



FAST

Announcer (a la David Attenborough).

Summertime in Somerset, where one can witness the awesome sight of the migration of caravans from the mid lands. Their purpose being to graze and breed on the Serengeti of the county, which is situated somewhere near or on the coast. Along with the massive trailer tents and their pups, one can hear the adults call of “Nioce heer innit?” And other unintelligible phrases that only trained observers and linguists can understand.

However there are predators who look to take advantage of the easy pickings. Following the herd, they lie low until the time to strike is right. They are deadly househunters! (Orchestra three dramatic chords). Armed to the teeth they will think nothing of blasting a four bedroom detached to bits before it can escape. It is truly an awesome and yet grizzly sight. Sometimes working in pairs they will track, maybe for days, a wounded semi down a cul de sac before finishing it off with a bazooka. The most infamous has been identified by a Major General Sir Avant Aclue OBE and barred as, N Boley BCOA and instructor. Not to be approached under any circumstances, unless you have an antidote of a coffee and kit-kat to hand.

(Normal voice.) And now from the Old and Wized school of embalming and extreme ironing club (Chairman A Sage): ‘FAST’ - another amusing tale to guffaw at whenever you get the urge.

That was the announcer who appeared by kind permission of his mum and dad. Well how are you doing? Give up? Well if you don’t know how am I supposed to? Honestly!

I ventured down the local last weekend, The Whistling Mouse and Bucket. Must be costing a small fortune in pub signs. Anyway I went through what was left of the doorway. Inside the place looked like a bomb had hit it. “Bloody pensioners” said a rather battered landlord. Apparently it was supposed to be a bingo cum old time dance night, featuring Jim and his pumping organ. But someone got the dates mixed and booked the legendary hard rock band, Reggie Goatfiddler and the Elastic Druids by mistake.

Well it began all right; the band started up and blasted into their first number. Most of oldies were stone deaf anyway so it really didn’t matter. In fact some of them started doing The Gay Gordons, an old time classic dance. But was this the cause of all the trouble? Nope, Mavis Clutterington-Smythe soon put paid to that. Thinking that the lead singer was sounding a bit rough, when in actual fact he was supposed to, she offered him some of her special linctus. Now bear in mind that old folks medication tends to be a lot stronger than normal, this was no exception. After giving a couple of spoonfuls, which looked and smelt like recycled waste and eucalyptus, to each of the band, and along with a few of pints of larger to get rid of the taste, the music went downhill fast. In the end, the singer waltzed off with Mavis; the two guitarists challenged and lost to the local dominos team. The drummer tripped over a cable as he tried to stagger off the stage and fell into the bass drum. This paved the way for Jim to give his old organ some welly.

So what was the cause of all the trouble? Well imagine pension day at the Post Office and then combine it with alcoholic drinks. Yes you’ve got it, pensioners don’t like waiting in queues. The bar was struggling to keep up. When a large lady with large arms and chest to match starts complaining, the last thing a landlord should mutter is, “Alright, keep your wig on you silly old trout.”

That did it; he never saw this huge handbag coming towards his left ear at a colossal rate of knots. The blow sent him and a new bottle of Wincarnis flying. Meanwhile Alf the bingo caller, who was using a megaphone to get over the din, had just started shrieking out the numbers, when the aforementioned bottle bounced off his head, causing him to slide slowly under the table with his glasses looking north and false teeth facing east. Seriously hacked off, the bingo fanatics completely lost the plot and a full-



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scale riot ensued. Chairs, tables, Zimmer frames and other appliances started flying in all directions. In the middle of it all was Jim thrashing away at full throttle, his old organ on the verge of destruction. A barmaid hiding beneath the bar frantically dialled 999 on her mobile phone.

Pretty soon the emergency services arrived. The police calmed the situation down by having the heating turned up and copious amounts of Ovaltine, hot chocolate and warm milk distributed. The ambulance crews patched up the injured and sorted out which appliances belonged to who, and the Fire Brigade put out Jims' organ which by now was on fire. Some members of the band were arrested on suspicion of using an unknown narcotic, and as for the drummer? Well he didn't live far away, so they didn't bother waking him up from inside his drum, they just unhooked all the attachments and rolled him home.

Which brings us back up to date. I found one of the few chairs still intact and sat down with a pint of froth, no beer just froth (well it was cheap) found a copy of the latest OK Arching magazine and settled down to read.

Right next to an advert from messers Hire and Fire, employment agents and clout shoot specialists. An interesting letter caught my eye.

Dear Sir, the other day we; that is our club, were busy arching as one does when some young whippersnapper yells Fast! Not a clue what he was on about, perhaps someone could help, yours Gladys Hugh Mr (Hon & In Sec). Time to go and investigate! (Rushes out of the door, Sound of horse galloping away in the distance at phenomenal speed). Total silence. Tumble weed rolls past. Suddenly a figure appears in the doorway.

Oh well I suppose I'd better take a taxi instead.

Eventually I arrived at BCOA HQ. The horse paid the fare, served him right. I entered hut two, an old pre-fab building, which was cunningly disguised as a large shed. At the back was a metal cupboard, I climbed inside, pushed a button marked 5 and went down to the fifth floor, which was situated just passed the fourth. Yes nothing escapes me. Our resident information specialist and librarian Ava Stogie helped me out of the lift and handed me a very mini micro disc that contained the information. I stuck it in the very mini microwave player, sat down and began to watch and listen.

(Announcer: American accent). "And now from Hollywood USA, somewhere west of England. Winner of no awards whatsoever, we present; THE SERIOUS BIT." Ok for all you anoraks this is the bit you've been waiting for, the rest of you can go and put the kettle on. I'll give you a shout when it's over.

Fast: In archery it is the emergency stop, and not the signal to shoot all your arrows off like greased lightning, then dash off to the loo, make a cup of tea, finally sitting down to watch your arrows land in the target, or for longbow, all around and one in the leg of the stand.

No nothing to do with that at all. Anyone can call a fast or stop, for example: if they spot someone in a dangerous area, or an animal that has strayed onto the range and for goodness sake don't just say it, shout it, so that everyone can hear, including the judge or field captain who should give three blasts on the whistle. On this signal archers on the line should immediately stop shooting, lower their bows, put their arrows back in their quivers, step back off the line and wait until the problem has been dealt with to the judges satisfaction. The whistle will then sound again and shooting will recommence. Well that's more or less it. A fast doesn't often happen so I recommend you practise it maybe once in awhile. So that if a situation should arise you all know what to do. Right you can all come back now! Where's my cuppa?

And a Kit kat? Brilliant! Ok that about wraps things up, I'm off. See you next time.

Good Shooting

Nigel.