

the alternative Edinburgh Fringe magazine

Fringepig

Issue Two

FREE!



No reviews of anything whatsoever

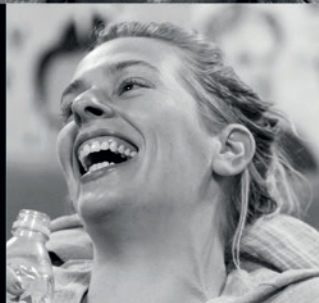
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Well hello,

About this time in the Fringe you realise that, as Conrad put it, we live as we dream – alone. We are all living through the same Fringe yet our own private Fringe. And within each of us there's a person who's happy and lonely and exhilarated and bored.

Those of us who live in this great city can at least see the Fringe in all its grandiosity, passing like a stately liner (or one of our brand new obsolescent aircraft carriers) and either get aboard or look forward to it sinking. For the visitor, disconnected from comfort and routine, time is a flakier concept. The *Daily Telegraph* released its list of the Funniest Jokes of the Fringe on day four, as if it was all over. A lot of ticketed performers say it hasn't really got going yet. A lot of free-show performers say it has already peaked. Is it the beginning of the end or the end of the beginning? Is it too early to regret your show? Is it too late to change it?

The truth is an elastic concept too. This is the first year in which the number of shows on offer has decreased from the year before. And yet the Festival Fringe Society will, of course, tell us that it sold a billion more tickets and that the sun shone upon all of us, and that it found a unicorn nest on Arthur's Seat along with a cure for herpes, death and Brexit.

Just remember that none of it matters.

Pip pip!

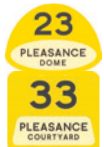
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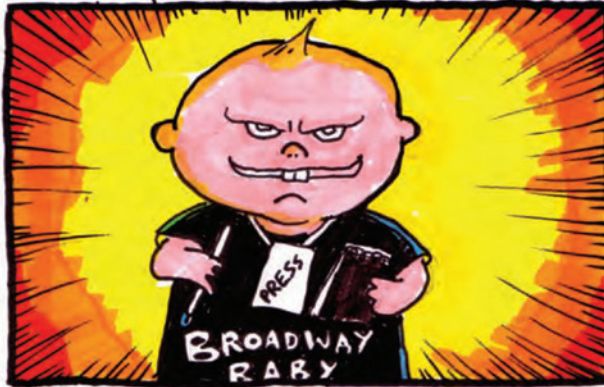
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FIND US AT THESE LOVELY VENUES:



COMEDIANS

BY CHRISTIAN TALBOT & ROBBIE BONHAM



@THETALLBOT

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

@RBONHAMCARTOONS

City of Dreams (possibly Kafka's)

I live in the greatest place on earth, says Derwent Cyzinski. But the way it's run is often like an absurd black comedy

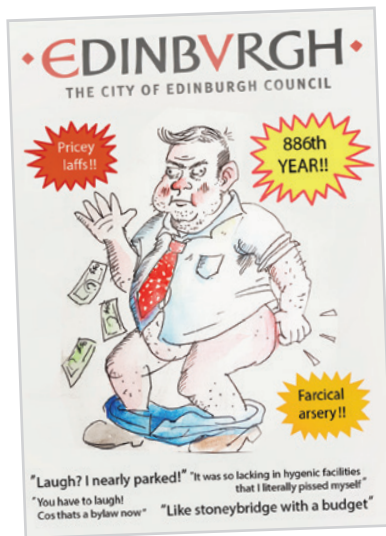
The trammage done

Have you checked out the live Chilcot report read-through at Bob's Blundabus? There's another report that begs to be read in its entirety by comedians in a shed. That is, when we get to see it. Lord Hardie's report into the Edinburgh tram fiasco, which Alex Salmond promised would be "swift and thorough" has now cost the Scottish Government £3.7 million and climbing, according to Transport Scotland, and has yet to make any of its findings public.

The enquiry employs 25 staff who are sifting through more than 6 million documents. Edinburgh's tram system, intended as a three-line network that would cost £375 million, ended up as a single line to the airport that cost £776m, reaching a billion after interest payments. Previous Convenor of Transport Gordon MacKenzie summed up the failure with the words "We didn't have the right skill mix", meaning that none of them knew much about trams. Which is probably all we need to know, plus he already said it for free.

The upper-fixers

Ever wondered why Fringe rents are so high? This might help explain it. In June last year Edinburgh Council's Charles Owenson and James Costello were sent down, along with others, for their part in one of the most scandalous exploitations of modern history. Under the council's Statutory Notice System, tenement householders who couldn't sort out their own repairs got the repairs done compulsorily by the Council, at a massive markup. The Council hired the contractors.



Obviously this was a cushy number for any builder and so Owenson and Costello were giving out contracts in return for cash, football tickets and trips to lapdancing clubs. They were even billing the City for the expenses incurred in GOING to the lapdancing clubs. The judge said that the pair were "stealing from and manipulating the public purse almost at will".

One of the contractors, Action Building Contracts, was making £400 million a year at its zenith, vastly overcharging Edinburgh citizens for repairs. In one case a job estimated at £15,000 was charged at £500,000. As a result of the scandal Edinburgh Council is now owed £22 million from local tenants, much of which is to be written off as irrecoverable. But there's more fun to come! Having been in abeyance for a bit while the Council cleans up the mess, our compulsory repair scheme will be back by this time next year.

Slow tar

'Winter weather' is the deathless culprit for explaining why Edinburgh's roads are so appallingly bad, now ranked in an AA survey as the worst in Britain for potholes and unattended repairs. The A8 to Corstorphine is reckoned the very worst in the UK and is beaten for congestion only by roads in inner London. Why the roads in Oslo, Reykjavik or Stockholm stay so smooth and tarmacery has yet to be satisfactorily answered by the 'winter weather' stop-gap, but it may just be that the City of Edinburgh Council prefers visionary schemes to unglamorous maintenance.

Council Transport Convener Lesley Hinds recently announced that a whopping £120,000 would be spent on the black stuff in the coming months to fix George Square and the Mound in a 'right first time' overhaul. (Shouldn't 'right first time' go without saying really? Isn't this a bit like announcing you're taking your beloved on a not-rapemy date or running a razorblade-free soft play?) But compare this figure to the £2.2 million spent on the just-imposed 20mph speed limit on the entire city centre, enacted despite evidence from Portsmouth City Council that the same scheme (delivered at a quarter of the cost) had actually made road casualties increase slightly.

The 20mph speed limit is enforced at all hours. The last time a vehicle travelled at 21 mph over the safe zone's cratered boulevards during daylight was sometime between the invention of the diesel engine and the installation of traffic lights in 1928.

Fringe Words *with Professor Foof*

3: “PBH”



If you are involved in comedyness and you have the intercom socmed pooter apps, then you'll know that this year everyone has been saying “Hey! Fringe police! Crack down on the menace of PBH!”

PBH, also known by the street names ‘diktat’ and ‘no’, was popular

about 10 years ago as a cheap way of getting your festival vibe on, but has recently been associated with feelings of paranoia, nausea, anger and regret. “I thought PBH would be fun,” said one user. “But It gave me a massive headache that lasted almost a month.”

“PBH used to be fairly pure and you knew what you were getting. It has always been mixed with some

“ PBH is also known by the street names ‘diktat’ and ‘no’. ”

.....

weird shit, like ‘rulez’ and ‘ethixx’, but these days there’s a lot more of that stuff and it really kills your buzz.

“A lot of the top comedy stars have done PBH occasionally so I thought I’d be okay. But my mind has been totally blown and my sense of reality skewed. For instance, did you know that ‘free’ actually means ‘a bit oppressive’?”



The Ham Fist Award

Every year hundreds of talented people flock to Edinburgh to take part in the Fringe and every year there are hundreds of journalists waiting to appraise their efforts. Some of them can write. Some of them are shaved monkeys with the same appreciation for art and culture as a privet hedge that’s joined Isis. At the end of the Fringe we like to celebrate the **WORST REVIEW OF THE FRINGE** by giving a small prize to its recipient. Could you please help us get it to £500? Go to fringefunder.com and search for ‘Ham Fist 2’.

The ceremony takes place on Bob’s bus at the end of the Fringe and is a **BEAUTIFUL THING**. More details on Twitter @fringepig

Theatre for Comedy Fans

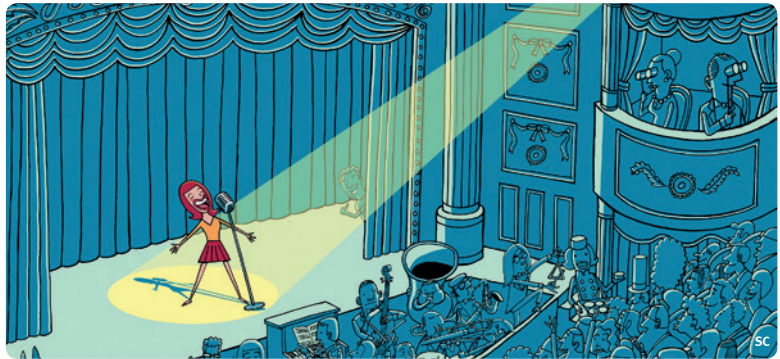
You know that bit of the Fringe programme that looks like it's full of shows, but they aren't comedy so you don't know what they are? Well that's the *Theatre* section and those are plays!

Plays are like comedy shows, but when they're not funny it's not because the actors¹ have done something wrong, it's because it's drama² and it's meant to be serious (sometimes). It can be fun and rewarding, making you laugh and/or cry. Dive in to the world of theatre; it's *okay*. But don't heckle, or they'll throw you out.

If you're feeling a bit nervous about watching all the acting, adaptations can be a good place to start. You already know how books work, and reading is a bit like a play that's written down and acted in your head. Only a theatre company have read the book for you and will be doing the acting-it-out part. And, bonus, after the Fringe you can join a book club and pretend you read the texts. If you know and love the story, these plays can be a gentle introduction to the theatre world while still having choice. At this year's Fringe you can see *Frankenstein*, *The Great Gatsby* and Phillip Pullman's *The Ruby In The Smoke*, to name just three — because you're a comedy fan and you like things in threes.

If you've checked out an adaptation and feel confident with this theatre viewing thing, why not jump in to one of the biggies of the theatre world? Hunt out some Shakespeare! And by hunt out I mean spin in a circle and point at a venue and you'll have found some. You may have noticed while watching adaptations that the actors don't acknowledge you, even though you are right there in front of them.

In theatre we imagine that the divide



between stage and auditorium is a jump between worlds, an imagined fourth wall³ separates them and lets you look in but doesn't let them look out. Although in Shakespeare, sometimes that wall is removed and the actors *do* talk to you directly. But they still don't expect you to talk back.

It's confusing, but you'll be focused on working out what on earth the cast are saying, so you won't get this bit wrong. How you choose your Shakespeare is up to you, but boy do you have choice. There are at least four takes on *Hamlet*, three versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* one of which (Church Hill Theatre) has Batman in it — that's not usual by the way. There's only one *Much Ado About Nothing*, but it's outside, so that's quite cool, and you'll have to imagine the other three walls as well.

Not all theatre is so passive; you don't have to sit in the dark with your suspension of disbelief⁴ keeping you in the show's world. Some shows bring you in, in far more literal ways. Immersive theatre⁵ invites you to step in with both feet (and all of the rest of you) to join the cast who will interact with you. The show *Blood Will Have Blood* (C venues) even uses cool tech,

putting you in headphones to listen to characters adapted from *Macbeth* (look at you combining what you've learned so far!) Other shows don't fully immerse you, but do ask for your input. *Tatterdemalion* (Assembly) is physical theatre⁶, inviting some of the audience to join in on stage. *I'm Doing This For You* (Summerhall) is set in the very familiar world of a comedy gig (still don't heckle, you shouldn't be doing that in a comedy show anyway).

There's so much, I can only touch on enough to get you started and leave you to wander the auditoriums, halls, found spaces⁷ and occasional ovens of Edinburgh to find your own theatre gems. There are shows that mix the theatrical genres (*Yokai* at Underbelly promises theatre, dance, magic, poetry and utter stupidity) shows that mix metaphors, and shows that mix into one once you've gone crazy seeing all you can in one day.

Just like comedy shows, there will be shows you love and shows that aren't to your taste, but don't be dismissive of that whole other brochure section — if you try it, you might even like it.

Amee Smith's *Relax, It's Not About You* is at Underbelly: Daisy at 15.00, 3-29 Aug (Not 16)

¹ Actors: like comedians but won't listen to you. On or off stage.

² Drama: show without jokes, but that's okay.

³ Fourth Wall: an imagined wall between stage and auditorium. Don't let it fall on you.

⁴ Suspension of Disbelief: going with it even though you know it's not real.

⁵ Immersive Theatre: what happens when the fourth wall falls on you! You'll be fine, just remember the above.

⁶ Physical Theatre: the words are swapped for actions but you still know what's going on.

⁷ Found Spaces: non-traditional places where theatre happens (not like converting a shed into a Fringe venue, but similar).

Don't hang around with tw@ts. Or friends.

My Fringe by Isy Suttie

Festi-flacid? Fringe-frazzled? We talk to Isy Suttie – comedian, singer, actress, author and Dobby from *Peep Show* – about her lowest (and funniest) Fringe moments

“I started early with the Fringe. My dad – Scottish – would bring me up when I was 5 or 6 and I saw a lot of kids’ shows. I adored it. As a teenager I’d come up and stay in youth hostels; I remember buying one baguette from Gregg’s every morning that would have to last the whole day so I could save my money for shows.

“When you’re up here, the Fringe is *everything*. It’s so hard sometimes but you have to have as much fun as possible. And don’t hang around with tw@ts. It’s very easy to end up talking to tw@ts because there are a lot of people up here playing mind games. It’s the best and the worst place in the world, the Fringe. It’s a seductive, glittering, hellish maze. A labyrinth that you keep going round and round. Like a shit computer game where you keep getting extra lives but don’t want them.

“In 2005 I was staying in a flat in Hunter Square with Josie [Long] and Danielle [Ward]. My room had no windows; I got ill in there and slept in Josie’s bed for the last week, and her window had a bloody piper under it. The washing machine flooded the flat and Danielle was washing her clothes in the bath and

I was actually really glad of all that because it was a nice distraction. I was in the Comedy Zone (a mixed act show that used to be on each year at the Pleasance Courtyard); it wasn’t the right show for me.

It started at 10.20 and was full of stags and hens and drunks. Every evening I’d walk to the gig like I was in a f*cking dream. I had an MP3 player but I didn’t know how to put music on it, so all it had was three Kraftwerk tracks and *Happy Birthday* by Stevie Wonder. So every night I’d walk there, listening to those same four songs, going ‘What am I doing? How is this helping?’ But I guess it did, because the next year I did the show I wanted to do. You realise you don’t have to compromise or do what people offer you. It’s the Fringe and you can do whatever you want.”

“In 2008 I didn’t like my show. It was unadventurous; the left-over bits from the previous year. Because of course when you have a good year you want to build on it. But really, no... you need to take your time. If you’re in ‘the arts’ you have to tell yourself that it doesn’t matter too much; there are no stakes. Don’t

tell yourself that there are stakes. Just go out there and die and die and die; it doesn’t matter. Don’t ask yourself ‘Why am I not on telly?’ Find the joy in what you do and why you do it. Talk to your friends



PHOTO: STEVE ULLATHORNE

about their material. Get pissed with them. The camaraderie is everything.

"You realise that at the Fringe. When it's near the end and you've been keeping yourself alive on minimum sleep and a diet of ibuprofen and cider, a friend you used to go to school with or something will show up, all smiling with lovely clean shiny hair, and they'll be all 'come on, show me the Fringe!' And you'll be thinking 'No, f*ck off.' Because they'll say things like 'Come on, you're only working for an hour every day!' And you want to say 'Yeah but anyone can come. Anyone can walk out. Anything can happen. There are critics, drunks, hecklers, and friends like you turning up on bad

“Dont tell yourself that there are stakes. There are none.”

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nights! Sitting out there, trying to smile along...

"You have to talk to them afterwards. And you think '35 minutes might be okay for this, we should set a timer and talk for 35 minutes and then say goodbye.' But then you order a pint and it drags on and you admit to them you're not having a good time and the whole pretending-thing slips and you're stuck with them. But even when you're in a bad mood you want to go out drinking with another performer. Because they'll

know where you're at and you won't have to explain yourself.

"I guess my advice to performers having a difficult run is: watch the news. Buy a newspaper. See something weird to jump-start your system. And if you're a comedian, go and see something that *isn't* comedy. Go and see a student play about racism or candy floss – there's literally something about everything going on up here."



Isy Suttie's debut book, *The Actual One: How I tried, and failed, to remain twenty-something for ever*, is available now from bookshops and (if you must) Amazon.



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Jack Campbell

Boy-Girl Brain- Banshee Labyrinth 2pm

As part of PBH's Free Fringe

PATHOS ☐

MINING TRAGEDY ☒

IMPRESSIONS ☒

EMOTIONAL BIT ☒
AT THE 45 MIN MARK

CLEVER REFERENCE THAT'S ONLY FOR CRITICS THAT AUDIENCES WON'T LIKE (FIRST 35 MINS) ☐

CLUBSET REPLACEMENT FOR CLEVER REFERENCE (REST OF SHOWS) ☐

A SHELL OF HIS FORMER SELF (LAST SHOW ONLY) ☐





Top Sneer

Top critics show us their state-of-the-art critical crap machines

Me and my flying toilet

You might think it's a difficult life being a press critic. You have to wear a lanyard. You have to spend literally minutes typing up your reports every evening. You have to look at yourself in the mirror. But you may not know that the job also involves flying over Edinburgh on a magical toilet, busily pooing on people's dreams! *Fringepig* has spoken to three top critics about the state-of-the-art critical conveniences that help them deliver lofty, messy judgment on Fringe performers.

.....

Kate Copstick's Shitemoore 500

"My Shitemoore has been with me through thick and thin. It's old, it's knackered and it's not very nice to look at but, wow, did it deliver a payload back in the day.

I remember back in 2006 when I dropped a truthbomb on a young three-hander: 'I'd rather eat my own ovaries than watch another minute of their comedy,' I said... well, the blast nearly ripped the wings off and the fallout made me slightly radioactive for years after. How I laughed!

Recently I've taken the Shitemoore on some slightly misjudged missions; we took a lot of flak while I was out strafing some provocatively-dressed rape victims two years ago. So these days I mostly use the Shitemoore to deliver aid ablutions to struggling Free Fringe acts in conjunction with my charity event *Kate And Some Bloke Who Knew Malcolm Hardy Talk About a Festival They No Longer Entirely Understand*.

The Duxford Fringe Critics Flying Toilet Museum has offered me ten grand for the Shitemoore, but I think I'll keep it for a bit. There's always someone who needs to cop an earful!"



Brian Logan's Sturmokrapvik JS-19

"Not only does the Sturmokrapvik look great, but it was made in the former Soviet Union by arrested comedian dissidents on a forced labour camp. So I like to think that the tears and suffering of those who do THE SORT OF COMEDY I HATE are well and truly built into its mainframe.

The best thing about the Sturmokrapovic is that, though it's getting on a bit now, it can be airborne at a moment's notice. So if any comedian, anywhere on the Fringe, suggests that capitalism might be a good thing, or that socialism doesn't necessarily end all racial prejudice, I can be there letting rip all over their hopes of wider recognition.

The Sturmokrapovic nearly fell apart from air fatigue lately while I was dropping hundreds of ten-pounders on Jack Whitehall: he was out in the open, being all appallingly unashamed of his middle-classness. I just couldn't get him to stop. My toilet has six stars on its airframe — which is the rating I would give if I could review the Stalinist purges."



“ Let rip all over their hopes of wider recognition!

Lewis Porteous's Guanobat K-6000

"While a lot of my fellow critics prefer speed and delivery, to me it's a lot more about style. I like to creep up on people. I like them to hear the grating scrape of my wings like a swinging gallows cage; my pistons popping like the joints of a prisoner on the rack.

So when a comedian is standing there, foolishly doing his 'jokes' and making people 'laugh' in the insane and mistaken belief that this is a worthwhile thing to do, I want the wretched animal to hear me first and then see me emerging, as inevitable and unreasoning as death, through the mists of their fevered Fringe hopes.

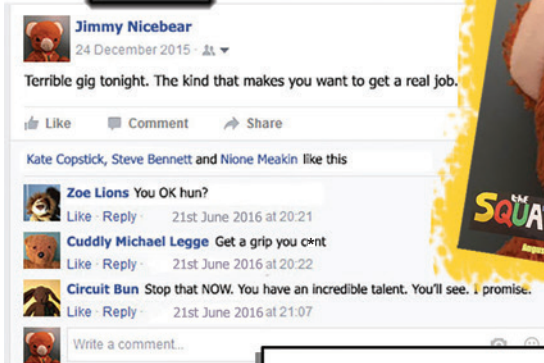
Lately I've been hitting the wrong targets because of my penchant for seeing the Fringe through brown-tinted goggles, but I find that any other sort of eyewear brings on a horrible flood of endorphins and makes me feel things."



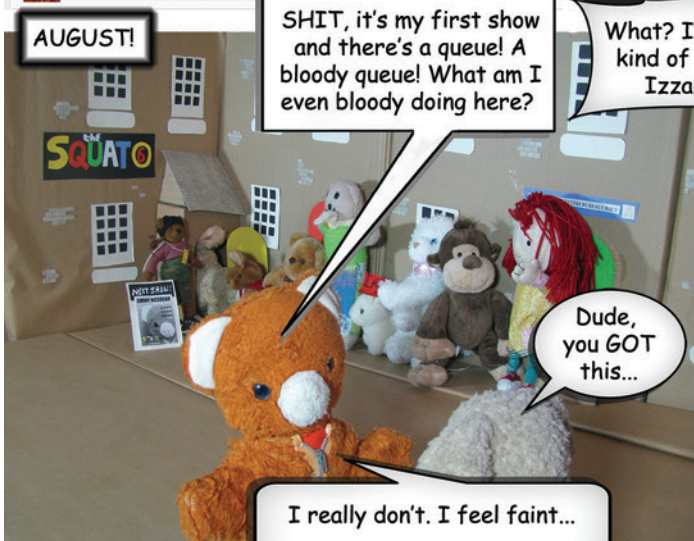




June...



July...





Circuit Bunny's adventures continue next Fringe!

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fringe
sell-out show
2008-2011

"His accent is not so much German as indescribable"
Daily Mail

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HOW IT WORKS

RACISM & XENOPHOBIA

1 Most people are arseholes.

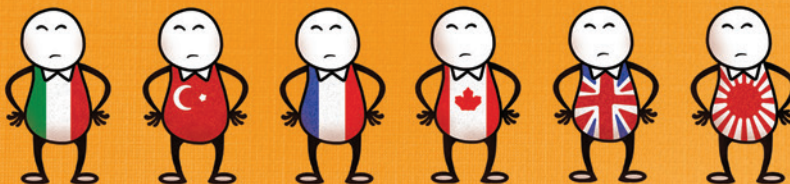


common or garden arsehole
(anus vulgaris)

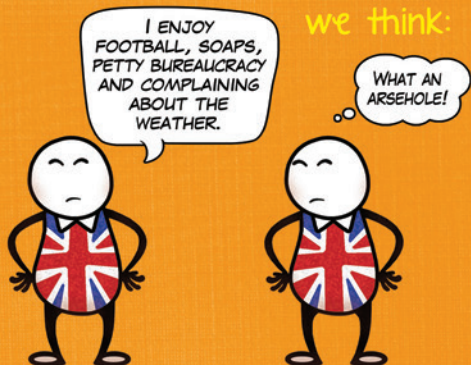
2 Their country and culture gives them a 'flavour'.



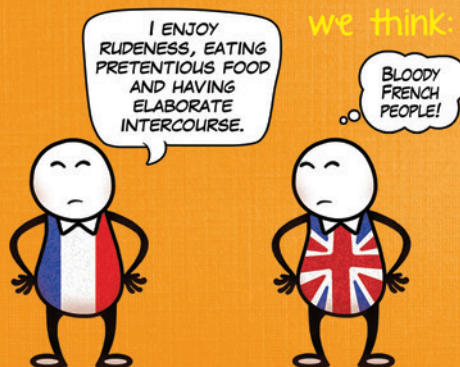
3 This gives us different flavours of arsehole.



4 When we meet an arsehole from the same place as us...



5 But when we meet an arsehole from somewhere else...



This is known as the 'flavour of arseholes' theory.

↑ do not Google this



“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!

Thu 18th



David Longley:
*Everything I Hate
About My Club Set*

The Stand 4, 20:15

@DavidLONGLEY

A phenomenon. I’ve seen him turn rowdy stag groups into well behaved charity workers, so surely he can turn Fringe audiences into screaming louts. Let’s go and see. He’s utterly hilarious.

Fri 19th



Alexander Bennett:
*Your Beloved
Alexander Bennett*

**PBH@Cowgatehead,
19:30**

@AlexyBennett

Very funny indeed. Very silly and satirical. Just bloody very good. So very go and see him or you’ll look very stupid. VERY stupid.

Sat 20th



AAA Stand Up
Pleasance C’yard, 19:15

@TwaynaMayne
@RobMulholland
@FailingHuman

You can’t do the Fringe without seeing one stand-up comedy package show. I recommend this one for Twayna Mayne alone. Don’t really know the other guys but she’s one of the best stand-ups I’ve seen in years.

Sun 21st



Gavin Webster:
*Jesus Christ’s a
Window Cleaner Now*

Stand 2, 19:10

@TheGavinWebster

I never miss any of Gavin’s shows and he’s never, ever anything less than brilliant. Treat yourself and see this show. Fuck knows you deserve it.

Mon 22nd



Lazy Susan:
Crazy Sexy Fool

Pleasance C’yard, 19:15

@ComedySusan

Brilliant sketch comedy from two very talented people. Plus they named their show (sort of) after one of my favourite albums. I think they might be really cool but I still like them.

Tue 23rd



Will Duggan:
*A Man Gathering
Fish*

**Pleasance Courtyard,
18:45**

@WillDuggan

I’m really looking forward to Will’s debut hour. If Will is half as funny as he is in Phil Ellis’ Funz N’ Gamez, then I suppose that’ll be fine.

Wed 24th



Daphne’s
Second Show

**Pleasance Courtyard,
17:45 and 22:45**

@DaphneComedy

I’ve not seen Daphne yet but I’m very keen to. Phil Wang is superb though. Phil Wang is very funny and clever and young and brilliant. Phil Wang is in Daphne.

Thu 25th



Jordan Brookes:
The Making Of

Laughing Horse
**@The Cellar Monkey,
17:00 FREE**

@JordBrookes

One of my very favourite acts right now. He won a big award this year too but don’t let that put you off. He’s great.

Fri 26th



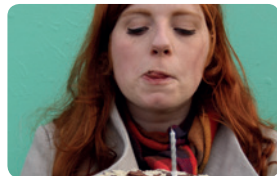
**Alfie Brown:
Scissor**

**Laughing Horse@ City
Café, 15:00 FREE**

@ABrownComic

I like Alfie a lot. The great thing is, he's unpredictable. You might spend the hour laughing or drowning in fire. Probably the former though.

Sat 27th



**Eleanor Morton:
Happy Birthday
Katie Lewis!**

The Stand 4, 14:25

@EleanorMorton

One of my very favourites of last year. Perfect, strong, very witty character comedy. Eleanor is fearless. Everyone see her show, please.

Sun 28th



**Lloyd Langford:
Rascal**

**Laughing Horse
@ The White Horse, 21:15
FREE**

What a way to end your Fringe. One of the very best standups in the country. He's a charming treat. And it's a *free show*! Hooray!

Mon 29th



Nothing

Nowhere, Never

If you're a comedian who's stupid enough to do a show on the last Monday of the Fringe, you get what you deserve. Tw*t.

**First draft
chat-up lines**

1. You look so good I want to tattoo your face onto my face.
2. You're giving me a raging heart-on.
3. You smell better than the best toilet I've ever been in.
4. If I could rearrange the alphabet I'd put 'U' and 'I' together... although that would mean a total teardown of the English language, cause widespread confusion and thoroughly ruin the lives of anyone who relies on the alphabet for their profession, such as librarians, filing clerks or nursery school teachers.
5. Did it hurt? When you fell from heaven? I'm guessing it did by your horribly misshapen head.

DB

2 SHOWS DAILY - EACH SHOW 4 DIFFERENT ACTS

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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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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

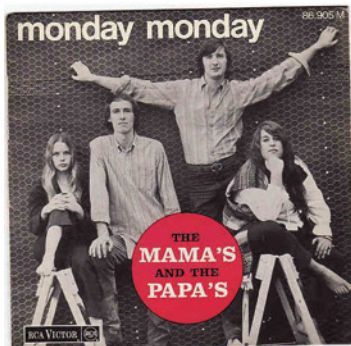
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Fringe Words *with Professor Foof*

4: “The Monday”



Ah, Monday Monday. A song about how you ‘can’t trust that day’ by the Mama’s and the Papa’s (yes they had grocer’s apostrophes in their band name, the peasants). Also the title of a 2009 ITV sitcom starring

Miranda Hart and Tom Ellis from *Miranda* that was so excruciatingly bad STV wouldn’t buy it and nobody in Scotland had to watch it (“Bloody hell, no tuition fees *and* you avoided this?” — an English person.)

Anyway, in Edinburgh during August *Monday Monday* or ‘the Monday’ is the final, addendum, vestigial tail-end final day of Fringe performance as practised by the Pleasance and a couple of others but eschewed by everyone else.

“I’d love to come home and have a bath but I have to do the Monday” “Oh goodbye then everyone else,

I’ll stay here by myself and do the Monday”; “Can you please stop dismantling my venue? YOU told me to do the Monday!”

The Monday is when done-and-dusted performer friends may finally honour their promise to come and see your show, shining like a wan light in a sea of salty tears and windblown flyers. But if they’ve waited ‘til The Monday, are they really your friends?





Don't mistake this guide for a hat

Immerse yourself in absurdism for the day. Holly Burn tells you how.

Start your surreal day normally – with breakfast. I mostly dine at the Fourth Floor, **Harvey Nichols** on St Andrew's Square when I'm in Edinburgh as it really gives you a wide berth from... well everybody. Then trot along to **Adam Larter's Return on Investment**, **12.50** at **Heroes at The Hive**. It's about a business in the 1980s – the corporate stationery world to be precise. It's (probably) talking staplers having affairs with the paperclip from the Word document while the elastic band cries in the corner – think *Wall Street* a la Hobby Craft.

Next comes lunch. Harvey Nicks? – seriously it's the only place to go. Then, if you have kids, or if you just like your humor really silly, you can't beat **The Listies 6D (Twice as Good as 3D)** **14:45** **Assembly Roxy**. Rated S for

Stupid. Alternatively, go for **Marny Godden**, **15:00**, **Heroes at the Hive**. She spends the entire show looking for a missing porridge bowl, which I'm sure counts as surreal. Dressed as Moses. Yelling about crockery. You'll love it.

Bob has a bit of a monopoly on strange this year – on another day try **Michael Brunström's, The Hay Wain Reloaded**, **Heroes @ Dragonfly**, **18:00**, an entire show about Constable's painting. For now, stay at **The Hive** for **Ed Aczel's Foreign Policy**, **16:20**. Eddy Baby is on about the "current global maelstrom and predicts an apocalypse". He might have been onto something when he wrote the copy pre-Brexit, but now I think apocalypse is a given. He'll have a flip chart.

Leg it to **Simon Munnery and Friends: 30 Not Out**, **18:45** at **The**

Famous Speigletent. Good old Munners. He's Mr Captain Doctor; The Guv'nor Surreal Esq. and he's on with all the old faves. HEART HEART HEART.

Dinnertime: Bit far from Harvey Nickeypops, so try **Ting Thai Caravan**, 8-9 Teviot Place: Delicious, no-frills, street-food Thai restaurant. Eat quickly and leave room for **Spencer Jones Presents The Herbert in Egg Bagel**, **Heroes @ The Hive**, **19.50**. A story about wheelbarrows, dads, evil water and eating too much chocolate.

Round off the evening with top drawer bonkers **Alan Cumming Sings Sappy Songs**, **22:30**, **The Hub**. Yep, you heard! Just imagine.

Holly Burn: I Am Special is a bit surreal and is on at Underbelly: Buttercup At **18.55**, 3-28 Aug (Not 15)



Blue funday

Join Derwent Cyzinski for a day of existential tragi-comic theatre. Or don't. Whatever.

Start with breakfast at the **Community Project** on Candlemaker Row. It gives employment to vulnerable adults, so you can at least feel positive about that.

You're a short walk from Merchant Street where you'll find **Paradise at the Vault**, and at **11:35** (from 23rd) it hosts **The Glummer Twins**. They've been going for 30 years, so it's already quite sad if you've never heard of them. Poetry from the beat generation, this is very dour and very Northern (well, South of here but you know what I mean).

Now slog over to the **Pleasance Courtyard** for **13:00**. Since Willis Hall wrote *The Long and the Short and the Tall* in 1959 the soldier's play has tugged on the heartstrings of British theatre. **Dropped** promises a similar level of tension and dark reflection, but the soldiers here are Australian. And women. I would have called this play War Sheilas, but then I am a total dick.

Time to hate your body (a bit) with a burger from the **Wee Burger Company**, 4 Nicholson Street. Have one of their ice cream shakes. It's fine, we're doing a LOT of walking.

Now get back to Potterow and the studios sanctuary of the **Gilded Balloon Museum** for **16:30**. If you follow @proresting on Twitter you'll know about **Casting Call Woe**: tales of coping with the shamelessly sexist and humiliating 'opportunities' offered by casting directors. Will suit large-breasted woman willing to be scurried over by rats. (And everyone else).

Now... are you in Edinburgh as a shameless tourist? Then go and see **Trainspotting**, Irvine Welsh's culture-shock play (as t'was), set in Leith before it got all bistro and the people who talk to themselves got packed off to Niddrie. It's on at **18:00** on **17, 18, 22, 24, 25 and 29** (other days different times)

Stroll on down to the **Grassmarket** now because at **20:15** Christian Talbot monodramas his socks off in **Every Day I wake Up Hopeful**, a comic gem about the dying of the light of youth and opportunity.

You're in Grassmarket, so go to the **Mussel and Steak House**. You'll have to wait around drinking gin and tonics until they can seat you, but you'll have time to eat and then pop back to **Greenside** on Infirmary Street where we'll end our busy day at **23:10** with something absolutely bonkers. **Juice Straws Are Bleak** is the story of, among other things, a plastic bag who likes punk rock... all set in a dystopian primary school. Now go to bed and have fretful, existential dreams.

Derwent Cyzinski is a stuffed-toy Fringepeg reviewer-reviewer who enjoys model trains, poetry slams, yoghurt and historical pornography



Deadly femme brace

Martin Walker, a fan of the female double act, offers a full day of favourites

You're going to need a healthy breakfast first, so pop in to **C** in Adam House on Chambers Street for a large bloody Mary and a cake. Seems like everybody has a lanyard around their neck this year. If you're got one, wear it — they'll assume you're staff and give you a discount.

Then head round the corner and see **Help** at **Just the Tonic @ The Mash House** at **11:45**. Nina Millns and Sophie Morgan-Price are the character-based double act, 'Bae'. In *Help* they lampoon the self-help industry and its gurus. Namaste and all that. Funny stuff.

Time for lunch. Take a walk up West College Street and enter the **Pleasance Dome**. You'll find a bar with some relatively inexpensive hot grub.

Once nourished, run the gauntlet of flyerers (be nice!) and head directly towards the **Underbelly's upside down cow @ George Square** is where you'll find Hannah Croft and Fiona Pearce performing their sketch show, **Croft & Pearce Are Not Themselves** at **14:40**. They've had good reviews. They've had full houses.

Sometimes this happens because acts are good.

Show over, you have an hour to retrace your steps and get to the PBH venue T-Bar, also known as 'The Tank'. Despite scurrilous rumour, there is no block on audience members seeing Peter's shows if they've ever entered any another building ever, and you can stop off for a coffee at the aforementioned BlundaBus, if Bob has run out of beer. He may send you to the shop to get milk. And some beer.

At the **T-Bar** you'll find Rachel Watkeys Dowie and Ruby Clyde — the sketch double act **Shelf**. They start making you laugh at **16:45pm**. They're not in the Fringe programme but these young women are certain — hack alert! — 'stars of the future'.

Not far from the T-Bar is the Free Sisters, run by the jovial Alex Petty. Like PBH, he doesn't care where you've been and judging by some of the punters in the bar, neither does security. To give it its correct name, **The Three Sisters** is a busy drinking shop which attracts

stags, hens, sports fans and other characters all intent on demanding Billy Connolly come on next. Happily, flatmates Charlotte Michael and Lucy Roper can handle themselves. Their show, **Michael and Roper: Three's a Crowd, Four's an Audience** commences at **19:15pm** and takes a self-deprecating look at the Fringe and themselves. Just joyous.

Now for the **Pleasance Courtyard**, where they observe antiquated theatrical traditions like buying a ticket. Pop into the Pie Maker on South Bridge on your way over: a 'modest pie shop with an extensive menu'.

You'll have a bit of time to kill, and enjoying a couple of pints in the Courtyard is as good a way of hanging out as any. Before you know it it's **22:45** — time for Katie Norris and Sinead Parker in **Norris & Parker: See You at the Gallows**. I've interviewed them and they're hilarious.

Martin Walker is the comedy editor at Broadway Baby and runs fledgling live comedy site onthemic.co.uk

Solipsist wrestlers



DB

Manly things I have yet to do

1. Crawl through an air duct.
2. Outrun a fireball.
3. Reload a gun before the spent cartridge hits the floor.
4. Throw a sheriff's badge into the sand.
5. Hurl a man into a jet engine.
6. Eat a peach with a dagger.
7. Throw some dog tags into the sea.
8. Yell "take the wheel!" at a passenger.
9. Punch a hole through a wall next to the person's head I'd really like to punch but it goes against my strict moral code to do so.
10. Exercise.

DB



RECENTLY DISCOVERED POST-CREDITS SCENE

J-SQUAD MOVING IN.
WEAPONS ARMED.



THE FIRST
RAPTOR HAD
TAKEN ME BY
SURPRISE.
RIPPED MY
WHOLE ARM
CLEAN OFF.

STAY SHARP,
THESE
BEASTS ARE
LETHAL!

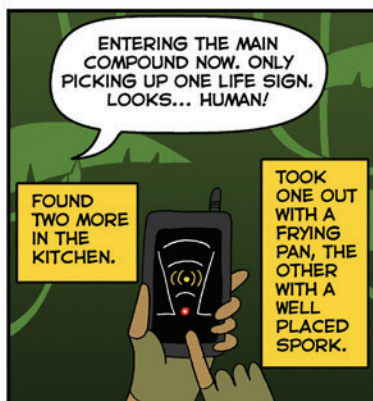
STRANGE. EXPECTED MORE
RESISTANCE. WHERE THE HELL
ARE ALL THE DINOSAURS?



BLACKED OUT FOR A WHILE, WOKE TO
FIND IT CLAWING AT A DOOR. HAD TO
BEAT IT TO DEATH WITH A RUSTY PIPE.

ENTERING THE MAIN
COMPOUND NOW. ONLY
PICKING UP ONE LIFE SIGN.
LOOKS... HUMAN!

FOUND
TWO MORE
IN THE
KITCHEN.



TOOK
ONE OUT
WITH A
FRYING
PAN, THE
OTHER
WITH A
WELL
PLACED
SPORK.

IMPOSSIBLE!



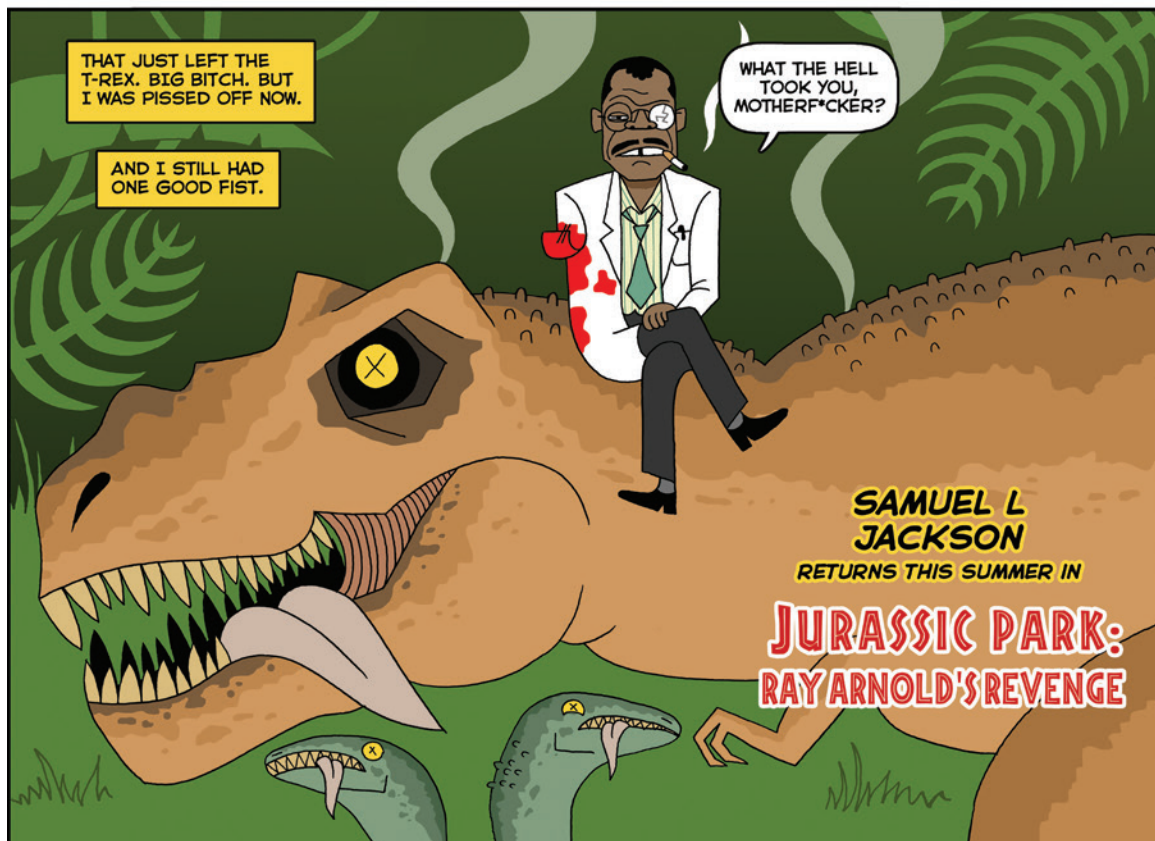
HAMMOND SAID THERE
WERE NO SURVIVORS.

THE LAST ONE WAS IN THE COMPUTER
ROOM. I JAMMED AN ERGONOMIC
KEYBOARD DOWN ITS THROAT.

THAT JUST LEFT THE
T-REX. BIG BITCH. BUT
I WAS PISSED OFF NOW.

AND I STILL HAD
ONE GOOD FIST.

WHAT THE HELL
TOOK YOU,
MOTHERF*CKER?



**SAMUEL L
JACKSON**

RETURNS THIS SUMMER IN

**JURASSIC PARK:
RAY ARNOLD'S REVENGE**

Bad Endings

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Suicide Chic



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The numbers are out of control," she told him, speaking of the recent spike of suicides. "We're witnessing an acceleration in fatality rates the likes of which we've never seen, and something needs to be done about it."

Quite why he'd been summoned to a Government office to watch a PowerPoint presentation on suicide control he was unsure of at this point. Though certainly he sympathised with the issue, what did it have to do with him, a middle aged Compliance Advice Manager for a high street bank?

"The trouble," the lady said, advancing to the next slide, "is that the dead have all the best people: the Cobains, the Joplins, the Hendrixes. The living, on the other hand, get Chris Martin, Donald Trump and Simon bloody Cowell. Pardon my language," she warned him, "but the dead are kicking our arses."

She stepped away from the projector and took a seat opposite him. "Thankfully," she said, "we've arrived at a strategy to combat the problem."

It was obvious from his

face that he didn't have the slightest idea where she was headed.

"What we need to do," she clarified, "is to rob suicide of its cool. To make it unfashionable. And that's where you come in."

No, he definitely hadn't seen that coming.

"We set out to find the

“We need to make suicide uncool and unfashionable. That's where you come in.”

.....

least fashionable person in the UK," she went on. "Someone so uncommonly insipid that the mere mention of their name would strike tedium into the hearts of men. Someone so mind-numbingly prosaic that any association they shared with a trend would result in its immediate societal rejection."

Could she really be talking about him? Because if she were, she'd soon be reading a very lengthy and uninspiring complaint on the matter.

"You first came to our attention through your

blog," she went on, "the one detailing your average-sized collection of pylon postcards. It was from there that we discovered the rest of your imitable lack of qualities. Your unwillingness to try new things. Your steadfast lack of opinion. Your fondness for bookmarks."

It was true, he did like bookmarks, though not overwhelmingly so.

"You, sir, are a mundane, humourless dud of a man. A long phone call to tech support. A visit to a clothes peg museum. A car park given human form. You are exactly what we need to buck the suicide trend, and all we need from you is one thing. We need you to kill yourself."

He might have taken that last part for a joke if jokes were the sort of thing he understood. She wasn't joking though; in fact she was perfectly serious

and prepared to reward him handsomely for his cooperation. He wavered briefly on the decision to take his own life, then realised that the money she was offering would make for a very sensible investment in a low risk ISA.

The next day he wrote a suicide note that read simply 'Bye,' then made his way to Hornsey Lane Bridge (the top Bing hit for suicide bridges). There he stepped over its edge and into oncoming traffic with a resounding lack of flair.

Unfortunately he landed on the roof of a car being driven by journalist and television host, Piers Morgan.

The resulting impact killed them both and earned him untold posthumous accolades, including the number one spot of *Time* magazine's Most Influential People list, inclusion to that year's *Who's Who* and a standing ovation on both sides of the Atlantic.

The strategy had backfired spectacularly. Suicide was to become more popular than ever. The new selfie. The ultimate ice bucket challenge.

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