

Hoger
Algemeen
Voortgezet
Onderwijs

20 | **02**

Tijdvak 1
Woensdag 29 mei
13.30 – 16.00 uur

Tekstboekje

In the dark

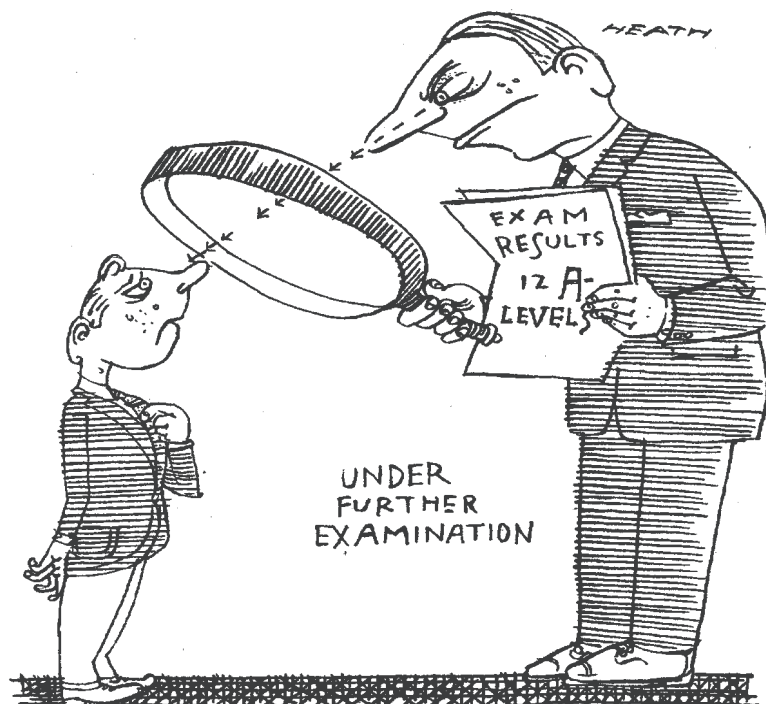
SIR — I think that your weather report, provided by the Meteorological Office (Jan. 3), surely must surpass that of Michael Fish's for the Great Hurricane, back in 1987.

It predicted for SE & Central S. England: "Early mist clearing to give sunny spells & scattered showers. A light south-easterly breeze."

This I managed to read by candlelight during a six-hour power failure and amid the sound of tiles being ripped from our roof.

RICHARD SKINNER
Puttenham, Surrey

'The Daily Telegraph', January 6, 1998



Do exams make good sense?

NIGEL WILLIAMS writes scornfully about A-level examinations in News Review: "Examination results tell us nothing about a person apart from how they performed in an exam." Just so. He overlooks the fact that examinations test performance in matters important to life outside the examination hall. Somebody who has gained a high grade in a German examination can understand spoken German and write it well.

Would Williams like to take his next flight with a pilot who has not shown, in an examination, that she or he can fly a plane safely?

Howard Bailes
St Paul's Girls' School
London W6

APART FROM knowledge of a subject matter and communication skills, doing well in a "traditional" A-level exam demonstrates that the pupil can work in a disciplined manner over a period of time and perform under pressure. (If you know your stuff you don't need Prozac.) Most companies do not require their employees to discuss the meaning of life but it does help if people are numerate and literate and able to absorb new information.

I suppose to be a journalist requires a hefty dose of imagination and creativity but should I need a hip replacement, some dental work or the services of a barrister, I shall consult someone who has passed traditional exams.

Toria Forsyth-Moser
Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire

'The Sunday Times', September 6, 1998

Comics being serious? Don't make me laugh!

1 IF YOU are reading this
with a squeaky red plastic
ball attached to the end of
your nose, then read no
5 further. You will not enjoy
what follows. Yes, I know that
this is the day set aside for
national hilarity, and I should be
laughing my head off as I reach
10 for my chequebook. But I cannot
get into the spirit of the thing.
The whole idea of Comic Relief's
Red Nose Day¹⁾ fills me with the
most profound gloom – and I 4
15 know that I am not alone.

2 Before I go any further, I
ought to set out exactly what I am
not saying. Above all, I am not
saying that people should be
20 discouraged from contributing to
the Comic Relief appeal. On
the whole, Comic Relief has
established a good and
improving record over the
25 years for supporting charities
that actually do good. It has
learnt from its mistakes.
Money given to Comic Relief is
now very much more likely to be
30 spent on relieving suffering than
is government-to-government 5
aid, which, as a pamphlet
published yesterday by the
Centre for Policy Studies makes
35 clear, has too often gone to
subsidising arms, repression and
corruption. No, most of Comic
Relief's charities are eminently
worthy causes, and the appeal
40 richly deserves everyone's
support.

3 Nor am I questioning the 6
motives of the comedians who
run the appeal. I believe that they
45 are driven by a genuine desire to
do good and not, as snide critics
suggest, just to look good. It does
not bother me that most of them
have large houses, with Ferraris
50 in the drive. All the more

understandable that they should
want to give up some of their
time and energy to helping those
less fortunate. Nor do I blame
55 other celebrities – ministers,
actors, television cooks, etc – who
have been roped in to do stupid
and embarrassing things for the
cause. If they stood on their
60 dignity and refused, the tabloids
would tear them to shreds:
“Humourless Minister Snubs 7
Starving Children”.

It is the element of moral
65 blackmail, pervading the whole
event, that stifles my laughter and
makes me feel sick. For the fact is
that preaching and comedy simply
do not mix. To be any good, a
70 preacher must be an authority-

*Money given to Comic Relief is
now very much more likely to be
spent on relieving suffering than
is government-to-government aid*

Tom Utley

figure. If a comedian is any good,
he will subvert authority.

There is no more humourless
activity than analysing what
75 makes us laugh. But subversion is
obviously the key: the
archbishop slipping on the
banana-skin; John Redwood, the
cleverest man in the last Tory
80 cabinet, opening and shutting his
mouth like a cod, pretending to
know the words of the Welsh
national anthem.

The Comic Relief comedians
85 clearly understand this point.
Year after year, they have all
looked hideously uncomfortable
when required to switch from 9
mirth to solemnity, comedian to
90 preacher, in the course of an
evening's TV show. All the
indications are that tonight's six-

hour bore-in on BBC1 will follow
the pattern of the past: Lenny
95 Henry, pulling a comic face and
putting on a silly voice in the
studio; cut to Lenny Henry in
sub-Saharan Africa, pulling a
long, solemn, caring face and
100 telling us that children are
riddled with disease here, for lack
of nothing more luxurious than
clean water.

The trouble is that we have all
105 become so conditioned to laugh-
ing when we see Lenny Henry's
face – or that of any other national
comedian – that we find ourselves
looking for laughs in all the wrong
110 places: Ho! Ho! There is good old
Lenny strutting his funky stuff in
some African village. Hang on!
That wretched child sitting
on his knee is all skin and
115 bones. This isn't funny. This
is heart-rending.

8 Britons have long been
contemptuous of the
Germans for their
120 supposed lack of a sense of
humour and their readiness to
submit to authority. Indeed, it is
easy to see Red Nose Day
rendered as an anti-German joke,
125 with an authority-figure come-
dian in charge: “Ve vill now show
you a clip of a humorous tele-
vision programme. You vill now
larff. Ve vill now show you a clip
130 of people suffering in Efrica. You
vill now cry. You vill now feel
bad zat you vere larffing a
moment ago. You vill now reach
for your chequebook.” But no
135 self-respecting German would
dare attempt such a vulgar
manipulation of the emotions.

The awful truth is that this
utterly humourless event is
140 typically British.

‘The Daily Telegraph’, March 12, 1999

noot 1

Comic Relief's Red Nose Day: annual national British charity TV campaign conducted
by comedians wearing red noses

Shop for Little Horrors

Children are not big earners or spenders. So why are television channels so keen to reach them?

BY THE time American children leave high school, they have spent more than 20,000 hours watching television – almost double the 11,000 hours they will have endured in the classroom. But, from a TV programmer's viewpoint, the American child is an exasperating and demanding beast. Children change with bewildering speed: every year at school is a different audience. 13 they are increasingly distracted by other screen-based delights, such as video games and the Internet.

All this explains why children's television has usually been treated as a Saturday morning ghetto of cartoons and clowning; and why two of the three older broadcasting networks, CBS and NBC, are now 14 their children's programming. But the other big network, ABC, now owned by Disney, is rapidly expanding its children's broadcasting. And two media moguls who seldom miss a trick, Rupert Murdoch and Ted Turner, are pouring money into childish TV projects of their own.

The reason is the cable channel, owned by Viacom: Nickelodeon. Watched on average by 1.3m two- to eleven-year-olds a day, Nickelodeon has wooed its young audience so deftly that in most weeks it has at least 40 of the top 50 shows on American basic-cable TV. "We are," boasts Jeffrey Dunn, its chief operating officer, "the fastest growing network in the United States in terms of ratings."

American children's television has lots of 15, but

Nickelodeon seems astonishingly immune. Amy Jordan, an academic who recently compiled a report on children's television, found that Nickelodeon accounted for 18 out of 75 programmes listed as "high quality", more than any other broadcaster.

The channel's magic recipe has been to see the little dears as an audience in their own right, rather than appendages of their parents. That makes sense. These days, American children 16 watch with mum: a study by Roper Starch, a consultancy, found that 32% of six- to seven-year-olds have a television in their own room, as do 50% of eight- to twelve-year-olds and 64% of thirteen- to seventeen-year-olds. So children are largely free to choose.

Resistance is futile

One reason why the moguls are now scrambling after kids is that advertisers have begun to realise how 17 they are. Douglas Zarkin of Grey Advertising, an agency that claims to place about a quarter of all children's

advertising in the United States, reckons that children aged between three and twelve control about \$47 billion of spending a year. Their own pocket money comes to \$540m; the rest, says Mr Zarkin, is "pester power".

Others produce different numbers; but all agree that the growth in the numbers of dual-income, one-child and single-parent households has increased children's 18. "If you have so little time with your children, do you want to spend it arguing over whether to go to McDonald's or Burger King?" asks Joan Chiamonte at Roper Starch. 19, McDonald's is one of the biggest spenders on advertising on children's TV.

20, children are the consumers of the next generation. One of Mr Zarkin's triumphs was to help launch Kids' Aquafresh, a children's version of the adult toothpaste. Hook them on a brand today, and with any luck they will still be using it in the middle of the next century.

But another reason for chasing children is that a channel, once created, can be sold abroad. "If you think about worldwide markets," says Lloyd Shepherd of *TVInternational*, a newsletter, "they boil down to news, business news, sports and children – and children must be the most lucrative."

Keeping the attention of the little horrors will not be easy. Apart from distractions, electronic and otherwise, 21 have to step through a minefield of regulation: even in the less-regulated United States, they have to provide a minimum amount of "educational" material. But the way children watch today will be the way adults watch tomorrow. That alone makes them a market worth chasing.



'The Economist', July 5, 1997

Preservation of Oxbridge privileges

From Mr Duncan Fallowell

Sir, In the September issue of *Oxford Today*, the official university magazine, the editorial introduction to a survey of new Oxonian MPs begins: "It is a healthy sign that the proportion of MPs educated at Oxford and Cambridge is in decline ..."

I find this death wish in one of the two most successful English institutions quite terrifying. And if the editor appears to consider the influence of Oxford on national life unhealthy, why doesn't she edit something else?

Yours faithfully,
DUNCAN FALLOWELL,
Leamington Road Villas, W11.

'The Times', November 20, 1997

EATING PEOPLE IS WRONG

So is refusal to consider scientific evidence for cannibalism

1 Cannibalism is not just a taboo diet. In the past
generation it has also become a taboo topic. That is 4
why news of *Man Corn* by Christy Turner is already
creating outrage around the campuses and
5 laboratories of the world even before it is published
in America next month. As we report today, this
controversial anthropologist has spent the past 30
years investigating cannibalism in the American
Southwest. His book provides proof for wide-
10 spread cannibalism until 400 years ago among the
Anasazi ("Ancient Enemy"), the ancestors of the
Hopi Indians. His report shocks both conventional
wisdom and political correctness. 5

2 Conventional wisdom regards the Hopi Indians
15 of Chaco Canyon in New Mexico as a great
civilisation. Their architecture and engineering are
wonders of prehistoric America. Their peacefulness
and their society with equal rights for all have
made Chaco a Mecca for followers of the New Age,
20 seeking a spirituality outside Western civilisation.
And political correctness calls cannibalism a myth, 6
invented by the European invaders in an attempt to
justify their conquest, conversion, enslavement and
genocide.

3 25 The name "cannibal" was a Spanish libel on the
natives of the Caribbean. Modern anthropology
treats the forbidden food as 99 per cent legend,
except for survival cannibalism by castaways or
survivors of an air crash. Claims have constantly
30 been made that savages and outsiders are

cannibals.

Europeans accused Africans of cannibalism, and
Africans accused Europeans of the same thing. The
Romans said that early Christians ate human flesh,
35 and the Christians said the same of the Jews. But
the sensational travellers' tales of cannibalism in
Victorian encyclopaedias have shrunk to a footnote
by their latest editions. *The Man-Eating Myth*, 1979,
an influential book by William Arens, argued that
40 there were no reliable, firsthand accounts of
cannibalism anywhere in the historical or
ethnographic record. Until now, that is.

Mr Turner's findings are unusually convincing.
His study of human bones and other remains point
45 to widespread slaughter, butchery and cooking.
Heads were used as containers to boil the brains.
Myoglobin, a protein that is found only in skeletal
and heart muscle, has been identified in coprolites
(fossilised human excrement). That could only have
50 been ingested through the bowels.

Unsurprisingly, his demonstration of
cannibalism has been met with denial and hostility.
Museums refuse to display his bones. Other
academics accuse him of everything from
55 insensitivity and racialism to obsession. Truth
must matter more than fashion in anthropology.
The ghosts of the vanished Hopi deserve a cold eye,
not a blind one.

'The Times', November 28, 1998

De onderstaande tekst is het begin van het boek The Lost Continent van de Amerikaanse schrijver Bill Bryson.

I come from Des Moines. Somebody had to.

When you come from Des Moines you either accept the fact without question and settle down with a local girl named Bobbi and get a job at the Firestone factory and live there for ever and ever, or you spend your adolescence moaning at length about what a dump it is and how you can't wait to get out, and then you settle down with a local girl named Bobbi and get a job at the Firestone factory and live there for ever and ever.

Hardly anyone ever leaves. This is because Des Moines is the most powerful hypnotic known to man. Outside town there is a big sign that says WELCOME TO DES MOINES. THIS IS WHAT DEATH IS LIKE. There isn't really. I just made that up. But the place does get a grip on you. People who have nothing to do with Des Moines drive in off the interstate, looking for gas or hamburgers, and stay for ever. There's a New Jersey couple up the street from my parents' house whom you see wandering around from time to time looking faintly puzzled but strangely serene. Everybody in Des Moines is strangely serene.

The only person I ever knew in Des Moines who wasn't serene was Mr Piper. Mr Piper was my parents' neighbour, a leering, cherry-faced idiot who was forever getting drunk and crashing his car into telephone poles. Everywhere you went you encountered telephone poles and road signs leaning dangerously in testimony to Mr Piper's driving habits. He distributed them all over the west side of town, rather in the way dogs mark trees. Mr Piper was the nearest possible human equivalent to Fred Flintstone, but less charming. He was a Shriner and a Republican – a Nixon Republican – and he appeared to feel that he had a mission in life to spread offence. His favourite pastime, apart from getting drunk and crashing his car, was to get drunk and insult the neighbours, particularly us because we were Democrats, though he was prepared to insult Republicans when we weren't available.

Eventually, I grew up and moved to England. This irritated Mr Piper almost beyond measure. It was worse than being a Democrat. Whenever I was in town, Mr Piper would come over and chide me. 'I don't know what you're doing over there with all those Limeys,' he would say provocatively. 'They're not clean people.'

'Mr Piper, you don't know what you're talking about,' I would reply in my affected English accent. 'You're a cretin.' You could talk like that to Mr Piper because (1) he *was* a cretin and (2) he never listened to anything that was said to him.

'Bobbi and I went over to London two years ago and our hotel room didn't even have a *bathroom* in it,' Mr Piper would go on. 'If you wanted to take a leak in the middle of the night you had to walk about a mile down the hallway. That isn't a clean way to live.'

'Mr Piper, the English are paragons of cleanliness. It is a well-known fact that they use more soap per capita than anyone else in Europe.'

Mr Piper would snort derisively at this. 'That doesn't mean diddly-squat, boy, just because they're cleaner than a bunch of Krauts and

Eyeties. A *dog's* cleaner than a bunch of Krauts and Eyeties. And I'll tell you something else: if his Daddy hadn't bought Illinois for him, John F. Kennedy would never have been elected President.'

I had lived around Mr Piper long enough not to be thrown by this abrupt change of tack. The theft of the 1960 presidential election was a long-standing plaint of his, one that he brought into the conversation every ten or twelve minutes regardless of the prevailing drift of the discussion. In 1963, during Kennedy's funeral, someone in the Waveland Tap punched Mr Piper in the nose for making that remark. Mr Piper was so furious that he went straight out and crashed his car into a telephone pole. Mr Piper is dead now, which is of course one thing that Des Moines prepares you for.

The old country

According to the promotional video which Her Majesty's Government inflicted on 51 representatives of Commonwealth countries yesterday, we are now part of "Britain – a young country". However, the fact is that Britain is not a young country. It is an old country. Britain was created in 1603 or 1707 – depending on whether one takes the union of the crowns or the Act of Union as being the decisive event. To call Britain a young country, therefore, is absurd especially in the company of many Commonwealth countries on whose constitutions the ink is barely dry.

The Government's "re-branding" film

showed quantities of young people but it would also be untrue to suggest that the British people are particularly young. On the contrary, we are older than ever before. Whereas in 1961 12 per cent of the population was over 65, now 16 per cent have exceeded that age. In 30 years' time, the proportion will be nearly one in four.

Mr Blair announced yesterday that "there is a new British identity". When he is talking such palpable nonsense, one can only be grateful that he did not go so far as to proclaim a "new, improved Britain".

'The Daily Telegraph', October 25, 1997



TECHNOLOGY WORTH WATCHING

E-Smart puts environmental monitoring on the spot

Engineers at the Georgia Institute of Technology have developed an environmental monitoring system that can analyse contaminants on the spot.

The system, called E-Smart, consists of sensors capable of measuring small amounts of contaminants, such as heavy metals, solvents, petroleum oil and lubricants, that are linked to data management software and hardware.

E-Smart can give a response in seconds and is sensitive enough to measure parts per billion. The sensors are expected to have applications in food safety and medical testing.

Georgia Institute of Technology:
4048943444; <http://www.gtri.gatech.edu/rco.html>

Virtual sight for a safer reality

Having watched a blind man crash into a bow-shaped cupboard his walking stick failed to detect, two Austrian students have devised a small ultrasonic scanner that alerts the wearer to obstacles ahead, *writes Marcus Gibson.*

Fitted to the upper arm, it provides protection for the "exposed" area – between the hip and head, often missed by trusty sticks. Paul Pak and Peter Weilenmann from the HTBLA engineering school in Klagenfurt say the scanner can "see" objects up to 5m away. A small motor built in the system generates a vibration to warn the user.

Virtualblindmanscane: Austria,
tel 43 664 255 9540

Vanessa Houlder

'Financial Times',
October 18, 1998

Shy dishonesty

SIR — You are understandably proud of J. Paul Getty's decision to seek British citizenship (leader, Dec. 30). There is indeed still much goodness around in these islands, and even when breaking the law Britons can do it generously and with style.

Recently, while queueing to buy non-transferable Underground tickets, my friend and I were shyly approached by a young couple. Would we like their Travelcards for nothing? This has not happened to me anywhere else in the world.

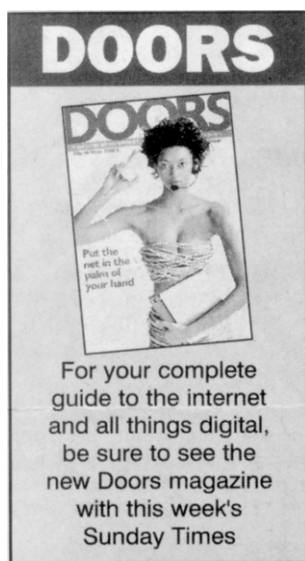
BERNARDO RECAMAN
Bogota, Colombia

*'The Daily Telegraph', January 6,
1998*

Trip-wired.com/industry secrets online

MARK HODSON turns up the sites that give you the inside track on the tourist industry. You'll never believe a brochure again...

How many travel websites are out there in cyberspace? Hundreds of thousands? Millions, maybe? And how many pages of information do they all contain? Tens of millions? Billions? It's a daunting thought, but there's no need to panic because the vast majority are irrelevant, unreliable, or both. A tiny proportion, though, are genuinely useful, publishing information that, without the net, we would probably never find. These are the sites worth tracking down: they enlighten and empower the consumer, cutting through the purple prose of the holiday brochure. Here are some of the best.



*'The Sunday Times',
October 29, 2000*

OAG GAZETTEER

www.virgin.net/travel/resortfinder/index

The OAG Gazetteer is sometimes known as the "truth book", a warts-and-all guide to resorts around the world, traditionally kept by travel agents under their desks and rarely shown to the general public. The comments on some resorts are particularly caustic. Playa de las Americas in Tenerife, for instance, is described as being "popular with the British; also, sadly, with lowlifes and drug peddlers". The contents of the book are published on Virgin's travel site.

CRUISEOPINION

www.cruiseopinion.com

Cruising is confusing — all those ships look much the same. Many travel agents also struggle to tell one from another, which is why it's worth consulting an independent database such as this. Although American, the site contains more than 4,000 ship reviews, including all the main British lines, such as Cunard and P&O. There's a guide to each line, a summary of its strong and weak points and each ship is rated out of 100 in 42 categories, based on the views of visitors to the site. Exhaustive.

HOLIDAYS UNCOVERED

www.holidays-uncovered.com

Straight from the horse's mouth — this simple home-made site allows holidaymakers to post comments, both good and bad, about popular resorts and hotels. It's a fascinating insight into the British holidaymaker — "the beer was off ... watch out for bus drivers charging full price for toddlers ... no decent bars ... kids run amok until the early hours" — and, given time, it could grow into a mine of useful information.

CHARTER AIRLINE DELAY STATISTICS

www.auc.org.uk/news/delay99.html

Every year, a performance table appears in your newspaper showing the average delays of charter airlines. You read it, throw away the paper and forget about it. Then, when you want to book a holiday, you don't know where to find the information. Here it is, compiled by the Air Transport Users Group. The figures relate to last summer and are calculated using two methods: the proportion of flights more than an hour late, and the average delay in minutes. Among the big airlines, the best performer was Britannia; the worst, Air-tours International.

THE THORN TREE

www.lonelyplanet.com/thorn tree

Say what you like about backpackers, but they do have a tremendous knowledge of obscure destinations around the world. A few years ago, they might have shared their hard-won wisdom around a campfire; today, they go to the Lonely Planet site and post it on the Thorn Tree, a giant message board. The subject categories are wide ranging, from staying healthy to using laptops; there is a women's section ("from tampons to crampons") and — of course — you can always find the address of that cheap hostel in Kathmandu.

FLY IN THE SOUP

<http://flyinthesoup.com>

This is a site for restaurant staff, many of whom seem anxious to vent their frustrations at undertipping and arrogant customers, and to reveal the errant behaviour that goes on behind the kitchen doors. The site has recently been revamped in a typical victory of style over content, but many of the stories are worth reading, with categories such as "The worst thing I ever did to a customer". I suspect some of the most gross boasts have been censored, but there is still plenty here to put you off your lunch. You might never be rude in a restaurant again!

BREEZENET'S GUIDE TO AIRPORT CAR RENTALS

www.bnm.com

The main purpose of Breezenet is to track down the cheapest car-hire deals at airports across America and Europe, a trick that it does rather well. But click around the site and you'll be presented with an easy-to-read explanation of how the car-hire business works, from drop-off charges to upgrades.

TRAVEL HELPERS

www.geocities.com/TheTropics/2442/database.html

The surest way to get the inside track on a strange city is to know someone who lives there, a friend who'll tell you which bars to visit and show you their favourite haunts. If you don't have that special person, the next best thing is a Travel Helper. This site puts travellers in contact with locals who are willing to answer e-mails and maybe even meet you for a drink. In Moscow, for instance, you can choose between Julia, who speaks English and will reply to e-mails, or Alexei, who will show you around at weekends, "preferably trips out of the city" to destinations several hundred miles outside Moscow. On second thoughts, I'm not sure I like the sound of Alexei.

BRADMANS

www.bradmans.com

So where do you turn if you don't get any joy from Julia and you don't like the sound of Alexei? Try Bradmans, a series of city guides aimed at business people but which is also handy for tourists, particularly in those out-of-the-way places. So, there is a 2,000-word essay on Moscow, with everything from a potted history to restaurant reviews.

But, because business people go just about everywhere these days, there are also reports on the sort of cities that normally only turn up in trivia questions: Ashgabat, Al Manamah and San'a. (The answers, by the way, are Turkmenistan — which, for some reason, is listed under eastern Europe — Bahrain and Yemen.)



Amnesty International
Website Against the Death Penalty

[Current Information](#)

[Documents on the Death Penalty](#)

[Other WWW Sites](#)

Facts and Figures on the Death Penalty

Last updated : 16 November 2000

1. Abolitionist and Retentionist Countries

Over half the countries in the world have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

2. Progress Towards Worldwide Abolition

More than **three** countries a year on average have abolished the death penalty for all crimes in the past decade.

Over **30** countries and territories have abolished the death penalty for all crimes since 1990. They include countries in **Africa** (examples include Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa), the **Americas** (Canada, Paraguay), **Asia** (Hong Kong, Nepal), **Europe** (Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Turkmenistan, Ukraine).

3. Moves to Reintroduce the Death Penalty

Once abolished, the death penalty is seldom reintroduced. Since 1985, over **40** countries have abolished the death penalty in law or, having previously abolished it for ordinary crimes, have gone on to abolish it for all crimes. During the same period only **four** abolitionist countries reintroduced the death penalty. One of them – Nepal – has since abolished the death penalty again; one, the Philippines, has resumed executions, but there have been no executions in the other two (Gambia, Papua New Guinea).

4. Death Sentences and Executions

During 1999, at least 1,813 prisoners were executed in 31 countries and 3,857 people were sentenced to death in 64 countries. These figures include only cases known to Amnesty International; the true figures are certainly higher.

In 1999, 85 per cent of all known executions took place in China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the USA. In China, the limited records available to Amnesty International at the end of the year indicated that at least 1,077 people were executed, but the true figure was believed to be much higher. At least 165 executions were carried out in Iran. As many as 100 people

were executed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo after being sentenced to death by a military court. In Saudi Arabia, 103 executions were reported, but the total may have been much higher. Ninety-eight people were executed in the USA. In addition, hundreds of executions were reported in Iraq, but many of them may have been extrajudicial.

5. Use of the Death Penalty Against Child Offenders

International human rights treaties prohibit anyone under 18 years old at the time of the crime being sentenced to death. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child all have provisions to this effect. More than **110** countries whose laws still provide for the death penalty for at least some offences have laws specifically excluding the execution of child offenders or may be presumed to exclude such executions by being parties to one or another of the above treaties. A small number of countries, however, continue to execute child offenders.

Six countries since 1990 are known to have executed prisoners who were under 18 years old at the time of the crime – Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, USA and Yemen. The country which carried out the greatest number of known executions of child offenders was the USA (**13** since 1990).

6. The Deterrence Argument

Scientific studies have consistently failed to find convincing evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments. The most recent survey of research findings on the relation between the death penalty and homicide rates, conducted for the United Nations in 1988 and updated in 1996, concluded: “Research has failed to provide scientific proof that executions have a greater deterrent effect than life imprisonment and such proof is unlikely to be forthcoming. The evidence as a whole still gives no positive support to the deterrent hypothesis...”

(Reference: Roger Hood, *The Death Penalty: A World-wide Perspective*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, revised edition, 1996, p. 238, paragraph 328)

7. Execution of the Innocent

As long as the death penalty is maintained, the risk of executing the innocent can never be eliminated.

Since 1973 more than **85** US prisoners have been released from death row after evidence emerged of their innocence of the crimes for which they were sentenced to death. Some had come close to execution after spending many years under sentence of death. Recurring features in their cases include prosecutorial or police misconduct; the use of unreliable witness testimony, physical evidence, or confessions; and inadequate defence representation. Other US prisoners have gone to their deaths despite serious doubts over their guilt.

The Governor of the US state of Illinois, George Ryan, declared a moratorium on executions in January 2000. His decision followed the exoneration of the **13th** death row prisoner found to have been wrongfully convicted in the state since the USA reinstated the death penalty in 1977. During the same period, **12** other Illinois prisoners had been executed.

Announcing the moratorium, Governor Ryan said: “I cannot support a system which, in its administration, has proven so fraught with error and has come so close to the ultimate nightmare, the state’s taking of innocent life... Until I can be sure that everyone sentenced to death in Illinois is truly guilty, until I can be sure with moral certainty that no innocent man or woman is facing a lethal injection, no one will meet that fate.”

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INSTRUMENT AMNESTY

A collaboration between



BBC Music Live, in collaboration with the charity the National Foundation for Youth Music, are calling an Instrument Amnesty – anyone who has a working instrument that they can spare is asked to hand it in. It could be the start of a lifelong love of music for one child, or a glittering career for another.

The idea of the Amnesty came about because of a worrying shortage of instruments available to people who desperately wanted to learn to play, and didn't have the opportunity.

The campaign was launched on 30 March and is a focal point of the BBC Music Live weekend from 25-29 May. Along with the live music broadcasts, there will be appeals on national and local TV and radio stations to alert the public to the Amnesty.

Anyone with an instrument in good condition that they'd like to pledge can call the BBC audience line or go online. Youth Music will allocate the instrument to music projects local to donors, and they will all make arrangements for the hand-over of the instrument following BBC Music Live.

To find out more or to make your pledge, call the BBC audience line on 08700 100125 or go online. All calls are charged at national rate.

GIVE IT UP

SO SOMEONE ELSE CAN TAKE IT UP

A new campaign will make sure your unwanted instrument goes to a young person who needs it...



HOW CAN I TELL IF MY INSTRUMENT IS PLAYABLE?

■ Make sure that there aren't any serious dents or other distortions of the instrument's shape that might affect the sound.

■ If you encounter tuning problems on your instrument, it does not necessarily mean it is irrevocably damaged. Strings can be changed, screws tightened, pads replaced. As long as the tuning post or plank is itself not damaged then all it probably needs is simple adjustments.

■ Check that all keys work smoothly and do not stick when depressed.

■ For more unusual instruments, and specific instruments like flutes and trumpets, you may need an expert to determine its state of repair.

STRINGS

■ Be wary of cracks on the underside of the instrument where the sound post joins the roof to its base, and also cracks directly underneath the bridge (where the pressure from the strings is greatest).

■ Cracks in other places may not be so serious.

■ Worn strings may cause the overall tuning of the instrument to wane but they are easily replaced.

PIANOS (UPRIGHT)

■ Pianos with wooden frames are more susceptible to warping – humidity and central heating can wreak havoc on them. If in doubt, get an expert to check the condition of your piano.

■ Worn keys can be replaced but the action must be in good working order.

BRASS

■ All valves and slides must be present and in good working order.

■ Check for rust – if it has gone through the metal, it can disable the instrument.

WOODWIND

■ Varnish should be intact on oboes and bassoons, as air and water can leak through the wood itself.

■ In bassoons the U-bend can be a common trouble spot – water is sometimes left there after playing.

■ With flutes, it is very hard to tell whether air is escaping due to a leak, whether it's the player, or whether it's the design. Only a repairer or experienced player can give a full picture of its condition.

Compiled by Benjamin Arnold, with thanks to Phelps, Markson Pianos, Boosey & Hawkes and Howarth's.

PLAY YOUR PART, MAKE TOMORROW'S MUSICIANS



BBC AUDIENCE LINE 08700 100 125 www.bbc.co.uk/musiclive

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