

the alternative Edinburgh Fringe magazine

# *Fringepig*

Issue One



*No reviews of anything whatsoever*

*Fringe-based satire & sarcasm*

*Cartoons! Stories! Stuff you should see!*

# 2 SHOWS DAILY - EACH SHOW 4 DIFFERENT ACTS

INNATE TALENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH JUST THE TONIC

# BIG VALUE COMEDY SHOW



## EARLY SHOW

7.20pm - 9.20pm

Jo D'arcy, Tom Little,  
Leo Kears, Liam Pickford



## LATE SHOW

9.40pm - 11.40pm

Darius Davies, Liz Miele,  
Danny Deegan, Robin Morgan

4  
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27  
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Tonic**  
THE COMMUNITY  
PROJECT

With over 20 years at the Edfringe, Big Value Comedy Shows have brought the best of the big names to the festival before they were famous

Here is just a sample of some of the people that have performed in previous years. Come along this year and see the stars of the future

1995 - Milton Jones  
1997 - Lee Mack  
1997 - Stephen K Amos  
2000 - Mickey Flanagan  
2000 - Glenn Wool

2001 - Alun Cochrane  
2001 - Paul Sinha  
2002 - Jim Jeffries  
2002 - Steve Hughes  
2002 - Justin Moorhouse

2003 - Pat Monahan  
2003 - Jarred Christmas  
2003 - Gary Delaney  
2004 - Josie Long  
2005 - Jon Richardson

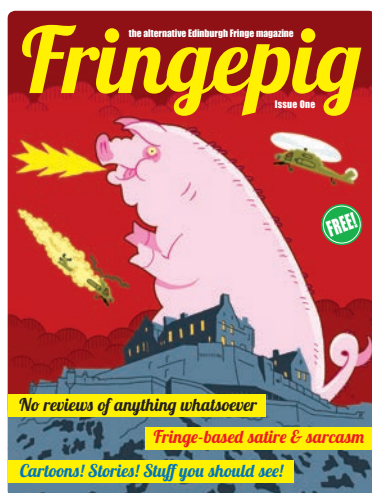
2005 - Jason Manford  
2006 - Sarah Millican  
2008 - Carl Donnelly  
2009 - Seann Walsh  
2009 - Paul McCaffrey

2009 - Brett Goldstein  
2010 - Nick Helm  
2011 - Romesh Ranganathan  
2011 - Rob Beckett  
2011 - Eric Lampaert

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# Welcome to Frangepig

Once a mere website, we're now hard copy.

We are tangible. Holdable. Huggable. Browsable. Trouserable. Approachable and roachable (better not actually, it's coated gloss).

Fringepig will be very different to the other publications you see lying around in August. We hope you'll actually want to read this one, and not just because we've sent some spotty plonker to review you. Because we **won't** have sent some spotty plonker to review you. No! We won't review anything – except of course the occasional comedy reviewer.

Our only policy is to never tell anyone that they're bad at making art. We will, however, be celebrating everything we love about Fringe comedy and theatre while yelling like a big paper drunk at the people who run Edinburgh, the Fringe, and this one irrecoverable month of our short lives, so hilariously badly.

But we can't do it alone. So if you want to contribute to, or advertise in, a rag that's all about enjoying the chaos and experimentation of the Fringe rather than doorstepping award winners and releasing clouds of farty critique, then we are so for you. Come on in.



**A. K. Kipper**

PUBLISHER

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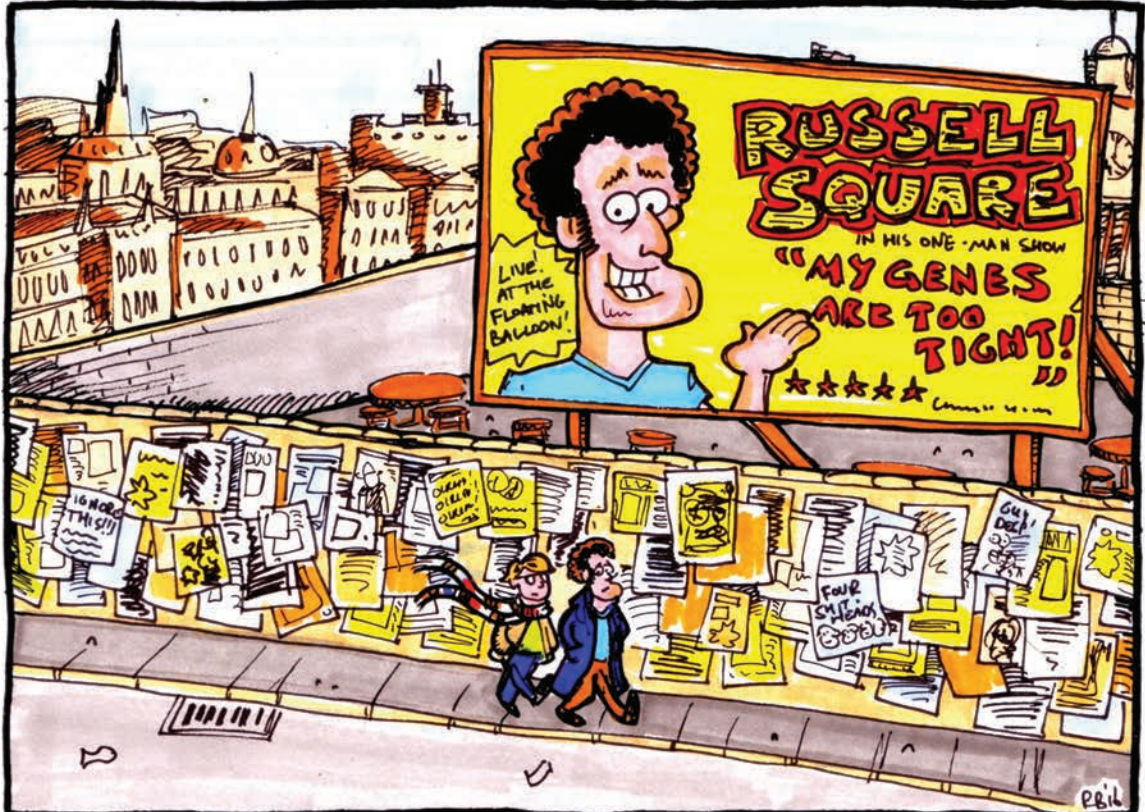
**HEROES OF FRINGE**





# COMEDIANS

BY CHRISTIAN TALBOT & ROBBIE BONHAM



@THE\_TAILBOT

Christian Talbot is performing "C60" at the Underbelly, Med Quad at 5.50pm every day

@RBONHAMCAROONS



# It's Mordor out there

by Stefan Emiljanowicz

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen! We're just waiting for Mrs Pertwee to use the bathroom... My name's Brenda and I'll be your guide on Middle Earth Coach Tours, ably assisted by Almarond your driver.

Yes, Almarond is of Elven stock. He's been with us for four years now, and hasn't crashed once! His ancestors knew these lands well so we won't get lost!

Those of you who flew into Shire International last night from Manchester: your luggage has been located. It was accidentally transferred to Mordor but it will catch up with us at Weathertop. Sorry about that!

A note of caution ladies and gentlemen. In the unlikely event that the coach is besieged by wargs, orcs, goblins, trolls or river trolls please, stay inside the coach. Don't worry: they're quite used to people these days but their natural curiosity can get the better of them.

This has been designated a non-smoking tour for your comfort and safety, so those who wish to try the traditional pipe weed should do so only in designated areas on our official stops.

We'll be stopping for lunch at the Prancing Pony in Bree, one of a chain of licensed eateries and built near the site of the original Inn in which Frodo and his companions met Aragorn. The Inn does a good range of Olde Middle Earth pubbe grubbe including mutton and coney in a basket with french fries and coleslaw.

The motorway closely follows the route of the original road as used by Bilbo Baggins and by sunset we hope to be at the Weathertop Inn; a four star hotel with TV programmes in Elven, Dwarfish and Language of Men. There is also wifi in reception. Where is that Mrs Pertwee?

Next day it's onto Rivendell. There, guests will be treated to a traditional Elven welcome including a Banquet Under the Stars (inside if raining). This will be followed by traditional Elven dancing and 'Galadriel' Queen of

and a full Elven breakfast will be served on board (mutton or veggie option). Then the funicular railway will take us to the Misty Mountain Adventure Lodge. Attractions at Misty Mountain Village include apres ski, a number of bars, fast food outlets and a traditional Dwarvish Tavern complete with an authentic Dwarvish horn quartet.

“ If you wish to foresee your future, please let me know as there are limited places. ”

the Forest will look into the Magic Well of Rivendell™ and tell the fortunes of those who dare to know! If you wish to foresee your future then please let me know by lunchtime tomorrow as there are limited places. Viewings last five minutes and cost £40 per person. Young – and the young at heart! – might want to take a stroll down to 'Elronds' in town but please keep an eye on your belongings: a downturn in the Mirkwood economy has seen many Wood Elves coming into Rivendell looking for employment.

We'll be boarding the Misty Mountain Express first thing in the morning

We'll be leaving very early as we must be down at the Goblin Gate before 10 O'clock! Due to logging operations, much of Mirkwood has now been cleared and the recent discovery of oil has meant that the Elven King's halls had to be pulled down to make way for a refinery. However there is a spider farm near the golf course at the old enchanted river, and a superb gift shop.

Next day we head to Lake Town (pop. 550,000). The journey will take six hours aboard an authentic old Middle Earth steamboat. Don't worry ladies and gentlemen, these days there

is no requirement that you spend the journey shut in a barrel, ha ha! Little altered since Bilbo Baggins' day, the Lonely Mountain is an extinct volcano rising to 9000 feet above sea level. After a visit to Smaug's cavern you'll want to browse the beautiful jewellery boutiques run by the Thorin Oakenshield Mining and Casino Corp.

Right, where has the old dear got to? Mrs Pertwee? ... Helm's Deep suffers from air pollution in the summer months, so we'll pass it by in favour of Minas Tirith. The Minas Morgul Hilton is the best in the region and there's a children's clubhouse where one of the last remaining Ents, on loan from the Isengard Cultural Trust, will regale them with stories of the impenetrable forests that once stood to the east.

Ah, there you are Mrs Pertwee... where have you been dear? What? Hobbits? Little sods, they're a bloody nuisance. Right, are we all set? There's a waterproof bag in your seat pocket should anyone feel sick.

Now let's take a moment to thank our lucky stars that the Dark Lord Sauron didn't prevail all those years ago! Imagine that, ladies and gentlemen! What would the world be like eh?



# Culture's vultures

Holyrood has turned down City Hall and the big 'cultural' venues on their request for a tourist tax. But they'll be back to pump the little guy next year

Over the course of a year and 12 major festivals, 4.3 million geese fly north to Edinburgh and lay an enormous golden egg worth £261m to the local economy. The Fringe, which began as the ugly stepsister to its firstborn the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) contributes a staggering £142m or 54% of this amount.

Apparently, this is not enough. City and Festival officials anticipate an impending £10m shortfall in Festival finances this year. Julia Armour, the new director of Festivals Edinburgh, recently proposed a 'bed tax' of one or two pounds per night in hotel rooms or a broader 'tourism levy' to help fill this gap - with revenues ringfenced solely for 'cultural' activities (i.e. not the lowly Fringe). Holyrood said no in June, but they've been trying for eight years and will try again.

Speaking as one of the geese, I find this problematic. Everyone in Edinburgh during August is overwhelmed by the sheer flood of humanity that attends shows, eats at restaurants and then trickles back to hotels or rented rooms at 5am after taking full advantage of the extended licensing laws.

In much the same way that 2008 saw many of us thinking "These banks are worth billions; I shop at LIDL; why exactly do I have to pay for this?" One might wonder just how there could be a funding shortfall within this orgy of spending.

A trip to Edinburgh during festival season is unquestionably a life-enriching affair but a wallet-draining one. From premium prices charged for travel, to quite frankly being price-gouged for accommodation, there is no shortage of people willing to extract their (now slightly depreciated) pound of flesh from the

“A life-enriching but wallet-draining experience.”

tourists and artists who descend on the city from all corners of this wide blue marble. Aside from the usual bit of stoic grumbling, people quite happily pay for what is a genuine bucket-list experience.

Ticket sales yell loud and clear that Edinburgh's tourists come disproportionately for the Fringe over and above the other 11 festivals. The Fringe, though broad in scope, is populated predominantly by comedy and theatre.

Public funding, whether through city grants, arts council or lottery funding goes disproportionately to the other, less profitable, more 'prestigious' festivals. Funding flows mainly to Edinburgh Cultural Venues (ECV), principally associated with the EIF and 'high culture' genres such as ballet and opera. Unsurprisingly, these ECV venues are wholly supportive of a tourist levy.

Even with £10m a year it would take 20 years just to cover the £200m overspend on Edinburgh's tram fiasco. Bob's Blundabus, a popular and profitable converted bus used as a Fringe venue, receives zero funding. If even a sliver of the money earmarked for the ECV was given to Bob, it could be retrofitted with a working flux capacitor, stuffed with councilors and

whisked back to 2001 where better public spending decisions could be made, saving £200m and rendering this entire question moot. I could go and watch Daniel Kitson *MC Late and Live* again too. I may not know culture, but I know what I like.

There is an unspoken dictum that Edinburgh's festivals are 'too important to fail' and any of them shrinking would be a national tragedy. I respectfully disagree. Tourists speak with their feet and their wallets. Why should they pay more to subsidise shows they didn't come to see? That's why I'm performing my shows at the Free Fringe, where audience get in for nothing and at the end pay what they think it was worth.

There are many other viable options. Much of the £261m of festival revenue makes its way back to the Scottish Government via devolved taxes. Surely a fairer way would be to lobby Holyrood to ringfence a proportion of tax flowing from the 4.3m long-suffering souls pouring £261m into the Edinburgh economy?

Someone needs to stand up for us ganders, geese and goslings. Sure, we might grudgingly accept paying an extra £1 a night to stay at Hoppo Backpackers during August. But should we really have to? Put the stuffing away. Haven't we suffered enough?

**Yianni Agisilaou performs**  
*The Simpsons taught me everything I know*, 13:30 at Voodoo Rooms and *Comedians Against Humanity*, 19:30 at Liquid Rooms Annexe. Both FREE.





★★★★  
 "Good Old Style set up and punch"  
 Funny Women

**Charmian Hughes**  
**Soixante Mirth**

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 Cowgatehead  
 UpTwo M  
 (venue 32)

**6-27 August**  
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 \*Not 15"

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FREE FRINGE 2016



WRITER FOR SARAH MILLICAN TV PROG.  
 8/10 CATS AND MOCK THE WEEK

**JULIET MEYERS**

This Flipping  
**RESCUE**  
**DOG**  
 has  
 RUINED  
 my  
 life

"Smart &  
 very funny"  
 INDEPENDENT

★★★★  
 "DEVILISH  
 social  
 COMMENTARY"  
 SCOTSMAN

★★★★  
 "QUIRKY &  
 original"  
 BROADWAY  
 BABY

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 EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

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"Now, I will admit, I am not a regular  
 watcher of stand up comedy, but I  
 really could not grasp what a  
 majority of the audience were in  
 hysterics over at any point of

French comedian  
**Marcel Lucont's performance...**


maybe I missed something"

★★★★★ Arts Award Voice

**MARCEL LUCONT'S**  
**Whine List**

23  
 PLEASANCE  
 SOME

**Aug 3-28, 9.30pm, Ace Dome**



# Theatre Sectioned with Limp Giardia



## Macbeth With Fish Stuffed Up Our Arses Assembly Poxy, 16:00

As always, Fringegeers this year will have a cornucopia of Macbeths to choose from. There's the Modern Macbeth at the Concrete Hardbastard Theatre, or Maccie B's N Txtspk at the Fluffy Warehouse, with its iconic rendering of "Is shankICB4I fam??" After having Banquo slain, the Thane of Glamis underscores the malady by texting "pwnd" to the dead man's phone.

Neither is it new to see a carnivalesque play on the nether regions. Theatre fans will recall 2011's Macbeth In Which Everyone Has Sex With a Haggis, a production that really restored to

the Scottish play its earthy, pre-Union clannishness and proved that the work, like the sheep's stomach, could keep its form despite the most violent traducement.

So does Macbeth With Fish Stuffed Up Our Arses offer anything new? Well it's wonderful to see Simon Gravysniffer's Duncan, a plodding and deliberate interpretation due to the anal impediment of a 12-pound Pollock. The accidental ejection of the Grey Gurnard in the rectum of Graham Tights's Macbeth over the arm of his wife added a special gravitas to Lady Macbeth's "All the perfumes

of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand". The killer queen, played by Amanda Amandamanda, admirably keeps her grip on an Atlantic wrasse throughout the performance.

In short, Macbeth With Fish Stuffed Up Our Arses is a piscivorous delight. Running at just one hour and 52 minutes (a record by 50 minutes), the garbled, pained dialogue and the apparent urgency with which the players wish to remove their scaley back passengers speaks tracts about the discomfort of the human condition. Or something.

3½ pigs

## Look Back In Anger Whilst Needing a Wee Glummerhall, 19:30

Where else to go with the kitchen sink drama? Producers have agonised over this question for so long that it's surprising – and a relief – to see the answer. The kitchen sink drama needs actors for whom the kitchen sink is a tempting conduit of relief.

This isn't the first time micturition, and our ceaseless need for it, has found expression onstage. Who can forget Ash Dutchelmdisease's production of *The Secret Garden After a Five Litre Bottle of Lemonade*, a powerful piece of feminist speechifying that turned a watershed piece of literature into a watershed piece of theatre at Edinburgh's Dirty

Pocket Repertory in 2009.

There, the incontinence was a poignant remark on female sexual release whereas here we have the social upheavals of postwar Britain expressed in all their pressing immediacy. By removing the bathroom from Osborne's work, director Rowan Poplar has brought that kitchen sink back into focus.

When Jimmy, sensitively played by Crabapple Firlarch, gasps "The wrong people going hungry, the wrong people being loved, the wrong people dying!" the audience wants to rejoin "The wrong people wetting themselves, too". And how do we resist? Well, there is the play's timeless message: suppress

what is inside, even if it's making your eyes water.

As Jimmy crosses his legs in agony and Helena (Maple Beechbitch) gestures towards a toilet that is no longer there, the long-suffering Alison (Juniper Hornbeam) delivers the line "Oh, don't try and take his suffering away from him – he'd be lost without it." At that moment, the compromises Jimmy must make are as clear as his compromised dignity. There wasn't a dry eye in the house, nor board on the stage, and we must contend that the human soul, like the human bladder, can only hold in so much. Or something.

4 pigs





# Fringe Words *with Professor Foof*

## 1: "FFS"



If you move in lofty Fringe circles you may hear the abbreviation 'FFS' quite a bit in August. It stands for Festival Fringe Society. Confusingly, the same combination of letters has been taken up by sections of British youth as a quick

way of saying "For F\*ck's Sake" in texts and emails. This has become quite a headache for the special men and women trying to run our Fringe for us! To get an idea of the problems they face, see if you can tell which FFS is intended in the following sentences:

- \* "FFS, why is the website saying my show is sold out when I haven't sold a single ticket?"
- \* "Why has my show been listed under the show title rather than my name FFS?!"
- \* "Really? Four hundred pounds for a two-line brochure listing, FFS?!"



- \* "FFS! I've seen a stoned octopus get into pyjamas more quickly than you answer email queries"
- \* "FFS you plonkers have had since 1947 to get this right FFS!"

Answers will appear as soon as we have them.

## Jack Campbell Boy-Girl Brain- Banshee Labyrinth 2pm As part of PBH's Free Fringe



# From Genesis to Rebel Bacon

## Fringepig: the story so far by Mr Kipper

**Fringepig started as a humble website reviewing Fringe comedy reviewers. But just look at us now! We're a beer-soaked bit of paper in your hand.**

Remember three years ago? We were in the European Union. The skies were blue. We had a new Pope who wasn't a dick. We used the word 'meta' all the time. Everyone wanted to tell you how 'meta' everything was. You couldn't go to the bathroom for a quiet poo without someone banging on the door and shouting "Hey! Imagine if we, and the world, and our whole universe, is just a giant lump of waste falling through a porcelain void?! Wouldn't that be meta?!" It was relentless. Suddenly every triviality had been impregnated by infinity. It was all Brian Cox's fault.

So when fringepig.co.uk appeared with its reviews of all the Fringe comedy reviewers, everyone said "Ooh, reviewing reviewers! That's very meta!" Some people wanted to out-meta us and sent us reviews of our reviewer-reviewers. Without exception these emails were labelled HOW META IS THIS?? in capitals, to make sure we understood that it really was very meta indeed.

So, to clear the air, Fringepig is not, and never has been, 'meta'. Fringepig is an ombudsman. It happened because everyone in comedy was complaining that a Fringe show costing, easily, £10,000 to stage, could be hobbled on its first night by an unschooled

know-nothing spotty apomict writing in green crayon for a pop-up Fringe rag. We realised that, no matter how explicitly a performer told the public what their show

**“Most annoying of all, the reviews seem to have improved.”**

.....

was about, a reviewer would complain that it wasn't something else. *A Young Man Dressed as a Gorilla Dressed as an Old Man Sits Rocking in a Rocking Chair for Fifty-Six Minutes and Then Leaves* was given one star by a first-time reviewer at *Three Weeks* who had somehow misunderstood the concept. Alasdair Tremblay-Birchall's *Alasdair Lists Everything* was savaged by a reviewer at *ScotsGay* who gasped "He just stands there listing everything". But it's uncool to whine about these things. "S'all in the game yo" as that guy in *The Wire* said. I forget which one. That one who is involved with drugs and gets killed. Him.

So we couldn't moan about it. But we could do it right back at them. We could one-up the game and say "Do you see how annoying this is?" Hilarious!

There was a problem though. A guide to just the handful of reviewers who bothered us would appear spiteful and have no validity. Nobody would care. Clearly we would have to review ALL the comedy reviewers, and there the problems began. Not because of the sheer number of people who had reviewed Fringe comedy— we had, after all, nothing else to do — but because of the practicalities. The human brain is wired in a way that allows us to take the piss out of one person or institution at a time. When you try to take the piss out of hundreds of people, one after another, as part of

a systematic excoriation, a weird thing happens. You become fair. So while we had fun undercutting these hacks at first, before long we'd started to rate them comparatively. Relativism is a thing that destroys satire, even more than BBC Three tried to destroy satire. More than





Brexit destroyed satire by being more ridiculous than satire. And even then people made it worse by saying: “Well it’s not quite as bad as genocide or nuclear war, is it?” Relativism turns the most vicious butcher into a kitchen connoisseur.

Still, the website annoyed the reviewers, which was the point. Kev F, the man who does the *Scottish Falsetto Sock Puppet* shows, was our only advertiser. This made everyone think he was behind it, and so he spent August 2014 being accosted in alleyways by reviewers who told him he’d sunk his career. “You’ll never put socks on your hands in this town again!” they said. Poor Kev. He hadn’t even ASKED to be our advertiser.

But the Fringe changes quickly. What was extraordinary or shocking one year is normal the next. Adrienne Truscott, having done a show about rape with her junk out in 2013, was moaned at for not upping the ante the following year. She should have been fully nude, or baring her soul at least, while talking about infanticide and stamping on hamsters, said the press. Sort of.

At any rate, if Fringe reviewers reviewed science they’d be saying “Isn’t it about time someone grew a whole head on the back of a mouse? Everyone’s doing human-ear mice now. Why no human-head mouse? Just a simple, inoffensive head? Say, Alan Cumming’s head? Alan Cumming’s head, smoking a pipe, on the back of a mouse. WHY is nobody doing that this year? Oh you’ve cured cancer? Three stars.”

The point is: by 2015 nobody was angry with us anymore. We were just another bit of Fringe furniture. Reviewers we criticised wrote in



to thank us — actually THANK us — and say “would you look at this manuscript too, please?” We always obliged. Bernard O’Leary from *The Skinny* told us that we had given editors the impetus they needed to fire and reprimand bad writers. Martin Walker, comedy editor at *Broadway Baby*, asked us to check over the site’s new reviewers’ guidelines, based on Fringepig’s ‘Ten Tips for Good Reviewing’. In fact, despite always referring to the publication as *Backstreet Abortion* and stating that its writers would “wank off a Doberman to get free tickets to a dog fight”, everyone at *Broadway Baby* was just lovely to us. *Fest* wanted to do an ad swap. Most annoying of all, the reviews did seem to have improved; few were so amusingly awful we could

have a good jeer. Having been, if not actually killed, then certainly punched in the face by kindness, we faced the UKIP quandary. We’d got what we wanted and were now just hanging around being dicks.

But then we saw this advert for Three Hop beer. Look at it. Seriously. Someone thinks that this is what the Fringe is about. Some coked-up jarfart in a tweed jacket looked at the Fringe, wondered how to sell it beer, and thought “Ah yes, I’ve got it. We’ll tell people to be a total bellend.” And the Fringe brochure actually printed this advert, because the Festival Fringe Society would run an advert for swastikas made out of rhino horn if the client took a whole page and paid before the early-bird deadline.

We realised, then, that Fringe performers still need an advocate, a mouthpiece, a sympathetic ear. A big blue felt ear. They needed someone with a head full of sawdust and a trunkful of badly-formed opinions. And that’s me. It’s all of us here. It can be you too.

Fringepig’s database of reviewer-reviews can be seen online at [fringepig.co.uk](http://fringepig.co.uk)

To write for Fringepig, send submissions to [editor@fringepig.co.uk](mailto:editor@fringepig.co.uk)



Our second issues is out Aug 16th. To buy an ad, contact [sales@fringepig.co.uk](mailto:sales@fringepig.co.uk)

# Circuit Bunny

'Failure is addictive'

SO...

Ha! Frog Skinny is so cool! he booked a Fringe venue when he had no show at all! It forced him to write one...

...It won the Perrier Award! ... which used to be a thing

Hi! Bun Flopsy here! You prob'ly heard of me!

I came second in the ....

Yeah yeah. I've got the Dead Horse at noon or the Sock Factory at 20 to midnight.

March..

...

I'll have that one!

April..

May..

CAFÉ L'HIPSTERE





# I remember when all this was veggie cafés and strip joints

*My Fringe* by Robin Ince

**Comedian, rationalist, culture glutton and Fringe stalwart Robin Ince reflects on the changing face of Edinburgh in August**

It began with Russell Harty. He was probably introducing the acapella outfit Instant Sunshine.

This was the first I saw of the Edinburgh Fringe. Just as BBC2 introduced me to *The Young Ones*, so it went on to introduce me to dreams of a fringe existence.

In those times, comedy wasn't just an entertainment, it was a manifesto; something to believe in. A way of mind.

As punk had shaped the agenda of those outsiders before me, so alternative comedy manipulated my opinions on Nicaragua, the miner's strike and mother in law jokes. Who needed Adorno or Orwell when you had Alexei Sayle and The Dangerous Brothers? An oft-botched image of alternative comedy is that it was all people shouting about Thatcher and doing impersonations of the sinking of the General Belgrano, but there was also a lot of art school stupidity. Just like many of the alternative synth bands that came before them, the performers mixed being well-read with being ridiculous.

At 15 years old I started going to London comedy clubs. The first line of alternatives had graduated to television or acting jobs, so I

saw Jeremy Hardy, Clare Dowie, John Hegley, Frederick Benson and more acapella outfits that weren't *Instant Sunshine*. Looking back now, I realise the two events that most shaped my life were being in a brutal car accident at the age of 3 and seeing Rik Mayall on *A Kick Up the Eighties*.

I presume I am third-generation alternative, maybe the last alternative generation before the lines blurred to a new mainstream. Alternative is a tag that hung around the bitter lips of cruise ship entertainers and inky news hacks long after it meant nothing. Old men like Stewart Lee and me, brought up on the *NME* and radicalised by late night Channel 4, can be infuriated by some of the mainstream comedy of today grown from the agitprop acorns of the 80s because we thought stand up comedy was meant to be something else.

Surely it has to mean something; something more than just laughter?

In my dark moments, lit by the neon of the lightest entertainment, we

look to the sky and wonder if Lenny Bruce died for the sins of those that were yet to come?

Does the rise of stand up comedy run in parallel with the resurgence of the psychic medium? Too many hours of TV to fill, so the



ROBIN ON THE COVER OF HIS BAD BOOK CLUB BOOK. PHOTO © SPHERE



cheapness of one human and some amplification either mocking fast food workers or contacting the spurious ectoplasm of the dead can be handy.

I feel the weight of the Edinburgh Fringe brochure in my hand: does the remarkable increase in weight from the brochure of 1987 correlate to the weight of ambition to all who go up there now?

And what of those ugly prison camp fences around Edinburgh for the purpose of erecting vast gurning heads of comedians and their four-star reviews and “star of the Comedy Roadshows” tags, a gallery of Big Brothers who would rather be watched than watching?

Should I bemoan the circuit of today and while looking fondly at a time of few comedians and fewer clubs? I remember when all this was vegetarian cafés and strip joints taking a night off.

My first Edinburgh Fringe was 1987. I ate a different form of tinned pasta shapes every night and augmented my diet with a Dairylea triangle for calcium. I walked the streets alone, excited by each flyer I was handed. I saw the *National Theatre of Brent* with Jim Broadbent and Patrick Barlow re-enacting *The Bible*, Denise Black and the Kray Sisters, a double bill of Helen Lederer and Raw Sex, Jenny

Lecoat with Richard Vranich on piano; a play about Kenneth Halliwell and Joe Orton that had a very haunting scene involving death by wasp sting... and Jeremy Hardy. It was fabulous and exhilarating and I started to dream of the days when I'd be introduced by Russell Harty after the applause for the acapella group

*The Flying Pickets* had died down.

After Jeremy Hardy's show, I bought a signed poster for a pound (all money to the Terrence Higgins Trust) and a few days later I saw THE Jeremy Hardy walking along Princes Street. I approached him nervously and asked him if he could give me advice on being a stand up. He didn't put me off enough,

“The is the delight of Edinburgh: it need not be ‘product’.”

.....

so now, 29 years on, my adult life has been as a stand up comedian of some description or other.

Some days the huge business-like, PR heavy, empty, noisy glitz of the beast I first saw roaring amateurishly in a cellar off the Charing Cross Road saddens me. I have moments of wondering if this whole sorry affair is something I should never have got involved with in the first place. I see acts of incredible inventiveness go unrewarded, fameless and near penniless, and I see people who ‘know how to play the game’ boss their butler into polishing their brass buckles brighter. I think it is a pity that the panel show has been king, as some of the most fascinating comedy minds cannot thrive in that environment. I watch comedians with audiences that have no patience; they want hit after hit of laughter and refuse to have the attention span for a story.

That is the pessimistic old man who sees some truths, but then ignores the ones that offer sunshine for fear the joy of light will

ruin his eyes and his theses.

Much like the number of TV channels, the number of comedians means that you can create numerous visions of the entertainment present and the entertainment future, both dystopian and utopian. Though the imagination of the entertainment industry's controllers may often be dull and limited, the imagination of the comedian still thrives. There is still politics and absurdity in abundance. It is not all fashionable young bucks telling you stories from their universal Stepford lives.

The greatest confusion in stand up now is brought on by the expectations of an audience nurtured on mainstream TV comedy, and the ambitions of the stand up comedians who may wish to test themselves further than the audience want.

This is the delight of Edinburgh. It is a reminder that everything need not be ‘product’.

Television does not have to be the destination, though it is harder to build an audience without it.

Philip K Dick said the problem with Hollywood was that they wanted to disturb the senses, not the mind. I think there are still enough comics out there who wish to do both. It may be a longer struggle, and the rejection is rarely palatable, but I know there is an optimist homunculus somewhere in my skull that sees the rise of all manner of magnificent comedic monsters.

RI



Check out Josie and Robin's Book Shambles at

[cosmicgenome.com/shambles](http://cosmicgenome.com/shambles)



## “Let’s sell this gig out!”

Michael Legge urges us to give each of these great comics a crowd surge. We’ll be at these shows at these times... come with us!

### Wed 3rd



#### **Alison Spittle** **Discovers Hawaii**

**Gilded Balloon**  
**Counting House, 13:45**

@AlisonSpittle

The Gilded Balloon... The ITV of Fringe venues. I think this is going to be a much talked-about and loved show this year so let’s all get to say we saw it first! Day one starts strong.

### Thu 4th



#### **Phil Ellis is Alone** **Together (But** **Mainly Alone)**

**Underbelly**  
**Cowgate, 17:40**

@ThePhilEllis

This is another show that I reckon will be talked about a lot. He’s so naturally funny and inventive. I hate him. I bet the f\*\*\*er wins the award this year. Pr\*ck.

### Fri 5th



#### **Danielle Ward:** **Seventeen**

**Just The Tonic**  
**The Caves**  
**14:40**

@CaptainWard

*Do The Right Thing’s* Danielle Ward’s show was superb last year. This one is looking even better. Very exciting.

### Sat 6th



#### **Seymour Mace:** **Shit Title**

**The Stand 2**  
**14:30**

@SeymourMace

The funniest man on the planet. He got nominated last year so let’s go see him now and see if he’s gone all crap.

### Sun 7th



#### **Fern Brady:** **Male Comedienne**

**The Stand 2**  
**12:10**

@FernBrady

So much attitude. I love it. Her show last year was excellent and I keep hearing great things about this one too. Go!

### Mon 8th



#### **Juliet Myers: This** **Flipping Rescue Dog** **Has Ruined My Life**

**Laughing Horse**  
**@Southside Social**  
**14:30 FREE**

@JulietMyers

Juliet is a delight. Great lines, very funny observations. She wrote *the funniest thing I’ve ever heard a comedian say. Ever*. So think about that eh?

### Tue 9th



#### **Stuart Goldsmith:** **Compared To What**

**PBH Free Fringe, Liquid**  
**Room Annexe 15:45 FREE**

@ComComPod

I don’t know why I like this man. He’s so funny, incredibly skilled, he works so hard, is thoroughly decent and handsome. And yet I like him. A lot. You’re in very safe hands at his show. Yeah, he’s even got safe hands.

### Wed 10th

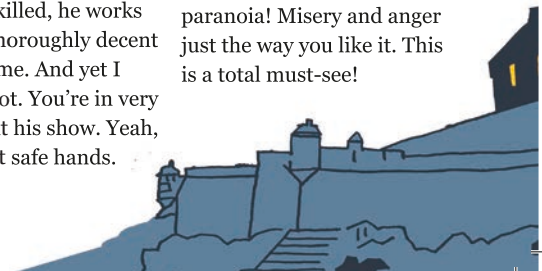


#### **Michael J Dolan:** **The Most Villainous** **Michael J Dolan**

**The Stand 4**  
**14:25**

@MichaelJDolan

Hooray for deeply intelligent paranoia! Misery and anger just the way you like it. This is a total must-see!





**Thu 11th**



**Rachel Parris:  
Best Laid Plans**

**Pleasance Dome  
18:50**

@RachelParris

Rachel just gets better and better. I saw her do a gig at a huge music venue this year and she nailed it. You won't ever regret going to see her. So, you know, go see her.

**Fri 12th**



**Christian Talbot:  
C60**

**Underbelly Med Quad  
17:50**

@TheTall\_Bot

Christian Talbot, an actual human dog, returns with his new hour about his love of music. Go along and record it and sing along to it in your bedroom afterwards.

**Sat 13th**



**Stephen Carlin: TV  
Comeback Special**

**Laughing Horse @  
The Free Sisters  
20:15 FREE**

@MrStephenCarlin

It's Saturday night. Go to this. Please don't let the drunks in. Stephen is head and shoulders above most comics so treat yourself.

**Sun 14th**



**Garrett Millerick:  
The Dreams Stuff  
is Made of**

**Pleasance Dome, 21:40**

@FergalTweet

Confident, bold and very funny. A truly great stand up but with enough shabby humanity that you don't think he's a pr\*ck. Looking forward to this immensely.

**Mon 15th**



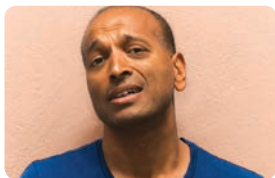
**Grainne Maguire:  
Great People Making  
Great Choices**

**Pleasance Courtyard  
19:15**

@GrainneMaguire

She tweeted her menstrual cycle to the Irish Taoiseach! Why would you go anywhere other than Grainne's show? She's very, very funny and a huge inspiration.

**...plus!**



**Joe Bains:  
Curried Mustard**

**Laughing Horse @  
Espionage (Kasbar) 01:00  
FREE**

I know nothing about this show or the performer but LOOK! He's on at 1am! Every f\*\*\*ing night! He deserves an award for even thinking of doing that. Go to this, bring your friends. Support, support, support!

**Tue 16th**



**Joanna Neary Does  
Animals and Men**

**The Stand 5, 14:30**

@MsJoNeary

I won't lie: This is the show I most want to see. She never fails. Definitely the most talented person that I've ever seen in comedy. I could cry if I wasn't laughing. Don't not see this show. You've wasted your life if you miss it.

**Wed 17th**



**Colin Hoult /  
Anna Mann: A  
Sketch Show for  
Depressives**

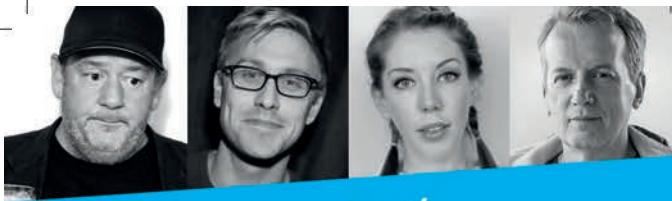
**Pleasance C'yard, 19:00**

@ColinHoult

I've seen three of Colin's solo shows and spent most of my time since then thinking about them. Trust me, this will be a huge highlight of the Fringe so do not miss it!



**Next issue: our  
LSTGO flashmobs  
for days between  
Thursday 18th and  
Monday 29th >**



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# Roll up! Roll up!

**MR KIPPER REVIEWS THE  
BEST OF FRINGE CIRCUS  
ENTERTAINMENT!**



## *Toppleplop's Flying Story-Attached-To-It Circus*

The Smelly Belly @ The Chunderbelly, 21:45

**The PR says:** "Marvel as people attached to ropes fly about the ceiling because reasons"

**Mr Kipper says:** There were no elephants. ★

## *Chinese State Ladyboy High Wire Crazy Spectacular*

The Big Top @ The Meadows, 23:00

**PR says:** "Be amazed by a show that oozes sexuality and daring if you a) like that sort of thing and b) scare easily"

**Mr Kipper says:** Somehow this seemed to have less than no elephants. What the actual hell? ★

## *Cirque De France Presents: La Bulemia*

The Reasonably Large Area @ The Glades, 20:45

**PR says:** "Gasp as women who need to eat more fold themselves into shapes for your amusement"

**Mr Kipper says:** Absolute zero elephants, and I counted them twice. ★

## *Anarchist Shouty Man In A Bowler Hat Circus*

Not Quite Large Enough Room @ The Fields, 12:00

**PR says:** "Swoon as heavily tattooed people tell you over and over again how much fun you're having"

**Mr Kipper says:** Okay in places, but desperately needed elephants. ★

## *The Sad, Pointless, Elephant-Free Albanian State Circus*

Oppressive Situation @ The Railway Siding, 19:00

**PR says:** "Experience feelings as a circus that used to have an elephant turns up again anyway and wonders what to do with itself"

**Mr Kipper says:** Finally, a circus that addresses the lack of elephants in the room. Brilliant. ★★



# Creators of Vanity Mirror launch Gluttony Fridge

Company continues series of products inspired by the seven deadly sins

At a star-studded launch show last night, Dante Inc unveiled their latest innovation, the 'Gluttony Fridge'. As bikini-clad models draped themselves over the gleaming stainless steel monolith, CEO Ted Omnibus boasted that "our offensively sized refrigeration unit meets consumer demands to accommodate the huge quantities of food that you don't really need."

He gently tapped the side of the three-metre-high obelisk, causing inch-thick electronic doors to slide open with a self-satisfied sigh. "Our product utilises cutting-edge food-wasting technology," he enthused. "Automatically sending barely-touched produce to landfill whilst ordering new overpriced goods to replace them."

"This glistening temple of consumer greed also features a hi-def widescreen

“Our fridge boasts cutting edge food-wasting technology.”

monitor embedded on the inside of the doors," he continued. "So as you indulge in fatty snacks it can play live footage of starving children in war-torn countries, sublimely underlining your lack of empathy for those less fortunate – and all in breathtaking 1080p definition!"

Dante Inc made their fortune in the 1980s with the Vanity Mirror, a triple mirrored desk enabling people



to surround themselves with grooming products and scented candles in what their marketing campaign called a "shrine to yourself".

The company had further success with the Sloth Couch and Envy Binoculars, but they were almost crippled by litigation after the launch of the disastrous Wrath Pistol.

However, the Gluttony Fridge is already being hailed as a return to form, and if it does as well as industry experts anticipate, fiery rain will soon be plummeting from the heavens, rightly wiping our miserable species from the face of the Earth.

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## Off the Beaten Path

Pith-helmeted Rebecca Perry guides you through the steaming interior of musical theatre like a non-racist Cecil Rhodes or von Humboldt or something

Start your expedition with a bang. Walk up **The Mound** to **Assembly Hall** and sing along to Dolly Parton's catchy lyrics in **9 to 5: The Musical** at **11:30**. After that much talk about plotting the death of your boss you're going to need a cocktail break! Run over to George Square and get one from the bar (in a to go cup) and zip in to **Assembly George Square** at **14:40** for **Penny Ashton's Promise and Promiscuity**. Her multiple spoofs of famous Jane Austen characters with modern music will have you laughing like a chimpanzee on crack.

Then it's time to get some delicious take-out at the food trucks beside the square – I recommend the cold curry potato salad at the **Indian Bazaar** – and then you are hopping in a cab

and just making it to **2 Become 1** at **Underbelly Cowgate** at **16:00** to pump your veins with 90s nostalgia and witness infectious pop anthems and power ballads while these women speed date. That's right, the old version of Tinder before you could swipe right for a good time.

It's time to reload and refuel. A savvy expeditionary of the musical theatre jungle always knows where to find a watering hole. Check your Google maps app and let it guide you on foot to **The Elephant House** for delicious **dinner** and dessert! Trust me – you will want to save room for one of their cakes and fancy hot chocolates. You can also observe all the *Harry Potter* memorabilia – JK Rowling wrote the first Hogwarts stories here.

Now that the sun has gone down it's time to get gritty. Reapply your lipstick (boys) and head on over to **The Voodoo Rooms** on **West Register Street** at **18:30** for **Cabaret Whore Presents...La Poule Plombé**. Sarah-Louise Young is the definition of a one woman musical if ever there was one. Just sit back, relax and enjoy.

Then wrap up the day with the siren songs and musings of the one and only **Camille O'Sullivan**. She will take good care of you as she serenades you at the **Underbelly Circus Hub** at **20:30** where you can enjoy the serene view of **The Meadows** and drink cider until you want to stumble home.

**Rebecca Perry's Adventures of a Redheaded Coffeeshop Girl is at Gilded Balloon Teviot at 16:15, Aug 3-29 (not 10, 17, 24)**



## Early Bird Catches the Show

Good morning campers! Haley McGee has a full-on day of theatre for you

You're up at 8am. Come on! Shovel some granola from **Real Foods** into your mouth and fly out the door. Nod to Arthur's seat, you'll get up there soon. First you need caffeine. Stop in at **Black Medicine Coffee** for a cortado.

Take a tiny moment to pat yourself on the back and share a smug smile with your fellow new-writing culture-bots who've also made it to the **Traverse** for the **Breakfast Plays** at **9am**. Enjoy a breakfast roll and coffee, as you take in a reading of a new play—it's a different play every morning, on the theme "Will technology save us or tear us apart?"

Next, dash over to **Summerhall** for Pippa Firth's love letter to the sleepless: **Stories to Tell in the Middle of the Night** at **10:15am**.

You've been at it for a while now. Head over to **Spoon** for a delicious brunch. Indulge your carnal appetite with black pudding and a fried egg.

Fortified, you can now whip over to **Assembly Roxy** and dive into a grand piano with Circo Aereo & Thomas Monckton's wonderfully cuckoo contemporary solo circus **The Pianist**.

Now you're ready to revolt. **2pm**: Lemon Bucket Orchestra's **Counting Sheep**. This 15-piece guerilla-folk punk band will have you singing, marching, dancing, laughing and crying as you lose yourself in... Ukrainian history!

You're doing great. It's **3:15**. Grab a beer when you arrive at **Assembly George Square** and delight in international sensation Sean Kempton's Edinburgh debut of **Stuff**.

Okay back to **Summerhall** for Flangan Collective's **From The Mouth of Gods** at **4:55pm**. It's immersive and daring and it explores free will, maths and kissing; determined to make the fictional real. Wheee!

Take a pause. Wander around

Arthur's Seat. Go up as far as you can. Have a scream. Sing the highest note you can. Have a sip of water. And head over Leith way. It feels far, but Edinburgh's small. You can do it.

Spend some time here. Have dinner at the **Forest Fringe Café**. Eat vegetables. Enjoy cheap wine. They're celebrating their 10th anniversary with the best performances from the last decade. It's pay-what-you-can and always fascinating, provocative and fun.

If you feel like a good hard laugh, hilarious Mae Martin is improvising a new hour every night at **9:15pm** at **Laughing Horse @ City Café**.

Otherwise snuggle up in Leith and head to **Port O'Leith** for a nightcap. Go on. Take the tram home. Sleep. You did everything right.

**Haley McGee's I'm Doing This for You is at Summerhall every day of the Fringe at 4:15pm**





## Aczel Piece

Ed Aczel urges you to have this sort of fun, in this order

So you want a busy, yet varied day at the Fringe? Not too pricey, but catching all the rising stars and with some fine refreshments? Well look no further!

Start at **12:15** sharp at Laughing Horse's **Cabaret Voltaire** on Blair Street for **Previously from Maff Brown**, with some beautiful one liners and charm personified. Sit back to watch a consummate professional entertain.

Afterwards hop along to the **Hula Bar** on the corner of **Grassmarket** for a smoothie, bagel and a sit down.

Then head for an afternoon double bill of pay-what-you-want shows at the Heroes **Hive** venue on Niddry Street. At **2pm** see Mr Matthew Highton's **I, the Universe** for some magisterial glam rock comedy and surreal sci fi story telling. Then stay in your seat at **3pm** to see Marny Godden's **Where's John's Porridge Bowl?** Supremely abstract character comedy and clowning from a brilliant, brilliant performer.

Next, get your walking boots on to hoof it across town for **afternoon tea/early supper** at Edinburgh's oldest and finest Vegetarian restaurant **Henderson's** @ 94 Hanover Street. Beetroot and quiche a speciality, no need to book.

At **4:50pm** it's time for some intelligently crafted political comedy from the master **John Gordillo** at **The Stand 2**.

Then march/meander/taxi back to the **Hive** for **6:40pm** and the charming Joz Norris' touching homage to the transitory nature of love and life, **Hello, Goodbye** (a cardboard box to help explain things and I believe there's engaging red pepper eating). This one's pay-what-you-want.

After that a quick drink at true Scottish boozier the **Royal Oak** (on the corner of Infirmary St) and onward to see the madcap, brilliant, beautiful **Ms Lou Sanders** (a star rising fast) in the **Pleasance Dome** at **8:10pm**.

Then hot foot it down to the **Banshee Labyrinth** (PBH Free Fringe) on Niddry Street for Mr Richard Gadd's eagerly anticipated **Monkey See Monkey Do** (need I say more?) – high octane comedy at its best. Note: you will have to queue for this, so get there early. Show starts at **9:45pm**.

And if that's not enough, finish the night off with larger than life Bob Slayer on his Heroes **Blundabus** in the **Underpass** – although can I suggest you turn up pissed, please? It's just better that way.

Ed Aczel's **Foreign Policy** is at Heroes @ The Hive (venue 313) at **16:20** from 4-28 Aug (not 16)

THE FRONT ROW.  
ALWAYS A RISK.  
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE AN  
ENTITLED C\*NT.  
THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND.  
BEFORE YOU KNOW IT  
YOU'RE 'TRYING TO HELP'  
THE CROWD ARE INCENSED.  
YOU'RE THE DORK  
OF THE FRINGE.  
NEXT YEAR YOU'RE  
**MAINLINING  
SMACK.**  
IT ALL  
**STARTS  
HERE**



YA+BW

**THERE CAN BE  
ONLY ONE**



DB



# Fringe Words *with Professor Foof*

## 2: "Tech"



The word 'tech' is derived from the word 'technician', a word first recorded in the dictionary in 1833 under the definition "A person expert in the technicalities of some question".

Confusingly it is also the August job title of several hundred drama

students with the mechanical adaptation of a Humboldt squid and the concentration of a bonobo monkey in a disco. These creatures propagate emails in May, designed to lure unwary comedians into putting them behind a mixing desk. They will then build a nest out of lanyards and spawn a new CV.

This description of the tech is, of course, a little unfair as neither squid nor primates have been known to suffer from synaesthesia. Techs will regularly confuse sound for light and lights for sound, usually before bursting into tears and going back to the Home Counties on or around day three.

However the picture is confusing, as there are some excellent techs.

The word should be used with caution, like 'sex', which likewise can be either life-affirming or disastrous. The true joy of techs is experienced when there is love and understanding. If you are going to pay for techs, try and go upmarket. You get very little satisfaction for £10 an hour.



"REALLY FUNNY"  
★★★★★  
the Scotsman

"A PERFECTLY  
PACED HOUR"  
★★★★★  
the list

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# Bad Endings

*A series of tales that don't end well*



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## Old Hat



I sat alone in that silent, gloomy attic for so very long. The only sense I had of the passage of time was the ever-increasing weight of dust that settled upon my back. Dust that wouldn't have been stood for on Harold's watch.

Harold wasn't a rich man, but what he lacked in money he made up for in class. He would fix his hair with a light touch of pomade, polish the tips of his brogues, and carefully brush the lid of his hat to keep it immaculate. I should know, I was that hat. Harold's prize fedora.

I was Harold's trademark, a gift from his late father, worn with pride. In the rare times I wasn't sat atop his head I could be found hanging from an iron hook in his porch, near enough to the front door that he could grab me on his way out of the house, but not so close that the sunlight from its oval window would bleach my fabric and spoil my look. Spoil our look.

But that was a long time ago. Before the world went to war and I was put out to pasture. When Harold left to serve his country and put on a different kind of hat.

For years I hung from my hook, waiting for Harold to walk back through the door

with the oval window, but he never did. Eventually Brenda, Harold's widow, plucked me from my hook, carried me upstairs and shut me away where the sight of me couldn't upset her anymore.

The dust on my back had grown thick by the time I saw the next face. It

glances. This was a world where everything flashed by at speed, except for the people, who propped and sat and slouched all day.

My new owner's attire wasn't tailored; rather it was assembled from second-hand shops and worn ironically with the express intention of proving

matter the occasion or company. They had no class.

One day my owner's aimless meandering led him to a vintage market where he took a fancy to a selection of war medals. More antiquities, shut in the dark for decades, relics like myself. He plucked a gold star from its case, paid the stall's proprietor and fixed it to his blazer, grinning like a split watermelon. I was so angry. He hadn't the slightest idea what that star meant. Hadn't done a thing to earn it. Hadn't been shot at in the mud and the blood. It was just a shiny thing to pin to his lapel. And Harold was dead.

I breathed in. Breathed in then exhaled. Exhaled all of the hate. All of the disgust and the loathing I had for this feckless generation. And I shrank. Shrank until the idiot beneath me screamed and screamed then screamed no more. Until his flesh oozed from between the weave of my fabric like icing from a baker's decorating bag. And only after the horrified crowd gathered around, picking their way across a hundred yards of flesh ribbon, did I cough up the tight pellet of crushed up bone that was his stupid skull.

“The man who sat beneath my brim was not a man at all, but a sloppy reconstruction.”

belonged to a young man, Harold's age but not Harold. He was dressed in the style I was accustomed to, a wide swing necktie matched to a single-breasted waistcoat. He wore a waxed moustache with his hair trimmed to a short back and sides, and when he lowered me onto his head I was pleased to catch a familiar note of Brylcreem.

But when he brought me down from the attic I found myself in a fresh new world. A world lit not by gaslight but by electric. A world of plastics and microchips and glowing rectangles that my new owner watched through the matching rectangle lenses of his expensive

that he was different. This, I learned, was his sole contribution to the world. The man who sat beneath my brim was not a man at all but a sloppy reconstruction of one, and I was his unwitting accomplice.

The world outdoors was, for the most part, a hat-free place – at least outside of my owner's clique: an insufferable set of clownishly dressed twits jockeying to prove which of them cared less. They had no jobs, yet could somehow afford to spend the working week discussing music and drinking expensive coffee. They had no manners, keeping their hats on no

# on the MIC

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## LESS COMMENTARY MORE COMEDY

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