 2005. She passed all security checks before realising she had it on her. Now you may be wondering why she would have a 2inch flip knife on her, she worked at Ikea opening boxes... It came in handy

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 09:27am on 27 Oct 2010, pkay wrote:

I agree with 53. Common sense has been taken out of the equation here. I cannot understand how a bottle of mineral water poses a security risk!

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 09:28am on 27 Oct 2010, Chris wrote:

I could list fifty different ways a terrorist could easily kill and maim people, and not get caught. All it takes is a little bit of imagination. If we make it harder to execute acts of terrorism on aircraft, the terrorists will just find alternative ways to do it.

If you really want to fight terrorism you have to understand its underlying causes. Saying they're evil and brainwashed explains nothing.
What makes caring, intelligent people turn into terrorists? Understand that and you can quietly cut off the supply of willing vassals - and terrorism suffocates.

"Fight" it with draconian preventative measures and you instill fear into the hearts of innocent people.

And then terrorism has won.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 09:29am on 27 Oct 2010, ExpatKS wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 81. At 09:31am on 27 Oct 2010, cojon wrote:

@27 Cojon
Hmm...the word 'alien' in that context is a legal one. It's used worldwide to describe a person who comes from a foreign country, an individual who does not have allegiance to the country of his or her current environment.

I did not see signs for 'aliens', when I arrived at Heathrow T3 last month. I am not an authourity on legal terms used 'worldwide', but as an LLB student, I cannot recall coming across it, in English law so far. Perhaps you could enlighten me on how it is used 'worldwide' as a legal term.

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 09:31am on 27 Oct 2010, Rich Marsh wrote:

Surely we're forgetting that one of concepts behind terrorism is to take away our freedom. It appears this has already happened in our airports where removing clothing and getting frisked is becoming more and more commonplace.

I can understand the desire for safety and agree with the checks we used to carry out in airports many years ago, but this has gone more than a few steps too far.

Should we not be looking at the cause of the terrorism, rather than trying to stop it at a stage which is clearly too late?

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 09:35am on 27 Oct 2010, Alasdair Campbell wrote:

I agree that some airport security checks are targetted indiscriminately and because of that make little sense. What is needed is a system of random selection of individuals for more thorough screening, similar to inbound customs checks, based on the current threat assessment and circumstances. A basic check of everyone should remain at the back of this system of selection, that should be intelligence driven, just like customs checks.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 09:35am on 27 Oct 2010, DaveH wrote:
Yes, of course most of the checks should be scrapped - simply because they are useless, and have never yet caught a single terrorist, because they wouldn't be stupid enough to carry anything in a means already being checked. Yes, there is always a risk that someone will get bombs/explosives etc. onto a plane, but does anyone REALLY believe that the current predicatable checks would stop them? e.g. would the current checks stop a woman with explosives in a false bra, or a non-metal knife in a waistband, or anything at all concealed in a body cavity? Unless we subjected every single passenger to a full strip and cavity search, then we might as well give up the whole process, which is now more about giving an "illusion of security" and providing a huge raft of income/employment than it is about safety.

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 09:35am on 27 Oct 2010, Rob wrote:

The security checks aren't actually all that effective.

They're only there to make people think something is being done when it isn't. This is a false security.

There have been countless examples where people have tested this so-called security and have passed through unhindered while carrying things deemed to be "unsafe". Very few examples of where it has actually succeeded.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 09:36am on 27 Oct 2010, howard parkin wrote:

4 years ago I broke my leg and needed a metal plate and screws fitting. I flew twice with this metal and was never stopped. Last year I had a total knee replacement and was stopped at Heathrow and had a full search. Returning to the uk at Mauritius airport the metal detector did not bleep and I walked straight through!!! I am all for security but I have shown the systems are fallible.

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 09:37am on 27 Oct 2010, Eleventh Earl of Mar wrote:

Security checks are a small inconvenience to protect our way of life from those who, for various reasons, should like to disrupt or even end it. I can live with such an inconvenience if it makes the difference between myself and my family safely completing the trip.

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 09:37am on 27 Oct 2010, iscotia wrote:

And what about airport management? Why is it that UK airports always look like they are dealing with unexpected quantities of passengers? There's nothing unexpected! Herd large numbers of people together and you risk them being a target for violent religious extremists.

[Type text]
I recently flew via the far east and had one of the best airport experiences at Hong Kong. Friendly polite security staff - all smiling; no more than about 6 people in a queue in a cavernous area; good separation of processes so that herding didn't happen. I arrived back into the new terminal 5 at Heathrow and it was an absolute nightmare - herded everywhere, confusion, officials barking and getting stroppy.... I don't object to proving that I have no ill intent when I travel, but I do mind the bad management and lack of imagination that leads to these senseless and dangerous situations.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 09:39am on 27 Oct 2010, cynicalsimon wrote:

This is what happens when religious nutcases believe that their lives can be best spent by murdering others. If certain groups of people believed that life was more sacred then they wouldn't be that keen on blowing up themselves as well as innocent people.

The security industry has mushroomed on the back of these religious fanatics.

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 09:41am on 27 Oct 2010, AMc wrote:

Basic security checks fine, but taking shoes off, forcing people to ditch their bottles of water etc, oh come on. 90% of people don't get body searched and any determined terrorist could easily conceal plastic explosives on their person so well that even if they were body checked they wouldn't be found. Then there's the water business, let's be honest the airports can't believe their luck. We have two children and when they were babies we were allowed to carry bottles full of liquid on, now their over 3 and suddenly in the eyes of the jumped up 'D' class school dropouts in uniforms working on the security checks they are deemed potential terrorists.

Again any determined terrorist group could easily smuggle in such explosives via the deliveries made to the shops inside the departure areas. Answer this, how many of the thousands of bottles of water that get delivered every week to those shops are actually checked?

They do all these checks for people getting on to a plane but how many of these hardened checks are made on the perimeter of the airport, if I were a terrorist I wouldn't bother getting on to the plane but just position myself 300 yds off the end of the runway with an RPG and then be able to get away as well. Sad as it is but it's these things that really make a mockery of these ridiculous checks.

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 09:43am on 27 Oct 2010, RabidRaccoon wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 92. At 09:43am on 27 Oct 2010, John Barrett Rose wrote:

I suppose airport security checks are necessary while homicidal lunatics roam this world; but a little more common sense might eliminate some of the absurdities, such as a request I once had to show the metal bar and screws used to bolt together the formerly shattered bone inside my leg.

A quick medical operation at the check-in counter? The mind boggles.

Complain about this comment

* 93. At 09:46am on 27 Oct 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:

Mr Broughton, chairman of BA is also chairman of Liverpool FC (!) according to the report related to this HYS question. Also Philip Hammond, Conservative Transport Minister is involved.

Difficult to read between the lines without suspicion. However, we do need 'experts' to seriously review and collaborate/co-ordinate a 'gold standard' of security across the whole public aviation industry and airports too.

Complain about this comment

* 94. At 09:46am on 27 Oct 2010, fletch wrote:

I do not object to the safety checks if they work. What I think is very wrong is you cannot take knitting needles, nail files or tweezers but you can buy a glass bottle of spirits and to me that can become a far worse weapon than any of the ones mentioned. Difference is a profit can be made from these sales so that is overlooked.

Complain about this comment

* 95. At 09:47am on 27 Oct 2010, Mark wrote:

Let's face it. If your aim is to kill a lot of people with a bomb, you don't need to get on a plane - you could easily do it prior to the security screening. In fact, as 7/7 showed, you don't need to be at an airport either, just somewhere where there are crowds of people.

This is all about being seen to do something, rather than actually doing anything useful.

Complain about this comment

* 96. At 09:50am on 27 Oct 2010, Crannoid wrote:

Thoughts of someone who flies many times a year ...

We are told that we cannot take small nail scissors on board flights yet many airlines give you reasonably sharp metal cutlery and breakable glasses and bottles once in flight, whilct many shops sell Swiss Army knives, etc. which you can take on board without further search. Can anyone spot the mistake here?
The strip search we currently have recently failed to find a penknife, which was mistakenly left in my coat pocket from a Scout weekend. Sharp as a beach ball, eh?

I'm made to remove my shoes and belt supposedly as not to set off the metal detector yet my large, heavy metal watch has no effect on it. Nice to see that’s working well.

Most of our airports have a ‘one bag through security’ rule, yet I can buy as many pieces of luggage, hold-alls, bags of duty free or fashion bags as I like, once past the (usually) aggressive and insouciant strip search. Clearly there is no barrier to taking whatever you like on board, as long as you've bought it in the airport that day.

I'm not allowed to take more than 100ml of after shave, etc. through security yet I can buy (and take on board) as much as I can afford/carry. Do you think that this could be another commercially advantageous decision? Surely not.

One large (airside) pharmacy at a major airport sells products and materials which are supposed to be prohibited in flight. Anyone else not get this, or is it just me?

Aside from commercial gain dressed up as security, many airport operations are ideas which have been badly (or not) thought through and are poorly executed.

Because of this, other than travelling for business, I do not fly. Nor do I buy anything at all in the airport, out of principal and I make sure to tell them this every time I fly. If we all did this they would have to change their behaviour. If you do nothing, don’t complain about what treatment you get.

Security checks take whatever joy there was in flying right out of it. Having to arrive three hours early because they want to probe me for a while is a joke.

I do not believe that my half drunk 500ml bottle of coke is a danger to other passengers nor are my shoes...

Can you imagine if we had to go through this for other types of transport? Metal detectors when you step on buses? Invasive searches before being allowed on a train?

The liquid regulations will never be lifted. My flights are usually for long weekends away with friends (stag parties, birthdays etc), meaning I have no need for anything more than hand luggage. But I can't take my bottles of shower gel etc with me, so I have to buy those little bottles instead. A nice little

[Type text]
earner for toiletries companies. My first couple of trips, I bought a bottle of water at the airport while I was waiting around, but had to chuck half of it away since they wouldn't let me take it on board. So then you have to buy any refreshments on board at inflated prices.

The liquid restrictions are too lucrative for too many people. They're here to stay, unfortunately. As for taking off my shoes, belt and jacket – how about next time I just turn up in my pants and socks? Will that help move things along quicker?

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 09:50am on 27 Oct 2010, iscotia wrote:

I travelled through Newark Airport with my family in 2008. There were 5 of us; my wife and 3 kids.

When I handed over the passports I left my wife's by mistake in my bag and only handed over 4. The passport controller (in an argument at the time with his female boss over not getting a lunch break) checked them and handed them back, letting us through. I saw he only had given me 4 and went back to ask for the other one, thinking he had it. He got all stroppy and said he didn't have it. Female boss got very stroppy too. I looked in my bag and realised I hadn't given it to him in the first place. We had a wee chat about it and it turned out that he had waived us through thinking the picture of my 2yo daughter was my wife and that the 2yo did not need a passport!!!!!!!!!!!!

This was NEWARK! Get the basics right people!

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 09:53am on 27 Oct 2010, Steve wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
Appendix 49. All messages in the message thread Child benefits.

Do you support child benefit changes?
09:13 UK time, Monday, 4 October 2010

Child benefit is to be axed for higher rate taxpayers from 2013, Chancellor George Osborne has announced. What is your reaction?

Parents earning over about £44,000 who pay 40% tax and above will be affected. Currently child benefit is paid to all families with children and it is estimated the change will affect about 15% - 1.2m - of families.

Mr Osborne said he expected the public to accept that it was not fair to tax someone earning £18,000 a year to pay child benefit to someone earning £50,000.

Are the changes to child benefit fair? Will you be affected? What would be the alternative?

This debate is now closed. Thank you for your comments.

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  * 1. At 09:29am on 04 Oct 2010, AndyC555 wrote:

      Why wait until 2013? Why not now?

      Complain about this comment

  * 2. At 09:32am on 04 Oct 2010, Jim wrote:

      George Osborne says these changes are fare and that we are "all in it together"
      So why dont the changes affect all families, or all higher rate tax payers or even all families on the same income.

      This change targets one particular group of people in a particular set of circumstances. It is not fare and does not promote the idea of "all in it together".

      Complain about this comment

  * 3. At 09:33am on 04 Oct 2010, AndyC555 wrote:

      A step in the right direction.

      It would be typical Labour lunacy to say that someone is so wealthy they can afford to pay taxes at higher rates and so poor they need benefits.

      Complain about this comment

[Type text]
4. At 09:38am on 04 Oct 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:

A start. But these days £44,000 isn't that large a salary. I would have a sliding scale as the benefits decreased rather than a cut-off point - I think the cut-off is what is being brought in?

Complain about this comment

5. At 09:39am on 04 Oct 2010, PompeyOops wrote:

Yes, it is right that they should cut out this payment.

They also need to look at families that will keep the payment even though they have a joint income equal to or higher than the higher rate payer.

Too be honest about it I would do away with child benefit and pay the poor by a different method.

We are all in this together....

Complain about this comment

6. At 09:39am on 04 Oct 2010, ipswichred wrote:

Good to see that the foolish middle classes who voted in this Tory government (sorry Lib Dems but you are Tories now) are losing money because of it. In effect, as your political correspondent Nick Robinson says, this is a form of higher taxation for those affected. Same old Tories - higher taxes & higher unemployment!

Complain about this comment

7. At 09:39am on 04 Oct 2010, Michelle wrote:

I don't have children, my choice, one of the many factors being that I couldn't afford them.

Wow, if only I'd known what 'families' are entitled to! I am staggered at how much money people with children receive for the pleasure of their lifestyle choice. Having 3 children will bring in £2440 per year tax free... then there is the tax credits... and the rebates and everything else you can get. I always thought I was the sensible one. Obviously not. How foolish I have been having worked for the past 16 years without a break with the prospect of another 40 years to pay for all this!

Complain about this comment

8. At 09:40am on 04 Oct 2010, Dai the Tie wrote:

About time too!

Complain about this comment

9. At 09:40am on 04 Oct 2010, Know-Dice wrote:

Let me see...
Family 1. Two earners on £40,000 each, total income £80,000 still get child benefit.

Family 2. One earner on £45,000 family doesn't get child benefit.

Is that fair?

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 09:41am on 04 Oct 2010, glass_is_half_full wrote:

I completely agree with Child Benefit being cut for higher-rate tax payers (of which I am one myself, by the way) BUT the way this is being applied does not seem to have been thought through.

How can a couple where both earn £40K (so household income of £80k) still qualify for CB when a couple with one person earning £45K doesn't? The person earning £45K not only has to pay 40p tax on everything they earn over £44K but now loses £80 per month plus through CB changes.

Surely this will be a major disincentive to families wanting one parent to stay at home to provide childcare in the formative years of a child's life?

It should either be that all household income is means tested, or the threshold is raised from £44K to say, £75K, to prevent those on more modest single-earner incomes losing out.

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 09:41am on 04 Oct 2010, Portman wrote:

As I understand it a couple with two £40k incomes will still get the money but a single parent on £45k won't? That is hardly fair. It also is discouraging to earners who not only will get taxed at 40% for crossing some silly threshold but also now get taxed heavily again by losing their benefit. It is unquestionably socially damaging and one of the best examples yet of the Tories using the deficit argument to pursue ideological objectives.

To take away this universal benefit is the worst blow yet to the caring Britain we once lived in. I am saddened.

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 09:43am on 04 Oct 2010, superiorMunchkin wrote:

As far as I am concerned you should only have children if you can afford to have children. Therefore, if you chose to have children you should not be relying on the benefits system to keep them fed and clothed.

If, once you have had children, your personal circumstances change through no fault of your own then (and only then) should
we have a benefits system to fall back on until you get back on your feet.

So yes, I do agree with the changes, and actually, I think they should go further.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 09:43am on 04 Oct 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

Crazy isn't it, a footballer or banker/etc on £100,000 per week gets child benefit.

£44,000 is a reasonable income or joint income, you should not need or be reliant on such a benefit.

The benefit should be totally removed, even with these changes, those above £44,000 a year can still claim it but then it is paid back via tax, which again just adds unnecessary costs to the benefits system.

There should be a complete cut off. Earn £44,000 a year, and there should just be no access to it whatsoever.

Complain about this comment
* 14. At 09:44am on 04 Oct 2010, PompeyOops wrote:

@c, Yes do it now or at worst from April 2011.

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 09:45am on 04 Oct 2010, Casitian wrote:

Leave it alone nothing wrong in child benefit

Complain about this comment
* 16. At 09:45am on 04 Oct 2010, barry wrote:

whilst I have no objection to this benefit being scrapped for higher earners. I'm single so it has no effect on my income except my taxes are diverted through a different path. It seems Mr O has not really thought it through. If a house hold has one high earner at say 44k they lose their benefit but a house hold of two earners just below the threshold with a combined income of 75-80k still get the benefit - how is that fair and equitable. If you are going to knock holes in the edifice of universal benefits, it has to be seen as fair to those that win and those that lose, this simply creates a sense of grievance from moderately paid one earner families.

Complain about this comment
* 17. At 09:46am on 04 Oct 2010, One in a million wrote:

Bit meaningless really, don't suppose it will save much as the percentage of people earning this won't be high I'd imagine.

However, if this means he is going to task with those on benefits, who seem, rather than get the minimum needed, get far
too much so that the rest of us working seem poor (in money and time) then bring it on.

Complain about this comment
* 18. At 09:47am on 04 Oct 2010, Clive wrote:

I'm not a parent as yet, but this is something my wife and I are planning.

How do I feel? Personally, I feel you can't be successful in this world without being knocked down. I work hard, build up my experience and skills in my career and when I finally get to the point where I want to have children I get told I am too successful for my own good so the government will offer me no assistance.

I ask the government, will you decrease my tax payments in lieu of taking away any potential child benefits?

If you want to save money, why not target those who don't care about working and quite happily knock kids out for the fun of it and live perfectly fantastic lives living on the tax contributions of all of the honest, hard working people of this country.

Complain about this comment
* 19. At 09:47am on 04 Oct 2010, jr4412 wrote:

"Child benefit is to be axed for higher rate taxpayers from 2013, Chancellor George Osborne has announced. What is your reaction?"

cynicism! if the Chancellor wants to achieve savings why wait until 2013? I think that he hopes that by delaying the implementation of his 'reforms' the political fallout won't affect their chances in the general election in 2015 too much.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 09:47am on 04 Oct 2010, Dai the Tie wrote:

Child benefit should be means tested, too.

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 09:48am on 04 Oct 2010, ziggyboy wrote:

Can someone tell me why it will take until 2013 for Child Benefit to be scrapped for the high earners and what date has been set for those who can least afford to loose it.

I find it strange or do I that the cuts will affect the low earners and those need help most. How's about they go after the huge amounts of unpaid tax due by high earners - is that going to be clawed back?
The Tories will always start with the working class and leave the people with the money alone. No change there then despite Cameron's assurances.

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 09:50am on 04 Oct 2010, steve wrote:

I posted this else where however it is most appropriate to this forum.

I see the Robber Baron Osborne is proposing to strike again.

The latest wheeze regarding child credit will mean that a Ward Sister in an NHS Hospital with 2 School age children (Hardly most peoples idea of a high earner) who sneak into the 40% tax bracket by a few Pounds will lose the equivalent of 5% of their after tax income by this means at the same time as having pay frozen and NIC contributions increased. By 20013 this will leave this individual who is representative of hundreds of thousands in the public and private sector 15% WORSE OFF in real terms.

For those captains of industry and indeed senior multi millionaire politicians like Messrs Cameron, Osbourne and Clegg this cut will result in a reduction of less than 0.25% one FORTIETH of the impact on a hard working key worker.

At the same time the Queen and other multimillionaire pensioners will still be entitled to claim their winter fuel allowance, free bus pass and free TV licence.

Yet another example of the Condemned Government version of equality.

Hopefully 5 Years will not be quite enough time for this shower of hypocrites to utterly ruin the country but they are obviously going to do their best. I suspect this particular move will be the shot in their own foot that does for them.

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 09:51am on 04 Oct 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

Do you support Child Benefit changes?

Another point.

Those with children, actually receive much great welfare benefits entitlement, whether schools, NHS, etc, hence ultimately and fairly, those with children should pay MORE tax to cover extra costs.

Its funny how so much fairness is based upon unfair discrimination, against single people or those without children, or whatever.

[Type text]
Simple answer, if you cannot afford children, then like a Ferrari, go without.

I know people on lower incomes who manage just fine with their children, yes some things can be expensive, but those parents, put their children first before themselves and any materialistic and social desires they have. Their children don’t go round stealing or behaving obnoxiously and in most cases they all go on to be good adults in better paid jobs.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 09:52am on 04 Oct 2010, GetOnYourSoapBox wrote:

Of all the proposals to cut the Country's deficit, this has got to be one of the most palatable and sensible. The payment of Child Benefit is there to help with Clothing, Food Etc. but quite clearly in some cases, it is just being used not on the child but to keep its parents in Fags and Booze etc or even in the case of welthier families, handed straight to the Child as some sort of 'Pocket Money' to spend on Luxuries. I wonder whether the Government should perhaps look to paying this allowance not in cash, but maybe in vouchers to make sure it is being spent for its intended purpose.

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 09:53am on 04 Oct 2010, smilingparrotfan wrote:

Sounds a sensible venture. I've always thought it strange that if you pay a higher rate tax you are also eligible for benefits.

The whole system needs reform. However, without plenty of jobs on offer I've no idea what we do with those who could work, but won't work!

Complain about this comment
* 26. At 09:53am on 04 Oct 2010, sande wrote:

I agree with this reform it appears sensible. Only one question, why can 1 person lose benefit if they earn £45k p.a. but if 2 people earn £40k each then they keep child benefit? I feel sure when all the 'dust settles' the Chancellors team will be able to look into this.

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 09:54am on 04 Oct 2010, Simon Hill wrote:

I think it should be entirely the other way around - those families who choose to have children (and it is a choice) when their income is so low that they fall below a certain threshold should be denied state aid.

This would encourage people to think about whether they can afford children before they have them rather than breed first, let the state pay.
We held off having children until both my wife and I were in stable jobs that paid enough to support them - it only took a couple of years and we (and our children) are far better off having done so.

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 09:55am on 04 Oct 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

At 09:33am on 04 Oct 2010, AndyC55 wrote:
A step in the right direction.
It would be typical Labour lunacy to say that someone is so wealthy they can afford to pay taxes at higher rates and so poor they need benefits.

Here in Finland, everyone with a family gets child allowance, and giving to the wealthy is not seen as a problem. If a small country like Finland can manage without difficulty, where is the problem in the UK? It's not a matter of being poor, or lunatic, but rather of ensuring that children are cared for. Children, after all, are brought up by us all, not just the parents. Yes, I'm sure there are people who abuse the system here as well, but that price is accepted in the interests of fairness. It's not actually a sin to be wealthy, any more than it is to be poor.

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 09:55am on 04 Oct 2010, Albert wrote:

Absolutely right. This ridiculous benefit has meant the poor subsidising the rich to have kids for way too long. But why does it take so long to implement the change?

Complain about this comment
* 30. At 09:56am on 04 Oct 2010, leslog wrote:

PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED HARD AND PAID THEIR TAXES ARE ENTITLED TO THE CHILD BENEFITS, MY UNDERSTANDING IS ITS PAID TO THE MOTHER FOR THE CHILDREN ,THATS NOW TWO SEPERATE PAYMENTS FOR CHIDRENS SAVINGS, NOW SOME CHILD BENEFITS TO BE STOPPED BY THIS GOVERMENT ITS ONLY THE BEGINNING ,TO BE HONEST IM GETTING FED UP RE THE COMMENTS ABOUT WHAT LABOUR LEFT US,I LOOK AT OTHER COUNTRYS WHO ALL HAVE THE SAME PROBLEMS ,THE FAULT WITH THE BANKING SYSTEM WOULD BE A MORE APPROPRIATE COMMENT ,I REMEMBER WEEKLY LEAFLETS THROUGH MY DOOR OFFERING ME MONEY,UNIVERSAL BENEFITS DOES MEAN WE ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER ,THIS IS MEANS TESTING AT ITS WORST

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 09:57am on 04 Oct 2010, Total Mass Retain wrote:

ruffled wrote:
You sell your assets when in dire financial states and when they will achieve the most money - gold was sold at its lowest

[Type text]
level for no clear reason. The price for gold is now high – when we could do with being in a position to sell.

Not always. You sell assets when you think you can get a better return somewhere else (which may be liquidating them to pay off debts). In 2000 gold prices had been languishing for almost two decades (they are still only slightly more than in 1980 without taking inflation into account). At the time the government saw buying Euros, Yen and Dollars as providing a better return than gold. They also wished to reduce taxes (in the same way Thatcher sold off state industries to reduce taxes). The reason you can say that was a bad decision is due to that most exact but useless of investment advisors: hindsight.

In 1999/2000 when the dot com boom was underway and prior to 9/11, what reason was there to believe that gold would now be trading at $1300 an ounce? If you thought they were wrong at the time, did you buy up lots of it and are now independently wealthy? If you did, good luck to you; if you didn't you have no right to criticise for not being able to predict the future.

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Complain about this comment
* 32. At 09:57am on 04 Oct 2010, Davy G wrote:

Don't wait. Start this April.
As we are hurrying down the road to over population, how about stopping all child benifit after the third child. We appear to have another Government who are wobbling down the road of indecision and not standing up for the majority.

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 09:58am on 04 Oct 2010, AdMeus-CaputFilius wrote:

From what I have heard discussed on various news channels, it is being assumed that by 2013, the earnings level you start to pay 40% tax from will have risen to this level. Considering the difference is around 6.5k more than it starts at now, that means that if you are earning that much your tax saving will be around £975.00 (15% of the 6.5K). Child benefit for one child is £80.00 every 4 weeks so you get £1040.00, so you will actually be losing only £65.00 pa.

Obviously anyone with more than one child will lose out, but at that level of earnings, it should not be too big a hit. It is also being suggested that the 50% tax limit will be raised a little (no figs were suggested only that it could be) which would lessen the impact even more. So in reality it is only families with more than one child that will feel the pinch, but it is not that they could no afford it anyway.

It does not however, address the problem that it is normally the less well off that have bigger families. It will be interesting to see what will be done regarding that.

This should so far be seen as a positive move because it does show that the better off will be paying their part in the national debt and it is not just the less well of bearing the cost.
Trust Osborne to do something right for a change. But then ooops, only do half the job.

Some mindbending logic (or lack thereof) here if I've understood the proposal correctly.

The Deputy Head of the school I work at earns £42K pa. Her husband is a Department Head and gets about £35K. That's a combined family income of £77K. They have 3 kids, which means they get over £2K pa in Child Benefit (? don't know the exact figs as my kids are long grown up).

The Head Teacher of the another school in the city gets paid about £52K pa, he has 3 kids but his wife doesn't work, so he not only has to pay a higher rate of tax than my Deputy Head and her husband, but will not be getting Child Benefit either.

Like I said - amazing bit of logic.

I don't have a problem with high earners being deprived of universal benefits - but shouldn't it be based on household income?

I agree with the idea
Why wait til 2013?
Just make it simple, over £50000 total household income

I think the measures should have gone further.

The idea of child benefit is to help those who find it difficult to finance the cost of having a child. The benefit should have always been means tested. Previous governments ignored the issue through fear of losing votes.

I think the benefit should (in these days of over-population) be payable ONLY in respect of the first child (or the second child if the first one dies).

The changes are as expected but using the restriction (for administrative simplification) to anyone on the higher rate tax
has the perverse effect that a family with a single earner of £44K or above will not get child benefit but if there are two earners of up to £43K each they will still get it (they each get £7.5K personal allowance too so pay less tax each as well). So, some families with income of £44K won't get it but other families can earn up to £86K a year and still get it. How is that fair?

Fortunately for my family our last child is 18 before 2012 so this won't affect us anyway, but the message is clear under this government as well as the last is that they would prefer both parents in a family to work and they want to discriminate against single earning families.

This was similar to when the child tax credit was first introduced: anyone on the higher rate tax didn't get it but a dual income family on just below that threshold each could get it. When (again for simplification reasons) the threshold was essentially doubled then you have the situation that families on pretty high incomes get state benefits which is daft.

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 10:02am on 04 Oct 2010, Lee Brown wrote:

I agree 100% with this policy. There can be few sights quite as nauseating as seeing people earning high salaries jumping up and down with rage because their child benefit is to be cut. Benefits and tax relief should be targeted on people that need them, not the undeserving rich.

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 10:03am on 04 Oct 2010, Catriona wrote:

"Family 1. Two earners on £40,000 each, total income £80,000 still get child benefit.

Family 2. One earner on £45,000 family doesn't get child benefit.

Is that fair?"

I think it is. Family 1 incurs high childcare costs as both parents work, family 2 incurs a lot less expense from their children as one parent stays at home.

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 10:03am on 04 Oct 2010, Niall Firinne wrote:

Again why wait! I was never in the high earner category when my children were in that age category and my wife simply used it as her "mad money"! When I used to raise the absurdity of such a benefit with family and friends I was repeatedly reminded that in England we don't means test. Again another absurdity which hopefully is being done away with. Means testing that is simple and see as fair is the only way to economically deliver the care and support to people that actually need it.
Complain about this comment
* 42. At 10:03am on 04 Oct 2010, yorkshiremum wrote:

As a parent in receipt of child benefit I agree with the changes proposed. I have said for a long time that people on higher incomes do not need child benefit [and probably don't notice it]. I do feel however that the level should be set higher. Also the first child gets more than the rest so why can it not be a sliding scale for each child down to a certain level?

However I do not agree with cutting it altogether at 16. Some 16 year olds are still in school [year 11] and do not qualify for EMA so what are the parents to do in that year, especially those like myself who use the benefit for necessities such as school shoes and coats?

And before anyone starts wingeing on about not being able to afford children, they are the next generation and will be looking after you in your old age and paying taxes to support your pension [even if you have a private one.]

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 10:04am on 04 Oct 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

I suspect this is only the first step in scrapping Child Benefit altogether, followed by Winter Fuel allowances, tax concessions, personal allowances, state pensions, housing support, etc, etc.

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 10:04am on 04 Oct 2010, AndyC555 wrote:

"9. At 09:40am on 04 Oct 2010, Know-Dice wrote:
Let me see...

Family 1. Two earners on £40,000 each, total income £80,000 still get child benefit.

Family 2. One earner on £45,000 family doesn't get child benefit.

Is that fair?"

Jeez. Comes to something when critics of the Government are defending higher rate taxpayers!

But no, it's not fair. But I'd stop child benefits for both groups so at least Osborne has got it half right.

People seem to think the Government has a pot of its own money and is choosing to stop handing it out. No it hasn't, it is OUR money. The Government is choosing to either take less from us or is choosing to spend it on better things than giving it to comfortably off middleclass families who probably use it for the weekly wine budget.
Complain about this comment
* 45. At 10:07am on 04 Oct 2010, Alan Baker wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 46. At 10:08am on 04 Oct 2010, Nakor wrote:

1. At 09:29am on 04 Oct 2010, AndyC555 wrote:
"Why wait until 2013? Why not now?"

Simply because there's a shed load of legislation which has to be changed first.

But I approve.... It's about time.

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 10:08am on 04 Oct 2010, Mrs Vee wrote:

I support cutting child benefit but this seems perverse.

In a family where two parents earn £35k each = £70k, they will continue to receive child benefit.
In a family where only one parent works but earns £50k, they will lose their child benefit.

Seems a bit odd to me....but maybe I'm missing something.

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 10:09am on 04 Oct 2010, Virtualvalkyrie wrote:

Although we didn't 'need' it I claimed CB and looked on it as a way of recouping a tiny bit of all the tax we paid. CB for a month just about covered child care costs for a week and all child care costs came out of my pocket, no help towards it in those days! If claiming CB had meant more tax being taken off I wouldn't have bothered. I was also amazed when I continued to receive CB for both children until they were 18 or 19 as I thought it stopped at 16.

However, this does nothing about all the families who don't work or pay taxes and continue to produce children for whom they have no means of support. We could only afford two even if we wanted more. To those who say this is a myth, non-working, mostly partnerless and entirely state funded parents were my largest client group at work.

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 10:10am on 04 Oct 2010, bob6000bob wrote:

In the run-up to the election the Tories were at pains to assure voters that they had no plans to scrap the universal Child Benefit although they were clear that they would need to alter the thresholds at which Child Tax Credits/Working Family Tax Credits were paid. I see today's announcement as a straight forward betrayal of a campaign promise and for this reason I can assure the conservative party that they have now lost one vote.
Sadly I won't have the opportunity to demonstrate that for 5 years.

To be clear there is a measure of self-interest here. I can't believe that my household might be deprived of an income because I myself earn slightly over the higher rate tax threshold whereas a household with an annual income of £35,000 more than ours will still be able to claim because there are two earners and neither one is a higher rate tax payer. Where is Vince Cable and all his talk of "fairness" now?

So a family supported by a total income of £45k p.a. where one partner works and the other cares for the children, cannot possibly need help with their finances. A family with an income of £85k p.a. however might well need the extra help? It just does not make sense.

I would be more than happy to swap the child benefit in return for the ability to offset my wife's unused personal allowance against my income. That would be fair.

Complain about this comment
* 50. At 10:10am on 04 Oct 2010, Syni_cal wrote:

Why wait until 2013? It should start ASAP and should be applied to a couples joint income, not just the income of one earner.

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 10:13am on 04 Oct 2010, AndyC555 wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 52. At 10:13am on 04 Oct 2010, Chris wrote:

A very good start. Next step should be to clamp down on those who activey avoid/evade paying tax in this country, yet are wholly domiciled here. Tax havens should be shut down.

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 10:16am on 04 Oct 2010, roberto67 wrote:

By all means stop child benefit for the rich but THIS WAY IS REALLY STUPID.

EG a woman who stays at home to take care of her own children and look after ill elderly parents and doesn't claim benfits will be punished, If the husband is earning £45000 then they will lose child benefit. A couple earning jointly £80000 WILL receive child benefit!!!!!Fair?

Tory solution send the wife back to work and let the state pay for elderly care and child care which will cost the govt more AND the wife is then taking a job where there are some families that do not even have one parent working and are desperate for work!! STUPID STUPID

[Type text]
Complain about this comment
* 54. At 10:17am on 04 Oct 2010, Nina wrote:

I do see why they are doing this but I think that it is done wrongly. If a mother is on her own with children as her husband has left her and she earns £45K a year, why should she not get it when a family with two parents on the lower tax rate but earning £35K a year each which is £70k between them still get it. I think that is where it is unfair. I think that it should just be scrapped and those families who are struggling should get some kind of help, but the population has to remember that having children is a choice and by making that choice you are forcing hard working people who pay tax to fund them? It is a good idea, and it probably is fair, but I do not know yet whether it is fair or not. But for high earners I fail to see how a small amount of money really affects them to that extent but it does save the country a lot of money. Personally I would have scrapped it altogether. It was a universal benefit so really it should be universally scrapped. I did agree with the higher rate of VAT as that does not affect the poor at all. People say that it does but anyone who knows anything knows that poor people only buy essentials such as gas and electricity which is at about 5% vat and food which is 0% vat and children's clothes also at 0% vat and if everyday essentials there is barely a difference in price. It really is only noticeable when you buy expensive items such as cars etc. where you are spending thousands of pounds.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 10:19am on 04 Oct 2010, sheila coleman wrote:

I am a pensioner now so does not affect me, but the cut off point seems a little low. What I would like to see is child credits for a maximum of two children only. We have the so called 'deprived' who just will not work breeding like rabbits and claiming far more than the £44,000 [not counting housing benefit, free dental treatment etc] that is to be the cut off point, so these so called 'poor and vulnerable' will still be laughing their heads off. If we are 'all in together' this should be the starting point, not taxing people who do go out to work.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 10:20am on 04 Oct 2010, Shaun Hollingworth wrote:

Both parents earning beyond £80,000 between them (40K+ each) don't lose their child benefits, but one parent earning £45,000 to support a FULL TIME PARTNER PARENT and their children does? Another crazy example of rather stupid governments who simply do not think things through. This is an attack on families, who think it best (and are fortunate enough) to have one partner parenting full time. This is a difficult job in itself, but I think children benefit greatly when this is possible. In a fair society, the working partner (paying tax at any level) who is wholly supporting another full time parent should be able to claim the tax allowance of that parent.
"Mr Osborne said he expected the public to accept that it was not fair to tax someone earning £18,000 a year to pay child benefit to someone earning £50,000."

Well Mr Osborne is wrong, and very misguided. I am sure that someone earning £50,000 per year, pays enough tax AND "national insurance" (another con) THEMSELVES to cover THEIR OWN family's meagre child benefit. When one person is WHOLLY supporting TWO OR MORE people , is it really right and fair that they are still expected to pay the same amount of tax as a single person or couple with no such responsibilities ? Is it right that they lose the only extra support they get for their children ? Personally I don't think so. £44,000 isn't that much these days. Especially when one parent isn't earning, in a family with two or three children. Remember too the higher rate tax allowances haven't gone up much in recent years either as our governments rob us more and more.

Soon there will be no allowances to anyone. The government have gradually eroded ALL tax reliefs for everyone, including the basic allowances for very high earners. What comes next ? Owing the government tax before one earns anything ? IE negative tax allowances ? Taxing children's pocket money ?

Rip off Britain strikes again.

I have never seen so many twisted, and probably jealous, "I am childless so why should I pay for other people's children" on HYS. If you choose to be childless then fair enough but where do all the firefighters, nurses, policemen, doctors and other essential workers come from to "serve" them in their lonely, twisted and bitter dottage?

Presumably they also don't want to pay for education, pre and post natal and infant immunisation programs.

I tend to agree that high earners, I was one of them, don't need CB but 44K is not a lot of money and the idea that it is based on the top earner and not household income is stupid and unfair.

What we are talking about here is hard working family men and women that are having benefits removed because the earn slightly higher than others. It is the breeders of children that never work a day in their lives that should be hit not workers.

Lee Brown, these people are not rich they just earn a good wage. They are not undeserving because their higher taxes in the first place are what funds this country the most. I think the undeserving are the ones who never want a job and have never worked under a labour government because they think it is easier by having children and getting £200 plus a week per child and get
an individual house with a garden and get everything for free. They are undeserving. The rich pay the most tax and so really are not undeserving. Just like those who are not rich but work really hard all their lives. They are not undeserving either. The rich are actually those who have wealth, not those earning £40K plus a year.

Complain about this comment

* 59. At 10:20am on 04 Oct 2010, Dai the Tie wrote:

It should include joint incomes totalling in excess of £44k, too irrespective of tax. Below that child benefit should be means tested.

Complain about this comment

* 60. At 10:21am on 04 Oct 2010, 1stTopic wrote:

A step in the right direction, now we need to gradually reduce these payments to only the first child. This will help reduce the population expansion in Britain and make a start towards stabilising and reducing overpopulation which is the largest problem in the world and needs to be recognised as such.

Complain about this comment

* 61. At 10:21am on 04 Oct 2010, ady wrote:

The middle classes are soaking us for billions, all their benefits need to be means tested.

People on 10k a year should never ever be subsidising people on 30k a year, it's perverse...the system has lost its way.

Child benefit, child and working tax credits, state retirement pension, winter fuel allowance, statutory maternity pay.

They should ALL be means tested.

The welfare system was invented for the "abolition of want", for those people with nothing who had fallen on hard times, not for bribing middle class voters.

Complain about this comment

* 62. At 10:21am on 04 Oct 2010, pragmatickev wrote:

I don't know how many people heard the Today programme interview with Mr Osbourne. It confirmed an ill thought out poorly conceived policy, which has clearly been rushed through as a headline grabber at the party conference to cover many of the other policies in a similar vein.

Also, slightly off the point, what of the blatant u-turn by our beloved prime minister on how the cuts aren't going to be half as bad as we thought?

It is high time this crude political manoeuvring (by all parties) was pointed up by so called political reporters. New
government tells us it's all terrible. Three months later, in the blink of an eye, by superb policies they perform a Batman-like escape. It's many years since I read Macchiavelli but I bet it's down there in his stuff.

This isn't a political point because they have all done it at some point, but isn't it getting very very boring now?

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 10:21am on 04 Oct 2010, David Sizer wrote:

This should have been acted upon years ago instead of throwing state benefits at people. All benefits must be means tested, and given to people that really need it. Perhaps the next course of action will be the £250 heating allowance again paid without being means tested, and given to some of the wealthiest people in the country.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 10:22am on 04 Oct 2010, alison wrote:

It is unfair that the cut off point is not per household but applied to the individual. My husband earns just over £44k pa but a couple next door may earn £43k each totalling £86k but still receive child benefit.

Anyway, the reality of my husbands take home pay means that I work part time (we work 7 days a week) to pay our way, we don't have enough money for extras and I rely on that money to buy clothes, shoes and at times food for my children.

It is very easy for the ignorant to describe us as High earners but the reality is very different.

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 10:22am on 04 Oct 2010, helen_back wrote:

The claiming of child benefit by people earning those kinds of sums of money is just wrong. Another example of pure greed, claiming money just because they 'can'. Whether they need it or not.

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 10:23am on 04 Oct 2010, RightWingIDBanned wrote:

I don't support waiting until 2013. We elected them to get the hell on with it.

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 10:23am on 04 Oct 2010, Craig Miller wrote:

"9. At 09:40am on 04 Oct 2010, Know-Dice wrote:

Let me see...

Family 1. Two earners on £40,000 each, total income £80,000 still get child benefit.

[Type text]
Family 2. One earner on £45,000 family doesn't get child benefit.

Is that fair?"

Yes you are right, it isn't fair. However, it would be very expansive to organise a means tested system at the moment, especially as you would then have to police it to make sure no-one cheated.

After a few years, and when the single benefit payment comes in, you might find the balance being re-dressed then.

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 10:24am on 04 Oct 2010, Rabbac wrote:

ruffled_feathers wrote: But these days £44,000 isn't that large a salary.

What planet are you on Ruffled. I earn just under 17k and so does my partner in what i regard as a reasonable, non professional job which combined doesn't even equal 44k. If you cant live on 44k a year you should look at yourself and lifestyle. Its nonsense to suggest these people should get child benefit. I would cut it down to less than than.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 10:25am on 04 Oct 2010, Tory Bankers Stole My Cash wrote:

I support this change to child benefit - rich people don't need it.

However, "Ozzy" Osbourne's claim that "we are all in this together" rings very hollow. The only people profiting from this crazy coalition's economic "policies" are the bankers.

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 10:25am on 04 Oct 2010, maryjanes wrote:

Great idea. Go for it George. I get benefit for two children at present. My husband earns less than the threshold and I earn even less than him but I don't think we should get the benefit. Of course, it is nice to have, but I can't honestly put my hand on my heart and say I need it. My children wouldn't be hungry or shoeless without it. Cuts need to happen.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 10:25am on 04 Oct 2010, lefty_lefty wrote:

This isn't a matter of fairness. It's a numbers game. The bottom line is the most important thing. It would cost too much to means test everybody.

You can't have your cake and eat it as well. You can't complain about "bureaucracy" and then kick up a fuss when a
government implements the most cost effect away of implementing a new policy.

As soon as you start realising this is nothing fair about this government the better. You voted them in middle england; enjoy the ride.

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 10:26am on 04 Oct 2010, James Rigby wrote:

I'd support this if it was combined with transferable personal allowances, in which a working person could utilise the unused part of a non-working partner's tax allowance.

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 10:26am on 04 Oct 2010, NotMeHonest wrote:

Yes, as long as this will be the first in a series of effective moves to take benefits away from people who don't NEED AND DESERVE them, and save the country a fortune. We are spending far too much money on people who don't deserve any sort of support at all.

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 10:26am on 04 Oct 2010, M4NCUNIA wrote:

The gov't has to make cuts. Cuts will impact someone. Please, please don't tell me that someone on higher rate tax can't take the impact. It's just patronising. People who earn significantly less than those on higher rate tax are having to accept cuts too, and they have less scope for dealing with those cuts! We're all in this together - and never forget the need for cuts is down to Labour! Again!

Also, I don't mean to be funny, but child benefit is a part of the welfare system? No? Seriously, hand on heart, do those who end up in the higher tax bracket consider they need to be subsidised by the Welfare State? Seriously? Come off it. The welfare state should be there to help the needy, not just hand out tax payers money as a nice subsidy or gift!

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 10:26am on 04 Oct 2010, Jason wrote:

If a couple can afford a stay at home parent they're presumably saving on childcare costs which a 2-working parent family will be paying out for.

If you're starting a family you have to be responsible and consider whether you can afford to, and not rely on government benefits / credits which may or may not exist in the future.

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 10:27am on 04 Oct 2010, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:

I think it is a step in the right direction,
There are those that claim that £37000 (40% tax rate begins at £37000 not £44000) is not a lot these days, compared to what exactly, £140'000 claimed by MP's as expenses every single year by almost every single member of parliament, no it is not a lot compared to that. compared to every single vacancy in the town i currently live in it would be 3x the average and double the best paid.

All benefits should be means tested and so should entitlements.  
If you cannot manage as a family to live on £37000 a year then you are living beyond your means simples!!.  
I have never earned more than £20k a year ever.!!

Complain about this comment  
* 77. At 10:27am on 04 Oct 2010, bob bobwell wrote:

23. At 09:51am on 04 Oct 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote:  
"Simple answer, if you cannot afford children, then like a Ferrari, go without."

I don't think you appreciate how expensive it is to run a Ferrari. The cost of even routine servicing is ridiculous, let alone if something goes wrong. The engine needs to come out and be re-built at least once a year. It's never-ending. If they stop child benefits then I will probably have to sell it.

Complain about this comment  
* 78. At 10:28am on 04 Oct 2010, Total Mass Retain wrote:

40. At 10:03am on 04 Oct 2010, Catriona wrote:  
"Family 1. Two earners on £40,000 each, total income £80,000 still get child benefit.  
Family 2. One earner on £45,000 family doesn't get child benefit.

Is that fair?"

I think it is. Family 1 incurs high childcare costs as both parents work, family 2 incurs a lot less expense from their children as one parent stays at home.

So what? That's their choice (the single earner family gets no state help so why should dual income families).

The couple each earning £40K each take home between them about £60K after tax and NI. The single earner on £45K takes home about £32K, so the dual income family have TWICE the net income of that single earner who gets no child benefit. They can fund their childcare costs from that extra £28K without requiring any help from the taxpayer.

Complain about this comment  
* 79. At 10:28am on 04 Oct 2010, Eric Clarke wrote:
Long overdue and should apply to couples as well - if you can't feed don't breed - simples !!!

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 10:29am on 04 Oct 2010, lotty wrote:

  i think in someway they are doing the right thing as long as they dont get families more into debt by not giving child benefit to families that need it.
  I also feel they should help families like me i am a mum of four with only husbands income i want to go to work but with four children in education its hard to get a term time job and feel the government should make companies provide TERM TIME CONTRACTS for mums/dads who want to work when all children are in full time education and are unable to pay child care during holidays

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 10:29am on 04 Oct 2010, Tez wrote:

  Yes!

  Those who earn ENOUGH to support their family, should not receive 'Child-benefit' - that's just Greed - not much better than the 'Bankers' really.
  But this benefit should also be limited to a maximum of THREE Children - and it should end at School-leaving age.
  We especially cannot afford unemployed, single-parents to continue to have more and more Children that will have to be 'housed' and TOTALLY supported via benefits.
  I hope the LIBDEMS reconsider this TOO - although I doubt it - TOO PC...

  There is NO other effective way of returning our Benefit-farce to reality.

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 10:29am on 04 Oct 2010, sophiamandava wrote:

  If two partners earn 43k each=86k. They can Claim child benefit but not a single earner earning 44k.I don't think Tories are fair,And they don't like home-makers.come on George at least try to be fair.

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 10:30am on 04 Oct 2010, Charlotte wrote:

  Given the state of the economy I can understand that those with more pay more, HOWEVER, how a household with a single income of £44k can lose this whilst 2 people with a joint income of £80k can keep it beggars belief. Surely if those with more are to pay more, then this should be universal and not just targeted at those with one income!

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 10:30am on 04 Oct 2010, Jason wrote:
I'd have liked to have seen child benefit restricted, for new babies only, to the first 2 children only.

If couples choose to have larger families they should be certain that they alone can support them.

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 10:30am on 04 Oct 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:

"Do you support Child Benefit changes"?

You have to look at the history of this Benefit, and it's original purpose after WWII Britain and that it is paid directly to the mother, or main carer.

Interestingly, the Chancellor is less interested in cutting costs on Child Benefit, but setting a legal precedent on this one, by forming a means-test on this universal benefit of around £20.50pw per child. Think about it?

I would hope that he would also ensure that Child Benefit will also not go children and mothers who have never lived here; but had their babies here and permanently live abroad too, whose fathers living here access other benefits fraudulently on the back of that 'benefit gateway'?

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 10:30am on 04 Oct 2010, valensname wrote:

I agree with some of the other posters, why do we give money to people who have children. The majority of these people it seems let their children run riot and do not care how they talk or treat other children and adults. It might make people think twice about how they bring their children up and make them responsible parents. For these parents who say they cannot afford children without the help is simple don't have them or cut down on your luxuries of £20 a week. Leave out the sweets and chocolate cakes as much etc. After all the parents on the lower brackets are still going to get the help so what is the problem?

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 10:32am on 04 Oct 2010, The Milk Man wrote:

Great news! I'd actually like to see the child benefit scrapped altogether and the money just put directly into free school meals, books, subsidised equipment and uniforms for those on lesser incomes.

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 10:33am on 04 Oct 2010, DibbySpot wrote:

While broadly supportive of revising the Universality of Child Benefit the measure as proposed fails the fairness test. It cannot be right that a single earner on higher tax looses the household benefit before those on higher total household income. This is clearly simple but unfair.
Meanwhile there are broader issues that have not been addressed such as:

+ Ending child benefit after the 3rd child - so placing a ceiling on benefit
+ Ending child benefit after the child reaches 16 - they can get a Saturday job then

Something has to be done for the benefit that is true but above all it must be fair. Sadly this measure fails that test. It also fails the speed test something needs to be done now not 2013.

Complain about this comment

* 89. At 10:33am on 04 Oct 2010, Kasia wrote:

For a society (and government) that endorses the significance of the 'family' so much, this seems like a counter-intuitive move and also a poorly-thought out plan. The fact that a single-parent on £44,500 (thus such a household income) will lose the child benefit while two parents earning a combined income of just under £88,000 will continue to receive it is completely irrational. Osborne's argument that this is the only way to avoid a 'complex', means-tested system is unacceptable: it is his JOB to set up systems that are fair rather than going for the simple knee-jerk reaction to make some cuts. However, there is a good chance that this decision has actually been made with deeper ideological intentions (the ethics of which I would question): this strategy aims to give extra incentive for people to avoid being single parents (at all costs) and live together - in marriage, preferably - in order to continue receiving child state support amongst other benefits. As idealistic as this might be, it is simply not possible for many families going through disintegration and enough distress as it is without having the benefit rug swept from under their feet.

Complain about this comment

* 90. At 10:33am on 04 Oct 2010, richardjackson99 wrote:

Doesn't sound an unreasonable measure to help the country's finances.
I would like to broaden the question somewhat: Why pay Child Benefit at all? Surely, if you announce that there will be no benefit paid to children born from 1st. from April 2013, you will have given people sufficient notice? I am proposing this because our planet is overpopulated, this island in particular, and we will never successfully address this issue, while we reward people to have more children.
I may have missed something, so, as my school teachers would have said, discuss:

Complain about this comment

* 91. At 10:34am on 04 Oct 2010, M4NCUNIA wrote:
On the point of "means testing": Osbourne has made the right decision, in my opinion. The question is not one of whether people can fill out a simple form so that total household income (i.e. 2 parents vs 1) can be assessed or not. No, the question is what is the purpose of this exercise - it is to save money for the country!

Little point then in creating more work (i.e. requiring more civil servants, more computers, a new computer system etc) by assessing the forms and "means testing" each house. I can well imagine that the £1 billion expected savings would then largely be swallowed up by yet another inefficient gov't dept and new computer system. THAT, my friends, is Labour's way of doing things! No, much better, at this difficult time to go with a simpler method that allows the vast majority of the savings to be used to pay off our national debt - accrued under Labour's watch. Again!

Complain about this comment
* 92. At 10:34am on 04 Oct 2010, rob wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 93. At 10:35am on 04 Oct 2010, Dai the Tie wrote:

61. At 10:21am on 04 Oct 2010, ady wrote:
The middle classes are soaking us for billions, all their benefits need to be means tested.

People on 10k a year should never ever be subsidising people on 30k a year, it's perverse...the system has lost its way.

Child benefit, child and working tax credits, state retirement pension, winter fuel allowance, statutory maternity pay.

They should ALL be means tested.

The welfare system was invented for the "abolition of want", for those people with nothing who had fallen on hard times, not for bribing middle class voters.

Hear hear!

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 10:36am on 04 Oct 2010, Reasoned Rants wrote:

Scrap it completely - and do it now.

If you can't afford to have children, don't have them.

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 10:36am on 04 Oct 2010, Humpty_Numpty wrote:

[Type text]
So, where parents are separated and the person caring for the child is not working, they could lose their child benefit if their partner is earning over £44000. Cool. Well done Georgie Boy.

Complain about this comment
* 96. At 10:37am on 04 Oct 2010, Total Mass Retain wrote:

57. At 10:20am on 04 Oct 2010, Graham wrote:
I have never seen so many twisted, and probably jealous, "I am childless so why should I pay for other people's children" on HYS. If you choose to be childless then fair enough but where do all the firefighters, nurses, policemen, doctors and other essential workers come from to "serve" them in their lonely, twisted and bitter dottage?

Presumably they also don't want to pay for education, pre and post natal and infant immunisation programs.

I agree. These people also ignore the fact that their parents were in receipt of child benefit (or family allowance before 1977) and they also received (or were entitled to receive) state education, NHS care as children etc. Contributing to society's need to bring to adulthood coming generations of workers who are well educated and healthy is merely doing what was done for them. As you say, those who will be providing essential services, paying taxes and paying their pension when they can no longer contribute to society anymore but will be dependent upon it again, are the children of other people.

And before these dinkies and sinkies come back saying they are funding their own pensions, thank you very much, they clearly don't realise that the value of their pension when they need it is dependent on economic growth at the time they cash it in, not when they build up the fund. This is the reason pension funds are trashing right now due to long term (lack of) confidence on returns.

Complain about this comment
* 97. At 10:38am on 04 Oct 2010, lfdw12 wrote:

The last couple of years I have worked as much overtime as possible to enable me to keep a roof over my wife and children's heads. The last 2 years I have earned £45,000. I AM STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE. My wife stays at home looking after our children, isn't this what MP's keep saying they want us to do. We waited to have our 4 children until such time as we could afford them. Then we get hit with higher taxes, VAT, fuel costs, food and now I am even forced to pay tax on my 10 year old's clothes because she is too tall (definitely not FAT.) This announcement will cripple us. Neither my wife or myself have ever been on the dole or claimed any other benefits. We both had mortgages by the time we were 19. I feel like quitting my job and doing what the rest of the scroungers do in this country. Just let me keep all my wages and I will look after my family and not expect any further help.
Complain about this comment
* 98. At 10:38am on 04 Oct 2010, MavicChen wrote:

I don't earn over £44,000, but might well do by 2013. I work non-stop, working a full time job and running my own business with my Wife in my spare time. I live in a very average house in a fairly poor area and need every penny I earn just to get by. I will definitely miss the £80 per month child benefit come 2013.

A much better solution would be to cap the number of children that the benefit pays out for, perhaps at 2. This would put an end to the people that seem to exist solely on benefits and churn out children at a rate of around 1 per year, and whom are likely to grow up to abuse the system in exactly the same way.

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 10:39am on 04 Oct 2010, mintman60 wrote:

Child benefit is to be axed for higher rate taxpayers from 2013, Chancellor George Osborne has announced. What is your reaction?"

This is a great we're all in it together soundbite for now but by 2013 we will probably have forgotten.

One thing I say to those who say we shouldn't pay for people to have children my would be yes pay upto a number of 2. BUT children are our future, if we look rationally we can never afford them. Do I feel that I could trust that in my old age the state will be able to provide care for me- probably not the way things are going, or that my children will be around to help me. I would also to those chosing not to have kids who will be the nurses, doctors, care workers and tax payers of the future -the children of today. Child benefit should be seen as an investment.

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 10:39am on 04 Oct 2010, Total Mass Retain wrote:

76. At 10:27am on 04 Oct 2010, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:
I think it is a step in the right direction, There are those that claim that £37000 (40% tax rate begins at £37000 not £44000) is ...

You are forgetting the personal allowance of about £7K. The 40% tax rate comes in at the personal allowance plus £37K, so around £44K.
Do sons have it easier than daughters?

Mothers are harder on their daughters than their sons, according to a survey by a parenting website. Is this your experience?

Netmums found mothers were twice as likely to be critical of their daughters than their sons — even though half of the 2,672 mothers questioned said they thought it was wrong to treat boys and girls differently.

Boys were more likely to be described with positive traits such as funny, cheeky, playful and loving, while girls were given the labels stroppy, eager to please, serious and argumentative.

Do you agree with the findings? Do you find it hard to treat your children fairly? Did your mother treat you and your siblings equally? Do daughters benefit from tougher parenting?

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

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Comments

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  * 1. At 02:11am on 06 Oct 2010, Trueorfalso wrote:

    This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

  * 2. At 03:47am on 06 Oct 2010, jaytirth wrote:

    On the contrary, I feel parents and people in general are gentle towards girls.

    Complain about this comment

  * 3. At 04:16am on 06 Oct 2010, Icebloo wrote:

    This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

  * 4. At 05:47am on 06 Oct 2010, lordBanners wrote:

[Type text]
I give my children preference by AGE. Not much, but just enough to instill RESPECT.

Similar study would probably prove Fathers dolting more on their Daughters.

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 06:04am on 06 Oct 2010, Aneeta Trikk wrote:

Serious survey of parental practice from Netmums? Are you having a laugh BBC?

Complain about this comment
* 6. At 06:13am on 06 Oct 2010, Trollicus wrote:

Let me see, a web site on parenting with a MAJORITY of users being women has asked if mothers were more critical of daughters.... and this is the result..... I think the best word I can come up with to describe these results is duhhhhh..... That's like asking kids if carrots are more healthy than candy.

Now go on a website that has more men than women and ask about fathers and sons, guess what the results will be? (I don't think we even need to have this survey now do we?)

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 06:14am on 06 Oct 2010, Trollicus wrote:

Still in moderation.

Alright I'm sorry BBC, no more jokes about cannibalism, I promise.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 06:34am on 06 Oct 2010, chrislabiff wrote:

What a dumb subject.

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 06:36am on 06 Oct 2010, RitaKleppmann wrote:

We have twins. Both boys. Non-identical. I treat them differently. This is because, from the very first minutes after birth they showed different character traits - one was placid and the other restless. They are now 21 and still show the same traits - which still elicit different responses from me.

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 06:52am on 06 Oct 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:

"Do these issues make you worry about having more than one child?"
Unfortunately, in many instances, it clearly hasn't worried people who can't afford to bring up more than one child.

My mother-in-law always wanted a daughter, and spoiled her daughter which she did not do with her two older sons.

Everyone's going to be different, aren't they? Is there no other news?

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 07:11am on 06 Oct 2010, solomondogs wrote:

Well of course they are, how else are they to grow up moaning that they have had it harder than anyone in history?

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 07:13am on 06 Oct 2010, solomondogs wrote:

I've just realised it was a netmums survey, sorry i took it seriously!

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 07:28am on 06 Oct 2010, suzie127 wrote:

My mother did treat me differently to my brothers, in some ways stricter in some ways softer. She thought as a girl the world would hit me hard enough when I became a woman. How right she was.

Complain about this comment
* 14. At 07:33am on 06 Oct 2010, bob bobwell wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 15. At 07:55am on 06 Oct 2010, martin3647 wrote:

"8. At 06:34am on 06 Oct 2010, chrislabiff wrote: What a dumb subject"

Couldn't agree more

Complain about this comment
* 16. At 07:57am on 06 Oct 2010, Virtualvalkyrie wrote:

I don't have a son, but I am extremely fond of my son-in-law.

Complain about this comment
* 17. At 08:16am on 06 Oct 2010, Horse wrote:

'Mothers are harder on their daughters than their sons' Women doing each other down?
who'd have thunk it?

Stereotypes and casual sexism aside isn't this balanced by the fact that Fathers are normally far harder on their sons?

Complain about this comment
* 18. At 08:25am on 06 Oct 2010, Shoogly Peg wrote:

"Netmums found mothers were twice as likely to be critical of their daughters than their sons - even though half of the 2,672 mothers questioned said they thought it was wrong to treat boys and girls differently."

Interesting. It could be re-phrased as "Women prejudice toward own off spring because they are female" or "Women threatened by other females, including own daughters".

I might be wrong of course but since I work in an environment where there are more or less and equal number of men and women across the board, women hate other women for some reason.

Complain about this comment
* 19. At 08:29am on 06 Oct 2010, smilingparrotfan wrote:

What a dumb daft question to ask. Is there a shortage of subject matter ?

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 08:32am on 06 Oct 2010, DibbySpot wrote:

Certainly I try and treat them equally, however it comes down to personalities and capabilities. My son needs to think about what he does and says, his sister - who at this age is brighter - needs to focus on behaviours.

I understand the issues particularly with sons since boys develop more slowly intellectually and risk the late developer issues. Irrespective I feel very strongly that in modern life it is boys who face the greatest challenges.

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 08:32am on 06 Oct 2010, signalnorth wrote:

What an awful subject for debate. Get a grip BBC

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 08:33am on 06 Oct 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:

This has got to be the stupid question ever posed on HYS.

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 08:37am on 06 Oct 2010, Megan wrote:

Difficult to tell, as I only have a daughter!
As a teacher, however, I require equally high standards of behaviour and effort from both male and female students. Gender is of no relevance whatsoever, likewise ethnicity, religion, sexual preference or any other irrelevancy. ALL students are required to be polite, attentive in class, and to work to the best of their ability.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 08:37am on 06 Oct 2010, Dorfkcots wrote:

As a dad I see this in action every day!

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 08:43am on 06 Oct 2010, bob bobwell wrote:

19. At 08:29am on 06 Oct 2010, smilingparrotfan wrote: "What a dumb daft question to ask. Is there a shortage of subject matter?"

Clearly for the netmums users there is. I guess they can't discuss prams and breast pumps all day.

Complain about this comment
* 26. At 08:44am on 06 Oct 2010, DoleBoy wrote:

I was hoping for Ken's brilliant new prison regime to discuss and brighten my day. However, for the record there is a great deal of transference between parent and sibling, parallel process, in other words women are their own worst enemy. My daughter is always expected to do the housework, while her brothers sit on their arses doing nowt! After years of oppression and indoctrination by her mum, peers and media my daughter feels it is her duty to comply, complain and shout but do it. I have noticed, as she gets older that her biggest enemy are other females, they are ruthless, where boys tend to face each other and one backs down, women carry on relentlessly, bullying, bitching and changing friends. Apparently this is all to do with some animal instinct; all about getting the best bloke to have kids with, weird or what?

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 08:44am on 06 Oct 2010, Angryfinlandfff wrote:

I personally try to be equally as hard on both my son and my daughter. Of course i have to take into account the fact that my son is 3 years older, but they both have their jobs to do each day and get an allowance accordingly. It can be hard to remember the age difference sometimes, but I at least hope that I am succeeding in bringing them up to believe as I do that genetic differences not withstanding there is no difference between males and females of the human species.

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 08:48am on 06 Oct 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:
Now we are going to get the middle class mums hit with child benefit cuts maybe they should get out and find jobs instead of sitting at home writing rubbish like this.

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 08:48am on 06 Oct 2010, bob bobwell wrote:

A suggestion: rather than just say how pointless the debate is, why not spice it up by posting antagonistic statements?

Complain about this comment
* 30. At 08:49am on 06 Oct 2010, Horse wrote:

8. At 06:34am on 06 Oct 2010, chrislabiff wrote:
What a dumb subject.
---

Agreed, lets do 'Do women hate women?'

'A recent survey based on pretty much nothing has found that when a woman finds a knife in her back, professionally, socially or romantically, 99.9% of the time its been put there by another woman'

Discuss.

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 08:50am on 06 Oct 2010, Simon Hill wrote:

It does seem rather obvious that mothers will favour their sons over their daughters and, as many have mentioned already, you would imagine that a similar survey on a male dominated web site would suggest that the opposite is true of fathers.

I would propose that this is not so, as a father of two sons, I would say that I favour my car over either of them.....

Complain about this comment
* 32. At 08:57am on 06 Oct 2010, stevegrant wrote:

What a load of nonsense.

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 09:08am on 06 Oct 2010, bob bobwell wrote:

27. At 08:44am on 06 Oct 2010, Angryfinlandfff wrote: "I am succeeding in bringing them up to believe as I do that genetic differences not withstanding there is no difference between males and females of the human species."

Very modern and PC of you, but probably a huge mistake. Men and women should be able to recognise, respect and even *admire* the differences between genders. Men and women can make a great team together when they appreciate how differently they view the world.
You only have to look at 'Mr & Mrs Smith' for evidence of this. In the end they triumphed in an armed stand-off in a shopping mall when heavily out-gunned by the (probably all-male) opposition.

Consider the similarly themed but less successful mono-gendered pairing of Butch & Sundance as further support to this theory.

Complain about this comment
* 34. At 09:19am on 06 Oct 2010, entreril00404 wrote:

"Netmums"?

Gaahh! Is this seriously the best the BBC can do as a source of a discussion topic now? An all-female, by choice, organisation of mums admits to treating daughters more strictly than sons, so you ask the question "Do sons have it easier than daughters?" without ever even considering how FATHERS treat their sons and daughters.

Newsflash: Children are raised by FATHERS too, so unless you take the father's influence into account and deal with how fathers as well as mothers treat sons and daughters respectively, you aren't going to get an answer to your question, are you?

Complain about this comment
* 35. At 09:24am on 06 Oct 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents and the second half by our children.

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 09:26am on 06 Oct 2010, Dorotheen Strass wrote:

Sadly, what Netmums has found out is probably true. My son and daughter are now in their late thirties/early forties and I probably did favour my son over my daughter and was less critical of him than of her, especially in those teen years. If I had it to do over again I would be equally praising of the both of them, who both turned out to be very nice adults. Interestingly it is my daughter who is always there for me now and to whom I am closer. I am sorry my darling little girl. If I could do it over again I would do it differently.

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 09:26am on 06 Oct 2010, ian cheese wrote:

It is only natural that because of the 'gender' factor, fathers relate better to their daughters & mothers to their sons. All this nonsense in Asian & primitive societies about favouring only male offspring because then the family name & lineage will continue cuts no ice with educated people in the West.
Complain about this comment
* 38. At 09:28am on 06 Oct 2010, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 39. At 09:31am on 06 Oct 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:

On the contrary, I think parents are more critical of boys than girls. Mothers always like to dress up their daughters and have you never heard the term "Daddy's girl".

BBC has a reputation throughout the world for being serious and quite frankly you are not living up to your reputation. Please get real and raise more serious debates or will this stress the moderators too much.

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 09:33am on 06 Oct 2010, DW1957 wrote:

100% yes. Kipling got it right when he said that many women had a tremendous struggle not to hate their mothers.

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 09:34am on 06 Oct 2010, entropydave wrote:

Of course I favour my sons over my daughters.... I have no daughters.
A ridiculous and poorly conducted research, designed to be divisive.

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 09:35am on 06 Oct 2010, Call_Me_Col wrote:

As a Step dad, I find that my wife tends to favour our daughter over our son. Then again they live with their real dad and we only get to see them every other weekend. Friends coming over for the evening, Shopping trips and Taxi services are more likely to be for our daughters benefit (Then again she has a part time job and pays most of her own way now).

Our son is younger (Both teenagers) but more self sufficient and happy to spend a whole day fishing on his own, or a long night sat in front of the playstation. He tends not to have friends over (I'm sure the wife thinks they'll trash the house), and there's no way he'll get away with hanging around the streets with the local hoodie brigade.

I get accused of spoiling our son, especially when I buy "myself" a spare sea fishing rod and real (After all you can never have too many fishing rods) or when I want to buy playstations games and I choose ones we both like (I may be in my forties, but that doesn't mean I don't like CoD).

Then again, I also get accused of spoiling our daughter..... :)

[Type text]
That said, this is still a non-topic. come on Auntie, give us a decent one to chew on...

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 09:39am on 06 Oct 2010, Trina wrote:

My Mum's not too fond of her daughter in law if that means anything... and my bloke's mother detests me...?

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 09:41am on 06 Oct 2010, chezza100 wrote:

My parents treated me different from my brothers and my Dad has openly admitted it was because I was the oldest and they came down harder on me.

I doubt it has anything to do with the fact I was the only daughter though - it was just the pecking order and my youngest brother got away with far more than I did.

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 09:44am on 06 Oct 2010, Alan Baker wrote:

Netmums! A totally pointless organisation of coffee morning women discussing their brats, and what rubbish subject for HYS.

Now how about asking why no one is interested in the commonwealth games and why the stadiums are empty and will the GB Olympics go the same way (hopefully), and if it does then can we put an end to all this athletics circus, get rid of the sickening Seb Coe and company stop wasting UK taxpayers money on a collection of minor sport’s events that clearly no one is interested in.

Complain about this comment
* 46. At 09:44am on 06 Oct 2010, EBAYTKMAX wrote:

We have one of each! The boy is naughty & 'hard work'. He causes trouble at home & school! His sister is "a pleasure to teach" said by all her Teachers.

She is opposite to the 'findings's she is fun, easy going & happy, he on the other hand is grumpy, hard to please, disobedient, I could go on & on & on.... we wanted twins but we wouldn't have been able to cope!!!!!!!

He told me yesterday, in ONE MONTH last year he had detention 17 times!!! Daughter, like her parents hasn't had any.

He NEVER does his homework, she does. He dosen't like peace, she does. Every morning when they come down .... he hits her over the head with the cushion!! So I've had to remove them.

It takes him 2 HOURS to come home from school, his sister at the same school is home in 30 minutes....
If we treated him with kid gloves he's steamroll you!!! Thank goodness he has a Mum & a Dad! I applaud thoses who bring up children well, on their own, for it can't be 'easy'.

It is hard to treat them the SAME for they are not the same.

Growing up in my family boys were treated different to girls - boys could do nothing, while the girls had to do the housework!!!

Alright I'm sorry BBC, no more jokes about cannibalism, I promise.

That's interesting: I had a post removed a couple of weeks ago, for suggesting cannibalism as a solution to both food shortages and population growth! Tongue firmly in cheek, of course. But cannibalism seems to be a touchy subject with the moderators, for some reason, even if the intention is humorous. Perhaps they consider it... er... bad taste (sorry!)

Netdogs have found 75% of people treat their dogs better than both sons and daughters.

I think this is probably because on the whole little boys are SO much nicer than little girls.

Her daughter however (5) has no capacity seemingly to have any kind of empathy for anyone but herself. She is totally 100% selfish. She is obsessed with attention and doesn't care if its positive or negative. She is a total nightmare to live with.

39. At 09:31am on 06 Oct 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:
On the contrary, I think parents are more critical of boys than girls. Mothers always like to dress up their daughters and have you never heard the term "Daddy's girl".
Yep - and I've also heard the one "Mummy's boy".

Speaking from experience, as the only girl in my family I know only too well how much easier my mother was on my brothers than me. They were allowed to do as they liked, I was ruled with a rod of iron and screamed at if I did the slightest thing to displease her. My role, apparently, was to babysit younger brothers while all my friends were going out, and listen to my mother complaining endlessly about her terrible childhood, adult life, etc, because "that's what daughters are for".

Not surprisingly, I no longer speak to her!

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 09:49am on 06 Oct 2010, Nakor wrote:

Is this because girls should know better while boys are harder "to train" so mums just give up trying? Ok that was tongue in cheek.

Complain about this comment
* 52. At 09:52am on 06 Oct 2010, JohnH wrote:

15. At 07:55am on 06 Oct 2010, martin3647 wrote:
"8. At 06:34am on 06 Oct 2010, chrislabiff wrote:
What a dumb subject"

Couldn't agree more

-------------------------

So do I.

What next:-

What do you think bears do in the woods?

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 09:56am on 06 Oct 2010, corum-populo-2010 wrote:

There are the serious and relevant debate questions on HYS. There are the light-hearted or tongue in cheek debate questions on HYS.

Then there's this one, which is neither, (in fact it deserves a category that will not get past the Mods) based on this survey BBC? Aaaaargh!

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 09:57am on 06 Oct 2010, johnwilkes wrote:
Other news media are reporting a UK population forecast of 70 million, the Times Square bomber threatening an Islamic War and an ex marxist headteacher demanding war on the teaching unions.

So lets address the burning issue of the netmums survey on HYS.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 10:08am on 06 Oct 2010, RightWingIDBanned wrote:

Slow news day is it?

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 10:12am on 06 Oct 2010, Hannah Webster wrote:

I think it is appallingly accurate to say mothers are more critical of their daughters. It's a sad fact that women just love to have a go at other women, in a different and much worse way that men are critical of other men. It's depressing, and sad, and I am astonished that mothers admit to it. If I had children I would do everything in my power to be equally encouraging to both my son and daughter. How dare parents think gender is a legitimate basis to be more critical?

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 10:20am on 06 Oct 2010, ticktickticktickboom wrote:

Great subject for intelligent debate. May I suggest another?

'Are women different to men?'

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 10:20am on 06 Oct 2010, Heather wrote:

"Mothers are harder on their daughters than their sons, according to a survey by a parenting website. Is this your experience?"

Yes - my mother even admitted to treating me differently to my brother when we were kids. However, my parents are both Chinese, so culturally, my brother will always be considered superior to me, even though my brother and I were born & bred in the UK.

Mother's reasoning was that I was always the more capable child and my brother needed a lot of looking-after (which ended up being done by me from the age of 11 to 17!), so they thought they could just leave me to get on with life. I managed, but I now look back upon a very unhappy childhood where I suicidal at the age of 16. Fortunately, I came to my senses, and got into University as a means of escape. Since leaving home, it's taken many, many years to get over it all, but I've now accepted it was a cultural thing and they didn't do it maliciously.

OK, my case is an extreme one, but in this day & age and in a Western culture, I'm shocked at these findings. I would suggest
that the Mums that have admitted to this look closely at their behaviour and attitude. In this day and age of equality, there is no reason or excuse for treating boys & girls differently just because of their gender.

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 10:21am on 06 Oct 2010, Andrew J Chandler wrote:

I think girls get a harder time from their mothers, particularly if they are the first-born, because they have to fight all the battles first, especially as teenagers. My sister had three brothers, of whom I am the eldest and, being born at home, was always closest to my mum, although we often quarrelled, even after my father died and I went back to live at home for a while. Our relationship made my sister jealous, naturally, and this still affects our sibling relationship seventeen years after my mother's death. By contrast, my father always had a close relationship with my sister, but never treated any of his sons less favourably. I've seen this pattern in many other families over more than thirty years as a teacher. Mothers have a very different relationship with their sons, no less difficult for that, while fathers are nonetheless important as role models. Fathers are often 'heroes' to their daughters, while mothers become increasing 'rivals' to them. Of course, this is generalising and anecdotal evidence, but the research quoted rings true for me...

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 10:22am on 06 Oct 2010, ian cheese wrote:

43. At 09:39am on 06 Oct 2010, Trina wrote:
My Mum's not too fond of her daughter in law if that means anything... and my bloke's mother detests me...?
--------

Dear Trina,

Surely this has more to do with in-laws & outlaws!

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 10:31am on 06 Oct 2010, teedoff wrote:

If this finding of "Mummy's boy" is accurate, then I would put forward that you also tend to find "Daddy's girl" syndrome.

I'll have lots of kudos for that very scientific finding, thank you.

More seriously, I have tried to treat my children as evenly as possible, but I certainly found that my daughter appeared more empathic and was more willing to sit with me to watch my type of programme. My son seemed to enjoy spending time in the kitchen with Mum, so there may be something to this study, but they have only done half the work. I suppose that's what comes of only questioning one half of the equation.
As I say, for completing their study for them I'll take the kudos, and maybe next time they'll remember that mums aren't the only parents who have responsibility for children.

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 10:38am on 06 Oct 2010, JohnH wrote:

I have raised three daughters, all different, one is a single mum, one a hair dresser and the youngest has a Phd and is a university tutor. I've also been involved in raising two grandsons (twins).

Boys are easier only during puberty. They are either a) in bed, b) playing football or c) playing with ******** (you know what).

All the girls, when reaching puberty, started bouncing off the walls. Everyday was an argument, followed by a tantrum, followed by a sulk, interlinked with lies, accusations, demands, apologies etc etc etc.

I came to the conclusion that all girls should be put in jail when they reach 14 and released when they turned 21.

And yet. They are all now wonderful, and I recently cried my eye's out trying to give a father of the bride speech.

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 10:40am on 06 Oct 2010, Darwins Chimp wrote:

I suppose that Mothers do go easy on their sons more so than their daughters. This is because the mothers know the Hell that their sons are going to get from all the rest of the female population for the rest of their lives.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 10:41am on 06 Oct 2010, John Smith wrote:

A lot of people are positing that Fathers favour daughters and Mothers favour sons; a theory with which I have to say I partly agree. As a thought, and as a much more interesting debate, what implications does this have for the idea of the traditional family as compared to alternative family types such as single or gay parents?

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 10:41am on 06 Oct 2010, prophet_samuel wrote:

Ah yes! Lets branch off into the psychology of women. I've always wondered about the differences traits between male and female relationships. At secondary school I had basically the same set of 7 friends throughout the 5 years (we never really fell out), whereas the girls would tend to bounce from drama to drama having a different set of close friends each month

[Type text]
(exaggeration, but you get the point). Just an observation, but one that I still see in my female friends today. So like someone else said, I don't think it's so much a mother-daughter thing as a female-female thing. Of course I could be talking rubbish, hey ho.

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 10:41am on 06 Oct 2010, swerdna wrote:

I have certainly seen evidence of mothers treating their sons very differently from their daughters.

The mothers fuss over their sons, don't encourage them to do anything for themselves and can do no wrong in the eyes of their mother. Daughters are treated totally the opposite.

As a result, the young females are more self reliant and harder working and seem to get better qualifications and are more employable than young males.

As a male with teenage daughters, I have seen this happening and it makes me cringe. Cannot these women see the harm that they are doing to their sons? What are the husbands doing to put a stop to it?

You can certainly see the difference in the boys that are not spoilt and have caring encouraging parents that do not keep fussing over everything that the poor child does. Fortunately, I do know a few of these better parents and their boys are up there with the girls in the 'employability' stakes and they are very nice kids. So - everything is not lost.

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 10:42am on 06 Oct 2010, AllotmentJo wrote:

Why does anyone find this surprising?? It has always been the case that boys get away with murder, as far as their mothers concerned. I'm 55 years old and still get angry at the preferential treatment my brother used to get. I'm one of 5 children - 4 girls and 1 boy. He was allowed to leave wet towels on the bathroom floor, not do the washing up etc.He used to get 6d a day pocket money, we girls got 3d. We not only had to strip our beds and make them, but we had to do his too!! And make him cups of tea and sandwiches when he got in from school, even if he got in before us!! If we dared to remonstrate with my mother, it was a clip round the ear, followed by 'He's a boy. Get used to it.' Is it any wonder we girls all grew up to be raging feminists??

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 10:46am on 06 Oct 2010, yellowsandydog wrote:

I don't think "eager to please" or "serious" should necessarily be seen as negative traits, or "cheeky" be seen as a positive trait. All those words are open to a lot of different interpretation.
I think my parents treated us all equally. As for me I only have sons, but if I had daughters I would try to treat them in the same way.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 10:46am on 06 Oct 2010, Alfred Penderel Bright wrote:

As a father with two daughters I have never considered giving any kind of preferential treatment simply on the grounds of gender. I have always tried to be even handed and protective to both my daughters - now adults - but they are different in character and the younger is more head strong and independent. My wife has much the same attitude in her relationship with both daughters.

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 10:47am on 06 Oct 2010, chiptheduck wrote:

As a father and grandfather I can honestly say I never showed preference to either my son or daughter (they may feel different of course, but I don't think so).

My grandchildren are all boys and they are all different in terms of affection, personality, ability etc and it is often difficult not to choose a favourite, but I make sure I treat them all the same as far as possible. I would not want them thinking they are second class.

I don't think the sex of the child enters into it.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 10:47am on 06 Oct 2010, prophet_samuel wrote:

Still in moderation.

Alright I'm sorry BBC, no more jokes about cannibalism, I promise.

That's interesting: I had a post removed a couple of weeks ago, for suggesting cannibalism as a solution to both food shortages and population growth! Tongue firmly in cheek, of course. But cannibalism seems to be a touchy subject with the moderators, for some reason, even if the intention is humorous. Perhaps they consider it... er... bad taste (sorry!)

Don't apologise mate, that was top! haha.

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 10:49am on 06 Oct 2010, Syni_cal wrote:
Yet more wooly headed nonsense from the BBC, and who the h*** are NOT-MUMS?

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 10:51am on 06 Oct 2010, theoldgoat wrote:

Could someone quietly ditch this pointless HYS and add some about the burning issues - 'Tories c###ups department' for one.

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 10:57am on 06 Oct 2010, Tony of Britain wrote:

Who makes up these ridiculous surveys and thinks they are definitive of the nations opinion? Absolute rubbish. Why did the BBC waste its time on this?

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 10:57am on 06 Oct 2010, John Charlton wrote:

I think that the most astonishing thing about raising children (one of each) is that however hard you try to treat them in a similar manner they still grow up completely different.

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 10:57am on 06 Oct 2010, Pete wrote:

18. At 08:25am on 06 Oct 2010, Shoogly Peg wrote:

"Netmums found mothers were twice as likely to be critical of their daughters than their sons - even though half of the 2,672 mothers questioned said they thought it was wrong to treat boys and girls differently."

Interesting. It could be re-phrased as "Women prejudice toward own off spring because they are female" or "Women threatened by other females, including own daughters".

I might be wrong of course but since I work in an environment where there are more or less and equal number of men and women across the board, women hate other women for some reason.

I agree with your comment entirely!

I have worked in both predominantly male and female workplaces and the differences were incredible. For the most part the males worked together as a team towards a common goal with the usual general banter that you get with men. The women seemed to spend all their time in a constant battle of one-upmanship and trying to stick knives into each others backs (I also found all the constant crying and moaning most off putting). Probably not allowed to say that these days but there you go...

[Type text]
Complain about this comment
* 77. At 11:11am on 06 Oct 2010, ziggyboy wrote:

I had a good relationship with my mother but a fantastic one with my father who was interested in everything I did. He even helped me with dressmaking but my mother wasn't interested.

When I got married I could cook the basics but really had to teach myself to cook and my husband had to put up with a lot of failures as I had never been given the time by my mother. My dad was a good cook and if it hadn't been for his patience I wouldn't even have been able to boil an egg.

I don't think it is possible to determine either way what kind of relationships children will have with their parents as every family is different.

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 11:16am on 06 Oct 2010, entropydave wrote:

and why is it that i have to wait for god knows long for the moderators to post my comments? Are they that busy that i have to wait well over an hour and still no sign of my commentary?

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 11:29am on 06 Oct 2010, milvusvestal wrote:

Is this really something HYS needs comment on?

There are very many more serious debates this site could discuss; all this kind of subject will do is create pages of mindless banter between two extremes, and consequently devalue what should be a sensible, considered forum.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 11:31am on 06 Oct 2010, James wrote:

I agree with yellowsandydog - eager to please, serious and argumentative are not negative personality traits. I also find it astonishing that 49% of mothers did not think it wrong to treat boys and girls differently. 78% of mothers said they do not let their sons get away with things more than girls.

BBC- please do not report this sort of survey without at least giving the number of respondents to the survey. Without this it is extremely sloppy journalism.

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 11:33am on 06 Oct 2010, wolfinwoods wrote:

Society in general is much more forgiving of female behaviour though whereas I've taught my son to realise the world will be pretty merciless to his actions- he will be held wholly
accountable—whereas my daughter won't. Don't know exactly why but it's just a reality of being male.

I think parents are more readily critical of the child which is of their own gender as they are the principal example to that child whereas they are not to a child of the opposite gender... pretty simple stuff really as some contributors have already alluded to.

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 11:37am on 06 Oct 2010, pandatank wrote:

Yes and fathers are harder on their eldest son. So what? Parental aspirations aside, why should children be treated the same? This gives no one what they need but punishes everyone equally. Some children need more help, love, reassurance than others. Some are happy in isolation others need socialising. Being sent to my room was never a punishment for me, but was unbearable for my brother. Would equal treatment have been fair to either of us? We should be celebrating our differences, not trying to eliminate them!

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 11:39am on 06 Oct 2010, Paul J Weighell wrote:

Talk about only having half a story!

One suspects that Fathers are harder on sons than daughters and that the whole issue therefore balances out, all for rather obvious evolutionary reasons.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 11:42am on 06 Oct 2010, BOOBA wrote:

Yes, I totally agree with the findings. Really mothers are tougher with their daughters than their sons. In my opinion girls need a different treatment from boys. However mothers should bring up their sons in a way that would enable them to be great and brave men when they grow up. Therefore boys are in a critical need for the tough treatment not the girls. That is to say mothers need to reconsider the way they treat their children especially the sons, not the daughters.

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 11:44am on 06 Oct 2010, prophet_samuel wrote:

"I also find it astonishing that 49% of mothers did not think it wrong to treat boys and girls differently..."

Hmmm, why is it astonishing though? Boys and girls are different, it seems logical to suggest their upbringing should be approached in different ways. I suppose it depends on how you interpret the statement. I wouldn't want to love or favour my children differently, but the way I raised them would depend on
their gender to some extent surely. The same way it would depend on their personality traits.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 11:44am on 06 Oct 2010, bob bobwell wrote:

78. At 11:16am on 06 Oct 2010, entropydave
Stop whining.

79. At 11:29am on 06 Oct 2010, milvusvestal
Stop whining.

80. At 11:31am on 06 Oct 2010, James

It says in the header. It's 2,672. Try reading. And stop whining.

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 11:54am on 06 Oct 2010, JohnH wrote:

An interesting point is that feminists (almost exclusively women? - some men) seem to 'hate' all things male. And yet women with kids give preference to that often maligned creature 'the mummy's boy'.

As a mummy's-boy myself (my mum thought I taught Jesus to walk on water) I know for a fact I was allowed much more freedom and understanding than my sisters, (One older the other younger). Did it cause friction?

I don't know, but there again I was so wrapped up in self interest I didn't notice.

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 11:56am on 06 Oct 2010, Andrew Middleton wrote:

I think , that however much you try not to, you will always tend to favour the child of the opposite sex to you. I think this applies to both mums and dads.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 11:57am on 06 Oct 2010, SarahEllacott wrote:

I actually agree with the findings. I know my mum was very critical of me growing up that it led to a big rift between us which took me having my own children to heal. I know I can critical of my own daughter but more because she is the eldest of my children and it usually relates to her needing to set a good example to her brothers.

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 12:08pm on 06 Oct 2010, teedoff wrote:

[Type text]
Including my earlier comment I can split the comments on this HYS into 4 basic categories:

1. I agree with the survey
2. I buck the trend
3. I wish to point out that fathers and daughters have a bond
4. Why this HYS when there are other stories.

So, now that the whole thing has been summarised please, HYS, clear this off and give us something meaty to dissect and argue over.

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 12:16pm on 06 Oct 2010, One in a million wrote:

Sounds like another labour nanny state debate!

Why don't we worry about things that actually matter? I hope the tax payer didn't pay for this survey,

Complain about this comment
* 92. At 12:22pm on 06 Oct 2010, wind-blown wrote:

I hope nobody got paid for administering this survey!

I would be worried if parents didn't tend to treat girls differently than boys. They are a different species after all. Some boys barely qualify for upper-primate status though.

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 12:24pm on 06 Oct 2010, mrs_ruffday wrote:

My father always used to say that I would never get past 6 years old in his eyes. Therefore, I was always his "little girl" right up to the point of his death 3 years ago. I still miss the close relationship we had, even though he didn't treat my brother any differently - we could both go to him with problems of any nature. My brother now thinks of his daughter the same as my father thought of me - no one will ever be good enough for her!

My mother on the other hand always seemed to favour my brother when we were growing up. Maybe that was because I was a little horror during my teens that it seemed more noticable, but it only seems to have been the last year or so that the rose tinted glasses have fallen off and she sees my younger brother for the man that he is, not the man she thought he was.

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 12:29pm on 06 Oct 2010, Commander_Gooner_Shepard wrote:

[ 62. At 10:38am on 06 Oct 2010, JohnH wrote:

And yet. They are all now wonderful, and I recently cried my eye's out trying to give a father of the bride speech. ]
Awwww, just like my dad! ;-)

As the oldest child of 6, my parents were tougher on me. The fact that I'm a girl had nothing to do with it. In fact, I think my mother was harder on my brother than on me. And although he's the only surviving son, he still had to do household chores etc. My dad, meanwhile was happy to teach his girls to change a fuse, hang wallpaper, change a spare tyre, and all the stuff we're not supposed to be able to do (including mastering the offside rule!) We all got the same pocket money too! After reading some of the stuff on here, I'm so proud that my parents were apparently before their time in ignoring all this sexist rubbish!

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 12:29pm on 06 Oct 2010, luskentyre wrote:

chrislabiff wrote: What a dumb subject.

How dumb to comment on a "dumb subject". Last time I checked it wasn't compulsory to make comments on this forum. Are you incredibly bored or something?

Why do you think it's your god-given right to be served up topics of interest to you? How arrogant is that?

Complain about this comment
* 96. At 12:31pm on 06 Oct 2010, Claarm wrote:

With all the things you could be discussing on here... What a daft topic!!

Come on H.Y.S team - A bit more creativity please!

Complain about this comment
* 97. At 12:36pm on 06 Oct 2010, David wrote:

Of course the male child has it easier for example they have more access to education worldwide. Male chances of survival must also be greater because there are an estimated one million 'disappeared' females worldwide and the list could go on.

Complain about this comment
* 98. At 12:40pm on 06 Oct 2010, Bradford wrote:

Come on BBC is this the best you can do.

During the Labour Conference you had wall to wall coverage on HYS.

There are plenty of better subjects that are currently worth debate.

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 12:45pm on 06 Oct 2010, handy1 wrote:

[Type text]
Netmums? What on earth is netmums? Are expected to take this seriously?

Complain about this comment

* 100. At 12:58pm on 06 Oct 2010, Bibi wrote:

I'm amazed that an organisation such as the BBC would even consider the inclusion of such a question as this one. Women have fought long and hard for equality - anyone who admits to treating their children differently according to gender is not a fit parent.

Complain about this comment
Appendix 51. All messages in the message thread University fees and elitism.

Will higher university fees create elitism?
10:48 UK time, Wednesday, 3 November 2010

Students in universities in England face tuition fees of up to £9,000 per year from 2012 under government proposals to be announced today. Will this deter people from higher education?

The plans which follow Lord Browne's recent funding review could see institutions charge £6,000 per year with an upper limit of £9,000. Universities charging this higher amount would have to do more to help students from poorer backgrounds gain access to these courses.

The changes will mean many arts and humanities courses would become dependent on fee income, rather than state funding.

Ministers claim the changes will mean a sustainable funding system for universities. Student unions have warned that MPs will face a "huge backlash".

Will these changes stop you from going to university? Are you worried about education funding for your children? Do you work in higher education? Do you think the government's plans the best way to fund higher education? Will certain courses suffer more?

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

* 1. At 10:55am on 03 Nov 2010, U14366475 wrote:

Will higher university fees create elitism? No.

Complain about this comment

* 2. At 11:00am on 03 Nov 2010, Richy wrote:

So essentially, what the government is saying is that, if you live in England and you aren't from a wealthy background, you're not going to go to university.

Right now my son is 8 years away from making a decision about studying for a degree, but if this trend for raising fees in higher education continues then by the time he is ready it's going to be around £15k a year to study. There is no way a single parent like me could afford that, and there is no way I'm letting my child get into £45k of debt before he's even got a job!

How come Scotland are able to provide free university places? Don't we pay for them too?

Complain about this comment

* 3. At 11:08am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

[Type text]
It will only deter those students who aren't ambitious enough to get themselves into massive debt on the promise that they might just earn more money once they have graduated.

But then nothing is guaranteed in life and it is more likely they will end up working in a call centre.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/sep/22/call-centres-rise-graduate-applicants

Complain about this comment
* 4. At 11:09am on 03 Nov 2010, milvusvestal wrote:

This seems a very fair price to pay for further education, which is entirely optional.

It's about the same cost as an average second-hand car, which parents happily fork out when the time comes. Elitism has nothing to do with it.

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 11:09am on 03 Nov 2010, Megan wrote:

It is irresponsible NOT to invest in the future.

It is unfair to continually increase the burden on prospective students and their families. In the US, where privately-funded tertiary education is the norm, you start a 'college fund' for your children before you actually have them! Parents in this country have not been given the lead time to save up to support their children in gaining an education, as it has long been the accustomed practice for the state to pay its share in ensuring well-educated young people are ready to take their place in the future workforce.

By moving away from this model so quickly, the government is yet again reneging on its obligations to the citizens of this country, obligations it has been paid - through taxation - to meet.

Complain about this comment
* 6. At 11:09am on 03 Nov 2010, sandhu42 wrote:

Day light robbery by the so called leaders...they ought to hang thier heads in shame!

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 11:09am on 03 Nov 2010, mocambiquel wrote:

naturally it will, there are thousands from university who are in the wrong job, many who are unable to get jobs. increase prices and the less well off cannot afford, graduate jobs balance out over a few years and the rich stay rich

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Chris mather wrote:

[Type text]
Of course higher fees will deter people from going to university. That's a no-brainer; first lesson of the 'A' Level (never mind degree) economics course, supply and demand.

Sure the money can be borrowed, but borrowings have to be paid back, with interest. It won't stop everyone from applying, but far fewer will be willing to run up massive debts with which to start their careers (facing the prospect of the property ladder, marriage + children, etc.).

And, of course, the people most deterred with be the students from poorer families, to the extent that any 'assistance' (grants, scholarships, etc.) doesn't compensate.

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

Well, many people seem to want a considerable reduction in the numbers going to university. It looks as though this is going to happen, which means that Britain falls even further behind in the education stakes. Will there be any point in studying hard at school, if university becomes out of reach? I forecast a move to studying in foreign universities, where costs can be considerably lower, though how this would benefit Britain I do not know. The country will have to rely on the wealthy to run it for the benefit of all, and you know, I'm not sure that's going to happen.

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Rinc3wind wrote:

No it won't bbc. It just means that we might actually get decent courses attended by REAL students.

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 11:15am on 03 Nov 2010, shillo wrote:

Kuradi Vitukari wrote:
Will higher university fees create elitism? No.

-----------------------------------------------

Shouldn't that read is a pigs backside pork or; is the pope a Catholic.

University education at this cost means that only those who are able to start their working lives live with debt of £27,000 in fees, plus £12,000 in accommodation fees plus living costs of for example £12,000 (based on current Income support levels for a single person.
So that's the total of £51,000 in debt before you start.

And that won't mean education for the elite?

There we are then.
Complain about this comment
* 12. At 11:16am on 03 Nov 2010, Alcibiades wrote:

Will higher university fees create elitism?

Of course.

Just think of how much parents are prepared to pay to send their children to schools such as Eaton, Harrow or Rugby.

Universities like Oxford, Cambridge and LSE will be able to charge similar fees and wealthy parents will pay them.

I'm sure that there will be more scholarships available for the poor-but-super-bright kids, just so these Unis can hang on to their reputation for academic excellence, but in these days when so many kids are getting three 'A's at a-level i suspect they'll be able to stuff their institutions with 70% super rich kids to 30% scholarships.

So for all intents and purposes the increase in tuition fees will make higher education far more elitist than it is now.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 11:18am on 03 Nov 2010, pear80 wrote:

I don't see what everyone is complaining about, its only right that the privillaged few get a good education and good jobs. We've tried basing our system on fairness and equality and we've ended up with masses of people with degrees claiming unemployment, and we have to import workers from outside the country to work in our factories.

We need to go back to the good old days when the rich had their jobs (well paid) and the poor had their jobs (poorly paid, exploited and greatful for a warm meal), and nobody was told that they could do better for themselves and the term "social mobility" did not existit. Clearly this government is the one to do it.

Complain about this comment
* 14. At 11:18am on 03 Nov 2010, ELENAKL wrote:

It should never have got to this, TB's insistence on more people going to university was an unsustainable nonsense, it did of course help his unemployment figures. University should be for real studies, my daughter dropped out of doing Art, disappointing, but is not the end of the world and she does have a job now, my son, however, wants to be a doctor and he should be encouraged, more money should be allocated to people wanting to study for proper professions.

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 11:18am on 03 Nov 2010, Chris mather wrote:

"1. At 10:55am on 03 Nov 2010, Kuradi Vitukari wrote:

[Type text]
Will higher university fees create elitism? No."

====================================================================

Any rationale to support that strange statement???

You might be right, but on the face of it you're talking nonesense!!!

Complain about this comment

* 16. At 11:19am on 03 Nov 2010, Miss Ann Thrope wrote:

In before someone mentioning polytechnics or the old gem 'Students today are stupid'.

Complain about this comment

* 17. At 11:20am on 03 Nov 2010, Alba Al wrote:

This at the moment doesn't have any effect in Scotland but if the Labour party get back in at Holyrood you can bet your bottom Euro that they will follow the English lead. I think this is a big mistake. It is difficult enough for young English students to get out of the debt they are saddled with at the present time without giving the green light to treble that debt. It is also now nigh on impossible to get that first rung on the ladder of employment in a semi descent job without that degree. Who's fault is that? The Tories(I include New Labour) and their rich corporate bed fellows. What is needed is for a British Government to give big business a kick up the backside and force them to start giving people apprenticeships, on job training and accept HNC and HND and stop getting misty eyed over University degrees. Give the young of this country a chance and don't cripple the future generations with record levels of debt.

Complain about this comment

* 18. At 11:20am on 03 Nov 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:

Let's link 2 news items of today. Capping immigration is supposedly creating a shortage of qualified workers in the UK economy, yet we have all these graduates who cannot find work because they are not adequately qualified. Conclusion, a university education does not benefit the country or prepare young people for work.

Why should taxpayers funds be used to keep young persons at school free to study what they like without consideration to future employment. If a young person wants a useless degree then that person or the family should pay for it themselves. School leavers should grow up and be ready for the real world.

Complain about this comment

* 19. At 11:21am on 03 Nov 2010, Lucy Clake wrote:

Higher fees will of course deter many, how many want to start work with a huge debt at a time when they are starting to take on their own house and family commitments. The multi millionaires in the cabinet and supporters of the Tories are
pleased, there will be less competition from the plebs for places and they will be able to pay the fees in one go out of their pocket money. Does anyone really think that Cameron and Osborne have a clue what these fees mean to the average family, after all university is cheap when you have been paying Eton school fees for years.

As for the Lib Dems do they really think any of their loyal supporters will be able to accept this betrayal. Their election promises meant nothing.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 11:22am on 03 Nov 2010, Lionwillow70 wrote:

Why won't governments put up income tax to support education, health, public services and so on? Instead of putting tax on things that can fluctuate (i.e. VAT - we can always stop going shopping), do it the sensible way and make sure there are sufficient funds to support the necessities of life: education, health and social services...why are politicians so afraid to do this?

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 11:23am on 03 Nov 2010, Ben wrote:

Why is it that time is moving forward, and yet we (England) seem to be going back in time.

Increasing University fees is ludicrous, having money doesn't make someone a better academic, and even students do get through uni, the debt they will have with them will never be paid off. Better still, what bank is going to lend this money, in the banks eyes a student is a high risk to lend to! Even people with high income are refused loans. The Government really planned this well, or are they just seeing £ signs walking around instead of real people.

German students only have to pay €500 per semester, how can they afford to do it and we can't, especially considering the English like to rub in everyone elses face how quickly our economy is recovering!

A better idea would be to identify what industries we need graduates in and make those courses free (most likely science and engineering). This would put a stop to having so many Business/Marketing/Economics graduates unemployed and be of real benefit to England's economy and industries. Everyone likes to say how proud they are of England and being English, how about studying a subject that will actually benefit your country, rather than just yourself!

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 11:23am on 03 Nov 2010, nick1979 wrote:

I do hope not.

[Type text]
I find it quite objectionable that "the jewel in the economic crown" (George Osbourne's words not mine) is being further part privatised by an elitist class which in their time would have received grants to go to university. As it stands this government has stated that it is not fair to leave a huge debt burden on our children & grandchildren in the form of the national debt, however on the other hand they are actively encouraging these exact same people to shoulder debts of at least £30K, & in many cases far more for their education. It should also be noted that the £6,000 per annum which many universities are likely to charge will only cover the funding gap by means of the withdrawal of government funds, in essence the students will face paying twice as much as is currently paid with no increase in facilities or resources.

There has also been no mention of post graduate studies and the fees entailed, given that some vocational careers require post graduate degrees this is a further kick in the teeth for those who want to better themselves.

There is also this bizarre argument that most students will not pay off their debts entirely within the 30 year period, so what's the point? Reading between the lines the government are essentially storing up more problems for 30 years time when they will have all retired on their huge pensions while tending to their duck moats and houses.

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 11:23am on 03 Nov 2010, Peter_Sym wrote:

2. At 11:00am on 03 Nov 2010, Richy wrote:
"How come Scotland are able to provide free university places? Don't we pay for them too?"

Not another one of you....

Scotland gets 50% of Scotlands GDP returned to it for public spending (significantly less than Northern Ireland, Wales or the North of England recieve... The NW of England gets about 80% of its GDP back as public spending). How Scotland chooses to spend this money is up to Scotland. If they fund "free" university places (and English students pay a fraction of the fees they do in England... just £1800 a year to study in Scotland too) something else doesn't get funded. For instance "Free" parking in Scottish hospitals meant a couple of million came out the drugs budget to cover the car park maintenance.

I live in England now but grew up in Scotland and the standard of Public services in Glasgow are well below English standards, mainly because of the cost of providing school and medical services to people living in the middle of nowhere. Get sick in Glasgow and you get an ambulance. Get sick on Orkney and they need to send a plane.

I really hate the 'we pay for X in Scotland' which seems to presume Scots pay no tax too.
Well, many people seem to want a considerable reduction in the numbers going to university. It looks as though this is going to happen, which means that Britain falls even further behind in the education stakes. Will there be any point in studying hard at school, if university becomes out of reach? I forecast a move to studying in foreign universities, where costs can be considerably lower, though how this would benefit Britain I do not know. The country will have to rely on the wealthy to run it for the benefit of all, and you know, I'm not sure that's going to happen.

The UK was falling behind in the education stakes even when the number of graduates increased. It is the quality, and not the quantity, of graduates the country should be concentrating on.

Raising fees is downright criminal, on top of the job situation which is dire. The government are planning to put students in a position with a mortgage like debt hanging over their heads and no jobs available.

I am an ex-student who has graduated and come out expecting to find work, this is near impossible, there is no chance I will get a job associated with my degree in accounting within the next two years minimum.

I would like Iain Duncan-Smith to stand in front of me and tell me there are jobs available, and I would call him a flat faced liar, its ridiculous.

Real students presumably meaning those with access to money, and I don't mean the borrowed stuff?

Make no mistake the spending cuts (no longer funding arts and humanities courses) will result in many universities going
out of business, and a return to the situation where only the wealthiest 10% of the population can go to university. As a knowledge economy we need an educated population if we are to compete with other countries - we already have a lower proportion of our young people going to university than most developed countries. This is an incredibly short-sighted decision, which is not supported by most universities (but only the elitist Russell Group appear to get media coverage on this topic). University education is not training for a job, it encourages critical thinking, questioning, independent research and initiative, and problem solving; skills which society and employers need. Denying our young people an education is a backward step for the country.

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 11:26am on 03 Nov 2010, Fugl15 wrote:

They should make it cheaper to go to university but harder to get in. That way, the tuition fees wouldn't need to be so high because nobody is paying for the useless "media studies" and other chumpy subjects.

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 11:26am on 03 Nov 2010, meddleman wrote:

When the time arrives in the Cameron household, will the fees cause much anxiety? Of course not, Mummy and Daddy will comfortably be able to pay from their inherited wealth. What about the Osbourne's? Oh no problem, that can be paid for from the trust fund set up for George boy by his father to avoid paying income tax. It's the same for the offspring of the other fifteen or so millionaires in the Cabinet. Meanwhile, all across the country brighter but less advantaged offspring will be told by their parents that they will not be afford to help them and it's too much debt. If you are rich, debt is a convenient way of life; if you are poor, it is frightening and restricts choice. Of course this will be elitist; it is designed to be. We've got to get back to the old days where state educated pupils were excluded from Oxbridge and the better universities so that the chump offspring of Cameron and his ilk will once again rule the roost. What a waste it will be of genuine talent denied opportunity by inherited, largely undeserved advantage.

Complain about this comment
* 30. At 11:27am on 03 Nov 2010, 1stTopic wrote:

Will higher university fees create elitism?
Yes I think it will
Poorer students will not want to saddle themselves with this amount of debt

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 11:28am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

8. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Chris mather wrote:
Of course higher fees will deter people from going to university. That's a no-brainer; first lesson of the 'A' Level (never mind degree) economics course, supply and demand.

I assume that you failed 'A' Level economics as this has nothing to do with supply and demand.

I have removed this comment because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

The government have been telling us since May that it isn't fair to leave future generations with a lot of debt that is why they are taking the actions they are in the budget. Why are they now proposing to put millions of students in the future into massive debt?

Which is it?

This is the down to the greed of the Bankers - our children are now suffering. This will help maintain the power in the hands of the wealthy.

Oxbridge and other top universities may only have wealthy applying - there will be many poorer but more able students who do not apply. This will surely dilute our top Universities in that they will not necessarily be getting the brightest in the country. Indeed they may be forced to accept substandard students just to bring in the fees!

I have removed this comment because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

While I don't agree with the rise in tuition fees I do think that some are going to University because they feel obliged to go. There should be more investment in Trade colleges and real apprenticeships that teach some of the core skills needed to actually get a job. Having just graduated as a mature student I saw some who couldn't cope with the structured learning and others who, to be frank, just saw it as one long party! For those coming out with a low degree and no hope or desire to get a job anytime soon their loans are never going to get paid back which makes it unfair on others who are desperate for the funding.

I have removed this comment because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
Sure the money can be borrowed, but borrowings have to be paid back, with interest.

"I wish someone had told Gordon Brown that.

And, of course, the people most deterred with be the students from poorer families, to the extent that any 'assistance' (grants, scholarships, etc.) doesn't compensate.

If anything, the financial crisis has shown that poorer people are not deterred by going into ever increasing debt.

'Will higher university fees create elitism?'
No, but it will help to perpetuate it. Elitism is, of course, a dirty word in this day and age but if we could actually turn out graduates that were truly elite that would be something worth paying for. Unfortunately the education system has been used to try and engineer a political ideological vision of how life should be; it hasn’t worked and the result is that vast swathes of mediocrity have been churned out of our universities and society as a whole is now paying the price for that.

Hopefully a higher fee will ensure a better quality of courses, in turn providing better skills that will actually be of benefit in a work environment. If this happens then those who truly wish to study should be willing to take a loan to pay for their education with the knowledge that they will be able to secure well paid employment and the capacity to repay their loan. That's how I completed my degree and 8 years on I've paid back my University debts and have a higher income than my peers from school who did not attend University - including the ability to afford a mortgage which many are unable to.

I hope it does create elitism. The elite will be the ones who have money to throw away or are actually gifted and confident of their abilities.
Who would want to doss around at uni for such a high debt? Only those who want to do the work and those who are sure they can make the education pay will go to uni. Just as it should be.

Palming kids into uni to keep them off the unemployment statistics was stupid at the least.

Maybe the degree will get its reputation back as a real qualification and not some mass produced gcse

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 11:33am on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

At 11:20am on 03 Nov 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:

Let's link 2 news items of today. Capping immigration is supposedly creating a shortage of qualified workers in the UK economy, yet we have all these graduates who cannot find work because they are not adequately qualified. Conclusion, a university education does not benefit the country or prepare young people for work.

Why should taxpayers funds be used to keep young persons at school free to study what they like without consideration to future employment. If a young person wants a useless degree then that person or the family should pay for it themselves. School leavers should grow up and be ready for the real world.

_________________________________________________________________

I have no desire to argue about what constitutes a useless degree, but it seems that now even useful degrees will have to be paid for by the young person or family. Is this what everybody wants? Besides, if somebody is willing to pay for a 'useless' degree, might it be assumed that universities will offer such courses? It would seem to be a proper response to market forces, after all.

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 11:33am on 03 Nov 2010, Total Mass Retain wrote:

It saddens me that those of my generation who had university fees paid by the state and had means tested grants to attend the best universities in the country (and have repaid that investment many times over in taxes and economic activity) are now telling our own children and grandchildren that they cannot have this privilege. I do not think I could have gone to two of the top 5 universities in the world if my parents had had to pay or I had to incur huge debt to do so. Neither could many of my contemporaries who did not come from wealthy backgrounds.

The argument that "postmen subsidise the wealthy" as Gove used on the radio this morning is nonsense. A postman's tax and NI barely (if at all) covers the services the state provides him anyway so he's not subsidising anyone. If we all decided we'd only pay taxes for those things we did or expected to use then
we'd argue we are all subsidising each other (hey, isn't that what paying taxes is for?). We pay taxes according to our means and what we consume as determined by parliament and the state uses those taxes to provided services for the public good. Providing world class universities to ensure future economic prosperity for all (including the postman who benefits from the economic prosperity and public services created, funded and staffed by graduates) is such a public service.

Not only is this generation passing on OUR debts to our children and grandchildren but we are now adding considerably to their debts and making it even worse for them. The argument "only graduates pay and only if they earn above £21K" is dubious too: this opens the state up to paying anyway and has this been costed?

Fortunately I can afford to pay for my children to get the benefit of university education that the state afforded me 40 years ago, but this really will put off those who are now in modest means from going to top university.

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 11:34am on 03 Nov 2010, Daisy Chained wrote:

Please excuse me for mentioning it BBC, but we have elitism already as a peer around your board room and executive suites would demonstrate. And do the chattering classes have that much trouble forking out the support needed for their average son or daughter viz a job between terms, a cheap car for travel, a better than average opening once graduation is over, and so on?

The key group affected by this change have just had the gamble made even more risky, even more unlikely, even more the greater of two evils. Never mind though we can always fill their places with elites from abroad.

I thought it was important for society to reap the harvest of talent by properly cultivating it during the WHOLE of its growth period.

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 11:34am on 03 Nov 2010, Maverick wrote:

At 11:20am on 03 Nov 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:

If a young person wants a useless degree then that person or the family should pay for it themselves. School leavers should grow up and be ready for the real world.

I studied a degree in accounting with finance, I am prepared to do any job to get where I am, how can you say that people are not prepared to grow up and be ready for the real world; I have been waiting for this real world you talk of for 6 months...

Complain about this comment
44. At 11:34am on 03 Nov 2010, Alcibiades wrote:

This seems a very fair price to pay for further education, which is entirely optional.

It's about the same cost as an average second-hand car, which parents happily fork out when the time comes. Elitism has nothing to do with it.

-----

You'd pay £27,000 for your average second hand car?

I think you may be alittle out of touch with average earnings in this country.

Complain about this comment

45. At 11:34am on 03 Nov 2010, SaveourCountry wrote:

as someone with no kids I dont see why I should support or subsidy other peoples kids. they already get free education until they are 18. My step son has just started Uni and when I asked him would he be working (even PT) he said "no chance" too much having fun to do. So really why should I work 6 days a week for way below the so called "national average of about 25,000 PA and subsidies basically a 3 year party ! They should be paying there own way, they are adults after all.

Complain about this comment

46. At 11:34am on 03 Nov 2010, Kev wrote:

As a medical student currently studying in London, I will leave after my 6 years of training with over £50k worth of debt. If you increased the fees, I wouldn't be able to afford to go to Med School, and as someone from a working class background who is trying to climb the so called 'social ladder', this Gov. would have condemned my hard work and dreams to get to where I am today. Of course this increase in fees will create elitism, who cares about ability when you have money to buy your places.

Complain about this comment

47. At 11:35am on 03 Nov 2010, roberto67 wrote:

Given that the middle income in this country is so low how can middle class families afford to support their children through University if the fees go up? The poor will get help(quite rightly) the rich will get first choice as usual the middle classes will struggle as usual.

This suits the oligarchs that really rule our country. Our government will bow down to them not to public opinion.

Capitalism is best for the wealthy it gives them more power.
48. At 11:35am on 03 Nov 2010, Wyn wrote:

"Will higher university fees create elitism?

Unfortunately not!

The only thing that will create elitism is to go back to a system in which:

1) 'A' Levels are really hard to pass

2) Only about 6% of school leavers go to uni

3) University admission goes back to being extremely competitive

University education is meant to result in excellence - not to churn out graduates for jobs that don't exist. The UK needs to wake up and smell the coffee, - most of the jobs done by graduates don't need a degree - a couple of 'A' levels will suffice in most cases.

49. At 11:36am on 03 Nov 2010, hotmousemat wrote:

Gove points out that most students going to top universities usually earn lots of money. But he also points out that most students going to top universities are from rich backgrounds. But students from rich backgrounds who do not go to top universities also usually earn lots of money. So, the main correlation is between earnings and background, not earnings and education. Therefore it does not follow that the price of a top university education should be assessed by looking at the future earnings of those who currently go there.

I would add that Gove also seems unaware that tuition fees are not the only cost to students. One reason why people from poor backgrounds do not apply to top universities is simply because it is much cheaper to live at home with your parents and go to the local college.

There are other issues, for example poor students may prefer a course which is targeted at a job, rather than the more academic versions of the same subjects offered by top universities. An academic qualification means you will need extra practical 'on the job' training for example as an intern. A poor student may not be able to afford this, besides it is seen as something that requires 'connections'.

There is also the matter of the ethos of old universities like Oxbridge. It is often remarked how religious minorities are under represented in applications - yet what would you expect, since they are all named after Christian saints and look like churches! To Christians they are dreaming spires, to Muslims they could have been designed deliberately to say; not for you.
Complain about this comment
* 50. At 11:36am on 03 Nov 2010, Rays a Larf wrote:

Interesting question....as overseas students have been paying for the last 10 years, £8000.00 plus a year to study here and go home with 1st class degrees, then just maybe it might make our students sit up and take notice.

Further and Higher education has never been cheap at any time. If one pays a load of dosh to achieve what they would like to do in thier lives then so beit.
If on the otherhand one spends a load of dosh to waste 3,4 or even 5 years of their life, then they deserve all the things that are open to them.

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 11:36am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

19. At 11:21am on 03 Nov 2010, Lucy Clake wrote:

As for the Lib Dems do they really think any of their loyal supporters will be able to accept this betrayal. Their election promises meant nothing.

The election manifestos of both parties went out of the window once the coalition was formed and an agreement reached. I suggest that you read the section on education which includes the following sentence:

"If the response of the Government to Lord Browne's report is one that Liberal Democrats cannot accept, then arrangements will be made to enable Liberal Democrat MPs to abstain in any vote."

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8677933.stm

Complain about this comment
* 52. At 11:37am on 03 Nov 2010, M de Vol wrote:

"The changes will mean many arts and humanities courses would become dependent on fee income, rather than state funding."

Which in turn, may mean that there are fewer graduates with degrees in under-water basket weaving wondering why their 'qualification' hasn't impresses any potential employers sufficiently to get them a job.

I've heard people say: "The subject matter of a degree is irrelevant; the mere fact that an individual has a degree tells a potential employer that (s)he is worth employing."

Nobody ever produces any evidence in support of that statement.
If you were an employer of doctors, would you expect your employees to be medically-qualified, or would a degree in flower arrangement be a suitable alternative?

If you were hiring engineers, why would you think somebody with a degree in Creative Arts would be a suitable candidate?

There will always be a demand for graduates with degrees in the Humanities and in the arts, but perhaps the supply should match the demand more closely.

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 11:38am on 03 Nov 2010, TalkingFrankly wrote:

If you want to attract an individual's attention, grab their wallet. Quite simply, higher fees will demand more serious applicants to the university process, and thus strengthen the calibre of future UK graduates.

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 11:38am on 03 Nov 2010, surfingkenny wrote:

I think this is the tory's ploy. To make the oxford's and cambridge's of the world only available to the top tier of society. Granted Education at university level should be funded as its a choice not a right to be educated pass high school level. I do however agree that this may bring University education back to earth with a reduction in the many pointless course that have been going around for the last 10 years... maybe a level students may think twice about a media or american studies course if they need to find £45k to study it with no prospect of employment after it.

The tory government will do anything to get a tier system back into UK life with the rich being in control and the poor almost destitute.

Unless you study medicine, engineering / law etc then uni really doesn't offer the career prospects it once did, and unless you get a 1st or a very good 2:1 then no employer will look at you, we have a glut of degree graduates which makes the degree a bit meaningless

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 11:39am on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

At 11:20am on 03 Nov 2010, Confuciousfred wrote:

Why should taxpayers funds be used to keep young persons at school free to study what they like without consideration to future employment.
It's a wise person who can forecast what future work needs will be, but this might be acceptable if, after studying only what the government of the day decides shall be studied, there will be guaranteed jobs available on qualifying. It would be an odd country that dictated just what university studies anyone could take.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 11:39am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

20. At 11:22am on 03 Nov 2010, Lionwillow70 wrote:

Why won't governments put up income tax to support education, health, public services and so on? Instead of putting tax on things that can fluctuate (i.e. VAT - we can always stop going shopping), do it the sensible way and make sure there are sufficient funds to support the necessities of life: education, health and social services...why are politicians so afraid to do this?

Because even though people moan about University funding and say that it should be paid for by the tax payer they don't really want it to come out of their own taxes.

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 11:41am on 03 Nov 2010, martin3647 wrote:

Over the past decade the University sector has expanded but with no apparent economic benefit - too many ex-Polytechnics and FE Colleges became Universities offering in generic degree courses (business studies etc.) without any defined career as a result

Hopefully the increase will deter those students undertaking such courses thus releasing funds for more relevant of academically rigorous courses. The alternative for such students is vocational training or simply work

As for the creation of elitism - if this is intellectual elitism this is not necessarily a bad thing as long any savings from the cessation of unnecessary courses are made available to support students

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 11:43am on 03 Nov 2010, roberto67 wrote:

Where are the Lib Dems where is there honour and principles? All sold out for a taste of power. We saw how they congratulated Osborne at the end of his devastating budget. If they had stood by their principles they could have formed a government themselves in a few years given that many are sick of the state of our Politics and the high level corruption there is in this country.

It is clear that tuition fees rising will maintain the balance of power in the hands of the wealthy - the Tories know
what they are doing despite playing the 'it's not fair that people that don't go to Uni should pay for those that do'. The Tories are very good at manipulating the public to blame each other they did with the Private v Public sector. It detracts from the massive bonuses the Bankers are going to pay themselves again shortly after bringing near ruin to our country. Would our children now be facing a lifetime of debt (which the Tories are saying they are making the cuts to avoid! not on ideological reasons) if we hadn't had to bail out the Banks because of their greed? NO

Bankers bonuses would be very useful to the Universities and benefit the country for the future.

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 11:43am on 03 Nov 2010, Mincepie Murderer wrote:

This policy seems to be based on the fact that graduates earn a lot more during their working lives, so can afford an additional tax. This is certainly true for people retiring now, who would have graduated in the 1960's, when about 5% of the population went to university. A degree really did allow access to the top-paying careers. But 50% of youngsters now get a degree. There is no way that the great majority of them will earn hundreds of thousands more during their working lives.

I would encourage anyone considering university to also get part-time and holiday work, to start to offset the debts before they graduate.

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 11:44am on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

At 11:24am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:
9. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

Well, many people seem to want a considerable reduction in the numbers going to university. It looks as though this is going to happen, which means that Britain falls even further behind in the education stakes. Will there be any point in studying hard at school, if university becomes out of reach? I forecast a move to studying in foreign universities, where costs can be considerably lower, though how this would benefit Britain I do not know. The country will have to rely on the wealthy to run it for the benefit of all, and you know, I'm not sure that's going to happen.

The UK was falling behind in the education stakes even when the number of graduates increased. It is the quality, and not the quantity, of graduates the country should be concentrating on.
Can it be guaranteed that there will be sufficient numbers of quality graduates under the current proposals? It will be interesting to see.

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 11:45am on 03 Nov 2010, The Ghosts of John Galt wrote:

These policies are just wrong on so many levels it is frightening! Our nation is destined to sink into the mystic swamp as an increasingly rapid rate! What future for our children - it's a sad day for this country - when we expect our children to pay for the errors of our parents!

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 11:49am on 03 Nov 2010, Bob wrote:

Whats the difference between the Condoms and all the others in Parliament?
Answer - none. They are all as corrupt and the same as each other in reneging on promises and ripping us all off.

Bliar, Clown, Cameron and the other phoney's should be caged for the good of us all

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 11:50am on 03 Nov 2010, anthonysilvia wrote:

This will be a nightmare of a day for Britain when the government of the people continues to act in an oppressive manner towards its own people. The poor is paying for all the economic crises in this country, and the argument is that 'students will not pay anything'.

The government is cutting down its spending and funding because it wants to limit its debt. However, at the same time in a double standard manner, this government is also sending the message that it is ok to spend money one does not have to young people who will potentially be responsible for the running of this country in the future. The government is saying that it is ok for students to have a debt of about £50000.00 by the end of this degree.

Cutting spending to education will prevent people from poorer background to have a reasonable quality of education to enable them to make that positive contribution to this society and economy. In addition, this will mean that the same elite groups whose parents can easily pay off their education bill will continue to dominate and rule is this kind of discriminatory manner.

Currently, Britain see the in flock of foreigners coming to this country to sustain the workforce and economy due to gaps in the current system which will include funding and learning structure across the educational system. If Britain continues in this aggressive manner, it will soon have to encourage foreigners
to also come into this country to run the government, as these current policies by this coalition government will inhibit proper education for its citizens, as well as other area of daily livelihood in this country.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 11:50am on 03 Nov 2010, Space Dust wrote:

People are constantly going on about fairness. I wanted to read mathematics at St John's, Cambridge but I'm not clever enough. There's nothing I can do about that. If you can't afford a place at university it's too bad, think of something else. Move on. Stop complaining about fairness. We all live in a very unfair universe. I for one don't want to pay for anyone's university place other than my sons, if I can meet the payments/

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 11:52am on 03 Nov 2010, frankiecrisp wrote:

No. It will just hopefully stop the people who go for few years of drinking and getting up late and come out at the end with a media studies or dog walking degree.

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 11:53am on 03 Nov 2010, pragmatickev wrote:

A couple of things.
Firstly, why is it "everyone's in this together", except Cameron, Clegg, Osborne, Cable and the university system.
Secondly of course it will add to elitism. The people who will pay are the middle classes on £22,000 to about £75,000 ish; those who are high fliers will do what high fliers do now and salt away their earnings via some tax loophole.
I heard someone say this morning that fees are only going up to £6000 with exceptional cases only going up to £9000. That's a bit like 'we'll only kill you a little bit'. If anything else was virtually doubled or trebled, I doubt we would hear the word 'only' anywhere.
Where were the LibDems when we needed them. Oh yeah. They were in Vichy.
(little WWII joke there)

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 11:54am on 03 Nov 2010, mgg wrote:

29. At 11:26am on 03 Nov 2010, meddleman wrote: What a waste it will be of genuine talent denied opportunity by inherited, largely undeserved advantage.

-----------------------------------------------

Spot on.
Our household income with 2 in fulltime employ is £34,000 (gross).

[Type text]
My son has just began a 4 year course of Engineering at Cambridge and I asked him how he thought he would have managed to go to uni with the sort of debt being toted. He laughed and said he couldn’t have gone.

He is lucky because he is already 18 and there; however he is not unique. There will be many talented individuals who will be unable to go to Uni and their talents will be lost to this country. On the flip side there will be the offspring of those on high incomes who will be able to attend and prosper further.

It is shortsighted and grossly unfair to those young people who work hard at school, only to then be denied access to higher education on the basis of cost alone.

Elitism has never gone away, but it is surely here to stay when this agenda is followed.

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 11:54am on 03 Nov 2010, James W wrote:

While I respect the opinions of others, I think that the people in support of the increase aren’t aware of the resulting economic violation; a lot of young people from working class and even financially disadvantaged households could be the figures that our country will require in the future. In fact, the majority of my sixth form teachers, for example, were not at all from privileged, financially strong backgrounds yet they are intelligent, fantastic at what they do and above all university-educated.

So with this increase, we will have a shortage of teachers, engineers, social workers, senior managers, accountants, you name it. Thus, public services will diminish and the economy could ground to a halt. I'm expecting someone to refute this comment by stating that a lot of these courses could be replaced by free or low-cost vocational schemes, but at the end of the day they simply cannot.

Just because one is from a more privileged background does not render one more intelligent.

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 11:54am on 03 Nov 2010, Peter_Sym wrote:

32. At 11:28am on 03 Nov 2010, Kuradi Vitukari wrote:
"Or equally they may end up going on to find a way of generating clean and free energy, finding a cure for all Alzheimers or understanding why women can't drive."

Or at least a cure for Alzheimers.... thats in the pipeline eventually.
Clean and Free energy is impossible as it violates the laws of physics.

Women can drive fine... what some women have a problem with is parking and thats partially due to less spacial reasoning ability than men. Its a well know problem in the Royal Navy that a higher percentage of female officers have problems plotting a course for their ship in relation to the paths of other ships than men. (although given that the submarine service is 100% male and we've had 2 nuclear subs hit the same sandbank of Skye in 5 years and another of our nukes hit a french sub in a million cubic miles of Atlantic I doubt the women would do any worse than the men!)

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 11:55am on 03 Nov 2010, Will wrote:

I find all this talk about it 'deterring the poor' rather interesting. It would certainly have deterred me from going to University - I guess that means I'm also poor, despite being raised in a comparatively General-Studies-Friendly environment. Which is fantastic news, because now the world has to feel sorry and care for me.

The mathematics is what concerns me most. At £9,000 per year for tuition, plus £6,000 per year for accommodation, food and living expenses, a BA in History shall now cost £45,000 to study. And this £45,000, according to the BBC report, shall be paid back at 9% of a £21,000 per annum salary. That's £1,890 per year in repayments, with 'penalties' for overpayment.

£1,890 is 4.61% of that £45,000 debt. The BBC report states that this loan shall accrue interest at an above-inflation rate. Government inflationary target is 2%, so let's assume for the moment that they're able to keep it at 2%, and assume that portion of our 4.61% is swallowed by inflation, leaving 2.61% per year to cover both the 'above inflation' portion of the loan interest, and capital repayment.

The point is, whatever the 'above inflation' portion is, the minimum duration of this loan should the graduate's salary remain at the base repayment eligibility level is 38.31 years. And THAT assumes zero 'above inflation' contributions. Every 0.5% of additional interest the government claims increases the time taken to repay that loan by nine years.

Not only this, but for the duration if this debt, that 'graduate' is essentially paying an extra 9% Income Tax in terms of their quality of life.

Now, I realise that ultimately the system needs financing - and that some would argue it is fairer that students finance it themselves than receive subsidy from the tax system - but, that being the case, what motivation is there for talented students to go to an English university when they can attend equally prestigious universities elsewhere in the EU and the money they save in tuition is more than enough to offset any increase in living costs? Further to this, why should any graduate feel any obligation to remain in the UK and permit our economy to benefit from their skillset, if the state has had no notable financial role in their higher education?
Lastly, what moral authority do Ministers and Members of the House of Commons, who received their degrees completely free at the provision of the state when my parents were paying two-thirds of their income in taxation, have to make such massive changes to the university system? Granted, this last question can be asked of all politicians on both sides of the House who have voted to introduce and increase tuition fees over the past decade and a half.

I'm assuming these are questions to which the coalition government has already devoted significant thought and consideration, and I look forward to hearing their answers in the days to come.

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P.S. This is a fee cap increase, not a mandated fee increase. Presumably, then, responsibility for the fee levels set by individual institutions lies entirely with those institutions themselves, with Vice-Chancellors being as culpable as government Ministers, and as liable to having their cars egged. Food for thought.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 11:56am on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

At 11:24am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:
The UK was falling behind in the education stakes even when the number of graduates increased. It is the quality, and not the quantity, of graduates the country should be concentrating on.

Finland turns out graduates from its universities in quantity - there is a take up of well over 50% going to university - but there is no lack of quality. By the way, tuition fees in Finnish universities are non-existent, and everyone who wishes for a university education is encouraged in every way possible.

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 11:57am on 03 Nov 2010, The Ghosts of John Galt wrote:

The choice is clear now -

Indentured debt slavery to the corporate machine or unemployment, minimum wage work as a serf - existing in poverty for life!

The Dalai Lama and his priestly feudal aristocratic society could not have achieved a better method of enslaving a population!

Oh and if you fail to escape your debt - its your own fault!
The guilty little victims will be fighting for the 'opportunity' to be a debt slave because the alternative will be far worse!

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 11:57am on 03 Nov 2010, Chris mather wrote:

31. At 11:28am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:
8. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Chris mather wrote:

Of course higher fees will deter people from going to university. That's a no-brainer; first lesson of the 'A' Level (never mind degree) economics course, supply and demand.

I assume that you failed 'A' Level economics as this has nothing to do with supply and demand.

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Really? Increase the price of something, you increase the supply and reduce demand. Reduce the price and supply reduces (less profitable) and demand increases (more affordable).

Pretty fundamental supply-and-demand economics (as I recall from my degree).

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 11:58am on 03 Nov 2010, Cory CG wrote:

One issue seems to be completely overlooked - Universities should be able to complete many courses in two years instead of three, if they did not have one month off at xmas, one month at Easter and three months in the Summer - this way the total tuition cost would only be around £3,000 higher in total - in fact students would be around £5,000 better off in total as they wouldn't need to take out a student loan to live off in the 3rd year

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 12:01pm on 03 Nov 2010, U14366475 wrote:

" 36. At 11:30am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:
8. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Chris mather wrote:

And, of course, the people most deterred with be the students from poorer families, to the extent that any 'assistance' (grants, scholarships, etc.) doesn't compensate.

If anything, the financial crisis has shown that poorer people are not deterred by going into ever increasing debt.

"
That's because the "poor people" are now less likely to be able to get credit; their rating has dropped.

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 12:04pm on 03 Nov 2010, ndiddy wrote:

10. At 11:11am on 03 Nov 2010, Rinc3wind wrote:
No it won't bbc. It just means that we might actually get decent courses attended by REAL students.

***************************************************************

if by 'REAL' students you mean those from a very privileged or wealthy background then you are correct. I sense that £9,000 a year doesn't mean the same to you as it does the rest of us.

Complain about this comment
* 77. At 12:04pm on 03 Nov 2010, in_the_uk wrote:

32. At 11:28am on 03 Nov 2010, Kuradi Vitukari wrote:

" 3. At 11:08am on 03 Nov 2010, Magi Tatcher wrote:

It will only deter those students who aren't ambitious enough to get themselves into massive debt on the promise that they might just earn more money once they have graduated.

But then nothing is guaranteed in life and it is more likely they will end up working in a call centre.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/sep/22/call-centres-rise-graduate-applicants
"

Or equally they may end up going on to find a way of generating clean and free energy, finding a cure for all Alzheimers or understanding why women can't drive.

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But all is not equal. There is far more chance of not getting a better job than there is to get the wanted job. The reason is purely the availability of jobs and the fact that few jobs really requiring a degree exist compared to all other jobs.

Sending all the kids to uni just devalues the education and reduces the education standards.

There were only 2 options-

1) Put a cap on students going to uni which would cause major outcry about how the rich will get in and the lazy kids don't have a chance.
2) Allow anyone to go to uni but they must pay for it. This way they should only bother if they are confident they will get a better job. But this causes outcry because the lazy kids will have debt they cannot pay.

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 12:05pm on 03 Nov 2010, Johns the Man wrote:

Will higher university fees create elitism?
Students in universities in England face tuition fees of up to £9,000 per year from 2012 under government proposals to be announced today. Will this deter people from higher education?

Yes, this increase in university tuition fees will most certainly create elitism, as only the wealthy land owners and landed gentries will be able to afford to send their children to universities in the UK. But then I rather think this what Thatcher originally wanted when She was Prime Minister, to create a definate them and us in education and university, Cameron has succeeded in doing this.

Though far from saving the country money in the long term, it will generate a very severe shortage of home grown university educated skills in the high tech industries, as such many developments and inventions that start or are bought to the fore by universities will become less and less, more and more foreign students will end up getting their degrees here in the UK, getting Christ knows what benifits whilst here whilst the ordinary people are left on the sidelines.

An Elitist country for the Rich and Wealthy with just a service economy, we're almost there, then the plug will eventually be pulled and the British economy will finally collapse resulting in mass civil unrest and dissorter, I don't think we realise just how close we are to that right now.

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 12:06pm on 03 Nov 2010, Paul wrote:

This is a direct result of the ridiculous expansion in university places and courses under New Labour. We need to refocus our universities on those courses which benefit the country, get rid of the pseudo degrees in David Beckham etc and then put in place a proper grant system to allow those from all social classes to attend university if their ability allows it. If others want to study frivolous subjects then so be it but out of their own pocket not out of mine.

We need scientists, engineers, mathematicians and more not just limited to the sciences any subject requiring academic rigour (archaeology springs to mind). It may be an old chestnut but media studies we could do without.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 12:08pm on 03 Nov 2010, Blackcat4 wrote:
Of course this will be divisive and it comes on the back of the fancy fantasy world that Blair spun, the land of milk and honey that is there for the holder of a degree, no matter how useless the qualification or where it was obtained from. The reality of this false promise is now hitting home.

The figure bandied about was that graduates could expect to earn £100,000 more in their working life than a non-graduate. Do the Maths and that's £2000 per annum over a working life of 40 years - peanuts!

The latest figures give graduate unemployment at a record 9%. I'd love to know how many of the 91% employed are actually in graduate grade jobs, in jobs even vaguely related to the degree they took or in jobs they had aspired to before taking the degree.

Our tertiary education system has been thrown into turmoil by political dogma and economic expediency. We are producing young people who are over-qualified for the current job market, many of whom are now regretting taking any notice of the hype generated by the last government. If there was ever a case of 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' our tertiary education system is it.

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 12:08pm on 03 Nov 2010, ndiddy wrote:

28. At 11:26am on 03 Nov 2010, Fugl5 wrote:
They should make it cheaper to go to university but harder to get in. That way, the tuition fees wouldn't need to be so high because nobody is paying for the useless "media studies" and other chumpy subjects.

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Complaining about 'useless media studies' on the BBC website. Oh sweet irony

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 12:11pm on 03 Nov 2010, Neil Probert wrote:

'Will higher university fees create elitism?'
No. The education system is already elitist throughout.

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 12:12pm on 03 Nov 2010, echelon_watches wrote:

I find it STAGGERING that everyone on here is wittering on about debt.

In 1992, my colleague was saving 2k a year to put his two children through Uni IF they wanted to (which they now do). Entirely their decision, if they didn't want to go, he would have
given them the cash on their 21st birthday for a good start in life.

What has happened to good parenting and planning ahead? There should be no need for tuition fee debt if you are caring parents.

You have to pay your own way in this world, or put up with your lot and stop relying on the state..... I.E. people who pay TAX like ME.

You either want a good education for your children or not. Your choice.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 12:12pm on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

Considering the cost to future students, no matter how many, or how few they may be, don't be surprised if they decide to take their skills out of the country that refused to invest except at the individual's expense. Knowledge of one or more languages would be a useful addition to that end.

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 12:14pm on 03 Nov 2010, Mercianknight wrote:

Elitism? No.

And lets face it it is the parents NOT the students that face the real challenge of funding further education. People need to stop whining and just adjust.

Will it sort out the chaff? - probably. Universities, whether they like it or not, are businesses and this may lead to greater efficiencies, better quality or delivery of service or trimming down of the more liberal (pointless) courses on offer as they try to attract fees.

I'm on the other side of the pond and, trust me, the UK model is a far more attractive hybrid system than the expensive, free-market offerings in the US.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 12:14pm on 03 Nov 2010, AngloMark wrote:

38. At 11:31am on 03 Nov 2010, Cherry_B wrote:
Hopefully a higher fee will ensure a better quality of courses, in turn providing better skills that will actually be of benefit in a work environment...

Unfortunately this is not the case. The higher fees are being levied merely to cover the shortfall created by the drastic cut in state funding for university tuition.
Complain about this comment
* 87. At 12:15pm on 03 Nov 2010, SuperJase1985 wrote:

Germany rebuilt itself a lot faster than we did after the second world war because they had a better trained labour force. If you leave school and go straight into work and you work, say for 10-15 years and you lose your job, its even harder for you to retrain and do something else.

People with University degrees are more likely and find it easier to retrain, our labour force will become more flexible because people be able to look at other job opportunities not just related to their degrees and are more likely to migrate to areas of work.

University degrees will allow us to have a better trained and flexible labour force. The UK is one of the lowest ranked countries for higher education spending and the lowest amount of graduates in the developed world. Instead of cutting funding, we should be increasing it. Why should young people sacrifice their future and education to pay off the bankers debt?

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 12:15pm on 03 Nov 2010, Angry Man Rants wrote:

With the advent of a degree for everyone - the fact is that the degree is devalued. I myself don't have one, I chose a different path but still hold down a very well paid job. currently you pretty much need a degree to get a job as a street cleaner (highly exaggerated I know but you get the gist)

I believe that we should tier any payments as per the degree type. Thus if you were studying Math, sciences or engineering - subject which we need as a nation to progress - then you pay a reduced rate. If you wish to study philosophy, history etc then (while worthy degrees I'm sure but not likely to assist the nation) then you pay full whack. If you are studying to be a teacher - then you are "sponsored" by a future employer and the fees get reduced (as you are going into a sought after profession.

Payments can be adjusted depending on the over supply at the time. If you get a first then again you get a discount, if you waste your time and get a 2:2 then - full cost apply.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 12:16pm on 03 Nov 2010, soapybasketball wrote:

This increase in tuition fees is just going to deter people from applying to university, so we could see a potential drop in youngsters choosing to pursue careers in teaching, medicine and other public services. This shortage is going to result in the government having to explore more expensive options in order to 'plug' the drain of professionals. They will probably fund these expensive options by increasing tuition fees even more to the point that it won't be a viable option for anyone to go to
university. Maybe they should just go all out and ban people from attending university all together.

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 12:18pm on 03 Nov 2010, john3626 wrote:

Yes it will, its too expensive now when you have to add on accommodation and living costs plus interest on any amounts borrowed. The only way around this is to reduce the course lengths thus making it more affordable but then the universities will lose out if students only attend for 2 years instead of 3 or 4.

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 12:18pm on 03 Nov 2010, Freda Peeple wrote:

Students from poorer backgrounds will be put off by the possibility of building up debts that they feel may hang round their necks for most or all of their lives. They are less likely to believe that they will earn enough to pay the debt and live a reasonable lifestyle once they leave university.

Students from richer backgrounds are likely to be much more confident about future earnings and generally they do earn more when they leave University. They also have the bank of mum & dad to fall back on, even if not immediately, they know that when mum & dad pop their clogs then they'll come into money and will be able to pay off any debt if they choose to.

Complain about this comment
* 92. At 12:19pm on 03 Nov 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

At 11:54am on 03 Nov 2010, James wrote:
While I respect the opinions of others, I think that the people in support of the increase aren't aware of the resulting economic violation; a lot of young people from working class and even financially disadvantaged households could be the figures that our country will require in the future. In fact, the majority of my sixth form teachers, for example, were not at all from privileged, financially strong backgrounds yet they are intelligent, fantastic at what they do and above all university-educated.

So with this increase, we will have a shortage of teachers, engineers, social workers, senior managers, accountants, you name it. Thus, public services will diminish and the economy could ground to a halt. I'm expecting someone to refute this comment by stating that a lot of these courses could be replaced by free or low-cost vocational schemes, but at the end of the day they simply cannot.

Just because one is from a more privileged background does not render one more intelligent.
Well said, James. I'm with you 100%. It's a pity that not everyone can see as clearly as you do, and as far into the future. Thank you.

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 12:19pm on 03 Nov 2010, Martin Hollands wrote:

I must admit I don't understand why so many young people want to go to Uni and study subjects that will have no relevance on the rest of their lives.

I thought University was from those with an intellectual ability above the norm who would be stretched and then use the knowledge obtained for their future careers.

It seems it is merely an excuse to go and have a good time for far too many of them.

I have long thought that the reasons governments wanted more at Uni was to cut down the number going on the dole for a couple of years.

If these youngsters had a decent education that set them up for the real world they would be so much better off than they are today.

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 12:19pm on 03 Nov 2010, TSArthur wrote:

I have child who will hopefully go University in 2013 or 14. I was appalled by a complacent ill-informed contribution by spokeswoman for Universities UK on BBC rolling news, her view -it should be business as usual once students understand the new system - unfortunately for her many of the people who are students or might have aspired to attend University are not so stupid as to believe her. So many important aspects of this huge change are just not being discussed.

There will inevitably be a large reduction in student numbers there is a big reduction in future lifetime income as a result of this change - think it through Universities UK -£40,000 debt on graduation, interest and repayment kick in at income of £21,000, but with interest at 2.2% and repayment at say 10% of income above £21k then for those with incomes below £29,800 their debt will continue to rise. If, for example you become a teacher that will be your fate - rising debt followed by slowly falling debt -only when your income approaches higher rate band will you be paying off a significant amount, but if your income remains in the low £40,000s thereafter you will be repaying for the whole 30yr term. The graduate tax was rejected but what is proposed is a graduate tax for most people (and probably almost all women graduates) -they will face a marginal tax rate 9 or 10p in the pound higher for almost their whole working life (I believe anyway the 30yr cut-off for repayment will be abandoned when it becomes clear too much debt will have to be written off.)

It is highly probable there will also be a big change in the pattern of study -many arts and social science courses
already lead to only modest, if any, pecuniary reward. I think many of these courses will see big falls in applications—you can see many parents saying to their kids it would be better if they studied accounting or engineering rather than English. So career choice and subject choice are going to be affected in a big way. Many Universities will get into financial difficulty as numbers fall, and they struggle with staff numbers in now unpopular subjects—Universities UK take heed it will not be business as usual.

I also suspect these proposals are not properly accounted in the Osborne public expenditure plans—if we have £4000 of additional funding per year per student from 2012 then we get £2 billion extra public borrowing in 2012, £4 billion in 2013 and £6 billion in 2014—as none of this will be repaid in that interval, that is a total additional £12 billion of public borrowing by 2014. Moreover this borrowing will continue to rise for years, and while there will be an income stream from students it is a reasonable assumption that 25% would have to be written off (i.e. paid by general taxpayer) if 30yr horizon for individual repayment is maintained.

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 12:20pm on 03 Nov 2010, Loftgroov wrote:

Hopefully, yes.

Higher fees will help keep the riff-raff out.

Complain about this comment
* 96. At 12:20pm on 03 Nov 2010, drcarol wrote:

Of course this is going to mean 2-tier education. As someone who teaches post-grad science students, it will be a disaster. There are many very bright people out there who could give real benefits to this country in the future. The problem is that ability to pay does not equal merit—look at the cabinet for goodness sake.

There has to be a way of allowing exceptionally bright people of whatever background to attain a decent level of education. Oh I know, why don't we have an exam system that actually works, a real selection system and give students who merit them grants!!!!

Complain about this comment
* 97. At 12:21pm on 03 Nov 2010, Caroline wrote:

I graduated in 2002—the only person in my family to go to university. I struggled financially throughout, working around my studies and carrying out free work experience to help my future career as a journalist. I left university with nearly £13k of debt and still have £4k left at 30 years old. Yes university helped start my chosen career, but it also left me in piles of debt. £9,000 is a ridiculous amount to expect families to pay on top of rent, books etc. I am proud of my university education and
believe we should be encouraging people to better themselves, not putting them off.

Complain about this comment
* 98. At 12:22pm on 03 Nov 2010, BrimfulOfAshes wrote:

Higher-echelon universities don't even allow undergraduates to take jobs during term time to help pay their bills. £27,000 debt - and that's before taking out a student loan to live on. How on earth is a bright-but-poor student at Oxbridge going to manage? No such problem for a dimwit whose parents are loaded, though.

The Tories can spin it however they like, but it's all about keeping higher education for the priviledged, while keeping the poor in their place. We serfs are not too stupid to work that out.

However, if universities concentrated on teaching useful courses to those who deserve to be on them, there'd be fewer uni students and more money to go round for teaching them.

Not everyone IS clever enough to go to university and some of the courses on offer are laughable. Elsewhere on this site, there's a piece about a "degree" in Lady Gaga being offered at an American college - how long before that ends up on this side of the pond?

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 12:23pm on 03 Nov 2010, Desiderius Erasmus wrote:

Labour decided that instead of the top 13% of school achievers going to university, which has been the case for decades, it would try for 50% (regardless of intellectual achievements) ... this led to Universities expanding to cater for those not really suited to the requirements, by introducing ever more strange 'degrees'.

Now we have dropout rates at a level never seen before, and the market is reasserting the need to restrict university entry again .... only instead of by achievement, as was the case before Labour's social engineering, its by price (cost).

I hope that all those labour MP's who had a free education, filtered only by ability, are now happy that after 13 yrs of 'socialism' we have an education system filtered only by the ability to pay for it!

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 12:24pm on 03 Nov 2010, Rivers38 wrote:

I am concerned to read all the negative comments about arts graduates in here and the fact that people feel that their courses should not be funded. The one area that this country is well known for, throughout the entire world, is the creative industry. We train some of the best artists/designers/film makers etc in the world. Every single article that you pick up and use in your daily life has been designed - by an arts graduate. Look at James Dyson - a graduate of the Royal College of Art. How much
income is he generating for the country? Without good design and the highly skilled people who work in that area, the UK would not be able to function within the manufacturing arena. Yes, we need doctors and scientists but we also need good designers. Please do not let anyone tell you that these people have "noddy degrees" in basket weaving - just not true! As a retired art teacher, I despair at the lack of understanding and insight of the people making these comments - and I bet you own a Dyson vacuum cleaner as well!
Appendix 52. All messages in the message thread Snow and weather.

Have you been affected by the big freeze?
14:08 UK time, Wednesday, 1 December 2010

Snow and freezing temperatures are continuing to cause major problems for road, rail and air services across much of the UK - with thousands of schools also shut. How have you been affected?

The disruption caused by snow continued overnight, with temperatures falling as low as -20C in Braemar, Aberdeenshire and -7C in Birmingham.

Travellers face more misery as airports, roads and rail continue to be badly hit. Gatwick Airport has reopened after two days of closure, but passengers are warned of delays and cancellations. Southern and Southeastern rail have reduced services, trains in East Yorkshire are cancelled, and there are virtually no services north of Glasgow.

Have you been stranded in the snow? Have your travel plans been disrupted by the weather? Have you noticed other problems resulting from the weather?

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

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Comments

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* Previous * 1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5 * 6 * 7 * 8 * Next

* 1. At 3:01pm on 01 Dec 2010, darkvalleysboy1978 wrote:

   Isn’t it strange how it is national news because the South of England has snow. Scotland, Wales and the North of England seem to just get on with it. It is disruptive and dangerous but unfortunately we live with useless councils who don't grit the
roads. Either take it up with your council or suck it up like a good little Brit

Complain about this comment
* 2. At 3:07pm on 01 Dec 2010, Pete Rumour wrote:

Funny how some people from a distance away can get into work, but others who live fairly close can't! My business is travelling around the country with my range of tools. So far I have not had any problems other than it has taken a bit longer (a lot in some cases) to get to my destination.

What I have noticed though, is the bad driving skills of some road users! Too fast, too close! I watched one guy spinning the wheels of his car trying to get moving on ice. I told him to be more gentle and use the tickover and clutch method and out he came!

I know there have been complaints from some areas that the gritters haven't been seen, but if you have 150cm of snow on the ground it's ploughs that are needed!

I hope everyone takes care and all get home safely. Just remember, it's not a race so take it easy and don't ruin your or some other families Christmas.

Complain about this comment
* 3. At 3:08pm on 01 Dec 2010, John Sparks wrote:

I don't know what people are moaning about. 2010 has been one of the hottest years on record. Apparently. Just try and ignore the big piles of white stuff all over the place.

Complain about this comment
* 4. At 3:16pm on 01 Dec 2010, philjer wrote:

I'm taking a day off work, but enjoying is not the word, since I will not get paid. It's a pity Prince William couldn't get married today so that I am saved losing another day's pay next April.

I got stuck at London Bridge last night trying to get home and it was total chaos with little information and trains on unaffected lines that could have moved being cancelled due to no train driver, whilst other trains on lines which were blocked did have drivers. Why couldn't they have just moved the drivers and got some passengers away.

There was blockages at Purley but they did not consider running shuttle trains between London Bridge and East Croydon on the stretch of line that was free thus enabling many passengers to get away and helping reducing the numbers at London Bridge.

Not sure if I will attempt to go in tomorrow, and it will depend on the weather. But my decision is not helped by my boss who thinks that normal hours should be worked for no good reason and not even a lunch hour skipped. So trying to get in earlier and leave a bit earlier is not an option for me.
The websites of the train companies are poor providing live running information and one train company will say use another train company whilst that other train company will tell you to use the others. Neither are running any services. Very poor.

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 3:26pm on 01 Dec 2010, Rufus McDufus wrote:

Isn't it strange how it is national news because the South of England has snow. Scotland, Wales and the North of England seem to just get on with it.

The constant lead news items of the last week of chaos in Scotland & Wales with pictures of cars skidding about on inappropriate tyres, abandoned vehicles, airports shut and people whining about lack of action must've been in our imagination then!

Complain about this comment
* 6. At 3:31pm on 01 Dec 2010, doncaster_lad wrote:

I'm a student over in Hull and the whole university campus is closed because of the snow. Its snowed here now for 5 days almost none stop, there is 2 foot of snow in our back yard and at least 6 inches on the pavements outside.

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 3:32pm on 01 Dec 2010, veop wrote:

@1 = it was national news on Monday, no snow to speak of in most of south, lots in Scotland and Yorkshire. Same yesterday morning.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 3:32pm on 01 Dec 2010, Worldcitizen1 wrote:

It amazed me how the people of England get all flustered at a little snow. Here in Connecticut, we regularly get up to two feet of snow and think nothing of it. In some spots, 33 inches of snow is normal. What do I and a lot of other people do when a big snow storm occurs?

I fill my gas tank in my car and go driving around to enjoy the beauty of it and maybe spin my car around in an empty parking lot. In other words, I have FUN!

By the way, The Blue Danube Waltz is perfect to play while doing doughnuts with the car.

LOL.............Have fun. You only go around once in life!

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 3:34pm on 01 Dec 2010, sarsamhol wrote:
RE: "1. At 3:01pm on 01 Dec 2010, darkvalleysboy1978 wrote:
Isn't it strange how it is national news because the South of England has snow. Scotland, Wales and the North of England seem to just get on with it."

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The snowy weather in Scotland, Wales and the North of England HAS been national news for several days now, so please don't bring up that usual complaint. Presumably it's only "allowed" to be mentioned if it's NOT in the South? Arguably, snowy conditions in the areas you mention are more likely to occur there and therefore people are more used to dealing with them. The south doesn't usually get much snow, so of course it's going to be mentioned when it happens - but don't try to say everywhere else has been ignored, because that is just not true.

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 3:35pm on 01 Dec 2010, U8860545 wrote:

Why is it that when snow hits the UK the whole country goes out of whack?

Countries like Russia and Canada has no problems with this as they deal with it everyday. Maybe the government should invest in getting some ideas from them...or has that been 'cut' also?

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 3:40pm on 01 Dec 2010, LongJumpKonan wrote:

Yes, it is -10 degree Celsius today in Berlin. It was almost unbearable. And tomorrow it will be even colder!!

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 3:47pm on 01 Dec 2010, reasonstobecheerfull wrote:

Why is this subject about (The Weather) brought up each year is it because its seasonal, or that the councils have been caught out again for there incompitance. Its the same story every year we are all ways un prepaired, we become the laughing stock of europe because we cannot deal with a few inches (showing my age) of snow. Its a good job we have this bad spell other wise there would be no news to report.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 3:47pm on 01 Dec 2010, veop wrote:

@Rufus / Sarsamhol re: comment 1

I suppose if you see everything as against you, you don't notice things like that. Rufus was right, we must all have been imagining the coverage last week, at the weekend, on Monday and early Tuesday. Silly us. Maybe I could move north - from Leeds - and blame the BBC for being biased in favour of the South East whenever my local area isn't headline news. Last item I saw led with Sheffield today, then went to Scotland, then to Reigate - so the South East was third.
Complain about this comment
* 14. At 3:54pm on 01 Dec 2010, Desmond wrote:

Here in Southwestern Ireland where I am currently on holiday, there has been very little snow, just cold sunny days and even colder nights.

What happened to the global warming we were promised, we sure could do with some of it now.

Based on the last two winters the weather seems to be getting colder not warmer.

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 3:59pm on 01 Dec 2010, Diana_France wrote:

Here in France, as in Connecticut, we have two feet of snow. Our village is used to this, and we had poles in place to mark the edges of the road in case of drifts. However it did come a bit earlier than expected and the snowplough wasn't ready. We coped, and the kids got to school, but everyone is saying this is not an ordinary winter.

Of course snow hits the SE UK hard, and of course the Councils aren't kitted out for it. How would Council Tax payers react if faced with a bill for snowploughs and road salt which weren't used for years on the trot? Of course most drivers aren't handling it well - they get too little practice. Last week my French car was serviced and the garage changed over the wheels for my set with winter tyres. How many British drivers have these, or would expect to need them? Our garage has a drain in the middle of the floor to catch the melting snow when the car thaws out - who needs that in Sussex? We all have snow chains but rarely need them - maybe they would help in the UK?

We don't all live in the same surroundings. Finns and Swedes are good at driving on ice - it's part of their driving test. It's easy to laugh at the UK, but if winters continue to be this white, we'll soon catch up. Otherwise we'll muddle through in our traditional manner, ignoring employers who moan that they will lose money, while we go sledging with the kids. Why not, it doesn't happen often.

Complain about this comment
* 16. At 4:06pm on 01 Dec 2010, betahail wrote:

Well, this is typical isn't it, can't get to work and be economically active as the roads are closed because snow ploughs and gritters are in short supply. Obviously Gordon Brown and New Labour are at fault here for frittering away money they should've been saving during the good economic years on workshy immigrant asylum seekers and integrating terrorists courses. No doubt Milliband and co will be blaming the Conservatives for the weather.
* 17. At 4:12pm on 01 Dec 2010, killcrash wrote:

My newsagent said this morning: "It's now officially snowing here, as they have had snow in London". Guess where I live ?? (clue = haggis)

* 18. At 4:14pm on 01 Dec 2010, lacplesis37 wrote:

Yes. No gritting of roads in our area at all - London Borough of Bromley. No post. No rubbish collection. No milk delivery. Virtually no trains or buses either. They're all playing a blinder!

* 19. At 4:17pm on 01 Dec 2010, anotherfakenname wrote:

Can't say as I've noticed much, traffic was a bit slow on Monday but it normally is. Other than that walking the dog is a cold occupation.

Last year I remember making it from Germany to an interview in London to find the interviewer couldn't make it 15 miles.... I think for most people the snow is just an excuse to be lazy.

* 20. At 4:19pm on 01 Dec 2010, uk_is_toast wrote:

I was in Sweden last week and there was a few inches of snow on the roads but everyone just drove like normal. Everyone on the motorway was doing 60mph, but then that's the speed limit.

Maybe if this cold weather happens every year we will eventually get used to driving in it...

* 21. At 4:22pm on 01 Dec 2010, Asterix-in-Poland wrote:

Here in southern Poland it's -10 (in the day) and we have about a foot of snow with another foot or more expected in the next day or so. I got my winter tyres put on yesterday, without which I would not be able to drive anywhere. They do make a big difference and someone's going to make a fortune persuading the British to fork out for some extra winter tyres. Most of Poland continues to function as normal as they are used to severe winters, but even they are struggling as it's quite early for it to be so bad.

* 22. At 4:26pm on 01 Dec 2010, Peter Blenkinsop wrote:

I feel so sorry for the poor people who live in the south of England whose lives seem to be totally disrupted by a couple of inches of snow. We have had snow for over a week and each day it gets deeper. This morning it had reached 32 inches or c.80cm.
What would the south do if they had this much snow I wonder, and had a couple of hundred sheep and other livestock to feed. Hibernate for the winter? How would they cope with no post for a week which is what we are experiencing in rural Northumberland. This is far worse than last January perhaps the Gulf Stream is starting to shut down!

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 4:27pm on 01 Dec 2010, Worldcitizen1 wrote:

15. At 3:59pm on 01 Dec 2010, Diana_France wrote:

"Last week my French car was serviced and the garage changed over the wheels for my set with winter tyres. How many British drivers have these, or would expect to need them? Our garage has a drain in the middle of the floor to catch the melting snow when the car thaws out – who needs that in Sussex? We all have snow chains but rarely need them – maybe they would help in the UK?"

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I have wondered why most of the British don't opt for all-season tires since they don't need to be taken off every season. Here in the U.S., most people use these all-season tires to avoid tire changes each Winter. I use them and have never gotten stuck. I own a heavy car (Cadillac) but, still, I drive through some very deep snow with no problem. I watch the Winter driving videos on YouTube and see that most of the British drive on Summer tires during the Winter months and then have problems making the hills.

Are all-season tires available in Britain and France? Are they much more expensive? Here in Connecticut, they are maybe $5.00 more per tire but, WELL worth it. I highly recommend them to ANYONE who drives on snowy roads.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 4:36pm on 01 Dec 2010, Celyn wrote:

I get very tired of the chip-on-shoulder comments about the South of England. As has already been pointed out, the news for the last week, when the South was not affected in the slightest, has been dominated by how the North and Wales have been struggling with the snow.

Yesterday it started snowing here and, thanks to no gritting locally, nearly every school is shut. The traffic is chaotic and the roads on my estate are quite literally a sheet of ice. They probably won't be gritted at all. The blame rests firmly with the Council, who charge extortionate local taxes to run our public services and each year fail to do their duty.

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 4:37pm on 01 Dec 2010, dhd wrote:

@worldcitizen1:

[Type text]
I am a native born US citizen having grown up in Massachusetts which as you know has had as much snow as Connecticut over all the years.

These states have years of experience with snow and all the appropriate equipment to deal with it.

I have lived in the UK now for 25 years and it has only been in the last 5 years or so that the UK has had extensive snow, with the exception of Scotland and the far north. I mean more than a dusting that will melt quickly.

The councils do not have the snow plows that the northern states do. They could not justify the money for buying plows that might be used once in 10 years.

The other issue is that most drivers in the states will put on winter tires at the first sign of snow. In the UK the majority of car owners do not have winter tires and would not know that the "all weather" tires they have will not cope as well. As a matter of fact, I have a car that the manufacturer has only just indicated that you can buy special winter tires for (at a cost of about £400, or about $600.00).

I have seen other states in the US have problems dealing with an unexpected snow storm while living in Washington, DC.

Without the proper equipment it is difficult and they have to prioritize the work.

They are learning but it takes time and the will to make the change.

Hope you will understand and maybe investigate before you make comments about other countries response to adverse weather conditions.

Complain about this comment
* 26. At 4:40pm on 01 Dec 2010, Simon wrote:

It's all a bit pathetic really... okay so we get some proper winter weather for a change. A few generations ago in the UK hard winters were the norm and people grumbled a bit, threw on an extra pair of thick socks and got on with it. Many places in the world still do so annually but not here. A bit of snow and it seems that everything beyond the front door becomes dangerous and inconvenient, we're told to stay indoors, anything that can be cancelled is cancelled and the country grinds to a halt. Man up and adapt people, were not bigger than nature and never will be so suck it in, change pace and relearn how to live with whatever it throws at us.

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 4:41pm on 01 Dec 2010, SPEEDTHRILLS wrote:
Honestly, It snows in the North every year without fail. Are they ever ready for it? Can they handle it? Obviously not. We see schools shut, roads blocked, cars abandoned, airports closed, trains cancelled, operations postponed. What a load of softies - no different from the Southerners in fact. Its just that they like to think they are - so lets humour them. Eee, where ah were born we lived in't cardboard box etc., (apologies to the Pythons).

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 4:43pm on 01 Dec 2010, Raymond Hopkins wrote:

Here in West coast Finland, the temperature is only minus five Celsius, and what's more, there is only a light snow layer, about five centimetres of it. Looking at the reports coming from Britain, I have only one thing to say. Can we have our weather back please?

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 4:56pm on 01 Dec 2010, 24 years and counting wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 30. At 4:59pm on 01 Dec 2010, Worldcitizen1 wrote:

25. At 4:37pm on 01 Dec 2010, dhd wrote:

"Hope you will understand and maybe investigate before you make comments about other countries response to adverse weather conditions."

I didn't mean that to come off the way that you took it. I was simply wondering why the all-season tires were not used in the U.K. as they are relatively inexpensive and offer VASTLY improved traction on snowy roads. You explained very nicely why they haven't used them as they haven't had the need until recently.

Thank you.
I wasn't critisizing the British. I was only wondering.

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 4:59pm on 01 Dec 2010, SarahEllacott wrote:

I have been unable to pay in my husband's wages as Barclays closed ALL of their branches in the country! Yet, every other bank was open in my area. My husband has now been charged for being overdrawn despite it not being his fault. The roads in my area are now clear and all public transport is running with only minor delays. It is disgusting as we now have no money and unable to put more electric on which we desperately need due to having to heat home with electric heaters as our boiler is broken.

[Type text]
Complain about this comment
* 32. At 5:09pm on 01 Dec 2010, The Ghosts of John Galt wrote:

Yet again the UK proves itself a nation of incompetents that cannot cope with a little snow! Get the ploughs out - salt and grit the roads - keep the trains running - put winter tyres on your road vehicles - it really is not such a big deal!

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 5:10pm on 01 Dec 2010, Edwin Schrodinger wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

* 34. At 5:17pm on 01 Dec 2010, MellorSJ wrote:

Not yet. I went into town today with the christmas post. No drama.

But I have to travel LHR-SFO tomorrow and I worry that the trains won't make it. So far, so good, though.

But who knows? The driver may look at 1" of snow out of his window and decide to stay home in the warm :(

Complain about this comment
* 35. At 5:18pm on 01 Dec 2010, dhd wrote:

30. At 4:59pm on 01 Dec 2010, Worldcitizen1 wrote:

Glad I could help and explain how things work here. Some areas here have had over 2 foot of snow in one day which is difficult to cope with a the best of times for countries that can deal with it.

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 5:27pm on 01 Dec 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:

1. At 3:01pm on 01 Dec 2010, darkvalleysboy1978 wrote:
Isn't it strange how it is national news because the South of England has snow. Scotland, Wales and the North of England seem to just get on with it. It is disruptive and dangerous but unfortunately we live with useless councils who don't grit the roads. Either take it up with your council or suck it up like a good little Brit

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I don't know which bit of news you have seen. I have seen plenty about Scotland and the north of England not coping.

Our roads were gritted. The roads were gritted yesterday, it snowed all day, cars drove over the fallen snow which was
slippery by lunchtime and then froze. The gritting lorries have been out again. The melted snow will have frozen again by now.

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 5:59pm on 01 Dec 2010, englishmouse wrote:

I work 40 miles away from where I live. Thankfully I have a laptop, mobile phone and an understanding boss. So I've worked from home all week. Has actually meant that I have had an hours lie in each morning, still started work 30 mins earlier than normal, and finish the day at 5pm, instead of when I normally get home at 7. I hope the snow lasts for a few more weeks - I have a great work/life balance at the moment!!

Complain about this comment
* 38. At 6:02pm on 01 Dec 2010, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

I am the only person in the street to have cleared my drive and also the pathway outside along the front of the property. I have also cleared a portion of the road, rocksalt to it all.

I cleared around 8inch to 11 inch(in places) deep snow off my car using a soft floor broom, its so easy to just push it all off one side, starting with the roof, doesnt scratch paintwork either & saves loads of time then run it down the sides of the car.

I was out early this morning & the snow was quite deep. After clearing drive & car etc I went to my business storage facilities, slow treacherous drive, and couldnt get in, my car got stuck just outside a main gate but I had a spade & got out, + helped another car that was also stuck. I walked over 1/4 mile to storage facilities from car, it was heavy going due to depth of snow and cleared the snow to the entrance so I could get in easier when I was going to return later.

I grabbed a large bag of rocksalt from my few bags in storage, which I bought ages ago BEFORE panic of weather meant everywhere ran out of supply, & chucked it in a Royal Mail sack & humped it onto my shoulder & walked back through the snow which was around 10 inch deep, it wasnt easy trying to use the same steps on returning to my car because the weight of the rocksalt meant I was taking shorter steps. 10 inch deep snow doesnt sound much but it takes much more effort/energy to walk and is much slower.

Headed back home, (more treacherous driving but main roads slightly better because more people using them), where I do most of my work on the internet, some builders failed to turn up, we havent got a kitchen at the moment so its not easy.

On the way home I stopped off & got another shovel, bought some more salt, bought another full gas cylinder, to add to my spare ones.
Running my business from home I can only claim for part heating etc via tax hence to run just my office the whole house also gets heated, so I use mobile gas fire, which is more expensive to the taxman but which I can claim 100% of costs.

I also bought a sledge from a shop round the corner so that I was able to fulfil my days dispatches which I had to collect later from storage, across the deep snow.

The corner shop had some plastic sledges but also some others handmade with wood & a thin metal sheet underneath which someone had made last night. The FIRST I have seen of someone actually taking advantage of the weather & using self-initiative.

While at the shop I had chat with shopkeeper & some students that were not at college. I mentioned that if I was not working or was not at school/college, I would have been out clearing snow, as I did when younger, its EASY to make £100.00 a day in present times, but the students weren't interested, until I got to the £100 a day bit & the girl started to get interested, but her boyfriend, I presume he was, was not interested. Too much like hard work.

When I reached home I contacted all my customers who have placed orders and informed them that I was able to dispatch their items today but that there may still be Royal Mail delays.

Completed all paperwork went back to storage, more treacherous driving but main roads hugely improved, packaged & dragged all my dispatches on my new sledge to my waiting car & dropped off at post office, then was told Royal Mail were not making any collections today.

Wonderful!!!

What gets me is the total lack of effort that is the staple reality of so many people. There just seems to be no backbone to our nation, yes there are some great people out their doing voluntry work & other things, but they are a tiny number in comparison to the size of our population, & they are amazing people, far worthy of making Peers etc than half the muppets put forward by governments.

I have cleared my drive etc each day past few days, others have not & their cars are now trapped in much deeper snow. Idiots then walk to local shops & find they have sold out of bread & milk, vegetables & other things, or deliveries have not made it through to local shops. Sainsburys & Tesco have FULL stock, but muppets cannot get there because their cars are now trapped, I am sure they will be FIRST in queue to moan that the the local council has done not enough to clear roads etc, and/or blame Gordon Brown or whoever, everyone but their own muppet brain & self responsibility which they neglect.
Listening to BBC radio this morning on my first drive out, there was mention of treacherous conditions but NO REMINDERS, for people to be prepared in cars, taking EXTRA warmer cloths with them & a blanket, a drink, even a shovel.

It might help if BBC provided real travel advice & community advise at the end of hourly news broadcasts in such conditions, + for volunteers & encouraging /suggesting people off work get out & help themselves & others clearing paths & checking on pensioners etc but in our untrusting society who can you trust and rely upon because of the few who will seek to take advantage.

There just seems to be so much inconsideration & ineptitude selfishness and paranoia of individuals and even those who run community services etc.

Nothing is anyones responsibility, except of course government, who muppets will balme for their OWN ignorant selfishness.

With Royal Mail not collecting from post offices, rubbish collections cancelled, other services cancelled, there are bound to be important services that are undemnanned or in difficulty due to weather conditions. I cannot see meals on wheels completing their rounds without severe difficulties, especially due to back roads being atrocious. Same with helpers/services who help pensioners etc with shopping or whatever.

There are loads of VULNERABLE people on their own who are bound to need help yet Camerons BIG SOCIETY seems to be NON EXISTANT, there is no central organisation which can utilise volunteers, ESPECIALLY when extreme conditions arise.

I'd hate for anything REALLY serious to happen because this country would just fall apart.

Its outrageous that some unions even prevent teachers from taking part in a scheme of attending and helping ensuring lessons take place in a local school if they can't reach their own school.

Its crazy and outrageous, there just seems to be 1001 reasons to NOT do anything and new reasons are dreampt up all the time.

This evening even trying to volunteer to help out community services via local Doncaster Council was a complete waste of time, whether meals on wheels or whatever is just so hard, time consuming & ultimately pointless as know one seems to know anything, + everyone has either gone home early due to weather or are not answering phones.

I suppose that before I could volunteer I would need to complete a 50 page application form & criminal checks etc, taking weeks to process by which time the moment of need has passed & some people will no doubtedly have suffered.
The true realtys of this snow are not very nice. It is the fact that it just so proves how ATTROCIOUS and selfish and paranoid we are as a country, as communitys, as individuals, (excluding a very small minority). So many just want to take & receive, but give little or nothing, paying tax seems to negate any and all other responsibilitys.

It just seems to me that the vast majority of people, want a many state, or even a totalitarian state, so they can be told what to do and when because they are incapable of making such decisions themselves, unless of course booking a foreign holiday, or deciding beans or spagetti.

I think because generations since WWII have not experienced REAL hardship, much of the spine of our nation is lost. Maybe if it snowed for a month and was 50 times more severe and the vast majority experienced high level suffering then people might wake up to the fact that we are all in this together that our existance is totally 100% reliant on acting together and not as selfish ignorant individuals.

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 6:05pm on 01 Dec 2010, englishmouse wrote:

One of the problems we face is that people are just not taught how to drive in snow. Tailgating, not maintaining a decent speed going uphill on snow, braking too late...the list is endless of what I have witnessed this week. Maintain a steady speed (not fast, but not too slow either), low revs, stay well away from the car in front of you and slow down/brake steadily and early when you need to stop. It really isn't that difficult.

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 6:06pm on 01 Dec 2010, Magaroo wrote:

I turned 50 this year and I can remember very severe winters in the 60s that went on forever with much deeper snowfall than we have had in South Yorkshire in the last few days. My Dad worked down the pit and got up at 4:00a.m every morning to catch a bus, or in bad weather like this, to walk to work in the most severe of weathers. I think the main differences between now and those days are possibly these:

Most people lived within easy walking distance of where they worked, or a short a bus ride away, and they were possibly prepared to walk further than nowadays because a lost shift meant lost money.

Now We have very few manufacturing or production industries left and many industries are knowledge based, which means that a significant number of people, apart from service industries/manufacturing, are not required to be on the premises to fulfill their job role for at least a couple of days.
Plus, there were hardly any cars on the roads in those days and in fact, fewer roads, because very few people had a car to drive. Therefore the roads (all roads including the side roads which are now impassible for parked cars) were gritted. I would also guess that the steam trains in operation in the early 60s had snow ploughs fitted to the front, although I may be confusing this memory with a film!

Wouldn't it be great if, in some respects, we could travel back in time and learn some simple lessons from people who knew how to keep winter at bay?

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 6:19pm on 01 Dec 2010, meddleman wrote:

It took me 8 hours to travel 6 miles south of the Dartford Tunnel northbound on the A2, one of the main routes into England from Europe, yesterday and this had everything to do with extremely poor road management and very little to do with the weather. During the whole of that journey, the southbound carriageway (about ten yards away) was moving fluently at close to normal speeds. I only saw one gritter snowplough and that had broken down on the side of the road in half an inch of slush. Up to the point where I met stationary traffic, I had averaged a comfortable 60 mph from Canterbury and the road conditions did not change suddenly. Clearly, as is always the case in England, the authorities took far too long to clear accidents and get the traffic moving again. Clearly, there had been insufficient preparation for bad weather on the bridge and sliproads even though it was strongly forecast. The snow only became a problem because as the traffic was stationary for so long it began to build up and also lorry drivers were parking on the hard shoulder because their driving time had run out. On the southbound carriageway there were no weather problems. One local farmer phoned in to Radio Kent (our only source of information during those eight hours) and said he had four snow ploughs plus drivers in his yard but when he phoned the council, he was told they couldn't go out because someone at the council 'had not got around' to doing his contract. When he suggested they do it immediately by email, he was told that no one would be able to sign it then. Kent Council should hang their heads in shame but I think that there is a wider problem in England with the authorities' lack of concern about traffic holdups. They simply do not seem to understand the damage this does to England's economy and its image. Any visitor from Europe yesterday would have thought that the South of England couldn't organise an Autumn Fair let alone a World Cup.

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 6:21pm on 01 Dec 2010, Chablis76 wrote:

Work at radford and Bingley in Bingley. The worse the weather got and the more information we got about trains and buses being cancelled. However management didn't make a decision until it was common knowledge that trains were definitely being cancelled and buses non existant. I finally got home after a 3
and half hour ordeal and count myself lucky that it only took that long!

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 6:23pm on 01 Dec 2010, As_Iff wrote:

The snow pictures that people have posted on the BBC news web-site have been wonderful. I hope they keep on coming in.

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 6:33pm on 01 Dec 2010, MellorSJ wrote:

@Mr Wonderful: I slogged through your lengthy post cheering the while.

How marvellous it is to read of someone who is actually _taking care of business_, but how depressing to read of the all-too-usual lack of enterprise on the part of our youth. (Let us remember that you are clearing roads with rock salt you have paid for, while 'boyfriend' won't lift a shovel for £100.

Two oblique comments. First, your note that there is no central organization. IMO, that is not required. What _is_ required is a change in attitude that sees you clearing the road and says "I ought to clear my section of the road" rather than the all-too-likely "Look at that p**t! That's the council's job!"

Second, your note about the Beeb not reminding people of what they need to do in these difficult circumstances. I recall (about two years ago?) listening to some bleater going on about organ donation. Did they provide a URL to sign up? They did not. Moreover, when I searched, I found nothing. (In fairness, I was in the US at the time. Perhaps the search focussed on US sites.)

I am a strong believer in organ donation. (It's not like I'll be using them.) In the US (in my states anyway), you simply check the box when you get a drivers license. Done. In Australia, you sign up and get a card. Also easy.

It's still a mystery to me how you do it in the UK. But I have a ToDo now :) I'll just remember not to expect the Beeb to provide the info.

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 6:35pm on 01 Dec 2010, fishinmad wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 46. At 6:36pm on 01 Dec 2010, kentish wrinkly wrote:

Although I only work about 14 miles from home I have been unable to get in today because of snow. Most of my route takes me on lanes which rarely see a gritter lorry (appreciate major roads must take priority) so would have been foolhardy to venture out.
My husband is currently on business in Scotland where he tells me he is having no problems at all getting around!

Being fit and able I contemplated clearing some the pathway in front of our house but am concerned about any comeback if someone slips on the cleared bit. When I was a child everyone did 'their bit' and footpaths were very quickly useable again. Can anyone advise if I am wise to do this or am I leaving myself open to being sued?

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 6:38pm on 01 Dec 2010, As_Iff wrote:

24years and counting...
"Climate and weather are not the same thing"

That's like saying population and people are not the same thing.
Of course they are! One is made up of the other.

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 6:44pm on 01 Dec 2010, flyfisherswife wrote:

I live in Central Scotland (small town) and the snow that has fallen over the past few days has completely disabled the area - we have no buses (if they do run they are forced to stop and cancel), no trains and the roads have not been properly ploughed or gritted. The street where I stay is virtually impassable unless you have a 4x4. Our council have made promises after the snow of 2009/2010 that there would be enough grit and ploughs but so far they have not appeared. If they had been prepared and actually gritted when the weather forecast said snow we would not be in such a dire situation. The shops have run out of bread, milk and other essentials. I have watched so many people venturing out with the car and getting stuck or burning their tyres bald - these people make the roads dangerous. If people need to venture out then they should be prepared (carry a shovel) and most of all take it slowly!

As someone suggested tyre chains - our roads are not suitable for them and have still not been fully repaired since last year.

Take care and keep warm...

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 6:52pm on 01 Dec 2010, Asterix-in-Poland wrote:

40. At 6:06pm on 01 Dec 2010, Magaroo wrote:
I turned 50 this year and I can remember very severe winters in the 60s that went on forever with much deeper snowfall than we have had in South Yorkshire in the last few days.

I too grew up in S.Yorks - Sheffield, and I too remember many bad winters in the 60's. Certainly there were no closed schools, but then as you rightly point out most people could walk there. Whilst there was as much or more snow then, they weren't
considered bad - for us youngsters they were a pure delight. Sheffield being a city on hills was a sledging paradise.

Complain about this comment
* 52. At 6:57pm on 01 Dec 2010, dilly wrote:
its not snowing in willand and devon i wish it would for once it would be alright if the weather man could get it right

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 7:14pm on 01 Dec 2010, Sue Doughcoup wrote:
Only insofar as it shows just how stupid some people really are.
For instance - I saw someone clearing snow from their driveway and kerb entrance and just piled the snow two feet high on the pavement at either side of their entrance. For instance - I saw someone clearing their driveway and threw the snow off their shovel into the middle of the recently gritted road - on a steep hill!!

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 7:18pm on 01 Dec 2010, RTFishall wrote:
I bet most self-employed people and those on piece work managed to get to work.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 7:21pm on 01 Dec 2010, Johns the Man wrote:
Snow and freezing temperatures are causing major problems for road, rail and air services in much of the UK, and thousands of schools are shut. How have you been affected by the big freeze?

Well, I live in Sweden, we have well over a metre of snow - have had snow for the last five or six weeks - winter arrived here very early.
How has this affected us? The daytime temperature over the last month has got as high as -3°C, although now - December 1st - daytime temperature has reached a high of -10°C, night time temperatures of around -19°C.

Have the trains, buses, cars stopped running? Have the schools closed? No, of course they haven't!

Trains:
All, Including the X2000 expresses are still running normally, the local urban trains are still running normally, the freight trains are still running normally at night even at -35°C in the North they still run normally, and strangely enough, virtually all trains run on time - snow, ice, rain, wind, Autumn leaves - not a problem. All points are heated in the winter to prevent them from freezing up - they are also maintained properly.
Are there ever any delays or crashes on the Railways in Sweden? Occasionally there are delays, but that is extremely unusual, a train crash here would make headlines for days.

All locomotives and rail-buses, electric or diesel, are fitted with snow plow’s all year round, they also have that great British invention – The sand box – for allowing a small measured amount of fine sand to trickle onto the rail ahead of the driving wheels to obtain a better grip in cases of ice on the rail – It is such a pity that railway companies in the UK don’t have a look at this British invention – but that might of course affect bonuses.

But then the Swedish railways put the passengers first, the fares are affordable – far cheaper by a long way mile per mile than the UK – they also don’t pay their rail bosses telephone number bonuses for trains arriving or departing within nine minutes of the actual departure/arrival time as the UK Network Rail Fat Cats do, in fact I don’t even think they get bonuses for trains arriving on time, period, they just do a good days work!!, but pay and conditions here are good by European standards.

Buses:
All buses are running, they maybe a little late if they get caught behind a snow plow, but generally they are running well.

All vehicles are compelled by law to have two sets of tyres/wheels, summer tyres and winter tyres. Grit in the form of crushed stone is spread on the roads behind the snow plough’s, after the winter is over and the last remnants of the snow has gone, special sweeper trucks with a trailers sweep up the grit that is still on the road, this is then washed and stored for the next winter along with fresh grit so there is always plenty of grit available, there is never the excuses that are so often used in the UK, ‘Oh my God, its winter, we have no grit’.

Cars:
Owners must comply with the law and use winter tyres in these conditions, winter tyres for all vehicles is mandatory from the latest, 1st December to the end of March, however the law is flexible on this, if the winter arrives early, as this one has, you can fit winter tyres before 1st December, and keep them fitted after the end of March if the conditions require it. But between the dates of 1st December – End of March, it is compulsory.

I have been driving about normally, with winter tyres, one is very aware of the conditions yes, and you plan your journey and drive accordingly. Are there accidents on the road due to ice and snow here in Sweden? Yes there are some accidents, but nothing compared to the UK in severe winter conditions.

Trucks, vans etc:
As above with cars. Very large trucks run here in Sweden, far larger than allowed on UK roads, articulated trucks pulling two trailers are not unusual – a sort of miniature Australian ‘Road Train’ you might say.

Strangely enough, the most dangerous thing you are likely to encounter when driving in the winter in Sweden, in dawn and dusk,
is a fully grown Elk (Moose), they can run out in front of you with no warning whatsoever, many motorists are killed this way in the winter, normally the Elk will just walk away, but not always.

Schools closing when heavy snow falls:
You have got to be joking!!! Schools don’t close here on the fall of a flake of snow, they are prepared for it. It would be an extreme situation for a school not to open – its unheard of here!
Children, from what I have observed, would be very put out if they didn’t get to school, learning at school here is taken very seriously by pupils just as much as parents.

But as we’re talking about winter interruptions here, you could also add heating into this debate, Ground Source heating and Air Source heating is very big business here, these are sometimes referred to as ‘Heat Pumps’, and they are very good, generally speaking a Ground Source heat pump puts out three kw. of heat for every one kw. Of energy used to power it, and generally an Air Source heat pump puts out two kw of heat for every one kw energy used to power it.

Cars, Buses, Trucks and Trains have to comply with quite strict standards when it comes to heating and ventilation, in winter we carry a small sack of grit, a shovel and a good torch. Motorway services here also provide good affordable food (note – ‘Good Affordable Food’) fuel is the standard national price, you don’t need to take out a mortgage for litre of diesel.
So Motorway Service stations here are not Motorway Robbery Stations, as in the UK.

It is so very different here in Sweden compared to the UK, here we know that a certain period of a year – called “winter” – appears just after “Autumn”, and just before “Spring”, we also know that this occurs every year.
In the UK, Railtrack, Councils and Public Transport companies – as well as certain parts of the Government suddenly start running around like headless chickens when they suddenly realise “Oh my God, its Winter again – What are we going to do, What ARE we going to do?????????”
That just does not happen here – Thank God – people in charge here have something between the ears – its called a brain – not like the UK where its a vision of a ‘Bonus Envelope’, or sawdust, or in some cases just an empty void.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 7:22pm on 01 Dec 2010, Alan C wrote:

What's with all the fuss over snow? Woke up this morning expecting to see a white vista and was pleased to see that there wasn't a flake to be seen. Still no snow anywhere this winter in our area so what's all the fuss about? (And yes, we're only 10 miles from London in Middlesex/Bucks). Colleagues complaining about disrupted journeys (wimps!), news reports clogged up with pointless bulletins about non-existent snowdrifts...surely the
message is if you don't like the weather move somewhere where it doesn't snow.

Meanwhile, can we have some proper news about something other than the "soft" half of London (i.e south of the Thames) downing tools because it's got a bit chilly?

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 7:23pm on 01 Dec 2010, MellorSJ wrote:

Free from the BBC asks: "What’s the English translation to your gibberish?"

Not yet. I went into town today with the christmas post. No drama.

But I have to travel LHR-SFO tomorrow and I worry that the trains won't make it. So far, so good, though.

But who knows? The driver may look at 1" of snow out of his window and decide to stay home in the warm :(  

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 7:24pm on 01 Dec 2010, Sue Doughcoup wrote:

Why do so many people live so far from work? Surely that is the real reason why this country grinds to a halt. OK so you might have a couple of miles to walk otherwise but at least it shows some gumption. I rarely missed a days work due to bad weather. If people dont turn up for work then they should loose a days pay or take annual leave. People have things too easy these days. If my 65 year old father could walk 7 miles in the snow, several years ago, then so can most of the younger ones. (He got a bonus for that and was the only one at work). But then they will have to be more than 400 yards from their precious cars. Wouldn't they? Must be against their human rights or something  

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 7:26pm on 01 Dec 2010, Sue Doughcoup wrote:

50. At 6:45pm on 01 Dec 2010, Free from the BBC wrote:
· 44. At 6:33pm on 01 Dec 2010, MellorSJ wrote:
@Mr Wonderful: I slogged through your lengthy post cheering the while.

How marvellous it is to read of someone who is actually _taking care of business_, but how depressing to read of the all-too-usual lack of enterprise on the part of our youth. (Let us remember that _you_ are clearing roads with rock salt you have paid for, while 'boyfriend' won't lift a shovel for £100. [expletive deleted]!  

Two oblique comments. First, your note that there is no central organization. IMO, that is not required. What _is_ required is a change in attitude that sees you clearing the road and says "I ought to clear my section of the road" rather than the all-too-likely "Look at that p**t! That's the council's job!"

[Type text]
Second, your note about the Beeb not reminding people of what they need to do in these difficult circumstances. I recall (about two years ago?) listening to some bleater going on about organ donation. Did they provide a URL to sign up? They did not. Moreover, when I searched, I found nothing. (In fairness, I was in the US at the time. Perhaps the search focussed on US sites.)

I am a strong believer in organ donation. (It's not like I'll be using them.) In the US (in my states anyway), you simply check the box when you get a drivers license. Done. In Australia, you sign up and get a card. Also easy.

It's still a mystery to me how you do it in the UK. But I have a ToDo now :) I'll just remember not to expect the Beeb to provide the info.

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Perhaps you will get lucky?

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Good grief. Blame the Beeb why not. No wonder we are so incapable of doing anything these days. Ever heard of common sense or finding out yourself?

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 7:34pm on 01 Dec 2010, LogicalLady wrote:

Free from the BBC, post 50, wrote (aimed at SJ Mellors): "Someone may donate you their brain"
Are you volunteering then, I ask? Why is it, when some people don't agree with somebody else's post they have to make derogatory remarks?

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 7:34pm on 01 Dec 2010, paul wrote:

Living in the North East of Scotland we have experienced this strange white stuff before, although probably not quite as early as this for the amount we have.
After a week of deep snow and continual digging and clearing I have managed to clear my track and get the 4x4 (yes it's not a devil car its well designed for RURAL dwellers)out and re-supply the essentials.
In the whole week we have seen one gritter on this road putting down minimal amounts of grit it is perilous to say the least. Local farmers help keep the roads clear but have no grit to lay down.
Of course if I lived in the M4 corridor I would be in panic mode and having hissy fits about how slow the commute is.
Ah well I suppose its another night by the fire and a couple of decent Malts.

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 7:44pm on 01 Dec 2010, H130 wrote:

[Type text]
There seems to be a lot of Northern folk with some serious chips on their shoulders as the south finally gets an icy blast, believing the media to be uncaring of their plight.

As a "neutral", the news coverage has been pretty wall to wall with "SNOW FLASH" on every channel from the weekend onwards.

I wouldn't mind an article on the cool streets of Plymouth which has been free of any of the white stuff under the headline "No snow in Plymouth. Again". Protected by the moors and a temperate climate means we laugh at the news of poor weather, and the only challenge walking to work is a slightly chilly wind blowing from the moors.

People moaning about council gritters not doing their job, once it hits a certain level, snow ploughs are the only option, and seeing as snow is a two or three week event over the course of a year, I'm sure a little hard graft isn't too much to ask.

It seems the country that gave rise to the Blitz spirit, is in danger of turning into the class wuss.

Keep it up you moaning minnies.

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 7:47pm on 01 Dec 2010, Dave wrote:

I've been snowed in for days and have been forced to watch all the rubbish on TV for "entertainment". We get 100's of channels of unadulterated rubbish 24 hours a day and we are forced to have a TV license so the BBC can pay £1m pension pots to their execs and footballers wages to their presenters. Thank goodness for videos.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 7:56pm on 01 Dec 2010, As_Iff wrote:

LogicalLady:
"Why is it when some people don't agree with some body else`s post, they have to make derogatory remarks?"

Yes, I wonder why the moderators always allow such personal insults.

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 7:58pm on 01 Dec 2010, Argonaut wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 66. At 8:01pm on 01 Dec 2010, U14366475 wrote:

Have you been affected by the big freeze? Yeah, I've had to put the heating on
Once again a few inches of snow Britain grinds to halt because the infrastructure cannot cope. Embarrassing or what.

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 8:06pm on 01 Dec 2010, Dave wrote:

While I'm snowed in, it's fascinating to hear the talking heads on TV offering explanations for something they know nothing about. The weather presenters have suddenly realised that most of Scotland is snowed under. As usual, we had no warning.

The economic presenters are still convinced that greedy bankers caused the credit crunch, and not the American and British governments who created a sea of cheap money which was lent to the un lendable.

As they say, economists were created to give weathermen a good name!

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 8:13pm on 01 Dec 2010, Gigatickle wrote:

I use winter tyres....Because It is winter....roads get iced and snowy at least I know that I don't have to rely on the gritters..I can get to work without slip sliding around....

Winter tyres make such a huge difference to stopping distance and steering I see why it is law in many countries..frankly it should be in Uk.

It won't be long until insurance Co's catch on.I have taken measures to make my car safer and would point out to my insurance co the fact that I was using winter tyres and that the person who hit me was not. In my opinion drivers who continue to use summer tyres in winter conditions are being negligent..putting other road users at risk.

I love driving in the snow / ice and actively seek out all the back lanes on the way to work as I know there will be no Summer tyre Numpties on them. So stop complaining about lack of grit etc. and take some responsibility for your self...Get Winter Tyres...Simples

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 8:15pm on 01 Dec 2010, GMHallett wrote:

At the risk of restating the very obvious...

Climate is the behaviour of the system; weather is a local manifestation; and localised cooling is in no way incompatible with overall heating.

Consider the electric heater found in most peoples' kitchens commonly known as 'the fridge'. It takes electricity from the mains and uses it to pump heat; which results in the inside of the fridge being cold, and the outside of the fridge being warmer.
If you consider the total energy of the system, the fridge needs power to work; and the the amount of cooling inside the fridge is always less than the amount of heating outside it. So your fridge is - overall - a heater; despite the fact that it's colder inside.

So if you find it hard to believe that an increase in overall system energy is consistent with a decrease in local temperature, take another look at your fridge!

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 8:16pm on 01 Dec 2010, phill wrote:

I can't understand how a bit of snow can bring the country to a standstill. How do they go on in Russia Poland Finland and countries like that I'm sure they still open their schools and manage to keep their roads and public transport going.

Complain about this comment
* 71. At 8:16pm on 01 Dec 2010, dune wrote:

I have no motorised transport (I have a bike), no running water (I have a water tank which I fill from a standpipe that needs thawing each time) and no central heating (I have a stove). But I manage. What's the big deal?

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 8:21pm on 01 Dec 2010, SpacedOne wrote:

A couple of days ago the OBR released their predictions for economic growth and said that their predictions for 2010 would be higher than expected. I bet they didn't factor in half of the country being under more than a foot of snow (55cm here in Sheffield) into those predictions.

Considering that last January's snow had a huge negative effect on our economy will they now be revising those predictions?

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 8:42pm on 01 Dec 2010, ady wrote:

I'm still sweltering from the global warming heatwave this summer...and now I'm having to deal with a mini ice age...

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 8:47pm on 01 Dec 2010, ady wrote:

I find the killer for many drivers is the hills and slopes.

At least the russian steppe is pretty flat.

Complain about this comment
* 75. At 8:49pm on 01 Dec 2010, righteoussasquatch wrote:
Having spent much of my life in air conditioned neutral atmosphere offices ANY weather hot or cold, wet or dry is very welcome! Bring it on, my 4x4 just adds a fun dimension in the snow.

Complain about this comment
* 76. At 8:50pm on 01 Dec 2010, Silentium wrote:

Once again the whole country seems to grind to a halt because of a couple of inches of snow. Which was, believe it or not, FORECAST, in other words,,, we knew it was coming.

I saw the news reporter in siberia where it was a life-sapping -57 degrees, and the cars were still running, and people getting on with their lives.

So the trains get stuffed by the snow,. BRING OUT THE STEAMERS. The roads are atrocious, WALK.

I had to admire the lady head who said 'We have pupils who's parents work for the emergency services, if i shut the school, those kids have to stay home, and their parents cant be out there saving lives' So her school stayed open. One school near me shut because they had no heating... DIDNT STOP EM STAYIN OPEN 30 YEARS AGO!

Complain about this comment
* 77. At 8:55pm on 01 Dec 2010, Khrystalar wrote:

@ David Goddard, post #67;

"The economic presenters are still convinced that greedy bankers caused the credit crunch, and not the American and British governments who created a sea of cheap money which was lent to the unlendable."

That's probably because the bankers decided, of their own volition, to take crazy risks with toxic debts with the intention of making even more money. I don't recall any stories in the press about Gordon Brown, Alistair Darling, or anyone in the Bush Administration turning up at a bank's board meeting with a shotgun to directors' heads, and forcing them to make unsound investments... do you? Perhaps you could enlighten the rest of us with a link, if there's a story such as this which we all managed to miss, somehow.

The Government haven't boarded me into my own home tonight, for instance; and our society is such that I have the free will to do pretty much anything I want. That doesn't mean that if I choose to go out and do something stupid right now, or perhaps commit some sort of a crime, that it's going to be David Cameron's fault, does it?

Each of us are responsible for the consequences of our own actions - yes, even bankers on six-figure salaries and multi-
million pound bonuses. Sorry about that; just the way it is, I'm afraid. Try not to lose any sleep over it.

Not sure what any of this has to do with the weather, of course..?

Anyway; the problem with the snow is, as several correspondants have already pointed out, not so much the cold white stuff itself; but rather the lack thereof. The fact that this happens so rarely.

Yes of course, in northern parts of Europe and the US, you guys are better prepared; you need to be, conditions like this are a regular factor in your lives. A friend of mine in Vermont, USA, for instance, can start his car and get his engine ticking over and his internal heater running by remote control, whilst still sitting in his kitchen drinking coffee for half an hour. He tells me this is a standard feature on most models sold in his state - understandable, when you think that Vermont gets 6 to 8 months every year of these sorts of conditions.

Over here, it's simply not economically viable to invest the sort of money required to get the country generally prepared for this sort of thing. The private sector won't do it, because it would take them decades to even start making their money back; the public sector won't do it, because they'd get crucified in the press for spending millions of pounds of public money on stuff that only gets used for a week or so, every couple of years.

Me, I've already agreed with my boss to provisionally book the next two days off as annual leave - we're not too busy at the moment, so simple enough to arrange. If I can get in, I will, and save my holiday days. If I can't... I guess I'll walk a couple of miles into the next town and take my nephew & nieces out sledging.

Win-win, whatever happens. :o)

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 8:59pm on 01 Dec 2010, MellorSJ wrote:

Sue Doughcup writes: "Good grief. Blame the Beeb why not. No wonder we are so incapable of doing anything these days. Ever heard of common sense or finding out yourself?"

I certainly have!

I do not blame the BBC. (For this..) I merely point out that {whatever their current whimpering is about} they rarely provide the resources to enable the half-way-responsible character the wherewithal to follow though on their bleating.

Of course, one can--and should--follow up and address these issues for oneself, but the bleating is devalued (don't you think?) when they don't provide the necessary links...
79. At 9:12pm on 01 Dec 2010, Dave wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

80. At 9:26pm on 01 Dec 2010, U14366475 wrote:

70. At 8:16pm on 01 Dec 2010, phill wrote:

I can't understand how a bit of snow can bring the country to a standstill. How do they go on in Russia Poland Finland and countries like that I'm sure they still open their schools and manage to keep their roads and public transport going.

It really is embarrassing. Early this year, my American friends could not stop laughing and ribbing me about the chaos a few inches of snow had caused, especially when they found out the snow had caused the London underground to stop working.

81. At 9:34pm on 01 Dec 2010, Khrystalar wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

84. At 10:02pm on 01 Dec 2010, firebird999 wrote:

Cannot for the life of me understand why this country comes to a standstill with snow, for gods sake other countrys get on with it school always have to close, why? what would happen if every job stopped work, i work for the emergency services we cannot stay at home we have to risk it getting to work, its ridiculous, when i was at school our school never closed because of snow i can understand it in rural areas but there is no excuse why city schools should shut, something needs to be done in this country to cope with the weather and keep everything open if these schools shut for snow, then however long they are shut for the time should be added on in the summer, hence have shorter summer holidays thats one idea.

85. At 10:04pm on 01 Dec 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:

"79. At 9:12pm on 01 Dec 2010, David Goddard wrote:
Yesterday, the Scottish news on TV talked about the freezing conditions across the country and then went on about global warming!"

Indeed. Global warming melting arctic ice will result in the Gulf Stream being diverted and Britain on a similar latitude to Canada enjoying a similar winter to Canada.
615

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 10:06pm on 01 Dec 2010, RitaKleppmann wrote:

Yes. It’s made me get another jumper out of the wardrobe.

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 10:09pm on 01 Dec 2010, LogicalLady wrote:

To "Free from the BBC", post 83 at 9:39pm
Maybe you should take a look at your own history

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 10:14pm on 01 Dec 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:

58. At 7:24pm on 01 Dec 2010, Sue Doughcoup wrote:
Why do so many people live so far from work? Surely that is the real reason why this country grinds to a halt. OK so you might have a couple of miles to walk otherwise but at least it shows some gumption. I rarely missed a days work due to bad weather. If people dont turn up for work then they should loose a days pay or take annual leave. People have things too easy these days. If my 65 year old father could walk 7 miles in the snow, several years ago, then so can most of the younger ones. (He got a bonus for that and was the only one at work). But then they will have to be more than 400 yards from their precious cars. Wouldn't they? Must be against their human rights or something

==========================

They probably live so far away from work because they cannot afford to live in the city, or they cannot afford to keep changing their place of abode if redundancy strikes more than once.

Yep, in 1997 I stood on the platform in snow for two hours whilst fast trains shot through meaning that people living on the coast arrived in London, and I was hours late. A 13 mile walk to work in snow more than six inches thick isn't easy. You also need to know the way - the network of roads around London can be extremely confusing, and following a traffic-signed route may add miles to your journey.

I did sit on a bus for six hours in 1978 in the winter when there was a rail strike and the drivers of the gritting lorries were on strike, so the roads were chaotic. Twice a week. I then got a lift home - I suppose that was my bonus.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 10:19pm on 01 Dec 2010, Kat wrote:

I have been snowed in for the last four days in Kinross, from my work in perth. No buses have been able to go through kinross, by the time car has been dug out and our friendly

[Type text]
neighbour has dug out the street with his tractor, the snow is already starting to build up again; thus needing to repeat the following day. I have gone to our local supermarket twice to find the bread and milk cleared from panic buyers (there really is no need) we have about 18-20 inches of snow at the moment and hopefully will make it away tomorrow. What I don't understand is place where there is between 2-6 inches of snow, everyone seems to go into total meltdown and panic. We coped fine with that! These news reports of snow causing chaos and then showing us images where there isn't even snow on the roads, I do not understand why they're saying it's the snow. It's just stupid drivers. And London currently not coping that is just a joke!!

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 10:36pm on 01 Dec 2010, Artemesia wrote:

May I make a plea to all drivers
Like everyone else I have seen all the pictures on TV
What struck me particularly was the number of cars with up to 6” of snow on their roofs
Please, when you scrape the car to go out, take it off the roof too
It is highly dangerous to leave snow on the roof, especially if there is any wind, it can blow straight off onto the windscreen of the driver behind, the suddenness of it causing him to automatically brake, with possible disastrous consequences

Even if the heat from inside the car causes it to begin to melt and slide off, it will cause the driver behind to 'react', usually by putting his foot on the brake

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 11:05pm on 01 Dec 2010, Artemesia wrote:

85. At 10:04pm on 01 Dec 2010, ruffled_feathers wrote:
"79. At 9:12pm on 01 Dec 2010, David Goddard wrote:
Yesterday, the Scottish news on TV talked about the freezing conditions across the country and then went on about global warming!"

"Indeed. Global warming melting arctic ice will result in the Gulf Stream being diverted and Britain on a similar latitude to Canada enjoying a similar winter to Canada"

.................................

That is apparently true, according to the climate scientists but I believe the current bad weather is due to the Jet Stream having moved further north, being blocked by a ridge of high pressure and cold air being sucked in from Scandinavia
The possibility of the Jet Stream changing course is also mooted by the climate scientists, so let's hope this is a temporary phenomenon!

Complain about this comment
* 92. At 11:18pm on 01 Dec 2010, Anonymouse wrote:

As a disabled person I am currently living in rooms that are down to 10ºc and a heating bill that's through the roof. I only heat one room adequately in case I have visitors. I also rely on lots of wooly jumpers and an electric blanket to keep me warm in bed.

I've suffered from hypothermia twice in the past.

As a disabled private home owner I get very little help.

You would think that a visionary environmental organisation would help disabled people achieve environmentally sensible and sustainable solutions for heating their homes.

They could help those who can't help themselves and have appalling carbon footprints and often don't survive the cold.

Did you know that according to official reports from Mind and Shelter, shown earlier this year by the BBC, disabled home owners are more likely to suffer from mental health problems and they are more likely to die in cold weather.

So yes I'm cold.

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 11:20pm on 01 Dec 2010, Andy_Pandy1968 wrote:

• Isn't it strange how it is national news because the South of England has snow. Scotland, Wales and the North of England seem to just get on with it. It is disruptive and dangerous but unfortunately we live with useless councils who don't grit the roads. Either take it up with your council or suck it up like a good little Brit.

=======================

What a ridiculous comment! I live in the South East, and the weather in the regions has been on the news I have been watching every night for the past week or so.

You however appear to have a chip on your shoulder, which is perhaps because you live in an area which is subsidised by the wealth creating part of the UK, who 'just get on with it' all the time, which is why they generate the wealth to subsidise people who have time to write moaning articles during working hours!

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 00:02am on 02 Dec 2010, Wakeupthesheep wrote:

[Type text]
Firstly would the BBC please stop using tabloid terms such as "the big freeze" and "chaos". You have a standard to maintain.

Secondly the fact that a little snow brings the UK to a standstill is quite pathetic. It was predicted.

I now find myself wondering why the council puts the grit bins out and yet do not publicise their purpose. I am sure more people would be more than willing to treat the pavements if they did.

Everybody has been affected by the big freeze, well big freeze in British terms anyway. And whilst the economy in these fraught times is grinding to a halt, whilst a large chunk of our investment in the future in the way of school education is shut down where is our prime minister? Why he is over in Switzerland, not to enjoy the Swiss snow but to try and arrange a few football matches to be played in the UK in 2018. And who will that benefit, well it will certainly benefit the moguls of FIFA, it will certainly benefit all those individuals involved in the business of sport directly or indirectly, but for the vast mass of hard working folk there will be no benefit. In fact just like the Olympics there will undoubtedly be a large tab for the small ordinary taxpayer to pick up. They will also probably be asking for a large number of volunteers from amongst the unemployed to give of their time to welcome foreign visitors. Of course the government hopes to pick up a few votes from the football fans as well. And just to rub salt in the wound what do we hear, why there are certain individuals who don't want to pay any tax on anything that they pick up in relation to the event.

Get back to Britain Mr. Cameron, your hot air might just help to get things moving again by creating a thaw.

It's absolutely pathetic the way this country reacts to a bit of snow. And every Winter it's the same, it's not like they ever learn! When I was a boy, it would have taken the school burning down to close the school!
* 98. At 01:27am on 02 Dec 2010, ollie wrote:

I am sick and tired of hearing them say it will cost too much to clear the roads of snow and ice every winter. They take billions of pounds from us motorists every year, so give us what we pay for.

Complain about this comment

* 99. At 02:20am on 02 Dec 2010, Fly_n_finn wrote:

Aberdeenshire is near stand-still, under several feet of snow... But it's OK, we've got an ARMY of Snow-clearing machines operating 24/7 to keep all out roads clear - yes, all 6 of them are operating... even in areas where it's actually snowing... We're about to run out of salt and grit, so importing some from our Nordic neighbours... Meanwhile the Snow clearing machines are busy pushing the snow into mountains either side of the road, the road now the width of 1 snow clearing machine in most cases...

Interesting to note the Icelandic, Norweigian, Swede & Finns aren't reporting major problems, except where and how to deliver salt & grit to any given Scottish port...

We've learnt NOTHING from our Nordic neighbours - except how to loose money via our banks - thanks Iceland...

Scottish Highland Ski fields are closed due to the snow...
Go figure?

Complain about this comment

* 100. At 03:17am on 02 Dec 2010, Argonaut wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
Appendix 53. All messages in the message thread Neighbours from hell.

How should we deal with neighbours from hell?
10:28 UK time, Tuesday, 11 January 2011

The government wants to speed up the time it takes to evict tenants engaging in serious anti-social behaviour. Will the proposed changes make it easier to deal with "neighbours from hell"?

Ministers say it can take more than a year to remove anti-social neighbours. Those found guilty of a housing-related offence in England could be liable for automatic eviction in future. But one housing charity said the idea was a "blunt tool" and the courts were already dealing with the problem.

Will the proposed changes make it easier to deal with "neighbours from hell"? Should local authorities be able fast-track the eviction of anti-social tenants? Is this problem already being addressed by the justice system? Do you have experience of this?

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

* 1. At 10:43am on 11 Jan 2011, Positive Thinker wrote:

   It is impossible to fast-track any eviction - we are all, theoretically, innocent until proven otherwise... This is more hot air from a government desperate for populist ideas (anything to forget about the students' riots)...

   Complain about this comment

* 2. At 10:44am on 11 Jan 2011, pete wrote:

   Id say send them back there but thats too radical.

   Complain about this comment

* 3. At 10:48am on 11 Jan 2011, Tory Bankers Stole My Cash wrote:

   Local authorities already have the powers to deal with antisocial tenants, but some authorities (e.g. my local Tory council) refuse to act on them.

   It would appear that the Tories have gone soft on antisocial behaviour. “Hug a hoodie” does not work.

   Complain about this comment

* 4. At 10:49am on 11 Jan 2011, pete wrote:

   personally i think neighbours from hell are subject to abuse of one sort or another and they need help , its deep rooted phycological trauma ,

   perhaps a longterm solution is phycological and socio economic factors upbringing this passes from one generation to the next its a cycle that needs breaking , additional pressure on
people can often be retrograde, it worsens the situation and continues to impune people. It's a double-edged sword; it cuts both ways.

Complain about this comment
* 5. At 10:53am on 11 Jan 2011, RonC wrote:

The problem is eviction does not solve the problem; it only moves it and it then becomes someone else's problem.

We are now reaping the rewards of the Thatcher years and this government is just going to add to the problem, not solve it.

Complain about this comment
* 6. At 10:53am on 11 Jan 2011, the_eternal_optomist wrote:

Heard the interview on the news this morning. If it was my property, I'd 'send the boys round' to evict them - problem solved.

Complain about this comment
* 7. At 10:54am on 11 Jan 2011, Bradford wrote:

Stop their benefits until they behave and if they don't improve, make them homeless.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 10:54am on 11 Jan 2011, Jonathan_Kelk wrote:

If they are evicted, then surely they will then be living somewhere else, presumably next to someone else. So eviction is only moving the problem somewhere else.

If they commit criminal offences, they should be re-housed - in a prison cell. If they have committed no crime, they should be left alone.

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 10:56am on 11 Jan 2011, NameAgain wrote:

Questions are getting tougher and tougher. I don't know what will be the end of this. Don't trust me from here on.

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 10:57am on 11 Jan 2011, Aneeta Trikk wrote:

More empty soundbites from the Coalition and knee-jerk legislation likely to make the underlying problem even worse.

Kay Boycott of Shelter says "Something as critical as whether someone might be made homeless, is surely too important to be left to the discretion of a landlord who may not be wholly impartial".

I have experienced neighbours from hell and it is wholly unpleasant, often frightening, and always debilitating, but the
real issue at the heart of it is the absence of someone taking control of the situation, being aware of what is going on, and actually offering support and the opportunity to confront the neighbour in safety and on a level playing field. Most housing authorities tend to treat the problem like a domestic - "we don't want to be involved" - and that is why the situation runs out of hand.

As Kay Boycott rightly says the situations are always complex and always need a firm hand on the tiller if totally inappropriate evictions are to be avoided.

Landlords are often amongst the most untrustworthy in society and yet the Coalition is considering giving them extra power! Another piece of gibberish from the posh kids.

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 10:58am on 11 Jan 2011, Bauer wrote:

Jail them, see how they like their new "neighbours"

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 11:02am on 11 Jan 2011, smilingparrotfan wrote:

#4 Pete. I guess you've never been kept awake several nights a week by rampaging youths, all of whom gravitate to a certain dysfunctional family home? This particular family have been given a lot of support, over several years, but leopards would not appear to change their spots. Although I'm all in favour of encouraging self-esteem and responsibility in some of our more wayward citizens, there comes a point when drastic action has to be taken. I'm thinking "eviction," before the surrounding neighbourhood have a collective nervous breakdown.

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 11:02am on 11 Jan 2011, Positive Thinker wrote:

What we should be examining is how to evict that bunch of squatters over at the houses of parliament...!

Complain about this comment
* 14. At 11:03am on 11 Jan 2011, ProbMan wrote:

Many people don't want to report these types of behaviour for fear of retribution. My previous home had a violent drug dealer (and his partner & toddler) next door. We occasionally had a peaceful few months when he was sent down. He was eventually evicted because a neighbour had complained repeatedly, that neighbour was beaten severely, the dealer was arrested again, but not charged. None of my neighbours reported anything (according to the safer neighbourhoods team) after that. How will fast-tracking help? Eviction only moves the problem to another property?

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 11:05am on 11 Jan 2011, FatMao wrote:
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

* 16. At 11:05am on 11 Jan 2011, Lewis Fitzroy wrote:

sounds like a easy way to free up some council property, for other tenants ?" ref The Freedom Pass" new Tory system to move low payed workers to other areas'????

Complain about this comment

* 17. At 11:05am on 11 Jan 2011, John Mc wrote:

Having lived at one time in the past in local housing, most of the neighbours were fine. One group were not and the local softly softly approach by neighbours trying to talk to parents about the problems resulted in the parents being as bad.

The final spark led to public fighting between two neighbours, the local council did nothing and everyone else was in fear of that family. Eviction would have moved the problem elsewhere resulting in possibly worse violence as 'bad' tenants would be huddled together in ghettos.

What solved it was a lot of the grown men of the area visiting the family on mass and resolving the issue with a few chosen words about decency and what the future would hold. Things were quiet for years after that, a few minor things happened but were quickly resolved.

Social control was affected and the Police were acceptable but not entirely convinced by the method.

Was it a vigilante type scenario, no as no retribution was taken on the bad family but a settling of the position in the area of the families attitude was clearly pointed out.

When the family grew up they actually got more integrated into the community.

Today the protection the abusers gets deters social pressure as each house now is seperated from the other and so divided we all fall. Police cannot intervene due to PC intervention and legal help given to yobs etc.

When I was a kid, if I stole apples from the local orchard, and I did, the family complained to mine and I got the punishment of the time. I am ok even though it was harsh, I knew the rules and my parents knew that we had to be part of the community and to respect each other. I do not know what happens nowadays but it looks grim.

Complain about this comment

* 18. At 11:06am on 11 Jan 2011, AndyC555 wrote:

"Labour MP Eric Illsley has admitted he fraudulently claimed more than £14,000 in parliamentary expenses."

[Type text]
Falsifying documents and fraudulently claiming expenses off the taxpayer is very anti-social.

I wonder if you could ask to have any such MPs evicted if you were unlucky enough to have one as a neighbour?

Complain about this comment
* 19. At 11:06am on 11 Jan 2011, sinistrality wrote:

moving them just takes the problem somewhere else, what imbecile thought of that one??
moving to get away is often not an option or affordable asbo's etc do not work, they are a badge of honour

a community acting in accord is the only real option that would 'make a difference'... yes thats right, don't think or expect the state to be able to sort out what should not be their business. People need to stand together and take responsibility for their neighbourhoods and stop hiding behind closed doors and expect everyone else to sort it out for them.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 11:08am on 11 Jan 2011, Paul wrote:

Evicting them just moves the problem somewhere else. Really, we need to decide what to do with them. Do we evict them all to a small island somewhere and let them be 'neighbours from hell' to each other? Do we put the whole family 'into care'? Do we put them out onto the streets? Do we put them in prison?

Until we've decided what the 'final resort' will be, we can't really do anything else.

Personally, I think there should be several phases:
- police/social worker visit
- Temporary CCTV cameras put on the house (or neighbouring houses) to monitor/capture evidence. If the neighbours are that bad, then the community will be happy for this to happen.
- regular (daily) social worker visits, including talking to neighbours
- take any children into foster care
- withdrawal of some benefits
- house arrest
- prison

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 11:10am on 11 Jan 2011, John Mc wrote:

13. At 11:02am on 11 Jan 2011, Positive Thinker wrote:

What we should be examining is how to evict that bunch of squatters over at the houses of parliament...!
Correct...but who do we put in there??? More of the same, living on our money, squeezing the system for every penny, getting caught fiddling the accounts, doing little govvy jobs for backhanders later.

How quick can we evict them according to this report we are the landlords but I do not see a suitable tenant at all !!!

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 11:10am on 11 Jan 2011, frankiecrisp wrote:

Stop all their benefits to the people that are causing trouble and stop paying benefits to landlords its an easy option for landlords to put these people in their houses they get the rent paid every week by the social.

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 11:13am on 11 Jan 2011, AuntieLeft wrote:

These are EXTREME cases and will help REDUCE the people evicted as they will know now, there will no fooling about with them, you disrupt the majority of YOUR community, you move.

Again, one of many commendable measures making people responsible for THEIR actions and lives. Nanny is leaving children, it’s time to grow up and be responsible for your own life. The umbilical cord is at last being cut.

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 11:16am on 11 Jan 2011, AlexisWolf wrote:

This government and councils do not care about what doesn't effect them.

It costs to much.

As this gov sets about destroying our communities and making housing issues worse than so shall all forms of anti social behaviour get worse.

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 11:20am on 11 Jan 2011, NoHope NoChance wrote:

The sooner the people who are neighbours from hell are moved on the better for the whole community - why should I have to put up with idiots, idle feckless teenagers or kids who know they are above the law?

All of the last few governments have failed to tackle this adequately.

If you cannot behave normally in a community you do not deserve to live there - easy

BTW for some of the above - this has nothing to do with Thatcher or the student riots - if you can actually stick to the subject.

Complain about this comment
* 26. At 11:22am on 11 Jan 2011, Syni_cal wrote:

How should we deal with neighbours from hell?

Not sure.

How shouldn't we deal with neighbours from hell?

Certainly not by evicting them and making them someone else’s neighbours.

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 11:27am on 11 Jan 2011, Dr Bunsen Honeydew wrote:

1. At 10:43am on 11 Jan 2011, Positive Thinker wrote:

It is impossible to fast-track any eviction - we are all, theoretically, innocent until proven otherwise... This is more hot air from a government desperate for populist ideas (anything to forget about the students' riot

Why not introduce a new level of control order so that those suspected of being a "neighbour from hell" are restricted from entering their house, street or estate. Don't need to prove anything then and most people seem happy with this type of justice in the UK.

Complain about this comment
* 28. At 11:27am on 11 Jan 2011, Tez wrote:

"How should we deal with neighbours from hell?"

While these kind of people are 'protected' by the Human-Rights Act and the UK's own 'pinkie' PC Laws - OUR hands are tied somewhat.

Personally, I'd make such people start-off by doing unpaid Community-work in their area - so that suffering neighbours can denigrate them Publicly.

More seriously, they should be forced to move to remote Rural areas so that they have no neighbours to harrass.

Even more seriously, their Housing-Contract should make it plain from the start, that they WILL be ejected from their abode, recorded as 'undesirable-tenants' and denied the right for Housing-Benefit - regardless.

But then again, we know that the PC/Political 'Pinkies' will hurry to their rescue - and deny the decent people THEIR Rights - once again.

Still - we can DREAM on can't we?...

Complain about this comment
* 29. At 11:28am on 11 Jan 2011, littletenter wrote:

[Type text]
Make no difference at all. Another great social experiment that failed. Putting a number of "social" housing units amongst purchased starter homes etc. Daughter bought one and had the ubiquitous NFH. 2 years of swearing, shouting, breaking up things, tons of rubbish in the overgrown gardens. Sleep all day (no work) rock music all night.

No one interested. Say anything to them and in come your windows etc. No one interested in that either. Answer? move house 5 of 16 private owned sold cheap and went to a different area where they felt safe. What an indictment on our society.

Complain about this comment
* 30. At 11:30am on 11 Jan 2011, LaAntena wrote:

There is Neanderthal living in another road who has a primal urge to have bonfires of none garden waste on a regular basis, usually late evening or weekend on the nicest days when we have washing out or in the summer when the windows are open through the night. And sadly we are down wind of him. After banging my head against a brick wall of loop holes with the Council and the local police. He finally left a fire unattended through the night which meant I was able to call the fire service. After they attended and strongly advised him to be more responsible he reacted stupidly by rebelling against their authority by re lighting the tyres so in the morning when I enquired as to which service attended, as the fire was still burning my call was logged as an official complaint so an investigating officer was appointed to find out what went wrong. The result being my complaint was supposed to be raised at the next J.A.G. (joint agency something or other) meeting so Mr Fire-starter can be monitored. Well I am still monitoring a total lack of interest from ALL agencies when he has his plastic fires. The real world does not work like TV's Life of Grime where people from the council go out and fine environmental offenders.

Complain about this comment
* 31. At 11:31am on 11 Jan 2011, kaybraes wrote:

Evict them and make the fact that this has been done debar them from being given social housing or benefits ever again. No amount of help or attempts at educating or rehabilitating these people is of any use. They are not worth the trouble or the cost to the taxpayer, let them plough their own furrow as outcasts of society, if this causes them hardship , it is their own fault

Complain about this comment
* 32. At 11:37am on 11 Jan 2011, EnglishTeaparty wrote:

Eviction isn't the answer. Anti-social behaviour whether by neighbours or others should result in a custodial sentence. Simply evicting people usually ends up with the state paying out yet more in benefits in welfare. Yes, prison does cost money but that is because of the type of prisons we operate. Miscreants of all types should be kept in labour colonies in remote areas with no heating or other luxuries. Forget reform as it has failed. Re-conviction rates remain high and simply reflect the current
liberal and soft regime in British prisons. We need to rid ourselves of people that contribute nothing to society other than crime & violence. Incarceration in a remote inhospitable place is the answer. It's time governments of all political persuasions thought more about the decent law abiding majority than feather bedding miscreants. Yes, not PC but such a policy would be warmly welcomed by the unrepresented silent majority.

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 11:38am on 11 Jan 2011, Sylvia D wrote:

This is not just neighbours from hell, its to do with law and order, how can these folk flout the law time and time again! this is rule by fear on some estates, people are afraid of raising the problem with the police or councils because things take so long, the woman and her daughter who took their own lives is a case in point, this should be slapped down the minute it raises it head or Zero tolerance should apply, we have enough to worry about these days without being afraid in our own homes, maybe the mp for the district should have to live in the worst neighbourhoods to see first hand.

Complain about this comment
* 34. At 11:38am on 11 Jan 2011, LouisW wrote:

Something does need to be done to speed up these cases being dealt with

I talk from personal experience of a friend who was under counselling and on tablets to cope with abusive neighbours

Councils and housing associations do care but are not equipped to cope, they are not social workers

How about evicting quicker, then again if they play up in the new place. Then again if they continue. Surely it will start to become so tedious to keep uprooting they will learn that to stay in one place they need to respect the people around them

Respect to the residents that dealt with the problem en masse without violence. It may be that some of these 'problem' families have no real concept of how they are being perceived

Stopping benefits would result in the oh now so familiar 'human rights' complaint

#20. Paul @ 11:08am - Some good ideas but think of the cost to the taxpayer!

House arrest/curfew would be a good deterrent.

Complain about this comment
* 35. At 11:39am on 11 Jan 2011, K Ryder wrote:
I do think in general this is a good idea. I had a terrible experience when living in a house that was split into two flats, myself the 1st floor and my 'neighbour from hell' on the ground floor. I was constantly awakened at ridiculous hours in the morning by raging arguments, loud music and door slamming. I complained to my landlord several times and I was not taken seriously, eventually it got to the point where it was affecting my work from lack of sleep and I was forced out move out. I had also contacted the police on several occasions but they were even less helpful.

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 11:39am on 11 Jan 2011, ProbMan wrote:

23. At 11:13am on 11 Jan 2011, AuntieLeft wrote:
Nanny is leaving children, it’s time to grow up and be responsible for your own life. The umbilical cord is at last being cut.

Are you suggesting that people should "deal with" nuisance neighbours directly? Having lived in South London & tried this, I can't recommend it. I politely asked 4 teenage lads from smoking weed in the communal stairwell outside my door, I was given verbal abuse at that point & threatened by the returning larger group an hour later. They then glued the security door closed (only exit from the flats), covered my doorstep in rubbish & urine, graffitied the communal area & set a fire on the stairs.
I'm not a person that gets intimidated easily, but being 6ft & well trained didn't stop them from coming back with more people.

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 11:44am on 11 Jan 2011, Toothpick Harry wrote:

It's obvious that some people don't know right from wrong, so when they have children that's how they grow up. Answer - teach them in school, it should be part of the curriculum how to be a good citizen. Even in good neighbourhoods how many times have you experienced one or more of your neighbours in the garden with their stereo blasting away or un cared for dogs constantly barking? Half the problem in society today is people think that because they have a few bob they can do what they like, it seems to give them an air that they (because they've a few bob)are above the law, and other peoples rights don't matter.

Complain about this comment
* 38. At 11:45am on 11 Jan 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

Its right that such atrocious behaviour is dealt with as QUICKLY as possible. It is outrageous that victims then have to put up with further tirade of abuse & threats while the slow establishment processes meander to their conclusion and social workers etc and much of the system put the reported/alleged assailants first before the victims.
It doesn't matter if some have mental problems or will be made homeless, if they are seriously threatening families & homes etc then they should be removed & victims RIGHTFULLY protected.

The MORE mentally unstable a person/family or anti-social a family is then the MORE IMMEDIATE a response should be to curtail their behaviour as they are basically UNPREDICTABLE and of GREATER threat due to their mentality of NOT conforming or understanding acceptable BASIC decency and behaviour.

I personally believe that if any person/family is under such threats of abuse and violence and destruction of property by such criminal behaviour then the victim has a natural RIGHT to respond in just the same way as our government responds to such relative threats.

If my family experienced such behaviour then I personally am prepared to go to jail to make sure whoever was behaving in such a way was made incapable of undertaking such threats again, end of.

I would just accordingly act with the same restrained action as British government used in Falklands or Iraq in their reply to actions which ultimately cost no lives in Falklands prior to British government response and also which the threats of Saddams WMD were found to be NON-EXISTANT.

In the instance of ANY attack or threat of attack to my family I maintain my ENDEMIC NATURAL RIGHT as a living creature to respond to such a threat as is built into my natural survival instincts.

If you kick a dog, expect to be bitten, if you whack a lion with a big chain or metal pole, expect to be mauled, if you attack or threaten me or my family then there will also be severe consequences, end of!

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 11:45am on 11 Jan 2011, LouisW wrote:

1. At 10:43am on 11 Jan 2011, Positive Thinker wrote:

   It is impossible to fast-track any eviction - we are all, theoretically, innocent until proven otherwise.

In a lot of these cases there is a shed load of evidence from many neighbours over a period of months going to councils and housing associations. A lot of abuse/vandalism is blatant 'in your face'. Proof gathering is not usually a problem, these are not smart crims.

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 11:52am on 11 Jan 2011, Le Powerful wrote:

[Type text]
If benefits are being claimed at the address threaten that they will be withdrawn until the behaviour improves.

If they're not on benefits threaten them with being blacklisted so that they will be unable to rent (or buy) anywhere else in the private sector and if the behaviour doesn't improve then evict them.

When they're evicted move them in next door to the local MP or magistrate.

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 11:52am on 11 Jan 2011, bud wrote:

a big cricket bat, but, i'm old fashioned that way..

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 11:53am on 11 Jan 2011, ruffled_feathers wrote:

Treat much of this behaviour for what it is - criminal. Ok, you don't want youngsters growing up with a criminal record. But if it is that or other people living in fear then there is little choice.

Perhaps whilst children are under 10 their parents should be held financially accountable.

Setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme can really make a difference because it pulls people together who wouldn't normally come together. Suddenly they're on speaking terms, and their behaviour changes. And then they can present a united front to others. Plus you have a friendly PCSO (we have, anyway) who can go and talk to anyone who is causing problems, and who knows the people involved. It may not work in every instance, but it certainly can make a difference. Neighbours used to stick together - they can do it again.

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 11:55am on 11 Jan 2011, surfingkenny wrote:

Not much can or is done with problem neighbours sadly! After months of hell i managed to force the landlord into evicting them or i would make sure he was in court himself.

We live an a 3 storey appartment block, one flat was rented privately to a young girl, she was nice as pie but at night and full of booze her parties went on until 7am. we politely asked them to be quiet...nothing, we called the police and on one occasion they were at the premises 9 times in 6 hours...they too did nothing, i then decided to make an appearance to inform her to shut up.... there was a bit of hasstle! weeks of the scum urinating in the communal areas, wiping feaces on the walls and spitting on doors etc, obtained the landlords details. paid a visit, they tried to fobb myself and another resident off, so i
played the game with him. i basically went to his home evry single time their was mayhem, at 3am at 6am at 10pm...anytime. My theory was i would annoy him as much as they were annoying us all. My partner wouldnr stay in our home alone in fear of hasstle. in the end i sent the landlord a bill for £3000 for the re painting of the communal areas, a new door, a window and for my petrol for every visit to him i made. she was gone 48 hrs later. luckily the new tennant is fantastic and quiet !!! somtimes you need to take the law into your own hands to get anything done. council were useless and so were the police

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 11:55am on 11 Jan 2011, NoN PC wrote:

It will never happen...
More likely to prosecute the neighbours that make the complaint.

A man is lying on the pavement clearly been attacked. People find him and remark, ”We need to find the person that did this as they need our help.”

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 11:55am on 11 Jan 2011, Dave wrote:

How should we deal with neighbours from hell?
Stop their welfare benefits and get them out to work.

Complain about this comment
* 46. At 11:58am on 11 Jan 2011, PFC_Kent wrote:

Don’t report them to the council. When I did they trumped up charges of non-payment of council tax against my partner and demanded a custodial sentence. They backed down when it transpired they had made the whole thing up. Now what would be their motivation for that? Oh yes, they were council tenants and so considered 'better' than us home owning scum.

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 12:02pm on 11 Jan 2011, doctor bob wrote:

You have to live next to a neighbour from hell to really know what it's like... No one should have to eek out their lives under such conditions. People commit suicide over it.

But it isn't just in rented, social housing that it happens. It's time the help given to those living next to bad neighbours in private housing was upped a couple of notches.

Anything to speed up dealing with rotten neighbours, incarcerating them, getting rid of them, will ease a vast volume of national stress! Give bouncer-quality guys the powers to go in and deal with the source of the nuisance.

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 12:03pm on 11 Jan 2011, Mick wrote:

These families are usually easy to spot. Shuttering ply where the front door should be, curtains tied in knots, melted wheelie bins, a cooker or washing machine in the garden along with bicycle frames, broken prams, engine blocks, smashed kitchen cabinets and maybe a shattered toilet, and a strong smell of dog odors assaulting the nostrils as you walk by.

I have one such eye-sore just up the road from me. The council have sent 100's if not dozens of final notices, ordering them to clean up their act or face eviction. I believe the last letter was sent 18months ago. The family are still there, but the house next door is empty, vacated long ago by a family that could no longer take the onslaught of noise and over-spill of rubbish into their own garden.

Councils need to recognise that it is a problem and form a group of officers with special powers to deal with this sort of thing. If they need to find the money to do it, it's there in the guise of £200,000 p.a+ salaries of our illustrious council leaders.

Complain about this comment

* 49. At 12:03pm on 11 Jan 2011, wfhflyer wrote:

If as we all seem to claim live in a civilised society then there are rules that need to be followed by ALL to make living together possible.

What must happen and this not only applies to neighbours from hell but to everything is a realisation that all actions result in either rewards or consequences.

What has happened over the years is consequences for bad actions have been watered down to become so ineffective that they are not a deterrent

Complain about this comment

* 50. At 12:03pm on 11 Jan 2011, teedoff wrote:

I am not some bleeding-heart liberal. I do wonder, though, if we are even looking at this kind of thing from the right perspective.

Travelling back in time to that wonderful utopia that was yester-year, I recall the sense of community and the family ties that held us together. I recently had cause to visit a couple of countries in Eastern Europe, and noticed that this sense of community is still very much alive there. I believe it is also very alive elsewhere in continental Europe.

The main thing that struck me was that the community was almost like a local police-force, as well as a nursery, neighbourhood watch, and so many other things. Elderly people sat in front of apartment blocks, talking over old times with each other, all the while keeping an eye out for strangers and watching the very young playing in communal areas. People passed through each area with respect, and I was appraised that there
would be no funny business around as one of the old women was a local policeman's grandmother and it would be more than his life's worth to not respond to any issues she had.

In such an atmosphere everyone is expected to get along and to socialise and be part of the group. Everyone is included. And if someone wants to buck the trend they are quickly recognised and brought into the fold via a variety of methods. If they really want to be antisocial their own life is made difficult, with the entire neighbourhood standing up to them, so they are soon hounded out (although this, I was told, is a very rare occurrence and everyone feels they have failed if it comes to that).

Anyway, my point is that because we have lost our sense of community we are all adrift, not really knowing our neighbours, having little in common with them, and so we are all pretty antisocial. The ones being talked about here are simply those who rail against this in a noisy or violent way. They feel excluded and powerless, so tilt at windmills in an attempt to destroy their demons. The only real solution is to encourage community to return.

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 12:04pm on 11 Jan 2011, scotty1694 wrote:
  a good beating!
  but how dare we do something bad to bad people that deserve it!
  2 wrongs don't make it right, but it makes us even!!
  personally id fight fire with fire if my neighbors started beings a nightmare id do the same back but worse to the point they throw the 1st punch then i can ensure swift justice :) then have them done for attempted GBH.

  failing that the old flaming dog poo on the doorstep trick is good.
  the only thing the people were talking about understand is there own methods back at them. ASBO's etc are like water of a ducks back!

  Complain about this comment
  * 52. At 12:06pm on 11 Jan 2011, forwardpasser wrote:

  Disowning the poorest, and encouraging greed (Started by Thatcher) has now come back to haunt us. Not only that, but the problem will get worse and worse - we only have ourselves to blame!

  Complain about this comment
  * 53. At 12:07pm on 11 Jan 2011, Sensibly Reckless wrote:
23. At 11:13am on 11 Jan 2011, AuntieLeft wrote:

Nanny is leaving children, it’s time to grow up and be responsible for your own life. The umbilical cord is at last being cut.

----------------

Back during my 'pay my way through University' days I had a temp summer job loading lorries. One day one of the permanently employed workers failed to turn up.

Turns out he had some antisocial neighbours. A large asian family, far too big for the property, had moved into the house next door not long ago. They hadn't exactly socialised with him and were a bit noisy but other than the nuisance of litter/junk ending up on his lawn nothing serious happened. One day their children had been throwing stones in their back garden, over the fence they came and smashed the patio windows. He went next door and confronted them about it. They slammed the door in his face. He rang the door again, not long after 3 men stepped out and beat him senseless.

When others resort to violence in such a manner. 'Deal with it yourself' isn't a solution.

Complain about this comment

* 54. At 12:11pm on 11 Jan 2011, milvusvestal wrote:

Here we go again, wondering how to deal with a problem that the law itself has allowed to fester.

Everyone knows that these types are serial offenders who take full advantage of the law's weaknesses and couldn't care less about anything. Worse still, they all live on social security benefits, and spend the money on drink, drugs and cigarettes. They are the very dregs of society.

When are those in authority going to appreciate and admit this, instead of constantly labelling them as "vulnerable", and "disadvantaged"? They are neither. They are often much better off financially than their unfortunate neighbours, who work for a living, pay their taxes and are decent citizens.

As to the courts they are, from personal experience, a joke. The full force of the law is rarely exercised. Offenders are handed yet another piece of paper ordering them to behave responsibly and pay for damage on pain of imprisonment, but let off time and time again. Human rights legislation has subverted justice altogether. Solicitors and barristers are the only people who thrive in this scenario.

We should revive public flogging. Physical punishment is the only thing these low-lifes can understand. Do-gooders opposed to such "barbaric" measures will have to realise sooner or later

[Type text]
that their sympathetic methods don't work. Let's see whether a session with the birch will improve offenders' minds.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 12:11pm on 11 Jan 2011, doctorbob wrote:

Of course these problems should be dealt with as fast as possible. Too much time is currently wasted on bureaucracy: paperwork, processing complaints, gathering independent evidence, co-ordinating with other agencies and waiting for Courts.

Why on earth summary decisions can't be made sooner is anyone's guess. It's become similar to the child-protection problems: co-ordination across agencies, up and down hierarchies, the passage of documents, the time it takes to bring cases to courts, family courts, etc ad naus. There was a time when a Children's Officer could have a child pulled out of danger in an instant. Not now.

Besides, the law concerning what constitutes antisocial neighbourial behaviour needs overhauling and you know how long that will take. Unfortunately, some people don't know how to behave responsibly in a society so laws are usually essential.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 12:12pm on 11 Jan 2011, GavinH wrote:

Easier said than done. If we can't send a radical mullah who preaches violence and killing back to his own country because it's against his human rights what hope have you got and where do you send a bunch of holligans who terrorise people in their communities. Sound good in theory but it won't happen.

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 12:12pm on 11 Jan 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

How should we deal with neighbours from hell?
Not sure.
How shouldn't we deal with neighbours from hell?
Certainly not by evicting them and making them someone else's neighbours.

How about setting up training centres, like Pakistan uses to re-train/integrate ex-terrorists.

These people are basically terrorists, terrorising innocent families, there is NO NICE way of getting through to these low lifes mental thought patterns.
Maybe we should take a few pointers from Dubai and build a large offshore island, to house the worst anti-social people on, so they have somewhere to live, maybe design it to look like Animal from the muppets, then leave them to it, dropping off some cabbage by helicopter every now & then so they dont starve. It could be paid for by setting it up as a tourist attraction with low level flights buzzing the inhabitants and making them run around.

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 12:13pm on 11 Jan 2011, varnayfan wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 59. At 12:13pm on 11 Jan 2011, Bradford wrote:

To hell with their human rights. Stop their benefits, put them on the streets.

A few nights in the cold rain may make them better citizens.

Society finding excuses for them and bailing them out doesn't work it just encourages them.

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 12:14pm on 11 Jan 2011, suchan104 wrote:

37. At 11:44am on 11 Jan 2011, Toothpick Harry wrote:
Half the problem in society today is people think that because they have a few bob they can do what they like, it seems to give them an air that they (because they've a few bob) are above the law, and other peoples rights don't matter.

---------------
It's not a question of whether that have "a few bob" as you put it. There are just a lot of people around who don't give a damn about anybody else. A few months ago I heard a noise one night (I live in a city) and looked outside to see a young man who was having fun on his way home after a night out smashing off wing mirrors from every car in the street. (Police weren't interested) At a £100 each he caused several thousand pounds of damage, but I'm sure he felt better. A couple of weeks later my car and a dozen other cars were all keyed along the full length of the car. (And no, I don't have an expensive car - not that it would make it any more acceptable). The occupants of a neighbouring flat routinely come in at 4am after a night out on Friday and Saturday and turn their music on full blast until 6am when presumably they finally go to bed. Another neighbour even started hammering at 6am on New Year's Day!! This kind of anti-social behaviour is relatively minor compared to some of the things reported, but if this happens routinely in a fairly ordinary part of the city without being stopped then it becomes acceptable and slowly what is acceptable escalates. Who's going to stop it though? I can't believe that as a society we need to have police on every corner.
61. At 12:14pm on 11 Jan 2011, lukethetaff wrote:

Yet more Tory spin but no doubt some gullible people will fall for it. We should evict our anti-social PM from number 10 but at least he won't need to live in a cardboard box like he's forced many others to do.

62. At 12:19pm on 11 Jan 2011, AuntieLeft wrote:

At 11:39am on 11 Jan 2011, ProbMan wrote:
23. At 11:13am on 11 Jan 2011, AuntieLeft wrote:
Nanny is leaving children, it’s time to grow up and be responsible for your own life. The umbilical cord is at last being cut.

Are you suggesting that people should "deal with" nuisance neighbours directly? Having lived in South London & tried this, I can't recommend it. I politely asked 4 teenage lads from smoking weed in the communal stairwell outside my door, I was given verbal abuse at that point & threatened by the returning larger group an hour later. They then glued the security door closed (only exit from the flats), covered my doorstep in rubbish & urine, graffitied the communal area & set a fire on the stairs.

I'm not a person that gets intimidated easily, but being 6ft & well trained didn't stop them from coming back with more people.

Don't know how my comments were turned into 'dealing with' nuisance neighbours.
I thought it was clear that I believe that people who ARE the nuisance neighbours should bear responsibility for THEIR actions (ie by thrown out of home and community they are disrupting in this case). This IS one of many actions being taken by the government to make us all more responsible for OUR lives and OUR actions. Not the Nanny State and blaming everything on government or 'human rights', etc.

The feckless and immoral have had their day I hope

63. At 12:21pm on 11 Jan 2011, DoleBoy wrote:

5. At 10:53am on 11 Jan 2011, RonC wrote:
The problem is eviction does not solve the problem it only moves it and it then becomes someone else’s problem.

Doesn't have to be that way. Problem is they, council, never put all the anti-socials in one place. They fail to see the logic, all anti-socials don't mind other anti-social behaviours, it's normal to them! The solution is to put all the noisy, selfish morons in one place. I have had problem neighbours for a decade. The council does nothing. The last neighbour moved out not because of eviction, because he was imprisoned for being a
nutter! Next lot move in who are basically having 24/7 drinking sessions, all over 50 by the way! Most irritantly an eviction notice is presented within weeks if the rent is not paid! Eviction maybe not, move them all to the same place definitely.

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 12:22pm on 11 Jan 2011, FatMao wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 65. At 12:22pm on 11 Jan 2011, Dave wrote:

How should we deal with neighbours from hell?

I solved this problem by buying a detached cottage surrounded by acres of land.

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 12:27pm on 11 Jan 2011, PFC_Kent wrote:

forwardpasser wrote:

Disowning the poorest, and encouraging greed (Started by Thatcher) has now come back to haunt us. Not only that, but the problem will get worse and worse - we only have ourselves to blame!

Are you reading the same question as me? I would say it has a lot more to do with the ghettoisation of the poor under labour when Tony Blair decided to punish them for not being sufficiently subservient to him. Thatcher was no angel but you seem to have the blinkers on when the stasi were in power for the last decade.

Complain about this comment
* 67. At 12:28pm on 11 Jan 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

Many of these familys have received £thousands in help, from benefits to education to housing to social workers and they just carry on costing society more & more money. Then they then breed and multiply the problems and costs to society in general.

Maybe a pro-active way of dealing with them is to make them attend a Monty Pythons "school of funny walks" and to stay until they qualify.

At least that way people/victims could see them coming from a long way off and have a bit of warning and they wouldnt be able to run away so easily when the police turn up, or escape & attempt to blend in with crowds!!!

Complain about this comment
* 68. At 12:29pm on 11 Jan 2011, martin3647 wrote:

"5. At 10:53am on 11 Jan 2011, RonC wrote:

[Type text]
The problem is eviction does not solve the problem it only moves it and it then becomes someone else's problem.

We are now reaping the rewards of the Thatcher years and this government is just going to add to the problem not solve it."

Absolute rubbish, Thatcher left governemnt two decades ago since then we've had the ineffectual government of Major and the psuedo presidency of Blair

The problems arises due to the lack of consequences arising from such behaviour which reflects the labour governments fixation with rights and not responsibilities. Unfortunatley the legislators and enforcers in this country no longer have the guts to stand up for the decent living majority.

The answer, throw such people out of their houses and make them homeless - tough consequences will soon stop the problem. As for thugs who terrorise neighbourhoods they are no longer afraid of the police that needs to change

Complain about this comment
* 69. At 12:32pm on 11 Jan 2011, KenThompson wrote:

I wish that in my lifetime, JUST ONE of these governments who "Talk the Talk"....actually "Walked the Walk" as well.

There is a simple answer to local rowdyism, but they are all too spineless to do it.

Firstly. BIN the Human Rights Act.

Then bring all these vermin to the centre of our towns and cities, and put them into pillories or stocks for a couple of days. Let the public deal with them in a way that they wouldn't forget in a hurry.

And bring them back....as often as it takes for them to get the message!

They are the vermin on the face of Britain.

Complain about this comment
* 70. At 12:32pm on 11 Jan 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

How should we deal with neighbours from hell?

Make them live in "Heaven" night club in London for a few months.

It might convert them one way or another and at least they will not be neighbours from hell but neighbours from "Heaven" !!!

[Type text]
Complain about this comment
* 71. At 12:33pm on 11 Jan 2011, Reclaim_the_country wrote:

They maybe the "neighbour from hell" to you and you maybe the "neighbour from hell" to them.

Others who live near you would know.

Complain about this comment
* 72. At 12:33pm on 11 Jan 2011, Wyn wrote:

How should we deal with neighbours from hell?

A bit of reverse social engineering perhaps?

I'll preface my comments by saying that I have no experience of how things work/used to work re social housing in big cities - only in small towns.

Until I moved to Scotland 11 years ago, I lived for over 40 years in various council estates in North Wales. In my experience most towns - certainly the ones I knew about - had two main council estates. There was a 'nice' estate, where what might be called the upper working class were housed, and the sink estate.

Unfortunately, somewhere around the late 70's/early 80's, many of the local councils (this could have had something to do with local govt reorganisation in 1974) began to be dominated by a bunch of bleeding heart lefties (they tended to call themselves 'Independents' but even a cursory examination of their voting records showed otherwise). This lot believed in 'social integration' and they began to house those who requested homes (or requested transfers) in the 'nice' area in the sink estates instead, and those who requested homes in the sink estate to the nice estate. To the surprise of no-one but the pinko councillors (certainly no surprise to the inhabitants of the nice estates), these nice estates degenerated into something approaching Gaza City on a bad day. Where they've stayed according to friends who are still unfortunate enough to have no other choice but to stay where they are.

So, - evict the families causing the problems in what used to be the nice estates, move a nice family into their house (probably have to clean/fumigate it of course) and rehouse the scumbags in the nice family's old house in the hold sink estate (where they never wanted to be put anyway).

Sounds like a plan to me.

Complain about this comment
* 73. At 12:34pm on 11 Jan 2011, LouisW wrote:

# 65 - Dave

You've not done yourself any favours there mate...wait for it :-)

[Type text]
I found such neighbours unapproachable, with polite requests to tone it down a bit out of the question in that the miscreant, though of small build, had a violent disposition.

So I resorted to:
1. Reciprocating their loud music with my even louder sound system booming out ear-bleeding tracks from a Steve Vai album.
2. Effective temporarily as it conveyed the message in no uncertain terms, but sought our local council's help as their various dins resumed.
3. Police were subsequently involved owing to a 'violent' element and the family were moved on, albeit separately.

However, where such 'neighbours from hell' are moved en masse elsewhere, enabling their inconsiderate behaviour to continue - I think an enforced week's worth of their own medicine in a custom-built room with extremely loud recordings of fights, music and foul-mouthed arguments MIGHT eradicate their offensive activities.

Now, what can we do about the 'government from hell'?

Maybe do the same as with neighbours from Australia, turn them into a tv programme. Trouble is, if its anything like Eastenders or Neighbours, it will have multiple problems, like murder, rape, stealing babies etc all in just a few houses & familys, hence probably NOT much change.

MAYBE, this is where these anti-social people get their social education from in the first instance!!!!

What about MPs from hell? These greedy, grasping, cheating, immoral, self-serving hypocrites who still think they are above the law. They tell us anything to get elected then ignore us for another 5 years.
Complain about this comment
* 78. At 12:41pm on 11 Jan 2011, Sproutaholic wrote:

This does nothing about the scum that bought a house & therefore not subject to eviction - unfortunately.

The local police have done nothing whatsoever in our community about 2 active criminals despite a huge number of complaints, the council departments the same.
When a resident was forced to act "directly", he was the one the police arrested.

Pathetic soundbites from a failed Govt. as useless as the last lot when it came to results.

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 12:43pm on 11 Jan 2011, Me Myself and I wrote:

There needs to be a better system than automatic eviction. Where do they live after automatic eviction? If re-housed elsewhere, is that not moving the problem on to other neighbours? I agree with the housing charity that said the idea was a "blunt tool". Dealing with the problem through the courts appears to me to be the only fair way, as the courts will take consideration all facts before reaching a fair resolution. If the government are allowed to get away with automatic eviction today, tomorrow they will use that as precedence for automatic sentences on all matters that are currently dealt with through the courts.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 12:45pm on 11 Jan 2011, Claire Herbert wrote:

It is very difficult to deal with nuisance neighbours quickly. We tried talking to the neighbours but all we got was "We don’t speak English" and then the door was slammed in our face (we sometimes heard them chatting in English over the garden fence.) It took us ages to get the landlord next door to deal with our noisy neighbours and even then we had to force his hand. All requests for him to deal with the issue fell on deaf ears. He allowed 9 people to live in a 3 bedroom house.

We contacted the local council and they started to help us but it is a time consuming process. They have to send someone out when the noise is happening and they have to hear it themselves. You can’t make an appointment and they are really busy. So if the noisy party stops at 3am and they come at 3:15am you have wasted everyone’s time.

Luckily they came round at 2am one morning when the neighbours were making one hell of a racket. As soon as the landlord received the notice that he would be fined £2000 if this happened again, he swiftly kicked them out.

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 12:46pm on 11 Jan 2011, Claire Herbert wrote:
"4. At 10:49am on 11 Jan 2011, pete wrote:
personally i think neighbours from hell are subject to
abuse of one sort or another and they need help , its deep rooted
physcological trauma."

If that's how you feel, we'll send them to live next to you.

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 12:49pm on 11 Jan 2011, luskentyre wrote:

Anyone guilty of anti-social behavior as a tenant should be
evicted and automatically become ineligible for council housing,
anywhere in the UK.

Some people need to learn that living in a society requires
certain standards of behaviour. If you choose not to accept those
standards then you take the consequences and enjoy living on the
street. No housing benefit, no council tax benefit - they won't
need it.

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 12:49pm on 11 Jan 2011, Portman wrote:

Once upon a time decency and some level of accepted norm in
behaviour based on a shared concept of decency actually ruled the
streets. People who shared that idea were together stronger than
those who ignored those norms. They were even supported by those
who had power locally be they the authorities or less legal
versions of such. All had the ability to put pressure on in a
flexible manner to achieve the end of keeping the streets safe
and decent and allowing us all to sleep at night.

Bit by bit it has all been given away and those shared
notions of decency are memories. We don't even dare to police
minor anti social behaviours and even people who assume they are
decent will park in disabled spaces or empty their car ashtrays
as they drive down someone else's residential streets. The police
have had their connection with local community broken and have
more rules than power to intervene. Laws protect the perpetrators
and disarm the community.

It isn't about eviction, it is about how we all want to
live, free of this kind of behaviour and the associated stress
and fear. This is what big society should be about but to achieve
it will take more than a few smarmy speeches.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 12:52pm on 11 Jan 2011, potatolord wrote:

They should bring back hanging.

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 12:53pm on 11 Jan 2011, LouisW wrote:

# 72. Wyn

[Type text]
I too have always wondered why integration was necessary

I believe some naive person truly believed that by putting the sink estate classes in with the rest of us they would up their standards

Sadly, in reality, the opposite has occurred. The sink estate class just resent those in the private housing that can afford a nice car and holiday and it is rubbed in their nose because they can see it from their own front door, they seem not to notice the residents leaving the house at 8.00am everyday till 6.00pm each day 48 weeks of the year.

In our area the developers are now putting the social housing element as far away as possible from the private element as it was not very appealing to pay £350k for a nice house only to have to navigate past cooker and mattress occupied gardens to get to it.

People are what they are, and it could be deemed quite cruel to have put the financially better off in their faces.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 12:54pm on 11 Jan 2011, Dave wrote:

Tony Blair should never have given them free computers so they wouldn't feel excluded from society. Now they infest internet message boards complaining about living in poverty on welfare benefits, bankers bonuses, the tory party, 4 x 4's, Big Business, Medium Business, Small business and the rich. Lol

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 12:54pm on 11 Jan 2011, Stokkevn wrote:

12. At 11:02am on 11 Jan 2011, smilingparrotfan wrote:
#4 Pete. I guess you've never been kept awake several nights a week by rampaging youths, all of whom gravitate to a certain dysfunctional family home ? This particular family have been given a lot of support, over several years, but leopards would not appear to change their spots. Although I'm all in favour of encouraging self-esteem and responsibility in some of our more wayward citizens, there comes a point when drastic action has to be taken. I'm thinking " eviction", before the surrounding neighbourhood have a collective nervous breakdown.

----------------------------------------

I had what sounds like similar neighbours, they annoyed everybody, shouting, screaming, kicking our bins over, throwing rubbish in our gardens. I asked nicely if they could refrain from their unruly activities. All I was met with was a bunch of abuse from both father and 12 years old son. The next day I employed a few very rough looking guys with a large dog who went round and explain their future if they did not stop annoying the
neighbours. They are now very good neighbours and the son even calls me Sir. Job solved

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 12:57pm on 11 Jan 2011, drcarol wrote:

I agree with many of the comments on here and am heartly sick of the throw money at the problem brigade.

It's not that difficult. Every tenant must sign a contract. Add a couple of lines - 3 strikes and you're out. This is what some housing associations now do. It's amazing - one lot get thrown on the street and the rest of them behave. Also, the law needs to be changed so that any landlord must take responsibility for their tenants - get them out or the neighbours can sue you. Housing benefit should be withdrawn from these wasters. I'd go further and tackle these feral kids by withdrawing all child related benefits from parents who don't control their kids and make them take fiscal responsibility for any damage caused by the lack of parental control. So what if they end up homeless - if the consequences are spelt out it's their decision.

Behave like a member of society - or don't complain when society protects itself by rejecting you. As for the Human Rights Act - don't get me started!!! You only have human rights if you're the perpetrator -law abiding people don't seem to have any at all - GET RID

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 1:03pm on 11 Jan 2011, Fred Schuhmacher wrote:

If I lived in 9 Downing Street, I might want to evict my neighbour. (No. 8's probably OK though).

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 1:04pm on 11 Jan 2011, Nic121 wrote:

Surely just evicting these people simply pushes the problem from one area into another without actually dealing with it?

A successful eviction is great for the neighbours that have been suffering at their hands for months...but it's just the start of the suffering for their new neighbours.

You could say 'well just don't rehouse them'...but many of these problem families have young kids, and I don't think we live in society that will see kids living on the streets even if they are troublemakers.

My opinion is that we need to start thinly dispersing these problem people so we don't create any more no-go ghetto areas. It's bad enough when you have one problem family on a street, let alone 2 or 3. We need to make sure that these problem people are in a very small minority. Then we need to encourage all the decent local resident to support each other, which includes helping someone out if they are in need and coming forward as
witnesses when the police investigate...so many cases come to nothing because the local community clams up and wont come forward.

It's amazing what residents can do if they stick together and support each other - a group of local residents in my town got a club shutdown after months of keeping notes, dairies and video footage of drunk problem customers.

The trouble is, everyone keeps to themselves now and is too willing to turn a blind eye as long as it's not them being abused or attacked.

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 1:04pm on 11 Jan 2011, ProbMan wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 92. At 1:04pm on 11 Jan 2011, theoldgoat wrote:

Eviction is no answer, its just moving the problem somewhere else.
Of course, this is a kind of sweet revenge, as Cameron is having to deal with the legacy of Thatcher's 'no society' agenda. Again not a solution, but worth pointing out!

These people obvious need some help, and that's where the focus needs to be. Dave 'Hug a Hoodie' Cameron needs to magically appear, metaphorically hug them and turn them around, and all will be well.

Of course in the real word, the Social Services professionals, currently waiting on their redundancy notices and retraining plans to become office cleaners and checkout assistants, should be the ones to do the hard bits........

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 1:05pm on 11 Jan 2011, Wu Shu wrote:

Kick them out. Lock them up. Throw away the key.

Sadly the loony, bleeding-heart, liberal-left has ruined our society by protecting criminals and scum and making hard-working, law-abiding taxpayers second class citizens in our own country where we have fewer rights than neighbours from hell and scum in general.

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 1:05pm on 11 Jan 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

Maybe we should have a national anti-social lottery, which stops off in alternate towns & cities.
First, round up 48 of the weeks worst anti-socials. Wrap them up in velcro put the (48) anti-socials in a big see-threw tumbler concrete mixer thingy & spin it around, every now & then a big vacumm sucks one of them out & fires them (7 in total) down a moving & rotating barrel at a wall with numbers on, numbered 1 to 48.

It'd make good entertainment and good causes would benefit, and you could just leave them on the walls outside each town/city for a few days & people could feed them with rotten tomatoes etc.

The left over ones not fired against the wall could just be allowed home but remain as a viable future choice via a phone in competition.

See, there can be positive ways of dealing with anti-social behaviour!!!

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 1:06pm on 11 Jan 2011, AuntieLeft wrote:

"5. At 10:53am on 11 Jan 2011, RonC wrote:
The problem is eviction does not solve the problem it only moves it and it then becomes someone else’s problem.

We are now reaping the rewards of the Thatcher years and this government is just going to add to the problem not solve it."

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>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invoice
headline-grabbing lip service from a Government who have repeatedly demonstrated their utter contempt for the concerns of ordinary tax-paying voters.

For instance, they seem to just accept the popular misconception that this sort of thing only goes on in council housing - it doesn't. In fact, council tenants probably have far more recourse than other groups when besieged by problem families - most of those you do hear about being evicted or taken to court were council tenants.

What happens next? They enter the private rented sector, where a growing number of slum landlords aren't particularly concerned with their behaviour or even what they do to the house because they know that by housing them on behalf of the council they'll get guaranteed rent paid by Housing Benefit (and in many cases can name their own price) and any damage will be similarly covered using public funds. If you're an owner-occupier living in a street which has been ruined by this kind of irresponsible, unaccountable landlordism you have very few options but to sit it out and hope they'll leave, not least because selling a property rendered worthless overnight becomes an impossible proposition.

The local authority tell you to contact the police. The police in turn state that anti-social behaviour is a council matter. The same councils that can wade in and remove well cared-for kids from loving homes because some doctor decides they're 'obese' or fine someone for accidentally dropping a half-eaten sausage roll, or threaten them with jail for putting the wrong item in the wrong bin, invariably turn the other way and pretend not to see dog fouling, garbage hurled into neighbours' yards, foul-mouthed, feral kids defacing and despoiling everything in sight, open drug dealing in view of youngsters, the psychological abuse of innocents with verbal / physical abuse and the misuse of stereo equipment.

Why? Because our public authorities have become preoccupied with performance culture, 'quick wins' and easy targets - and in any case regard the perpetrators as 'victims' in need of a good hug and a cuppa, and certainly not the violation of their human rights through being punished or made to take responsibility for their actions.

Unfortunately whatever the Fib-Cons say this is only going to become a much more serious issue. We have a culture of landlordism where communities are being systematically destroyed by the rich using their resources to accumulate the sort of homes which would once have been purchased by the working poor. We have the prospect of massive cuts to the already thin blue line of policing and local authorities which will ultimately result in parts of our cities (not, of course, the parts where the rich and powerful live) becoming lawless and ungovernable.
This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.

* 98. At 1:10pm on 11 Jan 2011, icewombat wrote:

I understand Rockall is nice this time of year?

Complain about this comment

* 99. At 1:10pm on 11 Jan 2011, Muppet_Master wrote:

52. At 12:06pm on 11 Jan 2011, forwardpasser wrote:
"Disowning the poorest, and encouraging greed (Started by Thatcher) has now come back to haunt us. Not only that, but the problem will get worse and worse – we only have ourselves to blame!"

----------------------------------------

Now I've heard it all

1. Half of these "people" weren't even born when Thatcher was in power
2. The last 12-13 years has seen a huge rise in the nanny state, with a whole "industry" in the social work sector concerning itself with the "vulnerable" in society
3. There is (and always has been) a small percentage of the population who are so mentally incapable of grasping basics, such as community, that they are effectively outcasts who CAN'T fit in
4. Many of these people aren't POOR. Some of them will even qualify for additional benefit support because of their "special needs" - Promoted by point 2 because of point 3

Put in it's simplest form: These adults, and their offspring, just DON'T CARE

Basically there isn't much we CAN do directly, and there seems to be even less that the authorities are prepared to do

Complain about this comment

* 100. At 1:10pm on 11 Jan 2011, martin3647 wrote:

#90

"The trouble is, everyone keeps to themselves now and is too willing to turn a blind eye as long as it's not them being abused or attacked"

No its because they are afraid of retribution which the police nor authorities will deal with

Why disperse the minority of problem families, why should law abiding citizens put up with such individuals. Put them in sink estates and let the majority live in peace....its time to stop bothering about the minority and time to protect the majority
Appendix 54. All messages in the message thread Bus services.

How important is your local bus service?
11:09 UK time, Thursday, 3 February 2011

A campaign has been launched to save subsidised bus routes after it was found more than two-thirds of councils planned to cut services. Would cuts to local bus services affect you?

Stephen Joseph, chief executive of The Campaign for Better Transport, which is launching the Save our Buses campaign, said the cuts to bus services would hit the poorest and most vulnerable hardest.

However, local and regional transport minister Norman Baker argued that while he accepted the funding settlement was "challenging", most bus services would not be affected.

How important is your local bus route and how often do you use it? Would the proposed cuts affect you? Send us your comments using the form below.

Thank you for your comments. This debate is now closed.

* Bookmark with:
  * del.icio.us |
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  * Reddit
  * - What's this?

* 1. At 11:41am on 03 Feb 2011, Mike from Brum wrote:

  Not been on a bus for 20 years. Last time I used one it cost a fortune and was disgustingly unclean. The ones in Brum are poorly maintained too; many have baldy tyres. I'd rather walk (and frequently do) than have to take a West Midlands bus.

  Complain about this comment

* 2. At 11:42am on 03 Feb 2011, bud wrote:

  if you cannot afford a car it is very important,that is not including those who do not drive! doe's the beeb and "dave" still stand behind the slogan,"we are all in this together"how is the bus route cuts going to effect the rich?it is not! it is, in fact going to make life better for them,by freeing up the roads they will benefit."we are all in this together"is a lie.i call on the conden to take it back.tell the truth!

  you and your ilk are not in this with us the ordinary guy from the council estates and inner citys.we are the ones that are in this the innocent, the rich and the bankers are getting a way with it,that is the truth,if i'm wrong then tell nick or dave to tell me i'm wrong.

  Complain about this comment
* 3. At 11:43am on 03 Feb 2011, teedoff wrote:

I'd say it's very important, but I also understand how difficult it can be to travel to a local destination anywhere near the time you need.

I drive, so I can choose what time to travel, but my wife doesn't drive and is currently at university, which is 8 miles from where we live. She can either catch a bus at 6:30, getting her there at 6:50, or one at 9:30, making her 40 minutes late for her first class. It would be very easy to include this stop on other routes, but it's not profitable enough (student pay less) so the bus company will do nothing. I can see it being scrapped altogether in the future, belying our governmental focus on education.

Complain about this comment

* 4. At 11:47am on 03 Feb 2011, ClaudeBalls wrote:

Fine if you live in a city. Waste of time in rural areas like ours. Would take me about 3 hours (3 buses, plus 2 interconnecting walks) to go 16 miles to work, earliest I could arrive 11.20 (usually arrive 7.45!) and latest I could leave around 3.15 (usually leave around 6pm). Can drive it in 25 mins for £1.50 even at today's prices. File under "chocolate fireguard".

Complain about this comment

* 5. At 11:47am on 03 Feb 2011, Tio Terry wrote:

The nearest bus stop is over a mile away, not easy to carry shopping up the hill home from there - especially when you are not so young. Have not been on a bus in years and I know none of my neighbours have either. So, no, it's not important to me.

Complain about this comment

* 6. At 11:49am on 03 Feb 2011, Wyn wrote:

How important is your local bus service?

It isn't!!!!!

Living as I do in remote rural Scotland, our bus service can be described as sparse to non-existent. I live about 11 miles away from my workplace (not by choice I assure you, but because of rural housing problems) and whilst there are buses, none will get me to work on time nor stay long enough for me to catch one to return home.

So I have no option but to pay the £1.46 per litre for petrol and grin and bear it.

Complain about this comment

* 7. At 11:50am on 03 Feb 2011, paul tapner wrote:
The only buses I ever use aren't council ones and they're for long journeys. Local ones like park and ride I never use because it's easy for me to walk the distances as they go round in a short loop in the centre of town. But then I'm lucky because I'm very healthy and I like to walk. The same is not true of all people. Not that I've heard of any cuts like this locally though so you can't say more at the moment.

Complain about this comment
* 8. At 11:52am on 03 Feb 2011, richardjackson99 wrote:

Not at all. I refuse to use public transport - it's inconvenient, rarely on time and overcrowded. I'd rather walk, or stay at home, if I can't afford to drive myself. There needs to be massive investment in it before people will be tempted out of their cars.

And before the Greens have a go at me, I've cut my CO2 emissions by: Getting a smaller car, driving around 25% fewer miles, turning my central heating down & wearing a jumper, improving the insulation in my home, gradually replacing appliances with energy efficient ones, recycling/composting everything I can, etc.

Complain about this comment
* 9. At 11:52am on 03 Feb 2011, Toothpick Harry wrote:

This is a question you shouldn't have to ask. In rural areas, particularly for the elderly and those who don't have their own transport, it's vital. It shouldn't be down to some twonker in a council office to decide whether we have the means to travel. Schools have been closed and centralised, the same with hospitals, local banks have closed, post offices etc. We are supposed to be making moves to abandon cars and go greener yet every which way we turn some overpaid twonker in authority decides cutting services and jobs is the only way to preserve their precious ill gotten bonuses. What's happening in Egypt isn't far from happenig here, we need a cull of the twonkers at the top then everything will be cushty, yu no wot am sayin?

Complain about this comment
* 10. At 11:56am on 03 Feb 2011, Ben wrote:

What is the governments problem with public transport, and why does it always have to be run as a business rather than a service.

I do not use the buses on a regular basis, but where I live, the train service is so unreliable that I need to take the bus on certain days. It is a rural service and seldom has more than a few people on it (unless a lot of people have had trouble with the train, in which case it's like sardines!)

Aren't bus services also supposed to facilitate in removing cars from our roads?

It seems more to me that the government wants to scrap the bus services where they know people will have no choice but to drive. Which in turn means buying petrol, road tax, insurance and
surprise, these are things that government makes a nice tidy sum of money on.

Clearly the lives of those in rural areas mean far less than those that live in say, London. Which is of the only part of England that the government has any interest in!

Complain about this comment
* 11. At 11:57am on 03 Feb 2011, Monogram wrote:

Now there is a surprise, instead of cutting the thousands of non-jobs created by NU-labour councils have decided to cut services to the you, the elderly and the vulnerable. There is no necessity to cut bus routes. Aren't local and central government always bleating we should use public transport to help the environment, when it comes to non-jobs and cuts the necessary services are the first to go. No change there then.

Complain about this comment
* 12. At 11:57am on 03 Feb 2011, aphoristic wrote:

The bus service is fairly useless at the moment.
If there was 10 times as many buses and half the price then it would be a good thing. I can drive to places for much less than the cost of a bus fair.
It also needs to go on much later at night. If I go to a town 6 miles away, by bus, to visit a pub then I don't want to be forced to leave at 10:15P in order to get the last bus back! 1:30AM would be more like it....

Complain about this comment
* 13. At 11:58am on 03 Feb 2011, Cheese And Biscuits wrote:

Local buses can be very important to many people, especially those that cannot/will not drive. The problem is, it's just not viable to run some services.

People who depend on buses should be prepared to pay a lot more for the service if they wish to keep it.

I drive and use a bus very rarely so personally I'm not affected, however it would be a shame for the service to cease to exist but if it's not financially viable, what can they do??

Complain about this comment
* 14. At 11:58am on 03 Feb 2011, WiseOldBob wrote:

I frequently travel around the Yorkshire Dales using the heavily subsidised Dalesbus services. Whilst I would be willing to pay more for this marvellous service I appreciate that the few other users of the service probably can't. However, the subsidy could be covered ten times over if the Council were to charge all those pesky cyclists and bikers for coming into the Dales and cluttering up the place with their cycles and motorbikes!

Complain about this comment
* 15. At 11:59am on 03 Feb 2011, Queen_Beccib wrote:

[Type text]
The bus 'service' is very important for the many rural communities in Devon & these are the first routes to be cut because, as usual, councillors know the cost of everything but the value of nothing. In Devon there are currently proposals to cut the school bus service because it's not making enough profit. It's disgusting that, yet again, the most vulnerable are having to go without due to the excesses of the government. Many people that live in the rural villages are not second home owners with lots of money, they're usually elderly people who have lived all of their lives in the villages who have seen their local post offices, shops & schools closed & have been forced to go in to the town to do their business. We're not 'all in this together', some of us are more 'in it' than others.

Complain about this comment
* 16. At 12:00pm on 03 Feb 2011, scotty1694 wrote:

well to get to work for me it breaks down like thi

drive to work :15 min by car
2 trains to work : 1 hour 5 min
bus: 3-4 bus's and over and hour

and were literally talking a straight line north here probably 18 miles max

oh and all of these are increasing in price the only one that offer's a comfy clean on time ride is my own car.

Complain about this comment
* 17. At 12:00pm on 03 Feb 2011, Loony Liberal wrote:

There'll be a lot of responses suggesting buses aren't important. I'd like to disagree.

They may not be important for people who can afford to run a car, but lots of people rely on them (and trains) to get around. With petrol prices booming, insurance booming and salaries stagnant – presuming you're lucky enough to keep your job, then public transport becomes a much more viable alternative than relying on a car.

In a time when the coalition Government is suggesting that our economy will improve via manufacturing and green technology, surely we must be investing in public transport?

I can understand why people think some routes are dirty, inconvenient and expensive, but the answer to that is to invest and improve rather than to cut and be done with it.

Complain about this comment
* 18. At 12:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, yvonne woodward wrote:

I USED TO LIVE I A RURAL AREA WITH ONE BUS A WEEK THIS WAS A GODSEND FOR SOME VILLAGERS IT APPEARS THIS GOVERNMENT IS FULL OF

[Type text]
CONTRADICTIONS, THEY SAY THEY ARE GREEN YET THEY ARE FORCING PEOPLE TO USE A CAR THATS IF THEY HAVE ONE, OR IS IT GET ON YOUR BIKE, WHICH MOST ELDERLY RESIDENTS WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO, WHAT WITH OTHER CUTS PAR TO DEEP TO QUICK, IM SURE THIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE A MAJORITY MANDATE, FOR WHAT THEY ARE DOING CUTS YES BUT IN THE RIGHT PLACES THAT WOULD GET A MAJORITY SUPPORT, EVEN THE NON POOR WILL BE AGAINST A LOT OF THESE CUTS

Complain about this comment
* 19. At 12:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, Brianlancashire wrote:

Buses are not important to me - however they are heavily used by those which this government is determined to neglect - namely the young and the elderly.

Complain about this comment
* 20. At 12:03pm on 03 Feb 2011, kingofsuffolk wrote:

Another tool that will rid rural communities of the less affluent, what if house prices out of reach years ago, this should insure the final solution to economically cleanse rural communities, another 20 odd years and you will be hard pushed to go to a rural part of the country and hear an original local accent. Still we are all in this together.

Complain about this comment
* 21. At 12:03pm on 03 Feb 2011, sixpackerL wrote:

Chopping local bus services?

Just another on last nights stupid-vindictive-cuts list, which included local swimming pools (used by the disabled) and a couple of libraries.

Ah - I see "Cheese And Biscuits" has just posted - must be time for lunch....

Complain about this comment
* 22. At 12:03pm on 03 Feb 2011, Graphis wrote:

Public transport is indeed rubbish, and I live in London: heaven knows how bad it is in rural areas!

However, as a non-driver, it's my only option. It takes over an hour and a half for me to visit my mother in law by public transport, yet it is a 20 minute drive by car.

I thought the government was trying to dissuade us from using cars? This doesn't seem to me to be the right way of going about it...

Complain about this comment
* 23. At 12:06pm on 03 Feb 2011, DoleBoy wrote:

Public transport will be cut by the Tories as it always is when they get in power. I was thinking only the other day about my bus route, as a child we had 3 buses a day, now we have 1

[Type text]
every 2 hours, but it's subsidised, so it will be for the scrap heap. The most irritating thing is Stagecoach, who I write complaining to regularly, will not pay for these routes, despite the huge profit that they make on other journeys, lets face it Stagecoach don't even pay towards bus stations or bus stops! Public transport needs to be nationalised, the privatisation of buses/trains has failed in terms of affordable service, but vast profits for the owners!

Whenever I complain to Stagecoach about their extortionate prices they always say that they are investing in a new fleet of buses, as if!

Complain about this comment
* 24. At 12:07pm on 03 Feb 2011, stanblogger wrote:

Some of those who do not worry about bus cuts because they drive everywhere, should think again.

Many people as they get older find, for one reason or another, that they cannot drive anymore. If you cannot afford to employ a chauffeur, or to use taxis all the time, you may suddenly find yourself dependent on public transport.

This is another example of the the lunacy of the ConDem austerity policy. Bus drivers will be paid unemployment benefit not to drive buses, while people that need them are stranded at home.

Complain about this comment
* 25. At 12:08pm on 03 Feb 2011, doomjeffs wrote:

Not at all important.
I've used my local bus 'service' a handful of times in the last 20 years & each time felt ripped off. I live in the Bristol area & it is well known to be one of the most expensive bus 'services' in the country.
The last time i did use it, the journey cost approximately £1.00 per mile.
I'll stick to my car thank you very much. (much cheaper)

Complain about this comment
* 26. At 12:09pm on 03 Feb 2011, angryauntie wrote:

It's a lifeline. Like a high percentage of people in my area, I have no car. There is a train service, but only one train out of the town every 2 hours. So losing bus services would leave many people trapped.

Complain about this comment
* 27. At 12:15pm on 03 Feb 2011, teedoff wrote:

I read that many contributors have fallen into the government trap. It's a vicious circle.

Because of underfunding for years our bus and train services are sparse and unreliable; therefore people don''t use
them if they can avoid it, so they receive less funding, and so on. And many of you are telling us that because of this the services are not important to you. Please wake up and understand that these services are necessary to many people and you are allowing them to be cut more by your laissez faire attitude. Having spent time in countries where the public transport system works well I tell you that with proper funding and encouragement we could have a system that means far fewer cars on the road because public transport would be preferred.

Of course with debacles like the Edinburgh tram fiasco I don't know if this country has the heart to tackle our transport issues, as many comments here show.

Complain about this comment

* 28. At 12:16pm on 03 Feb 2011, frank wrote:

Local buses are obviously extremely important to all who use them, especially the elderly who rely on them to do their shopping etc. We are always being told to reduce cars on the road after all. Regardless of whether or not it would affect me (I use a bus to work and home each day) let us think about everyone and not just ourselves. One of the main problems in this country is the selfish attitude that seems to have been encouraged by subsequent governments that we should be responsible for ourselves. Yes that is fine but let us also try and be responsible for how our behaviour affects other people and show some consideration and care where possible.

Complain about this comment

* 29. At 12:18pm on 03 Feb 2011, in_the_uk wrote:

Buses are important for people who cant drive. I have no sympathy for people who wont drive (such as my partner) because driving is a necessary life skill. People need it, the economy needs it and everyone relies on on drivers even if they dont drive.

The public transport system cant compete with having your own car. The freedom and possibilities opened up to people is amazing

Complain about this comment

* 30. At 12:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, luckybeagle wrote:

I think it is important. I used to commute by bus to the city centre but First Eastern Counties stopped the route. There is another bus company serving our area but their timetable is not suitable for my work commitment. Subsequently I am driving to work. I am lucky because I have a car for my own use although it costs more than using public transport. But for people who don't have a car or can't drive, local bus services are quite important. How can they move from a place to another? Some people might be stuck in the middle of nowhere.
Complain about this comment
* 31. At 12:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, Tio Terry wrote:

Buses are not important to me – however they are heavily used by those which this government is determined to neglect – namely the young and the elderly.

As it's your local council that has taken the decision to reduce services (assuming it has) it's not central governments fault.

Complain about this comment
* 32. At 12:23pm on 03 Feb 2011, undyingcincinnatus wrote:

There is a fully private bus system where I live. Unlike the horrible, wasteful part-public funded rail services, this is a brilliant counterpart to the cheaper but less comfortable council-run buses.

It is a little more expensive, but it is comfortable (leather seats!), reaches very far from the city centre and shows that public and private services should exist alongside each other, not in a hideous public funded, privately run amalgamation where taxpayers line shareholder's pockets.

Having said that, I do not believe public buses should end. They serve their place as the cheap option, a public service available to all, and force private companies not to charge extortionate prices without competition.

Complain about this comment
* 33. At 12:23pm on 03 Feb 2011, th3_0r4cl3 wrote:

Local bus services in rural areas are an essential life line, not everyone drives or could afford to get a taxi, the cost to the passenger is as important as the service itself, these are tax paying communities that need transport links, the government should take appropriate steps to ensure that links to essential services for these people are maintained if not strengthened in our big society.

Complain about this comment
* 34. At 12:24pm on 03 Feb 2011, doomjeffs wrote:

Some of those who do not worry about bus cuts because they drive everywhere, should think again.

Many people as they get older find, for one reason or another, that they cannot drive anymore. If you cannot afford to employ a chauffeur, or to use taxis all the time, you may suddenly find yourself dependent on public transport.
This is another example of the lunacy of the ConDem austerity policy. Bus drivers will be paid unemployment benefit not to drive buses, while people that need them are stranded at home.

///////////////////////////////////

That's all very well, but it assumes that you'll be able to afford the 'service' when you're old & retired. I'm middle aged & in full time employment & i can't afford it now.

Complain about this comment
* 35. At 12:28pm on 03 Feb 2011, W Fletcher wrote:

Almost never use a bus - they're akin to travelling in a mobile TB ward / Plague House!

You hop on the bus all healthy & alight after contracting every virus known to the human race, never mind the mildew from the damp, the chewing gum on the seats...I'll stick to walking thanks!

Complain about this comment
* 36. At 12:28pm on 03 Feb 2011, jalfreizi wrote:

I live in North Lincolnshire but our Town is small and on the border of South Yorkshire. The town is small and like many others you have to travel to get major shopping done. The bus service is a life line for the non-drivers or folk that have no car. We help where we can, either picking up shopping or taking people in to either Scunthorpe or Doncaster.
Cut backs would be a disaster for these folk.
I realise that some councils are trying to force the government hand by cutting back on services which gain the most publicity but I am sick of the present bunch riding roughshod over us all with their cutbacks.
I look at the faces of Cameron, Osborne and Clegg and actually feel they are enjoying their moment of power. Just hope that they are a thing of the past soon. It is not so much the policies I hate it is the way it is these individuals and their smug "it won't effect us attitudes.

Complain about this comment
* 37. At 12:31pm on 03 Feb 2011, ed_butt wrote:

Public Transport used to be a service to the public at one time, but not any more. Now it's all run to make a profit - thank you for that, Mrs Thatcher!
I used to drive, but unfortunately, a medical condition now prevents me from driving a car, so I am at the mercy of public transport.
Bus services where I live are non-existent in the evenings and at weekends, so hard luck if you need to go anywhere!
That's "Public Transport" for you!

Complain about this comment
* 38. At 12:31pm on 03 Feb 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

31. At 12:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, Tio Terry wrote:
19. At 12:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, Brianlancashire wrote:
Buses are not important to me – however they are heavily used by those which this government is determined to neglect – namely the young and the elderly.

-----------------------------------------------------------
As it's your local council that has taken the decision to reduce services (assuming it has) it's not central governments fault.

=====================================  
As it is central government that has CUT council incomes, moreso the poorer councils with HIGH use of buses due to unafforability of cars, then it is FACTULLY CORRECT that government is more GREATLY responsible as their policies are basically to rob the masses of income and wealth in preference of maintaining and supporting those who are RESPONSIBLE for our atroclous economic/financial and social DESTRUCTION.

Complain about this comment
* 39. At 12:32pm on 03 Feb 2011, forclarification wrote:

I blame Thatcher!

Do I get a prize?

Complain about this comment
* 40. At 12:33pm on 03 Feb 2011, Geoff wrote:

I use my local bus route on a daily basis when commuting in and out of central London. The big problem with our route is that the timekeeping on it is atrocious. The buses are supposed to be approximately 12 minutes apart – which is admittedly a lot better than in rural areas – but very often you can be waiting an age for one or two come along together. Given the technology that is available these days surely it isn't that hard to get timings correct? And no I don't live in central London.

Many people use the 58 route and the number of buses that are on that route are insufficient to cover the number of people that use the route. God knows what will happen when the Olympics hit this area next year!

Complain about this comment
* 41. At 12:33pm on 03 Feb 2011, Last day wrote:

Public transport isn't practical for me like lots of other posters. It would add an extra 1 hour on to my commute each way and its only 11 miles away! I used the train to get to work during the heavy snow and it cost over £5 for a return ticket that against £1 for each journey by car I'd be crazy not to keep driving. However this is a lifeline for many, often those on low

[Type text]
incomes who cannot afford the financial burden of a car (who can these days!) so evidence again, that the poor man is taking the full front of the cuts.

Complain about this comment
* 42. At 12:34pm on 03 Feb 2011, Toothpick Harry wrote:

Can someone tell me, when the railways were privatised the people that bought them were private companies so there was no need for the state to subsidise them. So, why are we now in the position where the government are putting up funds to by new rolling stock? And tell me, when corporations and local councils sold off their public services to the private sector it was supposedly to create more competition and better services, where are they. It's o.k. if you live in a city, plenty of transport although you get screwed when you use them. Out in the country where wages are rock bottom, where people really can't afford to run a car but have to or they wouldn't be able to get to work, or get to the shopping parks for essentials or socialise, we have councillors saying they will have to cut services to save mone. No, no, no you greedy parasites, if you need to save money you save by cutting out all your excess that you've been treating yourselves to over the years. Transport is a vital part of the countries infrastructure, it's not yours to play about with, council tax payers don't pay their obscene taxes to keep you lot in luxury.

Complain about this comment
* 43. At 12:34pm on 03 Feb 2011, Nakor wrote:

If they want to cut bus services cut the local town and city loops. The ones that run every 10-15 mins in a small circuit with next to no people on. Put on more services at peak times for commuters by all means but through the day day you can easily have less.

In our area only the rural routes appear to be subsidised and to cut those would definately be harsh.

Complain about this comment
* 44. At 12:36pm on 03 Feb 2011, Bob wrote:

The majority of "Local" bus services are run by three international bus operators, none of which pay full UK taxes as they are headquartered overseas. As these are private enterprises they have to make profits for their foreign owners. They have carved up the UK amongst themselves yet our local councillors and quango Passenger Transport Authorities have done nothing to break the chain because they will lose out on their own lucrative behind the scene deals.

Until this situation is changed by law then the travelling public will continue to be ripped off and continue to suffer worsening services. It is interesting to note that the very people who would benefit the most from improved services ie pensioners and other elderly are very apathetic. They could help change the system by exercising their voting rights in the May
local elections against the very councillors who do nothing except pocket allowances and expenses whilst sitting on Transport Committees.

Complain about this comment
* 45. At 12:37pm on 03 Feb 2011, Boz Scaggs wrote:

31. At 12:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, Tio Terry wrote:
19. At 12:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, Brianlancashire wrote:
   Buses are not important to me - however they are heavily used by those which this government is determined to neglect - namely the young and the elderly.

As it's your local council that has taken the decision to reduce services (assuming it has) it's not central governments fault.

But where do you think the local authority gets the money from in the first place (or rather doesn't get it due to cuts in LA funding)? Central government, my friend. All council tax and local business rates collected by LAs goes to central government who then decide how much to return in the form of grants. If central govt cut the grants the LA has no choice but cut services. A neat way for central govt to pass the buck making it appear to be the fault of you local authority. And a ruse you've swallowed hook line and sinker. Dave must be delighted!

Complain about this comment
* 46. At 12:39pm on 03 Feb 2011, Rajiva wrote:

Since the time when road tax was introduced succesive governments have squandered and wasted the revenue earned. Brain dead politicians with their equally dead civil servants have ripped and ruined all forms of transports (trams, railways etc). The last tory government under Mrs T advocated everything would be done by road and sold off the railways that we the people of this country owned to maverick who ruined the railwaysnetwork. What little road we have left are full of pot holes thanks to successive government not spending the revenue they earned on repairs etc. Having killed everything else this government now wants to kill the only life line left to millions who rely on some form of transport -fine go ahead kill this as well - that way no one will be able to work, no work will be there the economy would be dead, perhaps the bankers will find a way to subsidise us all including the MP@S fat pay cheques!!

Complain about this comment
* 47. At 12:40pm on 03 Feb 2011, Chris wrote:

Correctly managed and timetabled, buses could be a valuable mode of travel. Sadly, the timetables in my area (we are on the Liverpool-St Helens route) are very badly organised. So-much-so
that I have seen 3 buses arrive within the space of 5 minutes of each other, then no bus for 2 hours!!

As a consequence I steer clear of public transport and use my car/taxis. Buses and trains are too unreliable. Yet they never were when I was young!! Progress!!!

Complain about this comment
* 48. At 12:41pm on 03 Feb 2011, gee4444 wrote:

11. At 11:57am on 03 Feb 2011, Monogram wrote:
Now ther is a surprise, instead of cutting the thousands of non-jobs created by NU-labour councils have decided to cut services to the you, the elderly and the vulnerable. Thre is no necessity to cut bus routes. Aren't local and central government alwasy bleating we should use public transport to help the environment, when it comes to non-jobs and cuts the necessary services are the first to go. No change there then.

-----------------------------------------

I see you're adopting the Tory handbook guide to blame local councils for cuts and absolve central government of all responsibility. Well done, Cammers will be proud.

Anyway, a lot of these rural bus services are not cost efficient. Why should I as a tax payer fund a service which isn't utilised efficiently? (I've been waiting to say that for ages).

So a few people may have to walk 40 miles to and from the shops, it's all part of 'we're all in this together'. As value for money is the mantra bleated out by the HYS Tory fans then surely they have nothing to complain about. You'll just have to suck it up like the rest of us.

If it's party led council decisions you'd like to discuss then may I offer up Surrey - Tory controlled - cuts per person of approx 9 pounds per head. A Labour council in the North East has a rate of 80 pounds approx cut per person. Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. Interesting.

Complain about this comment
* 49. At 12:41pm on 03 Feb 2011, Neil wrote:

@WiseOldBob...

I ride a motorbike. I pay for road tax, insurance and MOT's and I think you'll find I can ride it in the Dales whenever I like.

Complain about this comment
* 50. At 12:42pm on 03 Feb 2011, rossburman wrote:

Public transport is vital to any country. It is a green solution to road overcrowding and creates an efficient means by which the country's economy is kept moving.

[Type text]
Unfortunately, public transport in this country is an absolute joke. At the age of 35, I finally learnt how to drive last year after finally having enough of the poor, untrustworthy, over expensive service. I live in London. I know from experience that as soon as you leave the M25 you haven't a hope.

I believe that the rot set in during privatisation. Just because the Government at the time couldn't run the system does not mean that every Government cannot run the system. You only have to cross the channel to find efficient and well run public transport systems.

Public transport will never make money (and shouldn't) and at the moment we are paying through the nose to line the pockets of someone not doing their job.

Complain about this comment
* 51. At 12:43pm on 03 Feb 2011, scotty1694 wrote:

This comment was removed because the moderators found it broke the House Rules.
* 52. At 12:43pm on 03 Feb 2011, frankiecrisp wrote:

I stopped using public transport when Thatcher sold it off to her friends in the private sector.

Complain about this comment
* 53. At 12:44pm on 03 Feb 2011, MizzJShaw wrote:

Both my local bus and train services are very important to me as I live in the London suburbs and public transport is the only option when moving around London. I have given up driving because it is too expensive and I only used the car once in a while. My groceries are delivered, as is most of my purchases, the majority ordered online, so no need for a car. All my family work in the City of London so have to use public transport, driving around London is HELL, and I can't think of any sane person, except bus drivers and delivery people that would do it. My only complaint is that the cost of public transport is too high, when most buses and trains are overcrowded and uncomfortable. Sadley, we have no choice in the matter other than NOT work in the City.

Complain about this comment
* 54. At 12:44pm on 03 Feb 2011, TheBigBrownDog wrote:

After an eye operation over the festive period I wasn't able to drive. It normally takes me about 25 minutes to get to work but about three hours in a bus and a very long walk. It's great fun walking over the Forth Road Bridge in the pitch black on ice and snow - or I could have waited about an hour for a bus.....

I don't get buses very often primarily because drivers are often surly and unpleasant and the buses themselves are filthy.
I empathise with those who have to use them to get to where they want to go but it certainly is a very last resort for me.

Complain about this comment
* 55. At 12:44pm on 03 Feb 2011, TruthBot wrote:

I rarely use buses personally, but cutting bus services would be extremely irresponsible when the government is allegedly trying to get more people using public transport! This is the classic situation that never changes - what the government does with one hand is undone by its other hand! This is an example, and one of many, of this fundamental failure of our political system.

Complain about this comment
* 56. At 12:46pm on 03 Feb 2011, Farquhar wrote:

My village has 2 buses per day, which says everything about rural public transport. So we all get in our 4x4's for the commute across single track snow/ice covered roads and pay 3 times the road tax of anyone else. Nice.

Complain about this comment
* 57. At 12:50pm on 03 Feb 2011, Rational Viewpoint wrote:

I've seen both extremes of this: I used to live in a village in cambridgeshire - there was, literally, one bus a week, on a thursday to the supermarket, coming back a couple of hours later. No good for anyone and hence, rarely used other than by a few pensioners for whom it was probably their only link. People complained that its not convenient to use, they have to own a car anyway, so they use that.

I moved to Scotland, to a similarly sized village, and there is literally a bus passing through every 15-30 minutes from 6am to midnight. Its frequent, convenient and probably costs the taxpayer a fortune to keep running. The busiest services have rarely got any more than 8 or 10 people on it though, and quite often picks no-one up. People complain that its not convenient to use, they have to own a car anyway, so they use that....

I've come to the conclusion that it doesn't matter how frequent the busses are, people will always complain and find a reason not to use them. It won't make a lot of difference to those who already own a car... like most of us.

Personally, I think its the stigma and the experience. Civic busses are fairly hateful things - uncomfortable, noisy and really not much cheaper than the cost of petrol or diesel if you want to drive.

The public sector takes a very simplistic attitude to public transport. If there is a service between point A and point
B, it is relatively frequent and costs no more than driving, then people should use it.

Wrong. It take no account and places no value on the comfort and convenience of using a car which is being paid for whether you use it or not. The only variable cost (and therefore the only relevant benchmark cost) is of fuel and parking. People place a very high value on the comfort and convenience of their own car. So this has to be matched, or the service price discounted sufficiently to make the bus an attractive alternative.

Being someone who commuted to London for a time, I would go as far as to say I would choose which train service to travel on based on the specific rolling stock being used. 75 minutes in a cramped, worn out and uncomfortable carriage was not appealing, so I chose to work slightly longer so I could travel on a train that was more modern, more spacious and comfortable.

Make civic busses warm, comfortable, more of an 'experience' and half the price and it would tempt me.

For example, the X5 coach between Oxford and Cambridge is a great service and used a lot for hopping between villages on the route. I do it quite often, but I wouldn't even consider it if it was operated with a typical civic bus.

Complain about this comment
* 58. At 12:50pm on 03 Feb 2011, John Mc wrote:

I drive a car and so many will think it is unimportant to me however I take the bus everyday and so does my wife. The buses are clean and although sometimes full are always on time. The bustops have LED signs on them that tell you when the bus is arriving first at what time and as the time gets closer in minutes as a countdown.

The prices are good, the scedule is linked to others and we get about great.

My wife uses a bus to the underground and gets her connection at the same time everyday without fail.

The car I have to use to get home as we live in Hamburg now, yes Germany where the bus service is not privatised and the focus is on getting people to where they need to be. Yes you have to walk a little to and from bus stops but it is not far to offices and shops. The buses all tilt to allow the infirm to get on and wheelchair access.

When we come to the UK there is no relaible local service, the bus that my daughter has to get, because Daddy is in Germany, is hardly ever on time, twice as expensive as the equiveltant ride in Germany, filthy, noisy and generally running on roads that require a lot of work. This bus service, due to earlier government policies, is privatised.

I have found a similar high level of service in Holland as well, the trams are excellent if in Amsterdam.
The UK privatised, profits are made on main routes so others are scrapped.

I know which I prefer....ps you can even borrow books on some German buses and put them back next time you are on the bus and guess what nobody destroys them or fails to replace, in fact we have even contributed books after watching another passenger doing the same.

Nationalisation and increased routes may be the only way to get people out of cars. It works for me.

Complain about this comment
* 59. At 12:51pm on 03 Feb 2011, Alasdair Campbell wrote:

One could be forgiven for believing that local councils are deliberately making the sort of cuts that will 'punish' or even de-stabilise the Coalition Government. I would prefer to see more Councils cutting their top executive salaries first, but we hear very little news about that! Many Councils defend their decisions by merely saying that it is not their fault and that blame should rest solely with the Coalition Government - not an edifying spectacle. After all, the huge national debt has to be paid off somehow and we were all warned about it before the General Election. Or is it that the public are in favour of cut backs so long as they do not affect them!

Complain about this comment
* 60. At 12:52pm on 03 Feb 2011, Ben wrote:

39. At 12:32pm on 03 Feb 2011, forclarification wrote:

I blame Thatcher!

Do I get a prize?
---------------------
I there were prizes for blaming other parties, David Cameron would be swamped with them!

Complain about this comment
* 61. At 12:52pm on 03 Feb 2011, gee4444 wrote:

29. At 12:18pm on 03 Feb 2011, in_the_uk wrote:
Buses are important for people who cant drive. I have no sympathy for people who wont drive (such as my partner) because driving is a necessary life skill. People need it, the economy needs it and everyone relies on on drivers even if they dont drive.

The public transport system cant compete with having your own car. The freedom and possibilities opened up to people is amazing

-----------------------------------------------
Many people simply can't afford to drive. Have you any idea how much it costs for a teenager to insure a car in the UK? And what about pensioners who are physically unable to drive now? At least Cammers has promised to initiate a fuel regulation fairness system (or whatever he calls it) - but it is afterall a promise from Cammers - so we all know that will never happen.

Then there's the pollution caused by cars. Does this have no bearing on your comments?

The public transport system became a disaster after it was deregulated. Once profit became the priority then standards slipped and people switched to using cars as a more enjoyable form of transport. Myself included.

I'd suggest we renationalise public transport and provide a service worthy of a developed Western country, something similar to the French model would suffice.

Complain about this comment
* 62. At 12:52pm on 03 Feb 2011, Dancin Pagan The Mad Kiltie wrote:

It's confirmed then, this Tory Government is finishing off what the previous Tory Government started.

Why should local Councils have to subsidise a service which was privatised by the Tories under the mantra of - Private Industry will always do it better. Councils have been picking up the pieces of the disaster left from the public transport privatisation, now they are getting their money cut by this Tory Government, something has to give.

If privatisation was such a great idea, why is public transportation in such a mess, would anyone argue against the assertion that it is much, much worse than it was before privatisation, buses & trains.

My experience and obviously many others from reading this HYS, is that the current bus service is abysmal whether subsidised or not.

Looks like they are now going to force the poorer sections of society to get on their bike, except it will not just be to look for non-existent jobs, it will mean the elderly cycling to hospital / doctors appointments etc.

Complain about this comment
* 63. At 12:53pm on 03 Feb 2011, John Mc wrote:

39. At 12:32pm on 03 Feb 2011, forclarification wrote:

I blame Thatcher!

Do I get a prize
As it was the right answer you go through to the next
HYS!!

Complain about this comment
* 64. At 12:53pm on 03 Feb 2011, Moderator Friendly
Unoffensive Display Name wrote:

*chuckle* i drive. and if i don't drive i cycle. Why on
earth would i get a bus?

Imagine standing around outside waiting an unknown time for
a vehicle that may be too packed to stop? Where are these stops
anyway?
Imagine having to pay ever increasing fares for short
distances? How about not getting a seat. nevermind the logistics
of shopping. Oh, the practicality of public transport!

Of course, as mentioned, in cities you may get a bus more
often but otherwise, they dont really turn up frequently enough.
I'm not even going to mention what time services stop in the
evening.. oh, dammit, i mentioned it!

Scrap busses altogether - safer for cyclists and less
congestion in town centres

Complain about this comment
* 65. At 12:54pm on 03 Feb 2011, anotherfakename wrote:

There are huge problems here:
  a) 'Today' interviewed Cambridge council - the one that has
just squandered millions on ripping up a serviceable railway,
knocking down several stations and replacing it with a concrete
'guided busway' which is STILL not open somewhere around 2 years
late. This squandering of money is at the root of many problems.
It would have cost about 15% to have reinstated the track fully
and turned it into a less poluting electric tram system - the
current system still has diesel busses for heavens sake!
  b) Cambridge/Suffolk cancelled the bus I used to use for
work. The reasoning - they reckoned it cost 100,000 a year in
subsidy - when you consider that there were about 20 people who
used this minibus regularly it seems incredible - it wasn't a
new bus every year and the driver didn't wear rolex! Someone
somewhere was taking a huge rip off, far more than the cost of
the service that is for certain.

Complain about this comment
* 66. At 12:54pm on 03 Feb 2011, Aneeta Trikk wrote:

#8 richardjackson99 says "I refuse to use public transport
- it's inconvenient, rarely on time and overcrowded. I'd rather
walk, or stay at home, if I can't afford to drive myself."
First question is how do you know public transport "is inconvenient, rarely on time, and overcrowded" if you do not use it? And of course there is a massive lack of investment - people cannot afford it after maintaining their "convenient little 'green' motor". However for some a car is not a viable alternative - how do you think these people cope or don't you care?

Complain about this comment

* 67. At 12:55pm on 03 Feb 2011, Tio Terry wrote:

38. At 12:31pm on 03 Feb 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:
31. At 12:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, Tio Terry wrote:
19. At 12:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, Brianlancashire wrote:

Buses are not important to me - however they are heavily used by those which this government is determined to neglect - namely the young and the elderly.

As it's your local council that has taken the decision to reduce services (assuming it has) it's not central governments fault.

As it is central government that has CUT council incomes, moreso the poorer councils with HIGH use of buses due to unaffordability of cars, then it is FACTULLY CORRECT that government is more GREATLY responsible as their policies are basically to rob the masses of income and wealth in preference of maintaining and supporting those who are RESPONSIBLE for our atrocious economic/financial and social DESTRUCTION.

Just out of interest, why do you always find it neccessary to shout (use of capital letters) in your posts? If you read the house rules you will see you should not do it.

Firstly I don't care which political tribe is in power, they are all useless so far as I am concerned, there's no such thing as an honest politician.

All councils are facing cuts - like most lots of others - and there's no reason for them to be exempted. How the councils chose to apply those cuts is up to them. Labour run councils will do their utmost to discredit the national government because it's not their tribe. It would still be the same if the Labour tribe were in power, the non Labour tribes would do exactly the same thing. The whole lot of them are corrupt, none of them put the good of the Country first, just themselves.

As yourself the question, why have some councils decided to make these cuts but not others? There's more than one way to reduce spending, get your council to explain why they made their choices, pound to a penny most will be because ideology, not because it's the best thing for the country.
68. At 12:55pm on 03 Feb 2011, forclarification wrote:

But where do you think the local authority gets the money from in the first place (or rather doesn't get it due to cuts in LA funding)? Central government, my friend. All council tax and local business rates collected by LAs goes to central government who then decide how much to return in the form of grants.

Your understanding of local authority funding is wrong. Council tax normally accounts for about 25% of LA revenue and is raised and expended locally, it doesn't go to central government.

69. At 12:56pm on 03 Feb 2011, sixpackerL wrote:

Now there is a surprise, instead of cutting the thousands of non-jobs created by NU-labour councils have decided to cut services to the you, the elderly and the vulnerable. There is no necessity to cut bus routes. Aren't local and central government always bleating we should use public transport to help the environment, when it comes to non-jobs and cuts the necessary services are the first to go. No change there then.

Ahh the mythical non-job argument.

I know many public sector workers who work flat out all day doing the most hideous of jobs, bringing work home, stressed to the eyeballs.

Please list a few of these non-jobs, or is it just the usual Tory bull...

70. At 12:57pm on 03 Feb 2011, Starry Eyed And Laughing wrote:

Buses are important for people who can't drive. I have no sympathy for people who won't drive (such as my partner) because driving is a necessary life skill. People need it, the economy needs it and everyone relies on drivers even if they don't drive.

The public transport system can't compete with having your own car. The freedom and possibilities opened up to people is amazing

If I understand your argument correctly.
Then we should cut public transport in order to force people to drive in their own cars, because that would provide more tax revenue to the government.

I can understand Mr Osborne thinking this way, especially as it’s about to snow.

But any sane person would be arguing for the opposite, increase public transport to reduce the cars on the road.

Complain about this comment

* 71. At 1:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, ProbMan wrote:

Having lived in London for years, I got used to the fact that driving was something I could do without during the week. Bus services were regular & I could get to most places fairly easily - as long as I could put up with often drunk & abusive passengers - even during the morning rush-hour. But if I wanted to see a friend, 20 miles away (outside London), I had to drive as the journey by public transport was almost 3 hours.

Now I'm living back in the countryside, I have no choice to use public transport. My wife & I work in different directions, the 20 minute journey to work is not covered by any route for either of us, so we both drive.

Cutting back on local bus services will however have an impact on us. Where people still need to make their journeys, they'll be forced to drive. More cars on the road, more congestion, more duty for the government.

Complain about this comment

* 72. At 1:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, forclarification wrote:

If it's party led council decisions you'd like to discuss then may I offer up Surrey - Tory controlled - cuts per person of approx 9 pounds per head. A Labour council in the North East has a rate of 80 pounds approx cut per person. Hmmmhmmmhmmmhmmmhmmm. Interesting.

Hmmmhmmmhmmmhmmmhmmm, interesting indeed. Or maybe the council in Surrey is better managed and less wasteful............

Complain about this comment

* 73. At 1:02pm on 03 Feb 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

There is a fully private bus system where I live. Unlike the horrible, wasteful part-public funded rail services, this is a brilliant counterpart to the cheaper but less comfortable council-run buses.
It is a little more expensive, but it is comfortable (leather seats!), reaches very far from the city centre and shows that public and private services should exist alongside each other, not in a hideous public funded, privately run amalgamation where taxpayers line shareholder's pockets.

Having said that, I do not believe public buses should end. They serve their place as the cheap option, a public service available to all, and force private companies not to charge extortionate prices without competition.

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Nice to separate and conquer.

The FACT is, is that bus services are NOT just shorter urban journeys but also include inter-city and town to town journeys.

Upon personally searching for certain inter-city bus/coach and train travel costs I found that the ONCE great difference in prices has mainly been destroyed. Where coach travel used to be substantially lower than train travel in many instances the difference in price is endemically negligible.

Much of this has come about by train companys and coach companys now being one and the same and them gaining a near monopoly of routes and travelling and also via cross business monopolistic pricing structures.

I know of previous journeys which had a coach and train price difference of around £25.00 the difference has now reduced to around £4.00/£6.00.

However, local and regional transport minister Norman Baker argued that while he accepted the funding settlement was "challenging", most bus services would not be affected.

What MUPPET Norman Baker does NOT mention is that it is the SPECIFIC services which reach smaller communitys and off peak services which are being targetted for CUTS.

Hence NORMAL day to day life and activity for a GREAT number of people is being not just cut, but ATTACKED in a way which undermines the WHOLE structure of lives and FREEDOMS.

Its basically like closing down motorways or restricting numbers of vehicles allowed to utilise them during off peak hours.

I ask, HOW is our societys economy going to grow in a way that meets changing needs etc, which ENABLES LESS PEAK time travel and meets needs and growth of FLEXIBLE working hours and ESSENTIALLY PART TIME WORK if the transport structure which even at its present levels PROVIDES such flexibility is thus DESTROYED.
TRANSPORT structures are an ESSENTIAL ingredient of economic growth, yet instead of maintaining that which exists it is going to be severely undermined.

Is this part of an overal plan to reduce national emissions to reach targets etc via RESTRICTING movement of the lower earnings masses via making work journeys either unaffordable or just NON-EXISTANT, thus coraling workers into a local sheep pen workforce.

Why is it that so much of that which is endemically NEEDED to facilitate economic growth, is then CUT/DESTROYED when it is MOST needed.

Maybe, with the way the economy is going and part of the scheme, government are trying to facilitate HUGE job creation via creating a playing field which enables the MASS employment of people via a RICKSHAW transport system.

Complain about this comment
* 74. At 1:02pm on 03 Feb 2011, BewilderedMark wrote:

"41. At 12:33pm on 03 Feb 2011, 5 days to go wrote:
Public transport isn't practical for me like lots of other posters. It would add an extra 1 hour on to my commute each way and its only 11 miles away! I used the train to get to work during the heavy snow and it cost over £5 for a return ticket that against £1 for each journey by car I'd be crazy not to keep driving."

You're lucky!

£5 for a return ticket of 11 miles? My commute is a similar distance - 12 minutes on the train for the princely (rip-off) sum of £7.30 for a return. Rarely are there enough seats for all the passengers and often the train is often delayed simply because of the time taken to board and alight from the short-formed train!

There's a bus service that operates almost exactly the same route, costs almost as much and usually gets stuck in rush-hour traffic. Even without traffic the route takes around 50 minutes for a distance I can drive in just under 15 minutes in the car (legally). The local buses are also owned by the same company that run the trains, so whichever 'public' option I use the cash ends up with the same shareholders!

For a while I drove into work but with the insane levels of traffic, introduction of parking charges outside my home (resident permits), the loss of subsidy on parking at work (now £7 a day) and the cost of petrol and insurance - the train is actually the best option for me!

It's a shame there aren't more public bus services like the ones I've used in Cardiff and Edinburgh. They may not have been the most luxurious forms of transport, but they were cheap and clean - and got me where I needed to go.
52. At 12:43pm on 03 Feb 2011, frankiecrisp wrote:
I stopped using public transport when Thatcher sold it off to her friends in the private sector.

Have you stopped eating food because it's all supplied through the private sector?

And, by the way, I claimed the Thatcher prize at post #39

76. At 1:05pm on 03 Feb 2011, scotty1694 wrote:

*chuckle* i drive. and if i don't drive i cycle. Why on earth would i get a bus?

Imagine standing around outside waiting an unknown time for a vehicle that may be too packed to stop? Where are these stops anyway?
Imagine having to pay ever increasing fares for short distances? How about not getting a seat. nevermind the logistics of shopping. Oh, the practicality of public transport!

Of course, as mentioned, in cities you may get a bus more often but otherwise, they dont really turn up frequently enough. I'm not even going to mention what time services stop in the evening.. oh, dammit, i mentioned it!

Scrap busses altogether - safer for cyclists and less congestion in town centres

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yes i can just see it now,
people with broken legs, lost limbs or just being over 60 cycling round with no problems.

MEMEMEMEME

this country is a disgrace to the human race!
the individual selfishness in England is pathetic.

I use buses very often, although the service is better and more frequent than many years ago the prices are extortionate. If I am with my friend and we are travelling to town we get a taxi door to door because it is cheaper then both of us getting the bus for a 5 minute trip.
If they want to get people to travel by bus they need to make them cheaper and more regular. Its just hypocrisy by our gov. they want us to travel by bus or public transport to save the environment but make the fares so expensive people cannot afford even to go to work its a joke on us i think.

Complain about this comment
* 78. At 1:06pm on 03 Feb 2011, Lee Brown wrote:

In remote rural areas the local bus is a lifeline to many isolated villages and small towns. These are precisely the areas that stand to lose many of their bus services. It's all very well to say that everyone should have a car if they live in such places but many are elderly people who are unable or cannot afford to drive. Many less well off people rely on the bus for work, shopping and hospital trips as well as taking their children to school.

There are alternatives to subsidising full size buses running half empty though...Many communities have their own minibuses not used for parts of the day which could be used for some scheduled public transport functions at minimal cost...This needs to be explored more. I believe that money can be saved without neccessarily having to cut rural bus services.

Complain about this comment
* 79. At 1:08pm on 03 Feb 2011, anotherfakenname wrote:

Several problems around here (apart from the money wasting I've sent in another post).
We are close to a county border, appears that the two councils are unable to sort out how to get busses running from one county to the other.
I work on the edge of a major city - on one of the countries largest 'science parks' yet the bus service (such as it is) from my town goes into the city centre (through all the traffic jams) and then I have to change to another bus and fight through more traffic jams to get out to the edge.
Were the busses from out of town to circulate around the various park and rides dropping people off - and avoiding the queues for town - then the passengers could swap to a town based service from those stops. But no, no one seems able to think of such solutions.

Complain about this comment
* 80. At 1:08pm on 03 Feb 2011, Wayne wrote:

Before they think about cutting bus services why don't they think about cutting the 'bosses' in the public sector?
I have a friend who works in a 2 man team (was 4 but due to 'cuts' they had to get rid of some people) now this 2 man team has 6 direct managers to answer to. Can someone do the maths on this for me because I am confused! Keeping 6 managers on a high salary but justifying by cutting 2 low paid jobs?
So now because of the short sightedness of the government good ole' Doris at number 32 has to suffer because she can't get
to the shops to buy life’s little luxuries like toilet paper, bread and milk as her bus service has been removed! It makes me sick to my stomach to think there are people who would let this happen just to save a few pence.

Complain about this comment
* 81. At 1:08pm on 03 Feb 2011, MrWonderfulReality wrote:

As much as you can possibly avoid them, WHY would you use public transport.

They are germ/virus infested, spreading all and sundry onto those who travel upon them.

Might as well just eat peanuts from a bowl next to the toilets in a pub/bar.

Complain about this comment
* 82. At 1:10pm on 03 Feb 2011, sixpackerL wrote:

59. At 12:51pm on 03 Feb 2011, Alasdair Campbell wrote:
One could be forgiven for believing that local councils are deliberately making the sort of cuts that will ’punish’ or even de-stabilise the Coalition Government. I would prefer to see more Councils cutting their top executive salaries first, but we hear very little news about that! Many Councils defend their decisions by merely saying that it is not their fault and that blame should rest solely with the Coalition Government - not an edifying spectacle. After all, the huge national debt has to be paid off somehow and we were all warned about it before the General Election. Or is it that the public are in favour of cut backs so long as they do not affect them!

Things must be bad, even the Tory and LibDem councils are trying to destabilise the coalition....

Yeah - have to agree, people were very gullible in the last election.. some even believed Nick Clegg...

Complain about this comment
* 83. At 1:11pm on 03 Feb 2011, Chris mather wrote:

Just the latest in a very long line of special interest groups campaigning about public sector cut backs. Get real!

The last Government dug this country into a huge financial black hole (or should that be red hole???). The annual public finance deficit is very large, and the accumulated debt is huge. Cuts in expenditure HAVE to be made ... no ifs, buts or maybes.

So, if the arts budget isn't cut, school building programme isn't cut, local authority spending isn't cut, police budget aren't cut, subsidised bus services aren't cut, or any of the dozens of other areas of public spending aren't cut, where should the axe fall?
Come on all you campaigners. If your special interest is saved from cuts, where else should the savings be made?

Tax the bankers more perhaps? Either that will yield a very small amount (too few of them), or the tax rates will be so draconian as to drive most of the best talent into the arms of our competitors. It's happened before.

Complain about this comment
* 84. At 1:14pm on 03 Feb 2011, shillo wrote:

I have lived in central, suburban and rural areas during my working life and as a regular public transport user can confirm that without public transport rural unemployment levels could shoot through the roof. Many workers on low pay will be unable to travel to work.

The upward pressure on fuel prices will only exacerbate the situation. 'B' roads and country lanes are going to be put under more traffic pressure.

In these days of austerity this is one area which needs to avoid cuts.

It surprises me that the Countryside Alliance and Haulage Contractors aren't out blockading the streets as they did for what they perceived to be unfair legislation under the Labour Administration.

Are we only now seeing where their true loyalties lie?

Complain about this comment
* 85. At 1:14pm on 03 Feb 2011, Wideboy wrote:

Maybe the councils will remove the bus lanes that filter traffic to one lane despite only being 1 bus every 15 minutes. This could be an interesting experiment on traffic flow to see how it improves.

Complain about this comment
* 86. At 1:15pm on 03 Feb 2011, Awld divil wrote:

I wouldn't be seen dead on public transport. But if buses keep the riff raff off the roads then they are a good thing.

Complain about this comment
* 87. At 1:17pm on 03 Feb 2011, lordpoppy wrote:

We hear so much about public spending cuts but nothing about Council tax or any other tax cuts, why not?? If the bus service and other services are being taken away we should be paying less tax. "We are all in this together".

Complain about this comment
* 88. At 1:17pm on 03 Feb 2011, shillo wrote:

Alasdair Campbell wrote:
One could be forgiven for believing that local councils are deliberately making the sort of cuts that will 'punish' or even de-stabilise the Coalition Government. I would prefer to see more Councils cutting their top executive salaries first, but we hear very little news about that! Many Councils defend their decisions by merely saying that it is not their fault and that blame should rest solely with the Coalition Government - not an edifying spectacle. After all, the huge national debt has to be paid off somehow and we were all warned about it before the General Election. Or is it that the public are in favour of cut backs so long as they do not affect them!

=================================================================

It may have escaped your notice but there are more Tory Councillors than any other Party. If you take NOC Councils out of the equation I believe you'll find that a lot of the councils are lead by Tories.

Got to keep the serf's at home on low wages.

Complain about this comment
* 89. At 1:17pm on 03 Feb 2011, devonsongbird wrote:

I now live in the middle of Exeter and can walk most places. However, I also frequently use the bus for longer trips. At present Devon is generally extremely well served by a good network of reliable bus routes. This is absolutely vital in a county that is both very rural and has a higher than national average age population. I do have a car, at the moment, used about once a week. There are many that cannot afford a car given that motoring (especially fuel) costs are so high. The loss of bus links can only speed the decline of rural areas.

Complain about this comment
* 90. At 1:17pm on 03 Feb 2011, drcarol wrote:

I'm lucky, I live within walking distance of work - although there is a bus service, I rarely use it unless the weather is really bad. However, outside of town these services are a lifeline - not everyone can afford to run a car or is fit enough to cycle.

What strikes me though, is that there will be a developing cycle of people losing their jobs, with cuts in housing benefits many people will have to move out of towns, and then cuts in transport services mean they can't get to work when things look up again and they find a job. Also with these severe increases in the cost of fuel, many people are going to find it harder and harder to keep a vehicle on the road. There's no joined up thinking to many of these decisions, for example how much does it cost to transport patients to hospital appointments, if public transport is bad.

[Type text]
To those of you who complain about the state of public transport and say you wouldn't use it, just think on. Everything in the garden may be rosy at the moment, but what if you lost your job? What if you become too old or ill to drive/cycle?

A decent public transport system is necessary to any civilised country. I don't care who cut what service or when - some adult thinking on what necessary services are needs to take place.

Complain about this comment
* 91. At 1:20pm on 03 Feb 2011, in_the_uk wrote:

61. At 12:52pm on 03 Feb 2011, gee4444 wrote:

Many people simply can't afford to drive. Have you any idea how much it costs for a teenager to insure a car in the UK? And what about pensioners who are physically unable to drive now? At least Cammers has promised to initiate a fuel regulation fairness system (or whatever he calls it) - but it is afterall a promise from Cammers - so we all know that will never happen.

Then there's the pollution caused by cars. Does this have no bearing on your comments?

The public transport system became a disaster after it was deregulated. Once profit became the priority then standards slipped and people switched to using cars as a more enjoyable form of transport. Myself included.

I'd suggest we renationalise public transport and provide a service worthy of a developed Western country, something similar to the French model would suffice.

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Your right about the costs being restrictive and cheaper fuel would allow more people to drive and so produces a lot of benefits to our economy. Buses are worthless to our economy and while they can be improved, the improvement will never rival cars.

As for pollution you point out a serious problem. Buses are very inefficient and wasteful. A car travels from A to B which cuts travel time drastically. A bus is only efficient for the few times in the day that they are full. Otherwise it is pushing more pollution than cars!

Maybe a new system could be developed to remove buses but promote people giving lifts. With home delivery and home visits from doctors there is a vast improvement for people struggling to reach the shops. And so with cheaper driving costs this could be made even more accessable!

If you want to fix pollution problems then you will be campaigning against windfarms and electric cars.

[Type text]
Also there is the possibility of solar panels on the moon which could support our global need without pollution. Only heard about it yesterday (BBC program on IPlayer) but sounds interesting.

However relying on the public transport model without realising how much it costs for the vast amount of waste, maybe we would be better off subsidising home bound people using taxi's

Complain about this comment
* 92. At 1:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, LesC wrote:

Aren't we paying carbon taxes for precisely this kind of thing? I seem to remember that this was one of the reasons why they were introduced, this and saving the polar bears from the reports by both the BBC and ITV from icebreakers in the Arctic a few years back. If not then are green taxes now going to be just another cash cow for the Treasury?

Complain about this comment
* 93. At 1:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, sd wrote:

SOME form of public transport is necessary, but buses clearly are not fit for purpose, especially in rural areas (or people would use them) and haven't been for years. It would make sense if local people were allowed to organise their own service (Big Society!!), using their own cars, on a small profit basis. Stay at home people could run the service from home, help others out and keep a small fee without running the risk of prosecution from some local council busy body health and safety nitwit. But of course, local council's have a vested interest in keeping everything complicated, expensive and under their own control - so it won't happen any time soon.

Complain about this comment
* 94. At 1:22pm on 03 Feb 2011, Wideboy wrote:

Remember child hood obesity? The population is 50% overweight surly making people walk a few miles is a good thing, good for you, good for congestion, reduces co2 emission, better air quality and reduces the burden on the NHS.

Complain about this comment
* 95. At 1:22pm on 03 Feb 2011, corum-populo-2010 wrote:

"How important is your local bus service"? is the HYS question.

1) If you work irregular shifts in emergency services or hospitals - bus timetables are pointless. Furthermore, safety on all public transport for shift workers are unreliable and very unsafe at certain times.
2) Why do buses in rural areas have to be so huge - or is that question too obvious?
3) In fact, why do buses have to be so huge in cities too?

[Type text]
4) Smaller buses with an 'old-fashioned' bus conductor with a video cam might instill confidence of the law-abiding public to use buses more often?

5) The same could be said for the London Underground - poorly policed and under-staffed in all areas, at all times?

Video cams for staff on the London Underground. CCTV on stations is too random. Obvious cctv in all carriages would be beneficial for commuters.

Complain about this comment

* 96. At 1:24pm on 03 Feb 2011, Hugh Haddow wrote:

Local service is pointless to me. It takes me from where I am not to where I don't want to be. Park and ride service is excellent though.

Complain about this comment

* 97. At 1:24pm on 03 Feb 2011, PFC_Kent wrote:

Boz Scaggs wrote:

31. At 12:21pm on 03 Feb 2011, Tio Terry wrote:

19. At 12:01pm on 03 Feb 2011, Brianlancashire wrote:

Buses are not important to me - however they are heavily used by those which this government is determined to neglect - namely the young and the elderly.

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As it's your local council that has taken the decision to reduce services (assuming it has) it's not central governments fault.

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But where do you think the local authority gets the money from in the first place (or rather doesn't get it due to cuts in LA funding)? Central government, my friend. All council tax and local business rates collected by LAs goes to central government who thyen decide how much to return in the form of grants. If central govt cut the grants the LA has no choice but cut services. A neat way for central govt to pass the buck making it appear to be the fault of you local authority. And a ruse you've swallowed hook line and sinker. Dave must be delighted!

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Local councils don't want to cut sensibly. They want to cut that which will cause the most outcry in the hope that this will prevent any cuts at all. They still employ too many people in non-jobs, relatives of theirs on over inflated wages and pointless management. The best bit is it is blindingly obvious what they are up to and yet some people have completely fallen for it. Ed must be rubbing his little red book in delight.

Complain about this comment

* 98. At 1:27pm on 03 Feb 2011, LancashireLass wrote:
I tried a bus last week for the first time in about 12 years. I waited 25 mins in a freezing bus stop at 4.15 on a weekday. The driver was pleasant, but the jolting from the journey aggravated my sore back, and I am still feeling discomfort now.

Will I have another go. Don't think so

Complain about this comment
* 99. At 1:28pm on 03 Feb 2011, Ax010tl wrote:

1. At 11:41am on 03 Feb 2011, Mike from Brum wrote:

Not been on a bus for 20 years. Last time I used one it cost a fortune and was disgustingly unclean. The ones in Brum are poorly maintained too; many have baldy tyres. I'd rather walk (and frequently do) than have to take a West Midlands bus.

20 years ago you say..? What about now?

Complain about this comment
* 100. At 1:29pm on 03 Feb 2011, Wideboy wrote:

48. At 12:41pm on 03 Feb 2011, gee4444 wrote:
11. At 11:57am on 03 Feb 2011, Monogram wrote:

Now ther is a surprise, instead of cutting the thousands of non-jobs created by NU-labour councils have decided to cut services to the you, the elderly and the vulnerable. Thre is no necessity to cut bus routes. Aren't local and cetral government alwasy bleating we should use public transport to help the environment, when it comes to non-jobs and cuts the necessary services are the first to go. No change there then.

I see you're adopting the Tory handbook guide to blame local councils for cuts and absolve central government of all responsibility. Well done, Cammers will be proud.

Anyway, a lot of these rural bus services are not cost efficient. Why should I as a tax payer fund a service which isn't utilised efficiently? (I've been waiting to say that for ages).

So a few people may have to walk 40 miles to and from the shops, it's all part of 'we're all in this together'. As value for money is the mantra bleated out by the HYS Tory fans then surely they have nothing to complain about. You'll just have to suck it up like the rest of us.

If it's party led council decisions you'd like to discuss then may I offer up Surrey - Tory controlled - cuts per person of approx 9 pounds per head. A Labour council in the North East has a rate of 80 pounds approx cut per person. Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. Interesting.
gee4444

So what happened increases in council tax in 1997 to 2009 then? Tory areas went up by 30% in one year and 10% the next then 9% after that, it wasn't till people start to shout how unfair it is that Labour put a 5% cap (that was nice considering inflation was 2% at the time). Not all Tory voters are multi-millionaires most are normal hardworking people who work hard for social mobility.

Complain about this comment