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# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

05/02/2003

Brains of Oak playing the History Men; dispute about elements in the paper

*(no title)*

A Chara,

To give notice of our appeal against defeat by The History Men on 29/01/03 on the following beach-like grounds;

- 1) An overweight brain was fielded by Ivor. This is a bantam-brained league and middle-heavyweight brains simply cannot be tolerated.
- 2) They infringed the foreign player limitation rule by fielding 3 Sassenachs. This rule must be enforced rigidly or before you know it hordes of highly-opinionated Czech ladies already massing on our easternmost borders according to my satellite will muscle their way in drinking our hard-earned beer and taking all the plum QM jobs which are our children's heritage (if we are sober enough to have any of course).
- 3) The barman was biased. He supplied the home team with mind-enhancing drugs but the stuff he sold us made us lapse into a mental torpor of half-remembrance and self-recrimination (the butterflies were pretty, though). Now I know how poor Mr Bosnich feels all of the time.
- 4) One of their players (male) threw a lascivious glance in the direction of Roisin's left ankle which was undergoing treatment for cramp at the time (West Mercian Police file attached). If this had gone off in an over-priced pub at a time when firemen's hoses were lying intermittently flaccid due to industrial inaction we could all have been engulfed in a toxic conflagration of testosterone and I just hate it when that happens.
- 5) There were leaves on our table.

See you at the Tribunal with The Chief Electric Pig presiding.

Disgruntled of Ballyboke

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

26/02/2003

Ruminations on Kevin Keegan and football after a match against Albert

*(no title)*

A Chara,

We were sitting in our communal bothy-bath last night eating gipsy-creams, smoking the odd haddock or two and generally relaxing after our hard fought Quiz victory against the sabre-toothed rabbits of the Albert when who should walk in but Father Keegan. He's our new curate but rumour has it that he won't be staying long 'cos he hates our Parish priest, Fr. Ferguson (miserable auld git) who teases him something rotten and throws wellies at him. Anyway, Fr. Keegan said he was out exorcising his demons on the Reeks and he decided to call in for a chat and a cup of Pimms Number One (almost our national drink now and originally introduced to our shores by survivors of the Swiss Armada in 1588 - that would make a good quiz question!).

Fr. Keegan has retained a boyish passion for German football and sausages and he was looking gingerly teutonic in his spanking new F.C. Hertha kit (also available on CD). He's also a terrible man for the philosophical banter. He says that when he gets depressed (frequently) he tends towards a Nietzschean Weltanschauung whereas when he gets ecstatic (less and less these days) he likes to get his rocks off on the combined works of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Hall (he's got their fanzine pickies all over the vestry). He also veers dangerously towards the Berkeleian view that if you are not visible then you don't exist. I didn't like to say "BOLLOX" in front of a priest so I agreed that this theory might be fine and dandy betimes but was it not refuted by the fact that Alf Inge Haaland is still on the Manchester City payroll and nobody's seen hide nor hair of him since he slipped in to Keano's saloon bar and bistro for a quiet glass of stout and a sun-dried potato "many moons ago" as Tonto would say if he lived on the Reeks.

Fr. Keegan got a bit defensive then - and he's not usually a defensive man - and fulminated that a prophet was never understood in his own Reek. He would have to go off and found a new Reek - a Reek that would last "fur ein Tausend Jahre". He then said he would have to go home to get a map of Poland. "Fair play to you", I said "but mind the door on your way out. It's a bit unhinged as well."

Slan from Ballyboke.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

12/03/2003 Ruminations following a Brains victory over Dr O'Neill

*(no title)*

A Chara,

They were humming in the Reeks last night as B'Oak notched up yet another mind-numbing victory, this time against Dr. O'Mengele. A result that brings them to within a weasel's whisker of achieving mediocrity! Father Megson, team mentor and sun-dried knobbly carrot lookalike, was exultant:

"Triffic, I'm absolutely supralunatic !! ", he beamed. "I've had some magic moments in the past"

(in a previous life of absolute futility Fr. Megson once led Stockport County to a first round qualifying victory in the Sherpa Vans (Northern) trophy and went on to achieve the treble with West Brom. - three back to back 1 -1 draws, one of them away from home!)

"But to lead a team to mediocrity is beyond my wildest dreams. Different class, Triffic ! It's become almost a cliché in the game these days but on this occasion 'epistemological' really is the only word to sum up our performance. In a very real-ale sense the team are more 'Sheepdip' than 'Pedigree' but they play to their strengths. There are no big names in our squad (although Roisin has 6 letters and so has Damian come to think of it!) and their knees tend to buckle after the first pint which is hardly surprising since they have a combined age of 279 but mentally they play like 6 year olds. They're willing to work their brains to the bone for you and they don't know the meaning of the word 'defeat' but they are learning fast. They moaned a bit at first when I introduced nightly Thesaurus training but they are really drawing benefit (subvention; poor relief; green giro ) from it now.

"When I first came here I, rather naively, tried getting them to play in a cavalier 'University Challenge' type formation (2 bookworms doing all the work in the middle and 2 book-ends dropping off to sleep on the wings) but they couldn't get their heads around the concept. Only the Opsimaths operate the system successfully but remember that at least half their team played together at Dukla Prague under the legendary Franz 'Kaiser' Kafka.

"I know purists throw rotten eggs at us for playing the long-shot game but at the end of the day it's a simple game for simple minds. I don't really give a fiddler's dram whether their knowledge is a posteriori or a priori just as long as they have the courage to shut their eyes and shout out something. The Braggarts have been doing this since before the war and nobody's even noticed (their complicated hand signalling has less to do with joined-up thinking than with a rare and congenital condition known as 'Holt's Palsy') and nobody has been more consistently mediocre over the years than Kieran's lot. Marvellous!"

Sports Reporter

Ballyboke Bugle

(Fr. Megson was talking to a fellow bollox)

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

19/03/2003

Ruminations following a Brains match against the Griffing Braggarts

*(no title)*

A Chara,

There's a kinda hush all over The Reeks tonight, tonight.

From my Radio Eireann bunker I can hear silence broken only by the gentle souging of the wind through the crab-apple trees and a squealing clamour of U.S. rookies as they seek to duck parboiled Spud missiles apologetically launched by the beleaguered Branch Manager of the local Tie-Rack. All this in stark contrast to the seething cauldron that was The Loyal B'Oak tavern midweek when U.N. troops stood helplessly by, powerless to prevent a bloodcurdling draw between Fr. Megson's homespun Sunni Druids and Fr. Wenger's Jesuitical Braggarts. Quarts were neither given nor asked for and in the end neither pints difference nor WPC Elizabeth Slinger could separate the teams.

In a dour and overly metaphysical game tempers and nostrils frequently flared and the usually phlegmatic Michael O' Braggart was questioned by police (he elected eventually to confer with his solicitor) when he appeared during a mutually disastrous final round to make use of the home team's willow-patterned spittoon, an incident that sparked off an ugly pitch invasion by an itinerant sloth of Babycham-crazed quiz-setters one of whom was lucky to avoid being sent home for an early night with Mrs Bath.

Fr. Megson remained tight-curl'd at the post match interview and Fr. Wenger also refused to be drawn or photographed. "Malheureusement I was standing behind a static defence in Valencia at the time so I have missed the spittoon. I will say though that the QM failed to protect us from the home team's cruel and unusual use of irony which cut deeply into the beautifully complexioned skin of my pauvres garcons. Je crois aussi que beaucoup de questions importantes were answered ce soir by my team especially the one about London cottagers living mostly in Fulham. This I have not known in the past before. I must phone Sven now and we will go scouting for new talent. Au Revoir."

Filed by our Loiters Agency in the Reeks. Monitored by a store detective in Tie-Rack.

Kate Adie is unwell (a touch of direo' eeee, I believe).

P.S. Reeks Riddle of the Week result:

The lucky winner was Colinski, a trainee Christian Brother from Manchester in Sassana (near Liverpool) who asks:

Who would rule you if you lived in an Idiosyncracy?

and the answer is (look away now if you've got it taped to watch after the kids have cried themselves to sleep):

George Bush

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

02/04/2003

Jokey problem page letter and reply following Brains v Albert Park match

## The View from BallyOak

A Chara,

B'Oak had been given little chance against the metaphysical superiority of Fr. Michael Moore's rampant "Bowling for Albertine" quartet, but the home team's recent trip to Los Angeles to pick up their Oscar and several as yet undiagnosed infections seemed to take its toll. On a cramped pitch shared with 11 Sassenachs, 11 Turks, 4 Opsimaths and 4 Alberts (no relation and, for the 44th year running, no Oscars) the Gaels from the Reeks ran out easy winners and without paying their sizeable bar bill.

At the post match press conference in a hushed broom closet Richard, the League's only "Seeded" player, remained strangely upbeat and suspiciously laid-back.

"When I were a lad people used to sing about leaving their Hearts in San Francisco but I guess we left our Brains in L.A. Mind you, considering the number of Pina Coladas we downed on the Greyhound bus journey from Bangor in Maine to the west coast (we got off the 'plane at the wrong stop) I guess we gained a psychological victory by finishing in the top two here tonight." Yes, indeed Richard!

After a brief recess for Richard "to get his crazy head together" he resumed, "L.A. was marvellous and Nicole Kidman gave us all a lovely time, especially Clive...which was nice. The city has a lot to offer even to a seasoned and sated connoisseur like myself but I was disappointed by its dearth of medieval cathedrals. I've been to Wells on a school trip and it definitely had a medieval cathedral and yet I felt that Wells was a smaller city than L.A. Strange that. Would anybody like to see a photo of Wells cathedral? It's no trouble. I've got one here in my wallet."

At this stage our intrepid reporter made his excuses and left.

AUNT SAM'S PROBLEM PAGE.

This week Aunt Sam devotes her entire page to a dilemma posed by Quintus Garrulous O'Donely, an apprentice Pig insulator from Ballypoke, who writes:

Of late my team has been listless, lacklustre and suffering from low morals. Nothing new here but it's getting worse. The team therapist thinks they should get out more often. Maybe try an evening of social bondage in "Kansas Chicken" or even consider joining a coalition.

What do you think? Do coalitions fall within the boundaries of Political Correctness? And if we do decide to coalesce how many teams should we do it with and should we wear paper bags over our heads to protect our modesty and our anonymity?

AUNTIE SAM REPLIES:

Well, dear, I always think good coalitions are like good orgies - the more members the merrier and the devil take the hindmost. 46 members would be divine with maybe a few embedded reporters thrown in for good measure. However times change and downsizing seems to be the new black this season so don't feel too constrained, dear. I know I certainly don't since I stopped wearing that appalling basque! 2 consenting adults can just about swing it. I even know of a recent case where my socially inept second cousin over in America managed to coalesce in a deep and meaningful way with his Old English Sheepdog pen pal (but I wouldn't try this in Kansas Chicken!). So just relax and go with the flow, dear.

As for paper bags, well they are not exactly de rigeur, dear, but they certainly add a touch of spice, don't you think.

Good luck, dear, and don't forget to wear rubber boots when you are turning on those piggies!

Kisses and Cuddles, Auntie Sam.



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

09/04/2003 Ruminations following a home match v The Opsimaths

## Very little Shock or Awe

A Chairde,

Angry demonstrations by the away fans here tonight following rumours that Opsimath's troubled chairman, Mike Baa'th, whose family had until recently unbridled control over the massive Tie-Rack franchise in Ballydad, is keen to liquidate the club and its many supporters. The anger was fuelled when Mike's lookalike spokesman (also called Sadie) confirmed that he is to sell Colinski, their brilliant but volatile Belorussian snapper up of unconsidered trifles, to FC Partizan Peshmerga in exchange for John Hartson and 2 other beasts of burden. Quite how he purposes to use Hartson whose knowledge of Shakespeare and writing in general is said to be suspect remains to be seen. Curfew permitting, Colinski is set to make his debut in Kirkuk next Wednesday and we wish him well. With both teams already guaranteed mediocrity the result of the quiz itself was largely academic, an adjective not normally applied to either team. For the record the result was:

Real B'Oak 3 (Damian Figo and Roisin Raul(2)) : Opsimaths Utd 1 (Ruud Awakening)

The questions set by SWMCC tried hard to dispel the lassitude and ennui of the teams and often succeeded. B'Oak of course lapped up the 64 special questions on inter-county hurling (1378 - 1978) but I felt a momentary twinge of sympathy for the small band of Gastarbeiter Sassenachs who eke a living and a Quiz out of the Reeks. Obviously they lack the cultural inheritance of the natives and most of them probably still think a Hurley is a small brain trapped in a low-cut dress. Maybe the odd cricket question could be lobbed at them as a sop and comfort blanket. On second thoughts, sod 'em. Let them go to the fleshpots and themed Sassenach bars of Dingle if they want that sort of thing.

SWMCC is, of course, a new name in our league this season - and an unpronounceable one to boot! According to my indispensable copy of "The Rough Guide To Unpronounceable Even Rougher QuizTeam Names" (Frank McClintock Press; 38 korunas and a pint of house lager), SWMCC is actually a 19th century Serbo-Croatian variation of the 12th century Welsh anagram CWMCS as indeed are most of their fiendishly concocted and inventive questions.

Their lead singer Eddie Araucaria (ex Catatonia and of course The Drifters) tells me they are hoping to go acrostic next season with the release of their new album "Electric Pigs - Unplugged."

Mike Baa'th is busy this weekend re-indexing his grand children (congrats. from all of us) and of course redecorating his palaces and repointing his statues. He has asked me to nominate a Question of the Week (or as that underestimated American oral poet Donald Rumsfeld recently called it, "one of the unknown great unknowns." And the winner is:

Q: How many pieces of wood are carried off the field by the losing team in the Ballyboke versus Ballydad Reeks hurling final?

A: 37 (their own hurling sticks; their opponent's (broken) hurling sticks; 4 goal posts; 2 crossbars and Sarah Bernhardt's wooden leg)

Bet you didn't know that, Kieran.

Slan

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

16/04/2003

## Ballyboke Bugle Saturday Supplement

Legend tells us that on St. George's Day 2003 the white Knights of The Companions of St. Snoopy did mortal battle with the noisome maiden-mauling, vindaloo-swilling Braggarts of Griff. Today to mark the Millennium of this, the kid sister of all battles, we revisit Snoopy and, in the tired and detested format of a more famous but less worthy Saturday supplement, we subject them to a toe-curlingly fatuous Q + A session. No names have been changed to protect the innocent and it should be noted that the editor is insolvent as he had to buy another loaf at lunchtime.

Home for Snoopy's Friends is a large detached neo-Romany caravan which clings idyllically but frantically to the westernmost tip of the third Reek from the sun. When I arrive I find that all the others have gone out otter-tagging leaving the paterfamilias to field my questions unconferrred - thus at a stroke doubling the fee. I am surprised to find that he is in fact Sassenach-born, a cross he seems to bear with good humour and great fortitude. Looking cool yet reassuringly avuncular in a cerise kaftan with matching deerstalker and bedsocks he drapes himself luxuriously across an accommodating ottoman and, sucking ruminatively on his meerschaum, signals me to begin:

Q: Firstly, a question often asked by housewives who can't resist a flutter on you, is 'Snoopy's Friends' your real name?

A: (Laughing and peeling a kumquat). Good Heavens, no. No that name goes back to the early 90's when we were big in the world of rap music. We have kept it partly for reasons of nostalgia and partly to confuse the tax man. No, our real name is 'The Wife and Bairns of Judge Roy Bean'.

Q: When did you first break into the world of TV stardom?

A: I think it was in 1685 (gosh I'm showing my age now!) when we were lucky enough to be asked to host the popular light entertainment programme 'Sunday Night At The Bloody Assizes'. Do you remember 'Beat the Clock-Watcher'? That was our idea. Of course not many people had clocks or even TVs in those innocent days.

Q: Do you believe in Life?

A: Yes. Especially for those irritating people who insist on reusing partly franked postage stamps.

Q: And Death?

A: If the black cap fits.

Q: And Life after Death?

A: No. The quality of mercy is not strained but droppeth like a gentle Fr. Megson from the Premiership. Ergo, the two sentences should be allowed to run concurrently.

Q: And less boringly, what's your favourite Boy Band?

A: (Polishing a papaya with gusto). Atomic Kitten.

Q: What is your greatest strength?

A: An esoteric knowledge of Irish geography. My family has had moles in the Reeks for centuries and they keep us fully informed. And before you ask we don't have any weaknesses. Incidentally, did you know that the medieval Reeks were divided into 14 ridings just like Somerset? Marvellous!

Q: What is your favourite smell?

A: Exhibit "A" from The Crown versus Keith Moon at The Old Bailey in September 1972.

Q: And your favourite fantasy?

A: It used to be coming off the bench, still in my robes, to score the winning goal in the All-Ireland Hurling final (a more dapper version of that chap in the Guinness advert). I can't really discuss my more recent one as it is currently sub judice - anyway it's none of your business, slaphead!

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Dangling particples, Schrödinger's Cat and bad-boy Braggarts throwing stones at my window.

Q: Should the Royal Family be scrapped?

A: No, not all of them. Just the big fat geezer in the armchair. He should be ashamed of himself, he should.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

Q: How would you define a perfect question?

A: One that is left hanging in the air for a while before it is allowed to go begging.

Q: What is the one most important lesson that Latin has taught you in life?

A: (Looking darkly into his half-eaten pomegranate) "Mens imbuta vino volat ad pudenda."

Q: If you could take only one dyslexic anagram with you to your Desert Island to remind you of your colleagues in the Reeks quiz league which one would you choose.

A: GRABING FFRIGG-RATS.

Q: Finally, how would you like to be remembered?

A: Instantaneously and for 2 points (imagine the ignominy if my family had to confer!).

Fr Megson

Editor's note:

Julie O' Burchill is unwell (a vented spleen following a surfeit of french fries). I'm sure all our readers will join our circulation manager in wishing her a very slow recovery.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

23/04/2003

Ruminations after match v TUFKAC

### Reflections on Brains v TUFKAC from our rambling correspondent

A Chairde,

Unlike Arsenal, the Braggarts, or Tony Blair, neither of these sides had any worries about failing to retain the Premiership and in the event neither of them did. In true Celtic fashion the girls from the Reeks scraped home by the skin of their hoops. Tuf on Kac. Tuf on the causes of Kac. Congrats to Alison from Chorlton-Cum-Hardy (Gateway to Stretford and the western Reeks) who scored highly and impressively on her League debut for B'oak. The big question now is, can the heavily cash-and-jock strapped Fr. Megson hold on to his youthful starlet? He reckons she reminds him of a young Wayne Rooney but everyone else reckons that she is even prettier - and she doesn't spit!!

Hard to believe but it is 30 years now since Christies last topped the charts though it's said that even now on cold moonlit nights ghostly strains of "Yellow River" can still be heard wafting plaintively across the Reeks. Yes, the song remains the same but not the name. For, with business acumen unworthy even of "French Connection", Christies cocked an anarchic snoop at titular convention and a new tee-shirt legend was born. Today, from the catwalks of Milan to the tomcat alleys of Droylsden, "Tufkac" has become the opium of the idle and the icon of the chic.

Nothing fopish though about the unashamedly unflexed pectorals behind the tee-shirts. Equally at home in "Stringfellows" on a sultry Saturday night or in "Wacky Warehouse" on a drizzly Sunday afternoon they continue to raise Cain and the profile of Christies Hospital in much the same way as General Sherman razed Atlanta. Thanks to their shady efforts a rash of theme-pubs now pockmarks the entire rive gauche of the Mersey as far as Tescos and they plan to move into their new purpose built topless quiz-bar "The Tartan Turkey" early next Mother's Day (terrorists permitting). No cow is sacred to them and nobody is allowed to halt their inexorable march to Monopolyville. Witness this terse comment from the ex-manager of the now defunct "Pie And Porringer" alehouse on School Lane:

"Big Issue, sir? FCUKTUFKAC!!!!" Have a nice day, anyway.

Slan

PS: Congrats also to Jay Garner for landing Mike Baa'th's old job as managing director of Tie-Rack in Ballydad. I always knew he would get the chance to play Maverick again.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

28/05/2003

Amusing send up of recent website debate on what makes for the perfect quiz paper

## Ballyboke Boa Vista v Carrauntuoil Lost Wanderers Cup Final Report

A Chairde,

Both these teams easily qualified for the final on the controversial lowest scoring beaten semi-finalists rule as indeed did AC Milan who were subsequently disqualified for being just a little bit too Italian and flash for their own good.

Ballyboke won a closely contested and bad-tempered toss and elected to play downmarket and down-wind of the outside Gents in the first half. Unfortunately this proved to be their last success of the evening and they subsequently failed to register a score. Team mentor Fr. Megson was disconsolate but philosophical:

"It's no big deal", he opined. "When I were a lad I never seemed to score at Seminary discos and it was much the same thing during my time at the Hawthorns. I remember telling young Lee Hughes not to worry overmuch about being a useless pisspot; strikers are only human after all and you can't expect them to score every season, and, to be fair to Lee, he hasn't. I think my team done brilliant to get to the Cup Final. To get through an entire knock-out competition with only 9 defeats says as much about my lad's failure to understand the rules as it does about Fr. O'Donely's psychotically surreal organisational skills. Marvellous."

Both teams later attended a boisterous and sporadically lewd presentation ceremony and Fr. Ferguson (miserable auld git) was on hand to throw the "Lifebuoy Perpetual" Shield at the winners. The worthy losers were each given an ultimatum to do better next season or bugger off and find another pub as well as their very own sample-sized can of "Lynx De Luxe" deodorant which will be greatly valued by their respective spouses and indeed by their cuddlesome sheep.

Attached is a random selection of perfect questions. Sorry, Sassanachs, they are a bit on the cerebral side, but have a go anyway. There's no shame in scoring nul points for the second time in a fortnight. To view the answers simply stand on your head and click over there.

### PERFECT QUESTIONS FOR REEKS QUIZ FINAL

(Sponsored by Arbeit Macfry of Dingle & Duisberg)

Q1: Which former president of the USA is famous for saying "I cannot tell a lie" and for having trouble with his ill-fitting roughly hewn wooden dentures?

Q2: Name the short lived Supergroup formed by Robert Plant, Mick Jagger, Joe Cocker and Python Lee Jackson that had a massive number one hit in the 1970s before succumbing to the usual cocktail of Sex and Drugs and Sausage-rolls.

Q3: What cataclysmic event of 1914 caused Lord Grey of Fallodon to pessimistically say: "The lights are going out all over Europe"?

Q4: Which Scottish born Protestant reformer and Rangers supporter wrote "First Blast Of The Trumpet Against The Monstrous Regiment Of Women"?

Q5: Who inspired Abba's classic song "Dancing Queen"?

Q6: If you live in England and have babies, whether you planned them or not, where do you have to write to if you want money to feed and clothe them and buy them cough mixture and the odd sweet?

Q7: Which rock star was born Benedict Aloysius RoRo?

Q8: Who in July 1966 famously said: "They think it's all over - it is now!!"?

Q9: On what day of the week was Sheffield Wednesday FC formed?

Q10: Which singer became known as "The Force's Sweetheart"?

Q11: During the media ban on Sinn Fein members using their own voices when interviewed, who was used by the BBC to dub the voice of Gerry Adams?

Q12: What instrument is traditionally used in Spain to execute criminals when they deserve it?

Q13: What dramatic event in world history was predicted thus by Nostradamus:

"In the season of three Popes

Eleven tractors shall rise in the East

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

And crush the Gooners against the ropes

With garbled Bob, son of Rob, their anointed High Priest.”?

Q14: Who was the first person to become a millionaire by appearing on ITV’s “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire”?

Q15: Which actress became infamous for pumping up the volume by wearing a specially constructed bra for her role in “The Outlaw”?

Q16: Who invented the bicycle?

Q17: Which famous calendar is named after Pope Gregory XIII (1502-1585)?

Q18: Why did the citizens of Hartlepool recently hang their Lord Mayor?

Q19: In Britain an incoming Prime Minister traditionally signals his/her willingness to form a Government by kissing which part of the Monarch’s anatomy?

Q20: England has over the years shown an anally retentive predilection for fighting against countries which begin with the letter “I” (for Igloo). Name any 4 of them.

and THE PERFECT ANSWERS

Q1: Bill Clinton

Q2: St. Winifred’s School Choir

Q3: Burnley’s victory in the FA Cup of that year

Q4: John Noakes

Q5: Tor Andre Flo

Q6: Washington DC (the Bush Baby Department)

Q7: Brian Ferry

Q8: Jimmy Greaves

Q9: Tuesday (the first and only instance of forward planning being used within the club)

Q10: Marc Almond

Q11: Graham Norton

Q12: The Carrot (Julio Inglesias records are only used for Basque terrorists)

Q13: Ipswich Town winning the FA Cup in 1978

Q14: Chris Tarrant

Q15: Thora Hird

Q16: Sir Walter Raleigh

Q17: The Pirelli Calendar (he was formerly Cardinal Alf Inge Pirelli)

Q18: Because he used to be a monkey and so was Peter Reid

Q19: The Hands (Tony Blair was officially castigated for getting this wrong in 1997)

Q20: Iraq; India; Iceland; Ireland (extra time being played) and of course ‘Itler’s Germany

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

15/10/2003 First match of the 2003/04 season

*(no title)*

A chairde,

More whimpers than bangs on Wed. night last as a jaded Mike Bath finally popped his head out from under his dinky duck-down duvet and belatedly pulled the plug on this year's rutting season. In what has frankly been a tedious and unproductive season we congratulate the Electric Pigs for once again coming out on top of the pile thanks mainly to a butchissimo performance from their stag-horned team captain - impossible to identify due to the black mask and velcro basque, although, intriguingly, he and Gary never appear together in the same pin-up photo. What he lacked in technique he more than made up for with his many penetrating surges into the opponent's box. His caterwauling and blood-curdling cries of "GERONIMO" frequently enlivened and provoked the South Manchester hinterland on even the sultriest Summer night.

An honourable mention also goes to Ethel Rodin who, despite nursing a niggling groin sprain and a splitting headache, gave some memorable performances, mostly away (well away) from home. A bouquet of barbed roses also for Mike Heale for lifting the "Most Promising Newcomer" award for the 82nd year in succession - not quite a record but almost.

Jointly and firmly tied at the bottom (and savouring every moment of it) were the unseeded Tufkac and the still virginal Stumped who predictably lived up to their name though the same cannot be said of their team captain, Roger, who feels with hindsight that his team's 4play may still be a little on the cryptic side especially when playing with more basic sides like Fifth Finger. Fifth Finger, incidentally, as avid readers of "The Sport" will already know, were forced to prematurely withdraw from the fray both for ungentlemanly conduct and for having a name likely to cause a breach of the peace (and not for having a piece on the beach as reported in "The Sport" and in her sister paper the "Daily Mail"). The only previous player to have been banned for having a dicky monicker was the greatly unlamented "Chopper" Harris who of course went on to sire three perfectly normal sons, Anita, Keith and Orville.

Also failing to go all the way were B'Oak who pulled out of their scheduled weekend trysts and forfeited the spoils after Fr. Megson issued forth - some would say gushed - a little white papal Bull - "Post Coitum Omne Animal Crispe Est" - in which he decreed that no flesh should be consumed on a Friday night unless accompanied by a sober and consenting fish. Try finding one of those on a Friday night in Didsbury!

And speaking of ornithology, did you know that the humble swift can mate on the wing? And did you also know that the now even humbler Pete from St. Cath's can't. He deserves a lot of kudos for trying though. He even momentarily managed to make the earth move but it didn't move fast enough, or far enough, to avoid a nasty collision with our crestfallen and free-falling local Lothario somewhere just off the A6 (honeymoon couples planning scenic drives to Levenshulme are advised to take an alternative route). Pete is currently appearing in traction at The Fletcher Moss. Please don't reopen old wounds by asking him if he fancies a swift half.

Finally it is disappointing to note that the Histrionic Men, for so long the sleeping giants of the Rutting Kingdom, did not even enter this year. They pulled out dramatically following Ivor's shock announcement that he wished to spend more quality time with his plate. He has additionally employed two Estonian au pairs and a Welsh dresser to ensure that his prized plate gets the best possible start in life. Let's hope he never manages to win a cup or he will be well nigh unbearable.

I see Mike has retreated back under his duvet, probably to dwell nostalgically on his many and varied conquests of the night before yesteryear. So that shouldn't take long. Then, when he has emptied the post-coital ashtrays and arranged for Ethel Rodin to be "churched" we can start the quiz. A far more manly pursuit, if you ask me. I know Fr. Megson agrees. He was saying on Eurotrash last week that for him much of the romance has gone out of our national Rut ever since Skye TV were given exclusive viewing rights (TVs in the rest of Scotland have to make do with reruns of "The White Heather Club"). I feel personally that if more priests spoke out on Eurotrash we would have far more democratic confessional boxes and a corresponding reduction in pilfering from the local Co-op. Why not let the "Withington Reporter" know what YOU think about this sensitive issue. Even if you haven't had an original thought about this or anything else since West Brom last won the Cup drop them a line anyway. They will publish it and send you some jam - hence the origin of their motto "Publish and be jammed". Marvellous.

Enjoy your jam but don't dare get any of it on Ivor's plate!

Charlie George

(retired and emotional and set for quiz after mopping up operations by MB and the emptying of post coital ashtrays -

## **The Father Megson Archive**

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

sewer of consciousness - adult as alibi for eating meat - traipsing off to some sordid little steak-house)



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

12/11/2003

Poking fun at the Opsimaths

*(no title)*

A chairde,

Troubled times for the Reeks' oldest - but by no means grumpiest - quiz league team, as The Opsimaths are declared all out and bankrupt, both encyclopaedically and morally. Grizzled chairman Mike Bath, looking more dog-eared than you would normally expect after a mere 76 winters of discontent, spoke exclusively to Money Reeks. Perched in his Ikea cardboard box high above Old Lansdowne Road where he has vowed to remain until his team pick up their first league point of the season (you will be lonely this Xmas, Mr. Bath) he explained:

"It is a very complicated and technical cock-up and you would need to be a financial Wunderkind like wot I am to fully understand its complexities but to put it in simple layman's terms for oiks like you and your readers we have gone to the dogs and it can only be a matter of time before they bring in the retrievers. To make matters worse my assets are likely to be frozen if I stay up here much longer. Throw us up another Gypsy Cream for the love of God!"

In a brave but futile effort to stave off the inevitable Mike has rebranded and relaunched his team as "Consignia-ed" thought to be short for "Consignia-ed to the Beaver Road primary school quiz league next season". He also has plans to bring new blood into the team by signing other teams' cast off dross under the Bosnich ruling. So, if you happen to be a smug unemployable Australian tub of lard with disturbing racist tendencies and difficulty coming off your lines, Mike would love to hear from you.

Mike was unwilling to confirm persistent rumours that a, as yet unnamed, Rusholme ghee billionaire is poised to buy the team hook, line and sinker. "No comment" he barked in a very convincing Glaswegian accent, "though obviously we would welcome an injection of cash or indeed any other substance that might be going cheap on the streets of Rusholme".

Such a move would not be welcomed by Griffin regular and occasional quiz player Marshall Dillon (not his real name). "A brain-drain would then become inevitable," he fulminated, "and as always it would be the smaller teams like us that would suffer". (The team based in the Griffin who cannot be named for legal and aesthetic, reasons currently has a combined length and girth measurement of 25 feet 7 inches but take away the girth and you could easily squeeze them into a Swan Vesta box).

If anybody has any old quiz papers that they have already memorised or dodgy magazines that have similarly been committed to memory could they please make paper aeroplanes out of them and waft them up gently to Mike who is in need of some new stimulation having just completed his eleventh count of the roof tiles of West Didsbury and its environs (he could be wrong but he reckons there's one missing).

Gay Gordon Mc Gecko.

Editor's Note:

In a daring piece of avant garde experimentalism not attempted in this country since The Opsimaths set last week's quiz paper this article contains several key words that could act as a subversive and subliminal reminder to book early for next year's Didsbury Dog Show (tickets on application to Mike Heale or his faithful friend, Bingo). See if you can SPOT any of them - oops there's another not so subliminal one! Down boy!

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

19/11/2003 | A bit of fun at the expense of Mike and Mary O'Brien

*(no title)*

A Chairde,

I have been inundated by a letter from Dusty and Mike (who likes to be called "Buffalo" in his more climactic moments) Springfield from the Albert quiz team. They are asking when they can reasonably hope to be in receipt of their first points of the season. Well Dusty and Buffalo, I posted them out to you some time in mid October along with Evelyn's emergency vodka and tonic vouchers from the Distress Fund so they should be with you one of these Wednesdays in the not too distant future. Mind you, some of those long-haired Trotskyite apologists who pose as postmen, and who seem of late to be infesting our erstwhile apple-pie (just as Mrs Bush used to bake), God- and Mammon-fearing bourgeois quiz league in ever increasing and alarming numbers, have downed tools again recently. Up against the nearest wall with them, I say, sorted; but does anybody listen to reason these days? Not bloody likely!

Well David Davis does I suppose - so you might not get them until next season. Or the season after that. Or never, as the case may be. Who knows? I only work here. What do you want me to do? Weep? I suppose you think I have a bloody vocation for sodding customer care just like that pious, parboiled, carrotty, goody-twoshoes Father bloody Almighty Megson. Get real. Look at the time. It's nearly midday and I've been chained to this desk since 10.55 am (my bloody bus was late again but try telling that to the superannuated goose-stepper in high heels we've got for a manager!). There's no way I'll be able to find time to eat at lunchtime and it's doing my stomach ulcer no good at all. I'm in perpetual agony here but I have to soldier on. Just how do they expect me to get to the canteen and spend two hours in the pub when they only give us a measly one hour lunch break. Bet the bloody Union rep never brings that up at conference. More interested in pole-dancing poxy firemen they are than in decent working-class heroes like me and David Davis. I often wish I'd never left that abattoir in Kilmacow where I used to work. At least they gave me some credit (and some overtime) there for having homicidal tendencies. So stop bloody whingeing and let me get on with my life. I do have one you know. Unlike some people I could mention. Bloody quiz teams!

I do hope this prompt and measured response reassures you Dusty. Try and get some sleep now and take Evelyn with you. There should be a half bottle of Merrydown in the fridge if she's still being troubled by those pink elephants. Just tell her it's a premier cru from the new Kwiksave "Pasdefrills" exclusive range and she'll swallow it. Sleep tight all three of you. Tomorrow is another cacky day, as Clark Gable once wrote.

Oh yes, almost forgot. You also requested a soothing record for your Auntie Maureen who plays for Fulham F.C. and who finds it hard to get to sleep off the pitch. No probs Dusty. West London eh? I know it well. Did my Customer Care training there yonks ago (does it show?). Fab place. Used to see Dave Webb and Alan Hudson in the pub most afternoons. Lovely lads. Shared my artistic temperament they did. Relaxed as newts. I used to think Merrydown was the alternative name for the wishbone 'til I discovered them swigging away the afternoons in Holland Park. Happy days. They're probably dead by now. Or playing for QPR. Or both.

You never said which record your Auntie Maureen would like. Leave it to me, Dusty, I'm a very intuitive guy. Here you are Maureen - specially for you and your Fulham teammates - "Blue Is The Colour". Get stomping.

Your humble servant,

Conan Milosevic (Ms), Acting Customer Care Manager,

The Reeks Benefits Agency (Ireland's Number One Benefits Agency),

(Most of our highly motivated team have, or hope to apply for, work permits)

Remember our mission statement : OUR CUSTOMERS MUST KNOW NO BETTER

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

26/11/2003

**“To: Dusty and Buffalo Springfield**

**From: Reeks Benefits Agency Audit Team”**

A Chairde,

We note that you recently pursued a claim for 2 points in respect of the Albert Quiz Team. We further note that you moaned like the proverbial Man Utd fan when you were in non-receipt of said points. It has come to our attention from an anonymous and highly mercenary source ([www.snooperswithfriendslikethese dot cotton](http://www.snooperswithfriendslikethese dot cotton)) that no such establishment as the Albert exists in Didsbury or indeed in any adjacent or parallel universe excepting the one in Withington which is probably just a mirage from the 1970s. We must therefore conclude that your claim is fraudulent. It behoves me to inform you that I have consequently arranged for 2 points to be deducted from your Post Office account forthwith and without prejudice leaving you with a current credit rating of minus 2 points. I must also ask Evelyn to return 27 hogsheds of vodka and tonic to our Distress Fund using the enclosed prepaid envelope.

You will be aware from several leading articles in that hallowed organ The Reeks Daily Mail (incorporating The South Kerry Lovely Girls on Lovely Tractors Gazette) that such fiscal abuse is running rampant in the Reeks. Teams such as The V Fingers, St.Kathleens and The Histrionic Men continue to smuggle home unmerited points with brazen, dare I say, gay abandon thus bleeding our economy dry on a weekly basis. Is it any wonder that The Reeks can only afford a literacy rate of 1.27% (if myself, Fr Megson and his Turf Accountant were to abscond to Amsterdam for a life of casual debauchery - just a pipedream at the moment, alas - then this figure would dip to -0.04%) - cause for concern I think you will agree.

Clearly this cannot be allowed to continue. Our Dipstick Tribunal has consequently decided to award you an additional penalty, to wit: torture and death not exceeding disembowlement with a fairly hot poker. You have of course the right to appeal but be advised that any unsuccessful appeal may serve to lengthen the poker. Our departmental local authority and CORGI-approved disemboweller is currently keeping his hand in by attending a training course at Parrswood High. Mindful of waiting time targets we have therefore tendered the job out to a private firm of cowboys ([www.X-Pats dot cotton](http://www.X-Pats dot cotton)). As their name suggests they have been ethnically cleansing Irishmen for generations now without complaint so you need have no cause for concern. Just relax and go with the flow would be my advice.

Could you all please arrange to be in next Monday afternoon after 4pm as The X-Pats like to get an early start. Fr Megson will drop round to assist you in your final agony but try to keep it short as he tends to throw terrible tantrums if he's not home in time for Blue Peter. If you have any questions do not hesitate to confer.

Yours affectionately,

Arkan McArkle

Chief Auditor, Reeks Benefits Agency

PS. Forgive my levity at such a stressful time for you but I simply have to ask: Are you the Opsimaths in disguise?

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

03/12/2003

A letter from Emmanuelle Kant

*(no title)*

A Chairde,

Fr. Megson can be with us in spirit only this week as his more corporeal entity got struck by a bolt of meringue on the steps of St. Kathleens last night whilst remonstrating with His Eminence Grise, Cardinal Snoopy about the alleged superiority of Wittgenstein didactic over the far more Hegelian Thomas Aquinas school of thought (and woodwork up to GCSE standard). Things got even more arcane inside as the questions were unfurled in a kaleidoscope of various hues matched only by the colourfully explosive language of those unfortunate participants who were unable to reach the fire escapes. Truly unforgettable questions but then again Europe still has difficulty forgetting the Black Death! Why, oh why, oh why, were there so many questions about Rainbows and no mention whatsoever of Zippy and his gay paramour George. What a Bungle, Mr. Snoopy!

And why have Partick Thistle sacked Fr. Megson's ex-best friend and amanuensis (don't you ever wonder what Sylvia Kristell is doing these days?) Gerry Collins? OK so they only had 2 points in the Scottish Premier League and OK it was beginning to seem unlikely that they would overhaul Celtic at the top of the tree but surely 2 points is not all that bad. In our league it would probably be enough to guarantee you mid-table mediocrity. I wonder if he will come down south to manage a top post office or maybe even City? Who knows? Nobody knows. Which brings me nicely back to last night. What a vicious circle life can be.

Emmanuelle Kant

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/12/2003

A Christmas message from Father M

*(no title)*

Both the little hand and the big hand are moving very rapidly leaving Fr Megson in a spiritual pickle as he, already a little behind this year, struggles valiantly if somewhat ineptly to get his Easter cards out on time. His unanswered fan mail is mounting up as well. Not to mention the bills and the threatening letters from irate husbands. A good job he doesn't have to update his quiz team's points total every week or the pressure would drive him mental. If you don't believe him, just ask his imaginary friend.

Rest assured however that our conscientious cleric will still find time to give his traditional "URBIS et PRINTWORKS" address to the poor and fuddled masses of Manchester and Salford next Sunday morning immediately after the Blue Peter omnibus. As is the custom he will rant from the top of the world's highest and emptiest glass display cabinet (but it makes an excellent dry ski slope) situated just opposite Victoria which, coincidentally, is the world's emptiest mainline railway station - with the possible exception of Carrauntouil Central. His special guest will be Bono, The Reeks very own part time rock legend, cowboy, booted Papal adviser and full time dog's dinner.

The dress rehearsal was held last Friday night and was a great success. Afterwards Fr Megson and his Turf Accountant repaired furtively to that legendary hostelry of ill-repute "The Whippet Inn" hard by the Cathedral gates. Victuals were called for and our loosely frocked priest partook of a goodly chitterling. "Yum yum, pig's bum!" was the cry. Whereupon the feisty serving wench from Bohemia dismissively passed it over to the other table for a bonus. Two butts of lusty Blue Nun were downed without much ceremony and then to pudding; to wit the noisome speciality of the house, Spotted Dick Surprise. At length a heady Noilly Prat (named after one of Fr Megson's less salubrious Reekish ancestors, did you know?) and a condor moment to round off a perfect evening of quiet and selfless contemplation for our clerical paragon.

And so to bed.

PS. Earlier that evening Fr Megson was in Deansgate playing his kazoo and soliciting for alms when he thought he spotted Barry from Finger V in the window of Waterstones signing copies of Martin Johnson's new autobiography. Nice work Baz if you can get it. If you've finished with that library book "How to look like a famous rugby player without actually getting your left ear and right buttock bitten off" could you forward it to Roisin? She quite fancies signing copies of the new Jonny Wilkinson cookery book in the window of The Chorlton Bookshop next Tuesday afternoon. She thinks it's great craic altogether practising his hand movements during the Rosary hour at training. Fr Megson thinks her soul is now in even greater peril than her mind.

I'll leave you with a heart-warming human interest story from the Withington and Reeks Reporter. The newspaper that proves that great journalism is not dead - just moribund.

A worrying 48 hours last weekend for members and fans of the St. Kathleen's folkloric musical combo "The Funboy Four" as their lead spoons-player and mascot went missing presumed lost. Mike (28) and his beloved mutt Bingo (3) went spelunking in the Blue John mines of Derbyshire early on Friday morning. The alarm was raised when they failed to return home for their tea (chilli con pilchards and a tin of Bono respectively). Bassoonist Alan (63) takes up the story:

"We was worried sick. Still no sign of them at chucking-out time so we sent for the Peelers. They combed the area with bicycle-lamps and muttered blasphemies but it were fruitless. You try to stay optimistic, like, but deep down you fear the worst, you know, like a chip pan fire or summat. It were awful. It were as much as we could do to sup our ale without going all soppy."

"Still, life has to go on and we were just starting to audition for a new spoons-player on Sunday morning when the happy news broke on Radio Burnage. Apparently some altruistic American tourists were out weasel-baiting and, blow me, if they didn't find Mikey and Mutty stuffed down a rabbit hole near Takrit which is bloomin' miles down the road from Derbyshire. There's nowt as queer as folk, I always say. I thought at least the dog would have had more sense."

Both are now safely back in St. Kathleen's warm and fragrant bosom. And, despite everything, Mike is determined to play the spoons again.

"That's the last time I let Mike hold the map", chuckled Bingo (82) as they relaxed and posed for our photographer in a communal tin baa'th by an open fire in a parlour bedecked with mistletoe, roasted chestnuts and lachrymose Cockney waifs with beguiling yet strangely irritating speech patterns.

And a jolly Dickensian Christmas to all of you from Fr Megson.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

14/01/2004

## Bog - Snorkellers of the World Unite

A Chairde,

Mounting problems for Fr. Sinbad Megson this season as Brains of Oak struggle to regain their majestic mediocrity of yesteryear. No, I never knew his first name was Sinbad either, until he let it slip in the sauna. Apparently it is taken from an old Pictish acronym standing for Single Income No Brains Absolutely Desperate. Much more interesting than Jack don't you think? To his credit, though, the bespectacled par-boiled carrot lookalike is refusing to panic.

Interviewed exclusively for the Isle of Skye Bog-Snorkelling Channel on the steps of his beloved Church Of The Hidden Ovarie his remarkable sang-froid showed through even more clearly than the Scooby-Doo T-shirt under his size 44 pink nylon shirt (Millets of Collyhurst ; £2.99; matching bobble-hat 49p extra).

"Mounting problems are nothing new to me ", he beamed, "but fortunately I have a celibacy clause written into my contract, so I don't let such problems cramp my style too much. Seriously though, it would take more than the odd apocalypse or two to put me off the smell of Coco-Pops in the morning. I know they haven't answered a question correctly since mid November but these things happen in quizzes and, at the end of the vespers, they are still a young and callow team - well, apart from three or four of them. My bestest buddy from the top bunk at the seminary, Fr. O' Leary, had the same trouble with his babies at Leeds United but he didn't panic and look where they are today - er, everywhere except in Leeds come to think about it. Anyway, there's no way I would agree to go to bloody Birmingham and take up a missionary position under Bishop Doug Ellis like poor Fr. O'Leary had to do. No way, Josie."

The transfer window may be open but Fr. M. won't be spending any money. "There is some money in the kitty since we have not had to buy a round this season but I'm saving that since I promised my housekeeper who does for me (and splendidly too!) that I would take her to the Atomic Kitten concert at St. Kathleens. I confess - oops there I go talking shop again - that I did go round the skips of Didsbury and Withington on Boxing Day looking for bargain basement players surplus to requirements at wealthier teams but there was nothing worth picking up, not even outside the Bath household. I did find a few old turkeys but why carry coals back to Newcastle, so to speak!"

Has Fr. SM as he is known in the sauna, any plans to change the team's tactics in the second half of the season?

"Tactics? I'm afraid you've lost me there", conceded the man recently voted most likely to be the next Fr. Keegan." Actually it would be nice if the team could sit down during home matches. That bloody landlord has got more TV sets than they have at NASA Control. Another useful innovation might be for the team to start listening to the question being asked and to leave their specialised subjects to the end of the quiz". Roisin's specialised subject after a few pints of diet Vimto is entitled "How Hard It was Being A Cowgirl in North Belfast During The War Of The Roses". A quick resumé of this local parish skirmish for those of you who have been following the Princess Di story over on ITV for the past 36 years and may have missed any mention of it:

The Green Roses had God on their side and they went into extra time against the Orange Roses who had the even more ubiquitous and omniscient Rev. Paisley on their side, though if they had not been so strapped for cash they would have liked to replace him with Sir Alec Ferguson. The Green Roses were doing rather well until Roisin got sent off (to Manchester) for being drunk in charge of a bin lid and for not having a beard - well, how can you possibly terrorise people properly if you haven't even got a beard! She went on to form her own renegade faction which she called the Stoned Roses. But they had neither God nor the Rev. Paisley on their side and they quickly wilted. Roisin then fell foul of the Defence Of The Realm Act (DORA, who coincidentally is not related to our very own ETHEL Rodin) and she was subsequently interned in a high security Post Office in a far-flung and inhospitable suburb of the British Empire. And there to this day she languishes, incarcerated in a 3 foot square registered locker and forgotten by everyone except for pensioners who like to drop in once a week just to ask her questions a bit like the ones you get asked on THE WEAKEST LINK only not as daft.

But don't breathe a word of this in public just in case there happens to be any nonogenarian Black and Tans loitering at the bar. You never know these days.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

28/01/2004

## Seven Sins That Shook The World

According to a leaked document which has just fallen into the back pocket of a sleaze expert in the offices of the BALLYBOAK DAILY SHOWER, a soon to be published enquiry will heavily criticise a middle-aged and experienced priest for allowing his quiz team to be entirely oblivious to a consignment of seven or eight deadly sins probably bound for Iraq or the Isle of Man, and blatantly concealed inside an innocuous looking quiz paper by the hard line paralytic faction Finger V.

We confronted an ashen-faced Fr. Megson as he sneaked out of the side door of VESPERS exclusive club for incorrigible gentlemen priests.

"Fair cop", he mumbled, "I should have been more diligent, though to be fair, priests cannot be expected to go round spotting sins all the time. If we did we would never get a moment for Rest and Relaxation especially in this quiz league.

"With hindsight I think the little fluffy animal in the first question of that round put us off the scent a bit. Using my considerable expertise I signalled the team to hit the spiny-anteater button and I'm pretty certain there isn't a sin called spinyanteaterism. Even if we had gone for sloth I probably wouldn't have been thinking of sin anyway because I've got the 'Ice Age' video at home and the cheeky sloth in that is a dead friendly little fella and great craic altogether. Those setters must have filthy minds if you ask me. Alarm bells rung for a moment when Dutch plcs were mentioned but I soon relaxed when I remembered that the mail order company I deal with in Amsterdam is usually very discreet and use lots of plain brown paper. I didn't hear any proper sins mentioned after that either with the obvious exception of 'Lust' but there was lots of that in the other rounds as well what with aristocratic women being thrice pleased in big boots and smoking a Marlboro afterwards and of course the less than aristocratic Jordan being mentioned running around buck naked in the jungle being chased by the Sex Pistols singing 'Looked over Jordan and what did I see? Coming for to carry me home'. And then there was Fr. Allardyce (hasn't he got awful fat!) in a wet T-shirt competition surrounded by eleven half-naked footballers popping their corks at him - or was that on Channel 5 the night before? Can't remember now. But you see what I mean. Sin is everywhere and there's no need to string me up just because I happened to miss the odd seven or eight."

Did Fr. Megson and his oblivious team enjoy the quiz? "We certainly did ", they crooned in unison. "A little bit of masochism never hurt anyone, as they say in VESPERS. And the trip to eight seashores was a nice surprise. We don't get many charabanc outings at our age. Though my bones are aching a bit today after that part of the journey from St. Ives to Whitby. I think the Histrionic Men enjoyed it too especially the bits about the racehorses and why wouldn't they with Sir Ivor himself sat in the middle of them."

As to what more intelligent teams thought of it - well, you would have to ask them. But whatever everyone else thought - whether they loved it or loathed it - I think we should all club together and applaud the setters for the obvious thought, effort and ingenuity they put into it.

Fr. S.M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

04/02/2004

## Not The Only Fruitcake

A Chairde,

Fr. Megson had a fax this morning from some priests belonging to the Loyalist 'Red Hand of The Northern Reeks' faction (motto: 'Keep the Northern Reeks tidy and British') . In it they said how much they enjoyed last night's quiz and how it more than made up for not finding any useful Weapons of Mass Destruction in Ethel's handbag when she went to the toilet.

"We hadn't been expecting to enjoy our visit to the Southern Reeks", it went on. "We always thought youse lot down there were nothing but big girls' blouses who spent all yer time drinking, telling ghost stories, listening to Daniel O'Donnell tapes, going to confession and supporting Man. Utd. Well, we weren't far wrong and yer fancy so-called European money is crap as well. We'll stick to our tried and tested half-crowns if youse don't mind. But fair's fair and I must say it was a pleasant surprise to fly into Myles Na Gopaleen International airport and be met by hordes of saucy Orange gangsters running amok and chanting 'we've got an Occam's razor and we know how to use it' (while taking care not to presume that it exists unless it becomes absolutely necessary).

"Bloody brilliant craic. It was just like being at home in Portadown on a wet Saturday night only without the red, white and blue bunting on the Town Hall."

Fr. Megson was more circumspect.

"The quiz was OK", he opined, "but it lacked a little how you say, Je ne sais rien. You know how when you go to the park with your auntie and you are having fun on the see-saw and then a man with a council uniform and a spanner comes over and says, 'Get off the see-saw sonny, we have to tighten a screw or it won't balance properly and then you might fall off and die and go to purgatory and that would really rain on your Sunday parade, wouldn't it?' Well the quiz last night was a bit like that. They forgot to pay the man to put the screw in that makes it balance and we got thrown off early and we couldn't get back on but luckily it was only our pride that got hurt although my left knee is still a bit stiff. To be fair though, Ethel's brain was definitely heavier than ours last night so maybe that's the reason we fell off.

"I think there was a decent quiz in there somewhere but it seemed strangely reluctant to come out and show it's true colours (which were orange and orange). I know just how it felt - I was a bit frightened to come out and show my true colours with all those Orange gangs cooking their foreign sauces all over the place. So I spent the final seven rounds hiding behind Roisin, thinking up new sins for the quiz and reading Damian's copy of 'The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-time' which is a brilliant book about an autistic boy who would make a really good quiz-setter and it just goes to prove that even respected book critics don't always get it wrong.

"And Damian wasn't reading books last night or helping us to lose the quiz because he went to watch two football matches. A team called Tottenham won the first match 3 - 0 and a team called Manchester City won the second match 4 - 0 which means they win the prize which this week is THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME to Manchester to play another match, which, when you think about it, is not a very exotic prize for a team that already lives in Manchester. But they seemed happy enough in the shower afterwards. I suppose it beats a trip to the Job Centre in Portadown.

"And Damian says he met one of my old altar boys after the match. A lad by the name of Jermain Defoe. He sends his regards to all of you and hopes that Gerry H. is still his number one fan (but I doubt it). Jermain now plays for Tottenham but he told Damian he is now reconsidering his future. 'I feel I have been a loyal servant to Tottenham Hotspur for the past 24 hours and during that time I have always given my all for the club. But I think now may be the time to consider moving to a bigger club who can win things and pay me even more money for talking a load of bollix.'"

And Fr. Megson would like a slice of that action as well.



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

11/02/2004

## An Apology

A Chairde,

At the weekend some good friends (non-quiz-leaguers) tore a strip off Fr. Megson (OUCH!) for lacing his last sermon with a very unbecoming concoction of naked sectarianism. He duly examined his conscience and his hastily written sermon script and, to his horror, he accepts that the charge of sectarianism has substance - but not the charge of nudity which he believes was integral to the plot. He normally has a think about what he has written and stands back from it for a few minutes before transmission to ensure that no feelings are hurt but obviously he did not step far enough back on this occasion. Without being naive I think we all accept that there are Orange gangs in the Northern Reeks and they probably do carry weapons less metaphorical than Occam's Razor. However it is also true to say that there are a like number of Green gangs still in existence and it was wrong and misleading to "slag off" one side without making any reference to the other. The respective gangs do not need or deserve any defending and are thankfully very unrepresentative of their communities. Fr. Megson seemed to imply that anyone with Loyalist sympathies would automatically belong to a gang and that implication can only be described as sectarian. And I hope we all agree that sectarianism is a sin even deadlier than the se7en recently committed by The Finger.

Please accept Fr. Megson's unqualified apology for getting this badly wrong. It won't happen again.

Sorry, Jermaine, my apology does not extend to overpaid footballers from London.

Fr. M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

25/02/2004

## Of Reeks and Pigs

A Chairde,

Father Megson is just back from the Northern Reeks (he cycled up to Ultima Thule and caught the north bound cattle ferry from there which he reckons is an even more luxurious way of travelling than Ryanair). He is pleased to report that no pertinent portion of his anatomy was despoiled by gangs of either green or orange persuasion. Indeed, judging by some of the pubs and clubs he heard confession in whilst in Enniskillen, he reckons that pink might be the new black over there this season.

His aged mother alas was not so lenient with him as she sporadically belaboured him about the head and torso with her cruelly gnarled walking-stick for being the "useless black-frocked priest of the family". Thanks a bunch, Mum, I only ever took the Seminary Shilling because I thought that was all an Irish mother wanted from her painfully acquired son but now it turns out that she would have preferred me to have been a plumber so that I could fix for free and gratis that tap in the scullery that drips worse than Jackson Pollock on a bad night.

Us Reekish boys can't win, can we? Especially when our team nearly beats Finger V in our absence. Just imagine how I felt when I got a message from the Royal Oak saying:

"Missing you like hell we are. Can you stay over there for another few seasons? Tidy your room or something but just leave us alone. Love from all the team.

P.S. Can you telegraph us some money 'cause it's your round and Roisin says she'll have two pints and a creme-de-menthe chaser this time 'cause she's drinking to forget. Don't ask what 'cause she's forgotten

P.P.S. Don't feel guilty just 'cause you happen to be rubbish."

Rejuvenated by these kindly sentiments, Fr. M. stuffed some Yorkie bars into his duffel bag and sat himself alluringly down in the local greasy spoon with that knowing "Ah that's Bisto" look in his limpid eyes. It worked and soon he was being whisked across the Reeks in the cab of a massive trucker called Gus who had a pernicious taste for loud string vests and even louder Daniel O'Donnell tapes. Despite a lengthy snarl-up at the West Didsbury Job Centre where Gus, with his delicious sense of irony, ran over 5000 graduates and an unemployed sheepdog who were queuing up to join MI5, Fr. Megson made it to the pub just in time to lead his team into battle against some very pinky and perky Pigs. His beloved Brains did quite well eventually finishing in second place which is not bad is it? They were a bit spooked by those photos though. Wouldn't you wonder how such ugly people ever became famous (the half-men, half-trogs in the photos I mean, not the Pigs who aren't all that famous).

Father Megson never knew that Fr. Hennessey was a clandestine Pig. Funny how you think you know somebody and you don't even notice that they've got trotters. Maybe he took Jermain Defoe's advice and joined a team that can win things and ply him with swill-buckets of filthy lucre. Or maybe not.

Breaking news: We interrupt this sermon to bring you shocking news about the sad demise of Finger V's 100% record. I've always said that that Ethel Austin is a fierce dangerous woman. Heed my words, Fr. Wenger. Steer well clear of her charms. Your Jesuitical sang-froid will be no defence against her femme-fatality.

Slan,

Fr. S.M.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

03/03/2004

### Marshall Dillon and His Smoking Gun

A Chairde,

Schadenfreude was rife in the Reeks last weekend as thousands of Reality TV junkies were bussed in to witness the mental disintegration of Finger V who have failed abysmally to come to terms with their first straight defeat in a row at the baby-lotioned hands of Mildred Rodin. Relegation is now a very real threat for the troubled boy-band. Team mentor and former cup-bearer to the Gods, Marshall Dillon admitted to having had a frank and earnest exchange with his underlings (not a Frank and Earnest sex change as was earlier reported in THE SPORT) in the post match shower room.

"Things were said and limbs were sundered in the heat of the sauna that perhaps would have been best left unsaid and unsundered", he told REEKS SPEAKS Radio (well worth listening to for news, current affairs and goat prices if you can be bothered twiddling your digital cat's whisker every time a magpie lands on your roof).

"With hindsight I now accept that I may have piqued too early. I am truly sorry that Martin (bruised pride and shattered ribs), Anthony (pelvic disrhythmia) and Michael (chronic tinnitus) will now miss the rest of the season. On the good news front, though, I am delighted to say that Barry has regained partial consciousness, which is pretty much how things used to be - and his team of doctors say that in a matter of weeks he should be able to sit up and recognise basic flags and football grounds. Unfortunately, however, his map-drawing days are over. I have also come to the conclusion that my decision to curtail the team from meeting with wives and girlfriends (separately, of course) except between the hours of 7.30 and 8.00pm on Sunday evenings may have been ill-advised especially if, as now seems likely, they fail en masse to win the ratings war with Coronation Street.

"At the end of the vespers we are all seasoned professionals and we will come through this crisis. OK so we may be crippled physically and mentally for a few years but you can't make whoopie without cracking a few jokes can you? Know what I mean? The easy way out would be to hide away from those busloads of clodhoppers out there who have come to laugh at us, call us beastly names and sing 'Can we play you every week?'. But hiding is strictly for wimps and I double dare anyone to call us wimps, especially Barry. Now could you and your sound recordist kindly vacate this Mothercare changing cubicle as myself and the team want to eat our Pot Noodles in peace."

Should Marshall Dillon stand down and seek political asylum in the safer climes of Haiti? Have your say now on [www.allezennomdedieuallez dot cotton](http://www.allezennomdedieuallez.dot.cotton).

Father Megson is writing this homily on a Tuesday night as a welcome distraction from setting quiz questions. His time management has been less than perfect of late and it now seems fairly likely that the March 3rd quiz will turn out to be the first 32 perfect question quiz paper of the season (simmer down Ivor, I said you might be getting a 32 question quiz not a 32 county Ireland). If this happens please don't panic. My solution would be to double your first half score and then seasonally adjust by deducting, say, 19 points to equalise the "pissed as a newt" factor that tends to kick in during the second half of most quiz matches - and all of ours. Et voilà - a perfectly balanced quiz. No messy turning around for the second half (which has always confused Fr. M who feels that reversing is strictly for wimps) and you will be home in good time to see Trevor Mc Donald simpering on the telly. What's that Mike? Oh, you're wondering about spares. I don't know. Ask the barmaid or make your own up. Use your bloody initiative.

Fr. Megson is going to bed.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

10/03/2004

## Eine Kleine Weldkrieg

Fr. Megson writes this surrounded by Post Office engineers and hot-rodding electricians of the non-intelligent porcine variety. They have told him to spend no longer than 5 minutes on the computer otherwise they will weld him onto the keyboard and then go on an extended lunch hour. He tends to be unwilling to call their bluff so please read this as quickly as you can.

"Just to say we got to play at Snoopy Dog's new venue last Wednesday and very nice it is too. A bit like Guantanamo Bay on the outside but more like La Manga inside. We were cordially welcomed by the local Il Capo, Tony Cassandra and his exclusively female entourage who served us drinks and then proceeded to encase our feet in concrete and throw us off the deep end thus ensuring that we spend eternity at the bottom of the league - or thereabouts. We didn't mind though because they apologised and said it was nothing personal. It was just something they tried to do to all their guests.

"One slight quibble about this new venue - or two, if you count having a room named after James Anderton - sorry but the beer is appalling especially the current guest beer which is called something and Spank. Fortunately Fr. M. hasn't got time to think of a rhyming word to describe the taste. Our new transfer window signing John Dennis-the-menace-son was carried off injured after one sip and, like Barry last week, his long term prognosis is not looking good. Still, he's only a young lad with a mere handful of games and a very frisky ferret under his belt and I'm sure he'll come bouncing back from the Gents any day now.

"Gotta go now 'cos they've just soldered my tongue to the screensaver..... I wonder what they're going to do with that blowlamp under my chair.....GOSH.

"PS. My football poser this week comes from a Fr. Ferguson, a former racehorse owner, and now sadly underemployed preacher in the wilderness, who asks:

What is the difference between Leicester City and Manchester Utd?

A: Leicester City still have some players in Europe"

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/03/2004

### In Which Fr. Megson Casts A Dark Shadow Across The Cabinet

A Chairde,

Fr. Megson was in town last Friday night ministering to the needs of fallen women and of those who were about to fall off their high-heels after twelve Baccardi Breezers. He was just enticing one such hapless victim back to his exclusive parish-financed pied à terre (rhymes with lair) when who should he see berating the bouncer outside the City Arms tavern but The Government. They had been dragged kicking and screaming up to the barbarous north to model their new Spring Collection in G-Mex. He took 'em back to Vespers, a luxurious club for good men fallen among quizzers, for a quick debriefing session in the sauna and, as often happens when a posse of power-starved, half-blitzed men get together, they fell to talking about the local quiz league.

Apparently one of Tony's most pressing concerns, while he awaits his new financial year invasion targets issued by his Head Office in far off Pentagon House, is the woeful level of educational standards in the bottom half of the Withington quiz league (nor is he overly impressed by the political balance of its website and he darkly hinted that Mike Bath would do well to read A DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH for useful future survival tips like how to rescue a dimp out of a spitoon, but that need not concern us here).

"The level is scandalous, worse than Johnny Prescott's school report", he blazed. "How can decent people be expected to tag along complacently with a mediocre government when they can't even stay on-line with basic educational requirements like having a grasp of the history of Great Britain in the Eurovision Song Contest or knowing how many bottles of champers constitute a Jereboam. You can't fall into a pub in South Manchester these days without seeing a gaggle of anoraked middle-aged men and, God forgive me from saying this but it's true, quite a few Clare Shortish-tempered women sitting in a darkened corner engaged in not answering questions. Questions, I might add, that would be the lifeblood of intelligent debonair free spirits like me and John Prescott and countless tens of others who take the time and effort to watch Reality TV and pay attention to the BAFTA results.

"I ask you in all sententiousness (impressive word eh? - Alastair Cooke let me have it when he retired) to consider the future. These sad Robin Cook throwbacks, these alternative quizzers, probably cycle home, eat a vegan bacon buttie and in the absence of any intellectual stimulation like, for instance, watching the latest salutary instalment of HOW CLEAN IS YOUR TOILET on the telly, they probably find nothing better to do than breed. And if its anything like Islington round here they will tend to breed faster, and with more baying to the moon, than your average urban fox. And what a dystopian future awaits their unfortunate progeny! Dingy 4 bedroomed detached hovels unlit by the joys of ITV. How can these poor benighted creatures ever hope to attain their allotted role in life - that of decent Sun reading Sunny Delight swigging couch potatoes and polling-booth fodder?

"Imagine, if you will, a home where the History Channel is considered to be the norm. A home where cryptic crosswords are left shamelessly lying around the kitchen. A home where encyclopaedias are not guiltily snapped shut and stashed under the cushion whenever snotty-nosed little tots walk into the room without knocking or cleaning their boots. A world in short without the joy of YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED or the life affirming bathos of HEARTBEAT. A world, fellow Americans, without celebs. A world, in short, without ME. I swear to you, fellow Manchurians, I swear to you on the sacred career of Gordon Brown that such a world shall not come to pass in Manchester or in any other State of our Union. Goodnight fellow Ninja Turtles and may God bless Ant and Dec."

These things having been slurred (I am indebted to Sister Euthanasia of The Mount Lourdes Convent in Enniskillen for sending me this rare example of an Ablative Absolute), Tony and HM Government joined Fr. Megson in a peaceful slumber in the urinal furtherest from the left.

And as they slept Clare Short sat knitting on the Bull Ring and dreamed of passing rose red tumbrils.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

24/03/2004

## South Reeks Reporter Postbag

Last week's cringing homage to Tonyism has caused waves of nausea around the Reeks and, with it, a rather pustulent swelling in our postbag this week. Which in turn has led to a spate of ruptured paper boys especially on the Carrauntuoil round. Windblown copies of our hallowed organ have draped themselves around lampposts as far south as Droitwich, a town which never before in its long history has been known to be swamped by culture.

Our long held editorial policy, as ratified by our local Lib Dem councillor, is to print only those readers' letters that pertain to the peril of dog turds in the windows of Estate Agents or to the even greater risk of a rash of chip pan fires breaking out in unlicensed local massage parlours, and, of course, to the social scourge of taxis that go beep in the night. Here then is a brief selection of letters that we considered too interesting to print:

A judge called Tony Cascarino who presides over a bench in the Marie Louise Gardens every morning until the pubs open, writes to say that he strongly objects to being likened to Claire Short:

"Don't let the accent or the hair style fool you", he cautions, "the honourable lady from the Bull Ring, and I, have nothing in common. Au contraire, my nanny is of the opinion that, on a clear night, my angelic good looks tend strongly to favour a young Tony Curtis. (ED. NOTE: he means the guy who used to play Baldrick in Blackadder). Indeed in the early 80's when I had a weekly spot at Foo Foos many young men of indeterminate gender were wont to climb on stage and beg me to autograph their Some Like It Hot videos. I rest my briefs.

"Incidentally, when the other less good looking Tony was in Vespers last week I don't suppose he mentioned if he had anyone in mind for the vacant Lord High Executioner job. I wouldn't mind having a bash at it myself although the early starts might pose a problem during the quizzing season. Let me put it through my mental blender and I will get back to you next week with a nice bowl of pea and ham soup."

Raising the decibels somewhat a Fr. Paisley, an apprentice Moderator in the Church of the Poisoned Chalice over in the diocese of Little Britain, Rockall and The Calf Of Man, fumes to the point of self-inflicted tinnitus:

"I enjoyed last week's exposé of what really goes on at Vespers Sauna and I enclose my membership fee for 20 years. I must however break the habit of a lifetime and rant against the quiz recently set by Ethel Rodin. I have nothing against the good lady in question. Indeed, over the years, I have taken much solace and solitary pleasure from Ms Rodin's "KISS" - but her quiz was an abomination in the sight of my lodge. What do you mean, do you breed beavers over there? Beavers are vile playthings of the Devil with sticky-out teeth just like Bernie Winters and how abominable is that? Shut up and let me rant in peace! To have one round on popery could have been excused as an attempt to please an old bigot by teasing him almost to the point of blessed release but to have FOUR - d'ya hear - I said FOUR rounds on POPERY in ONE quiz means war. Step outside now Ms Rodin and choose your instrument of perdition.

P.S. Could you send me an autographed photie and maybe a used neckerchief?"

The Editor Replies:

It was POT POURRI you deaf old goat. 'Pot Pourri' - French for rotten pot. Speaking of which, have you taken your Epsom Salts yet? Take a Lem Sip as well and get back into bed or I'll tell the duty nurse you tried jumping out the window in your longjohns last night to go to the Westlife concert. Go on. Into bed NOW. And don't forget the magic words: 'Teeth and toilet'.

P.S. The editor's decision is final in these matters and you ARE a deaf old goat. Breaking away from the Editor's tradition of saving the best till last, we end this week with a letter from a raddled Opsimath who ekes out a meagre living by solving frameworks - he can't manage the actual crossword clues yet, just the frames! He writes tediously:

"Here's an interesting thing" (you just know instinctively at this stage that it won't be - ED.). Whilst putting last week's article through my siege engine I sat up as if galvanised when I noticed that you had used the word "bathos". It certainly is a small world, as they say (inhabited almost exclusively by small-minded people - ED.). My great great grandmother's name was Bathos - Bathsheba Bathos to be precise, which I always try to be.

"I have done extensive research, sometimes to the detriment of my conjugal lifestyle, and I have discovered that she was a 16 year old ploughgirl from Horsham when my great great grandfather claimed her as part of his Droit de Seigneur package on a windy bluff overlooking what is today East Grinstead's prestigious new National Bus depot.

"Now my great great grandfather would have been one of the Thynne-Baths (the first component thereof being rather idiosyncratically pronounced "tin"). They were a very old Norman family who came over with William The Conqueror.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

William's motto, as every schoolboy and some of the better disciplined schoolgirls know, was "Honi soit qui mal y pong" which of course means in translation "never leave home without taking a bath". William seems to have taken this motto very literally because legend says he never went anywhere, not even on a date, without having a Thynne-Bath dancing attendance on his every move. A 'By Royal Appointment' sanitary ware business was thus born and the family duly cleaned up south of the Wash although they were less successful when they tried introducing the heathen concept of hygiene into West Yorkshire.

"You and your readers will be intrigued to know that our family Coat of Arms still features "un chat mèchant pissant dans le bain" on an avocet background. Avocet is, of course, the heraldic term for avocado. Fascinating, I'm sure you'll agree. I could talk about this subject for hours and I feel sure that you would be delighted to listen. When are you free?"

Not now. Michael. Not ever.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

31/03/2004

Reflections on an Opsimaths paper

*(no title)*

Father Megson has long been a voracious reader. By the age of 15 he had devoured the entire oeuvres of JANET AND JOHN and CHICKEN-LICKEN and he was ready for a new challenge. Consequently he set himself the goal of reading Chambers Autobiographical Dictionary and, in a lighter vein, the Complete Oxford Dictionary.

Understandably for a priest with a very hectic social life and a congenital narcoleptic condition, he has yet to get past page 7 of either tome.

How fortunate for his team then that last night's setters suffer from a similar tardiness in their reading. The letter 'A' posed no difficulty whatsoever. In fact we revised the life and times of John Aubrey at the end of Tuesday nights's training session. And people wonder why Fr. Megson is so successful! He would have been slightly less successful had the setter gone on to ask about the lives of famous people beginning with the letter Z but forewarned is forearmed and he will be stopping off at the library tonight for the MASK of ZORRO video and a few Lena Zavarone tapes.

Very enjoyable quiz. I think it was similar in temperament to the previous week's Piggy effort - i.e. wide subject base, some mental teasers, a few anagrams (not the highlight of one of the X-Pat's night: "everybody else gets effin' general knowledge and I get effin' anagrams!") and generally reasonably difficult but with a sense of humour e.g. Methil (no more) Rodin. Bet she didn't get that one.

My own QotW would be the photo of Kenneth Horne. But then I'm biased. For truly Fr. Megson is the son of Fr. Horne. Just my luck to be handed a photo of somebody bloody Robey who I had only vaguely heard about. But that's quizzing for you. I also had no idea about the apple with its origins in Essex so I went for a Dagenham Piper. I strongly feel that such an apple should exist.

Congrats. to John B. for getting the long scientific question - sorry, essay - right. I was very relieved that it didn't come across for a bonus because we didn't understand a word of it. Are you absolutely sure it wasn't a brief synopsis of the plot of LORD OF THE RINGS? Oh well.

Gerry



## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

07/04/2004

### The Big Match – Souvenir Programme

The B-League fixture between Arsenal and Chelsea has been brought forward by 24 hours this week so as not to clash with the eagerly awaited meeting of those mediocre Titans, Opsimaths (Harry) and Brains of Oak (Aunt Sally). Stakes could not be higher with the winners expected to move into a pivotal mid-table position a mere 20 or so lengths behind the heavily weighted and blinkered pacemakers George the Fifth.

To mark this historic anticlimax we are publishing a special souvenir edition of our match programme Dope Test. John Dennison who, as not many people care, now plays for the Brains but continues to have his pints bought for him by the Opsimaths, has kindly agreed to be our centrespread model (watch out for those unsightly staples, John) and to answer our fanzine questionnaire. Please be aware that John was suffering from a mild and bitter hangover during the photo shoot and interview and cannot therefore be held legally responsible for any material contained therein which might lead to a breach of the peace.

DOPE TEST(DT): John, welcome to the club. I'm sure you must be very excited at the prospect of tonight's clash of the mediocre Titans.

JOHN: Not really. You have sausages, perhaps?

DT: Judging by your accent you're not a local lad made good, are you?

JOHN: Nice sausages. You have ketchup? No, neither local nor made good. I born in West Yorkshire but shortly my father he was moved to Siberia for reading Jeffrey Archer novel when he should have been hosing down pit pony. I am happy to be native of Irkutsk. Is much trendier than Bradford.

DT: But your name is English?

JOHN: Da and nyet. Is Anglicisation of real name. In my corrective camp when I join playgroup is already another Ivan Denisovich - very boring man. Always writing boring things in diary like "today I eat rotten potato". Not so good thriller writer as Jeffrey Archer. So they translate my name to John Dennison. Is unpronouncable and silly name, yes? In Reeks they call me Sean McDenis and also other names which I am not understanding.

DT: So you joined our quiz league for fame and fortune?

JOHN: Da spasibo. Also beer. Also sausages. I have very good agent. Best in all of gulag. He insisted I must have own bed-sit with key. Also own toaster, porringer and television set. Is very good television set. Receives not only black but also white. Is very cosy to cuddle up with Ant and Dec at weekend and toast hot buttered sausages.

DT: And have you adjusted to our language and weather?

JOHN: Da. Language is more littler problema than I have used to thunk. I only have major problema with language as she is bespoken if I am leaving my bed-sit. Weather also is better than I have thunk. I think your summers very much similar to our winters in Siberia.

DT: And has Fr. Megson taken you under his wing?

JOHN: Da. Chicken wings also very nice. Especially spicy ones from Marx and Spenglers. Fr. Megson is very influential man. But I have met him only once. We were in changing room after once more big big defeat. I remember Roisin and Jane were very unhappy to share shower with six drunken men and Damian. Fr. Megson strode in manfully like John Wayne, only without horse, you understand. He call team together in very wet huddle and announce in very powerful voice: "No more chocolate bikkies for you lot 'cause all you do is eat them!" Then he kiss me on both cheeks, ask me for a tenner to support very sick animal in 3:10 at Uttoxeter and is gone. I think Fr. Megson is very spiritual person. He is perhaps the Rasputin of the Reeks. Maybe one day Boney M will write famous song in his honour also..Ra... Ra.... Rasputin. Is very splendid song, no?

DT: No. You can go back to your bed-sit now.

JOHN: Spasibo. You want to buy rabbit-hat?

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

14/04/2004

## Fr. Megson's housekeeper opens the door.....and her heart

"Oh hello, what do you want? No love, I'm his housekeeper. Priests don't wear headscarves. You should know that.

"No, Fr. Megson can't come out to play this evening. He's indisposed. Hors de combat, as Fr. Wenger used to say in that funny accent of his. No love, that ill-bred Fr. Colleymore took him down to Cannock Chase on a doggin' weekend and the poor thing only crawled back last night. You should see the state of him - cuts and bruises all over the place. More gore than in that new Mel Gibson filum, The Passion of Beckham or whatever it's called. The poor little fella spent all last night in his basket licking his belly.

"... No love, that wouldn't be part of a housekeeper's job description. But I'll sew his ear back on when I've put it through the mangle.

"No love, he didn't say what happened. But he's been whimpering and crying out something shockin' in his sleep ..... something about them having an altercation with some pointers who kept laughing at them and calling them names. Honestly, he's not cut out for that type of stuff, poor wee lamb. His little nose is all hot and dry and that's never a good sign, is it?

"Yes love, you're right, I blame that naughty Fr. Stan as well. Disgrace to the cloth he is and always has been.

"No love, you're right, not worthy to wear a dog-collar. I tell you, that nice Saint Jude must have been working overtime to get a cur like him through his final Doctor of Divinity exams. Combined Honours in Theosophy and Celtic Studies my erse! Wouldn't know the difference between a druidic fertility symbol and a Swedish weather forecaster if you ask me!

"Don't fancy coming in for a drink do you, love? It gets a bit lonely here when he's stuck in his kennel. We could maybe crack open a tea bag or two. I've got plenty of tea bags. No strings attached

"No? Are you sure, love? Lots of men would jump at the chance, you know. Underneath this nylon housecoat beats the heart of a passionate woman.

"No? Sure? Oh well. You'd better sod off then. Bye.

"Now. How do you get offline on these things? Let's try this button. Sod it. That's the Hoover. Must be this one then. Oh sugar! Has anyone got a torch? ....."

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

05/05/2004

## Quiz Feedback and Wasps

There were an awful lot of quiz players in the Fletcher Moss last night. I thought that the alcohol must have been laying claim to my faculties even earlier than usual because every time I looked up I caught sight of some reprobate or other from our hallowed quiz league. Were they holding auditions for Fifteen to One or something?

Anyway, when they weren't avowing their disappointment at West Brom once again failing to make it to the European Cup Final, or being sick at the bar, they all seem to have been united by a common feeling about the quizset for last night. A lynch mob was gathering momentum by the door and shouts of "Let's drive the varmints outa town" could be heard all down Barlow Moor Road.

Nobody enjoys an occasional lynching more than me but, at the risk of sounding like Henry Fonda in Twelve Angry Men, I think we should give the setters a fair trial. Who wants to be Lee J. Cobb? OK so it was hard and not to everyone's taste. We won but our score wasn't marvellous. It wasn't the type of quiz where you were encouraged to go for cavalier 2 pointers (Ivan Denisovich from our team and Mike from the Albert excepted) but personally I felt that the questions encouraged quite a bit of logical conferring and many of them were gettable at least as a guess.

I thought the "nearer home" round based in the North West of England was a good example. Eminently difficult but we had a lot of interesting debates trying to puzzle out the solution. We hadn't a clue about the obscure Roman settlement name but we eventually arrived at Ribchester as a good guess given its North West location and the fact that it was a settlement rather than an actual modern town. I think the round based on the new entrants to the EEC could have been made slightly more easy and interesting. Ten intriguing countries should have been able to supply more inspiration to the setters than an insipid double portion of national dishes - whatever a national dish is when it's at home. I speak as an Irishman who has not eaten cabbage and bacon since I was four. But the concept of the round was nevertheless sound.

All I'm saying is don't automatically jump to the conclusion that a difficult low scoring quiz is the same thing as a "bad" quiz. Marshall Dillon has already made this point so try to pay more attention in future. After all, a scoreless draw in football can be just as exciting as a 4-4 draw. But, as a former manager of West Brom, Fr. Megson feels he should now drop this entertaining football analogy before it blows up in his face.

What's that? You still want to lynch poor old Snoopy Dog. Oh, all right then. They're in the attic. But no torture mind, or I will cancel our trip to Wacky Warehouse on Sunday. This is a British quiz league after all.

Fr. S.M.

PS. Incidentally, Copeland, I read your very impressive and impassioned plea for Civil Rights for the humble wasp in last Saturday's Guardian. Like you, Fr. Megson has many friends who are wasps and proud of it. WASPs are a different matter and should be swatted twice a day for refusing to go to mass and incestuously conspiring to spawn the Bush dynasty.

One question though. How do you know that ALL wasps feed meat to their kids? Surely a fairly large percentage of Didsbury-dwelling, Guardian-reading parenting wasps would tend towards vegetarianism. In which case it would probably be fair play to swat them, at least playfully, if they land in your muesli.

What does the rest of the league think about this moral dilemma? No answer. Probably not back from the lynching yet.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

12/05/2004

## Millwall fan writes..... or should I say scrawls

Fr. Megson's rejuvenated altar boys and girls breezed past the despairing and inebriated lunges of a tiring Fulham FC select IV last night.

Good questions and overall an enjoyably sporting contest keenly invigilated by Colinski. Although, to be honest, he only ever looked up from his Guardian crossword when he heard the rumble of an oncoming London Tube station question or when Fr. Megson tried taking a sneaky swig of his beloved Snecklifter. Fr. M. seems vaguely to recall being called a filthy Snecklifter during his Seminary days but the reasons that lay behind this jocular nickname are now secreted deep in the labarinthine archives of Maynooth police station.

So now all Fr. Megson has to do is to keep his squad moderately sober and pure in spirit until the Cup Final. No easy task although Ivan Denisovich is virtually certain to return pure as the driven slush and spiritually shriven - or should that be shrivelled - from his walking expedition when he aims to become the first man to walk from Robin Hood's Bay right across to Siberia without spilling his Snecklifter or shouting obscenities at his faithful husky, Boris.

2004 will surely go down in history as the year when an absolutely mediocre team made it to both the FA Cup Final and to the Withquiz Cup Final. You can rest assured, though, that neither Fr. M. nor that other cheeky altar boy, Wise by name if not by nature, will be taking their superannuated opposition lightly.

"I know people will accuse me of being an overcautious namby-pamby", said the bespectacled supremo, "but I will be treating Finger V as a proper quiz team. I didn't get where I am today by not doing my homework. I have already started watching videos of them in action. My favourite one so far is the one of Barry on the Club 18-30 romp in Ibiza in 1982. Amazing. I haven't seen anyone in that position since Devon Loch keeled over in the 1956 Cup Final."

Incidentally Mike if you happen to get knocked out of the Plate - and I know that's unlikely - could the Opsimaths set again for the final. If you are stuck for ideas might I suggest 64 themed questions on Irish counties beginning with the letter F. Just an idea.

Fr. Megson.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

19/05/2004

### A Very Unsporting Cup Final Build Up

With just two weeks to go to the Cup Final (except for viewers in the Northern Reeks who will have a second chance to hear The Rev. Ian Paisley in conversation with Graham Norton) intense pressure is building up within the seething cauldron that is The Griffin taproom, spiritual home of crisis boy-band Finger V.

As someone who has built his reputation on charity (more games thrown away than any other team this season) Fr. Megson has long been loathe to kick an opponent who is lying bloodied and senseless on the ground. However, after much wrestling with his conscience, he now feels that this might in fact be the safest time and place to kick an opponent..... so here goes.

"History tells us that all evil Empires eventually crumble", mumbled Fr. Megson ex cathedra as he polished off his third cream egg in as many minutes," and Finger V are no exception. This is a must win match for them. The directors of Holts demand instant gratification in the shape of cups and, frankly one measly league championship is scant return for all the beer that has been pumped into their underachieving guzzlers this season. Admittedly their eccentric manager, Marshall Dillon, is not without a modicum of animal magnetism (witness the recent Curious Case Of The Dog In His Nightgown!), and his English has come on leaps and bounds since last season, but frankly I will be surprised if he is not back managing a kebab stall in Albania by the end of the summer. He seems fated to lead teams to within a gnat's whisker of a double climax and then being asked to stand aside while someone else finishes off the job in hand. Or at least that's my reading of the situation based on my extensive knowledge of Barbara Cartland novels."

However our fastidious cleric is taking nothing for granted.

"I did not get where I am today by not doing my homework (and I still have the three smiley faces and the Zeta+ mark I received for my Why Sassenach children are boring, with particular reference to The Janet and John oeuvres dissertation back in 1959 to prove it). I have done a complete statistical analysis of the opposition's strengths and weaknesses and unfortunately it proves that they still have at least a mathematical chance of beating us on the night. My greatest fear is that they might get a question on local football teams right - thus becoming the first mortals to correctly answer the vexed question of Manchester City since the heady days of Joe Mercer. Such a lucky break might give them the impetus to go on and finish with a score approaching double figures and I don't think even the finely honed Brains of Oak could compete at that level.

"That is why I am now asking for your assistance in a local campaign I am organising (vendetta is an ugly word, don't you think?). If anyone out there can lay their hands on a klaxon of any kind, or a dog that likes to howl for some tender loving throughout the night, can they please bring them along at midnight for the next two weeks and I will give you further instructions when we meet up initially at: Dunwinnin, 16 Spatchcock Mews M20? You can find the home addresses of the other members of Finger V simply by tuning in to 'www.weknowwherelive.dot cotton' or from any good police station.

"Additionally I have invited the vociferous fan club of a well known and successful Irish stand up comedian to come along and chant the name of their hero under the bedroom window. A loud chorus of 'Dylan Moran forever' should be enough to eat away the final vestiges of their manager's flimsy self-belief.

"And thanks finally to Mike Heale for promising to come along each night and serenade our rapidly disintegrating opposition with his inimitable rendition of Morrissey's greatest hits. I never fail to be amazed at Mike's uncanny ability to mimic that plaintive note of disaffected alienation that has, over the years, made Morrissey Manchester's best loved wuss."

Fr. Megson broke off at this point to go and book an open-topped Magic Bus for the victorious homecoming parade. He certainly lives the dream, doesn't he?

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

09/06/2004

### More lasting than Bronze

A Chairde,

I know it's all over for another season barring hangovers but just to let you know that Fr. Megson is still waxing lyrically and gibbously over the moon about achieving his lifetime ambition of becoming a clue in a Dummy crossword. Eat your heart out Finger V - the better priest won. Better luck next year. "Dissolute Spiritual Leader Of Our Quiz Community" is, to Fr. Megson's way of thinking, a far more impressive epitaph than "He/She Knew 64 Things And A Couple Of Spares". Thanks again Dummy.

Slan til next season,

Fr. Megson

PS. Almost forgot, what does dissolute mean?

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

13/10/2004

Start of a new season and FCEK have decamped from the Royal Oak in Didsbury and gone to The White Swan in Ladybarn

## THE ROUGH GUIDE TO LADYBARN

A Chairde,

Someone famous, I think it was Jane Austen though it may well have been David Beckham, once said that if a young lady despaired of finding romantic adventure in her own village, she should seek it in another village. Fr. Megson thinks so too. So it was that, on a dank and dreary Wednesday night in October of the year 2004, shortly into the reign of good queen Kilroy Silk, that his new team, FCEK - THE IRISH CONNECTION, packed their trunks, said goodbye to the circus that is Didsbury Village and embarked on a new life of sordid mediocrity in the adjoining hamlet of Ladybarn (pop. 633 plus an itinerant part-time postman based in Fallowfield).

"A new season and perhaps a new millennium", thunk the ginger-haired, increasingly celibate Adonis as he hung his lovingly-pressed cassock and vest on the single coat-hanger, which also served as a light-fitting, thoughtfully provided by his adopted hostelery, The White Swan. That same White Swan as was famously bypassed by Prince Rupert of the Rhine on his way to the battle of Marston Moor, largely because it had yet to be built but perhaps also because he feared the Robinsons Best bitter would have a diuretic effect on his men in the heat of battle.

"Pray, what brings you down to these parts?" inquired a friendly jug-eared local, as Fr. Megson settled his nerves and his team at the bar, soon to be their home from home and, in Roisin's case, her only home.

"A lousy agent, fate and a paucity of success in metropolitan Didsbury", mused the failed urbanite.

"The world over there is full of married men, aye and Opsimaths and ex-Braggarts too. They're welcome to their newfangled ways and fancy inventions like Electric Pigs that light up at the merest touch of your finger. We hanker after the simple life and a single light bulb is about as simple as life gets. Now move aside, friendly jug-eared local, and allow me to inquire of that denim-clad vision behind the bar if she is unescorted after supping up time. I wager she will be mightily impressed to hear that I once plied my trade in sybaritic West Bromwich". She wasn't all that impressed as it transpired and thereby doesn't hang a tale.

For those of you who are cognisant of the fact that Bandar Seri Begawan is the capital of Brunei yet have never dared venture beyond Didsbury for a pint and a packet of pork scratchings, let me assure you that a trip to Ladybarn is not nearly as hazardous as THE GUIDE TO ROUGH WITHINGTON AND BEYOND would have you believe. Do not however, under any circumstances, attempt it without a duffel coat and a slab of Kendal mint cake.

### Route 1 (the most direct):

Take a north bound bus from Wilmslow Road and ask for Fallowfield (Phallo'feel'). No need to ask to be put off when you get there 'cause that will be your natural reaction when you see it. On alighting, don't immediately panic and think you've landed in the Home Counties. That's just the way the students speak these days. Point yourself in an easterly direction towards the dreaming spires of Droylsden and walk, don't swagger. When the dress sense of the locals begins to remind you of old TV footage of the Jarrow march, start looking for the large sign that says:

WELCOME TO LADYBARN - DESIGNATED BY UNTESCO AS AN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL MONOTONY. PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY - BOYS WITH HOODS CROSSING.

Then slow down until you come to a pub called the Talbot at which point you should gather speed again and run as if your life depended on it (it does). Then when you have recovered your sang-froid and rearranged your underclothing, simply follow the Charabanc Parking signs and you will eventually be grabbed by the lapels and "invited" into the hallowed vault of The White Swan.

And that's when your adventure really begins.....

### Route 2 (the most expensive):

Take a train to Stanstead Airport where you can get some really cheap flights these days. Unfortunately however even Ryanair refuses to fly to Ladybarn. So ask a taxi driver to take you back to Manchester. This could cost you as little as £550 if you smile winsomely. The driver will take you as far as The Pie and Porringer on School Lane but he obviously won't take you to Ladybarn after dark. So your most sensible option at this juncture would be to walk home and pray that you don't draw FCEK -The Irish Connection away in the first round of the Cup.

See, I told you there was nothing to worry about. Fr Megson

20/10/2004

## **OOPS.....IMATHS LET IT SLIP**

A Chairde,

Heartbreak for crisis club Opsimaths at rainswept Albert Club last night as they narrowly failed to bring off the comeback of the season against a dour yet increasingly metaphysical FCEK side.

It was a particularly dark teatime of the soul for Brionski, the Opsimath's brilliant but wayward Romanian international who, shrugging off accusations of indulging in life-enhancing drugs, played the game of his now officially non-enhanced life and still managed to end up on the losing side.

"Gutted, absolutely gutted", sobbed team captain and former heart-throb, Mike Bath.

"Going into the game nobody gave us a chance of grinding out a result against FCEK, possibly one of the slickest quiz teams to come out of Ladybarn in the last decade. But fair play to the lads and lass, they played their socks and tights off and I think our fan was also outstanding tonight. Out standing in the rain I mean because he's currently barred for selling his services to the highest bidder. Going into the final round I really thought we had cracked it. We had 'em on the ropes crying for the towel to be thrown in. Marvellous."

So.....what went wrong Mikey?

"I'm not saying anything until I have had a chance to see the video but I suppose with hindsight some people might say it was tactically naive for me to play the final round with young Brionski up front on his own and the rest of the team dropping back to the bar. I think our lines of communication became a bit stretched. I told them I wanted them to play in a Double Diamond formation but perhaps I didn't make myself clear.

"I've also told Colinski, our brilliant but wayward Moldovan striker that his knowledge is exquisite but it might be even more effective if he learned to release it earlier, perhaps even before the question gets answered incorrectly by both teams. A small quibble I know but I think it is attention to detail that marks out great managers like wot I am from mere mortals like Joe Keegan."

And will the Opsimaths avoid the drop this season? Everybody seems to have their own opinion, mostly negative. What's yours, Mikey?

"That's dashed decent of you. I'll have a pint of Albert and a packet of crisps please. Oh go on then, twist my arm then. Just a small Glenmorangie, ice, no coke and maybe another packet of crisps to keep the first one company. God, did you see that Brionski tonight. Triffic. Different class. Did I mention that he's brilliant but wayward? Don't know what he was on tonight, but whatever it was, I bet you you could bottle it and sell it behind the bar for 3 quid a pint. We could call it something German and pretend it was real. Trust me, I'm sure it would catch on. .We could get rich and buy a new team. We could....."

Triffic idea, Mike, different class.

Fr. Megson



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

27/10/2004

Reflections on a home defeat by Ethel Rodin

*(no title)*

A chairde,

Thrills and spills aplenty at the Village of Ladybarn

Stadium last night as Ethel Rodin deservedly outclassed the erstwhile league leaders in a high scoring, top-notch game watched by a handful of non-appreciative locals.

Here are some of the more repeatable post match comments:

**Winning team manager, Roz Rodin:**

"I never use clichés because I think their usage is becoming somewhat clichéd in the league in which we live today. Suffice to say that I'm feeling a tad superlunatic at this moment in time. I rested myself and decided to let some of the youth team have a run out tonight. It was a bit of a gamble but it paid off handsomely. Well, maybe not handsomely, but you know what I mean! I thought all my babies, with the possible exception of baby Tolin, played with great poise and maturity. And, speaking of maturity, I note with some alarm that my bottle of Highland Park is nearing the end of its natural life.....Garcon!"

**Father Megson:**

"Effin Rodents -- sorry, I don't mean to be bitter and twisted. It's just that I've been under a lot of stress recently. Tonight's defeat means that I may well be the first manager this season to be sacked twice within 48 hours. Mind you, I shall be taking my first dismissal to the High Court on the grounds that it took place in a parallel universe. They can't do that, can they? You've gotta help me, Tony. Don't go to sleep on me, Tony, wake up. God, I thought judges were meant to be sober!"

**Baby John Tolin** (third team youth player and apprentice heartthrob):

"It's every trainee heartthrob's dream to play a quiz in Ladybarn and I still can't believe I've scored tonight. Just think, only last week I was sat at home peeling the spuds and inventing 8 new words for last week's quiz! And tonight I'm scoring in Ladybarn! To be honest I don't remember much about it. Somebody said 'yarg' so I just closed my eyes and shouted 'nettles' like you do when you panic. And when I woke up all the team were on top of me, you know, kissing and cuddling and that sort of thing. It was a marvellous feeling, I can tell you. Marvellous."

**Sven Goren Eriksson** (a Swedish commercial traveller currently sharing digs in Ldybarn):

"Ya, forsure it was good but I have came only tonight to see Roz Rodin in action but she is not giving me action. This makes me feel bad forsure because I have many respects for her because she is happy to be dominant and because she is refusing to have a TV in her kitchen. In Sweden we have a wise saying which is saying that a team is not a team without a fox without a box. Now I have explained myself forsure so I will go to fold my underwear and listen once more for DANCING QUEEN on my music centre."

So it's Goodnight from Sven, and Goodnight from a very redundant.....

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

03/11/2004

Reflections on a paper set by FCEK which St Caths found far too lengthy

*(no title)*

A Chairde,

Fr. Megson is believed to be in hiding this weekend following allegations that his fingerprints had been found on a suspect picture round found in several South Manchester pubs and clubs on Wednesday night last. He is believed to have sought diplomatic immunity in the Gboottee Embassy situated in leafy South West Ladybarn. Late last night the Embassy received a call from a man, claiming to represent the Moral Majority breakaway faction of the Didsbury Rotary Club. He is claimed to have warned the controversial cleric not to show his face in any pub within a 5 mile radius of School Lane or the consequences would be dire. The man, who spoke with a pronounced St Cath's accent was unspecific about the nature of any planned retribution but warned that, if carried out, it would mean a long period of enforced and excruciating celibacy for the hapless Fr. Megson.

In a hastily convened press conference, Fr. Megson said he was unable to comment although he was heard to give a loud gulp when he heard the nature of the threats. He did manage to point out however an inaccuracy on this week's website.

"I tend never listen to anything that shock-jock Mike Bath says on the stupid website. There's enough bilge on Radio Eireann to keep me happy. But just let me point out to smarty-pants Bath and his elk - sorry I mean ilk - that curates do not in fact lay eggs and certainly not when they are feeling as menopausal as wot I am at the moment. What do you mean bad-tempered git? I am NOT being bad-tempered! It's youse that are being unreasonable ..... bugger off and find something else to read.....I'm goin' down a pub .....but definitely not on School Lane."

Fr. Megson.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

10/11/2004

Father Megson is away travelling around the Baltic states

### Fr. Megson has left the Building

A Chairde,

No Fr. Megson this week since he has accepted a lucrative missionary position in Eastern Europe. He will be hurtling around Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the Baltic Rail Express - not to be confused with the Balti Express which hurtles only between West Bromwich and Edgbaston on a Friday night after the pubs close.

Having closely observed Kirsty Wark's BBC series NEW EUROPE, Fr. M. is blissfully aware that the countries in question seem only to be inhabited by a giant race of blonde females, none of whom are legally allowed to be under 6 foot 3 inches in their dainty ankle socks. Coming from the Northern Reeks, where no female is legally allowed to exceed 5 foot 1 inch, Fr. Megson has obviously got his work cut out but he has always been keen to have a go at holding down a missionary position and we have to admire his selflessness, his pluck and his grossly misplaced optimism.

If you are all very good he will bring you back something nice from the Baltics. Sorry, Ivor, taking 6foot 3 inch blondes out of the country is frowned upon over there. But I might be able to get you a new plate to replace the one you so carelessly lost last season. There's a loaf and a tin of mushy peas in the fridge and a pint of milk cooling on the bathroom window ledge, so you shouldn't starve. Oh, and don't forget to turn the radiators off before you lift Baby Tolin out of his playpen.

Fr. Megson.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/11/2004

Father Megson returns from his trip around the Baltic states

## Letter from the Baltics

A Chairde,

Bitter disappointment for all Withquiz junkies this week as Fr. Megson returns still jobless from the Baltics. His last hope of gainful employment disappeared after the Chairman of the legendary FC Skonto Riga admitted that he would probably be hanged drawn and quartered if he were to appoint the much reviled cleric. "Maybe now you should let the Wolves have him", he sneered uncharitably, as Fr. Megson responded with a visible wince.

Some brief impressions of Latvia and Lithuania (I ran out of time and will have to save Estonia for next time):

1. Baltic Rail is fairly efficient but to use the word "express" in this instance would be as daft as to refer to our DAILY EXPRESS as a proper newspaper. It will get you there in the end, but bring three novels, a bottle of vodka and a cushion with you. Or if you are feeling lazy, you could always stay in Riga Old Town and spend the afternoon in one of its many Irish bars watching reruns of English Coca Cola cup ties on large TV screens. Now there's cultural for you!

2. Lithuania is far more exotic than the somewhat Scandinavian Latvia. Vilnius is a blend of exquisite Russian Orthodox church architecture and brutalist Stalin-era tenements. The people don't seem as self-assured as the Letts, and designer jeans are not de rigeur - but they are more willing to talk and seem to have a nice self-deprecating sense of humour, neatly summed up by this splendid logo I saw on a T-shirt (covering a rather splendid chest):

I LOVE LITHUANIA - BUT WHERE EXACTLY IS IT?

3. My favourite fact about Lithuania:

All their lifts seem to be manufactured by a company called Schindler. Now Lithuania is not a country where you can make jokes about death camps with an easy conscience but I must admit I was tickled by the idea of Liam Neeson rising to stardom in a film called SCHINDLER'S LIFT. Sorry about that!

3. Most esoteric moment: Watching WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE in Lithuanian with Russian subtitles. I must admit I found it tough going - on a par with last week's quiz set by Snoopy Dog by all accounts! The 64,000 litas question was (and I paraphrase):

"Blah blah blahvasi blah blahets blah Jose Mourinho blah blah blahvets. Illi:

- A) ARSENAL                      B) CHELSEA  
C) MANCHESTER UNITED      D) LIVERPOOL?"

The contestant looked at the QM as if he was an idiot (and he probably was) and, without batting a bushy eyelid, plumped for Chelski. I was impressed. Now can you imagine Chris Tarrant asking a contestant from Basildon:

"Which of these Lithuanian football clubs is managed by Viktor Brazauskas. Is it:

- A) KAUNAS                      B) VILNIUS  
C) KLAIPEDA                  D) ZEMAITIJA?

Take your time."

"Well, Chris, I've got an idea but I think I will phone my friend Barry who lives in the Griffin. He knows all the Premiership clubs in the Northwest so he's bound to know this one. Over to you, Baz."

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

01/12/2004

An epic victory over Fifth Finger at the Griffin is cause for celebration in Ladybarn

## WE WOULD LIKE TO HIRE A TOPLESS BUS PLEASE

A chairde,

Much binding in the Reeks last night - and not all of it totally suitable for pre-watershed TV viewing - as FCEK returned to a hero's welcome following their epic victory against their auld Saxon foes, Finger V. Fr. Megson is feeling far too emotionally overwrought to pen anything remotely resembling a coherent column.

Y.....i.....pp.....eeeeee.....

So let's detach ourselves for the moment from the cesspit that is his stream of consciousness and put things into perspective.

Firstly, yes, it was a grand victory and, I think, a deserved one. We kept thinking it would only be a matter of time before we managed to blow our early lead but the moment never arrived. Not even when yours truly did his best to self-implode by dismantling Brunton Park in scenic Carlisle brick by brick and setting it down kicking and screaming in Bolton's Lowryesque backstreets of the 1950s.

Over the next few days the website and the tabloids will doubtless be full of inquests and lurid headlines of the KIERAN MUST GO variety. But, lest we forget, Finger V's defeat is headline news purely and simply because it does not happen very often. And it does not happen very often because they are a fiendishly good quiz team. And the cheery spirit which they showed in accepting defeat and quaffing our free beer libations (and a burnt offering of peanuts for Martin) makes them an even better quiz team. So remember folks, they are good but not invincible. Believe in yourselves and feel free to add to their grief next time you play them. Let's make it an eleven horse photo finish season.

Incidentally, it was nice to note that FCEK's reward for beating the league leaders was to drop down from second to third position. As they say in the Northern Reeks, that Ivor is a sleeked one - you couldn't trust him with your granny!

Speaking of league placings, does anybody know why this week's setters, the Opsimaths, are languishing at the foot of the table when they are in possession of so much varied and esoteric knowledge as was in evidence in their paper last night? I suppose all of them are at an age when, whenever they hear an interesting fact on Radio 4 and decide to jot it down as "a good question", they find that - by the time they have wandered upstairs to retrieve their spectacles from the laundry basket - and then trundled back down to the downstairs loo to liberate the cat - and then find that the pencil sharpener which they seem to remember using as a bookmark that morning when they were forced to abandon reading Schott's very interesting Miscellany because the wife's constant banging on the loo door and frenzied cries of "are you dead in there or what?" became too much of a distraction - well, they find that the interesting fact has already wafted gently through the canyons of their mind and back into the ether whence it came.

They did a good job last night though. I thought they gave a master class in the art of balancing. Both teams were given an equal dosage of fairly straightforward questions and more devious posers that never quite stepped outside the boundaries of guessability. The picture round wasn't my cup of tea really and I found it very difficult but I would happily give it 10 out of 10 for freshness and inventiveness. Again, purely on a personal level, I would dispense with the "question of the week" category on this occasion and award instead a "round of the week" trophy to their excellent "cinematic colours" theme.

What's that again? you thought that round was crap? Oh well. That's quiz-business for you!

The final word on FCEK's epic struggle with Finger V goes to that well known Jesuit and papal pizza adviser, Pere Arsene Wenger, who observed the game on a specially erected giant screen at Old Trafford (well, when over 60,000 people turn up you have to make some attempt to entertain them!). Pere Wenger was heard to comment:

"C'est magnifique mais c'est n'est pas la buerre".

Actually, he made this comment some years ago during a heated TV debate on the merits of STORK margarine with the late and not terribly lamented Leslie Crowther. But what's the point of being Fr. Megson if you can't use a bit of poetic licence now and again.

Fr. M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

08/12/2004

## Of Cabbages and Queens

A chairde,

You may recall that Fr. Megson's Teaser of the Week last Friday was "Why are the Opsimaths at the bottom of the league?". A swollen postbag duly ensued, though not as swollen as the one received a few weeks ago pertaining to matters arising from our 6 foot 3 inch Baltic babes debate.

Unfortunately, no correct answers were received, so our star prize of a signed snapshot of Ethel Rodin playing Doctors and Nurses on the beach at New Brighton (c1962) will now be rolled over to our next competition - hard to believe that baby Tolan was still only 38 when that snap was taken all those far-off, sepia-tinted years ago!

The most ludicrously incorrect solution to our teaser came from a regular listener called Colinski, a retired child prodigy from Kiev, who writes unconvincingly:

"As you are no doubt aware, we are a very much better quiz team than most people realise. If you examine the video footage of all our games you will quickly see that we have hardly missed a spare all season; nor have we failed to answer an opponent's question except for those tricky occasions when it has been passed over to us whilst we have been engaged in solving our crossword puzzle which, I think you will agree, is a perfectly legitimate way to while away yet another boring quiz evening. I feel that this speaks volumes for the woeful quality of the quiz setters this season. The amateurish inability of these so called "bright young things" to position the questions allocated to the Opsimaths in any sort of logical mayhem is killing off our chances of winning the League this season just as surely as myxomatosis did in the bad old 1950s."

He continues: "Far be it from me to make excuses but you would also have to agree that we have been a martyr to niggling injuries this season. That most of them were self-inflicted is true but hardly germane to the argument. Not to mention the blatant bias of the regular QM towards our opposition. When was the last time we got a spare at home? I'll tell you bloody when. The 17th of bloody March 1954 - and only then because it was bloody St. Patrick's night and she was too bloody pissed to tell us apart from the bloody away team! No, I have a lot of sympathy with that Gerard Houllier bloke when he said that his beloved Liverpool never deserved to lose a single game during his 6 year reign of glory at Anfield. That they did in fact lose most of them was unfortunate, but what can you do when Lady Luck decides to treat you like un plonker de grand magnitude?"

Not a lot, Colinski and Gerard, not a lot. Sometimes world events take a dramatic turn that overshadow even the Machiavellian world of the Withington quiz league. Such an occasion occurred last Friday evening when one of our greatest statesmen, Robert Kilroy-Silk, was brutally ambushed on the steps of the BBC studios on Oxford Road, ironically perhaps, just a stone's throw away from the site of the Peterloo massacre in 1819.

Much to his credit, Fr. Megson was quick to show his revulsion and to condemn the perpetrator.

"It saddens and pains me greatly", he pontificated from his luxuriously padded pulpit at 9o'clock mass on Sunday, "that some mindless thug, who quite possibly hails from some decent middle-class family of this parish and who has had all the benefits of a state education, should so wantonly and so wilfully waste a perfectly good bucket of shite in this manner....."

The more charitable among you will be relieved to hear that Mr Kilroy-Silk is making a manly effort to shake off the odour of sanctity thus showered upon him.

"Only time will tell", he told an appreciative, if somewhat distant audience, "but I feel confident that my hair is big enough to bounce straight back after the 48 dousings of Jeyes Fluid it has had to endure tonight."

One beneficial result of the debacle is that Mr. Kilroy-Silk may now leave UKIP to muddle on without him.

"I have found that a bucketful of ordure in the mush concentrates the mind wonderfully", he crooned. "Sadly I now feel that UKIP is no longer big enough to harbour a statesman of my undoubted ego. Consequently, I now intend to launch a new, more egocentric party which, after careful thought, shall be called the KILROY-SILK - THE UNITED KINGDOM'S UNRIVALLED NATIONAL TREASURE party."

Anybody who wishes to support the new party should contact Fr. Megson in Vespers nightclub after confessions on Saturday evening when he hopes to have a small number of introductory badges and tee-shirts to give away.

Wear them with pride. Fr M.

15/12/2004

## Last Night

A chairde,

Like Chelsea, Snoopy Dog has had difficulty fielding a full team this season so it was nice to see their full strength side get back to winning ways last night. It would have been even nicer had it not been against us, the hapless FECKS of late. What price us becoming the first team to beat Fifth Finger and get relegated in the same season? No quibbles though. Beaten by a better team last night. We always find Snoopy a bit of a handful. They are the slumbering giants of the league and if they can buy a few more regular players they will once more be a major force in world quizzes. Team supremo, Tony Orlando (26), is looking forward to the transfer window opening in January.

"Yes, it is a bit stuffy in here tonight," he said in his post-match summing-up.

"As you know, I am a very sleepy giant indeed and I thought the questions looked a bit on the tired side as well tonight. So, all in all, it might be an excellent idea to open a window in January. Do we need a warrant?"

Fr. M

*....and, following the above match report, I'm very honoured to have received a Christmas Card from our friend from Erin addressed to all at Withquiz.....*



**....EWE SEXY THING....**

Fr. Megson (pictured left in the dark demob suit) indulges in some sub Graham Nortonesque baaanter with Imelda (nearly 2) from Swaledale, one of the finalists in this year's REEKS OF SHEEP X-FACTOR final currently being recorded in Vespers nightclub. The final of the contest that has gripped the nation by its communal jockstrap will be shown on ITV 1 on Christmas Day and will run simultaneously with The Queen's Speech. The lucky winner will receive a nosebag full of mashed turnips and an exclusive contract to host www.Withquiz from January onwards (take a well-earned hike, Mike).

.....PLUS the once in a lifetime opportunity to share a single berth with Fr. Megson and Trevor Mc Donald during a romantic 7 night cruise on wine dark Wastwater.

.....Eat yer hearts out Carlisle Utd. fans.....

Best wishes to all our quiz teams,

Fr. M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

26/01/2005

## The Priest Is Not for Turning

A chairde,

People often stop Fr. Megson on the street and say:

"Now just run back in there like a good priest and put that bottle of Merrydown back on the shelf and we won't say any more about it this time".

And you know, in a very real sense they are right. If it wasn't for the kindness of strangers like them Fr. Megson would be forced to take to his bed with a permanent hangover the size of County Laois.

Do any of our listeners have a similar heartwarming story about having their lives reaffirmed outside the COOP by security guards? Do write in and tell Auntie Mike all about it on the website. There's a mega bottle of Merrydown to be shared by the ten best entries - but I can't seem to find the receipt so please don't go supping it outside the COOP.

Very often people stop Fr. Megson on the street and say:

"Well now Father, it's nice to see you out on parole again and when will you be changing your name to Fr. Robson?"

On these occasions I tend to smile benignly, raise my hands as if in benediction and gently apply my forehead to the bridge of the supplicant's nose. I then offer my hanky as a peace-offering and say unto them:

"What sort of effin' eejit are you anyhow to be askin' such stupid effin' questions? Sure even a protestant wouldn't be goin' round askin' pup questions like that! Do you mean to say that I look like a Fr. Robson or something? Are you tryin' to say that I look like a middle-aged overweight terminally depressed dipsomaniac has-been with a cry-baby 'woe is me' Geordie accent? (Ed. Note: We think the Geordie accent lets Fr. Megson off on a technicality here!)

Away home to yer cesspit and boil yer head".

Then I go all holy looking again, tell them they can keep the bloody hanky, and absolve them on the spot (well, I am a priest after all). I then tell them to run along home to the bosom of their family and the dog but for penance they should watch the five sorrowful videos of Fr. Robson being interviewed after the match. If, after watching the interviews they still think that Fr. Robson has the face and the mind of a satirically eloquent priest, they should report back to me at confessions next Saturday evening and I will break their bloody nose all over again. Persistent offenders will not be given the purgatory option when they die. They will go straight to the Hawthorns.

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm just popping out to the COOP. Don't wait up for me.

Fr. Megson (for ever and ever)



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

02/02/2005

## A Quiet Night in Ladybarn

A Chairde,

Inactive brains for Fr. Megson's social inadequates last night as FCEK sat out a one match ban imposed for harbouring impure thoughts in their recent match against The Histrionic Men (Fr. Megson still reckons that at least one of them isn't really a man but there seems little point in arguing with referees these days if you haven't got a Scottish accent and an M16 post code). The ban came at an unfortunate juncture as Damian, Fr. Megson's stunning amanuensis (pertly played by Sylvia Kristel), caught sight of some of the questions as he was typing them up and he reckons that he might have been able to get some of them right especially the ones about old queens and other filth that never appeared on the seminary syllabus in Fr. Megson's youth.

Still, it was nice to relax. Half past nine saw a freshly horlixed Fr. Megson already curled up with a torch and a good Trollope underneath the bedclothes. Funny, but there seems to be something about the scribblings of Trollope that appeals to charismatic men of action like Fr. Megson and John Major.

Alas, 5867 sheep later our eponymous pastor was still tossing and occasionally turning, bedevilled by feverish images of Wayne Rooney in a sarong and Timbo Henman in a construction worker's kit. The teatime of his soul grew even darker when his past failures came rushing back to haunt him: agonising memories of spineless moments when he had refused to fly solo for a much needed two-pointer and, even more painful to recall, those involuntary and unilateral ejaculations of absolute balderdash that were fast becoming his trademark.

In desperation he reached down for his trusty hotwater bottle which contained an emergency supply of Merrydown for such moments. Soon he was hurtling through the astral plane. Looking down on the cosmic speck that is South Manchester he saw several Greybeards trapped in a gigantic glass bubble of many hues. There they would remain until they had solved the 64 enigmas set by 4 gnomic dwarves known as the Homines Pedantici or, in family circles, as the Norman No-Lifers.

The more the captives tugged at their greybeards and the more they poked at the walls of the giant bubble the more the answer to the mystic riddle of "Who won the Eurovision Song Contest in 1970?" receded from their grasp. They twisted and writhed in their agony; they conferred arcanelly using ancient masonic wrist movements; they spilt their entrails on the floor and examined them rapturously (the landlord was less than rapturous); they conjured up mendacious desires to relieve themselves so as to send secret textual messages to their friends. But still they could not persuade the runes to spell out the one Druidic word that would end their gut curdling misery (if you don't want to know the answer look away now).....DANA.

"I'm glad I'm up here with a big big bottle," mused Fr. Megson's astral body, "and not down there. It must be an awful way to spend eternity."

There you are now. I've been telling you for years that any oul' eejit could have written LORD OF THE RINGS in half an hour.

Fr. M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

02/03/2005

## FCEK take the FLAK

A Chairde,

I will continue to use this form of greeting even though it apparently does not constitute an official EU language.

Fr. Megson is today reconsidering his future as a top notch quiz team manager after his side, Dynamo FCEK, were sensationally beaten, nay mauled, by the previously unheralded Finger V. The minnows from the Griffin stunned a packed White Swan stadium by easily recording their first win in the league since Feb. 2005. Many of the home fans who managed to stay awake during the debacle are now baying loudly for the blood of the self appointed 'people's priest'.

"Sometimes a manager-priest has to stand up and be counted", said Fr. Megson,

"but there's no way you'll get me out of bed on a night like this for some stupid pub trivia inquest. I will say though, that I thought we played well against the wind in the first half. It is easy for fecking vultures like youse to be wise after the event but I suppose youse have a point when you call into doubt my second half tactics. Performing 4 half time lobotomies was a gamble that failed to come off on the night. It might have been better to have saved one of them in case it was needed in the final round. But the fact remains that lobotomies have now become an integral part of our game and the team will just have to forget about last night. And fair play to Roisin, she has already forgotten where she was last night. She thinks she was at home revising her book of Irish rivers. She reckons she got as far as the O'rinoco before she fell into a coma. I wish the rest of the buggers were as dedicated as Roisin."

Colinski, a convicted panel-beater from Bratislava, has once again inundated the Withquiz office with a hastily scrawled note. He writes:

"I didn't get to the big game last night as my apathy was playing up. I did however watch it on FIVE LIVE and it was rubbish. Even Alan Green, the commentator who normally wouldn't say boo to a solent goose, agreed that Fr. Megson's lot should be spayed. There's no way I'll be buying a radio licence this year after listening to that lot of rubbish.

That Fr. Megson is far too soft. A good dose of discipline is what that team needs. None of yer fancy lobotomies. That kind of thing only encourages nancy-boy softies to be even more touchy-feely. Now, if I were Fr. Megson I'd have that Roisin one into my den before her feet hit the floor. No messing. I'd tell her to pull her socks up immediately and no excuses. Especially if she was wearing those little ankle-socks that you sometimes see in Ethel Austins and in late night films on the telly what I never watch. Yes, 'pull yer ankle-socks up woman....', I'd say, '....and now roll them down again.....but very.....very ....slowly.' That's what I'd do if I were Fr. Megson. Has anyone seen my crossword?"

Fr. M.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

09/03/2005

### A Succinct View Of Last Night's Quiz As Told By The Albert Park

A Chairde,

Albert Park set off at a blistering pace last night in the seething cauldron that is The Bowling Club. The local constabulary struggled to prevent the lone drinker at the bar from spilling on to the pitch as the home idols threatened to become the first team this season to do the double over the overpaid, undersexed and over here mercenaries of FCEK.

Tragedy then struck as the home side unaccountably lost control of their destiny and veered off sharply down the lanes and underpasses of their pre- Cambrian childhood memories. The rest was largely silence.

"It was the Clitheroe question wot done for us," opined Mark, their eloquent anchorman.

"It seemed to have the same effect on us as Jaffa cakes did on that French geezer wot used to write long books about nothing in particular. It certainly got me thinking about the good old radio days. I practically grew up with THE CLITHEREO KID, though unfortunately, due to Jimmy's hormonal imbalance, the experience was never likely to be mutual. Still, size isn't everything and he were a fine looking man in an elfin sort of way. And really, really funny in a way that only Lancastrian midgets can be. Well can I remember the whole family sat round the wireless on a wet Sunday afternoon choking on his cheeky capers and our boiled knuckle of lamb. I suppose it's the same for all of us old codgers but I honestly feel that in those good old days Sundays were definitely wetter and tinned peas were without a doubt greener. And Spangles - does anyone remember Spangles? ....."

Yes, yes but returning to the painful present for a moment can I just ask Richard how he found the questions last night.

"Sorry, I'm not quite with you. I don't, think they went missing, did they? I'm sure Jitka had them for most of the evening. I seem to remember her reading out some of them for us.....oh, yes, I see what you mean now. Sorry, I was miles away thinking about Spangles.

Yes, the questions were set by The X-Pats who apparently used to be Irish though they always seem quite normal to me when I see them in the pub. They always tend to set 64 questions and last night was no exception. I wouldn't say they were brilliant but they certainly managed to inspire me. And while we're on the subject.....Did you know that spires are those pointy things you sometimes find on the top of cathedrals? I'm quite fond of cathedrals, especially the ones that look like giant gothic phallic symbols that reach out as if to ravage the sullen skies of Britain, thereby unleashing golden showers on the sordid detritus that calls itself mankind.....sorry got a bit carried away there.....anyway its about time we had a whole quiz given over to cathedrals. I could do the first half - maybe 32 interesting facts about Beverley - that's a cathedral by the way, not a girl. Then I could balance things a bit in the second half by asking 32 interesting facts about Ripon. With maybe a spot the connection question at the end.

Or better still, we could do a reality TV series about life in a cathedral. We could brick up a couple of quiz teams in a cathedral for a year and a day and see how they cope without food or water or hanky-panky, though I suppose we could allow a small bit of hanky-panky if we kept it tasteful and used an Anglican cathedral. It would make fabulous viewing and it would probably make all the contestants feel terribly ascetic and a bit peckish as well, I shouldn't wonder. I know I could eat a horse just thinking about it. You don't have any Spangles on you by any chance?"

Fr. M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

16/03/2005

## St. Patrick's Day - A time to reflect

A Chairde,

Sometimes people stop Fr. Megson in the chemist's and say:

"Bless me father, is it yourself? Boy, but I was awful drunk at 9 o'clock mass last Sunday and half the time I hadn't a notion what you were chunnering on about. Would you ever be so good as to run that bit about temperance by me again and also the arrangements for the St. Patrick's Day march? And would you like me to buy that wee packet for you, Father, 'cause there's only a young slip of a girl serving?"

And you know, in a very real sense, Madge, my housekeeper is right. It is all too easy to get caught up in life's little debaucheries and to lose sight of the really important issues that pertain to our spiritual realm. And what could be more important than organising the craic for St. Paddy's Day - it'll be feckin' brill. So let me run through the timetable again for all of you who were feeling less than sentient last Sunday morning:

10.00 - Mass (please note that this may have to be cancelled if Fr. Megson can't find a new battery for his alarm clock - we simply can't afford to fall behind schedule on such a holy day)

10.14 - Traditional blessing of the Sassenach graves

10.15 - The even more traditional cursing of the Sassenach living

11.15 - Fr. Megson to nip home for well earned bacon butty with all the trimmings and a scalding hot mug of Irish coffee. Feel free to mill around the chapel gates chewing baccy like demented cows, hawking, spitting and slagging off your feckless neighbours like you do every Sunday

11.30 - Annual St. Patrick's Day traditional parade to commence from the gates of our beloved Church Of The Hidden Ovarie, Ladybarn

11.32 - Annual St. Patrick's Day traditional parade to terminate at the front door of " Vespers", our church social club and exclusive nightclub for discerning gentlemen priests and turf accountants.

The men should make their immediate way to the bar. Could the ladies please assemble in the cleaner's storeroom? Please mind the broken statues, most of which have sharp edges. In the storeroom they will be treated to a gratis and complimentary porringer of Bailey's Irish Cream (75p for pensioners and other unwaged parochial parasites). The ladies should then bid a fond adieu to Fr. Megson and make their way home in an orderly fashion to pluck the chicken and boil the spuds.

You may remember that last year some auld hoity-toity busybody from the Town Hall tried to take us to task about this arrangement. Well now, Fr. Megson is as Politically Correct as the next priest and I would thank that auld lesbian-bollox to remember that this year. If she cares to look up the relevant Health and Safety ruling (section 6; subsection 24(b) of the 1849 "Proper Placement of Women" act) she will see that this instruction is mandatory and is quite clearly in place to protect our good womenfolk from being subjected to unwarranted attention and compliments in a public place. There comes a time however when even priests have to be flexible in a heathen country so I would be willing to make the following concession:

If any of you women out there are under 25, have in their possession a leather mini-skirt and matching boots (green would be nice and apposite but don't worry if they happen to be dark red - both would look lovely with a wee black skimpy top) and have had experience dancing on fairly high mahogany tables, then report to Fr. Megson in the DJ booth behind the bar. Those lucky enough to pass his audition will of course need to text their kids to remind them to get their own tea that evening.

12.00 (midnight on the 24 hour clock system) - official ending of St. Patrick's Day. Time to stand in a desultory fashion for the National Anthem and then get a final 6 or 7 rounds in at the bar before wending your circuitous way to Fr. Megson's top table for the official inquest. Traditionally, this can be a very trying time for the maudlin. So this year I have roped in Sister Conceptua Euphoria to act as a confidante and counsellor. She's from the order of The Poor Bridgets who run a successful chain of Bail Hostels on Cheetham Hill Road so she'll be well used to listening to sobbers and gobbers like you lot. But don't spin the "I could've been a contender" yarns out too long because she can't abide bathos and she can get fierce ratty when she's had a few.

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

06/04/2005

The Charles/Camilla wedding was about to take place and Dave Rainford was about to appear on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*

## Wot's a gel to do?

A Chairde,

Mounting problems, both physically and metaphorically speaking, for Charles and Camilla as it now appears inevitable that their honeymoon will have to be postponed sine nocte on account of the clash with WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE this Saturday night.

A Clarence House spokesman told WITHQUIZ earlier today:

"Both Charles and Camilla are pig sick about this cock-up caused once again by bloody people. Fortunately, neither of them are regular viewers of MATCH OF THE DAY so that poses no problem although in fairness Camilla does feel that Gary Lineker can look appealingly equine when he laughs.

"Both Royal parties had anticipated hitting the hay immediately after the lottery draw but now feel that they will be unable to do so since WITHQUIZ will be represented on MILLIONAIRE. Protocol dictates that they remain bright-eyed and bushy-tailed to cheer Big Dave on this his biggest night since his 21st birthday party at the Red almost exactly 46 years ago today (I wonder what that stripper is doing in her retirement?)."

Regular listeners to this website will know that Dave and Camilla go back a long way. Right back to that snug in the Red next to the gents.

"Dave is absolutely fab" ,

said Camilla,

"and I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for calling him an oik on the occasion of our last tired and emotional meeting. I did so in the genuinely mistaken belief that he was poor."

One way out of the impasse might be for Dave to drop out of MILLIONAIRE and run instead in the GRAND NATIONAL which kicks off earlier that afternoon. Dave's trainer feels however that this idea, like Dave, might be a non-starter.

"Dave has been specially genomed to run in a quiz show," said Mr. Heale , "and his molecules are simply not wired up to compete in a bruising encounter with 7 foot fences. Nor does he feel intellectually compatible with either horses or with Irish midgets with annoyingly squeaky voices. We could in no way guarantee that he would get round the course in time for his tea and DR. WHO which tees off at 7pm. Sorry. What about if Camilla watches MILLIONAIRE on her ownio and we ask Ethel Rodin to stand in for her in the Royal Bedchamber for just the one night only. That shouldn't pose a problem, should it? It will be pretty dark in there and Ethel is about Camilla's height when she's lying down and neither of them know anything about football or Reality TV so it should be perfect.

"Mind you, we'd still have to find a childminder for Baby Tolan who's normally ready for his teddy long before the end of ANT AND DEC. And we'd need to buy some new jimjams for Roddy who ruined his old ones at the White Swan last week.....oh dear.....it's all a bit of a logistical nightmare isn't it?"

Royals - who'd have them?

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

13/04/2005

Dave Rainford has just won £250,000 on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*

## MAGNUS DAVIDUS - SUMMA CUM LAUDE

Hoc semana Withquiz in conjunctione "Osservatore Romano" Davidum Rainfordium summa cum laude salutatur. Ipse Davidus de facto rex mundi quizzorum cognentia generale et infans terribilis leaguae tavernorum Didsburiensis et proximis villagiis plus plebian qui recenter multos spondulikos vicit in populario ITV ludo-spectaculo nomine Quis Possessor Millionis Spondulikus Esse Vult.

Davidus Magnus qui frequens imbibere est in populario sed superprecendo hostelio nomine "Leo Rubidus" nunc potest non solum affordare in omni hipissime vino tavernis et discothequis Mancuniensis Stocportiensisque imbibere sed etiam regulenter procurare crustum grandum servatum cum condimento bisto (gustanter) et sacam patatas fritas devouratum dum ille in domum inebriatus ambulat media in nocte. Deo gratias tamen positivus est que successio suam personalitatem convivialiam non una iota alterabit.

"Nulla via, Jose", dixit eloquenter, sedente in suo novo constructato palacio media in Via Palatine - monstrous carbunculus in opinione Camilla nunc regina de facto angliae sed definiter non hiberniae.

"Amabo semper equaliter meos CCL mille spondulikos et meos amicos pauperos qui miserabiliter obligatos in squalore abjecte in saecula saeculorum subsistere....tur dum durum, amici....sic transit in Gloria Hunniford!"

Relaxante et sippende pinam coladam duplicatam in sua sauna privata, describat Davidus momentum grandum quando ipse videtur in TV contra inquisitorem Chris Tarrantum (ex Tiswas quod programmum infantile in decado LXX erat). Necne ille nervosus erat?

"Ablative absolute", responsit Davidus sotto voce familiari, "especialiter in prima parte nomine 'Digitus Prontissime Primus'. Difficile est movere digitum et cerebellum in tandem in studio ITV. Facile est domo in sofa sed non in studio. Urgenter in lavatorium visitare desirabam!

"Finalter mihi successum est et Chris me embracevit fortis quale ursus. Bonum ovum est Chris - meus hero puerile - amabam olim diem saturni ante meridiem quando tempus Tiswas erat.

"Crusta custardi et canis nomine Spit! Brillianter!!! Atque amabam observare non solum Tiswas sed etiam Champion, Equus Mirabilis et Torchi Torchi, Puer Batterius.

"A beatus meus perditus juvenis - sed odiosus AC Milano, bastardi. Sed digressio. Non iam nervosus media in ludo. Multi faciles questiones et Chris inquisitor gentilior quam Jitka est. Non potest conferrare sed potest:

### I) Audienciam interrogare

Sed nota bene: non bona idea est hoc attemptare dum ludente in taverno nomine Cygnus Albus - multo periculo!

### II) L:L

Hoc me totaliter confusavit - detesto anagramas

### III) Amicum Interrogare Telephonato

Problemum unum: ludent mei optimi amici pro squado Parco Alberto qui normaliter in profundis recessis leaguae localae

"Dormit - hoc ergo definiter non bona idea est. Necesse est ipso solo rubicon transversare noteo gradualiter patternum emergentum in ludo id est omnia correcta responsa cum letteris alpha, beta, gamma vel delta commencare tendit. Ludum infantum nunc est.

"Estimo tandem que satis spondulikos habeo. Fatigus sum et incredibiliter non imbibere pintum lageris dum duas horas!! Dico: 'Finale responsum absolute Chris. Ita missa est. Vale.'

"Tunc, spondulikus securis depositis in valiso sub jimjamis designo Winnie ille Pooh, decideo in domum ambulare. Non pluvit et ultimum omnibus transnocte de Londineo ad Mancunium multos spondulikos constat. Nulla via, Jose."

Bonum ovum es, Davide. Withquiz te salutatur in saecula saeculorum.

Pater Megfilius

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

27/04/2005

## Wrestling with my conscience - and the cat

The other evening after work I was wrestling with the cat for squatting rights on the sofa when Danny, my stepson, burst in and demanded to know who I would be voting for in the General Election.

"What General Election?" I started to ask before realising that, as the founding member of an esteemed quiz team, I shouldn't really have to confer on a question like this.

"Labour," I muttered enthusiastically.

"But you don't even like Tony Blair", protested Danny.

"Yes, there is that", I conceded, "but I don't like anybody else either and anyway I'm a natural born Socialist so it would be class treason not to vote for Labour like wot I've always done...."

Yes, Danny, I know that Labour is no longer a Socialist party but you are missing the point. No Danny, I'm not losing my temper, but Jesus wept, you're doing bloody politics for bloody 'A' levels so the least I expect is that you might be intelligent enough to follow the cogency of my superior argument? Now go away and practice your iPod 'cos I'm busy trying to listen to THE ARCHERS. And it wouldn't do YOU any harm to listen to intelligent worthwhile programmes once in a while".

Danny's a good lad really but, like most young people today, he refuses to grasp the complexities of being a tired old git.

Many hours later when I woke up (with the cat snoozing contentedly on my chest), I got to thinking. Maybe I should vote for somebody else. But who? The Greens sound like a nice bunch but they might feel inclined to put a tax on unreconstructed neanderthals like me whose idea of a nice dinner is steak and chips with lots of salt and hold the salad.

The BNP are running, as well I know, 'cos I saw their Party Political Broadcast the other evening. I hadn't meant to watch it but I was sleeping with the cat on the sofa and it was on when I woke up. They seem very sweet and caring. They were singing a lovely English folksong à la Ralph Mc Tell all about a misunderstood young lad who was forced to become a nutter on the streets of London 'cos when he was off fighting those racist Argies loads of gay black Albanians with turbans and Irish accents took over his bedroom and brutalised his teddy bear. I felt very sorry for the nutter and for his teddy but all the same.....I'd be worried that they were only pretending to be sweet and caring and when they finally got into power they might start shooting everybody that wasn't born in Basingstoke.

I was getting desperate now. What about Charlie Kennedy? Seems like a nice bloke. He looks reassuringly like a human wreck and he's got an accent that baffles Sassenachs so we would have a lot in common. And yet..... Lib Dem.... doesn't sound very macho does it? Not the type of party that could take care of itself if it got into a fracas outside the Pack Horse in Levenshulme on a Saturday night. Nah, sorry Chas.

Then I leapt up with a brainwave (much to the annoyance of the cat). Why shouldn't WITHQUIZ put forward its own candidate? I would be prepared to nominate Mike Bath for P.M. if any of you lot would second him. I really think he would appeal to the Great British public. He's clever but not too clever. He's good at communicating - he's got his own website for Chrissakes! He's about the right age - not baby-faced like that Hague tosser a few years ago but not as old as the Pope either. And he looks nice and avuncular. I think he would look ever so wholesome kissing babies and pets. Though we would probably have to airbrush out the pint of beer and the packet of pork scratchings if we want the pictures to appear on the front page of the Guardian.

We'll need a name of course. The Bath'ist Party sounds good but I think it has been used before by a friend of George Galloway's. The Liberal Opsimaths has got a nice ring to it but we don't want to alienate the large percentage of the electorate who don't own a dictionary. The Friends of the Electric Pigs Party? You're being fcekin stupid now.

I'm not very good at manifestos. Perhaps Ivor could run us one up when he gets back from the pub. Keep it simple Ivor. Something along the lines of:

"If elected we promise to get rid of the rat race. We will achieve this by forcing all the successful people in British society to take all society's losers out every Wednesday evening and buy them a pint."

Yes, I know it sounds a bit too much like ragged-trouserred Socialism but it might just work. And at least we would finally be spared the excruciating embarrassment of having to don a bloody red nose every time we feel like helping those worse off than ourselves. Sheamus McGuevara

(Fr. Megson is unwell - he fell into a coma when I mentioned the word "Socialist" - let's hope he stays there)

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

19/10/2005

## Fr Megson is out saying his office until further notice

A Chairde,

Fr Megson won't be with you on a regular basis this season as he is still very occupied helping police with their enquiries. He is beginning to be of the opinion that the local constabulary must be a bit dim because they seem to call round to Fr Megson's luxury penthouse flat opposite the White Swan (no hawkers or do-gooders asking for money for pesky poor people please as a knee in the groin often offends) looking for assistance with their enquiries on virtually a weekly basis these days.

Gretchen, his new and extremely strict housekeeper ([www.bigbavarianbabes dot cotton](http://www.bigbavarianbabes.com)) tried telling them that they should be getting their answers from GOOGLE dot cotton like every other moron on the block but a somewhat politically incorrect Sergeant told her to get the fcek back to Krautland or he'd personally google her with his truncheon which, in Fr. Megson's opinion, was a tad over the top even for a policeman.

Never mind, at least we have no police teams to contend with in our quiz league. Can you just imagine it? It would take all night. First you would have to answer your own question and then you'd have to skip over to the next table and help them with their enquiries and heaven help you if you got their question wrong. You'd probably end up in gaol for the next 25 seasons which, come to think of it, might be a lot more fun than having to brave the elements every winter Wednesday for the rest of your "life" to turn up in some poxy pub, empty save for two baleful tablefuls of baldy weirdos with an even weirder baldier weirdo (yes, Jitka, I am well aware that you are the exception to the rule) sat in the middle asking them loads of questions about fish and urinating cricketers and whatnot!

Welcome to the new season and may the Lord have mercy on all that sail in her.

Fr. M.



## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

26/10/2005

### Ethel well and truly FCEKed

A Chairde,

On the night that Chelski at last stumbled Fr. Megson moved to within a possum's prostate of proving himself a worthy successor to Mourinho's mantle of invincibility with a 52 to 20 win over the hapless Ethel. Two wins out of two now and surely ein Tausendjahre Reich at the Swan is at last becoming a realistic dream for the modest monk and his severely tonsured team. Well maybe not ein Tausendjahre but they are certainly looking good for another 168 hours until they meet their annual Nemesis in the grisly guise of Friends of Snoopy Dog (we always seem to wilt in the presence of Tony's motley crew). Maybe we have more skeletons in our closet than most teams but we can never handle the psychological pressure of a judge chanting "you're goin'down, goin'down, goin,down" before the start of a game!!! So come on Tony, it's only a fcekin quiz after all - leave your gavel at home next week and let Roisin enjoy her drink in peace.

Hearty commiserations once again to Ms Rodin. A good team who frequently have the beating of us, they got off to a bad start last night and proceeded to have the kind of evening that only Robert Pires could fully empathise with. Even after defeat their bad luck continued - baby Tolan was given a two match suspension for appearing to shake his rattle in a sarcastic manner right under the nose of the QM and Roddy chose the wrong week to reveal that all the team felt as sick as a parrot - leaving the landlord little choice but to wring their necks immediately and burn their carcasses in the charabanc parking area. We can only hope that our beloved Swan has not become infected.

Fr. M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

09/11/2005 Father Megson has a meeting with David Blunkett

## Fr. Megson's pastoral letter

*(Fr M is currently on tour in Poland. This letter was written in the departure lounge at Ringway and brought to us via an acolyte)*

A Chairde,

Many of you, I realise, have been very unsettled by all the rumours currently circulating. Dusty from the Albert was saying at confession only last Saturday evening that her team's slow start to the season was a direct result of her not getting any sleep since August 22nd.

"Bless me Father, but I've become a stranger to the arms of Morpheus", she wept confidentially.

"I'm desperate Father. My personal physician refuses to prescribe me any sleep potions on the grounds that he is a life-long St. Caths supporter. I've got to the stage where I spend the whole night pressing the HASH button on my phone but so far nothing has been delivered. Typical bloody BT - forgive my language, Father, but if they can't supply the feckin' stuff they shouldn't advertise it. Now stop pfaffin' around Father and grant me absolution and I might still make it to the chemist before they close."

To allay some of your fears I arranged to meet David Blunkett at a secret location for a frank and forthright exchange of views. What follows is a transcript secretly recorded on one of those nifty little recorders that fit nicely into your underpants. Sorry about the quality in places but Damart is a notoriously bad sound conducting material and loads of students kept getting on the 142 Magic Bus and they all insisted on making clicking noises with their tongues at Mr Blunkett's dog. Prats, the lot of them!

Fr.Megson: "Hiya Dave, how's she cuttin'?"

David Blunkett: "Shower of southern feckin'....." (expletives deleted)

FM: "I know you're not with the DWP any more but I was wonderin'- back in 1974 when I was a student some git stole the green giro I was keepin' behind the picture of the Sacred Heart in my bedroom. Would there be any chance of you gettin' me a replacement? It was for £14.78."

DB: "....." (eleven expletives deleted)

FM: "Fair enough Dave, sure there's no harm in askin'. Could I get yer dog another prawn and peanut sandwich?"

DB: "....." (expletive deleted)

FM: "All right so.. (sound of underpants being adjusted)....if I could just ask you about the rumours."

DB: "....." (sixteen expletives deleted) (sound of white stick breaking over priest's head)

Dog: "I think what Mr Blunkett is trying to say is that no, he will not be taking the Old Trafford job. At least not until the end of the season. David is of course free to make his own decisions but I may say that his refusal comes as something of a personal disappointment for me since I was looking forward to getting my teeth into Roy Keane's suspect hamstring. But c'est la vie. Life is a minestrone as someone wise once said and I believe this is especially true for political animals like myself."

FM: "..... I didn't know you could talk."

Dog: (sniggering) "So how didya think a commie from the socialist republic of South Yorkshire got to be Home Secretary, dumbbo? Jeez, you papist priests are even more naive than the goddamn Tories. Listen up, bud, Dave here would be zilch without me. Just another sad washed-up lackey of the lumpen proletariat with bad attitude and an even worse haircut. Hitler was the same. And Bush. Even Barbara Woodhouse. Look behind every great dictator and you'll find a dog."

FM: "Sorry, I'm a bit confused here. You mean you do everything for Mr. Blunkett?"

Dog: "Well not quite everything, bud. Otherwise the result of the paternity suit would have been even more embarrassing for the government. Say buster, you don't happen to have a rubber ball on you? I feel real frisky today."

FM: "Sorry, I left mine under the sofa. But what about the local newspaper?"

DB: "I could have been a contender."

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

Dog: "Down boy! Yes Father, that part of the rumour is true. Me and Dave will be down School Lane next week to take the goddamn thing over."

FM: "And will there be changes?"

Dog: "Initially only the rag will change. South Manchester itself will remain in its current format until January 2006 when all the new Gauleiters will have been fully trained. But listen ,keep shtumm about the Gauleiter bit. Pinko Dave here thinks it's goin' to be a Socialist republic. Tee hee hee....."

FM: "So the newspaper will retain its hallowed title."

Dog: "Mostly. You Brits sure don't like to have your culture changed. Mind you, we'll have to tweak it just a little to reflect the new Zeitgeist. Yesiree, the new Berliner formatted SOUTH MANCHESTER DEPORTER will hit the streets a week on Friday. So if you have any Czech or Irish or Yorkshire dissidents on your team.....Well you've still got over a week to find replacements."

FM: (sound of gulping) "But you'll still be giving out pots of jam for the best published letters?"

DB: "Oh yes. I can give you a firm commitment on this point. I was saying to Cherie and the dog only last week that it is vitally important that we retain our jam. That's why Tony went to war in Iraq you know. Somebody has to protect our jam pipeline. Jam is what makes Britain Great. And it makes an excellent sandwich. It's very tasty and far better for you than bloody prawns. Isn't that right ,dog?"

Dog: "Yes dear."

Fr. M.

23/11/2005

## The 'E' word

A Chairde,

.....sorry, be with you in half a mo. Just checking how many 'F's in esoteric.....here we are.....words beginning with 'E'.....God, there's an awful lot of them.....bear with me....let's see.....'E' for Entertainment.....nope, can't use that one. Erotomania - nice word that. Always reminds me of the Electric Pigs for some reason.

Eruct....that's a new one...."to void wind noisily from the stomach through the mouth" .....quite useful that.....might e-mail it to Kieran later on.

Escort.....no way could I afford one of them on a single priest's pittance .....Esker....."Irish name for the ridges of post-glacial gravel" .....fcek me, that's a good un'....here we are.....Esoteric. Nope, I was right, no 'F's in it. Interesting definition though....."communicated to, or intelligible by, the initiated only".

The "initiated" tonight, presumably, being those who have read Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy in its entirety. Or those of us who like to while away the evening salivating over pencil sketches of the contours of Delaware in splendid isolation from the other 49 states in the fiefdom of Bush.....and at this stage we welcome Barry from the Griffin....."Evening Barry. Thought that would get you out of bed".

Ranting aside, does anyone get my drift here? I love hard quizzes but if I want an esoteric evening, I will choose to stay home and watch Anderlecht on the box. You see I am aware of Pullman's trilogy and I suspect it is pretty good. But I haven't read it. Now, to ask me who wrote it or even to name one or two of the novels that comprise the trilogy is, roughly speaking, a valid GK question. But to delve further into it and ask me questions on the text becomes esoteric rather than general. Yes, Tony and fellow friends of Snoopy, I know that we all do this with Shakespeare or even Dickens but we have to accept that the general body of quizzers will have at least a passing knowledge of the classics. I would love to sit down and set an entire quiz on the collective works of Flann O'Brien (who I think is the greatest thing since sliced spuds) and a few of you might even lap it up and say, "God, that was a fierce good quiz altogether, I think the one about the bicycle should be the question of the week, don't you?". But most of you would hate it and that's why I wouldn't do it.

Playing against Snoopy Dog is always a pleasure and Tony must be one of the nicest judges currently playing on the quiz circuit. Yes, I know he has personally hanged 17 persistent offenders so far this year, but they were gaggin' for it as they say in forensic circles. But I'm afraid I will have to ask Tony to stand up and accept this Cardinal Sin award for esoteric quiz setting in November 2005.

I hope this will be accepted as constructive criticism. No team is better suited to set a wide and varied quiz. So spray your many nuggets of wisdom around a little bit wider next time, Tony and keep us hanging on your every word....

And speaking of hanging on, St Caths didn't last night. They told us we had won at the end of round 6. But thereby hangs a different tale and one perhaps best told by the likes of Flann O'Brien. Who unfortunately is dead.

Now, just one more 'E' word before bed - they're bloody addictive these 'E' words, aren't they?..... let's see now.....Esox....."a large fish mentioned by Pliny".....hmmm.....now if I could just find another 7 large fish mentioned by Pliny.....could be the theme round of the season.....

Fr. M.

PS: As I write, Radio 4 has just announced that scientists have discovered that a good memory is dependent on the ability of the brain to unclutter itself of the things it no longer needs to know. So that explains why the Oopsimaths never forget to send me a birthday card every year.....Bless.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

30/11/2005

## No 'F' Words This Week

A Chairde,

Following last week's definitive deconstruction of the 'E' word Fr. Megson had hoped to proceed in an orderly fashion this week by giving the F word a damned good seeing to. He ran the idea past his line manager this morning. Purely a formality, he thought as he eagerly anticipated yet another hefty cheque by return of post. The bishop however, despite his many saintly qualities, can best be described as a liverish auld tosspot and the tone of his reply seems to suggest that he leapt out of the wrong side of bed this morning with his dictaphone in one hand and Occam's razor in the other.

Top of the morning, Father, he ranted,

Mike here, the Bishop of Bath no less. As you know, I dropped the Wells bit recently. Sure there's no way a man of my age could be expected to manage two flocks a week. No siree. One flock a week and a wee snooze after breakfast - that's my new credo.

Having carefully considered your mealy-mouthed and ball-achingly obsequious request, I regret to inform you that there will be no feckin' F words on my website. Not now. Not ever. Away and frig yerself in a boghole, ye weasel-faced gombeen.

You have, of course, the right to appeal against my decision. As I said only last Sunday, democracy is a many-splendoured thing and well worth dying for if that's the sort of thing that stirs your porridge. In this instance though, I would warmly counsel against an appeal as a kick in the groin often leads to premature impotence. Or worse.

I greatly appreciate all the good work I have asked you to do for my website over the years and I feel confident that you will eventually get round to doing some. In the meantime please feel free to look upon me as a sort of icon; the sort of icon that sits on your desktop 24/7 ready and willing to leap into action at the merest touch of your mouse. I like to think I am never more than one click away from all my dear priests. But don't press your luck, baby. I normally go to bed at half past nine and I am well aware that most of your requests for rather bizarre websites don't start traipsing in until well past midnight.

Clean up your act, Father or you'll find yourself adopting a missionary position in Collyhurst.

In Saecula Saeculorum,

Michaelus Bathensis (Ms)

Post scriptum:

.....omne animal triste est.....(sorry couldn't resist a little episcopal humour there - I used to have them rocking in the aisles when I was a young bishop on the stand-up circuit)

Thank you so much for your kind invitation to go fly fishing next Sunday. Alas I have already committed myself to a spot of dogging immediately after matins. "il you can't beat the fornicators, join 'em" as Cardinal Randy Newman once said. Wise words indeed and words that have a particular resonance in the Didsbury of today, I feel.

Rest assured, though, that the thoughts of you and your flies shall be close to my heart as I trudge my weary way from car park to car park. I feel sure that one of us is bound to catch something.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

07/12/2005

## Everyone is human.....even Kieran's lot

A Chairde,

Proof that everyone is human - part one:

In an unprecedented show of humanity last night, Sir Alex Ferguson allowed his team to take the first half off in Lisbon to listen into live coverage of the table-topping CLASH OF THE TIGHT'UNS at the Griffin. He admitted afterwards to feeling a tad put out that the team had once again taken advantage of his easy going nature by taking the second half off as well. Football.....bloody hell.

"That Kieran looked a bit tasty tonight",

commented a jovial Sir Alex in the shower after the game,

"but I still feel confident that few teams will have a chance of beating us in Europe for the rest of the season.

"Our main aim here tonight was to ensure that we would not have to travel to Middlesbrough in the next round of the UEFA Cup. My lads achieved that goal with something to spare and that means a great deal to this club. I have always said that success is not just about winning, and you lot in the pressbox will have to start believing me now.....I thought the questions were OKish tonight but them two about European airports were a bit irrelevant, weren't they? Who gives a shite about flying to Europe nowadays when you can get to Burton-On-Trent for less than a fiver with National Express....."

Proof that everyone is human - part two:

In an exclusive interview with WITHQUIZ yesterday afternoon God said:

"Without wishing to sound omniscient, I have stuck 20 spondulicks on Benfica and The Fingers coming good tonight. Yes, I know 20 spondulicks is a big gamble for a Godhead currently on a losing streak (thank you, Opsimaths!!!) but Barry from the Griffin shares my confidence. As you know, I have spent years moulding Barry in my likeness. Still can't quite get the ears right but he is as near as dammit to looking divine. As Barry said on Monday night as we shared a glass of nectar in The Pie and Porringer,

'If God had meant FCEK to beat the Fingers He would have given them brains.'

"Quite right, Barry. I might have done a lot of silly things during my stint as God but I have never gone that far. Megson with a brain to play with would be an absolute logistical nightmare"

God was talking to Fr. Megson.....and Sir Alex still isn't.

P.S. If anyone can lend God 20 quid until His next payday in 4004 BC he would be very happy to grant you a plenary indulgence. Protestants will have to make do with a Boots gift voucher

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

14/12/2005

## FCEK's Manager makes a terse 74 second post- match statement following defeat

A Chairde,

I think it was Father Megson's father (who, following his successful operation, was also known as Father Megson) who once stated that pride comes before a fall. Well, perhaps we were too overweeningly proud leaving the Griffin last week clutching our deux points, and so it was fairly inevitable that we would fall to earth last night.

Let's be honest. We didn't just fall to earth, we got buried six feet under. And I'm sure I caught just the merest glimpse of lady's underwear as The Histrionic Men once again danced merrily on our graves. Once Fr. M., that most reliable of tossers, had won the toss and elected to go first thereby handing Ivor the Bogside question, we knew we were dead and gone. Nor did it ever seem even remotely likely that we could pull off a St. Winifred type resurrection. Though in truth, if you were born in 17th century North Wales would you really want to come back?

The quiz was fine in general. We kept managing to suss out the themes.....it was the answers that refused to come to us.

We wuz brain-dead and we got what we deserved against a very in-form team viz. a damned good stuffing. Which reminds me of the setters' still much reviled turkey quiz all those years ago.

The fall from our David Cameron-like status last week to this week's Charles Kennedy performance was best summed up by Ivan Denisovich who grudgingly accepted his first free drink of the season with the brutal but heart-rending admission:

"I hate Christmas!"

Cheer up Ivan, you've survived worse in the gulag. And don't worry about David Cameron.....he won't last.

Fr.M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

18/01/2006

## If Only It Were That Simple.....

A Chairde,

The Withquiz call centre - recently outsourced and now working 24/7 from a disused mineshaft in Doveholes - has only been inundated by one letter this week. It comes, as ever, from Colinski, a left-leaning scribbler from Bialystok whose epic travelogue KAZAKHSTAN - A GIANT STEPPE FOR MANKIND, BUT MOSTLY FOR SHEEP AND GOATS won the coveted 'most pulped book of the year' award back in 1953.

He asks:

Has this ever happened to you? You've just been kicked out of the Fletcher Moss on a Monday night in January. You watch disconsolately as the teeming rain reduces your beloved and unfinished crossword to the consistency of papier maché. A shiver of atavistic existentialism races down your spine as you observe the sodden squalor of Didsbury's ginnels reflected through the sickly Lucozade-tainted glow of the street lights and you suddenly and life-affirmingly think: "I don't want to be called Colinski any more. I want to be called Boris The Macedonian".

Funnily enough, exactly the same thing happened to me last Monday night. Spooky or what?

Now that I've made up my mind to follow this inner voice, I was wondering if any of your late night listeners might know or care if the local GPO keeps forms for people who wish to change their name to Boris The Macedonian? I won't be getting up tomorrow but you can catch me in the fish shop on Friday any time after elevenses.

P.S. I love your show.

There's something very comforting about people who like to rant in the middle of the night.

Roisin replies:

Next PLEASE. Over here ye blind bat....make it snappy....I've not even had my morning beer break yet. You should really be in the "Boris The Macedonian" application queue but I'll serve you anyway 'cause I like the cut of your jib.

It's quite simple really. Why people have to be spoon-fed, I'll never know.

You'll need a form BM1611b(rev2003). Then you'll need to show 9 household bills to prove that you currently exist as Colinski. Plus of course the obligatory 5 photographs, at least 4 of which must bear a true likeness of you. Please note that, in their renewed efforts to wipe out terrorists and other non-Blair voters, HM Government now insist that all photos must be doubly authenticated. So you will need 2 professional people (3 in the case of judges) to countersign form PH27(c) attesting to the fact that you were alone in the booth at the time of development.

You must also ensure that your ear lobes are lined up correctly. Neither of them should be allowed to stray more than 26cms from the tip of your nose. Smiling is of course strictly prohibited unless in possession of form PSY196(b) outlining how long you have been in psychiatric care. You must also be aware that if in the last 25 years you have submitted an application to hold a dog licence (either in black and white or in colour) you will need to furnish a DG4 exemption certificate. Don't worry unduly about this one, they hardly ever turn down an application - in fact most people get them back less than a month after their application has been processed.

No ,the real problem is getting hold of the V81 DG4 which is the form you need to apply for the DG4 exemption certificate. We normally have them here but, due to an unprecedented run on them recently, they are out of stock at the moment. If you care to call back after 4 pm a week on Friday we should be in a better position to let you know why they haven't arrived yet.

If I can be of any further assistance then please don't hesitate to ask one of my colleagues. And may I just say how much I'm looking forward to calling you Boris The Macedonian.

The rest of ye please note that I'm fcekin' SHUT here now.

Fr. Megson.



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

01/02/2006

## Megson's Half Sour

A Chairde,

Nobody ever gets their name up in lights at the White Swan - there's only so much you can do with two light bulbs! But metaphorically, Tony and his gifted Canine Friends achieved this accolade last night, becoming only the second team this season to carry home the bacon from Ladybarn's dimpressive Stadium of Murk.

Snoopy has been our traditional Nemesis over the years so we were none too surprised at the outcome, despite going into the last round with a 4 point advantage. MEMO to team: this week's training session will mostly be dealing with the 2005 obituary pages - we can maybe do the 2006 edition a little later on. Tony on the other hand seemed a trifle stunned by the victory. He nearly spilled our free drinks as he cart-wheeled his way back from the bar. Then came an urgent request as to whether anyone had Mike Bath's mobile number, fearing no doubt that the victory would quickly turn to ashes if not registered before the webmaster had a chance to sober up. Aidan took the added precaution of notifying all the Irish newspapers. Anyway, well done Snoopy Dog. Good win, good team, good quiz, good grief! Now we'll have to beat the Mad Dogs TWICE if we are to have any chance of wresting the laurels from their rabid paws this season.

We liked the questions last night and I was particularly impressed by the first themed round. I presume that it was intentionally and fiendishly booby-trapped. We were quite convinced that the theme was colours until we simply couldn't come up with a colour to explain the stage entrance of Bill Kerr.

"Maybe Bill Kerr is wrong", opined Roisin frantically. "Maybe the actor was Richard Greene." Good point Roisin. But would the hero of Sherwood Forest really have felt at home in the environs of East Cheam chez Tony Hancock.

And surely, it would only have been a matter of time before Anthony Aloysius snarled: "Get out of my digs, you Brylcreemed poof and take your band of Merry Men with you. Good grief."

One genuine note of dissatisfaction with an otherwise skillfully put together paper. We were narked to get no points for correctly naming Peter Nicholl's 1960s play A DAY IN THE DEATH OF JOE EGG. Even more narked when our opponents were awarded a bonus point for incorrectly naming it A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JOE EGG. I know how easy it is to make small mistakes when setting but I think this called for a greater degree of care. The incorrect answer does a great disservice to the subtlety of the author. Anyone who has seen this excellent play (or film) will know that it was deliberately named to make a very important point about the existence of a severely handicapped child and the way parents respond to this burden. Perhaps one of the very rare occasions when a trivia quiz question can be described as the difference between LIFE and DEATH.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a lot of obituaries to get through before the team arrive for training.

Fr. Megson

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

08/02/2006

### "Just the cheese, love - I won't risk the Danish bacon this week"

A Chairde,

After a few hours spent in the scantily dressed conviviality of VESPERS nightclub, Fr. Megson frequently loses track of his fiscal outgoings. By way of stark contrast, his monthly incomings have remained brutally static since 1976, the year, coincidentally, that he sent that ill-advised letter to the Vatican questioning the need for dashing red-haired young priests to remain celibate every Friday. The resultant gap is known to economists as Fr. Megson's shortcomings.

The local bank manager, several utilities and the people who manage his WORLD OF LEATHER storecard are not averse to corresponding by post with Fr. Megson reminding him in less than subtle terms of these shortcomings.

His spirituality being no match for this ugly face of capitalism, Fr. Megson's only recourse is to outfox the postman by sauntering down to the Village early in the morning where he likes to indulge in a spot of window shopping at the CHEESE HELMET. He never ceases to be amazed at the smells and prices that emanate from in there. Why, he often ruminates, do people spend so much on a lump of cheese with holes in it recycled from last night's mousetrap - one that smells like it passed its sell-by date the year City last won a trophy?

People just don't think things through, do they? After all, it's not as if cheese was scarce. If you take the trouble to walk a few doors down (all the while making sure the postman isn't following you) you can pick up a nice packet of Galtee processed slices from the Co-op for a fraction of the price. And slices are so user-friendly; even hungover priests can easily manhandle them into the gap between two slices of Mother's Pride to make a delicious and nutritional lunch whenever the housekeeper storms out ranting and raving just because you forgot to pay her last month and you happened to leave your socks on the kitchen table last night.

But where was I? Ah yes, outside the CHEESE HELMET. Funnily enough, I was here last Tuesday morning as well, when who should walk past but Dusty. She was on her way to do a bit of window shopping at the fish shop. A brave woman is Dusty. Some of them fish would give you the collywobbles, lying there with their big open mouths full of teeth and their sad, accusing eyes. Is it any wonder Hemingway shot himself?

"Morning, Father", she said,

"How's the hangover? Is it confession you're taking or are you just stood there avoiding the postman?"

"He's like a feckin' limpet that same postman. You could have your head under the bathwater for a good half hour and he'd still manage to find you! A shameless lackey of the financial powers that be, that's what he is, and no mistake. Makes you wonder if Engels wasn't right all along, doesn't it Father?"

"Listen, Father, could I ever bend your lug for a minute? It's just that I find myself on the horns of a theological dilemma. I keep having this dream, Father. At least I think it's a dream but sure how can you tell these days? Anyway, I'm always running around in this lovely big garden having a great time altogether - and me without a stitch on - and then a big snake sticks his head out of the nettles and says 'Dusty, sink yer gnashers into this big juicy Beauty of Bath.....ach you will, you will, go on, go on....if you do you won't ever have to confer again.....that Withquiz will be your oyster.....go on, go on, sure it's only a bit of forbidden fruit.....where's the harm?'

"Well Father, what do you think I should do? I'm not the kind of girl who would normally chat to snakes or take sweets from them, but sure wouldn't it be worth it maybe just the once? I'd love to beat them auld Mad Dogs all the way up Didsbury Road and back again and them yelpin' and howlin'. Come to think of it Father, it wouldn't do your team any harm either after that lily-livered performance you gave last week. What do you think, Father? Should I partake of the Tree of Knowledge?"

"Well Dusty", replied Fr. Megson, "since time immemorial that has been one of the ten great unanswerable questions. If I'm not mistaken, the other nine appeared last year in a paper set by Snoopy's Friends. Would you consider maybe listening to a Leonard Cohen LP? Therein might lie the wisdom for which you seek....or I could let you borrow a few of my Cliff Richard albums if you prefer.....hang on.....they're putting some of them Polish sausages in the window now.....'Yum yum, pig's bum' as my Granny used to say. Listen Dusty, don't take offence or anything. It's just that I've not really got my spiritual head on at the moment. Could you ever give us the lend of 79p and we'll consider the matter closed?"

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

08/03/2006

## Photo-Finish Illuminates The Stadium of Murk

A Chairde,

Well, they were certainly humming in the Reeks last night after this clash of the Tight'uns. As indeed were the combined 16 armpits (uxters to Roisin) of the shattered contestants. When the dust had settled - actually most of the current dust in The White Swan settled there in the early 1950s - the draw was seen as a tactical victory for the the Mad Dogs who can now relax and let their game in hand do the talking on the final evening of the league season.

Notwithstanding the fact that the final quiz is due to be set by the less than neutral FCEK. Roz, can you let me know if you would prefer the questions to be set in Highland Gaelic or in the Lallans of the Lowlands - and Roddy, how do you fancy a round on GREAT RAILWAY SIGNAL BOXES OF EASTERN EUROPE?

That said, the moral victory last night could perhaps be said to belong to Fr. Megson's middle-aged heartthrobs. To negotiate a league season without being bought a consolation drink by Kieran's redoubtable squad is no mean achievement. Does anyone know when this last happened? Never mind, team, we play the Histrionic Men next week. They normally buy us a drink.

'Make Geography History' - that would have to be the new manifesto after tonight's Atlas-fest. Nobody likes a bit of 'where in the world?' better than myself or Mad Dog Barry but this was surely global overkill. There were many good and interesting questions in there but the intervening jetlag made them hard to savour. Overall, the paper contained a few blips and loose ends that could have been tidied up by a spot of judicious editing. In fairness though, Mike from St Caths has had a few squad problems this season and deserves a lot of credit for keeping his team on the road. The one or two blips last night were probably due to some of the team providing questions for the first time.

Our best player last night was that snapper-up of unconsidered trifles (and urine-sodden dimps), Ivan Denisovich. He may not know much but he certainly knows how to improvise. His educated guesswork was truly inspiring. A wave of sympathy went round the room on the one occasion when his deft footwork deserted him and he blurtingly attributed the song I'm Mandy, Fly Me to his hero Barry Manilow. Given his previous good behaviour we have let him off with a caution though he will have to report daily to the Didsbury Police station under his new name IVOR Denisovich.

One final point. Despite the high stakes and the fevered armpits last night's encounter was a truly sporting affair with a lot of hugging and kissing (no tongues) after the final whistle. Are you listening Fr. Mourinho and Fr. Robson?

Slan,

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

15/03/2006

## Battle of More Marstons re-enacted at the Red

A Chairde,

Very much a skirmish of two halves last night with Fr. Megson's roundheads taking the high ground in the first half and Prince Ivor of the Bann mopping up resistance and leading a valiant if belated counterattack in the second.

Unfortunately for Ivor the first half contained 7 rounds and the second half consisted solely of round eight. Hence the somewhat inevitable futility of the comeback.

In between bouts of internecine warfare with their QM Ivor remained philosophical about the result.

"I thought we tossed well tonight and ultimately that was our undoing",

he blurted cryptically,

"In philosophical terms I thought FCEK played a very astute game. Much of their knowledge was a priori whereas it soon became obvious that our knowledge tonight was argued very much from an a posteriori position. At least I assume that is what our QM meant to say when he said we were shite! But what else would you expect an auld epistemologist like him to say?"

The QM was quick to retaliate by cuddling his man-bag and falling asleep.

Slan,

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

29/03/2006

## The Bootleg Tapes

A Chairde,

That's it folks. Another Withquiz league season ends not with a bung (...nice try, Brother Damian..) but with the whimpering of Rabid Mutts.

Once again many questions were left unanswered during the season and once again most of them revolved around Fr. Megson's inherent inability to lead his team to a quiz title. Has the league's highest paid priest become a luxury we can no longer afford? Is it time to ditch the deacon?.... sack the sacristan?

Now is the time to find out if Fr. M. is capable of handling his knockers. As you know, he no longer talks to the media but we clubbed together and promised him a slap-up meal (without the meal) on condition that he should subject himself to some rigorous scrutiny. What follows is a transcript of the secret tapes. Withquiz's very own Megsongate.

**Mike Opsimath:** Winston Churchill famously described Rusholme as "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enema". Many of my Withquiz brethren feel that this description might equally apply to you, Father. So let's begin with a very basic questio . Just what is it, Father, that makes you tick?

**F.M:** Fcek off, ye hoor. Just because my team is tick doesn't make me tick. Tick, my erse. I'm a feckin Eisenstein compared to you, ye big superannuated Sassenach gombeen. Ask me any US state capital.....go on, any one you like. Even Des Boise.....See, motormouth, you're all blether and no fur knickers. Step outside and we'll see who's tick.....be warned though..... I was a bareknuckle fisting champion in the Ring of Kerry during my youth.....put 'em up, ye Sassanach varlot.....

**Gary Pig:** Calm down Father.....eat your sausages before they get cold. There's a good boy. Nobody's calling you thick. In fact your epistemological knowledge is the envy of every pensioner who ever fell asleep in the bar of St. Cath's social club. Tell us Father, this great passion of yours for philosophy, is it innate or acquired?

**F.M:** Acquired. Picture the scene: A humid Saturday evening in 1986. ...."And now on BBC1".....I sat mentally transfixed and physically erect. The happy conjunction of so much blood, bodily fluids, starched white uniforms and functional black tights made me swoon and I realised I had now embarked on a lifelong voyage of passion. I simply had to get more of this.... Unfortunately I wasted the next three years thumbing through bleedin' philosophy tracts before me mammy pointed out that the soap opera in question was called CASUALTY and not CAUSALITY.

**Roz Rodin:** What's your favourite chat up line, Father?

**F.M:** I'm pretty much a "Heh,babe, d'ya come here often?" kinda guy..... and I think the results speak for themselves, babe. Mind you, it has on occasion led to a few moments of embarrassed silence whenever I use it in the confession box especially up the road at the convent. Those Sisters of Perpetual Succour are a bit traditional for my liking. Loosen up babes, you've nothing to lose but your wimples.

**Kieran Dog:** Your reference to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic sacrament of confession leads me nicely into a very pertinent question, Father: Does the concept of absolution ever occasion you to have feelings of negativity of almost Nietzschean proportions? Or, if I might paraphrase that in the vernacular, does it ever get on your tits a bit having to sit there and forgive people all the time even when you know that they are all basically tosspots who haven't an ounce of contrition in their beer sodden, fat-encrusted hearts? Incidentally, I trust there are no hard feelings about my team once again beating your lot to the league title. Sorry about that. It's getting a bit monotonous now, isn't it Father? Let me just say how much I admire your ability to be a pathetic loser every year and still come back the following year like a demented fcekin' groundhog looking for even more grief.

**F.M:** Keeping it in the vernacular - P### off, my son.

**Mike St. Cath:** What advice, Father, would you give to me and the other young blades in the village who are thinking of settling down and entering into the holy sacrament of Matrimony?

**F.M:** Well Mike, I think it was Hegel who so wisely declaimed: "Ihr Schwimmvest ist unter dem Sitz."

**John X-Pat:** What was the first word you ever looked up in a dictionary, Father, and how was it for you?

**F.M:** CUNEIFORM. I was six at the time. The experience was O.K. but I remember feeling a bit cheated. If me mammy hadn't been so quick to rip the batteries out of my torch I might have got to the word I was really looking for.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

**Ivorhistoryman:** What did you go off for Lent this year?

**F.M:** Celibacy and Maltesers.

**Ivor:** Was it hard?

**F.M:** Impossible, Ivor, impossible. Whenever I managed to smooch my way into a position of non-celibacy, I started fantasising about Maltesers.

**Ivor:** I know just what you mean, Father, I'm always doing that.

**F.M:** Must be a Northern Irish thing!

**TonySnoopy:** If you hadn't been a priest, Father, what would you have been?

**F.M:** Sober.

**Tony:** No, you berk, what profession would you have embarked upon?

**F.M:** Well, m'learned friend, like you I was mad keen to join The Axis Of Evil. It seemed a less stuffy option than the Civil Service - although their pension plan was a bit up in the air. I did actually get as far as sitting their entrance exam. They said my potential for Evil was really quite promising but unfortunately I didn't have the maths - and you always need the maths, as Peter Cooke so rightly pointed out. I also narrowly failed the SYNCHRONISE YOUR WATCHES practical module.

**Dusty Albert:** May God forgive me, Father, but I'm a fierce woman for the cynicism - it 's an occupational hazard with all us Fulham FC supporters, Father. My question would have to be: Just how do I know you exist, Father? You see, I've been trawling the fleshpots of Didsbury for years now on the lookout for you and that other man in black, you know, that nice man who delivers the Dairy Milk into sleeping women's boudoirs. I keep bumping into Colinski but your're never there, Father. No offence Father, but are you sure now that you're not just a figment of some eejit's fevered brow?

**F.M:** Now listen Dusty. If I was really a figment how would you explain the rapid disappearance of all those sausages that were on my plate five minutes ago. Keep the faith, sister. Seek and ye shall find. Actually I saw you in the Fletcher Moss on Monday night. I was in the corner sharing a pint with The Holy Ghost. He very kindly popped down to help us set the questions for the final league match of the season (I have to say he's not as inspired as people make him out to be). You must have spotted him - smarmy looking dude in the white suit and pony-tail. The one that kept trying to chat up the barmaid in tongues of fire.... I hate it when people do that - it's so fcekin pentecostal.

**Richard Albert Park:** As you know Father, it has been a life long ambition of mine to be buried in a cathedral. The full monty, you know, crypt, tomb, big alabaster effigy of me dressed as a Crusader knight and a nice cuddly wolfhound lying at my feet keeping my tootsies warm. I have applied three times, Father, but they say they've never even heard of me. So I was wondering, Father, would it be O.K. with you if I broke into the church some evening and doctored my baptism cert. to read "son of Mr and Mrs Richard Lionheart"? Also Father, I was wondering if you were ever buried in a cathedral?

**F.M:** Frequently, Richard, Frequently.

**Richard:** Wow, really Father? ....I mean, really really? Wow! Mega! I bet that was well cool, Father. Did you have one of them plaques on the wall with writing and stuff on it?

**F.M:** Yes, my boy - an epitaph inscribed in Latin.

**Richard:** Latin? Wow!! Well cool!! You actually got to read your own epitaph in Latin? Wow! Mega! What did it say?

**F.M:** HIC JACET PATER MEGSONIUS - HOMO QUI PIST IN EPISTLE INSERTAVIT.

**Richard:** Wow!! Megacool!! ....that's well good Latin. ....any idea what it means?.....never mind..... I don't care what they all say about you Father - I'm well impressed. I think you are one cool sacerdotal dude.

**F.M:** Amen, my son, Amen. Tell me, O brave Crusader effigy, are you going to eat them sausages or not? There's people starving over here.....

Pater Megsonius

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

24/05/2006

## JUMPING OFF THE BATTLEMENTS INTO GLORY

WITH A BLOOD-CURDLING CRY OF "TOSCA" A PIG CALLED DAVE HURLS HIMSELF AND HIS TRUSTY STEED OFF THE BATTLEMENTS.....WILL HE SOAR PEGASUS-LIKE INTO THE WELCOMING ARMS OF WINGED NIKE, GODDESS OF VICTORY AND NAFF SPORTSWEAR.....OR WILL HE SIMPLY GO SPLAT ONTO THE ROCKS BELOW?

TUNE INTO WITHQUIZ NEXT WEEK FOR ANOTHER EXCITING ADVENTURE OF "PIGS IN SPACE". WITH SPECIAL GUEST STAR GARY HEARTTHROB.

Only kidding. Relax, Dave and fellow Piggies, it's all over and you really have won probably the most exciting Cup Final of all time. I remember watching Kieran's lot being narrowly defeated on the last question by St. Caths in (I think) 2003. That one certainly was up there with the classics but I think the gut-wrenching drama of Wednesday night just pipped it to the post.

Not much to say really since I think the match spoke for itself and most of you were there in person to witness either our match or the Plate Final (well done, Dogs - hard luck, Albert Park). A big thank you for the splendid turnout which added greatly to the atmosphere of the Finals.....let's make sure we all take note and continue to pack all future Cup Finals to the rafters.

Thanks also to Ethel for setting their second paper of the Cup Season - fill in your overtime docket, Roz and send it to Mike. Should be worth about 3 casks of finest Bishop's Finger (myself and Mr Dennison Snr. still wince at our blurt to this question!). The questions were fine. Some people felt they were a bit uneven. Maybe so. Certainly the scoring graph indicated many peaks and troughs for both teams and I suppose it was inevitable that the Piggies handled the troughs better than us since they have had their snouts in them for more years than Gerry H. would care to admit. But, as always in a drawn game, you have to conclude that the balance was just right. Well done Ethel for upping the ante and making the questions a bit harder than usual. This is exactly as it should be in a final. Your motto was obviously MAKE THE BUGGERS SUFFER IF THEY WANT TO WIN A CUP and it worked admirably.

I will however quibble with the means used to decide the outcome after our drawn Final. Both teams worked really hard to achieve a draw and I thought the overall level of G.K. and inspired guesswork was very high. A shame then that we had instantly to resort to penalties instead of giving us a little bit of extra time or possibly even a golden goal outcome. What I mean is that some genuine G.K. could have been used in a fairly brief format - e.g. one rep from each team in a life or death face off or something similar using a question (or questions) similar to the standard of the spares. Then if still unresolved, you could resort to the dreaded Eskimos.....just a personal point of view, maybe it could be discussed at greater length before the next drawn Final (quite possibly not until May 2076, but you never know....

A big thank you to our very own Theo Walcott aka Charles Dennison who stood in at very short notice to replace Roisin who had to cry off due to a family illness. It was only his third quiz ever and was by his own admission a bit of a baptism of fire but he can be proud of the part he played in such a good game.

Well done Pigs. Enjoy your lap of honour next week.

Gerry

Fr. Megson adds:

Not so fast there - we will of course be appealing against last night's result. Apart from the fact that all of the Pig's answers were clearly offside and that Gerry H. spent all evening passing love notes (and quite possibly fivers) to the QM, what about that last answer? I spent all last night looking at the video replays and it is now quite obvious to me that what Dave actually shouts out is "Tusker". And, as you know, a tusker was a type of primordial warthog common in the swampy area now known as Didsbury. So Dave's cry wasn't an answer - merely an atavistic cri-de-coeur to an early ancestor of his team. Replay next Wednesday, White Swan, 8pm sharp. FCEK to set.

Fr. M.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

25/10/2006

### "Man is born free but is everywhere in chains"

Nowhere is this truth more universal than in the village of Didsbury, where our children, as soon as they are old enough to be expelled from school, invariably disappear and spend the rest of their lives in chains. Chains like CAFE ROUGE, THE SLUG AND LETTUCE, O'NEILLS and THE PIE AND PORRINGER. You name it, Didsbury's got it. O tempora, O mores! What a waste!

Don't get me wrong, nobody likes to see teenagers enjoying themselves more than Fr. Megson. It gives him great pleasure to mooch around Platt Fields of a summer's evening, peering into its various nooks and crannies and lending his vocal support to any trysting teenagers he finds happily ensconced there. But don't you agree that the young pups of today deserve a good kick up the arse for squandering their cosseted lives in these stripped pine fancy Dan emporiums where even the unfortunate worm in your bottle of poncey Mexican lager gets served up on a bed of sun-dried tomatoes?

Have they no idea of the many sacrifices we, their parents, had to make? The way we had to suffer for our art. Don't they realise that great wastrels are made, not born? Have they no appreciation of the countless hours we had to spend ripening and maturing in the permanent fug of smoke that was South Manchester pub life in the early '70s? The endless weekends we spent developing and honing our skills amid the noisome detritus of spilt beer, pork scratchings, soggy Number 6 packets of ten, dog-eared copies of SPORTING LIFE and beaten docketts, more spilt beer, blood, sweat and other bodily secretions less easy to identify? How we endured all this and still managed (mostly) to be up on time of a Monday morning to do our civic duty and sign on.

Marvellous. Just reflect on this and ask yourself one question: Without surviving all these hardships would we have become the unsung scourges of the taproom that we are today? I think not. Fear not though, the little green shoots of recovery are beginning to bud. Sometimes a trendy young blade will stop Fr. Megson on the street and say:

"Scuse me Father but would you mind not staring at my girlfriend's naked midriff. And incidentally Father, do places like that White Swan you're always banging on about really exist? I called in to Didsbury Library last week and asked if they could direct me to a pub in Ladybarn, and they said if its not on the shelf we don't have it. But had I tried looking in the section marked ORWELLIAN DYSTOPIAS OF THE 1930s? And by the way Father you're still ogling my girlfriend's bellybutton".

If he does decide to wine and dine his wee girl with the stunning belly button in the White Swan, he will be pleasantly surprised. Gone are the days when it was just a basic boozier with lighting problems. Today, thanks to the efforts of one of the most progressive landlords ever to wield a baseball bat in Ladybarn, it has become a total sensory experience. A riot of light and colour will take your breath away as you enter with virtually every room having its own individually styled decor. Their revolutionary idea of all-year round Christmas decorations has won them many friends within the Green Party - as well as its own state of the art light bulb. Although, if you intend visiting their sumptuous en suite toilets, it is still advisable to carry a small torch for those annoying moments when the barman accidentally turns the sandwich maker on without first turning off the TV thereby overloading their extensive but overly complicated wiring system. This should cease to be a problem in 2009 when their application to rejoin the National Grid is due to be reconsidered by the Health and Safety Executive.

Other recent improvements include a freshly laundered beer mat at every table and a strictly-adhered to policy of washing all the pots and glasses on a weekly basis, even when there is no direct evidence that the previous user was recovering from a sexually transmitted disease. And if the very mention of STDs is enough to inflame your gastric juices, you may like to note that The White Swan is rapidly earning a reputation as one of the finest gastropods (I think he means gastropubs, Ed) in the whole of Ladybarn. Try their all-night breakfasts (egg, beans, bacon, beans, sausage, beans and a freshly tinned tomato served with bread, dripping and lashings of house vodka) which, at £5.95, represents excellent value for money.

Finally, another unique feature that makes the White Swan a Mecca for impoverished drinkers everywhere except, possibly, Saudi Arabia.....

From November this year it will be possible to opt out of the time honoured tradition of buying drinks at the bar and join their exclusive BYO club. This enables you to bring your own supply (subject to a minimum of 96 cans) and drink it in the warmth and luxury of the taproom. You can even use the beer mats!! A nominal corkage charge of £34.75 (plus vat) applies though this fee can sometimes be waived if you are willing to let the landlord drink 65% of the total cannage. So, drop everything folks and get down to the White Swan tonight. You have nothing to lose but your chains - and the odd quiz or two. Father Megson



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

01/11/2006

## A Night of Mystical Fervour at the Bowling Club

Fr. Megson's trousers visibly sagged last night at the Bowling Club as crisis club 2 FCEKs sank without trace against seasoned campaigners Opsimaths. It was only the Ladybarn side's first away defeat of the season but, ominously, it was also their first away match of the season and the Landlord has given Fr. Megson just seven days to improve his team's performance or he will be looking for a new taproom for the rest of the season.

"I thought our players tried very hard tonight", said an ashen-faced Fr. Megson. "I thought our build-up play was very promising but unfortunately our final answers left a lot to be desired. It's ironic really - I have been telling the buggers for years now that they need to be more positive and the first time they heeded my advice was in that bloody picture round last night when a bit of negativity was called for.

I think the Opsimaths deserved to beat us last night though obviously it is always easier to win when you are on drugs. That new bloke, Howell, was obviously pumped up on something that isn't normally available at the bar in the Albert Club.....and he's far too old for an adrenalin rush. Are you sure, Mike, that his name is spelt Howell? Isn't there a welsh word HWYL that is impossible to translate into Sassenach but roughly means "an almost mystical fervour"? There is no equivalent word in the Irish language either although, in fairness, we do have Riverdance and the music of Daniel O' Donnell.

Question of the week for me was when Mike asked me "would you like a Talisker?"

Fr.M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

15/11/2006

Reflections on a paper set by Albert Park

*(no title)*

A Chairde,

Anyone who has ever sampled the crisps or pork scratchings at The Bowling Club will know that it is a great place to eat. Albert and his sous-chefs duly served up 7 courses of flavoursome haute-cuisine last night..... and one dish of poison dog's bane that was the quotations round.

Now listen, mes petits Alberts, nobody cooks up a more nutritional quizset than you lot but this round was off. The rest was brilliant but this round should have been thrown to the feral squirrels out the back. The only thing to be said in its favour is that it was off for both teams here last night ....and I suspect for all teams. Between ourselves and Napier Girls - which must surely come to a combined brain cell count of at least a hundred - we notched up the combined total of deux points in this round. Maybe it was just a bon mot too far for us two old warhorses and if so I will call around later to shower you with abject kisses of apology.....let's hope it doesn't come to that!

"Who said?" questions are OK in small measures. Normally you either know them or you don't. But I feel that there should always be something in the content or the context of the quote that gives a foothold to the drowning person....something to hang onto before that fateful leap into the dark with a desperate cry of OSCAR WILDE on your ashen lips. Not so last night. The setters chucked us into a well of Nietzschean profundity, sadistically applied vaseline to the sides and sat back to listen for the splash.....there were few survivors.

I was going to ask for a War Crimes Commission to be set up but our new webmaster, Ivan Denisovich, is frantically pointing at his watch. He had his laptop confiscated many years ago in the Gulag so he may well have to copy this website out in longhand and drop it off at your houses tonight. Please check your position in the League table carefully as his addition tends to suffer when he has had a few pints. I have already checked 2FCEKS tally. Well done Ivan - 4+0 does indeed equal 4.

Father Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

29/11/2006

All about Mike Bath and fairies

*(no title)*

A Chairde,

Still quite a few years to go before we are due for another new millennium but it's been quite a week for visitations in the Withquiz parish.

Just before he went down under Mike B. was surprised to find a fairy in his bedroom - of the winged variety, I hasten to add. Never one to look a gift horse in the mouth the veteran Opsimath trapped the little varmint in his sock drawer and threatened to leather it to death with his favourite Hush Puppy if it refused to grant him the statutory Three Wishes.

"Three wishes", guffawed the feisty little sprite, "are you 'avin a larf? ..listen, pal, this is post-Thatcher Britain, not bleedin' Fairyland. You can 'ave one fcekin wish and that's yer lot...and even then it will be of the either/or variety. Deal or no deal, pal?"

The proffered choice turned out to be either for England to win the first Test match by a record margin or for Mike to have unlimited Svengali-like control over a bevy of beauties for a whole evening in the comfort of his own bowling club.

Rather selfishly perhaps, Mike opted to allow his lust to overcome his patriotism and was soon left to repent at leisure when the bevy of pulchritude was revealed to be none other than (The) Napier Girls - all 52 stone of them simpering on Mike's knee and taking it in turns to whisper sweet nothings into his ear. Hence the Opsimath's unexpected victory last Wednesday.

"It was sweet as a nut", said an exhausted Mike afterwards, "but not quite the kind of climax to the evening I was hoping for".

Funnily enough, the other visitation in the parish also concerned one of (The) Napier Girls. Apparently Michael had been attending a meeting of The Flat Earth Society in a pub in East Manchester. It was a dark and stormy morning as Michael left the pub to walk home at approximately 4am, all the while taking great care not to step over the edge into the yawning abyss that lies directly below Eastlands. Imagine his surprise when he saw a spectral lady sitting majestically atop a traffic cone somewhere in Beswick. She was very beautiful and immaculately dressed in a sky blue and white kaftan with matching cloak and halo. She was clasping to her bosom a pair of rosary beads, a toy horse and what appeared to be a torn up season ticket. She looked very sad yet serenely resigned to her abject misery. Michael cannot be sure but he thinks she said something like "Blessed are they that giveth sustenance to the goat" before she floated away over the rooftops towards Gorton.

So intense was the vision that Michael immediately fell into a deep slumber and woke up the next morning in a vandalised bus shelter with a throbbing headache, blurred vision and a raging thirst....

Even more terrible to relate was the fact that he found a mysterious hole in the left knee of his trousers and there were traces of dried blood on the patella itself. Not only that but he experienced a terrible sensation in his right thigh as if hundreds of demons were sticking pins and needles into it.

Spooky or what?.....I'd like to see that auld rationalist bollox, Dickie Dawkins, explain this one away.....

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

13/12/2006

Fr M is transferred to a parish in Gorton

*(no title)*

A Chairde,

Like the unfortunate, and for me undervalued, Alan Pardew, Fr. Megson does not have a game this week. Or was that last week? I'm never sure these days. One of the pitfalls of going to work in my new parish of Gorton is that travelling so far eastwards inevitably means passing through so many time zones that, by the time the 169 bus has wended its eccentric way to Gorton Shopping Centre - Manchester City Council-speak for a derelict working men's club, a Turf Accountant's, a library, a post office and a butty shop - you invariably find yourself 61 years behind Didsbury Mean Time.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. The locals genuinely appreciate the services of what (I would have to say) is the friendliest post office I have ever slept in - and Clement Atlee is a far better Prime Minister than Tony Blair can ever hope to be - but it does play havoc with my already Rip Van Winklesque grasp of time and place. I was just about to start doing a scintillating piece on our extremely enjoyable recent tussle with The History Men but my housekeeper has just pointed out that that was last week and not last night and who am I to doubt the word of such a redoubtable figure of a woman ...Ah well, maybe I'll get it right next year....

One matter arising that might be worthy of mention however, is the proposal for a new weekly website slot that was unanimously passed by ourselves and The History Boys, to wit: THE ANSWER OF THE WEEK. This should run in tandem, or perhaps even replace, THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK. The first ever winner of this prestigious competition was Damian who correctly stated (SPARES number 5) that the distinction shared by Claire Rayner and Marilyn Monroe was in fact a proclivity for airing their views whilst standing over a manhole cover. Well spotted, Damo. Any future nominations will be gratefully accepted by Mike and his temporary vicar on Earth, that reckless muncher of polonium enriched potato peelings aka Ivan Denisovich.

Fr. Megson would hate to be taken seriously by anybody but would nevertheless like to make one heartfelt plea as we sink to our knees and suck a well deserved orange at the half time stage of yet another season. The quiz itself is still rightfully the highlight of the week but logging onto our excellent website every Thursday evening has, for most of us, become part of the ritual that makes our league so enjoyable. Everybody is unanimous in their praise for the efforts, dedication and skill shown by both Mike and John for making this possible every week. For their part it would be hard to improve on perfection. I do feel however that the experience could be improved by having more contributions from everybody else out there. The site is perfectly set up to be an open forum, particularly since the easy to use message board was added. I have to say that our silent majority has been growing by the week this season. When we meet up on a Wednesday night everyone seems to have strong, witty and sometimes polarised views about everything quizzical; yet given 12 hours sobering up time everyone seems to go quiet. Political Correctness?.....Apathy?..... Shyness?.....Surely not.

So come on everybody. Make a New Year resolution to release the inner bollocks part of your psyche that lurks beneath the surface of even the most sophisticated quizzer and let's get a bit of good natured banter and occasional controversy back into our increasingly anaemic Withquiz forum. You have nothing to lose but your friends and your self-respect. A free Fr. Megson tee-shirt and a night out with (The) Napier Girls for the best piece of invective publishedbetweennowand the whistle for the second half of our season.

Nollaig go breá

Fr. Megson

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

03/01/2007

A new year message from Fr M

*(no title)*

A Chairde,

Happy New Year. Fr. Megson extends a shower of greetings to all you shower out there and in Australia.

Hope you all had a good Christmas. People keep asking me if I did and I always say: "Oh yes, it was a very spiritual experience in a very real sense" ...but the truth is I can't remember a fcekin thing about it. I suppose I must have done but it's all a bit vague. I gather that I wasn't the flavour of the month in every parishioner's household over the festive period and could I just say sorry if you happen to have been one of those people in the queue in the Co-op on Xmas Eve. I was well out of order hurling obscenities and tins of baked beans at you just because the queue was moving so slowly and I now fully accept that your need to buy milk and groceries for your families was just as valid as my need to procure more cider. I can assure you that this will never happen again as I have since learned that DISCOUNT BOOZE (would that all our retail outlets were so poetically named!) is far cheaper and they don't bother stocking poxy loss leaders like milk and bread.

Let me see now if I can retrace my movements. I remember going into town for the local priests Diocesan meeting and Xmas booze-up in Vespers lap-dancing club on the 16th of December and not getting home again until the 21st. Apparently the craic was good and I eventually fell asleep under the Christmas tree in Albert Square. I must have stayed there for two or three days and I remember waking up feeling a bit under the weather with a lot of bruises and contusions. You know how it is when you fall asleep under a Christmas tree.....people can't resist picking you up and shaking and poking you to see if there's anything nice inside.....its a very inconsiderate thing to do to a fellow Christian and I dare say that the inquisitive hoors soon found out to their cost that there was nothing very nice inside me.....serves them right and I hope they got some nice new shiny shoes for Christmas!

Sorry about missing the midnight mass. I've had it in my diary since last January and I fully intended to go. But you know how it is on a Christmas Eve morning....you're stood there in your longjohns listening to the BeeGees and ironing your cassock when a couple of old lags from the Seminary turn up celebrating the anniversary of their defrocking and getting parole. You go out for a couple and before you know it, you've drunk your own body weight in cider and poteen and hey presto, in less time than it takes to say "you're a fcekin gobshite ex-Fr Keane, take that back what you said about me and that donkey or I'll kick your arse all the way back to feckin Sunderland, ye hoor ye", you have lost the power to twiddle your toes let alone genuflect....Sorry anyway.

Hope you didn't miss me too much. Can I just say a big thank you to all the altar boys for improvising so valiantly at short notice and to the many members of the congregation who shouted out helpful instructions at key moments throughout the service. Marvellous. Sure isn't that what the spirit of Christmas is all about? The baby Jesus would have been fierce proud of the lot of ye. And isn't it an awful shame that the Channel 4 cameras didn't turn up. I'm sure there would be a lot of mileage in a new light entertainment series called WHOSE MASS IS IT ANYWAY.

For some reason I had a bit of a headache on Christmas morning and I felt a bit lonely and depressed. It's always a sad morning for priests. Strictly speaking, we aren't supposed to keep children in the house overnight so we never get the chance to dress up in a beard and red cloak nor watch their little eyes light up as they open their prezies. I think that's the bit that priests miss the most. I do of course get to dress up in various guises during the rest of the year - my Marlene Dietrich ensemble is to die for - but it never quite has the same magic.

Did any of you get any decent presents this year? I didn't. Just the usual auld shower of socks, bottles of holy eau de Cologne from Knock and Lourdes - talk about coals to Newcastle - and half gallon bottles of Bailey's Irish Cream. Read my lips, all you female parishioners of a certain age out there, real priests don't drink Bailey's fcekin Irish Cream.

I did get a big box from the Bishop but my wildest hopes were cruelly dashed when I tore it open and found A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE ONE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN 6 USER FRIENDLY INTERACTIVE SELF - LEARNING MODULES. I got on the blower to him prontissime but he told me to stop swearing and read the fcekin thing before the New Year or I would be out. Looks like times are hard in the Vatican and they are making all of us reapply for our own jobs.

So I slammed the phone down and got in touch with our Union rep. Fr. Vivaldi aka The Red Priest. He said not to worry because they had negotiated a very decent redundancy package for people like myself who had no fcekin chance of being given a job in the new shake-up. Apparently we are to be offered an annual pension not exceeding one and two-turd times the total of our best collection plate based on the previous fiscal year.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

"Pardon my Latin, Fr. Vivaldi", I said, "but that's a right load of bollox. There's no way I could eke out the next 20 years on a selection of zlotys, old Irish threepenny bits, mutilated coppers and buttons and washers of various sizes. And what about my wee house and housekeeper?"

"You'll lose the house", he replied, "but you can do whatever you want with your housekeeper".

"Well, at least that's something", I muttered as I adjusted my reindeer antlers and bellowed for her to drop everything and come hither.

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

24/01/2007

## The Good Old Days

A Chairde,

Fr. Megson was rooting through Mike Bath's underwear drawer the other week - and don't say the thought hadn't crossed your mind to take advantage of his absence - when he found this snap of the early days of the Withquiz league.

To the untrained eye not much has changed at St Caths over the years. Despite the best efforts of the Luftwaffe Mike H. was just as focused on the question then as he is now. If you look a bit closer, however, you will see that the format in those halcyon days was slightly different to current practice.....and, if you are an old prig like me, I'm sure that you will agree that all the new-fangled changes over the years have been very much for the worse.

You will notice first of all that, due to the war effort and Wilfrid Pickles being on the wireless of a Wednesday night, there was a dearth of manpower - girl quiz players weren't invented until 1969 - and teams were very often forced to turn out without any opposition. Today only the Napier Girls maintain this quaint tradition. Note also that in those chummier days the QM wasn't expected to be a Norman Nomates and sit all by himself, but was allowed to be a member of the team. I wonder how many QMs could you trust nowadays not to look at the answer until they had given the wrong response. Not many I fear, with the obvious exception of Jitka. Cometh the hour, cometh the woman!

Finally you will note that the questions were a lot more straightforward in the '40s. Theme rounds were a travesty yet to be invented. Interestingly even Manchester didn't have a Gay Village in those days and I always think the two go hand in hand. Cameras, however, had been invented and picture rounds were not unheard of - but, due to the blackout, they were rarely a success. Alternatively setters would use nothing but their own ingenuity to conjure up picture questions that combined simplicity with a stunning sense of reality. For example, Round 4 Question 6 which was being asked as the unnamed photographer from the Reporter captured this snap, simply required the player to:

"NAME THIS ANIMAL"

Life was certainly a lot less complicated in them days.

Slan,

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

07/02/2007

## Voting Has Now Closed

A Chairde,

The BBC's Goal Of The Season may still be up for grabs but the much more prestigious award for The Withquiz Round Of The Season was conclusively and effortlessly snapped up last night by the Opsimaths with their foot-faultless stagger through the heart of Manchester's publand.

It wasn't just the perfectly judged subject matter - any team that felt this round fell outside the range of their knowledge would seriously have to consider asking themselves just why they are playing in a Manchester-based pub quiz league - it was also the entertaining penmanship and the innate fairness of its construction. It may have claimed inspiration from an earlier stroll through the Streets of London with Ralph and Tony but, whereas Snoopy's quite imaginative offering courted (no pun intended) controversy by wandering out of our manor, this one succeeded because the setter knew his audience and he knew what they would appreciate being asked. In short he remembered to keep it a local quiz for local drunks....PERFECT.

The other seven rounds may not have been perfect but were nevertheless very enjoyable. The reason for the mysterious Australian connection may never become apparent to anybody who claims to have seen Mike B. out paddling on his holidays in Blackpool on Christmas Day. It became so pervasive throughout the evening that 2 FCEKs were fooled into thinking that that obscure road built by the Romans ran between Melbourne and Hobart ...and quite an engineering feat that would have been!

In the end the Piggies of Wrath proved to be unwise than the Horses of Fcekin' Instruction, but only by the width of a dead dingo's donger. Seeing such a strong squad as Gary's Seven Pillars of Wisdom languishing near the foot of the table comes as much of a shock to the system as seeing Charles and Camilla wandering round the mean streets of Gorton..... perhaps both parties are only there for the beer.

Slan,

Fr. Megson



## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

28/02/2007

### Fr. Megson Has Left The Reeks.....

A Chairde,

A significant number of you rabble out there have been asking if Fr Megson was over in Ireland recently to attend the Fr Ted memorial synod on Inis Mor (aka Craggy Island). My considered response to this enquiry would be "feck off and mind your own feckin' business". I will however say that it ill behoves the Catholic hierarchy of Mayo not to, at least, give The Reeks' most successful missionary in Godless Sassana the chance to turn down an invitation to such a bash. If the invite does eventually turn up without a stamp on it I shall be quick to let them know that wild horses couldn't have dragged me there even if the booze was free. When you've seen one pub full of smoking nuns and legless priests running around shouting "feck" and "arse" you've seen them all.

Mind you, I might have quite enjoyed joining the crush in the community hall to witness the "Loveliest Girl With the Loveliest Bottom" competition which followed hard on from the cleaning fluids drinks reception which was named in honour of Fr Jack's favourite tipple. He's an awful hoor, that same Fr Jack. A total disgrace to the cloth - but you could never accuse the man of being a hypocrite - not like some of them boyos in the Vatican.

Any wise dictator will tell you that the trick of staying in power is to stay at home. Fr Megson has been slow to learn this lesson and once again he faces the order of the boot on his return. Holding the Napier Girls to a one point margin and winning a game counts as a winning streak for 2 FCEKs this season and Fr M might well have to be content with joining Sheila in the car outside the White Swan for the remainder of the campaign. Could be a lot worse though - just imagine if Sheila liked quizzes and you had to spend the evening reclining with Howell in a steamed up Trabant with his size 12 steel tipped wellies poking into your ribs. Mind you, he's not bad looking for a man of his age, I suppose.....



I'll leave you with a picture of Fr M's country home in the Reeks. It used to be a mobile home before the wheels fell off in the early 60s. I never did get the dog's name. He just breezed in one morning, licked my face twice, yelped once - I think my beard must have hurt his tongue - and then he was gone.

The world would be a far better place if there were more friendly, enigmatic, dogs around.

Slan,

Fr. Megson

07/03/2007

## Galway Love

Fr. Megson can't be arsed to write a sermon this week. Talk amongst yourselves for the next week and read this interesting newspaper item featuring Megson's kid brother who, like his more street-wise sibling, would appear to be blessed with a fair modicum of animal magnetism.

A man who was found dressed in latex and handcuffs brought a donkey to his room in a Galway city centre hotel, because he was advised "to get out and meet people," the local court heard last week.

Thomas Aloysius McCarney with an address in south Galway was charged with cruelty to animals, lewd and obscene behaviour, and with being a danger to himself when he appeared before the court on Friday. He was also charged with damage to a mini-bar in the room, but this charge was later dropped when the defendant said that it was the donkey who caused that damage.

Solicitor for the accused Ms Sharon Fitzhenry said that her client had been through a difficult time lately and that his wife had left him and that his life had become increasingly lonely.

"Mr McCarney has been attending counselling at which he was told that he would be advised to get out and meet people and do interesting things. It was this advice that saw him book into the city centre hotel with a donkey," she said. She added that Mr McCarney also suffered from a fixation with the *Shrek* movies and could constantly be heard at work talking to himself saying things like "Isn't that right, Donkey?"

Supt John McBrearty told the court that Mr McCarney who had signed in as "Mr Shrek" had told hotel staff that the donkey was a family pet and that this was believed by the hotel receptionist who the supt said was "young and hadn't great English."

Receptionist Irina Legova said that Mr McCarney had told her that the donkey was a breed of "super rabbit" which he was

bringing to a pet fair in the city. The court was told that the donkey went berserk in the middle of the night and ran amok in the hotel corridor, forcing hotel staff to call the gardai.

McCarney was found in the room wearing a latex suit and handcuffs, the key to which the donkey is believed to have swallowed. He was removed to Mill St station after which it is said he was the subject of much mirth among the lads next door in The Galway Arms.

He was fined €2,000 for bringing the donkey to the room under the Unlawful Accommodation of Donkeys Act 1837. Other charges were dropped due to lack of evidence.

Slan,

Fr M

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

14/03/2007

## And so it goes.....

A Chairde,

I'm far too petrified of Roisin to even think about reviving the hoary old Limericks competition but I couldn't resist sharing this one which I came across whilst re-reading SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5 a few weeks ago. Like all the stuff in the works of Kurt Vonnegut (Grumpy Old Man, par excellence - forget all them pretentious tossers on BBC2) it's witty, irreverent and true. I think it would make a fitting epitaph for Fr. Megson and all his male bon viveur colleagues of a certain age in Withquiz:

There was an old man from Stamboul,

Who soliloquized thus to his tool:

"You took all my wealth

And you ruined my health,

And now you won't pee, you old fool"

And so it goes.....

By the way, if you haven't yet read SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5, can I recommend that you throw away this Saturday's twee Guardian magazine and do so. Don't read it whilst sipping a machiato outside one of leafy Didsbury's many trendy coffee bars but jump on a 169 bus and watch the descriptions of firebombed Dresden spring to life as you wend your enchanted way through the back streets of Gorton and Abbey Hey. Repeat the experience on Monday morning by catching a slightly later bus and enjoying a re-reading of Dante's INFERNO in the midst of 200 or so of Burnage and Levenshulme's finest schoolchildren as they plan their guerrilla tactics for another day in the quiet groves of academia that are littered all over East Manchester.

And so it goes.....

Fr M

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

21/03/2007

## Pure Fiction

A Chairde,

The final round tonight was called "PURE FICTION" - which only goes to prove that the truth, as portrayed in the previous seven rounds, is indeed stranger than fiction. Does anyone, for example, really believe that Socrates quaffed his final cup of hemlock simply because he could no longer live with his irrational fear that globules of peanut butter might stick to the roof of his mouth? I think not. Small wonder then that Fr M sat for most of the evening holding his onions and swearing in Egyptian. He did however really enjoy the final round though several might carp that it was a bit too specialised for their taste. Fr M would like to take this opportunity to invite the setter of this lit-fest round to his place at the weekend where we can slip into something more comfortable and spend an intimate soirée comparing our contemporary book-ends.....and I pray to God that it was not set by either Tony or Eric.

Truth indeed can be stranger than fiction. Could any sane person really have believed that Ireland's rugby team would take second place on the back pages to Ireland's cricket team last weekend? Or that Ireland's cricket team would be in turn be dumped off the front, middle and back pages by an Agatha Christiesque whodunit saga? Do they still have butlers in post-Raj Pakistan? Be that as it may, I look forward to the Pakistanis turning up at Croke Park and becoming the first foreign side to beat Kilkenny in an All-Ireland hurling final. Only then will I once again feel safe supping a pre-curry pint of Guinness and listening to THE FIELDS OF ATHENRY on the juke-box of The Clarence pub in Rusholme.

Only a true great like Fr Megson can ever hope to understand fully the heart-stopping night-fright that being a manager can induce. The next few weeks will make or break his reputation. Can 2 FCEKs hold out and become one of the truly great second best teams in the history of the league? Or will they wilt under pressure and be remembered as just another bunch of third-raters? And will they become the first team ever to get bumped out of t'Cup by The Men They Couldn't Hang? Glory may well be fleeting but obscurity lasts forever.

Fair play to him though. He's a wily old fox. More callow managers like Ferguson or Mourinho would have the team holed up in the Stadium of Murk endlessly revising their phobia questions. It is surely the mark of a psychological genius to whisk his squad off for a weekend of team bonding and pedalo racing in a disused quarry on the outskirts of idyllic Doveholes in Derbyshire. It was there during a limbering up hagiographic exercise that Fr Megson stumbled upon the intriguing fact that the patron saint of quarrymen is in fact Saint Rock. Must have been a bit of a shoo-in when he applied for that job.

"Have you ever done any patron-sainting before, Rocky? Never mind -you'll soon get the hang of it - it's not exactly rock science, you know."

If any of you out there happen to know who has the honour of being the patron saint of sewerage workers, could they drop Fr M a line and he will be in a position to commence setting a perfectly paired quiz for when his team get knocked out of t'Cup by the afore-mentioned THE MEN TCH.

THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG is an excellent name by the way. But I wouldn't go round shouting it too loudly when you're playing against last night's setters. You don't want to rile Tony by setting him a challenge that he might find impossible to resist.....

Go raibh maith agat, as they say in Pakistan. Sleep well.

Fr. Megson

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

28/03/2007

### An e-mail From Dusty

A Chairde,

Fr. Megson was in the shower last night, fingering his beads and rapturously contemplating his favourite Joyful Mystery when a brick sailed through his window. Attached to the brick was an e-mail from Dusty. It read:

"Bless me Father and forgive me for breaking another of your windows. Only I'm a desperate woman and the fcekin' Social are refusing to pay to have me put on the broadband. What else is a girl to do when she needs to get her hands on her preacher man? Sure you could be all night dialling up!

"Anyway, Father, enough about your fcekin' window. Get over it. How are ye ,Father? How's your bits and bobs? Doctor Tim was blind drunk in the Red again the other evening and he had us in stitches telling us all about your embarrassing discharge. He was sayin' that the smell of it would make a pig sick. He's a great man with the words is Dr. Tim. I was awful sorry to hear about your trouble, Father, and I hope it clears up soon. Isn't it a good job you're celibate or you would be out on your bike every evening infectin' half the county? You're a terrible man altogether, Father.

"I'm fine and dandy meself. As you know I've been a martyr to my corns and the quiz team these last few months. It's friggin' hard to get out to the bingo when you're a full time carer for a poorly quiz team. They were awful low at the beginning of the season but they're sailin' along as high as mountain goats on syrup of figs at the moment. Not as high as them shower of fcekers in the Griffin, mind you. Wouldn't they sicken you, that lot with their winnin' every fcekin' week? Do you think Father that it's natural to be winnin' every week? Sure, you'd have no time for a sex life at all with all them books to memorise. You'd wonder betimes if maybe that Kieran wasn't a secret Jesuit parachuted in by the Inquisition and embedded in our midst. I wouldn't put it past him, meself. Or maybe Father, they're in league with the Devil. I've seen them mind-improvin' documentaries on Channel 5 about hoors like that. Wouldn't it be awful Father to sell your soul for an aul' tin cup that you could pick up on Longsight market for less than a fiver? Much good a tin cup will do them when they're meltin' away in the fires of Hell in a few years time without so much as a drop of water to put to their blackened lips never mind the ten or eleven pints of fcekin' Holts they normally be guzzlin' every time they get a friggin' question right.

"Far better to be a perpetual and righteous loser is what I was just sayin' to the team - and I'm sure a lifelong loser like yourself would agree, Father.

"Anyway, Father, don't mind me. That's enough eschatology for one evening and me without even a glass of sherry taken. Would you have a drop in the house at all, at all, Father? It'll be in the cupboard, behind the bleach.....

".....that's better, Father, now where were we? Ah yes, in Hell. Do you ever get the angst, Father? I'm a martyr to the angst, meself. I be lying in me bed of a morning, listening to Wogan and the rain and the wind pelting the bejasus out of the corrugated tin roof on my wee cottage and I get to thinking about the poor people who die of a Wednesday night before you get back from the quiz. My guess is that they'd die unshriven and end up in the fiery pit, bad cess to their pockmarked souls. Is that how it works, Father? Do you have any figures on it? I mean, what percentage of your parishioners who pop their clogs of a Wednesday would go to Hell as opposed to them that can hold on till the Thursday morning, or maybe even the Friday morning if they can afford to go private? Do you think God is good, Father and He gives them some leeway and says,

"Ah go on then, just this once, mind and don't go tellin' Peter or there'll be hell to pay. Sure that Megson hoor is never at home these days. He's a fcekin' liability. Slip on into Limbo with the dead babies and the protestants who never drank or swore or kicked dogs or threw stones at Catholics."

"Mind you, Father, you wouldn't catch me dead in a godforsaken place like Limbo with all them squawking babbies and tee-total protestants with their noses stuck in a bible all day long. No Father, I've been to Ballymena of a wet Sunday and there's no way I could endure that for friggin' eternity.....

"This is turning very morbid altogether. You should be ashamed of yourself, Father. Frightening a poor defenceless woman with all your aul' guff about dead people and the Hounds of Hell. Is it any wonder that people can't stand the sight of ye. Cromwell was right, Father. Hangin' all the priests is the only answer...

"Keep up the good work ,Father. I'll be round straight after mass on Sunday to cheer you up and collect me brick. And don't forget to buy some decent sherry, Father. Kisses and cuddles, Dusty"

Slan, Fr M

25/04/2007

### **The Sun Has Got Its Hoodie On....**

A Chairde,

Dark teatimes of the soul for everyone down at the rarely sunlit Stadium of Murk as Fr Megson battles to persuade his team that there is still life after their cruel banishment from t'Cup. The Holy Grail of becoming the first team ever to finish second best in t'Cup for four years running has been cruelly dashed from their puckered lips and not even the outside chance of displaying the treasured Plate on their kitchen dresser can dull the pain.

A pain that gnaws away at Roisin more than most. After a heated exchange last week she stormed out of Fr Megson's office tearing up her contract and announcing to a stunned taproom that she intended taking a five year sabbatical to go off and retrace James Elroy Flecker's poetic footsteps to Golden Samarkand. After feverish preparation she duly set off on this epic trek last Friday. Unfortunately she was forced to abandon the expedition shortly after Parrswood when she got an urgent text from her family saying that she had left the oven on and could she come back and sort it out.

She has since taken to her room armed only with a crate of Becks and a copy of Hesse's THE GLASS BEAD GAME. We can but hope that the utter futility of this book (and the fact that her room is not en suite) will persuade her that playing in the Plate is not quite the most undignified way of obtaining oblivion.

Having given up the Herculean task of trying to motivate his team - a phrase that many of you who follow football in East Manchester will be familiar with - Fr Megson was forced into spending some time answering his fan mail. Apart from the usual paternity suits and death threats there was one other letter of interest. It came from Colinski, a well hung meat purveyor from Moldova. Colinski writes:

"As you all know I have been sent here by Her Majesty's Government and Jitka on a 25 year tour of duty. I cannot divulge exactly what it is I am doing over here as it involves industrial espionage and various other bits of political jiggery-pokery.....actually, could you excise that bit if you publish my letter on the website. Thanks ever so much.

I rarely get the chance these days to tune into your excellent Withquiz website. I believe this has something to do with Moldova being the only European country to opt for the long wave Betamax broadband option but I am not an expert in such matters. Anyway, the kids were off school a few weeks ago so I was able to get a bus into work and peruse the foreign laptop before the boss woke up.

I was delighted to read the e-mail from Ms Dusty. I found it stimulating both intellectually and otherwise. She is obviously a very remarkable woman with her finger firmly on the pulse of the Zeitgeist....whatever that is. A nation needs to feel the steely touch of a woman's finger on its pulse, none more so than present day Moldova. We do have many strong and able women in our society but, to date, the government only allows them entry into the Civil Service via the public toilet attendants (level 1) route. Obviously these positions do have their limitations and I would not advocate that Ms Dusty should apply for Moldovan citizenship just yet.

I was however wondering if Ms Dusty was 'spoken for'. If not, could I presume to ask her if she might care to join me for a spot of speed dating (I would of course be delighted to refund half her train fare). I normally fulfil my speed dating obligations - like national Service it is compulsory over here - on a Saturday night between the hours of 20:45 and 21:00. This gets me back to my flat in good time for Moldovan Match of The Day which is one of our cultural highlights, the other one being a form of Polo which is played on donkey-back. The entire nation is still in a frenzy of excitement after last week's programme which dedicated itself exclusively to extended highlights of the 1968 Wembley Cup Final between WBA and Everton. The Baggies became national heroes here after a late winning goal was scored by the backside of the late Jeff Astle. Unfortunately the goal came too late in the game to be included in the highlights as the Moldovan TV State Service is very short of lignite and must by law show the epilogue and National Anthem before closedown at 22:15. Even events of national significance such as Presidential assassinations, political show trials and the Eurovision Song Contest are subject to this rule. Everybody here hopes that one day we will join the European Union and then Moldovan men and women will have equal rights and enough lignite to watch football and films like DANISH DENTIST ON THE JOB until well after midnight.

I will have to stop writing shortly as my tallow is beginning to harden. Could I ask Fr Megson to send me a photograph of The Stadium of Murk. Many people here claim that our National Parliament building is based on an original blueprint for the construction of your pub which was found by Moldovan spies on the body of the architect shortly after it was cut down from a lamppost in Ladybarn in the bad old '30s. I would like to test the veracity of these claims.

Please send me also a signed snapshot of Fr Megson.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

Most Moldovans think that you probably look like the backside of the late Jeff Astle but with an even funnier accent. For my part, I frequently and fondly conjure you up as a youthful Didier Drogba only with less hair and perhaps a little pinker in complexion. Am I hot or cold?

Slanski,

Colinski

P.S. Could you tell your Turf Accountant friend that I wish to place a 5 rouble bet on WBA winning the 1969 European Cup Winners Cup - the late Jeff Astle to score the winner in extra time?

Also could you check with Didsbury library to see if that book HOW TO SABOTAGE A LIGNITE MINE is available yet? I reserved it ages ago.

Fr M

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/10/2007

## Tahini Sunset

A Chairde,

7:15 of a Thursday morning and still no Fr Megson at the breakfast trough. Gretchen, his recently de-nazified housekeeper, felt her pert yet ample bosom heave with relief and anxiety in equal measure. She could live with the thought that the miserable old bugger had popped his clogs in the middle of the night. But for him to do so with her weekly pay cheque lying as yet unsigned on the kitchen table was cruel beyond belief.

Lighting her pipe and slipping on her best deerstalker she surveyed the house for clues. The trail of discarded underwear and beer-sodden clerical garb from the front door to his bedroom told her that he had indeed made it home from the quiz in Ladybarn. Why though was the kitchen in such a state of disarray? Why should anyone ransack her condiments cupboard and spill jars of her famed homemade tahini paste over such a wide area? Why should any sane person feel compelled to use the ensuing goo to smear across the walls the single word FECK in crude disjointed lettering? Gretchen shuddered. She had been in the presence of a psychopath overnight and he had not even bothered to visit her room!

By now in urgent need of some sustenance Gretchen raced to the laundry basket and groped. Deeper and deeper she groped. Her heart sank further as it became apparent that she groped in vain. Her two bottles marked HOLY WATER - NON POTABLE had disappeared. These bottles had been more dear to her than life. They had been given to her by a wise blind farmer on Carrauntoohil shortly after she had parachuted into Ireland from Duisburg. He had said that they contained a magic elixir called poitin which his family had been distilling since before the coming of the Sassenach. It was sacred to the Irish and was traditionally drunk before funerals. It varied from drinker to drinker but, generally speaking, the funeral would be required about three days after drinking it.

Gretchen was overcome by grief. The woman who had single-handedly fought her way out of Stalingrad now found that she could not live without her poitin. She swooned to the floor and wallowed miserably in self-pity and tahini paste.....

As indeed did the author when he blew last night's quiz on the final question. An excellent quiz against excellent opposition. Both sides contested every point with a ferocious dalliance that increasingly tested our QM's endurance until he was reduced to a Basil Fawltyesque moment at about 11 pm when he politely beseeched each team to "Just answer the bloody question!!!!"

.....and then it was just me and the QM, eyeball to eyeball on the final question. The bar about to close. One point needed for a very honourable draw. Two points and I would be more famous than Jonny Wilkinson was in 2003. All my team looking smug and signalling with at least 30 fingers in the air. Mark and his Parkers looking resigned to a very unjust defeat.....

If ever there was a moment not to say CHICK PEAS, that was it.....Who says it's only a bloody game?

Fr M



## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

31/10/2007

### The Blessing Of The Unmarked Graves, forsure

A Chairde,

Fr Megson and his soulmate in adversity, Sven Goran Erikson, are still wringing their heads in anguish over last week's setbacks but, despite the hate mail, both managers remain remarkably upbeat.

"Ja, forsure, we were maybe unlucky not to come away with something after this six goal thriller. But that is football, forsure, or maybe perhaps it is cricket. I am not sure. I think that if we play like this every week then perhaps, maybe, forsure, foolish people will stop saying that we are inconsistent. I am wondering now if you need to be a member of Vespers gentlemen's club or is it that it is allowed to pay on the door? Also, is it that you are maybe perhaps allowed to join in with the young ladies who are dancing on the revolving stage? I must wear, forsure, pristine underpants".

Fr Megson has been rested this week and has been advised by the team psychologist to remain in hiding. He is however very appreciative of the massive public support he has received. In towns and cities all over Britain, notably in Bolton and in Leicester, tens of people turned out to chant his name and effigies were burned.

Luckily for him it is now that time of year when quiz fever gives way to the frenzied excitement of the annual Blessing of the Graves. In a remarkable show of confidence the Bishop of Bath without Wells has this year entrusted Fr Megson with the prestigious task of blessing the unmarked graves.

"Any eejit can bless the graveyard graves", he pontificated loudly ex cathedra, "but it takes a particular kind of eejit to traipse across Europe blessing the unmarked graves. It should get him out of my hair, sorry, diocese for at least three years. I am not unmindful of the fact that during his time in the parish paganism has become the official religion of choice in the Ladybarn area. In a recent exit poll conducted outside his church shortly after the beginning of mass 78% of the congregation admitted to having partaken of phallic worship whilst only 7% had seen SONGS OF PRAISE in the past five years. Of this 7%, over 4.6% admitted that they only watched SONGS OF PRAISE in the hope that it might show a bit of phallic worship. A worrying trend indeed".

" It is indeed a great honour to be chosen to bless the unmarked graves", beamed a delighted Fr Megson. "Domine, non sum dignus, but I'll give it a bash. It will be fierce, long and thirsty work though and I'll need lots of overtime and pub breaks. Withington alone will take about three weeks. Every garden in the area is a potential unmarked grave. We have to remember that crimes of passion were a very popular pastime in Edwardian Withington. They were a bit like the TV soaps of today but a lot more interactive, of course. God alone knows how many discarded spouses there are out there....not to mention the milkmen. Records from Heald's Dairy show that of the 92 milkmen who went out on their rounds week commencing 25th August 1902, only 11 made it back to the depot. And 2 of these 11 later succumbed to massive groin injuries.

I think it would be a really good idea to build a memorial outside Withington Library in honour of all the milkmen who were killed in action on the job or wounded at the front. After all, many of them could have been our great grandfathers though obviously nobody would be terribly sure about that.....

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

09/01/2008

## Dusty Claws Back..... (1)

A Chairde,

Fr Megson was sat on the top deck of the 142 bus this morning grooving away to the late Joe Dolan's timeless classic Make me an island and leafing through his Compendium of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Not a great book, if truth be told. Far too many drawings and not enough pictures. And the pictures that you do find are perhaps a little too graphic to get your juices flowing freely. But it's a book that Fr Megson wouldn't be without in the rush hour - even when the students pile on in Fallowfield ("I've only got a 500 Thai baht note, driver, can you change it?") he is still guaranteed to have at least two seats to himself.

But not this morning.

"Bless me Father, how's yer belly off for spots?" solicits Dusty as she plonks herself and her 17 Discount Booze bags down beside him.

"Sorry about the bags Father, I was just pickin' up a few odds and ends for the team's breakfast. You're lookin' awful lonely Father. Aren't ye lucky I got on to keep ye company. That's a very interestin' looking book you're clutchin' there under yer cassock. Are ye still troubled by that aul discharge down below or are you just doin' a bit of research for a theme round. Do ye fancy a wee quiz now, Father? Ah go on Father, ask me a disease. I'll crack open a few lagers and it'll just be like the real McCoy.

"Listen Father, will ye be seein' Roisin soon? Will ye do me a favour? Can ye tell her I was askin' for her and will she be in tomorrow night? I need to call round and apologise for not gettin' her a Xmas card and a wee present. I also need to poke her eyes out and scald her tongue. Fancy the aul strumpet standin' up in a crowded pub and shoutin' out that I was a lesbian. The cheek of her Father! The aul dirtbag. Sittin' there slaggin' decent Godfearin' women off and her sluggin' away on lager from the neck of a bottle like tumblers had never been invented. Is it any wonder that there isn't a back street flax mill in Belfast that would employ her? She must be awful jealous of me, the aul minx.

"Father, you just tell Miss Roisin that I've had more men than she's had liquid breakfasts and what's more, I was never desperate enough to have to marry a Mayo man just because any man from the more respectable Counties would refuse to touch me with a barge pole. Tell her to put that in her pipe and smoke it and I hope it chokes her..... are ye nearly finished with that can, Father, I'm in sore need of an ashtray?

"Tell her as well, Father, that me and the team have never even been to Lesbos. There's no way I would spend good money to sit on the beach for two weeks watchin' women with morals no better than a common Protestant lyin' around sunbathin' in dungarees and screamin' in agony when their nose studs get too hot. If ye want to see that sort of thing, Father, it would be far cheaper to lie on the grass outside Manchester Town Hall of a sunny Friday afternoon.

"Well Father, we're near the Town Hall now so ye'll be wantin' to get off. It was grand to see ye again before ye die. I've not seen ye on top of yer column recently. Don't worry about it, Father. Ye wouldn't be the first Imperialist lackey to get knocked off his column. Look what happened to that Nelson hoor in Dublin a few years ago."

Dusty was talkin' to Fr Megson

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

06/02/2008

### Dusty Claws Back (2)

A Chairde,

Bigger portions of jelly, and lashings of ginger ale, at the Withquiz party last week when it was announced that The Opsimaths had made it to the coveted number 2 position in the league table. Only Fr. Megson and Ivor refused to wear party hats. Team captain and the very model of an Opsimath (see dictionary definition), Mike Bath, was so buoyant that he became entangled with the helium balloons on the ceiling and had to be held down by Jitka and four burly security guards hired by the Bowling Club from KKLS (Kirby Kiss Logistical Solutions) to supervise the party.

"Absolutely brilliant, 'triffic feeling", Mike told our reporter when he had regained the use of his windpipe. "We're all absolutely supralunatic. 'Triffic. Who would have believed it? One moment we are just another mediocre quiz team and then less than 25 years later we are a second best team. Who says that fairy tales don't come true?...Oscar Wilde probably...it's always bloody Oscar Wilde.

"You know, it's an even more amazing achievement when you consider that not all of us are old codgers. I mean look at Howell. Seems like only yesterday that he was running around the club in short trousers licking the froth off your pint when you went to the loo... he still does that, come to think of it and I, for one, find it a very unappealing habit. Looking back, an awful lot of people thought I was crazy when I adopted a youth policy and gave him a run in the first team a few years ago. Just goes to prove that you CAN be second best with kids on the team. So ya boo sucks to that Scottish ponce on the tele who nicked the pound coin out of my trolley in Morrisons last week.

"You know, you need a lot of self belief to be a manager in this game. I still remember all the flak I took when I signed Howell. People said that 4 pints was a crazy price to pay for an untried youngster. They said his English wouldn't be good enough and that he was far too flash to settle down and start coming second best at quizzes. All those fancy hand movements and step-overs are fine and dandy, they said, but they won't win you no points. But I continued to believe in him and look at him now. He's still a flash git, I grant you. Still far too much Brylcreem for my liking and I absolutely loathe those tangerine boots of his, they just make him look silly, if you want my honest opinion. But you've got to admit that he can play a bit. The way he can bend a blurt in mid-air has to be seen to be believed. People like Ivor can pack a lot of power into their blurts but they can't bend 'em like Howell. 'Triffic.

"He still has his detractors, of course. A lot of people think he goes down far too easily when he gets within sniffing distance of the box. Maybe so but I can only speak from experience and say that whenever I have taken him out for the odd candle-lit dinner he has always behaved like a perfect gentleman. Just a quick coffee afterwards and maybe a chaste peck on the cheek and then he sprints off home to practice his hand movements and step-overs. I wish I could run that fast. I've tried chasing him a few times but I always collapse with a stitch and a loud gushing sound in my ears. Maybe it's God's way of telling me not to be a sentimental old fool.

"It's not all candle-lit dinners, mind you. Nobody works their team harder at evening training sessions than me. They don't call me The Dominatrix for nothing. But that's another story. No, I work on the principle that you can't get blood out of a stone so it's my job to drum some knowledge into their thick skulls. I've just started a punishing schedule where I give each of the team a specialist subject every evening and they then have ten minutes to research it and become an expert on it. Hopefully we can avoid injuries and by the end of March - at the latest - we should know everything that is to be known. Then we can really blow that monstrous regiment of Napier Girls out of the water.

"As we speak, Alice is in Stockport revising the brickwork of the local viaduct. Yes I know it sounds a bit obscure but it has come up before so it's bound to crop up again. And Brian is over in the library boning up on his irregular Serbo-Croatian verbs. A bit of an awkward one this. Serbo-Croatian is one of those pesky languages that has more irregular verbs than regular ones. In fact there are only five regular verbs in the whole Serbo-Croatian vocabulary, each one denoting, naturally enough, an action that is performed on a regular basis. They are - write this down please, I won't be repeating it - the verbs 'to be', 'to do', 'to spit noisily', 'to cleanse ethnically' and 'to score more goals than England'.

Incidentally, has anyone seen Colinski lately? I sent him out over a month ago to do some research on Manchester city centre pubs and lap-dancing clubs. I wonder what's keeping him?"

Mike was speaking to a sulking Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

19/03/2008

## A Viaduct Too Far...

A Chairde,

Portsmouth did it. The tykes of Barnsley did it magnificently. Even unsung Cardiff City did it. Surely the lowly Charabancs could do it.

But, alas, no! Against all the odds the underdogs of Ladybarn went crashing out of the WIST Champions Cup beaten by mighty Chunky last night at the stunning Pineapple of Dreams on Stockport's very own Rive Gauche.

A stunned, ashen-faced Fr Megson writes:

Things were going really well at the beginning. Then, completely against the run of play, we blurted out the wrong answer to our first question - confusing Small Heath with the less well known Newton Heath. Manchester Utd, Birmingham City - still not sure what the difference is. It was at this stage that things started going badly wrong for us.

You know that dream when you are a little fluffy bunny, your mummy takes you for your first day out on the M6, and then she runs away and you can't find her because you get a bit dazzled by all the bright headlights of the cars bearing down on you at 110mph. Then a massive Parcelforce truck comes hurtling towards you, you scream "Stop", and the driver sticks his head out the window and says "Sorry mate, can't hear you, I've got my I-Pod on. I love this track. Paranoid by Black Sabbath. D'ya know it?" And then you wake up screaming.

Or the one when you are making mad passionate love to 5 Page Three girls on a narrow ledge above a massive butcher's shop and suddenly the ledge breaks and you go hurtling down...down...down....and you wake up screaming: "Dear God I'm so sorry for all my sins - especially that one about making mad passionate love to 5 Page Three girls on a narrow ledge above a massive butcher's shop. But please God don't let me die in a mincer."

Well, it was a bit like that for us last night.

We panicked early on, and by the time we got into our stride we were about 20,000 points behind and the WIST Cup was well and truly beyond our clammy reach.

Chunky are a really impressive (and hospitable) team and it should be a humdinger of a final when they take on the might of the Napier Girls.....far too close to call.

Thanks finally to Mike for a really good set of questions. I loved the one about the Ayresome Park/North Korea connection.....really kicked myself (and the team) for not getting it right in time.

Fr. Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

26/03/2008

## Memo to Lord Bath from Lemsip Parsnip MP

As you know I am a very important person in the HP London which I think is something to do with politics as well as being very flavoursome brown sauce. I believe my official title at the moment is Lib Dem spokesman on Scrabble and anagrams, but my briefs are also wide enough to embrace all that is good in Eastern European teenage culture. Hence my following request, which is as follows:

Send me please ticket for your very exciting Chunky Girls final. Please also do not send me ticket for main auditorium. Send me ticket instead for adjoining shower cubicle which must have fitted one good-sized peephole. This is my favoured way for watching Chunky Girls play.

Please do not ask for me to send monies for ticket as visit from the Estonia Secret Police breaking down your door at midnight with pickaxe handles often offends.

I go now. Any further questions please first send cash. This is democratic principle which I have learned in your country.

Kisses and cuddles,

Lemsip xxxxxx

PS: Please also not to forget to secure long-term your "Lord" Bath title by leaving some more brown envelopes behind usual cistern. Brown envelopes this time please. You left brown sauce last time which I have not found very funny. No more Mr Wise Guy please or I will send hungry Chunky Girls to sit on lap.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

08/10/2008

## A New Season of Discontent

A fresh season of mental malfunction and stunted ambition is once again upon us and hope springs eternal in Fr. Megson's pert yet manly bosom.

"Bring me my pint of burning gold, bring me my arrows of desire", he croons happily as he manhandles his team into a sitting up position in the famed Stadium of Murk (briefly known over the summer as "The Enlightened Palace of Celestial Murk" in homage to the Beijing Olympics). Indeed much of Fr Megson's misplaced optimism is drawn from the recent Olympiad.

"It just goes to show what can be achieved even if you are born a bit of an eejit", he beamed. "All you need is the ability to forego the pleasures of youth like going out drinking and then kissing girls and getting sick, and concentrate instead on doing interesting things like riding a bike with funny wheels, or taking up residence for four or five years in the local swimming pool. Don't worry your pretty little head about being called 'Norman no mates' - sure there'll be plenty of time to be antisocial when you get your medal."

I have to say, though, that I was a bit disappointed with the Team Reeks overall performance. One miraculous medal in the Mixed Doubles Bog-Snorkelling event was a pretty poor haul compared to team GB. Mind you, it has to be remembered that most of the team GB success came in either sitting down or lying down events and just try sitting down or lying down on top of Carrauntoohil every night for 4 or 5 years and see where that gets you. For similar reasons Yngling class sailing has been slow to catch on as a favoured pastime in the Carrauntoohil parish. And as for dressage - well, as yet there is no equivalent event for donkeys and you would need to pick an awful lot of spuds to be able to afford to buy your wee girl a dancing horse for Christmas!

But fair play to the lot of them: they played as a team and that's what I want this lot to do this season. Why do people always laugh when I say that? If only I could get our Brazilian playmaker Roisinho to stop sulking and sign her new contract, we're quite willing to give her an extra bottle of Beck's every other week. But, oh no, that's not good enough for her. She's been a right little madam ever since that night she got tapped up by the Electric Pigs. All of a sudden she wants to play for a team that wins things. Personally I think it's more to do with playing for a team that is likely to have twelve fittish young men crammed into the post match shower cubicle.

In a clever move to ensure that somebody else gets the blame this season Meggers has allowed himself to be kicked upstairs at the Stadium of Murk (is'nt the Ladies loo up there? - ed ) as the newly appointed Director of Quizzing. Several candidates from various teams have already been interviewed over the summer with a view to filling the vacant Manager's position. The general standard of those interviewed was impressively dim but unfortunately none of them was stupid enough to accept the post. Consequently the Charabancs will henceforth be managed by a different 'Guest' Manager each week. This policy has already paid rich dividends for the team at Have I Got News For You and for that other well known team of jokers, Newcastle United FC.

In the hot seat for their first home match will be Kevin Keegan, the self-styled people's choice. Kevin is known to have a track suit and a proven track record in leaving a lot of questions unanswered so he should feel at home amongst the Charabancs. The match is scheduled to end at 11.45pm and Kevin has vowed that he will stay right to the bitter end. Obviously though, if we fall behind in the first round he may be forced to reconsider his options.

Come along early to avoid disappointment.

Fr. M

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

15/10/2008

## The Getaways - Mad, bad and unlikely to Know

Several of our listeners gleefully hurled buckets of night soil into the WithQuiz studios last Wednesday night in protest at the outsourcing of the first quizset of the season to a bunch of unknowns called the Getaways. The Bishop of Bath without Wells points out, however, that many of the Getaways have in fact played several games in our Quiz league in various guises, albeit under cover of darkness. Indeed he can recall one famous occasion when they actually came away with both points after four players from the opposition, Amboß, had been sent off for substance abuse in the first half.



*Getaway Richard (back row, centre) cheerfully gives bitter rivals, the Napier Girls, some useful advice on how to identify landlocked countries*

Anyway, for the benefit of any of you too young or too inebriated to remember meeting them, here are some brief pen pictures of four of them - not the brainiest four, I admit, but perhaps the four that would be best avoided on a dark night in Parrswood.

### CLIVE

in 1946 Woman's Realm predicted that young Clive would be "bigger than Mrs Miniver" - but then his mum splashed out the best part of a tanner to have his golden tresses lopped off and he disappeared forever from the women's problem page. Later he announced that he wished to become a thespian. This turned out to be nothing more than an unfortunate typographical error, though he did receive rave reviews for his performance in the 1962 Gorton library production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. In the Observer Kenneth Tynan noted that he had been greatly touched by Clive's Bottom, and that he looked forward to seeing it run and run in London's West End. It is perhaps this incident that Tynan had in mind when he went on to utter the first four-letter word ever broadcast on the BBC. In his heyday Clive was very much the Lord Byron of the quiz world - mad, bad and unlikely to know. Today he lives quietly in a two bedroom chateau on the banks of the Mersey where he cultivates award-winning marrows, his memories and a growing sense of worldly ennui.

### MARK

The only member of the team to have been given the name Stibium at birth, he renounced this title after his first day at primary school when he came home still friendless. In retaliation his parents barred him from using the name Bassett and from spending any of the sizeable family fortune accrued from their liquorice mines in Uruguay. In retaliation against their retaliation he announced that he was going to his room. Furthermore, he would henceforth be known as Mark and would never grow up. True to his word he still plays quizzes with the boyish enthusiasm of a 12 year old. Mark adds:

"I love quizzes. Quizzes are brill. I could spend all night playing quizzes. Sometimes I do spend all night playing quizzes. It's brill! I hate people wot hate quizzes. Especially people wot hate quizzes just 'cos they don't know nothing. I don't never give up even when I don't know nothing. I remember one night they asked me a stinker. Name the capital of Belgium? Obviously I hadn't a clue 'cos I wasn't even born in bleedin' Belgium but I gave it a go anyway. Using my skill and judgment I went for Tintinville. It was wrong.....but only just. I wasn't put off. I guessed and guessed. and then on

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

guess number 54 - bingo! I'll never forget that moment of epiphany. It came just as the opposition were on their final question of the evening which was 'Which city is renowned for its flavoursome sprouts' and I said 'is it perhaps Brussels?'. We lost narrowly by one point that evening and nobody spoke to me for the rest of the season. but I still love quizzes. I think quizzes are brill. PS I think Curb Your Enthusiasm is a very silly name for a TV programme."

## DAVE

Today Dave is an icon of the quiz world and is freely available on desktops all over Ladybarn - but in the early days he was largely unknown. Then, in a last ditch effort to revive his career, he turned to TV and became the first seven year old to win a million guineas (a sizeable sum in those days) and a Meccano set on Junior Criss Cross Quiz. Shortly after that he was persuaded to turn professional and the rest is history.

Despite his stardom Dave remains as unassuming as ever. Indeed, if it wasn't for his distinctive vocal chords (which helped him pick up an Olympic bronze in the Men's Boom in Helsinki in 1952) and his tactile habit of bear hugging everyone within a forty yard radius (he was once mistakenly yellow-carded for heavy petting with the opposition) you would hardly know that he was in the room. In 2005 he broke Pope John Paul's world record for shaking hands with the most people on their way back from the toilet.

Today Dave eschews the razzamatazz of TV quiz shows and divides his time between leafy Ladybarn and the taproom of the Red Lion where he does regular Harry Belafonte tribute evenings. In his spare time he likes listening to music ("anything by Rambling Sid Rumpole really") and watching ladyboys play football. He hopes one day to be rich enough to buy Man City FC and to steer them to their rightful place in the Beswick and District B Division League.

## RICHARD

(extracts from a recent interview first published in the Guardian Weekend Magazine)

Q: Full name?

A: Richard Brinsley Sheridan Schwarz.

Q: Really?

A: No.

Q: Which living person do you most admire?

A: Mike Bath.

Q: Really?

A: No.

Q: Who would you like to share your desert island with, Paris Hilton or Simone de Beauvoir?

A: Angelika Merkel.

Q: Really?

A: No. Let's cut the crap ok? Why isn't Bjork on this menu? I saw her once, you know, in Iceland. She was buying fish fingers and so was I. It's nice to have things in common.

Q: Who is your favourite playwright?

A: .....(long pause).....Pinto.

Q: Don't you mean Pinter?

A: .....(long menacing pause).....maybe.....why must you always contradict me?.....(very menacing pause.).....Merde!.....

Q: If you could only have one wish, what would you wish for?

A: A monkey's paw.

Q: Really? Why a monkey's paw?

A: Don't know. I suppose I had to say something and a monkey's paw just sort of floated through the ether...you can have it back if it's that important. But really, you shouldn't promise things and then take them back. It's very hurtful.



## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

How can I trust you in future. Bjork would never do that.

Q: This interview isn't really going very well, is it?

A: Don't know. Anyway you're the one that keeps asking the questions about sex. Why can't you just let me walk my dog in peace?

Q: Don't you start asking me questions, buster. I'm the bleedin' journalist around here. If you want to start asking questions why don't you just pi\*\* off back to your little boys' quiz league?

A: You're very feisty aren't you? I like that. It's how I imagine Bjork would be. How's about if we lose the dog and then maybe I can walk you back to your place? You can call me Brinsley if you want.

Q: ....(pulse racing but trying to sound calm).....really?

A: No.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

12/11/2008

Reflections on the meaning of the team name 'The Men They Couldn't Hang'

*(no title)*

Fr Megson is long back from the Balkans but is still far too jaded to put pen to paper. Suffice to say that he managed to pick up a very sore bum (nothing more sinister than severe stress being applied to his glutimus maximus by cruelly hard Balkan train seats) and a mysterious dose of Macedonian belly which refuses to go away. All in all Fr. Megson is feeling a bit of a wimp and it may well be that his future peregrinations will have to be curtailed. Two weeks in Lytham St. Anne's sounds a distinct possibility for his next great trek.....

In the meantime, here is some music.....sorry we don't seem to have any music.....I know, let's have a bit of vintage CALL MY BLUFF.

This week Withquiz is offering you the chance to win an all expenses paid (beer and tomato juice excluded) weekend for two in the luxurious White Swan hostelry in leafy Ladybarn. All you have to do is select the most appropriate definition for this well known phrase or quiz team. This week's teaser has been sent in by a Mr R. Robinson, a retired buffoon from Surbiton. Let's have a round of applause for Mr Robinson and a milk token is winging its way towards him even as we cringe.

Tonight's phrase is THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG.

Is it:

- a. A multiple botch up in a sex change surgery
- b. A youthful quiz team specialising in twentieth century punk ephemera
- c. A group of Gestapo officers enjoying an extended Vatican sponsored sojourn in Paraguay

If this game proves popular, we could play it every Wednesday night and thus avoid having to visit draughty pubs in bleak midwinter.

What do you think?

Fr M



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

03/12/2008

## .....in which Dusty repents for causing Ivor's damnation.....

A chairde,

Father Megson was trying to stay warm by playing keepy-uppy in bed last night when Dusty dropped in.

"Bless me Father", she chirped, "and how's yer belly off for spots? Isn't it a lovely evening to be happed up under the goose feathers? Hope ye don't mind me droppin' in only yer skylight was open. Holy mackerel, Father, that's a fierce big bed you've got there. Isn't it an awful waste of space with you bein' a celibate man? If ye were a proper Christian, ye'd share it with the poor people of the parish and them less well endowed than yerself.

"That's a great game you're playin' there, Father.....don't stop on my account.....away ye go again and I'll do the countin'. One, two, three.....nine, ten, eleven.....oh, hard luck, Father.....that was brilliant altogether, Father.... Mr Dusty would be awful jealous; his personal best is still seven.....and that was achieved back in the torpid summer of '59.

"But enough about you, Father. Let's move on to more important matters. Listen Father, would ye ever wipe that disgustin' sweat off yer manly torso and then we'll kneel down and say the rosary for poor wee Ivor and his broken team. Have ye not seen the table? Sure the History Men are lower than the beasts of the field. If it wasn't for them Johnny-come-lately Punks, they'd be bottom of the pit. 'The last rusty dodgem in the fairground of futility', to quote the Venerable Bede.

"Kneel down beside me now Father - not too close, I'm a happily married woman - and we'll begin. We'd better make it the Sorrowful Mysteries, Oh Father, it's no use, me conscience is killin' me even worse than me corns.....ye'll have to shrive me here and now. Get out of that bed, ye lazy pup and give me absolution.

"Ye see, Father, it's all my fault. Picture the scene. There I was a few months ago stuck for hours in the chiropodists while he pared me corns. I'd read all the CHESHIRE LIFE magazines twice over so I was forced to get out me copy of PARADISE LOST which I normally save for visits to the Post Office. It was written by a protestant, Father, so I'm sure ye didn't have it in the seminary but it's a fierce good yarn. It's all about a shower of big-headed bad angels who get on God's goat by sayin' that they're just as clever as He is and they join a Trade Union demandin' equal rights for angels. Then God really loses the bap and He shouts in a big loud voice 'Ye have me nearly astray in the head with yer constant caterwaulin', feck off the lot of youse and go and live in saecula saeculorum in a fiery furnace and give me head peace'. So they did what they were told for once and that's when Hell was invented. Not many people know that. I should be on the Eggheads, shouldn't I Father?

"So far so good, Father, but guess what I did then. When I was gettin' me corns pared I shut me eyes and prayed to God that he would cast them aul hours from the Griffin into a fiery pit as well and bad cess to them. I know that was a fierce uncharitable thing to do but I get awful fed up with them winnin' every week and their egos the size of Co. Roscommon and anyway, how was I to know that God would bollox it up and send the wrong team down into the fiery pit? It makes you think Father, if He can't tell the difference between Ciaran and Ivor, he can't be all that omniscient, can He? Maybe them bad angels had a point after all.

"Anyway Father, what's done is done. Just tell me what the penance is for sendin' the wrong team down and then I'll toddle off home to be Mr Dusty's obedient handmaid.....and wouldn't it be a hoot if God gets it right next season.....it'll take more than a mid-season change of name to fool Him next time."

17/12/2008

**Merry Christmas to everyone from The Charabancs of Fire**

A Chairde,

Aficionadoes of our Blockbusters quiz will be able to identify this painting as Hunters in the Snow. Maybe it didn't get the QotW award but nevertheless it's good enough to frame.



Fr Megson

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

14/01/2009

## The Great Ladybarn Charabanc Crash

A Chairde,

The January window may be open but it remains Darkness at Noon at the troubled Stadium of Murk.

Last week's defeat at the hands of arch-villains - sorry, arch-rivals - SPW, may be the final nail in the coffin for a beleaguered and bewhiskered Fr. Megson.

Never one to take things lying down (apart from that embarrassing incident with the strippagram dressed as St Bridget in the Vespers club for gentleman priests last February), Fr Megson remains ashen faced but unbowed.

"This is WITHQUIZ and not the Premiership", he reminded a hastily convened press conference, "so we have to be realistic."

Sean, the convivial bar steward at the Stadium of Murk has made it clear that the January window will only be opened over his dead body.

"And not just MY dead body", he added, brandishing his crowbar in a playful fashion, "I'll take the fcekin' lot of youse with me. It's perishin' brass monkeys in here already and if the winda is open I'll have the poxy beggars from environmental health down here askin' me to light the fire.....not to mention hordes of urchins from the Didsbury sink estates comin' through the open winda tryin' to steal my priceless plastic tables from the big room.....now fcek off the lot of youse while I'm still in a good mood."

Sean's intransigence (my word, not his) may lead to yet another trophyless season for the Charabancs. And yet things had looked so promising only a few short weeks ago. So, is there any truth in the rumours that Fr Megson has lost the dressing room?

"What a load of bollix", he waxed lyrically, "though I admit I briefly lost the downstairs loo on New Year's Eve. No, I think Christmas came too early this season, We were on a roll. Second in the league and in the semi finals of the Transviaduct Cup. Marvellous. Then the festive season arrived and with it, a lack of discipline on the training ground. Suddenly nobody was interested in evenings of yomping around Fog Lane park with a sheep and a Thesaurus under each arm, chanting Bob Dylan lyrics. The allure of late night shoplifting in Discount Booze proved too great.

"Then one of our recent signings crashed his brand new skateboard (thought to have cost in the region of £22.50) into the window of Axons the butchers. Luckily he was wearing his crampons at the time and he landed on his head so no permanent damage was done to his quizzing faculties. However, by the time the emergency services arrived to drag him him out he had become addicted to cold turkey. We are slowly but surely weaning him off this dependency and he is expected to be back to his erratic best well before Easter, though finding enough heroin for his medication is taxing our resources. It is a sad reminder of how bad the credit crunch is for everybody (except Gordon Brown and Robert Peston, of course) when even the big players in the market such as The Stadium of Murk are unable to meet the client's needs."

So saying Fr Megson bade farewell to his pre-season hopes and resigned himself and his flock to mixing it in March with those hopeless History beggars down in the nether regions of the Withquiz table.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

21/01/2009

A Mike Bath look-alike photo

*(no title)*

Fr M acquired a nifty little digital for Christmas and has despatched a picture this week in place of his usual homily.....



Opsimath veteran Mike Bath (94) is seen here wowing the congregation with his new Randy Newman tribute band which had top billing at last Sunday's Requiem Mass in memory of SWP's unbeaten run in Withquiz (107) which passed away earlier in the week.

The mass was co-celebrated by Fr Megson and a member of the local constabulary to whom he had become handcuffed the previous evening after an unseemly fracas in Vespers club for gentleman priests.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

28/01/2009

## Lancet and Chance it....

A Chairde,

A grotesquely swollen postbag at Withquiz this week after Dr Ivor's learned tract on that hoary old chestnut of orchitis. Many of your comments, though predictably lacking any vestige of intellectual merit, were at least legible (unlike Dr Ivor's sicknotes). Some of them even made grammatical sense. Something that most assuredly did not, however, came from a Mr George W, an unemployed brazilionaire from Texas.

"Sure was a swell peas of riting - as swell a peas of speechifying as what I have ever come across....and I sure don't mean that in a missexual sense. Nosiree."

As usual, the subject of bulls had Dusty riding eloquently on the horns of a dilemma:

"Dear Dr Scrote,

I read your genital-tinglin' expose of orchitis in the community with baited breath and a nice bottle of Asti Spumante. Ever since then I have been a martyr to the Swarfiga and latex gloves syndrome. It just confirms what Sister Eustacia used to say when she was learnin' us how to do 'A' levels at the convent of St Dymphna Of The Divine Succours. 'All men and bulls are lower than the beasts of the field', she would tag on to the end of the rosary every night, 'and should be avoided like the pox'.

Thankfully Mr Dusty is not the type of man to chase bulls but I shall be hidin' his wellies in future just to be on the safe side. Not to mention a nice bucket of Jeyes Fluid by the bedside.

Of more pressin' concern is the proposed visit of my cousin Concepta from the Reeks. She's a good clean convent girl despite livin' over the brush with a protestant merchant banker heathen in Chipping Sodbury. She promised to come up at the weekend to see me new parlour and to help me give Mr Dusty a hard time. The trouble is she used to walk out with a chartered surveyor called Kevin whose sister had an affair with a man who knew somebody who used to be something big in the BAIS (Bovine Artificial Insemination Service). As you can appreciate Doctor, I'm worried sick. Do you think I should phone her up and tell her to fcek off and never darken me doorstep again, ye unwittin' carrier of the male spores of the Divil, or do ye think I should do the charitable thing and pretend that she was normal and say nuthin'? I could maybe get her to use the public convenience in Stockport (there's a direct bus past the house every 20 minutes) and I could bury her teacup and spoon in the concrete bunker at the bottom of the garden. As you can see Doctor, I'm on the horns of a dilemma..."

Incidentally, if you are troubled by irritating nocturnal emissions or have any other medical concerns, don't forget that Dr Ivor and Dr Tim are currently available to give free advice. Their surgery is held in The Red Lion (daily from 11:30am to midnight) but try to get there as early as possible as, generally speaking, the validity of their advice tends to wane as the afternoon wears on.

"It is extremely magnanimous of us", concedes Dr Tim, "but we feel it is the least we can do for the indolent unwashed masses one tends to find infesting the ghetto that is South Manchester these days - and in any case we could not possibly afford to spend so much time in what can be a rather expensive public house if we had to buy our own beer. Yes, I am fully aware of the fact that it is unusual for doctors in the hard-pressed NHS to have so much free time on their hands but you must remember that we are currently 'resting'. I much prefer the term 'resting' to the somewhat vulgar 'struck off' - such an indelicate phrase, don't you think?"

In any case, the tribunal has not found against us yet - some legal nonsense about having to wait until the complainants recover consciousness. I do wish they would get a move on so that myself and Ivor could sign on like the rest of the clientele in here. It's all a bit of a storm in a teacup, actually. Anybody who has ever worked in the pressurised environment of an operating theatre will know how easy it is to get the technical terms 'testicle' and 'ventricle' confused after a few bottles of decent claret washed down by a rather nifty little Armagnac.

Now, if you'll excuse me, little unwashed priest, they're playing my song on the juke box. ....sing up Ivor, you dozy Irish git.....altogether now.....

"The firsht cut is the deephest....."

Fr M



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

04/02/2009

## There'll Be Blue Birds Over The White Bits of Dover.....

A chairde,

We begin with an impassioned plea from a Mr I. Denisovich from the Ladybarn area:

"Sir/Madam,

Due to the inordinate length of last week's quiz I felt compelled to sink under the table for a much needed catnap. I woke up in the midst of a heated discussion about the merits of Ben Dover. Could you please furnish me with some further information about the size and accessibility of the said Ben Dover. I have consulted my Bumper Book of Munroes on the matter but to no avail."

A judge who is a regular participant in Withquiz but who wishes to remain anonymous was only marginally more awake:

"An intriguing question. One of those where you have the porn star on the tip of your tongue but you can't quite get it out. I could see his naked pate bobbing up and down in his much garlanded portrayal of Gandhi but I couldn't for the life of me recall his surname. Didn't he also appear in Corrie or am I confusing him with Elsie Tanner?"

So how was it for Ben Dover himself and was this his first appearance on a website?

"Yes I was quite nervous at first", admitted Mr Dover (52 - that's only his age by the way, so don't panic).

"I've been on hundreds of websites before but this was the first time I had able to keep my clothes on. It was a bit awkward at rehearsals. I didn't know what to do with my hands and my bits and bobs. I was also a bit worried that the audience might think that the question I appeared in wasn't hard enough but thankfully it was all right on the night, as they say.

"It's never easy performing in front of strangers - and you've got a lot of strange people in Withquiz - so I was glad to recognise The Men They Couldn't Hang. I bump into them most weeks at auditions. They haven't quite made it into any of my films yet which is a shame because they have got loads of potential. They tend to go at it hammer and tongs at the beginning most weeks but unfortunately they can never quite manage to keep it up until the end. Keep plugging away lads, and give it another four or five years, I feel sure you'll find success eventually.

"It was also nice to have my old friend, Fr Megson, hovering around in the studio. It was him that first got me into porn back in the old seminary days. We were always short of money for the tuck shop so Meggers suggested that we send our piccies off to Soho. Paul Raymond was very impressed and he got us published in Playpriest. From there we got some small parts in various theologically erotic films that were all the rage in the '70s. Stuff like Come Pray with Me and Danish Deacon on the Job. Then things really took off when we auditioned for the ground breaking and lucrative Confessions series. My agent persuaded me to change my name from Ben Mablethorpe to Ben Dover and for some reason, which even to this day I can't fathom, my career really took off after this trivial adjustment.

"Unfortunately the wheels started to come off "Tich" Megson's porn career around this time. For reasons best left unexplained, he couldn't find an agent who was willing to handle him. Then his coach took him aside after five-aside training one day, placed a paternal arm round his groin and told him that he would never measure up to being a professional porn star. To add to his woes, his mother wrote him a blistering letter which I think spelled the beginning of the end:

'Dear Megson junior', she penned, 'me and the neighbours went to see the matinee performance of yer new fillum in the Reeks Rex last Monday and I didn't know where to look. It wasn't the prancin' around in the buff like demented eejits that mortified me - God knows, we've all done our fair share of that sort of thing at various weddings and wakes over the years - no, me boyo, what really pierced my heart was seeing my own flesh and blood up there on the silver screen gabbing away nine to the dozen and him with his mouth stuffed full. Is that the kind of thanks you give your poor oul' Ma after her giving up the best years of her life to teach you impeccable table manners.

I've talked it over with the parish priest and we both agree - stop making them filthy fillums NOW or ye'll end up doing your own laundry.

Your lovin' mammy,

Mammy.'

"He became a changed man after that, making a solemn vow at his ordination in Rome that he would never take his clothes off in public again unless it was integral to the plot. He did try to make a comeback as a serious director a few

## **The Father Megson Archive**

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

years ago but I believe his Bergman-inspired trilogy Fully Clothed Confessions of a Celibate Priest of a Winter's Evening drew very mixed reviews and sporadic outbursts of one hand (and paw) clapping from an audience of specially invited shepherds and sheep dogs in the Reeks Rex. It was very popular in the Cornerhouse though.

Yours etc, BD"

18/02/2009

### SPW's Freudian nightmare fails to materialise.....for now



Relax, guys, nobody is going to steal your trophy - this season at least - .....but don't cancel all your visits to the shrink just yet, it has not gone unnoticed that your projected walrus-image is grievously lacking in the tusk department.....

Fr M.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

14/10/2009

## The Withquiz Moderator Appeals For Calm

A Chairde,

Despite the onset of old age and worse, many of you will still experience the odd moment of lucidity. During these moments you may well have sat up in bed in the middle of the night and screamed: "That oul hoor, Fr Megson, is hardly ever available for comment these days. God, just listen to the peace and quiet. Isn't life wonderful."

The medical term for this rare phenomenon is a Euphoria attack and, as the name suggests, it is a sort of feel-good panic attack. According to eccentric behaviour experts Dr Ivor and Dr Tim (boozedboffins@redlion.com) such attacks are extremely uncommon and virtually non-existent among Stockport County fans. There can be little doubt that the recent spate of Euphoria attacks in the Withquiz community are, at least in part, due to the restrictions placed on Fr Megson by the Vatican and the prison authorities.

There is surely no need to go into the sordid details. The media and some rather vitriolic megaphone messages by Dusty at the chapel gates every Sunday over the summer has already done so ad nauseam. Nor is it seemly for a small yet vibrant organ, such as the Withquiz website, to make moral judgements on Fr Megson's actions. To paraphrase the words of possibly the most successful Messiah in the history of Christianity since Brian Clough: "Let him who has never had the front page of News Of The World given over to exclusives about his sex life on four consecutive Sundays cast the first stone".

So let us not all do a Dusty and label our priapic prelate "a fcekin' aul dirtbag who deserves to be taken down a back entry and beaten to within an inch of his manhood ". There will be plenty of time to do this after the trial.

And, without wishing to condone the existence in our parish of filthy degenerates like Fr Megson, there is always the chance that a "Not Guilty" verdict will be returned. No, seriously, folks...after all, who would have thought that City would win the first four games of the season? And I for one felt that Fr Megson had a point when he refuted the now notorious NOTW banner headline:

QUIZ PRIEST CAUGHT IN THREE IN A BED SEX ROMP - EXCLUSIVE PICS (see pages 4,5,6,7,8 and 9 and Editorial page 16)

If you remember, Meggers was quick to point out that there was no way a man of his age could survive a three in a bed sex romp. He confessed to having had a one in a bed sex romp back in the 70s but was off work with a stinging headache for weeks afterwards. He also claimed that the pictures had been set up by certain Withquiz detractors, long jealous of his unrivalled ability to pluck quiz teams from obscurity and make them mediocre overnight. And certainly, one of the "dishy, voluptuous sirens" captured in the albeit rather fuzzy snapshots does seem to bear an uncanny resemblance to Howell in a pastel negligée with a lurid yellow mophead sellotaped to his head. I'm bound to say that I have often thought that Howell can look quite dishy when viewed from a certain angle after a few halves of Bishop's Finger - but I suppose that point of view would be considered to be mere conjecture in a court of law.

Fr Megson would appear to be hiding in the metaphorical bullrushes at the moment. There was no reply when Dusty threw a petrol bomb through his window last night. He is believed to be staying with relatives somewhere in the city. A clue to his whereabouts might be found in some old Famine records which tell us that "many pestilential and lascivious hedge priests of the ancient McMegg clan were kicked out of the Reeks in the 1840s for selling indulgences in return for spuds, bog-butter and a quick snog with the first-born girl of the family. They duly arrived in Manchester by the fcekin' boatload. After many travails they were eventually found suitable accommodation in the Strangeways area of the city where many of their descendants can still be found".

I'll be going over there later on today to visit the X-Pats. I'll see what I can find out and keep you posted.

The Withquiz Moderator

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

04/11/2009

## Diversity Challenge

A Chairde,

Still no sign of Father Megson. It's like he never existed. Well, that's the good news over. The bad news is that I have heard from Tony's solicitors. Under some obscure by-law from the 1840s we are in breach of internet etiquette if we publish a blank column for more than three weeks running. Unless we can come up with something this week he has threatened to move in and use the empty space to publish an alternative quiz from the Merseyside League of the 1950s which he just happens to have found in the pocket of his best anorak.

Fearing public unrest I have been forced, somewhat against my better judgement, to ask Dusty to do the column. She has promised to launch a savage polemic against "them hoors in the Griffin" in her best handwriting in the near future but pressure of work means she is unable to do so at present. "Runnin' down to the off-licence every mornin' to get something for the team's breakfast and then racin' back home again to fire off letters to the movers and shakers of British Imperialism to get the Birmingham 6 set free has me heart scalded", she writes. I've tried telling her that the Birmingham 6 were pardoned over ten years ago but she says that people who believe what they read in the English papers are bigger eejits than they look. Maybe she's right.

That leaves only one other person stupid enough to do the column in return for a bit of publicity. He is very much a person of his time and is, I suppose, as worthy of your love and respect as Fr Megson ever was. For reasons that will become quickly apparent he has asked for complete anonymity. Fair enough. I hand you over now to a sweaty little git whom we shall call 'Mick from the Griffin'.

"Hiya volks, Nick here.....I mean Mick.....Hang on a minute, that's a bleedin' Paddy name isn't it. Might have guessed that a liberal bleeding heart website like yours would give me a Paddy name. Still it could be worse, at least English people can spell it...not like bleedin' Keerin or Roosin. Ethel's OK though. Quite fancy being called Ethel. Or Dave. That's a good old English name. Haven't met Dave yet. Wot's he like?

"Did any of you catch me on the telly recently? You know, some people thought I did it just 'cos I'm a geezer with my one eye on the main chance but it was a bit of an effing cock-up actually. I applied to go on BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT but they put me in the wrong bleedin' studio. Ended up on some poncey middle class quiz show called QUESTION TIME. I hate friggin' quiz shows. Especially ones that don't have Jim Davidson in them. Right bleedin' waste of time. Don't get me wrong, I know all sorts of interesting stuff like wot Hitler had a dog called Blondi - but they never even asked me that one. Ponces! Still, mustn't grumble. That nice old geezer, Jack Straw gave me a fiver after the show. He said it made a lovely change for a cabinet minister to be able to sit back and let some other eejit take the flak for a change. His mate Gordon said there might be a tenner in it for me if I go campaigning with him at the next election.

Have to go now since I've got a hot date with that Bonnie Greer chick. I knew from her body language that she couldn't wait to get her hands on me after the show. She mentioned something about a slap up so I'm taking her to an ethnic British curry house in Burnley. I love Burnley. It was built by the Romans over 17,000 years ago and the town centre and football ground still retain much of their ice-age charm.

Keep up the good work volks. And make sure that the Swan stays effin' white. No violence, mind. Know wot I mean?

Your bestest mate, Nick.....I mean Mick....

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

25/11/2009

## A Less Than Glorious Mystery Shop

Dusty is in Rome this week campaigning for the canonisation of the Manchester Martyrs and her late Auntie Maureen who once had a visitation of ecstasy whilst kneeling in front of a statue of St Martin de Porres.

Still no definite sightings of Fr Megson though the private detective that I recently retained - I refuse to call him a dick because I find the word rather vulgar - seems convinced that he is still operating in the Salford diocese. As part of his investigation he has gone through all the Mystery Shopper reports arising from visits to confession boxes in the diocese over the past three months. A mammoth task to be sure but by concentrating on visits that scored 5% or less he has narrowed the field considerably. One report in particular, conducted in the less salubrious end of Miles Platting, seems to indicate the Megson modus operandi. The actual report is still with the vice squad but here is a synopsis:

Saturday Nov 7th 2009: Entered confessional at 18:58 in the guise of a penitent sinner. Was kept waiting in the dark for 11 minutes as priest was still engaged with lady in the other box. He seemed to become agitated when she refused to follow his instructions. The lady was sobbing and did not seem comforted by his reassurances that it was dark and that nobody would know. Following her departure there was a further substantial delay and the sound of muted swearing and the clinking of ice cubes could be heard.

At 19:16 the slot on my box was (aggressively) opened. No name badge was visible on the priest and his vestments seemed to be in disarray. No eye conduct or friendly greeting was given other than to ask if I had a light.

In accordance with my brief I commenced to ask the father to bless me and to tell him it was a week since my last confession.

He professed no personal interest in this statement and told me to stop "fecking around" and tell him if I had been fornicating or looking at any good porn recently. When I denied any such behaviour on the grounds that I was a good catholic, he expressed his disappointment in a very vehement manner and said that we would have to make do with my dirty thoughts.

When I started to explain how once I had been tempted to entertain feelings of anger towards my next door neighbour who occasionally allowed her cat to do a whoopsie in the middle of my rhododendrons he called me a "lily-livered fecking Sassenach bible-basher" and further advised me that I should "feck off before he started to lose his temper".

I politely reminded him that he had not as yet given me absolution or a requisite number of Hail Marys to say whereupon he leapt out of the box and proceeded to eject me from the church in a demeaning and excruciating manner.

I have not been back to work since this visit and I am now strongly considering becoming a practising Buddhist.

TOTAL SCORE FOR VISIT = Minus 5%.

(I have to say that I was told to upgrade my original score considerably as the Chief Executive Officer of my company, JOYFUL MYSTERY SHOPPING LOGISTIC SOLUTIONS, plays golf with the Bishop of Salford)

09/12/2009

### Fr Megson's Big Match Preview



"It was never going to be easy taking on the behemoths of the Griffin but Captain Mikey felt that his team looked in pretty good shape"

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

13/01/2010

## Dusty's Yuletide Blog

A Chairde,

2009 AD. Another anus horribilis in the Dusty household. What with Mr Dusty still being a martyr to his housemaid's knee and them hoors in the Griffin doin' the double it's been one thing after another. And then to cap it all me sister Imelda made a fcekin eejit of herself on Christmas Eve by attackin' His Holiness The Pope on his own doorstep. God help poor Imelda. She lives on the home farm at the top of the Reeks and she's more deluded than the Opsimaths. Me poor oul father would have sold her to the nuns years ago but he needs her to help him walk the heifers down to the bull. She's not allowed out to quizzes and her only hobby is rugby tacklin' the rich and the famous. She got a black eye recently tryin' to bring down Ronan O'Gara in Dublin airport so I suppose she must have thought that an 82 year old Pontiff would be a soft target. She's an oul eejit and has me heart scalded.

You know, Christmas is not just the day before you queue up to buy a cheap sofa. Nor is it all about watchin' Rambo on the telly with a magnum of Asti Spumante and an industrial sized jar of pickled onions. No, it is also, by a happy coincidence, the birthday of the Baby Jesus and a time for forgiveness. I kicked off by forgivin' Father Megson. He's not a bad oul sod really and would probably be a saint if it wasn't for the cross dressin' and all his other disgustin' vices. I told him he can bask in the warm glow of me bosom until the feast of the Epiphany and then the gloves will be off again. Then me and Mr Dusty polished off another bottle of Merrydown, said a joyful decade and finished off with a prayer for the poor benighted Sassenachs and all our other enemies, too numerous to mention.

As you know there isn't a more Christian woman in the league than me but it fair stuck in me craw havin' to say "and God bless and keep safe them hoors in the Griffin". Did youse hear, by the way, about poor wee Kieran makin' an eejit of himself on the night before Christmas? His social worker was tellin' me that he stuck a note up the chimney askin' Santa to make City win a trophy this season. He got a very curt note thrown back down sayin' "catch yerself on, wee boy, the name's Santa Claus, not the fcekin Holy Ghost. I'll bring you a tree house instead".

Most years it's just me and Mr Dusty cosyng up for Christmas dinner. Mr Dusty can be an incurable romantic betimes but mostly he can't be arsed. The team is nearly sensible enough to go out on their own now so we give them some money and pack them off to stand outside the off-licence on Christmas Eve and we hardly ever see them again until the Epiphany. This means a lot less cookin' for me. We don't bother with a turkey - they're fierce ugly beasts and I'd be awful frightened to have one of them runnin' round the kitchen gobble-gobblin' at me - so we get a nice bit of Colonel Saunders chicken in instead. As it's the Baby Jesus's birthday we don't just have it with boiled spuds. We have two other veg as well. Last year we had sprouts and baked beans which were finger-lickin' good but not to be recommended if you like a quiet Christmas.

This year was a bit more exotic as Mr Dusty invited Big Dave for dinner. He's been meanin' to invite Dave around ever since we saw him win Blankety Blank on the telly. I wanted to put it off for another year but Mr Dusty said that if we put it off any longer he would have all the money spent and then there wouldn't be any fcekin' point invitin' him. Then he told me to buy him another pint and fcek off to the shops or we'd never be ready for Christmas.

So I had to leave the Red Lion early to dash home and cook the curried goat and the jerk chicken. Christmas Eve mornin' is never the best time to buy fresh goat in the village - even The Cheese Helmet was out of it - so I had to make do with a nice scrag end of mutton. I'm a dab hand at the curry. The secret of a good curry is to make sure there's no lumps in the Bisto before you add the chillies and the garam masala. The jerk chicken was more problematic. The girls in the Co-Op started sniggerin' when I asked them if jerk sauce came in bottles or packets. Ignorant hoors. So I went down the road and asked the butcher if he'd ever jerked a chicken. His face went even pinker than usual and he started mutterin' something about bringin' his chopper with him next time he went to Confession with that big-gobbed Megson fceker.



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

10/02/2010

## Home & Away

A Chairde,

Violent scenes at the Stadium of Murk last night as crisis club Charabancs of Fire served up another inept second half display and yet another defeat which sends them hurtling towards the relegation zone. Angry fans chanted, "Megson Out Again" and, "You're All Fcekin' Pissed" as they smashed the lightbulb, tore up lino and hurled the pub's historic collection of cobwebs on to the pitch. They eventually dispersed only after a quick-thinking officer from the Police Tactical Support Group had the presence of mind to point out that the Charabancs were playing an away match.

Witnesses were either too frightened or drunk to comment on the disgraceful scenes. Only Sean, the resident Barstewart, managed to maintain his customary sang-froid. Asked how distressed he was to find his pub turned into a pigsty after an evening of rioting, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Can't say I noticed, pal. Doesn't it always look like this? I did think though that it was a bit noisier than usual. There were times when I could hardly hear the commentary on the Liverpool game which I was watching on a live Transnistrian feed. Fcekin' cracking match it was too. We were three -nil down at half time but we came back against all the odds and beat some Wop team on penalties. Fcekin brilliant. How many European Cups do we have now? Must be about seventeen. Carling Cup my arse."

Meanwhile over at the Red Lion, or the Turnpike as it has recently been renamed to raise its commercial potential, team coach Fr Megson refused to attend the hastily convened press conference. He was said to be "stony-faced but no more psychotic than usual" as he head-butted his team towards the dressing room and padlocked the door. Apart from the odd scream or two nothing more has been heard from them at the time of going to press. If they come out before their next match we will try to get a reporter reckless enough and stupid enough to interview him in time for next week's home page.

17/02/2010

## **Withquiz Exclusive: John Terry and Ashley Cole Relegated To Page 5 Shock**

A Chairde,

Events at crisis club Charabancs of Fire continue to dominate the front and back pages of the Withington Deporter this week. I have to say that MURKY HANKY-PANKY AT STADIUM OF MURK makes a more riveting headline than their usual LOCAL HOUSEWIFE ALMOST INCINERATED IN NARROWLY AVERTED CHIP PAN FIRE INCIDENT exclusives.

So what exactly is going on? Have current owners, the shady consortium of Ladybarn pub and Bessarabian strip club owners gone bust? Is the Inland Revenue poised to send in the receivers? (The sensationalist piece in the Deporter yesterday about retrievers being sent in was an unfortunate misprint; police confirmed that only experienced and specially trained alsatians will be allowed to accompany them when gaining entry to the White Swan.)

Will a rich Rusholme ghee billionaire step in with an offer thus allowing the present owners to launder enough money to pay the leccy bill for another week? Withquiz sent along Mike Bath, its most senior cub reporter, to wrinkle out some inside information from beleaguered club manager and well known Friar's Balsam addict, Fr Megson. Can Mike become the first person this season to get a sensible answer from a Charabanc? Can he fcek! We should warn you that this interview contains more blood, strong language and nudity than your average birthing pool.

MB: "Another abject performance on Wednesday, Father. You seemed to wilt after the first half."

FM: "Well yes, it happens from time to time. I was a bit tired and emotional and you know what those beds are like in cheap hotel rooms..... hang on....who the fcek told you?...I gave that out' bint my last 50p to stop her talking to the papers. I'll give her a crack on the head with me thurible next time I get to swing it in public, the deceitful hoo....."

MB: "I meant the Charabancs, Father."

FM: "Did them fckers lose again? Nobody around here never tells me anything. How the fcek can I be a successful manager when my team can't even remember to tell me how they got on. In fairness though we've had a terrible run of injuries, not all of a sexual nature. Damo was rushed to hospital recently after I was forced to bang his head on the table for foul and abusive blurting. I'm happy to say that his brain scan results came back negative so he should be back to normal for the big match on Wednesday. And of course our record foreign signing, Ivan Denisovich, who cost the club well in excess of four rotten spuds and a spitoonful of dimps, is still out after that unfortunate incident with the roll-on deodorant stick. The physio says he won't be able to walk without a grimace for the rest of the season. It's very sad of course ...but how a so called intelligent quiz international could misconstrue the simple instruction 'unscrew top and push up bottom' is beyond my understanding."

MB: "Ouch, I feel faint..."

FM: "Quite so, my dear boy. Care for a swig of my Friar's Balsam?"

MB: "Don't mind if I do.....Good shtuff thish. It's not looking good Father (hic...) two defeats on the trot and up against SPW on Wednesday. Do you think the Charas have any hope of avoiding the dreaded 'even fckin stupider than TMTCH' tag this season?"

FM: "How dare you swear in the presence of a priest, ye fckin cur. And stop drinking me Balsam. No, three defeats in a row would be unthinkable. I think I might pop down to the Turf Accountant and wager a fiver on them hoors in the Griffin."

MB: "Finally Father on a lighter note, do you still do that religion thing to help you relax after a hard week's quizzing?"

FM: "Yes my son, religion is very important to me. Better than sex I am told though obviously I wouldn't know. Personally I always think you can't beat a big bowl of pea and ham soup with a hunk of soda bread smothered in Kerrygold. I hope that makes things a bit clearer for your readers. Now give me back my Balsam and fcek off."

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

10/03/2010

## The Lonely Passion of Roddy's Bicycle

A Chairde,

Fr. Megson was busy googling in his underpants last night when he was interrupted by a loud crash overhead. It was Dusty.

"Sorry to bother ye Father," she said, "only I was passin' and I thought I'd drop in. Sorry about your skylight, Father, only I thought it was open. I won't stay long Father, I feel like a right eejit standing here drippin' blood all over your nice new bit of lino.

"I see you're busy googlin' in yer underpants again, Father. Are ye sure that's wise? Aren't ye frightened of poor demented women with no aesthetic taste lookin' in the window and beatin' themselves into a paroxysm of lust at the sight of a priest without his keks? Relax, Father, I'm a woman of unbridled purity so I won't be pouncin' on ye tonight or any other night. Mind you, I have to admit that there's something very spiritually arousin' about a priest in his underpants - it brings out the Mary Magdalene in me, whoever she was. Who knows what might happen if ye had a better class of chassis and didn't have them annoyin' wee tufts of ginger hair down yer back. That's why I never look into Father Donely's window when I be out prowlin' at night. If I happened to see him googlin' in his underpants I'd be up on the roof like a helium balloon quicker than you could say 'kyrie eleison'. Ye could get pregnant just by imaginin' that man in his boxers, Father.

"But I digress, Father. I'll leave you alone. I'm sure ye have fierce important things to google. It must be a handy way to get in touch with the fallen women of the parish. I hope ye don't be passin' on this confidential information to Mr Dusty, Father. Before I go, Father, could ye give me a quick confession? Don't bother lookin' for yer keks, sure ye'll be fine and dandy in yer unmentionables.

"Bless me Father, I was in the Swan recently quizzin' away like the clappers against Ethel Austin when the QM sin-binned me for foul and abusive language, the oul hoor. While I was waitin' to come back on I got chattin' with Roddy's bicycle. Well Father, we clicked immediately. He's a lovely bike. Very quiet but broodin' and deep. I would say without fear of contradiction that he is one of the most philosophical bicycles that I have ever chatted up in a pub.

"He was sayin' that he loves quizzes but is far too shy to play on the team. He prefers to stand there thinkin' up hard questions which he whispers to Roddy on the way home and then Roddy takes the credit for them when they come to set.

"Anyway, before ye know it he's askin' me out for a spin and now we're savin' up for a deposit for a flat in Ladybarn. Mr Dusty was a bit taken aback when I told him I was plannin' to leave him for a bicycle but on the whole he thought it was an excellent idea, provided of course that we could come to some agreement about his beer and fags money.

"Well Father, thanks for the absolution. That's enough of the oul contrition. I'm away now to get me leg over. By the way Father, have ye ever baptised a bicycle?"

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/03/2010

## I Luv Lvov

Tavarishi,

Owner of Kosmonaut hostel has kindly allowed me a few minutes on his PC. Could not access Withquiz site for some reason (surely not political Mike?) but have been informed of Charabancs abject submission to the might of the Opsimaths. Clearly Megson's days are numbered as the only manager-priest in league.

Last day in Lvov. Can someone tell Roddy that the city of his forefathers is one of the finest in Europe. Wonderful city of crumbling infrastructure and buildings especially churches that take your breath away with their beauty. A bit like old Budapest, Phil, with the drama of its old courtyards hidden away behind doorways that look pretty mundane from the street. The old Armenian quarter is wonderful and after all that it is nice to find small pubs with no fuss and good beer. Obviously nothing to compare with the White Swan whose Stalinist spartanism is as yet unsurpassed in the former lands of the Soviet empire.

Regular listeners of Withquiz will know much about my fear of border guards. Well experience was far better than I was led to expect. Thought it was a Strippergram actually. There I was tucked up in my couchette when in burst 2 females in full camouflage gear and big boots - yes Damian, I said boots. Admittedly they were terribly severe and I don't think I was terribly successful in my attempts to chat them up but I am nothing if not persistent.

"Please ladies," I simpered, "before you leave my boudoir can you just do one thing for me, one thing that I have not had done for me since 1992. I promise you it will take far less time than you think and it will make me sleep happy.....please...".

And you know what? They stared me in the eye (for about 5 minutes) and then proceeded to fulfil my wildest dreams. My passport now is the proud bearer of the word UKRAINE. Wow, did I sleep happy.

Go to Kiev overnight.

Gerry

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

24/03/2010

## Pismo Iz Ukraina

Tavarishi,

Entered Odessa, City of Heroes 6am 24 March 2010. Secured the Railway station, well the buffet bar anyway, no Russian soldier worth his salt will march without his traditional breakfast of coffee black bread and a sticky bun. Thanked the lady for scowling at me, wolfed down me bun and then got to work freeing the workers from their chains.

Not as easy as it sounds. "Why you try to boot us out of McDonalds?" asked the workers. "Big Mac is good breakfast. Better than sticky bun. Also good chain is Tasty Sendvich and United Colours of Benetton."

"But don't you know your Marx," I asked aghast. "Da," they answered, "Marx is very funny. Especially when he smoke cigar and ask fat lady if she marry him. And if she has any money. And if she could answer second question first."

Things obviously change. The Charabancs used to be a quiz team and Odessa was once Russia's third city of communism. Much of it looks Russian if not Ukrainian but the main drag looks far more like an Italian city of chic fashion shops and expensive coffee outlets. I had been told that Odessa was a Mafia stronghold but I assumed they meant the Russian Mafia and not the original Italian brand. That said it is a lovely city to walk around and is completely hassle free for the tourist. As well as looking Italian there is a strong Greek flavour which goes back to its foundation as a Greek settlement. Hard to believe that this is the same country as Western Ukraine. There were a lot of political marches in Lvov last week protesting about being starved of money, education and jobs by the pro-Russian government. I can see what they mean now, on the surface of things at least.

Spent the weekend in Kiev and found it a harder city to sum up. Wealthier than Lvov, not nearly as affluent as Odessa. The architecture is stunning (walking into the centre early on Saturday morning and seeing the exquisite Sofiaski church in a mixture of snow and sunshine was the best moment of my trip so far) and the historical sights are numerous, ranging from a wealth of medieval history to so many reminders of what the city suffered during WW2 right up to the modern day image of Independence Square home of the Orange Revolution. But Independence Square is a good place to get hassled as indeed is any part of the city centre. Nothing major like crime or anything, but it becomes a bit tiring to be approached by pimps every hundred yards - and it is even more unsettling when you find out that the hotel you are staying in has given your room number and hence telephone number to these low-lifers.....phone calls every 5 minutes asking if I wanted a girl or maybe boy became too sinister to bear. I complained and made a fuss about this breach of confidentiality, was given a refund in fairness and did a flit to a hostel down the road run by a very laid back Norwegian whose motto was 'Shit happens, welcome to Ukraine'.

One last point to ponder. Some of you Withquiz Intellectuals like Martin or Kieran or Dave or Damo, or even Mike, might read this and think: I like the sound of Ukraine - think I might go over there and become a tram driver. Well forget it. No idea why, but I have yet to see a tram not driven by a woman. Even the spectacular funicular that takes you from the banks of the Dnipro river up to the hills above Kiev was piloted by a little old lady in a shawl and knitted hat who looked old enough to have met Lenin in person. So come on, Roisin, Mary ,Anne etc., get a life and come out here now. All you have to do is follow the tramlines and throw a tantrum whenever somebody gives you a note to the value of anything higher than 2 hvr.....I think Anne in particular would be a natural.....

Gerry

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

31/03/2010

## Pismo Iz Stockport

A Chairde,

Two weeks after swapping the warm sunshine of Stockport for the snows of Eastern Poland I left the warm sunshine of Kiev for the driving rain of Luton. Hard to imagine a less enticing place than Luton in the rain but I suppose Enniskillen with snow, high winds and no electricity on the same evening might have run it close. They were complaining bitterly in Ukraine about how cold their winter had been but it seems to have been shorter there than here.

I left you in Odessa last week. After an eleven hour train journey from there I eventually arrived in the capital city of the Crimea region. Which, as all you Withquiz buffs will of course know, is Simferopol..... No?... Well to be honest I had never heard of it either until a few weeks ago. Despite being a sizeable city with excellent industrial and transport credentials, as many Drive-in McDonalds as you could wish for (even better, it is also well served by the local rival chain McFoxy's) and some of the best examples of concrete high rise buildings this side of Luton, Simferopol remains one of Ukraine's best kept secrets. A wise choice though as a touring base for the whole of the Crimea. I was able to stay in a first class hotel for £15 per night and negotiate with the local taxi drivers to drive me wherever I chose for very reasonable amounts. For a total of £25 I got a personal tour of the otherwise inaccessible mountain villages of the local Tartar minority (descendants of the Mongols and only fairly recently allowed to resettle in their native Crimea after having been sent in their thousands to Siberia by Uncle Joe). After driving me through some spectacular mountains and lunar landscapes honeycombed with cave villages and 8th century churches my driver then invited me back to meet his family and have a cup of tea. Taxi drivers rarely do that in South Manchester these days.

I ended up in Yalta. This was more the Crimea I had been expecting: the lush playground of the Russian intelligentsia and ruling classes for over 200 years; the Chekov house and the Livadia palace where the 1945 summit meeting took place; the holiday dachas of the working class lads who once led the good old CCCP. Much of Yalta was undoubtedly grand and you could see how exclusive it must have seemed in the old Soviet days. But, as I wandered along its cheap and cheerful promenade in a light drizzle, past the cheap souvenir stalls and the speak-your-weight machines, bumping into joyously overweight kids eating their Tasty Sandwiches and drinking their Cokes it was easy to see how it came to be twinned with Margate. Rats! I was going to save that interesting fact for a future Question of the Week.

Gerry

14/04/2010

## WithQuiz fever in Ukraine

A Chairde,



Withquiz is huge in Ukraine. Only the evergreen gameshows Sdelki Ili Sdelki Net (Deal or No Deal) and Who Wants To Win A Bride With Her Own Tractor get a bigger audience.

Obviously all the Withquiz participants are household names by now but as you can see some contestants are more popular than others. I took the photograph of the open air telly in Independence Square Kiev. Unfortunately I arrived on the one day in the year when Big Dave wasn't being beamed out live to an adoring nationwide audience.

The other photo shows the Kiev branch of our very own Red Lion. This one is an Erotic Bar. There is talk of the Historymen moving there next season. If that doesn't stop Peter falling asleep, nothing will. But will it stop Ivor from blurting in public?

Gerry

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

27/10/2010

## Last Quango in Ladybarn

A Chairde,

Groans of apathy and cries of "shut the fcek up, I'm trying to watch Loose Women", greeted gorgeous George Osborne last Wednesday as he stood up in the gilded splendour of the White Swan's taproom to unveil his ambitious plans for making Ladybarn a half tolerable sort of place to live in by the end of the century.

His promise to phase out students by 2013, thus affording every pensioner in South Manchester the opportunity of buying an untidy second home was greeted by angry murmurs of "Why just the students? Why have youse stopped picking on the fcekin Irish?"

His more controversial plans to scrap the outmoded Department of Work and Pensions and replace it with a comprehensive network of kiosks that would provide the sick and the needy with Green Shield stamps that could be used when making any purchase under a tenner from the popular Innovations catalogue were given a cautious reception but rapturous applause soon followed when Mr Osborne gave an assurance that the congenitally stupid, those incapable of winning a quiz, would still qualify for a free pint every Wednesday night for the rest of their lives.

The room finally exploded with enthusiastic demands for "three cheers for the smarmy Tory git in the fcekin suit" when the Chancellor announced that the first £25 of all the monies freed up by making the Police responsible for pre-natal care and the collection of wheelie bins on alternate Mondays would be used to fund Ladybarn's bid to become Britain's first Suburb of Culture in 2010. Ladybarn would in future be a big player in the promotion of not only the Big Issue but of the Big Society as well. Big Deal!

The choice of Ladybarn over hot favourites Beswick for this inaugural honour has shocked the world of culture and turf accountants alike. Certainly Beswick seemed to be in a better position to fund the event with an average per capita weekly wage packet of just under £190,000 as opposed to £37.02 in Ladybarn. In the end though it came down to facilities and Beswick was always going to struggle to come up with a stadium that could compete with the opulence and grandeur of the Stadium of Murk with its magnificent neo-Utilitarian interiors and state of the art light bulb. It beggars belief that this will be the first major event it has hosted since the National Rat-Baiting Championships of 1933 when a still youthful Charabancs team squeaked home against the middle-aged Opsimaths in a tail-biting finish.

The Festival is scheduled to begin at midnight on October 31st (the Feast of All Hallows in the rest of Manchester but still celebrated in Druidic Ladybarn as the first day in the lunar cycle of the Three Bridgets, a day when the husbands of the parish traditionally hide their copies of Razzle and tiptoe around the bedroom for fear of causing offence). Watch this space however since doubts have been raised about the state of readiness of the Stadium of Murk for the official opening ceremonies.

"The toilets alone are a major cause for concern", grimaced Fr Megson, clenching his knees provocatively. "Myself and Sean the Barstewart are working flat out to make sure that Dusty has them in a fit state for human habitation by the end of the month. Thanks to the generosity of the Chancellor, we can now afford to supply her with a brush. After that our main concern will be to ensure that she washes her hands properly before she starts making a mountain of egg and onion sandwiches to keep us going for the first few lock-ins. I hope people are patient and appreciate just how much pressure us administrators are working under".

More details of The Suburb of Culture extravaganza will follow. Anybody wishing to see a full programme of the scheduled events should send a stamped addressed envelope (don't attach the stamp too firmly) to either Sean the Barstewart or Fr Megson. Please include a £20 pound note and a detailed list of ideas about the kind of things that people do to pad out cultural festivals like what we are supposed to be organising. A list of experienced but currently unemployed lap dancers would also be invaluable.

Fr Megson



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

24/11/2010

## Iron In The Royal Sole?

A Chairde,

People often stop Fr Megson in the street and say things like "Bless me Father but would you get your hands out from beneath your cassock or you'll be bringing the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church into disrepute.....and, by the way, I booked a coach to take the wife and kids to Ladybarn last Sunday to see the Festival of Culture but when we got there Sean had a sign over the bar saying 'Please don't ask for culture as a kick in the groin often offends'. You're doing a great job Father - with admin skills like yours you should be in the Irish government. Are you Biffo in disguise?"

If only ould eejits like that would read the Daily Telegraph properly instead of harranguing men of God outside the Ann Summers emporium. Not only did it print the statement issued by Buckingham Palace in full on the front page but it even dedicated its editorial four days running to the now infamous 'Swangate' affair. Here is the statement again for any of you cretins who don't take the Torygraph.

"It is with great sadness that HM The Queen must announce that one was unable to officiate at the State opening of Britain's inaugural Suburb of Culture gala. This was due to one's inability to gain admittance to the Stadium of Murk situated on the Boulevard of Dreams (formerly Green Street) in the parish of Ladybarn. In royal mitigation it must be said that one might reasonably assume that proffering one's passport and a note of the realm clearly showing one's portrait would be deemed sufficient evidence of identity no matter how stringent the security measures. Sadly one had not taken into one's account the level of pigheadedness shown by the oik at the door with the scouse accent who was intent on taking exception to one's footwear. When one pointed out that one was the head of State attending his flea-ridden little back street boozier in an official capacity and in any case what he took to be metal was in fact fcekin ermine, he informed me in colourful but somewhat unnecessary language that one could not come into his taproom in them heels not even if one were Steven fcekin Gerrard himself. One wonders what the young people of poorer quality in Liverpool spend the day doing in their minor Grammar schools or, if they even know the meaning of the simple phrase 'lesé Majesté'.

"Sadly this unfortunate incident means that one's grandson and his common fiancée may now be forced to reconsider their plans to celebrate their forthcoming nuptials with a right royal knees-up in the lounge bar of the same establishment. Their respective hen and stag nights will however proceed as planned as the oik with the scouse accent has already cashed and laundered the cheque remitted to him by one's Chancellor, the Right Honourable gorgeous Georgie, as a deposit for the finger buffet, sundry crisps, peanuts, pork scratchings and the four crates of Old Tom. 'Be there or be square' as one often hears the youngsters saying nowadays".

God save me

Liz (one's Queen)

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

01/12/2010

## FM Warning: Culture Can Kill

A Chairde,

It's a month now since the abortive grand opening of Britain's first Suburb of Culture by HM Liz - and still no sign of any culture in Ladybarn. Not a jot. Expectations ran high last Friday evening when the Boulevard of Dreams (formerly Green Street) was cordoned off by Geoff, a Community Police Officer who used to work at the local B&Q store until he succumbed to pressure, following an anonymous tipoff from Roddy that an example of exotic culture had been unearthed in the cellar of the Stadium of Murk. However extensive research by culture boffins Dr Ivor and Dr Tim from the nearby Red Lion institute has confirmed that it is not a new culture but merely a more virulent strain of the RPR (Robinsonella Pudenda Rubella) culture that was first discovered in the 1920s and went on to claim the lives of more cribbage players in the Heaton than the Great War and the Spanish Flu put together.

"Yes, he is quite an aggressive little critter but rather cute in a non-cuddly sort of way", said Dr Ivor at a hastily convened press conference under a table in the Red Lion institute. "I like to think of him as the Grim Reaper's Most Valued Player or the Jonah of the taproom, if you prefer. Previously the poor little mite was only able to flourish in Stockport but for some reason this new strain seems far more resilient and is expected to outlive the entire drinking population of Ladybarn over the next week or so. All credit to Sean for providing such unique breeding conditions for the little varmint".

Dr Tim then woke up and was quick to assure everyone in a measured and professional manner that there was no cause for panic. "Don't panic, don't panic", he screamed, "we all have to die sometime. You should be perfectly safe provided you don't swallow or go to the toilet. And for Chrissakes don't, I repeat don't, do both together or the paramedics will be off for months with post traumatic stress. God, this is thirsty work. Over here gin wallah, when you're ready".

"This is not the type of culture we were hoping to promote", said an ashen-faced Fr Megson as he struggled into his protective lead underpants designed by Dr Tim, "but beggars can't be choosers. I can assure you that no stone is being left unturned in our efforts to dredge up some proper culture. As we speak Dusty is out on her trusty push bike scouring the streets of Ladybarn for the next generation of working class playwrights and novelists. She is under strict orders not to stop pedalling until she nurtures and caresses the latent talents of horny-handed men of toil and brings forth a nouvelle vague of proletarian wordsmiths to rival the likes of Alan Sillitoe, John Osborne et al. She was on the blower a few minutes ago saying she had found a very promising group of angry young men trying to break into an off-licence on Ladybarn Lane at lunchtime but when she tried to nurture and caress them they set fire to her push bike and ran away. I told her to get the fcek off the blower and give chase on foot but I have to say that she sounded a tad dispirited. But sure that's women for you, no fcekin stamina. Is it any wonder we don't allow them to be priests or play golf?"

DO YOU KNOW ANYBODY IN LADYBARN WHO HAS INDULGED IN CULTURE? WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU. PHONE FATHER MEGSON'S FULLY CONFIDENTIAL 'SHOPTHECULT' HOTLINE NOW ON 0800 696969 (calls are free if you are female and have a husky voice; all others are charged at 95p per word or part thereof).

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

26/01/2011

## From our own correspondent in Ladybarn

As we move into February 2011 it now seems increasingly likely that Ladybarn's much hyped cultural renaissance will be stillborn. Figures released by the Coalition last night show that the tiny feudal fiefdom is now the least cultural suburb in the whole of Europe. Slobozia in Transnistria, which abuts the town of Bender like a badly inflamed prostate and, which previously held Europe's cultural wooden spoon, is slowly but surely climbing out of the relegation zone following an innovative and far-sighted amendment to their legislation which now makes it much more unlikely that anybody found carrying a library card will have their eyes gouged out and their female relatives sold into sex slavery in nearby Moldova. Ladybarn must now hope that they can come away from an awkward away fixture in the back streets of Grozny next Wednesday night with at least a point if they are to avoid the drop to the Suburb of Subculture League Division 2 (sponsored by Kansas Fried Chicken) next season.

Mr Cameron and his Coalition catamites were said to be viewing the deepening crisis with growing concern from behind the sofa in Downing Street. There were also fears that Biffo, Ireland's greatest cultural icon since Father Jack, who is currently in London holding exploratory talks with Poundland about a possible buyout of the Irish economy, would pop in for a cup of tea and refuse to leave until March at the earliest.

There was, however, some welcome relief for the beleaguered citizens of Ladybarn when it was announced that a state visit by the Culture secretary, Mr Hunt, to the Stadium of Murk had been cancelled after police were unable to guarantee that his name would not be mispronounced in a wanton and provocative manner by a disaffected member of the local clergy who cannot be named for legal reasons (but see p15: GRAUNIAD NAMES MAGSON AS DISINFECTED PREEST).

In a separate move to avert the crisis Dusty has made good her undertaking to send strongly worded begging letters to various deceased Irish literary giants. To date only one of them has had the courtesy to reply via a specially convened seance in the Stadium of Murk. Locals gasped in disbelief as Mr Dusty fell into a trance-like state shortly after consuming his customary two dozen bottles of Old Tom and when he awoke the following message was scrawled on the back of his Sweet Afton packet:

"SAT MORN - NB - POP INTO CHEMIST'S TO COLLECT SPECIAL PACKAGE ON WAY HOME FROM DISCOUNT BOOZE. IF DUSTY GETS SUSPICIOUS TELL HER YOU WERE IN THE FISH SHOP

(followed by)

"Dear Mrs Dusty,

Kindly desist in future from disturbing my well earned eternal rest and please note that my name is, and always has been, Samuel Beckett not Lemuel Feckitt as you seem to think. I can categorically assure you that I have no interest whatsoever in penning a new play for the Ladybarn culture fest. Where is Ladybarn anyway? Nobody up here has ever heard of it though the mention of your friend Fr Megson did cause a prolonged gnashing of teeth. As a one-off I will, however, attempt to inspire your rather paltry brain to conceive a minor classic to be written in my own fair style. Be in your boudoir early tonight with sharpened pencil and rubber at the ready. Probably best to tell Mr Dusty that you have a headache.

Yours in spirit if not in body,

Samuel

PS: In answer to your rather philistine question, "What's eternity like and does it be gettin' on yer fcekin tits?", I have to say that I'm rather enjoying it. It's a bit like a speeded up version of being at a cricket match."

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

09/02/2011

## Write on, Dusty

Just a wee note to let you know that Fr Megson is a bit tied up at the moment down in the Rifle Volunteer and has asked me to let you know that there won't be any culture in Ladybarn this week either. It's not all bad news though for youse culture vultures because ITV will be screening a two hour How Clean Is Your Toilet celebrity special this weekend.

He has also asked me to point out that the unforeseen lack of culture this week has nothing to do with him and that all complaints should be addressed in the first instance to that lazy hoor Dusty but I'm tellin' youse now that there's no way I'll be passin' that message on.

He's an ignorant aul pig, that priest, and about as sensitive to a woman's feelings as a feckin' Sky football pundit. Here's me workin' me brain to the bone to bring youse a bit of culture and do I get a word of thanks from His Fcekin' Nibs? Me erse I do. That man is only happy if he's handin' out pain and degradation to the women of the parish and you'd need to be a right aul eejit to let him handcuff you to the spare bed in his box room and give him leave to chant the Paternoster at you backwards and him frothin' at the mouth watchin' The Song of Bernadette on his black and white portable. Nosiree, he's got another think comin' if he thinks I'd be daft enough to fall for that aul stunt again.

Anyway culture lovers, I've nearly finished writin' out that play that that aul eejit Lemuel Feckett dictated to me when he was possessin' me last Tuesday evening. I was quite lookin' forward to a bit of possession as it always looks like good craic on the Hammer fillums but by God this was a bit of a let down. Trust me to get possessed by an aul bollox with a jumped-up accent and hairs growin' out of his nose and ears. I dunno how he ever managed to win one of them Nobel prizes for the writin' because I've met Opsimaths who could rustle up better plots than he can. I think he must have been sick the day the schoolmaster did plots so all he can do is pad his oeuvres out with pregnant pauses and existential Weltschmerz by the bucketful. I mean who the fcek in his right mind would want to pay good money to watch a fcekin' pregnant pause. So I've had to start from scratch and every time it said "stick a pregnant pause in here" I've had to beef it up a bit with a shootin' or a stabbin' or a car chase or something that a Ladybarn audience could identify with. And it was up to me to bang in a bit of rumpy pumpy as well wherever it was integral to the plot. Looks like that was another day when young Lemuel wasn't well enough to attend school.....

.....top of the mornin' everyone, I've been up half the night writin'. I was writin' away like the clappers and was in danger of winnin' the Booker prize or something until me biro started leakin'. I've told Mr Dusty to get me a new one when the turf accountant opens. This writin' lark is great craic altogether. I feel like I'm Ladybarn's answer to Virginia Woolf or Barbara Cartland. I'm a driven woman. Well, sort of a driven woman except that I've only got an aul push bike so I suppose the technical phrase would be a pushed woman. And Mr Dusty is being very supportive, he has vowed to be right behind me if ever I need a big push. It's true, you know, behind every great woman you'll find a badly shaved man with a bottle of Old Tom and smelly socks that don't match.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

23/03/2011

## Waiting For Biffo

A Chairde,

They'll be humming in the Reeks tonight. Culture is finally coming home. To Ladybarn. Ladybarn, the economic powerhouse of East Fallowfield and the Transnistria of the North. It has taken months of blood, sweat, tears and other bodily fluids too rancid to mention but finally Britain's inaugural Suburb of Culture has broken its duck. Dusty has finally come good. With a little help from Fr Megson of course (very little actually but heh, who's counting?). Here at last is what you have all been waiting for. And I hope it chokes youse, youse fcekin impatient shower of Paxman-leaning, hairy-arsed, pseudo-intellectuals.

WAITING FOR BIFFO

A dramatic outpouring by Dusty (based on a nocturnal emission by the late Lemuel Feckett)

SCENE: A suburban pub on a rainswept Monday night. A bar steward stands behind the bar. He waits and watches. An electric bulb flickers fitfully. A dog sleeps on the bar.

A barmaid enters. She kicks the bar steward and gently strokes the sleeping dog. From upstairs is heard a ghostly jazz ensemble rehearsing a syncopated rendering of Mussolini's poignant unfinished composition: 'I'm hanging from a lamp post watching all the girls go by'.

Oestrageen (the barmaid): Pustule still sleeps.

Vladimir (the bar steward): Aye.

O: .....and snores.

V: Laugh and the world laughs with you. Snore and you sleep alone.

O: Shakespeare?

V: Mr Dusty.

O: Not many in tonight.

V: Nobody.

O: Like the grave.

V: Only half as lively.

O: I must repair to the powder room to adjust my cleavage. Scream if it gets busy.

Vladimir turns the television on. The clock ticks. Eventually even the little hand moves. Pustule wakes himself by breaking wind, opens an eye but changes his mind and goes back to sleep.

V: Feck you too Pustule. Come on Liverpool.

The door opens and O'Shaunissey, an itinerant pig castrator from Co. Laois enters.

O'Shaunissey: Are youse open?

V: As a gaping wound.

O'S: A Guinness and a crème de menthe with one of them wee umbrellas.

V: How are you paying?

O'S: (unties the bailer twine from around his donkey jacket and produces a bloodied package from his trouser pocket) Will these do? They're fresh. Only came off this afternoon.

V: Bollox

O'S: It will have to be money so. Is Milan still winnin'? Do ye think there's any hope that Liverpool will make a stunnin' comeback and win on penalties?

V: I'll be taking the feckin video back if they don't.

O'S: Where's the beguillin' Oestrageen tonight?

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

V: In the bog, adjusting her cleavage.

O'S: Nuthin better to put a head on a man's pint. (he shuts his eyes and dreams)

The clock ticks and the little hand moves again. Suddenly the skylight opens and Dusty drops in, a woman of remarkable beauty and intellectual capacity but fatally dogged by bunions and epistemological uncertainties.

Dusty: Do ye have any bottles of strong drink left, Vladimir? Give us a dozen so, me uvula is parched. I fell proper dogged tonight. As ye know I am a martyr to me bunions and me epistemological uncertainties have been playin up again.

(She takes her dozen bottles of strong drink over to a table in the corner away from the maddening glare of the lightbulb where she sits drinking, ever and anon chatting up Roddy's bicycle and softly crooning her version of the old 'Tight Fit' classic from the hit parade 'In the boxroom or on the sofa, my husband sleeps tonight'.)

The clock ticks and the little hand moves again. Oestragen returns with a pertly readjusted cleavage and renewed hope.

O: Do you think he will come tonight?

V: Move that feckin pert cleavage. I can't see the match.

D: Do you mean Biffo or the Lone Ranger? They be sayin that Biffo is penniless and they won't be givin him any dole money of account of him workin on the lump all them years. The Lone Ranger might come though. He always comes - pronto. A bit like Mr Dusty back in the days when passion was still an issue. The National Health advised him to think up a list of landlocked countries but it was feck all use because he only knew Lesotho in them days. That's why he joined the quiz league. A fat lot of use the quiz league and the National Health and fcekin landlocked countries ever did for a woman of my engorged sensibilities.

The clock ticks and the little hand moves again. Enter Scrote, a wrinkled retainer accompanied by a tall mysterious woman. She is naked except for a pair of high heel metal-tipped boots.

Scrote: Good evening bar steward and allow me to compliment you on the Olympian disregard you favour your punters with. I shall partake of a pint of your finest Cherry B and the lusty lady craves an Old Tom.

V: (gazes first into the gaping chasm that is the lounge bar and then drinks in the bronzed beauty of the naked lady from the pinnacle of her golden tresses right down to the heels of her metal-tipped boots). You're barred, love.

FINIS. EXEUNT OMNES

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

05/10/2011

### Saint Oliver Plunkett had it easy

A Chairde,

The world of Withquiz was thrown into a state of chaos last night with the news that Fr Megson is coming home. Early - far too early - in the opinion of most.

A Home Office spokesman confirmed this evening that he was being released on humanitarian grounds. He denied that they had been forced into this move by the recent 'either he goes, or we go' ultimatum by prison warders at HMP Strangeways.

The burly prelate (13 stones of raw testosterone in his stockinged feet), and mediocre quiz team manager, has always protested his innocence and had at one stage gone on hunger strike, refusing all solids except 'Butcher's Choice' rashers served with mashed Maris Pipers....and maybe just a small helping of cabbage.....oh, and a dollop of Kerrygold on top would be nice.....and don't forget the brown sauce. Further self harm was only prevented by the eleventh hour intervention of Home Secretary, Theresa May, who reluctantly agreed that Fr Megson, and all the other Reekish priests held in the secure wing, could wear their own chasubles and would be free to opt out of exercise in the prison yard whenever there was a nip in the air.

Fr Megson has always been adamant that his arrest and imprisonment had more to do with institutional racism and Britain's enshrined and virulent anti-Papist laws than with any desire to protect the nation's toasters.

"I was a hapless victim of fate and circumstance on that balmy Summer evening", he opined through his nose as he swilled his slop bucket out.

"I would never even have made that bloody sick visit if there had been anything half decent on the box. Turned out to be a bloody waste of time in any case as the old codger had spent half his life chatting up Protestant lap dancers.....Yes, my son, I know that we worship a God of infinite mercy but there are limits.

"Anyway the daft old tosspot took hours to pop his clogs and by the time I made my getaway it was too late even for the White Swan. It was still a bit too early to go straight home so I decided to spend a pleasant half hour mooching around the wine dark ginnels of Ladybarn drinking in the aromas of the night and perhaps offering some pastoral succour to any fallen woman I might chance upon. It was then that I noticed the local Comet emporium was lit up as if by fire. As I drew closer I saw a large crowd had assembled inside so I joined them, assuming quite naturally that they must be having their New Year's day 'Everything Must Go' sale a bit early this year.

"In contrast to the half-naked young lumps you normally encounter in shopping centres my fellow shoppers were modestly attired in scarves and hoods. They were boisterous but good natured and were possessed of a certain joie de vivre which is sadly lacking in the lives of the feral underclass who lay siege to the Didsbury fish shop of a Saturday morning and belabour about the head any priest who unwittingly jumps the queue for the reduced monkfish giblets.

"Emboldened by their almost religious fervour and camaraderie I decided on the spur of the moment that now might be a good time to replace the toaster that I had borrowed on a sine die basis from the seminary refectory in the 1960s and which lately has been in the habit of bursting into flames every time I turn it on.

"I carefully scrutinised the prices before choosing a nifty little stereo number that was not only capable of doing two hunks of Mother's Pride at a time but also of jet-propelling them out and safely across the room before they get burnt to a cinder. (You know, my son, the Nazis were far from perfect but just think, if the Yanks had gone ahead and hanged Wernher von Braun as a war criminal we might still be living in a society that has to eat burnt toast for breakfast. It makes you realise just how meticulously God plans World Wars).

"Proudly clutching my new status-enhancing gizmo I queued at the checkout for about half an hour before realising that there was nobody serving. I was just on the point of dashing off a stiff letter to the Daily Mail about the incompetency of modern store managers who allow all five comptometer operators to nip out the back for a fag at the same time, when I noticed that all the other customers were simply hoisting their purchases onto their shoulders and walking out.

"'That's damned clever', I thought, as I lofted my toaster above my pate allowing, as I supposed, the overhead scanner to read the barcode and automatically debit the sum of £7.99 from my Bank of the Southern Reeks credit card. I must admit I did wonder at the time how the scanner would manage to link up with, and read, my card which I always carry in a sock concealed in my boxers, but I just assumed that if Nazi-inspired technology was capable of firing toast across the room it would have little difficulty in penetrating a nylon sock and underpants.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

"And the rest is the stuff of Kafkaesque nightmare. The dawn raid; the refusal to let me make a bit of toast before being frog-marched down to Police HQ deep in the killing fields of Longsight; the constant questions and the refusal to let me confer before answering; the intrusive swabbing of my pyjama bottoms for incriminating toast crumbs. What choice did I have in the end but to plead guilty and ask for one hundred and forty four counts of frottage in the outsize department of British Home Stores to be taken into account?"

Fr Megson is planning a quiet homecoming and has asked to be left alone for a time with a large bottle of Bushmills while he comes to terms with the loss of his confiscated toaster. He is due back in court next month to answer charges of gross frottage in a public place. He is confident of acquittal but Tony, who has an O-level in jurisprudence, reckons the verdict will be touch and go. Let's hope he doesn't rub the jury up the wrong way.



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

02/11/2011

## Ballyboke Bugle Saturday Supplement (1)

Legend tells us that on St. George's Day 2003 the white Knights of The Companions of St. Snoopy did mortal battle with the noisome maiden-mauling, vindaloo-swilling Braggarts of Griff. Today to mark the Millennium of this, the kid sister of all battles, we revisit Snoopy and, in the tired and detested format of a more famous but less worthy Saturday supplement, we subject them to a toe-curlingly fatuous Q + A session. No names have been changed to protect the innocent and it should be noted that the editor is insolvent as he had to buy another loaf at lunchtime.

Home for Snoopy's Friends is a large detached neo-Romany caravan which clings idyllically but frantically to the westernmost tip of the third Reek from the sun. When I arrive I find that all the others have gone out otter-tagging leaving the paterfamilias to field my questions unconferrred - thus at a stroke doubling the fee. I am surprised to find that he is in fact Sassenach-born, a cross he seems to bear with good humour and great fortitude. Looking cool yet reassuringly avuncular in a cerise kaftan with matching deerstalker and bedsocks he drapes himself luxuriously across an accommodating ottoman and, sucking ruminatively on his meerschaum, signals me to begin:

Q: Firstly, a question often asked by housewives who can't resist a flutter on you, is 'Snoopy's Friends' your real name?

A: (Laughing and peeling a kumquat). Good Heavens, no. No that name goes back to the early 90's when we were big in the world of rap music. We have kept it partly for reasons of nostalgia and partly to confuse the tax man. No, our real name is 'The Wife and Bairns of Judge Roy Bean'.

Q: When did you first break into the world of TV stardom?

A: I think it was in 1685 (gosh I'm showing my age now!) when we were lucky enough to be asked to host the popular light entertainment programme 'Sunday Night At The Bloody Assizes'. Do you remember 'Beat the Clock-Watcher'? That was our idea. Of course not many people had clocks or even TVs in those innocent days.

Q: Do you believe in Life?

A: Yes. Especially for those irritating people who insist on reusing partly franked postage stamps.

Q: And Death?

A: If the black cap fits.

Q: And Life after Death?

A: No. The quality of mercy is not strained but droppeth like a gentle Fr. Megson from the Premiership. Ergo, the two sentences should be allowed to run concurrently.

Q: And less boringly, what's your favourite Boy Band?

A: (Polishing a papaya with gusto). Atomic Kitten.

Q: What is your greatest strength?

A: An esoteric knowledge of Irish geography. My family has had moles in the Reeks for centuries and they keep us fully informed. And before you ask we don't have any weaknesses. Incidentally, did you know that the medieval Reeks were divided into 14 ridings just like Somerset? Marvellous!

Q: What is your favourite smell?

A: Exhibit "A" from The Crown versus Keith Moon at The Old Bailey in September 1972.

Q: And your favourite fantasy?

A: It used to be coming off the bench, still in my robes, to score the winning goal in the All-Ireland Hurling final (a more dapper version of that chap in the Guinness advert). I can't really discuss my more recent one as it is currently sub judice - anyway it's none of your business, slaphead!

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Dangling particples, Schrödinger's Cat and bad-boy Braggarts throwing stones at my window.

Q: Should the Royal Family be scrapped?

A: No, not all of them. Just the big fat geezer in the armchair. He should be ashamed of himself, he should.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

Q: How would you define a perfect question?

A: One that is left hanging in the air for a while before it is allowed to go begging.

Q: What is the one most important lesson that Latin has taught you in life?

A: (Looking darkly into his half-eaten pomegranate) "Mens imbuta vino volat ad pudenda."

Q: If you could take only one dyslexic anagram with you to your Desert Island to remind you of your colleagues in the Reeks quiz league which one would you choose.

A: GRABING FFRIGG-RATS.

Q: Finally, how would you like to be remembered?

A: Instantaneously and for 2 points (imagine the ignominy if my family had to confer!).

Fr Megson

Editor's note:

Julie O' Burchill is unwell (a vented spleen following a surfeit of French fries). I'm sure all our readers will join our circulation manager in wishing her a very slow recovery.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

23/11/2011

## She Died With Her Metal-Tipped Boots On

While on quizzing duty in the Turnpike last Wednesday in the company of the Prodigals and the Opsimaths I was asked a few times if Fr Megson would be writing an obituary for the late and perhaps lamented White Swan. I was also asked if the Charabancs were sad or glad to see it go.

In answer to the first one, a legal gagging order is in place against Fr Megson. Nobody likes it when a priest turns up at a wake, drinks all the whiskey and then starts to poke fun at the corpse. During its lifetime the Stadium of Murk provided a rich source of inspiration for the parallel universe where Fr Megson and his motley gang of eccentric misfits joined battle against reality. The least they can do in return is stay sober during the funeral and observe a dignified silence at the back of the chapel until the bier has passed - and if any of you dare make a joke about the gents toilet in the Swan at this juncture, I will personally send Dusty around to sort you out.

The answer to the second question is yes, the Charabancs were sad to see it go. We had however, no doubt like Ethel and the rest of you, mixed feelings. It was, let's be frank, no longer a place where it was an unadulterated pleasure to drink or socialise. The grand old lady of Green Street was no longer grand. She was only in her eighties, which is no age for a pub these days, but she looked older - senile in fact and decrepit. She badly needed a carer but she obviously lived too far from Stockport for Messrs Robinson to hear her pleas for help. In the end she gave up the ghost and slipped away virtually unnoticed. In truth her spirit had departed years ago.

Let's be positive though, and thankful.....thankful for the pub it used to be.....thankful for the beer that used to taste like nectar by night and hemlock by morning.....thankful for the gourmet bar snacks that catered for every taste from salt and vinegar to pork scratchings.....thankful for the folk club which always managed to keep one finger on the pulse of current trends in English and Celtic traditional music and another finger firmly embedded in the ear ( I don't remember this myself but Carmel assures me the audience sometimes used to include a band of local tricoteuses, who, in true Gallic "didn't we have a lovely day, the day we followed the tumbri!" style, sat clapping along to the music and knitting at the same time).....thankful too for the jazz sessions where cool cats purred along to the beat of even cooler combos whose ghostly syncopations wafted downstairs and could still be heard going be-bop in the night until the very end.....thankful for the beer garden - yes, Fr Megson, a beer garden in fcekin Ladybarn. And not just a beer garden but a plastic climbing frame in the shape of a shoe, to boot. Ah, the bliss of being a happy, hippy parent in the 70s. You could don your Sunday best loons and drink away the afternoon in the Swan, safe in the knowledge that your eight toddlers (or was it ten?) were having the time of their lives clambering up and sliding down a plastic shoe.

And thankful above all for the quizzes. I used to think that only the Post Office social club on Quay Street had decent quizzes until I discovered the White Swan. I didn't know many of the people who attended them in those days but, looking back, it was more than likely all the usual suspects from the ranks of the still young Withington quiz league . If Barry Whitehead was there then could the rest be far away?

From this academy four Post Office rookies eventually summoned up the courage to meekly ask permission to join Withquiz. "Where will you be playing from?" asked Keith Glazzard, as he pocketed the nominal £100 annual membership fee (only kidding). I remember wondering if all the questions would be that easy to answer.

R.I.P. the White Swan and the old days. A light bulb has gone out over all of Ladybarn.

Gerry C

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

11/01/2012

## Dedicated to Tony, who appears to be missing his spiritual mentor

A chairde,

Fr Megson is missing, presumed drunk.

There are many theories currently circulating in Withquiz and The Reeks about his whereabouts but the fact is that nobody knows where the fcek he is. Even the legendary psychic powers of Dusty, his platonic plaything and perhaps the only woman ever to truly understand him after a night in his beloved White Swan, have drawn a blank.

"I nearly had his spirit cornered in the back kitchen last night", she lamented over a diet-conscious early morning bowl of muesli and Bailey's Irish cream. He seemed so close I could smell the Old Spice, the turps, the brown sauce and all the wonderful aromas I will forever associate with him. I was on the fcekin' cusp of an epiphany. But then Mr Dusty, bad cess to him, set fire to his nostrils when he was tryin' to light his dimp on the primus stove and the fcekin' moment was lost forever."

Another theory advanced by a crack team of National Health funny farm experts is that Fr Megson is still alive but suffering from a depressive illness. The team, headed by Withquiz's very own Dr Tim and Dr Ivor who between them have over five joyful decades experience of lunacy in the Red Lion taproom and an O level in medicine, believe that our once irrepressible curate may be suffering from an advanced form of CCBA syndrome - that's Chronic Can't Be Arsed syndrome to any of you plebs out there who dropped O level medicine in favour of doing an O level in media studies.

"Once CCBA syndrome sets in it can be a bugger to shift", opined Dr Tim as he fought his way to the bar. I myself suffered from it for over 35 years and it was hell. I lost all interest in pretending to be a doctor and my sleep patterns were disturbed. Very often I would wake up in the late afternoon and not be able to get back to sleep until Blue Peter came on. If it had not been for the vodka chasers and the Aussie soaps I think I would have gone mad".

Dr Ivor, who likes to wear a white coat and compile interesting statistics when he is not sinking pints of his favourite dizzyade, fears that Fr Megson may come out of this latest crisis in an even more vegetative state than when he went in. "We have to remain optimistic and hope that he will be one of the lucky ones who are still able to hold their own with a parsnip or other root vegetable in a lively and stimulating debate about the merits of Margaret Thatcher or Strictly Come Dancing. Sadly however the likelihood is that he will be totally incapable of winning an argument with any life form higher than an Opsimath. By the way, did I ever tell you about that night back in 1999 when I was the Historymen's Most Valuable Player? Just lie on that wee sofa over there and I'll see if I can find the video. It's a cracker.....

Fr Megson's last public appearance was at the awards ceremony in November when the Charabancs retained the White Swan trophy awarded to the team that shows the least improvement over a 12 months period. "He was in a very buoyant mood that evening when I waded over to admire his trophy from across a crowded urinal" recalled Colinski, an unemployed bon viveur from Skelmersdale. "He said he was riding along on the crest of a wave, though, whether he was speaking metaphorically or referring to the underfoot conditions prevailing in the boys' room at that moment, I couldn't say".

We now know that Fr Megson never left the pub that night. He was seen haggling with Sean the barstewart over the price of renting one of the cheaper cubicles in the Stadium of Murk gents for the night. Shortly afterwards he seems to have locked himself into the cubicle with no overnight provisions other than 5 bottles of sacramental red and his well thumbed hagiography of the life of St Munchin. St Munchin is of course the patron saint and first martyr of the Reeks and is vividly portrayed in the Book of Kells as "a 7th century hermit and visionary who chose to live in close communion with his herd of goats and the Holy Ghost high up on a rugged Reek until one day he was sorely molested by 1100 Druid temptresses clad only in mistletoe and chose to suffer death by heathen fellatio rather than surrender his virginity."

"Way to go!" may well have been Fr Megson's final words as his fifth and last bottle of sacramental red rendered him oblivious to the arrival of a demolition team from Stockport and to the fury of the wrecking ball that came hurtling towards him.....the rest is silence.....

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/10/2012

## A View from the Ladybarn Charabanc

A Chairde,

Those of you who subscribe to Schopenhauer's viewpoint that the only way to get through this irrational world is to foster a complete and utter indifference to it and strive always to attain the highest ideal, which is of course, Nothingness, will be delighted to hear that yet another Withquiz season is up and running. Rarely will you get a better chance to grasp the true meaning of Nothingness. What better way to while away the few remaining autumns and winters of your careworn existence than to sit in a pub drinking yourself into a stupor whilst being slapped about the head by three psychotic team mates for daring to voice your long held if marginally erroneous belief that Ulrikastan is the world's largest doubly landlocked country? And then, when finally you fall into bed, laid low by drink and ignorance, you have still the consolation of the night sweats and the blurting nightmares to look forward to, nightmares that are guaranteed to make you wake up screaming at least twice nightly over the course of the season. Sometimes for longer; Ivor was telling me that one of his, arising from a blurt he made on a wet evening in 1998, is not scheduled for decommission until January 22nd 2037.

Still, I suppose if we weren't doing this we would only be stuck at home doing something more enjoyable. And where would be the pathos in that? Better to travel in hope than with Ryanair. Happily the Charabancs of Fire, traditionally hopeless, are more hopeful than most this season. They have settled into their impressive new purpose-built stadium ("The Turnpike", by the way, is a clever anagram of the Charabanc's ancient motto "Think, Rut, Pee"). Their youth policy, in place for some decades now, is slowly coming to fruition with the imminent arrival of at least two second childhoods and, given the reputation of their venue, it can surely only be a matter of time before a gang of youthful players ask permission to join the quiz team, at least until the police and sniffer dogs have finished conducting their enquiries on the premises.

Most dramatically, they have deserted their traditional "boot the question up in the air and hope for a long shot" style of play in favour of a more attractive and cerebral approach based on the Iberian model of "tippy-tappy" quizzing. On one memorable occasion last night the crowd was on its feet as Roisin and Damo passed the question to each other an amazing 47 times before rifling it across the table to John who cleverly feigned sleep before lobbing an exquisite answer which sailed majestically over the QM's head. OK, so the answer had little to do with the question on this occasion but Barcelona was not built in a day and it would be harsh to expect perfection so early in the season - especially when the unruly opposition keep making obscene gestures and baying "get a fcekin move on, some of us have to be up early for community service tomorrow afternoon".

Finally and inevitably, we must acknowledge the pachyderm in the room. Many of you continue to accost me in the chemist's whenever I'm in there asking if the male assistant is back from his lunch yet and if not, can I have another packet of corn plasters please, yes that's right, the small ones. This harassment must cease with immediate effect and once and for all I can tell you that I have no fcekin' idea where Fr. Megson is or if he's still getting his 15 a day. All I can say is that the body found last season in the burnt out cubicle in the Gents at the Stadium of Murk was naturally presumed to have been his because of the dog-collar. Significant advances in the field of forensic science have now however led the coroner to the equally plausible theory that the collar may in fact have belonged to somebody called "Fido".

Rumoured sightings of the turbulent priest still persist. Only last week Gary from the Electric Pigs claimed to have seen him fronting the heavy-dub skiffle combo "The Chicksie Dicks" at the annual Sodor and Man Ladyboy rock festival on the Calf of Man. Such reports need of course to be treated with caution - Gary and his team are notoriously auto-suggestive whenever they come into close contact with wacky-baccy and thousands of screaming, half naked ladyboys - but we must continue to be on our guard. He might still be out there, lurking in the shadows, waiting for one of you to drop your guard and leave a pint unattended on the bar. One blood-curdling slurp and suddenly your life could be bereft of meaning.

No need to panic but just remember to lock up your daughters and other small household pets before you go to bed at night. Then you can relax and enjoy your blurting nightmares.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

28/11/2012

### A Postcard from Mablethorpe

A Chairde,

Not much in the Withquiz post bag this week except for another threat to prosecute Roddy if he's not got that fcekin bike out of the White Swan by the end of the month and this postcard to Dusty from Father Megson. Hard to say where it was posted as it doesn't have a postmark, not surprising since he didn't put a stamp on it, preferring the cheaper Catholic option of writing "St Anthony guide" on the top right hand corner. Anyway, apparently he's in Mablethorpe which Martin tells me looks a lot like Ladybarn except it's got an amusement arcade and some pubs that haven't been demolished yet.

Dear Dusty,

Hope your epistemological uncertainties are not giving you gyp. I'm staying in Mablethorpe for a few days on the advice of Dr Tim who says I should try and get in touch with my feral side. The sleet is very bracing and the digs are very comfy. Laundry is not included but the landlady said she'll press my underpants for a small consideration lol. My bed has got sheets and a quilt on it so I stay there most of the day and then when it gets dark enough I go out, have a few pints and a kebab and then usually run feral for a few hours in a welter of fevered and feckless depravity. It's feckin brill. Mortal sins used to get a bad press back in the seminary but they're not so bad once you get to know them. I would recommend them all except maybe swearing at policemen which can be quite painful. And ladies of the night are fine and dandy as well, not half as bad as they are painted. One of them offered me a blowlamp for a tenner but I told her I had a primus stove back at the digs. I have to say that committing sins is a whole bunch more fun than forgiving them. Hope you are well and not doing anything that I wouldn't do and if you are let me know and I'll try it too lol.

Your loving curate,

Meggers

PS: Can you put my bins out asap please and can you hire somebody to write quiz reports for the website? Lord Bath, the Chief Procurer of the Sink Estates, is doing his nut and threatening to cut off my stipend if I don't get my finger out and start producing more copy. See if you can find some eejit willing to do it for nothing.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

05/12/2012

## Through plate glass darkly - a belated view from the Reeks

A Chairde,

Dusty phoned me the other evenin' wantin' to know how the calves were doin' and if I'd ever heard that aul eejit Stuart Hall doin' match reports on the wireless. She was wonderin' why the BBC Light Service would pay good money to a demented geezer in his 80s who thinks he's visitin' the People's Republic of Wigan and spouts on about some football match in a voice like you would only normally hear when the Reeks Amateur Dramatic Society put on the Erse version of Shakespeare's Richard the Turd on the Eve of St Bridget's Day.

"That job's so easy even ye could do it", she said, "and Fr Megson would like ye to start this Wednesday night. Mind you, I'm not forkin' out good money to Ryanair to have you over here gallivantin' around South Manchester in your short frocks and maybe causin' a passin' Opsimath to shed his load on the A6. Ye will have to watch the quizzes on the telly and then write up the reports. And don't forget to feed the calves first, ye idle wee hussy".

Well Daddy doesn't own a telly so here I am standin' outside O'Toole's Television Shop, Undertakers and Baby Clothes Emporium on what is the nearest thing Muckcross has to a Main Street. It's lashin' it down with the sleet and blowin' a gale and it's very hard to take shorthand notes and stop me short frock blowin' up around me ears at the same time. The RTE Guide says that The Big Quiz tonight will be featurin' "live and exclusive highlights of the Smoke Fairies' grudge match against The Men That Wouldn't Hang" so I suppose the stroppey bloke with the armband that keeps givin' grief to the QM must be Kieran. He's a bit of a letdown to be honest. In my schoolgirl dreams I always picture Kieran with a big bushy red beard and a manly sporran the size of County Laois. Ah well, maybe the nuns are right when they say ye can't always tell a man by the heft of his sporran. I think the Fairies are in the lead because they keep thumpin' their chests and then pullin' their ganseys over their heads and slidin' across the lounge bar on their knees whereas the other team just keep lookin' at their watches and bangin' their heads against the table, but, to be honest, it's very hard to know what the fcek is goin' on when you're stood outside in a gale and can't hear a blessed word that's being said. The sooner the government people bring the electricity up the mountain and Daddy gets a telly in the kitchen the sooner I can start doin' proper quiz reports.

I'm Concepta by the way, Dusty's younger sister. Dusty was the one born with the brains and the bunions so she was packed off to play quizzes in Manchester. I was the one born with the milky white breasts so I had to stay at home and help Daddy feed the calves. I'd love to go to the quizzes but Dusty says that if God had meant me to go quizzin' He would have given me poise and sophistication not to mention brains. But she also said that if I work hard at school and get decent 'O' levels in the Latin and the Eschatology I might be lucky enough to end up with a proper job like being a priest's housekeeper. She even reckons that in these enlightened times there would be nothing to stop me crackin' through the glass ceiling and becomin' a bishop's housekeeper. Mr Dusty passionately agrees and says there's nothing that would give him greater pleasure than to see me crack through a glass ceiling but he always goes red when he says this and splutters beer through his nostrils. He never says it when Dusty is in the room.

Well, I'm soakin' wet and friggin' freezin' now but at least I've seen all the quiz highlights except for the Charabancs game which was on last - and by that time Mr O'Toole had put the shutters down and told me to fcek off back up the mountain because he wanted to say the rosary and then hunker down and watch Danish Dentist On The Job in the peace and quiet of his own shop. I'll phone Dusty when she gets up tomorrow evenin' to find out who won the matches and then I'll be ready to write the match reports. They should be with you by the middle of next week always assumin' that Alphonsus the postman is sober enough to drive his van. Maybe when the government men bring the electricity up the mountain Daddy can get one of them new fax machines as well as a telly. That would be fierce handy.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

02/01/2013

## A View from the Fiscal Rocks

A Chairde,

For some time now the financial situation within the Charabancs' camp has been perilous. This will come as no surprise to anybody who has been forced to huddle up close to them in a poorly ventilated taproom of a sultry Wednesday evening and drink in the noxious fumes of home-made coal tar soap. Sadly the inevitable has happened and it was announced early in the new year that three of them have slipped over the fiscal cliff and hurtled headlong into the gaping abyss (Fr Megson's spelling, not mine). The fourth is said to be in a critical condition, clinging onto the crumbling rock face by his fingertips which ever and anon are being viciously gnawed by various small rodents.

The good news for Withquiz is that interim team manager, Dusty, has given assurances that all fixtures will be fulfilled. A small slush fund found under Fr Megson's bed - along with some very interesting and collectible magazines charting the meteoric rise to stardom of various buxom artistes such as Diana Dors and Chesty Morgan to name but four - will be used to defray expenses. Please note however that all games featuring the Charabancs will now commence at 9:30 pm as it will now be necessary for the team to get drunk before they come to the quiz. Investing in industrial quantities of Lidl's excellent and much underrated own-brand vodka makes a lot more financial sense than forking out anything up to a fiver for a round of drinks in glitzy over-priced tourist traps such as the Turnpike in Withington. It remains to be seen what effect this pre-drunkenness will have on the team's performance but the general consensus seems to be that the only way is up.

One unfortunate side effect of this fiscal collapse will of course be that the Charabancs will no longer be in a position to maintain the time-honoured tradition of buying a round of drinks for the losing team. On the positive side however, Dusty knows a bloke in Strangeways who used to be an actuary and he reckons that statistically this is unlikely to be a problem. He calculates that if Dusty accurately monitors the team's vodka consumption before leaving home they should have little difficulty in getting a round of drinks down their necks before closing time. And, in the unlikely event of a Charabancs win - well, we will cross that bridge when we come to it. I suppose one viable idea might be to issue vouchers to the losing team. The vouchers (one per losing team) could then be saved up and any team lucky enough to collect, say, six vouchers would be entered into a prize draw with the top prize being a free round of drinks. We might have sold the Chesty Morgan magazines by that stage so I'm sure there wouldn't be a problem financing this solution. Anyway, it's still a good few years off yet and who's to say that the price of booze won't have gone down by then.

Hope that's OK. I appreciate that there will always be a small majority in any quiz league who like to whinge and who find it difficult to cope with change - I can still remember the furore caused by the decision to put a new toilet roll in the Gents in the White Swan! If you are one of these moaning Minnies please feel free to contact Dusty or Fr Megson and they will be delighted to tell you where to go. This recession is here to stay and it's time you lot started living in the real world. Dave Cameron has managed to do it so why can't you?



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

06/02/2013

## A View from the Statosphere

Many of you will of course know Ivor as the founder member of a successful quiz team that regularly features in the top 10 of our local quiz league. What you may not know, and be surprised to hear, is that Ivor also has a life outside the frenetic world of the History Men. At least two in fact. Not only does he share an 'O' level in medicine with Dr Tim (postal correspondence course with the University of Rapid Voids, South Dakota 1979 - 1986) but he is also something big in the world of applied statistics. In fact he is currently rated the 137th most eminent statistician ever to drink in the Red Lion.

I was reminded of this little known fact when I heard him on the wireless the other morning. Speaking on TalkQuiz, the only wireless station in the world that talks about quizzing every fcekin minute of every fcekin day, he blurted exclusively:

"Good morning everyone and may I say how thrilled I am to be on Woman's Hour. I am immensely proud of the dossier I have built up on all the great quizzers that Withquiz has produced over the years. I particularly enjoyed shadowing Martin from the Griffin (shadowing is a much more friendly word than stalking, don't you think?) in an effort to scientifically determine what makes a great mind tick.

"Martin's ability to score points is quite phenomonommel. By my reckoning he has now scored maximum points in 2.3674% of all the games he has completed. That would make it, let's see, 46 times that he has pulled off a perfect 8 in one evening which is quite phenomemmmone... er.....good. Hang on a minute, that can't be right. No, sorry I see where I've gone wrong. You see I use my trusty penknife to put a notch on the bedpost every time Martin gets a perfect 8. But I also put a notch on the same bedpost every time one of my patients pulls through. Silly me, sorry about that. So, let me just do a bit of mental maths..... right so 46 take away 9.....talk among yourselves for a wee minute..... carry one..... God, it's at times like this that I wish I'd been sent to a Catholic school.....hang on, nearly there. Yep by my reckoning that's as near as damn it 36 times that Martin has scored a perfect 8 - and obviously that is quite a phemmmomamel achievement."

Combining his medical knowledge and his statistical prowess has Ivor been able to come up with a scientific reason why Martin should be so prolific a scorer?

"Well no, I think you would probably need at least an 'A' level in medicine to determine something as complicated as that. Or maybe to have studied Darwin which of course wasn't on the 'O' level syllabus in either Northern Ireland or South Dakota. Extrapolating from the figures to hand I would probably say that it may have something to do with him having a brain which is, in scientific terms, absolutely ginormous - anything up to 12.4658 times the size of an ordinary brain. To be honest though I've no idea where he would store such a large brain as his head looks to be much the same size as that of everybody else who drinks in the Griffin. Another plausible explanation might be that he's got a very clever imaginary friend who whispers all the answers to him. Who knows? All we can say with any certainty is that he is quite phemmmmmommammel."

Is there any medical downside to being so phenomenal at answering questions?

"One downside, of course, is that he may not be with us much longer. According to an actuary I met in a Free Presbyterian lap dancing club last week the average life expectancy for a clever person is 29 and a bit - compared to the average life expectancy of, say, a Queen Mother which is 100 and a bit (providing, of course, that reasonable care is taken with fishbones).

"You see, knowledge is a bit like a deep-fried Mars bar. It clogs the synapses as it races up to the brain - the knowledge, I mean, not the Mars bar. For most people in Withquiz this isn't a problem as their synapses can go for months without ever having to cope with a shipment of knowledge. But poor buggers like Martin have to walk home every Wednesday night with their synapses clogged up like the Mersey used to be before they dug the sewers. It's a shame really. He's a lovely lad, but I'd say that his trophy winning days are numbered."

Ivor is sponsored by Tubigrip, makers of Britain's sexiest tubular bandage.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

13/02/2013

## A View from our Papal Turf Accountant

It used to be only Chelsea that turfed the manager out at the drop of a point or a hat. Now everyone's doing it; this week even the Vatican got in on the act. One minute the Board are 110% behind him.....

"He's a triffic gaffer is Benny, infallible, absolutely infallible. They don't come any more infallible than Benny and we're 120% behind his project. This is a great Church and Benny is the man to lead us back to where we deserve to be. We've had a few disappointing results recently but we can assure you that Benny is going nowhere".

And then, as soon as the ads come on, they sprint into the dressing room and sack him....

"Sadly the Church and Benny have parted company by mutual consent. The Board felt that Benny wasn't going anywhere".

So who will be the new Pope? Withquiz and Paddy Power get together in a grey, smoke-filled taproom to consider the starters and riders....

### 1. Fr Megson

Local boy gone bad. Very much the housewives' favourite flutter, back in 2005, to become the first pope from the Cisalpine Reeks. Since then however his star has waned. Still has the celibacy factor - despite increasingly fevered attempts to lose it - but no longer considered infallible as his languishing quiz team, the Charabancs of Fire, continue to stare down the barrel of a wooden spoon.

Odds: 200/1

### 2. Patriarch Tony

One of only three Withquizzers to declare an interest. The right age and the right religion. And nobody can doubt his infallibility - the last person to do so was hanged in Walton prison in 1961. However his insistence that he be given 5 weeks off every Christmas and every Easter may stand against him.

Odds: 100/30

### 3. Chief Moderator Alexander Chapman Ferguson

Sometimes (but not often) called 'the Angel of Govan'. He positively seethes with compassion and the spirit of forgiveness but has been known to lose his temper, on one occasion gouging out his centre forward's eyes for being too slow to turn the other cheek. Despite his charisma and his caritas it would be a major shock if he were to become the first Protestant pope. Probably just as well as his nose would clash horribly with the conclave of cardinals.

Odds: No fcekin' chance

### 4. Padre Roberto Mancini

Along with Tony, the only devout Catholic to show any interest in the job. Speaks the lingo and his present club is unlikely to raise any objections if he wants to leave. A move might do Roberto the world of good, as would a good night's sleep. He has recently taken to sleepwalking around Beswick in the wee small hours unpicking his scarf and muttering a line from Auden: "No one can live for long in a euphoric dream."

Odds: 12/1

### 5. Hedge Priest Fr Roy Keane

A man of Cork from one ear to the other. But don' be fooled. Beneath that suave Old Spice appearance lurks an odour of sanctity that reeks from his every armpit. There may not be a more sanctimonious Corker in the world of punditry. If elected he will dread speaking 'ex cathedra' as sitting on a chair is a skill he never seemed to master during his time with ITV.

Odds: Only an eejit with a death wish would bet against him

### 6. Lay Preacher Roy Hodgson

Has an impressive track record in taking over the helm of small, unfashionable teams and working flat out to make sure they stay small and unfashionable. Currently doing great things with Liechtenstein... sorry, England. Will struggle to become One Holy Catholic and Apostolic overnight. The Urbi et Orbi papal address might also be a big and

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

embawwassing ask.

Odds: About the same as England (or Liechtenstein) winning the next World Cup so hardly worth the whisk

7. Holy Joe Mourinho

Unlikely to throw his biretta into the ring as he feels that acting as your own vicar on Earth is pretty pointless.

Odds: No way Jose

8 & 9. And now where the smart money is going. The first black president of the USA will surely be followed by the first black pope. Only two possible contenders here: the machismo of Withquiz's very own Deacon 'Tremendous Pectorals' Dave or the intellectual prowess of Jesuit Mario 'Tremendous Knowledge' Balotelli. Nobody speaks silkier Latin than Fr Mario but the charitable works of Deacon Dave who loves to nip out during Coronation Street and distribute wheelbarrowfuls of used five pound notes among Manchester's fallen women may well be enough to carry the day.

Odds: Not the width of a gnat's crotch between them

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

06/03/2013

## A View from Heaton Norris Park

(From a sworn affidavit by Fr Megson's amanuensis)

This much is true: if you invent a character, breathe life into him for a decade or more and then try to kill him off, he will find a way to come back and haunt you. I think I am being haunted by Fr Megson. He hasn't exactly appeared to me but I think I may have witnessed his disappearance. Can you be haunted by a disappearance? I suppose there are more things in heaven and earth and in SK4 than are dreamed about in our philosophy.

Anyway, I was walking through the early morning gloom of Heaton Norris Park this morning when I noticed what looked like a black bundle lying in the distance. I immediately felt a little bit more spooked by this than a grown man should, largely because my next door neighbour was unlucky enough a few years ago to come across a body hanging from a tree near the same spot. I walked warily towards it and was relieved to find that it wasn't a body. It was still shocking though - there, laid out fairly neatly in the grass was a black gown very similar to a chasuble together with a pair of black socks and what looked to be a cheap imitation stole which a priest would wear around his neck during a religious service. A few feet away lay a roughly carved crucifix (actually in the shape of a cross of Lorraine) and a black hardback book which I initially took to be a missal but on closer inspection turned out to be entitled A Book of Needs. I didn't hang around; going into work seemed by far the saner option.

I retraced my steps late this afternoon. All was normal and mundane. No relics of a priest, living or otherwise. Assumed into heaven? I think not. Fr Megson was never that kind of priest. If any of you out there happen to see a naked priest, or even a defrocked one wandering around, please let me know. I shall be very relieved."

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

27/03/2013

## Can't Believe It!

A Chairde,

They will be humming in the Reeks tonight. Aye, and they might also be fracking. That most lovely of obsolete coins, the silver Irish threepenny bit with the startled hare on it, rallied briefly on the Macgillycuddy Stock Exchange as Fr Megson's ravished foursome, for so long the butt of music hall jokes, confounded the scribes and chalked up a draw against the mighty Ethel Rodin in a fibrillating finale to the league season. A draw that, however unlikely as it may seem, means that it is now mathematically impossible for them to be lumbered with the Withquiz wooden spoon for the first time in their history.

In an emotional post match interview, Roisin, fighting back tears and hordes of prepubescent groupies, fuelled by lager and the desire to grab the toggles off her duffel coat, summed up the raw emotion of this memorable evening in the hallowed portals of the Didsbury Cricket Club:

"Absolutely unbelievable. Seems like a dream. Even in our wildest dreams we never imagined that this would really happen. It still hasn't sunk in and I don't suppose it will until presentation night. I'm too scared to go to sleep now in case I wake up and find that it has all been a dream. That's seven fcekin' weeks now without a wink of sleep since our last point. It's a fcekin' nightmare. I wouldn't have it any other way though. It's incredible, absolutely unfcekin' believable. I still haven't got my head around it. They said we'd never draw anything with kids on the team. But we refused to panic. We knew the boy Damian would come good in the end. We always knew that he was a volatile player. Just like David Beckham that time he said in a riveting interview that he was definitely a volatile player because he could play on the left or on the right or even down the middle. Well, Damo is even more volatile. When was the last time David Beckham scored sitting at a table with his arms folded? Marvellous. It's like a dream come true. We are all literally over the moon. Next stop Jupiter! I feel like I'm floating on air. It feels a bit like sleep deprivation only without the hood and the barking dogs. Is it your round yet? Don't get me another pint, I'm too tired to drink pints, just get me 3 halves....yes Pils please..... lots of sleeping pils....."



Roisin spending more than a tenner

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

10/04/2013

## Very little Shock or Awe

A Chairde,

Angry demonstrations by the away fans here tonight following rumours that Opsimath's troubled chairman, Mike Baa'th, whose family had until recently unbridled control over the massive Tie-Rack franchise in Ballydad, is keen to liquidate the club and its many supporters. The anger was fuelled when Mike's lookalike spokesman (also called Sadie) confirmed that he is to sell Colinski, their brilliant but volatile Belorussian snapper up of unconsidered trifles, to FC Partizan Peshmerga in exchange for John Hartson and 2 other beasts of burden. Quite how he purposes to use Hartson whose knowledge of Shakespeare and writing in general is said to be suspect remains to be seen. Curfew permitting, Colinski is set to make his debut in Kirkuk next Wednesday and we wish him well. With both teams already guaranteed mediocrity the result of the quiz itself was largely academic, an adjective not normally applied to either team. For the record the result was:

Real B'Oak 3 (Damian Figo and Roisin Raul (2)) Opsimaths Utd 1 (Ruud Awakening)

The questions set by SWMCC tried hard to dispel the lassitude and ennui of the teams and often succeeded. B'Oak of course lapped up the 64 special questions on inter-county hurling (1378 - 1978) but I felt a momentary twinge of sympathy for the small band of Gastarbeiter Sassenachs who eke a living and a Quiz out of the Reeks. Obviously they lack the cultural inheritance of the natives and most of them probably still think a Hurley is a small brain trapped in a low-cut dress. Maybe the odd cricket question could be lobbed at them as a sop and comfort blanket. On second thoughts, sod 'em. Let them go to the fleshpots and themed Sassenach bars of Dingle if they want that sort of thing.

SWMCC is, of course, a new name in our league this season - and an unpronounceable one to boot! According to my indispensable copy of "The Rough Guide To Unpronounceable Even Rougher QuizTeam Names" (Frank McClintock Press; 38 korunas and a pint of house lager), SWMCC is actually a 19th century Serbo-Croatian variation of the 12th century Welsh anagram CWMCS as indeed are most of their fiendishly concocted and inventive questions.

Their lead singer Eddie Araucaria (ex Catatonia and of course The Drifters) tells me they are hoping to go acrostic next season with the release of their new album "Electric Pigs - Unplugged."

Mike Baa'th is busy this weekend re-indexing his grand children (congrats. from all of us) and of course redecorating his palaces and repointing his statues. He has asked me to nominate a Question of the Week (or as that underestimated American oral poet Donald Rumsfeld recently called it, "one of the unknown great unknowns." And the winner is:

Q: How many pieces of wood are carried off the field by the losing team in the Ballyboke versus Ballydad Reeks hurling final?

A: 37 (their own hurling sticks; their opponent's (broken) hurling sticks; 4 goal posts; 2 crossbars and Sarah Bernhardt's wooden leg)

Bet you didn't know that, Kieran.

Slan

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/04/2013

## Ballyboke Bugle Saturday Supplement (2)

Legend tells us that on St. George's Day 2003 the white Knights of The Companions of St. Snoopy did mortal battle with the noisome maiden-mauling, vindaloo-swilling Braggarts of Griff. Today to mark the Millennium of this, the kid sister of all battles, we revisit Snoopy and, in the tired and detested format of a more famous but less worthy Saturday supplement, we subject them to a toe-curlingly fatuous Q + A session. No names have been changed to protect the innocent and it should be noted that the editor is insolvent as he had to buy another loaf at lunchtime.

Home for Snoopy's Friends is a large detached neo-Romany caravan which clings idyllically but frantically to the westernmost tip of the third Reek from the sun. When I arrive I find that all the others have gone out otter-tagging leaving the paterfamilias to field my questions unconferrred - thus at a stroke doubling the fee. I am surprised to find that he is in fact Sassenach-born, a cross he seems to bear with good humour and great fortitude. Looking cool yet reassuringly avuncular in a cerise kaftan with matching deerstalker and bedsocks he drapes himself luxuriously across an accommodating ottoman and, sucking ruminatively on his meerschaum, signals me to begin:

Q: Firstly, a question often asked by housewives who can't resist a flutter on you, is 'Snoopy's Friends' your real name?

A: (Laughing and peeling a kumquat). Good Heavens, no. No that name goes back to the early 90's when we were big in the world of rap music. We have kept it partly for reasons of nostalgia and partly to confuse the tax man. No, our real name is 'The Wife and Bairns of Judge Roy Bean'.

Q: When did you first break into the world of TV stardom?

A: I think it was in 1685 (gosh I'm showing my age now!) when we were lucky enough to be asked to host the popular light entertainment programme 'Sunday Night At The Bloody Assizes'. Do you remember 'Beat the Clock-Watcher'? That was our idea. Of course not many people had clocks or even TVs in those innocent days.

Q: Do you believe in Life?

A: Yes. Especially for those irritating people who insist on reusing partly franked postage stamps.

Q: And Death?

A: If the black cap fits.

Q: And Life after Death?

A: No. The quality of mercy is not strained but droppeth like a gentle Fr. Megson from the Premiership. Ergo, the two sentences should be allowed to run concurrently.

Q: And less boringly, what's your favourite Boy Band?

A: (Polishing a papaya with gusto). Atomic Kitten.

Q: What is your greatest strength?

A: An esoteric knowledge of Irish geography. My family has had moles in the Reeks for centuries and they keep us fully informed. And before you ask we don't have any weaknesses. Incidentally, did you know that the medieval Reeks were divided into 14 ridings just like Somerset? Marvellous!

Q: What is your favourite smell?

A: Exhibit "A" from The Crown versus Keith Moon at The Old Bailey in September 1972.

Q: And your favourite fantasy?

A: It used to be coming off the bench, still in my robes, to score the winning goal in the All-Ireland Hurling final (a more dapper version of that chap in the Guinness advert). I can't really discuss my more recent one as it is currently sub judice - anyway it's none of your business, slaphead!

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Dangling particples, Schrödinger's Cat and bad-boy Braggarts throwing stones at my window.

Q: Should the Royal Family be scrapped?

A: No, not all of them. Just the big fat geezer in the armchair. He should be ashamed of himself, he should.

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

Q: How would you define a perfect question?

A: One that is left hanging in the air for a while before it is allowed to go begging.

Q: What is the one most important lesson that Latin has taught you in life?

A: (Looking darkly into his half-eaten pomegranate) "Mens imbuta vino volat ad pudenda."

Q: If you could take only one dyslexic anagram with you to your Desert Island to remind you of your colleagues in the Reeks quiz league which one would you choose.

A: GRABING FFRIGG-RATS.

Q: Finally, how would you like to be remembered?

A: Instantaneously and for 2 points (imagine the ignominy if my family had to confer!).

Editor's Note: Julie O' Burchill is unwell (a vented spleen following a surfeit of French fries). I'm sure all our readers will join our circulation manager in wishing her a very slow recovery."



## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

24/04/2013

### Brains v TUFKAC

A Chairde,

Unlike Arsenal, the Braggarts, or Tony Blair, neither of these sides had any worries about failing to retain the Premiership and in the event neither of them did. In true Celtic fashion the girls from the Reeks scraped home by the skin of their hoops. Tuf on Kac. Tuf on the causes of Kac. Congrats to Alison from Chorlton-Cum-Hardy (Gateway to Stretford and the western Reeks) who scored highly and impressively on her League debut for B'oak. The big question now is, can the heavily cash-and-jock strapped Fr. Megson hold on to his youthful starlet? He reckons she reminds him of a young Wayne Rooney but everyone else reckons that she is even prettier. And she doesn't spit!!

Hard to believe but it is 30 years now since Christies last topped the charts though it's said that even now on cold moonlit nights ghostly strains of Yellow River can still be heard wafting plaintively across the Reeks. Yes, the song remains the same but not the name. For, with a business acumen unworthy even of French Connection, Christie's cocked an anarchic snoop at titular convention and a new tee-shirt legend was born. Today, from the catwalks of Milan to the tomcat alleys of Droylsden, "Tufkac" has become the opium of the idle and the icon of the chic.

Nothing foppish though about the unashamedly, unflexed pectorals behind the tee-shirts. Equally at home in Stringfellows on a sultry Saturday night or in Wacky Warehouse on a drizzly Sunday afternoon they continue to raise Cain and the profile of Christie's Hospital in much the same way as General Sherman razed Atlanta. Thanks to their shady efforts a rash of theme-pubs now pockmarks the entire rive gauche of the Mersey as far as Tesco's and they plan to move into their new purpose built topless quiz-bar 'The Tartan Turkey' early next Mother's Day (terrorists permitting). No cow is sacred to them and nobody is allowed to halt their inexorable march to Monopolyville. Witness this terse comment from the ex-manager of the now defunct Pie And Porringer alehouse on School Lane:

"Big Issue, sir? FCUKTUFKAC!!!!" Have a nice day, anyway.

Slan

PS: Congrats also to Jay Garner for landing Mike Baa'th's old job as managing director of Tie-Rack in Ballydad. I always knew he would get the chance to play Maverick again."

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

16/10/2013

## I Dreamt I Dwelt In Marble Halls

A Chairde,

Father Megson was having a beautiful dream. Not the sort of beautiful dream he usually had, the sort that was forever getting him in trouble with his housekeeper on laundry day. No, in this one there were no comely Irish maidens dancing at the crossroads in diaphanous shifts; no sultry cowled Scottish Widow traipsing through the heather offering to swell his emoluments for a happy old age; no beserking hordes of Viking warriors, their magnificent naked thighs offset beautifully by the phallic tilt of their horned helmets as they wreaked their rampant manhood upon the virginal nunneries of the Reeks - this last recurring one had recently earned him a stern rebuke not only from his bishop confessor but from no less a person than the vice superintendent of the Reeks, Garda Síochóna. No, this dream was different though no less orgasmic.

In it he could see himself within the hallowed portals of the Albert Bowling Club in leafy West Didsbury. He observed himself striding manfully forward, his timbers shivering mightily in the slipstream of his beloved Charabancs' unchecked march towards destiny and - O happy moment - towards the rostrum where a beaming Mike, gun in hand, was instructing a keening Kieran to prepare himself to hand over the WithQuiz League trophy to the new victors. The serried ranks of onlookers were mobbing the victorious manager - The Special One - ecstatically, and many of the women were renting their upper garments in the hope of a brief anointment as he passed among them - he would omit to mention in his next confession that The Men They Couldn't Hang were even more abandoned in their adulation than the women. Dusty was foremost among the women, renting her garments to an extraordinary degree. How strangely alluring she looked when you stripped away the duffel coat and the seven layers of jumpers, cardigans and assorted undergarments. If only he had known earlier!

They were drawing ever closer to the rostrum. It would not be long now. Andrew, who had insisted on bringing along his trusty guitar, was just being persuaded to bring to a premature end his cheerful rendition of the Pink Floyd classic Seven Species Of Small Furry Animal Gathered Together In A Cave And Grooving With A Pict. Kieran, now at knifepoint as well as at gunpoint, had magnanimously agreed to retrieve the trophy from his voluminous underpants. He would hand it over.....any moment now.....

"Are you ready to toss yet?"

It was the judge that woke Fr Megson up. Fr Megson's family had always been afraid of judges ever since his great grandfather had been tarred and feathered and then transported to Ladybarn for plotting to kidnap a boiled potato. Fr Megson did not know what to say in the presence of a judge so he said nothing. 'Maintaining his right to stay silent' was what his turf accountant would have called it. He just stood there in the Cricket club in Didsbury before the second game of the season, saying nothing, thrusting his hands ever deeper into his trouser pockets and nervously jingling his thrupenny bits. Within an hour and a half the almost Di Canioesque brilliance of his management would count for nothing. The ceremonial waving aloft of bloodied bedsheets would signal that his superannuated protegées had once again been well and truly deflowered at the hands of the wolfish Bards. All his early season hopes would once more be strangled in the cot. Presentation night would remain a dream.

Saecula Saeculorum.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

06/11/2013

## Hope Springs Infernal

A Chairde,

A wise man, Friedrich Nietzsche perhaps, or maybe even Roddy when Ethel were going through a nihilistic phase, once told Fr Megson that Hope is in reality the worst of all evils since it serves to prolong the torments of man; neither Friedrich nor Roddy felt qualified to hazard a guess on what effect Hope might have on a woman. Fr Megson wasn't listening at the time since he was desperately hoping to recoup a goodly portion of the previous Sunday's collection plate takings on the 3:30 at Kempton Park. Later that evening however, as his kindly turf accountant helped him tear up his last batch of beaten docketts, he got to thinking just how wise those words really were.

His dark teatime of the soul was still with him when he woke in the wee small hours. He got up, fought his way over the mountain of spent Sacramental Red bottles and Gipsy Cream packets (he would need to find time to go shopping for basics in Lidl soon) and attempted to plug his spiritual leak by immersing himself in work. In vain, even after ten minutes of rapt contemplation on the life and works of St Teresa of Avila, and on the early edition of the Daily Star's guide to the racing at Uttoxeter, he felt no better. The bitter truth hit him like a sudden round on rocket science. He would never be happy until he had lost all hope. God and the Charabancs would have to go.

In truth the Charabancs should never have been a problem. They were, after all, the most hopeless thing in his life. 'Nil satis, nisi mediocrum' had been their mantra now for nigh on a quarter century. So why once more had he allowed Hope to spring infernal at the beginning of this season? Why could he never see that, even at their brilliant best, which mostly occurred between 8:30 and 9pm, that bewitching half hour between insobriety and mental incapacity, it was predestined to end in tears?

He had been too optimistic for his own good. How could he have been naive enough to think that new tactics, a revolutionary new formation and a strict dietary ban on turkey twizzlers would make a blind bit of difference? A turnip would always taste like a turnip no matter how much brown sauce one poured over it.

It made him squirm now to think that only last week he had been foolish enough to phone around for advice and, even though he rarely listened to protestants, how childishly gratified he had been to hear Sir Alex rant on for over an hour on....

"the need to toughen the buggers up both physically and mentally and then play the wee lassie with the Fenian name in the hole and stick the other bampots in a diamond formation, or maybe even a Christmas tree formation, aye, like wee fcekin Fenian fairies pretendin' tae be a Yule tree with Damo runnin' aroond like a numpty-headed false number 9 or whatever else shite thaim drookit pundits and joby-jabbers on TalkQuiz were always bletherin' on aboot whenever ye turned on yer tranny. Jesus jonny, it was enuff to maik ye bowk! And dinnae gae me staired on Roy fcekin Keane, anither heid the baw bampot from the Reeks. I fair banjoed him in the wallies in mah wee book, hae ye no read it yit, Faither? That'll wipe the sleekid smile aff his hackit big coupon, nae that he iver smiles inyway, gittin a smile oot a' him wid be lik gittin milk oot o' a fcekin bullock. Now fcek aff, Faither, and gae ma heid peace and claise the fcekin door behind ye. WHIT???? Ah cuid nae giv a tinker's testicle if yer oon the phone and nae actually in ma hoose, jist fcek aff an' dae whit ah tell ye or ah'll git ma hairdryer oot an' gae ye a wee blow jobbie. G'night Faither and tell the Pape ah wis askin fur him next time yer over in Rome winchin' his ring."

Sir Alex had once been a genius at making great men feel hopeless. Keegan, Rafa, Taibi, the blind Venetian; the list went on and on. So why could he not have done the same for Fr Megson? Taking his Hope with him, like some unwanted pet, the desperate priest disconsolately climbed the stairs, grabbed his flugelhorn and began furiously to improvise. His only hope was that the blues might blow away his Hope.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

18/12/2013

Some Christmas shopping advice

*(no title)*



A Chairde,

For the many of youse who couldn't be arsed to get sober in time to do any Christmas shopping this year, salvation may yet be at hand in the unlikely guise of Dusty and her hen-pecked heartthrob, Mr Dusty. Using her vivid imagination and a style of language that, while lacking the poetic intensity of Dan Brown's acclaimed works of children's fiction, is nevertheless to be admired for its determination to keep spelling mistakes and swear words to a minimum, Dusty has produced a book that will melt the heart of any 7

year old who has ever dreamt of owning a pony named Shag. Using a more virile approach and an old letraset he found at the bottom of the hamster's cage, Mr Dusty has produced a first novel that pays homage to the mores and values of the American Wild West where men are men, chaps are vaselined and boys are boggle-eyed. Buy One and Get One Free at all mediocre bookshops and off-licences this Christmas.



# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

29/10/2014

## A Blob is Born

Fr Megson is unwell. The rash first appeared around Eastertime shortly after the decorous deacon had given up celibacy for Lent. Other less socially acceptable symptoms soon raised their ugly head and eventually, after many anguished nights of tossing and turning and not a little scratching, Fr Megson was forced to seek medical advice.

The atmosphere in the Red Lion surgery was even more boisterous than usual on the afternoon of his appointment, and as he sidled in he was subjected to some very uncharitable chants of "Sideways Christian Soldier". After a cursory inspection Dr Ivor told him to put to put his clothes back on with due diligence and never ever take them off in a crowded pub again. He got his stethoscope out, read the instructions and told the patient to breathe in and blurt out three times. He tapped him on the kneecaps with his biro and asked some pertinent questions: Was he a smoker? Had he seen Holby City last night? What was the collective term for a group of hermits? He then told a relieved Fr Megson that he was as fit as a butcher's dog apart from his ailment. Unfortunately he couldn't really help him with that as he had never been able to get his head around "them parts of the body down there" as they were known in the trade. On the positive side though, it was fortunate that Dr Tim was feeling a bit paralytic at the moment. When sober, he could be a bit on the cavalier side and had a reputation for gleefully amputating anything that dangled. He advised the patient to go home and keep scratching. He should drink plenty of Sanatogen and cod-liver oil and, with any luck, he would be as right as rain in good time for the next London Olympics. And above all he shouldn't worry. After all, we all had to go sometime and, sure, wouldn't it be great to be remembered as the priest who went out with a bang and not a wimple?

Fr Megson will be so busy scratching over the next few months that he has been forced to appoint an amanuensis to fill his column. He says he can't afford to pay much so his turf accountant has advised him (at the special rate of only 75 guineas per half an hour) to give the job to a woman...."A woman who is priest-ridden and who has had the backchat beaten out of her would be your only man" he advised. "And don't be giving it to a good looking one, either, because you don't want her to be looking in mirrors and running home pregnant every minute of the working day".

So Fr Megson placed a small ad in the personal column of the Church of the Hidden Ovarie parish magazine and, after careful consideration, he has decided to give the job to the only applicant. He has told Dusty that she has everything a priest could want in a woman writer: two sharp pencils and a rubber. He told her not to worry about the grammar as that was sure to come later. He counselled her to relax and write about what she knew. And if she didn't know about it, well, bejusus, write about it anyway as the half dozen or so fcekin' eejits that bother to read it will know even less. It worked for Joyce and Beckett, and it nearly worked for Richard Littlejohn, so why the fcek would it not work for her?

An excited Dusty raced home, peeled the spuds and told Mr Dusty the good news. Mr Dusty was silent until he had eaten his spuds. Then he said the extra half crown a week would come in very handy and where the fcek was his custard and jelly? He admitted that nobody on his side of the family had ever had much joy at dipping the quill but he could at least sharpen her pencils and supply her with jotters from the Pound shop. Or, if he could fire up that oul hoor of a Sinclair computer that was out in the henhouse, she could even do one of them thingamajigs on the internet....you know like what that wee girl Belle de Jour did about her secret life as a protestant.

"A Blob" cried Dusty triumphantly. "I'll do a Blob....."

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

19/11/2014

## A Blob takes shape

Kittens. That's what Fr Megson will be havin' when he finds out I've missed me first deadline. And him payin' me the guts of half a crown per week! I hope he takes it better than Mr Dusty did. He nearly fell out of bed when I told him my first blob was late.

I blame them fcekin illegitimate postmen. It really gets on me goat when the GPO gives jobs to people who can't read. I sent a letter off to Gorton College in me best handwriting askin' them if they had any cheap diploma courses goin' for people who wanted to do blobs on the computer. The next thing I knew me lollipers were flappin' in the wind as I pedalled like the hounds of hell to get to Cambridge for an interview in some god-forsaken place called Girton College. And a right waste of time that was. They didn't even do blob studies. They said they could rustle me up a nice crash course in Phenomenology; all I had to do was run home and get four 'A' levels by next Tuesday. And while I was at it, could I change my accent as well? I told them that Phphphenommennnoology might be a fine and dandy option for them that could say it but it wouldn't butter many parsnips in the cultural hinterlands of Ladybarn and was any of them carryin' a spare bicycle pump?

Well, there's no way me bunions or me lollipers would allow me to pedal up and down to Cambridge everyday for three years so I'll sit in the kitchen and drink a few bottles of strong alcohol and then after a wee nap I'll say a prayer in front of me headless statue of the Infant of Prague for divine guidance. With any luck the Holy Ghost might pop down and help me out with me blob. I'll make a start just as soon as I've peeled the spuds and mangled the neeps for dinner. I would have started sooner if Mr Dusty hadn't got the rooster's dander up when he tried to take the Sinclair out of the henhouse. There was no way that rooster was going to give up his favourite roostin' place and his reputation for bein' the only rooster in the neighbourhood to have his own personal computer without a struggle. Blood and feathers all over the place. The two of them are still up in the bedroom recuperatin'.

Well, tempus fugit as the fella said and we're another day closer to the grave. Mr Dusty and the rooster are still asleep so I'll have a bowl or two of Coco Pops to get me strength back. I was up half the night cleaning the Sinclair. Them hens had made a right mess of it - bad cess to them - but it has come up a treat after steepin' it in bleach for a few hours and then givin' it a good goin' over with a bar of coal tar and a packet of Brillo pads. There were still a few wee bits wedged under some of the keys so I got on the blower to that Mike bloke who does the teleprinter results for the quiz and sought his expert advice. He wasn't all that friendly to be honest and I'd hate to be his wife if he's always that grumpy at five in the mornin'. Fair play to him though, he stopped effin' and jeffin' after a while and said it sounded like I might be suffering from 'sticky key' syndrome. Had I tried turning the computer off and then back on again? If that didn't work I could always try a smidgen of Mr Muscle oven cleaner - but just a smidgen, mind you, as it tended to melt the computer. And if I didn't want any more episodes of 'sticky keys' I should tell Mr Dusty to stop using them dodgy websites in the middle of the night.

I'll just head up to the Co-op now to get a bit of breakfast for Mr Dusty and the rooster and a few more bottles of strong alcohol to have in the house for emergencies. And then it will be all systems go for the blob. I suppose I better leave a note in case the Holy Ghost decides to pop down before I get back.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

03/12/2014

## Pulpit Palpitations

Many of Fr Megson's parishioners were startled to find an unfamiliar priest celebrating early mass last Sunday. It was Fr Megson. As befits a priest who finds himself in less than robust sexual health and sober at such an ungodly hour of the morning, he was in a fulminatory mood.

Nobody escaped his fulminations. The questions from the previous Wednesday night were not questions in any meaningful Catholic sense of the word; small wonder that the Charabancs had not deigned to answer them. A mere bagatelle of arid and base pettifoggeries, the vapid musings of Roddy and his yuppie ilk who are wont to sit around sipping Prosecco and easing themselves quantitatively in that whited sepulchre of a pub that had caked on the makeup and play-acted at being the White Swan. Any Christian, even a Protestant, could see that that pub was on a handcart to Hell the minute they started tarding up the urinals with them wee blue blocks. Idle fripperies! Pearls before swine! The Roman Empire had crumbled under decadence and soft living. Now it was Ladybarn's turn. We must all remember Sodom and Gemorrah before it was too late, begorrah.

The normally placid pastor then switched his wrath from the Ethel Austin wannabees to the brazen iniquity of gay rent boys. What really got his dander up were them fcekin' gobshites who hang around the bandstand in a well known South Manchester park of a Tuesday evening. They look all angelic and innocent as if Stork wouldn't melt in their mouths. Then, the minute you stop to tie your shoelace and adjust the hem of your chasuble they go all vampish and promise you a dainty treat - "something that will take your breath away, Father". But as soon as you hand over a goodly portion of your paltry stipend they knee you in the nuggets and run off sniggering and shouting hurtful things like "so long sucker". In the good old days any mill owner who found his brats offering to tug anything other than their forelock in front of a man of God would tan their backsides with a sally rod from the hedge and fair play to them. The world would be a better place if we had more tanned backsides.

He then vented his engorged spleen on that other scourge of modern society, women. That monstrous regiment of strumpets as John Knox called them. And who could disagree, even if he had been Scottish and rumoured to be a Protestant. Yessiree, if women weren't giving you a rash they were trying to get their hands on that last wee morsel of your stipend that the gay rentboys hadn't managed to purloin.

Take that Dusty for example: "Strumpet doesn't even begin to describe her. Shyster, Snollygoster par excellence, Whore of Babycham. The guts of half a crown I'm paying her on a weekly basis to keep my column going and what do I get? Nichts, nada, rien, fcek all! Some bullcrap about blobs and roosters. It's a quiz website for Chrissakes. The hoi polloi want match reports, post match interviews in the shower, scurrilous invective heaped upon the heads of them hoors in the Griffin, beefcake images of the Pigs. Our target audience is made up of quiz punters, for fcek's sake, not fcekin' intellectuals. They want to tootle along in their white vans listening to TalkQuiz, not Mrs Dale's frigging Diary. Wake up there in the back pew, Dusty and Mr Dusty and pay heed. You've got until January when the window opens to save your half crown. Doing columns is a results-based business and I expect results, not bleedin' blobs.....and get that heathen rooster out of my church NOW!"

Fr Megson then said some holy things and collected some money before reminding his congregation that the mass was ended and that they should wake up and go forth in peace pronto or there would be trouble.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

17/12/2014

## Blobber Soul

Were any of youse at early mass the other Sunday? God, that Fr Megson was awful hard on me. It was like bumping into Chopper Harris when he was in his pomp. I was heartscaled. Poor Mr Dusty who prides himself on being as insensitive as the next man was heartscaled too and took to his bed for a week and the man from the dole had to come around and collect his signature at his bedside. I think even the rooster was heartscaled. He hasn't crowed since apart from a half-hearted squawk when the X-Factor came on - and he only pecks at his Coco Pops. Bad cess to the clergy. For two pins, I'd turn Stalinist and liquefy the lot of them, the whole caboodle. Good enough for them.

Mr Dusty is not optimistic. He is a passionate student of current affairs and often reads The Daily Star from cover to cover. He is firmly of the opinion that there is not much chance of a bloody revolution in the North of England before next May at the earliest. On the positive side though, he reckons that 'Suck It And See' has an excellent chance of being placed in the 3:30 at Wincanton. I'm a fierce teleological woman by nature so I'll pop out for a wee flutter after I've mangled the neeps and who needs a revolution when you are a winner and the cupboard under your sink is crammed full of bottles of strong alcohol. If Fr Megson calls to cadge a Christmas drink I'll give him Harpic and pretend it was a tragic accident.

Morbid depression and bunions is a terrible price to pay for being an artist. How can I ever do a blob when I spend my nights staring into a gaping abbess or whatever it's called and my days too plum-tuckered even to pop into Lidl. Mr Dusty says feck all that arty-farty stuff for a game of soldiers, you'd be lucky to get a bottle of stout these days for half a crown let alone a work of art. And anyway, if you still want to do the oul blob couldn't you just do it in a stream of unconsciousness like what that Joyce wotsername did in her book about Finnegans Wake whoever the fcek Finnegans was when he was at home. "Don't think about it", was Mr Dusty's literary advice, "Let her rip bejaysus and care not a fig for the philistine sensibilities of hoors like Fr Megson and his henchmen who have done for the WithQuiz website what fcekin Mussolini did for Abyssinia. Be true to yourself, old girl. But not a blessed word, mind, about my wee problem in the bedroom department or about what that rooster said about me last night. Sure, he never would have said such a thing if you hadn't poured that sourmash over his Coco Pops.

Well, be that as it may, I'll have to put me blob on the back burner till Twelfth Night at the earliest. The Baby Jesus will soon be celebrating his 2014th birthday. God, can you believe how awful quick kids grow up these days! Christmas might be fine and dandy if you happen to be the Messiah but it just means more skivvying in the kitchen for me. It will be worse than ever this year as the rooster says he has ethical issues about the jerking of dead turkeys and could we keep it vegetarian this year. And not just fcekin neeps. I told him to mind his language and I'd see what I could muster up. Little does he know that back in the 60's in our courting days me and young Mr Dusty were great fans altogether of the Craddocks when they used to cook on the telly. We would write the recipes down and make a mad dash for the scullery when it was over. I still fondly remember them days (before Mr Dusty decided to become a useless gobshite) when nothing would give him greater pleasure than to play Johnny to my Fanny. We used to tickle palates the length and breadth of Ladybarn with our legendary soya bean tripe and kidney pie served with sun-dried potato peelings - and for pudding you would have been hard pressed to find a pamplemousse stuffed with greater aplomb.

So fear not little red rooster. This Christmas you will be a quorn-fed chicken. Fr Megson and the rest of youse can fcek off and fend for yourselves.



14/01/2015

## Two more ringers sign up for WithQuiz



*Ron, Len and 4 unidentified false number 9s getting an early feel for the playing surface at the Turnpike....  
"If we'd known that Eric was bringing his camera, we would have put on our fancy duds" moaned Len (49)*

Even the Charabancs are doing it now. Signing up ringers in a frantic attempt to win a quiz. Ron and Len were originally thought to be on their way to Old Trafford but shortly after meeting Louis van Gaal they desperately tweeted Fr Megson: "No way, José. Mad as a box of frogs. See you in the Turnpike."

A spokesman for Fr Megson said he was currently resting after a hectic bit of business that had left him tired and emotional. Earlier he had told TalkQuiz that he was: "Over the moon - supralunatic. You wait ages to sign a Welsh international and then two turn up at once. Marvellous. How much are you tossers paying me for spouting this bilge?"

Mike was at WithQuiz HQ early this morning sorting out the paperwork and was confident that he could get the players

registered in good time for the Chara's first game after the winter break. Even if their application for Jobseeker's allowance is turned down there shouldn't be a problem. Ron already holds a licence to drive a minicab and Len is often mistaken for a postman. Mike promised to pop into Wythenshawe sorting office later on and see if that part-time vacancy is still going.

Mike then finalised the pleasantries by grabbing Len warmly by the throat and welcoming him to WithQuiz before pinning Ron to the wall and warning him to clean up his act before their game with the Opsimaths.

"There's no way Jitka would tolerate an opposition player dropping his hand like what you are doing in that mucky photograph and I'm not even sure if Howell would be happy with it. I know from bitter experience how tetchy he gets if you happen to put your hand on his knee when he is trying to blurt".

Over at Old Trafford meanwhile, Mr Van Gaal told TalkQuiz that he was feeling frustrated....

"Ja, frustrated forsure and maybe even a little bit mad. I think my team played in red tonight and from right to left in the first half. Maybe you can think that the manager of Liverpool can also say this but I am confident forsure that my team is different. You know, sometimes it is imperative that you make things alter in a game and so for this reason I have instructed my players to play from left to right in the second half. It was a big deschision forsure but I am paid to make big deschisions. OK, you can say we still lose the match but I am confident forsure that if I do not make this big deschision then perhaps we lose bigger forsure. I am hopeful for my defenders and I think forsure that they have perhaps played beyond hope tonight. Dutch cap, anyone?"

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

18/02/2015

## Chaste all the way home

Fcek Fr Megson! He can whistle for his fcekin' blob until he sees fit to apologise for letting rip from the pulpit and calling me the Whore of Babycham. In a strongly worded epistle to his bishop I have made it clear that me and Mr Dusty will be leaving the Catholic church and going over to join the Epicureans. As from Shrove Tuesday we will devote our lives to strong alcohol, frequent visits to the kebab shop and as much rampant sex as we can fit in between times (with or without Mr Dusty). This state of affairs will continue until such time as Fr Megson sees fit to issue a grovelling apology or we run out of money, whichever comes first.

We thought it might be nice to get the Epicurean ball rolling by having a little soirée chez nous as they call it in that fashionable magazine Ladybarn Life that Mr Dusty likes to read when he's on the bog. A sophisticated evening with maybe a few boiled spuds, canapés and wee bangers on a stick - and little bowls of pork scratchings served with a guacamole dip. All washed down with bottles of strong alcohol (or weak alcohol if you are a driver). Stick a smoochy Daniel O'Donnell Greatest Hits tape into your cassette and hey fcekin' presto! you've got yourself a soirée.

Who to invite? It has long been my wish to fill the parlour with suave, sophisticated and sentient people with beards and things, with whom you could engage in lively and witty debates about Art and Literature and The Archers. But this is Ladybarn, not fcekin' Bloomsbury so I suppose it was inevitable that I would end up stuck in the kitchen trying to fend off them hoors from the Griffin and other Withquiz riffraff. Mr Dusty said we should maybe invite the Withquiz girls as well but I wasn't sure how to go about it as they always laugh and throw things at me whenever I be out window shopping at the Cheese Helmet or the fish shop. Anne's quite nice though and very sensitive. She mostly just sticks to verbal abuse and hardly ever throws things at me except maybe the odd cabbage which doesn't hurt all that much. So I rang Anne and told her we were having a ladylike soirée chez nous and would she like to come? "Would I fcek", was Anne's reply when she had stopped laughing. "Me, Roisin and the girls are going uptown on a girls' night. It's going to be a 70s night and it will be chuffin' brill. You can come too if you like only you'll have to promise to wear a balaclava back to front when we start hunting for sugar daddies in the clubs."

Well, I got there in good time and all the girls were there, dressed to the nines in cheesecloth and velvet loons. They were pretending to be ladylike and some of them didn't even throw anything at me. It was Anne's turn to babysit the Historymen so we had to wait until she got the little fcekers settled down. Peter was no bother, he'd already nodded off and little Ivor, bless him, was engrossed in a statistical analysis of the demography of Noddy's Toytown. Dr Tim was being a right little monster but we eventually managed to herd him into bed with a cattle prod I happened to have in my handbag. Try as we might we couldn't get baby David settled down so there was nothing for it but to bring him with us and hope that he could suppress the trauma in later life.

Roisin had done the planning. We'd start off in the Tommy Ducks where we would sink a few lager and limes, point and yell abuse at the topless barmaids, snigger at the knickers on the ceiling and pretend to be dead and lie in the coffins. Then we would hobble across Oxford Street to Jilly's Rockworld where we would kick off our platforms and bop till we dropped to the strains of Lynard Skynard, the thinking woman's Status Quo. Then it would be time to hit the clubs and look for sugar daddies. Pips and Rotters were always a good bet for meeting men with suits and sideburns and shiny shoes. Sophisticated men who knew the world and would think nothing of buying a whole bottle of Blue Nun and letting you drink most of it while they regaled you with stories of stunning derring-do from their exotic lives as estate agents or trill-phone salesmen. And even if we couldn't cop off with a sugar daddy couldn't we go slumming it in the Conti where we could pretend to be nurses and frighten the bejusus out of the first year geography students with our Chesty Morgan impressions.

Have you ever noticed how things never turn out like you planned? A lot of the places on Roisin's itinerary were very quiet or in some cases nothing more than holes in the ground or car parks. Pips was okay though - although we never got the chance to chat up sugar daddies. We were still on our first rum and pep when Anne-Marie started pfaftering around on her wireless phone, taking selfies and tweeting all over the fcekin' place. The fcekin' bouncers came wading in like the Hounds of Hell. They duffed us up and threw us out, telling us to frig off and be anachronistic somewhere else.

So, after traipsing around the city centre in the rain for hours we chucked Roisin's 1975 A-Z in the bin, bought baby David another packet of Parma Violets and started looking for the nearest SELNEC all night bus stop. There was no way we were going to risk them newfangled trams. What the fcek would you do if them doors snapped shut with your cleavage in the carriage and your platforms still wedged in the tramlines?

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

14/10/2015

## 'Summoned by Bells'

Father Megson is a great fan of early morning radio and always wakes up to Bells on Sunday. Cheap and nasty stuff, to be sure, but someone has to drink it. His ambition is to one day become a bishop and then he could afford to wake up to a decent malt. If he did really well at the interview he might even be offered an archbishop's stipend and then he could afford to pour Lagavulin over his Coco Pops. Heaven knows what he would drink if they gave him a cardinal's biretta and pay packet. There was a fair chance that he would never wake up at all. That was the trouble with ambition - it killed you. Wiser and healthier to stay in bed and drink Bells.

Raising his glass, he gave thanks to his Maker for making him healthy and wise and then threw in an extra Hail Mary to make up for the mass he would not be saying later on. He was sorry to disappoint God and his congregation at such short notice for the third Sunday running but it would be disrespectful to both parties to celebrate the miracle of the Transubstantiation in his darned socks. And getting brogues on over that toe was out of the question. The fourth toe in from the right on his left foot - his kicking foot, to boot - was now a cauldron of red hot pain. He muttered a quick Glory Be to thank the baby Jesus for the Bells without which he doubted he could stay in this vale of tears a moment longer.

Too agitated to sleep, Father Megson reached for his texter machine. A dozen overnight messages from Dusty, seven of them foul, four abusive and one informing him that she was a martyr to her bunions. "Martyr, my erse", he muttered to himself, everybody's a fcekin martyr these days. Some people would do anything for the promise of a quick shag in the next life. Like most women Dusty spent too much time reading religious pamphlets and not enough time peeling the spuds. Not her fault of course; the real blame lay with them puffed up Redemptorists and yuppie Jesuits who churned out such drivel and sold it for a tanner a sheet in the porch every Sunday. Young bucks with degrees in creative writing and friggin' comparative theology who raked in a fortune flogging their fictions to a captive congregation still intoxicated by religion and stunned by sobriety in that fatal half hour between the end of mass and the opening of the pubs. Young bucks who would probably succumb to a fainting fit if they witnessed some poor wretch having his privy parts lopped off or having his toe brutally stubbed in real life. No, such people should not speak of martyrdom. When he was strong enough to wield a pen he would show them how it should be done. He would tell the world about his toe and his chastened parishioners would weep and wring their hands and say "Oh Father, you are a true martyr to your toe. If only you had not been so brave, if only you had shared your pain. And how can you ever forgive us for thinking that you were nothing but a lazy, sozzled lard arse, a stinking carcass, more dunghill than priest?"

Yep, there was good money to be made in the world of misery memoirs. Get his pamphlet out in time for the Christmas rush and he might yet be pouring Lagavulin over his Coco Pops.

He was feeling better now. He would have a little sleep and then hobble down to the off-licence to get some more medicine. He might even pop into the training ground to motivate the quiz team. Never an easy task at the best of times and practically impossible when you had lost the use of your kicking foot. Traditionally the Charabancs were slow starters, sometimes not knowing anything until well into the Lenten period. He bitterly recalled one crapulent, vendetta-ridden bloodbath of a season when their first two-pointer did not arrive until St Swithin's Day when all the other teams were already on the beach. That left a lot of catching up to do especially when some of the other teams (he would try not to conjure up images of them hoors in the Griffin as it would only make his kicking foot throb even more) were up and out of the traps in October like fcekin beagles in search of a damp groin.

Yes, he concluded, as he was once more summoned by Bells, this was going to be a challenging season. He would need lots of sleep and Bells to get him through it. Most martyrs were given just one cross to bear. God had seen fit to land him with four. Five, if you included his toe.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

11/11/2015

## Nothing special

You know like when you are bathing the cat and Mourinho comes on the radio and his first sentence is the most profound thing you have ever heard and you drop everything and shove the cat under the water and listen, spellbound. Wow, you think, this is going to be the most profound thing I've ever heard on the wireless since Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart was dropped from Junior Choice. I won't ever be the same person again when this interview is finished. It will be like losing my virginity all over again. Only better... and longer.

But then Jose starts running out of steam. You realise to your horror that his first sentence was so brilliant that it has left him emotionally and intellectually drained. Like a super-stud who has made the mistake of starting his performance off with a devastating earth-mover of a climax, he now finds himself dribbling flaccidly into his Beckham boxers. His clarity of thought gets stuck in the mud; his syntax panics and heads for the corner flag. His opening had the hard, bullish clarity of a Hemingway; he teeters on the brink and his conclusion, when it eventually limps over the line, has the impact of a Brecht quoting Nietzsche in Serbo-Croatian from the bottom of a bathtub.....and speaking of bathtubs.....sod it, the cat's dead. How the fck did that happen?

Meanwhile, across the road in his bijou bungalow that stands hard by the hallowed heap of The Hidden Ovarie, Fr Megson was snoring his way through the same interview. "Filha da puta, a special bollox without so much as an ounce of Christian humility, or self-discipline", he averred, casting aside his empty Bells bottle and reaching under the pillow for his meerschaum (Dr Ivor, bad cess to him, had recently confiscated his carton of Sweet Afton). Still and all though, the man was a good Catholic (Mourinho, not Dr Ivor) and was deserving of our prayers. He would say one for him when he had nothing better to do.



Rekindling his pipe and tamping down his odious shag with a box of Swan Vestas, Fr Megson got to wondering what it was that made all managers mad. Not a difficult question to answer really, it was the team. Nobody knew that better than him. He had lost count of the number of kickings he had given the Charabancs recently but still they obstinately refused to be motivated. The number of points they had amassed so far this year, even when seasonally adjusted, was disappointing. 'Disappointing' was the technical term managers used when they meant 'fckin disastrous'. The time had come when he would have to call a turf spade a turf spade. Though it pained him to mix his metaphors, he had nevertheless to admit that his team was now staring down the barrel of a wooden spoon.

New blood. That was what was needed. A team of youth and vigour. A team of blood and thunder, and bollox to the thud and blunder he was getting from the present squad week after fckin week. He needed a succession plan. He would see to it immediately once he got back from the pub this afternoon. He would put the necessary structures in place and draw up a youth policy by Friday afternoon. Then he would slip into a clean cassock and spend the weekend trawling the pubs and clubs of South Manchester and Stockport on the lookout for youthful talent. Sorted. What could possibly go wrong?

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

02/12/2015

## The Buckfast years

"Hello there Father, I've brought you a few grapes that were goin' cheap on the market. The brown ones are always a bit cheaper. Message from the Judge, Father. He says he's sorry to hear that you are in traction. And Mr Dusty sends his fond regards too. He says he won't bother visitin' because he's not a big fan of genito-urinary matters. Between you, me and the wall, Father, I don't think he ever got over that wee mishap we had on the honeymoon. You're not sayin' much Father. Is all of you dead now, Father, or is it still just the brain?"

Father Megson was hearing Dusty loud and clear but he kept his eyes closed and wished that he was back in his coma. Generally speaking, comas got a bad press but in Fr Megson's experienced view, there were worse places you could find yourself. There was a lot to be said for lying in bed all hours of the day and letting them young nurses (nice country girls with lovely warm hands) minister to your every whim. If he could get his hands on a bottle of Buckfast and maybe the odd smoke or two he would be in paradise.

Things had not been so good before he went into the coma. He shuddered at the memory. Like Maggie Thatcher in that aul football commentary he had taken one hell of a beating. But unlike Maggie, he had done nothing to deserve it. It was the injustice of it all that really hurt him. No, that was wrong - it was trying to have a pee that really hurt him. But the injustice was almost as bad. He had done nothing wrong. He had merely acted in the interests of the quiz team and, like all managers, he had been made the scapegoat.

The quiz team had been in dire need of inspiration and he had taken it upon himself to don a clean cassock and spend the afternoon in the University bar down the road from Ladybarn scouting for youthful talent. He had needed to stay sober so he bought himself a single bottle of Buckfast, plonked himself down at a tableful of studious looking young ladies and, pretending to be engrossed in his much thumbed Delta of Venus paperback, had studiously blended in and eavesdropped in equal measure. Within minutes he knew that he was on the right track; this place was a hot bed of youthful talent. They were chatting away in an erudite and clued-up fashion about bands with names that even Rachael would have found outrageously avant garde; they were solving quadratic equations faster than Nick that time he tried to move in with Victoria Coren; their mastery of the finer points of jurisprudence would put Tony back in his box; you could write on the back of a matchbox what they did not know about phenomenology or Boolean logic (Fr Megson still had the matchbox to prove it) and their grasp of the Kantian Categorical Imperative would put to shame any posturings that Roddy might have on the subject. They were, in short, the perfect quiz team. As long as Fr Megson remembered to rest them whenever Hangman Dave was setting, they would bestride the world of quizzing for the next generation or two.

Sorted. He would get himself another bottle or two of Buckfast at the bar and make his move. It was difficult not to allow his mind to fast forward to the glory days ahead and the royalties that would accrue from the endless documentaries the Beeb would make on Father Megson's 'Class of '16' - the year that quizzing finally came home to Ladybarn. He would go down in history as the first priest ever to win anything with kids. He would have to tell the present team of course. He would try to let them down gently. Maybe even allow them to pick up the paper from the Red some weeks and pretend that they were sharing in the glory. It wasn't in his nature to be brutal.

And so, only mildly incapacitated by the Buckfast Tonic and the dizzying prospect of taproom immortality, he had leaned forward, tilted his biretta to a more rakish angle, reached for his most winsome smile and addressed the table in his grooviest version of what he felt sure must be the language of the young.....

"Yo, babes! Call me Bamber. I bet that there's not much that youse girls don't know. Grab yer duffel coats, chicks, you're pulled. What say you to a chill in my pad and then I can get youse going with a toss."

Those were, as far as he could gather, the last words that he had spoken in almost a month. In hindsight perhaps he had been a little naive. But then hindsight - or any sight for that matter - was a wonderful thing. As a priest, he could hardly be expected to keep up with the constant tectonic shifts in the world of sexual politics. He had only once before come across the phrase 'Women's Lib' and that had been in an article in the Guardian. But his hunger that evening had



## **The Father Megson Archive**

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

been too great for him to pay much attention to the wrapping around his fish supper. He would have to be more vigilant in future when, and if, he got out of hospital. The terrorists were everywhere these days. Duffel coats were the new balaclavas.

# The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

20/01/2016

## Big boot and custard cream

Father Megson woke up. He allowed a few brief thoughts of mortality, and the four Last Things, to scuttle across his consciousness before swatting them firmly with a large tumbler of sherry and a wacky cheroot. He was out of hospital now and on the road to recovery. He had called into the Red over Christmas where Dr Tim had given him the once over and told him that he was as sound as a Bells except for his 'vas deferens' which was, in layman's terms, well and truly fecked, adding tearfully (Dr Tim always got a bit maudlin around closing time) that if the good Father wanted children in the future he would probably have to steal them.

Medically speaking, Fr Megson was no longer in a coma but, to the unpractised eye, it was hard to tell. Certainly he still preferred to appear comatose whenever the bishop phoned to discuss his return to work, or when the quiz team called around to throw bricks through his window. He had had to meet the team at training and tell them about his attempt to replace them with intelligent (but murderous) girls in duffel coats. They had taken it badly, very badly. So badly in fact that Fr Megson had feared more violence. Fortunately, however, they had nodded off before being able to give full vent to their fury.

He drank another tumbler of sherry and made a mental note to get up before dark and turn on the microwave. He had a nice young Jesuit coming round for tea and a chat about the art of team management. He had first met Fr Keane on a TalkQuiz phone-in on the wireless. Right from the moment the severe young curate had bellowed at him to turn his fcekin' wireless off when he was on the fcekin' wireless, Fr Megson had liked the cut of his Jesuit jib. Here was the type of manager Fr Megson had always longed to be. He listened spellbound to the Hitleresque vehemence of Fr Keane's argument that all losers were tosspots who deserved nothing but a good kick up the arse and never mind buying them a fcekin' round of free drinks - and his insistence that the only way of handling the ongoing threat from them hoors in the Griffin was to carpet bomb East Didsbury and the northern badlands of Heaton Mersey. Nuke the fcekers and nuke 'em hard. Such resolute manliness had caused Fr Megson to swoon. He had desperately wanted to ask Fr Keane if he loved the feel of silk against his naked skin but had made do with asking him if he cared to pop around to his bijou bungalow for a quick bite and maybe something to eat.

Fr Keane arrived promptly at six. Father Megson found him in the hall.

"Your door was closed, Father, so I had to put my shoulder to it. What's for tea?"

Physically he was as imposing in the flesh as he had been on the airwaves. Perhaps a trifle abrupt in manner and perhaps a little too conventional in dress (black soutane over matching Bri-nylon socks and panties). Fr Megson had dared to hope that he would be wearing something a trifle more decadent but it was not to be. Clearly Fr Keane was more of an angry tallboy than a cross-dresser.

Fr Megson told his guest to grab a pouffe and offered him a tumbler of sherry.

"Nice tumbler, Father, did you get it free at a petrol station?"

He was less complimentary on the pulled pork pot noodle that Fr Megson had lovingly microwaved for him earlier that afternoon.

"Just like my dear old ma used to make, Father. She was another hoor that couldn't cook. Any custard creams, Father?"

After tea they sat and shivered as a seasonal gale blew through the broken windows and smashed front door. Fr Megson would have liked to warm himself by cuddling up but something in Fr Keane's icy stare and raised fists suggested that he did not wish to share his pouffe.

In a desperate attempt to break the ice Fr Megson decided to spark a debate on management tactics.

"I've lost the dressing room, Father."

"Can't help you there Father, it's your fcekin' bungalow."

"No, I mean the Charabancs are revolting. So are them hoors in the Griffin. Have you ever seen them in the shower? Any ideas on a winning formula, Father?"

"How often do you kick the team, Father?"

"Seven times an hour."

"Try kicking them six times an hour. Then when they're expecting kick number seven, give them a custard cream. It's

## The Father Megson Archive

Articles from the WithQuiz website in date order

called psychology, Father. I read it in a book. The good cop, bad cop routine. The eejits will think you love them and they'll be motivated. Never fails when you're dealing with stupid teams, Father. Look at the fcekin' Opsimaths. If you believe the tabloids they get through two packs of custard creams a week.

I'm off now Father. All this socialising is doin' me head in. Is your back door open or shall I put my shoulder to it?"



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12/10/2016

## Peaks and Troughs

Curiouser and curiouser. It now seems that Fr Megson, the mercurial and quixotic manager of the Charabancs of Fire will stay on in his post. This despite his announcement at a hastily convened press conference last May that he would be stepping down from the world of trivia management with immediate effect. He was doing so...."in order to spend more time with Hangman Dave's family - too many fcekin' troughs in my life so far, time to hit the Peaks."

It seems now that neither Hangman Dave nor his family had been in complete agreement with these retirement plans. "Fr Megson is a man of God," Dave told an even more hastily convened press conference seven minutes later, "and as such he is a welcome visitor into our house. We are, however, less tolerant of the idea of him sleeping in our kitchen on a permanent basis". Dave's subsequent hiring of armed guards to patrol his garden on a 24/7 basis alongside the iron bars that appeared overnight on his cat flap seem to suggest that further negotiation in the matter is extremely unlikely.

And so, spurned alike by the Reeks and the Peaks, Fr Megson can be considered lucky to keep his job in charge of the Charabancs of Fire. The net was spread far and wide to find a replacement and a shortlist was drawn up of men with nothing left to live for. In the end they all said no, even men as diverse and desperate as Michael Gove and Big Sam. Father Megson it is then - by default.

So how does Father Megson see the new season going? Two defeats so far in their opening two games and still no injection of youthful talent. Surely he must accept that there is no longer any point in trying to sharpen a pencil when its lead has already fallen out?

"I strongly resent your pessimism, young rapsCALLION of the gutter press," counters Fr Megson, chomping on an organically sourced donner kebab and abstemiously sipping from his pint of the house red, a cheeky little Transnistrian number from the sun-kissed environs of the Bender underpass,

"I would prefer to think that, like Antony and Cleopatra, our powers are crescent at the moment. Even our harshest critics are saying that the Charabancs are playing very well this season (ED: What a strange and slightly disconcerting phrase). True, the two defeats so far were unfortunate and have maybe turned our powers a bit gibbous - and if things continue in this vein there may well be nothing other than darkness visible by the end of the season. Let's stay optimistic though. After all, every team gets things wrong sometimes - it's just that we do so more consistently than most. I feel confident that we can turn things round. Finishing the season third from bottom is still an achievable goal. The team may look plum-tuckered but they are still seasoned professionals and highly motivated..... well, ok then, maybe not professional or motivated - but they are still highly seasoned and they still play with a smile on their faces. Big smiles, that's what I like to see. This kebab is really rather excellent, even the ketchup tastes organically sourced".

But didn't you say the same thing last season, Father? "Second from bottom, but still playing with big smiles on their faces.....marvellous," you said. Then they went to the Parrswood and QM Gilly insisted that you play with all hands above the table. And then there were no more big smiles for the rest of the season. Even the free pints you were getting after every game were quaffed as if you were sucking on a vinegary sponge. Won't the same thing happen again this season, Father?

"Not if I can get my mitts around the throat of Hangman Dave's moll first, it won't. That's the trouble with this quiz league, you know. Far too many intellectually bankrupt degenerates allowed in from the Peak district. Build a fcekin' wall, that's what any sensible person would do. Care for a jalapeno?"

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26/10/2016

## Carry on Kampfung

Blissfully undaunted by a recent run of drubbings that stretches back to October 2013, dynamic quiz impresario and part time man of God, Fr Megson, sent his team sauntering into battle earlier this evening with the inspired and only marginally slurred instruction to "Carry on Kampfung". These, the very words used by Adolf Hitler in the last of his hilarious bunker romp-coms that made a star out of Barbara Windsor, ably supported by her pert and perky pair of Siberian hamsters. And, very much to the annoyance of Hitler fans and turf accountants all over Britain, this time the words had the desired effect. Yes folks, go tell it on a mountain - the Charabancs of Fire have won a game this season.

Naturally TalkQuiz Radio - Britain's only radio station to talk quizzing "every fcekin minute of every fcekin day" - were keen to talk to the victorious prelate after the game. Sadly however so was Slipper of the Yard who had earlier slipped into the Turnpike heavily disguised as a book club. "Nothing to worry about, Sir, just a few routine questions about the Defence of the Realm act. We need not detain you more than 25 years or so."

As he was being bundled away TalkQuiz - "every fcekin minute of every fcekin day" - managed to grab an incoherent word with Roisin, doyenne of South Manchester quizzing for more years than she cares to (or is capable of) remembering. "So how did it feel to be on the winning team tonight after all those years of heartbreak?"

"Did we win? Brilliant! Is it over then? Thank God for that.....sorry I was busy flossing my toes when it happened so I didn't hear the final whistle. Brilliant! This is the best day of my life, apart from last Friday, of course.....or was it Sunday?.....can't remember.....It's a bit too early to take it all in yet. Maybe I will be over the moon when I wake up in a day or two.....or under the bed, maybe.....who can tell where they'll be in a day or two, you'd need a crystal ball for that sort of stuff.....or tea bags might do the trick if you could read them and were desperate. Which I'm not of course. Just a bit tired. Tired and plum-tuckered 'cause we won tonight. Are you sure we won.?.... I tried to listen but I kept getting distracted..... Who was that annoying woman who was sat in the middle?.....she kept talking to me as if she knew me and kept asking me daft questions. I hate when that happens when I am trying to listen to a quiz.....So we won eh? Fine and dandy - just what the doctor ordered. And speaking of orders, what's everyone having? I'll have a pint of lager please.....no I won't, I don't think I could manage a pint.....I think I'm starting to well up inside. God no, a pint would be a big mistake at this juncture in time.....just get me three halves please.....and a wee bag of pork scratchings."

Another chance to see the Charabancs tomorrow at the civic reception in Ladybarn Job Centre at 2pm. Don't forget to line the route as the team makes it's triumphant progress along Ladybarn Lane aloft a topless charabanc.....sorry Damian, get your shirt off, you drew the short straw!

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22/03/2017

Farewell to Dave Barras



It was dark, dreich and dismal at Macclesfield crematorium yesterday as many of us gathered to say goodbye to Dave. A sullen contrast to the rich and colourful patchwork that had been Dave's short life as we heard described in an eloquent ceremony.

One thing that stayed with me (apart from the grief etched into Gilly's face) was the description of the little bits of paper left lying around the house when Dave took to setting quizzes. I recently heard Seamus Heaney's widow saying that she still missed her husband's untidiness about the house; his clutter of little jottings and phrases that might one day be nurtured and coaxed into poetry.

Good quiz questions are maybe more ephemeral than good poetry but they have this in common: they don't just happen, they both need a lot of work, a lot of teasing and wheedling before they can be published. Above all they both need inspiration. Dave had that inspiration. An inspiration that made us realise that there is more to knowledge than knowing the answer; that knowing how to ask can yield a still more rewarding pleasure.

Quizzing, by its nature, will always be about the trivial and the banal. But so is life oftentimes. So take a leaf out of Dave's jotter and make the most of both.

Rest in Peace, Darlo lad. You are and will always be missed.

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24/01/2018

## Sour Aul Cleric up for grabs

Fr Megson is no friend of the New Professionalism that has engulfed the modern quiz league. Even as he slides his penknife into the wee slit on the underbelly of his ancient piggybank and extracts a torrent of Victorian pennies and thrupenny bits to meet the ever spiralling pay demands of the Charabancs, he weeps and gnashes his teeth and harks back to better times when quizzers would turn out for nothing more than the glory of the parish and the odd pound or two of smuggled butter. They were real quizzers in them days; big hefty lads who would plough all day long, pull a calf from the rear end of a cow or a stricken ewe from the ditch on the way to the pub and then beguile the taproom beauties through the long dark night with their arcane knowledge and their bulging biceps. And it was good practical stuff they knew too. None of that Harry feckin Potter stuff or what manner of piss them city slickers put in their cocktails. There wasn't a landlocked boghole in the Reeks that they couldn't put a name to nor any internal organ of a sheep that they couldn't identify with their eyes closed.

But try telling that to the hoors that are only in it for the money nowadays. Big Sassanach lummoxes for the most part, educated beyond their intelligence in socialist secondary schools, big Bolchevist palaces with roofs and flushing toilets and bottles of milk and all manner of sybaritic excess, establishments that pandered to the every whim of these big bouncing baby boomers and made them soft. No longer beaten to a pulp for not learning their Catechisms off by heart, these cosseted milksops grew up feeling entitled to become freethinkers and freebooters, atheists and bank clerks who believed in neither God nor hill farmer.

And this drift towards Hell in a handcart continues apace. If you can believe the tabloids and the websites, there are some teams out there who won't even deign to turn out for Victorian pennies and thrupenny bits. The hoors in the Griffin are rumoured to be demanding appearance money of anything up to ten decimal coins a week - that's more than some decent hill farmers get on the dole. It's elitism gone mad. It will be the Bitcoin next. And it was in the Mail a few weeks ago that some uppity manager from some place in the back of beyond of Europe is saying now that any team that can't afford to buy in at least 300 million brain cells can never hope to compete for an end of season tin cup. Well that's the Pigs and the Charabancs well and truly fecked for the next 300 million seasons.

Withquiz and the modern world are off to hell in a handcart and there's precious little Fr Megson can do about it. Except to donate his most favoured birthday present as a new and hopefully much sought after trophy. A bottle of Sour Aul Cleric, brewed as a "controlled and disciplined union of bitter lemon and apple juices for the poor and plain people of Ireland". A dedication extended on this occasion to the poor and plain people of the Withington Quiz League who take the greatest stand against taproom elitism. So, your future Wednesday mission is clear: just turn up and drop off, as the hippies used to say - but don't forget to wake up in time for the free round at the end. The team that does this most consistently and manages to finish the season propping up the league will be rewarded with this handsome trophy.



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14/02/2018

## Letters to the Editor

Frenzied activity at WithQuiz HQ as the venerable quiz league staggers towards its 40th birthday bash. Hardly a day or night goes by without Mike having to send an email or three. So much to do and so little time. Bad tempered negotiations with Michael O'Leary to have honoured guests flown over from Vienna without having to pay extra to get them on the same flight as their luggage; retired old quiz veterans to be dragged kicking and screaming from their afternoon dens of iniquity to be shaved, showered and shampooed in a desperate attempt to make them presentable on the big night; mugshots of all the teams to be urgently photo-shopped to make them look as if they are still alive or at least sentient. All this and that big hundredweight bag of sausage meat still lying there festering on Mike's kitchen floor as he desperately tries to get to grips with his Boots Home Brew kit manual. Too late now but perhaps it would have been a sensible idea to bring in outside caterers.

"Isn't there anything we can do to help?" you might be asking.

Well, not really, since Mike's kitchen is a bit on the bijou side and there would be untold havoc if we all piled in with our Primus stoves and wooden spoons. So best really if we just stay in the pub and get plastered until the food is ready. Oh, there is one thing you can do, I suppose; lay off using the message board for the moment. It's not exactly state of the art and Mike goes to bed every middle of the night worried sick that too much frenzied activity might cause it to go down before the big night. Obviously you have all got to let off steam on a daily basis so Mike has thoughtfully resurrected the old 'Letters to the Editor' page on the website so please endeavour to use this option to take some of the pressure off the Message Board. You will need stamps for this option but don't panic; I am reliably informed that even in these days of privatisation you can still buy a second class one in the local confectionery shop for not much more than the price of a round of drinks in the Red.

So get scribing. And in case you are a student or somebody who has managed to float through life without having had to write a begging letter to the Job Centre here is a useful template to guide you in this obsolete but still useful craft. It comes from a regular listener and contributor to our Postbag over the years. Clearly WithQuiz isn't this particular punter's cup of gruel but as dear old Uncle Joe used to say: "We value all your feedback and we will endeavour to get back at you within two working days".

Dear Junior Points of View,

A fatuous arse of a programme and a waste of the tithepayers money. When, oh when, will the BBC stop living in the past? I watched the Dunkers versus the Opsis episode before Yuletide. Clearly no one would go to the pub dressed like that nowadays.

Your obedient servant,

Rees - Mogg,

House of Commons,

London and Somerset