

18 Game Dealer
Nigel Harvey pp 90-93

The business started in 1924, here in Norwich, with my grandfather, and in those days the only products that we sold were wild rabbits, farm butter and honey, and that was it. Father came out of the war and took over what was not a thriving business, and the natural progression, especially when myxomatosis virtually wiped out the rabbit population, was to go into game.

People that buy from us? Everybody, right through the whole scale, from the little old lady in the council house down the road that will come up and buy one rabbit leg for her poodle, going through the middle and upper classes, who are now realizing that game is such good value, because it hasn't really gone up in price for the last ten years. The other end of our business is wholesale, and we supply people like Harrods and Fortnums, and we do some export customers as well.

Selling pheasants in Norfolk, certainly over the retail counter, is a bit like trying to sell coal in Newcastle. There are those that get it given to them free at source, friends of friends who've got shoots, or they get paid in game, like the local doctor who always gets pheasants. Because they are given birds in the feather, they bring them to me and we charge them a nominal amount, and we pluck and dress them. We charge 80 pence per bird, which for coming in with something like that, and going out with something ready for the oven, has got to be good value really.

I'm down the shop at 7 a.m.; we have five of us there. The staff are Jack-of-all-trades, and they have to be. They serve in the shop, they process the game, they do virtually everything. My main job is to get on the telephone and sell game which I know is coming in, perhaps it hasn't even been shot, but I know that there are estates shooting in the next two or three days. I have a rough idea, there might be three, four or five thousand pheasants that I'm going to have to turn over in the next week, so my job is hopefully to find customers and fix a price before the birds enter our premises. That's the difficulty. That's why there aren't more

game dealers about. It's a fluctuating market for a start; you're dealing in fresh food, and because game is shot and not slaughtered like normal meats, you can't freeze it in the condition it is shot, i.e. leaving the feathers on and then deciding what you're going to do about it later. One has to process them as and when they are shot.

I didn't really have too much choice about going into the business. I went to school not two hundred yards away, King Edward School, and by the age of about fourteen or fifteen I was old enough to realize that my father was very ill. He had, well, he still has got Parkinson's disease, he's had it for thirty years. It was becoming more and more difficult for him to carry on with the day-to-day running of the shop. After having two brain operations, he had problems with his voice, but I could understand him, so I would be standing next to him acting as an interpreter.

I had to learn the business that much quicker. There was a lot to learn. For instance, guinea-fowl are hung up by their feet, and a pheasant is hung by its head. All game is hung up to retain the body fluids in the gut, for a period depending on whether it's warm or cold, whether it's humid or not, how old the animal is. An old red deer will want hanging for at least a fortnight in relatively cold weather. An old cock pheasant you could hang for two or three weeks in certain circumstances, but the criteria is how long game must hang to attain a certain flavour, and that flavour will also depend on what the bird has been eating.

I love work, I thrive on work. My wife will tell you that I'm a miserable toad in the summer because I'm bored. This is why I'm so much looking forward to this new shop I'm opening up in Grove Road. There's so much to organize and I shall love that. I hate kicking my heels, I'm sure that the staff are the same, I think that's mostly human nature.

My first wife could never really come to terms with what every farmer's wife has to put up with. You know, that there are busy times of the year, and business has to come first. If you are earning your main living from something which is essentially very busy for four months of the year, the social world has to come second. And because it's over the Christmas period, it didn't go down too well starting work at five in the morning and finishing perhaps ten o'clock at night. I'm lucky, my present wife, she was brought up in the farming fraternity where they have seasons like Harvest, and everybody has to muck in, and now she

a guinea-fowl
a large grey pheasant

dress poultry, to prepare for customers
at a nominal price clean

is taking the most active female role in the business since my grandmother was attached to it. I don't have to come home and explain why I'm completely pissed off or whatever; the chances are she's already heard about it during the day, and she does come up with some extremely good ideas. It's always very good to get somebody totally from outside to come in with new ideas. One tends to become very staid with old, traditional family businesses, you tend to get in a rut, it's inevitable.

*serious
still
old-fashioned*

From March to August we have to fall back on more traditional-type foods. It's less interesting because everyone else is doing it. I mean there's no way that I can compete any more with the supermarkets selling things like fresh chickens. Ten years ago a fresh chicken was very much more difficult to get because it was the era of frozen foods, but people now are definitely going back to something that's fresh, and they will have frozen food as a standby.

All the game that I handle is shot by sportsmen. Nobody yet has successfully reared pheasants because of today's costs. A pheasant put in the air for shooting next season is going to cost a conscientious landowner, who doesn't skimp on the food and employs a gamekeeper, about £12 to £14 each. He is going to get back from me a maximum of £2 each. So he's going to lose on average about £10 per bird. Now when some of them rear 30-50,000 pheasants, well, it's not business because they don't expect to make money out of it. But at the same time they expect the best return that the market will allow from people like myself.

I get a great deal of satisfaction out of selling, and if I get one customer a week that I can convert to buying something he or she wouldn't normally buy, for someone to come back and say, 'That was super', that makes my day.

Partridge is probably the best of all. English partridge, mind you; there are two types of partridge, English and French, and a young English partridge is reckoned by the gourmet to be *la crème de la crème*. It's something which requires only twenty, twenty-five minutes roasting, and it literally melts in your mouth, it's superb.

I have one daughter, and she's nearly seven. Obviously she's had to come to terms with a lot of things which most seven-year-old young ladies wouldn't have seen, and it would probably turn over a lot of mummies' rummies too. She has to accept that animals are killed. She'll drag twenty dead rabbits in from the back of the van, and it's all part of

Kip

her education. She may want an academic career, in which case I shall help her as much as I can if she's good enough to go to university; or hopefully, she'll marry the right guy and go off and have a family. But she will certainly not go into the business. My job is quite physically demanding. There's a hell of a lot of lifting and driving vans around at high speed, and it's long hours. I wouldn't want to wish that on my daughter. Certainly she will not go into the business, this lease on our new shop premises is going to see me out.

Eggs are a great ⁹² standby in the kitchen

Gamekeeper Andrew Seaman

My father was in forestry and as a boy I had two hundred acres to go and do what I liked in, really, and when I came home from school I'd make a little hide and I'd sit there until it was dark, watching the birds, and Ma can't relate to how I could want to do what I'm doing, which most people think is killing things the whole while, when I was such a nature boy, as she used to call me.

My beat is approximately three thousand acres. That's as big as they come. I ain't got to look for a job, there's always something to do somewhere around here.

Even though I live in the village, it might be a week before I talk to people, even the farm people, other than waving when they go past. It could be a lonely profession but I don't find it so.

I completely nurse the pheasants from the day-old eggs right on until they're shot, and then make sure there's enough left behind for stock for another year, and generally control the vermin that would prey on the wild birds. Really I'm a conservationist, with pheasants in mind more than anything else.

It's a complete loss for my guv'nor right from the word go, really and honestly. The only bonus he's got is that I'm able to keep the odd vermin down - you know, rats and rabbits. They say that every bird shot costs £10 and when it gets to Nigel the game dealer, Nigel probably pays maximum £5 a brace, well, if you get £5, that's top money, and sometimes they don't reach that. The only money to be made out of it are the estates that let days out - perhaps they'd have foreigners come and let a day out.

But that doesn't happen here. Simply, it's just a tradition that's gone on and that's their hobby, same as someone else's hobby is darts in the pub, you know, it's just the thing that's done. And my job when you boil it all down is to produce ten, fifteen days' shooting through the winter. I mean my whole year is based on that, really.

Gamekeeper

Until they started this driving towards them, they never really killed a great number of birds, and of course once they started, they got into competition with landowners round about to try and rear even more pheasants because Lord So and So wanted more pheasants in his woods than Lord Such and Such, and that's when the really big bags started. Of an average now it really does vary, we have several smaller days, more a fun day, where we'll perhaps have only ten beaters, and if we get 120 head, which is accounting for the odd woodcock and pigeon, perhaps seventy to eighty pheasants and a few bits and pieces to make it up to that, that's acceptable. When we start to do the woods, then really we're thinking about four to five hundred pheasants a day.

We have about thirty beaters a day which I have to organize and somehow get to synchronize so they come in the right place at the right time. We have three, perhaps four pickers behind with the dogs that go right back behind for any runners, so we don't leave a lot behind by the time we're done.

The standard of gunnery here is very good indeed, you'd have a job to find anywhere where they have a better team of guns. Maybe it's hard for you to imagine, but it's an art form, really, to see them shooting. There's very few of them that get hurt, they're dead in the air before they even come down. You see the art is to hit the bird in the head, and our guns are good enough, they do enough shooting, so that's just what they do. There are very few guns that come here that can't shoot. If they come here and they don't shoot very well, my guv'nor don't have them again, and that's all there is to it.

As far as the traditions go, it's always been a tradition that the gentlemen give the keeper a tip on a shoot day, and it's tradition again that the gamekeeper takes the birds out for the tenants on the estate. They're just little things, but things you more or less take for granted, things that have been going on for over a hundred years or more.

The tenants that actually farm land that belongs to my guv'nor are obviously not allowed to shoot, but it's common courtesy really that when we shoot the pieces of land they farm on, they put out a piece of kale which is a crop they will grow for cattle food, but which we can also make a drive out of. That'll probably grow five or six foot tall, absolutely ideal game cover, so we get them to grow that on the top of a hill somewhere and the pheasants that come out of there are real screamers, you could say.

We try and make them into as good a sporting bird as we can. We improve the woods by cutting the front down so that they fly a bit higher, and the birds aren't so close to the guns when they take off. So they take off on a hill and they're probably forty yards higher and they make a really good shot.

And then of course we leave it nice and quiet and feed them up again. They're fed all during the winter on straw and we see what we've got and whether we can shoot again, decide whether perhaps there's too many cocks, and so then we'll only shoot them and leave the hens. It's very much 'make it up as you go along' through the shooting season. But if you want to have a stock at the end on a private estate like this, there's no pressure. If it was a shoot where they'd let all the days for X amount of pounds, the people who have already paid their money want their blood, don't they? They want their shooting, even if they have to shoot everything on the estate.

I've got a very good relationship with my employer. You know, he's the same age as me which I find quite helpful. Usually we see each other at least once a week. I think he's been quite a wild sort of chap in his time, agriculture college, all that sort of thing.

In a way I suppose it is quite feudal because the shoot actually holds back the farming for the tenants, because to do what we want for the birds means that some of the farm activities are going to be done slightly different. Mind you, it benefits all the rest of the wildlife as it means instead of coming in with a damn great sprayer, charging along spraying everything, we have to be careful about the hedges and things like that. And if they aren't being careful of the hedges I soon get my eye on to it and make sure they are. So really my guv'nor is the only one who benefits from it, and to everyone else it's just a damn nuisance.

There's general aggravation with the farmers in that we want things done how we want them done. I mean when you see someone driving down the farm track and they've got one wheel up on the verge where you've got nests, you're going to say, 'Come on, you've had one too many at dinnertime,' and they don't really like that. But you don't want the wheel there, and that's the sort of little thing that upsets someone for perhaps a couple, three years afore they forget it.

Personally I like the trapping part of it best, trapping the vermin and that. To me that's the most interesting thing. Really it's a matter of deciding which way your vermin is going to come from and making the

relevant trap to catch it. I'll dig a hole right through the bank, what we call a through-hole, and we've got traps today which are a hell of an improvement on the ones of years gone by. Stoats, weasels, rats, foxes. Nine out of ten things are dead in the trap these days. Crushed and that's that. And of course, me being me and liking some of the old traditions, I actually hang all my vermin up on my vermin line, whereas the old keepers used to nail them all round their shed in the wood.

You've got to check the traps each day, which is the fun part, if you like. I try and run just about two hundred, which is quite a lot to look at each day spread over three thousand acres, and I concentrate on that for six to eight weeks. I have a man trapping session in the spring, and I say, 'Well, by the time I done that, what's left over deserve to be there, or there ain't enough to do you a lot of harm.' And by the next year there's just as many again, I catch just as many every year because it moves in, but at least it gives the birds a chance to get going once the pheasants and partridges get to, say, six or seven weeks old.

I did actually take another job before, just to appease mother, really. I took a job with a builder for a month, but I knew when I took it I shouldn't be there. You don't work gamekeeping round your life, you live it, and if you didn't you couldn't do it. There's plenty of times when I've been perhaps two days without sleep because there is things to do, the weather is such that you want to get on and make the most of the light, and you have something to do in the dark as well. You just have to sort of plod along. Luckily that don't affect me too much.

My wife's father was a gamekeeper, so she knows as much as me. If she wasn't I don't think she'd still be here, she'd be gone by now. And little boy Robert, he's now nine, and the other boy's only just over a year, but Robert being nine, he loves it, he'd far rather come with me than anything else. I don't want to push him either way, it's very tempting to get him to do what I'm doing, but I can see that my job has not got many years to go as I'm doing it now. I mean legislation is already coming on the Continent to restrict the rearing of pheasants, and if my guv'nor was not allowed to rear pheasants I don't think he'd particularly want a keeper. Full-time keepers are getting thinner and thinner, there's no doubt about that.

I don't meet up with other gamekeepers. I'm classed as unsociable in the gamekeeping world. The others get together but I don't have time, actually, I spend so much time at work, and the odd time that I do get

off I try and put aside for my family rather than jigger off and yap about what I've been doing for the past umpteen weeks. It doesn't interest me what other people are doing on other estates.

I don't know how I'd stick a nine-to-five job, I don't know how I could get into such a rut; maybe I'm in a rut here, but I am my own employer. Really and honestly, I often look at my job, and I get more out of the three thousand acres that I look after for my gov'nor than he does himself. Far more. Don't put that in the book because he'll dock my wages!

I like my work, I do like my work. Sometimes I consider it work, but truthfully, if I had a nine-to-five job, I'd have to have a piece of part-time keeping to do, and I'm really being paid for what I'd be doing as a hobby.

Golf Professional Chris Moody

You read about people who say when they were twelve years old they decided they were going to be... something or other. I always sort of thought I'd like to be a professional golfer but it was more a question of I couldn't really think of much else to do, to be honest.

I was keen to play golf for a living, and a chap that I used to give lessons to sponsored me for two years to go and give it a try. The first year I won something like £380 on the tour, and the second year I did quite a bit better, by no means making any money, but showing signs of getting somewhere. This chap sponsored me for about £5000 a year, which was ample to play the tour in those days - I wish it still was now. It meant you could go play and not have to worry from day to day about making a cheque. I didn't see my sponsor from one month to the next. It gave him a good interest, a bit like, I suppose, owning a share in a racehorse. He did it because he liked golf and presumably liked me, and to give me a chance to get going. It was all a bit... philanthropic I suppose is the right term.

When you say you're a professional golfer, people say, 'Oh, really, but what's your job?' And I say, 'That is my job.' Then they say, 'Really? Don't you work?' And I say, 'Well, that is my work.' 'That must be nice,' they say, 'playing a game for a living must be great fun.' Which of course it is, but at the same time it is very hard work. That seems to be the mental leap that most people can't make - that if you enjoy it, it can't be work.

It's very hard work. I mean, most people think it's the life of old Riley and every day's a holiday because we go where they go on holiday, Barcelona or Malaga, south of France, I keep going off to different places every week. I've just been to Rio. But you go there and you've got to work, because if you don't make any money, you won't be doing it for very long. Actually making money out of golf is quite tough to do. Unless you're incredibly talented you have to work hard at it. And really

it is a seven-day-a-week job. You can never really stop working, you've always got to go and practise.

You've got to keep your game in shape all the time. Basically speaking, Monday's your travelling day; Tuesday you've got to play your practice round, and practise your game; Wednesday it's either the Pro-Am or it's another practice round - more practice. Then the tournament starts Thursday, finishes Sunday, and then you go to the next one and it's the same thing. And all that time, you're having to try and maintain your golf game at a standard to win money.

The golf game is a bit like a pendulum; your game swings from one side to the other, and you're trying to get it steady in the middle. You start to battle with one part of your game, be it your short game, or your putting, or your driving, or maybe you're battling a hook. You tend to concentrate very much on that aspect of your game which is letting you down, and then the pendulum starts to swing the other way because you've neglected another part of your game a little bit. So it's a constant swinging from one side to the other to try and keep it on the straight and narrow.

People do get obsessed with golf, in the sense that it is a permanent challenge, and you know you've got to keep grafting at it all the time, you have to practise continually, to fire on all four cylinders as it were.

A lot of people would hate the life, I think, it's just hotels and airports and golf courses. You get up, you fly from one airport to another airport, and the hotel, go to another golf course. I happen to enjoy travelling, and I think we're very lucky that we play lots of different countries because if you make an effort, you can get around and meet the local people and they'll take you around and show you things, and it can be quite interesting. But generally speaking, it's a pretty relentless slog, throughout the year, and you don't get the chance to see very much.

I think for me, I much prefer the uncertainty of playing the tour - even not really knowing whether you're going to make any money that week, but being very independent - than actually working for somebody else, and being answerable to their whims. You are your own boss in this life, and you can't fool yourself. There's no office politics. I mean you either shoot a good score or you don't. If you shoot a really bad score, well, there's nobody to take the blame, but if you shoot a very good score, there's no one else to take the credit either.

It affords me more freedom than a lot of people, but it means while

having a lot of freedom, I have to be a lot more disciplined than a lot of people. You have to keep practising all the time. You have to stay relatively fit; you can go out and have a few beers, but if you tie one on right before the first round, it's gonna cost you. I mean a lot of people can go to the office with a hangover, and they put in a dismal day's work, but they still get paid, and they probably even have people to cover for them, but with golf, all your pleasures have to be slightly disciplined.

It's very difficult to analyse the way you play. I'm pretty erratic. My main asset, I suppose, is I've got quite a good mental approach to the game, I've got a reasonable ability to concentrate, and even when I'm playing badly, I get the ball around. I'm pretty good around the greens, my short game is pretty reliable, most of the time. I'm known as a pretty good putter, which is a big asset. You can't play golf if you can't putt, basically. Mind you, I would look at my sixty- and seventy-yard pitch shots and say they were pretty indifferent for a professional player.

When I'm playing well, most of the parts of my game are pretty good. I'm a lucky player, you know, I bounce off trees and land back in the fairways and things like that. It's always better to be lucky than talented.

'Professional' means you play for money. With four good rounds of golf you can earn as much as some people earn in a year. Even if you're not in the top two or three there is a lot of money to be won now in the tournament. I'm not a wealthy person as a result of playing golf, but I live very nicely: I won enough money to be able to buy a house, I live quite comfortably I suppose, you know, middle-class comfortable living. There are people who are making a great deal of money out of the game, which we all aspire to do.

Hitting balls doesn't guarantee you will get better, because obviously everyone would just be out there twenty-four hours a day and make fortunes. I think the best players, the top players on the tour, certainly work the hardest. The Sevvys and the Langers and the Faldos probably practise more than anyone else to keep their game up at the standard that they've got it. Anybody can have a set of clubs as good as the ones I've got, it's the man holding the other end; it's the puttee not the putter. You know, Sevvv has very, very good equipment, but give me Sevvv's clubs I won't become Sevvv - otherwise I would have stolen them long ago!

The difference between winning comfortable sums of money and quite substantial sums of money is a great big leap, and it is a difficult step to get on the next rung of the ladder. I don't know, maybe I'm over

the hill now - I'm thirty-two - who knows? That's old for a sportsman. I mean in a lot of sports, people have retired long since - squash players and football players are considered well past it at thirty-two. If you're playing badly for a couple of months, you think there must be better ways of making a living.

My mother is actually now dead, but I always remember she used to say, 'Well, why don't you get a proper job?' when I said I wanted to play golf for a living. My parents were very disappointed I didn't go to university, because both my brothers work with computers and are doing quite well for themselves. They're both older than me and my parents obviously had visions of me doing something similar. In fact I'm the only person in my family who plays golf at all.

At the moment I'm trying to use the money that I'm making to give myself a sort of financial base, so that I won't starve to death if I suddenly stop playing terribly well. It never used to concern me at all. I suppose as I'm getting older I start thinking, 'Well, I might have to stop playing in X number of years - what am I going to do then?' I would say after ten years of playing tournaments you're almost unemployable in the normal sense of the word. Having been my own master completely for ten years, I would find it very difficult to try and settle into a routine job, and I want to have sufficient money behind me so I don't have to rush off to some dead-end job if I do decide to stop playing.

It's a very anti-social existence, really, because you're away most of the time. It makes any relationship very difficult. I don't know how golfers who are married cope; it must be very difficult for the wife. I'm thirty-two and still single. I know my girlfriends have always found it pretty difficult, and really, being frank about it, I suppose I've always put the golf ahead of the relationship.

One of the things that I've found with golf, I think it tends to dull your brain in that it makes you so inward-looking. It's such a selfish life, you spend half your day planning the next day, so that your schedules are correct; you do the right amount of practice, and then you've got your travelling, and then you've got to watch what you eat, watch what you drink, and you've got to do your jogging, and your exercises, and the whole thing is terribly self-orientated, and it's very easy to think and talk about nothing else but golf.

I took my new girlfriend to Monte Carlo and she spent the entire week

on the beach, and as an afterthought last thing in the evening, she'd ask, 'Oh, what did you score today?' Which is fine, it doesn't bother me at all, I don't need her to be hanging on my every movement. It's quite refreshing, really, because if I start talking about how I duffed a chip into a bunker at the fourteenth, she hasn't got a clue what I'm talking about, so the conversation doesn't start.

I think I'm very fortunate to have been able to do what I've done, you know, and whatever humble achievements I may have had have given me a great deal of satisfaction. Obviously you feel disappointed that you haven't done more - I'm sure Sevy feels disappointed that he hasn't won every British Open since 1979, and I feel comparatively disappointed that I haven't won a tournament in Europe. I've been second, but there's a big difference between coming second and winning. Well, we all have our disappointments, but you can't go through life kicking yourself for all the things you failed to achieve. So I'm very fortunate to have been able to have done what I've done, and at the same time see half the world.

I find it a little boring outside the tournaments now; if I stopped playing tournaments I doubt that I'd play a great deal of golf because for me the enjoyment and excitement of the game is the playing under tournament conditions and there is a world of difference between ordinary golf and tournament golf, which you can't appreciate unless you've ever tried making a living with a golf club in your hand.

Hairdresser

Richard Brockwell

I've been doing it since I was eighteen, I'm now twenty-five. It's something I've always wanted to do but where I come from you don't really get that many hairdressers, or I didn't know of many. I used to think it's only a job that women do, but a friend of mine worked in a salon in the West End, and she talked me into coming up for an interview, I got the job, and it went from there.

I don't know why I wanted to do it. At school I was worried sick about what I was going to do when I left, thinking I hadn't got anything I really wanted to do. I did day-release in a mental hospital and I thought I might want to be a male nurse, but I've always liked playing with hair, so after a couple of other jobs I went into it.

My father still thinks it's not hard work, it's not strenuous. I suppose my mum thinks it's glamorous, as people who don't have their hair done do. She thinks it's all glamour and nothing else. But I work very hard. It's mental and physical strain. If you've got a client every half an hour you don't want to be running late for the next woman because she'll be going mad. You've got to keep going, you've got to keep your stamina up, and if you're feeling low one day you can't let your hairdressing slack off, because it will show. You ignore the fact that your back aches and your legs ache. I notice I'm getting round-shouldered.

There's mental strain, too, dealing with each person, and having to stay happy and cheerful with them, even if you're really pissed off with listening to them.

I don't know why, but I can always remember the conversations we've had when I do their hair, they always say, 'How on earth do you remember?' Say they're moving or something, three months later they'll come back and I'll say, 'How did the move go?' And they are amazed that you can remember.

How interested I actually am depends on how much I like the client, I think. But to be cynical about it, you've got spring, summer, autumn,

Hairdresser

winter. In the summer you'll be saying, 'Are you going on holiday?' to every person that comes in. In the winter it's, 'What are you doing for Christmas?' or something, and you think, 'Oh God, I can hardly wait for the next season.'

Generally people are okay. Someone who's got an exceptional amount of money and comes in two or three times a week, they're usually well over the top. But I think the general public overall are very nice. They can be pretty shy when they come into a salon, especially the one I work in, because it's got a name and that sort of thing.

When I go out I'm pretty shy, I can't go up to someone and start making conversation. In work I have confidence in myself and that I will make people liven up and relax. I like dealing with people that are actually frightened of coming into a hairdressing salon, which is quite a lot, actually, and it makes you feel good if you start getting them chatting sort of thing if they're really nervous. Another reason people don't like going to a salon is that so many hairdressers are standoffish.

The upper-class person will treat you wonderfully if you do their hair well, but then after that you're just really like one of their little maids or whatever, and you're running around after them. You get treated a bit better with people with not so much money or not so much class, and someone from the working class like myself would think, 'I'm friendly with a hairdresser, isn't that good!'

You get lots of people that come in every week and you do get to know them, but you can never really say they're a true friend, because all it takes is for them not to like their hair once, and you've lost them, no matter how friendly you were with them.

If anything, if you know you've got a bitch sitting in front of you, you would actually put much more effort into it, because there's no way you're going to let her say, 'I don't like it,' but then no matter how much effort you put into it, you know she's going to say something. People actually get a real high out of being a bitch to a hairdresser or beautician. They like to be awkward, like they'll say, 'You didn't use that brush last week,' when you know you use the same one all the time. What the hell does it matter as long as you finish it right?

It can get you down. I've never felt like this, but at the moment I hate work. I love what I do but I hate work. I begrudge going into work, I begrudge being there, I actually think I'm becoming really pissed off with people, with the public. Okay, not all of them, you look forward to

All in a Day's Work

seeing some of them, and some you really get on with. I don't know why I'm pissed off, some people say it's the seven-year syndrome, which is fair enough, maybe, but I think – do I still want to be hairdressing, do I still want to be banging away behind a chair for the rest of my life? People think the money is brilliant, but it's not, you've got to work your guts out to get it, because in the West End you work on commission, and if you want to get a good wage, you've got to really go at it.

I get there at eight in the morning and I quite often have an eight-thirty client and then finish at six, and every half hour, every three quarters of an hour you're cutting a head of hair. You get 20 per cent commission on each one you do, that's about three or four quid you get for each client, so you'd have to do between fifteen and seventeen clients a day to earn any good money.

I'm not one of these hairdressers who think, 'That's so and so, she gave me a fiver, or she gave me a few quid, so I'll fit them in, or be particularly nice to them.' It doesn't matter if someone doesn't tip, I'll still fit them in if I get on with them.

I love cutting hair. I always look at people's hair, on the bus, walking along the street, I like to admire hair. I'm not one of those people who say, 'Who on earth cut your hair!' sort of thing. If someone has nice hair I'll ask where they got it done. I love the creative part, to see if you can actually do something different. I like someone to be pleased and happy with their hair. That's the ego-trip part, they're happy with their hair, so you get a boost, or whatever. But the longer you do it, the less the boost lasts, and it's not such a good high when you do it day in, day out: you say, 'Another one that's pleased, good, where's the next lady?'

I could open up my own salon, but there's so much hassle to own a salon. You're working four times harder than you would be working for someone else, although I suppose in the end maybe you reap the rewards. But I wouldn't like to settle for an average salon, I'd like the best salon ...

If we had to take bets about what I'd be doing in five years' time I'd like to say I'd be really famous or something, but I have to say I'll probably still be slogging away behind a chair at someone's hair. I don't know, I'm at the stage where it's been bothering me for quite some time. But then you'll forget it for a little while, you get distracted. Unfortunately I don't see it leading to anything. I wish I could see some more future in it.

Kissagram Stephanie Greenslade

I've always, I suppose, been the kind of person who has done strange and mad things when other people are looking – such as jumping into swimming pools topless and that sort of thing. I was working as a graphic designer and realized that I wanted to do something that was more flamboyant, because I've always believed that I'm a flamboyant person; and deciding that it was the nearest I would ever get to Hollywood, I hit the Kissagram lights.

I do lots of different things – naughty nuns, silly schoolgirls; I do a sadistogram, hair pulled back, the whip, leather. I charge into the restaurant and bash on the door and get my victim. I vary the acts that I do, and I actually develop and work on the character so that I know what that character would say in response to a question or a remark.

There are a lot of Kissagram agencies around that really serve nothing but titillation, and don't consider that there could be a more entertaining value in the Kissagrams. I suppose if I go in with a whip it is highly suggestive, but it has got to have that element of suggestion to make it an exciting event. Because, let's face it, for a lot of people that I do, this is the one show-bizzy thing that happens to them in their life. I mean I did a Kissagram on a chap who was sixty-five and who'd retired, and there was almost a tear in his eye because it was something that was totally unexpected and probably the only time he would experience somebody in fishnet tights and a G-string coming and making him feel like a special person.

It must be rather strange for Rebecca to see her mother leaving the house scantily clad, and apparently the neighbours are starting to talk. I wonder what must happen when she goes to school and says, 'My mummy went out today dressed with a whip and hardly any clothes on.' I wonder what kind of reaction her teachers have, but I don't worry about it. I came to the conclusion that I must do what I must do, is it really anyone else's business? I know what I'm doing, I've spoken to the

teachers at her new school and told them what I do: I'm a Kissagram girl, I do Kissagrams.

Obviously the money is a consideration; not many people do things for nothing, and although that wasn't the prime motivation – the initial consideration was to do something that would be exciting for me and varied, and because I have the ability to chat and to make people laugh and I am a bit of a comedienne, you know – it was an opportunity to do all that and earn money as well. But I think, really, the most exciting part of it is being able to show off and to be enjoyed and to entertain. A lot of people possibly don't think of Kissagrams as a form of entertainment, but I make sure that people are actually getting about half an hour of theatre, instead of just someone who's rushing in in a scantily clad outfit reading a poem.

I sometimes get very profound about it and say that it stems from a desire to be loved by people. And a desire to be noticed and to be different. I find now when I go into a pub as I am, I just want to take all my clothes off, and I know it sounds really crazy, but I hate it when people don't notice me or don't look at me.

I've been told many times I live in a fantasy world. I suppose I do in a way. I'm a vain creature as you've probably gathered. I think I must get this or that to look right... hair, face, make-up. Even with housework and looking after my daughter, I'm constantly criticizing myself and wondering if I could do better at it. I'm fastidious – probably neurotic is a better word. It's important that everything works out just right. If I'm doing a Kissagram, I get very upset, I almost cry, if my hair isn't right. I'm having my teeth done, and my nose, and all the little bits and pieces to make things what I consider just right. I'm going to have cosmetic surgery, and I'll probably have the money to pay for it by the end of the year.

I mean, what is reality, anyway? Reality is only a product of fantasy, isn't it, to a degree? We think about something we want to happen, and the fantasy makes reality.

I think that if I were slippant about it then I would lose the sense that I was trying to make myself better each time, trying to make my act better. I think of it as hard work. There are lots of times when it's not fun or glamorous. If it wasn't work, why should I want to drive around in freezing temperatures in the middle of winter, to some fat spotty man and sit on his knee. I don't see how I could not think of it as work, really.

I had a dreadful call from the taxman – I nearly had a heart attack! He wanted to find out how much I was earning. So I sat down the other night and worked out how much it actually cost me to start up, and I've paid out much more than I've earned in total. I've spent a fortune. But I love my costumes! My costumes are little characters of me; they are little facets of my personality, all in my cupboard hanging up, ready for me to assume.

I suppose in some ways it is sexist. But I don't look on it like that. I consider myself to be an entertainer. I don't do topless, I don't do stripping, I don't consider myself to be exploited. I'm running the business myself and the takings are mine. How can someone that is attractive and funny be exploiting themselves? I don't really know. I can remember once there were three nurses in a pub who said that it was disgusting that I was going around dressed like this, and wasn't I harming the women's cause? And I said, 'Well, you know, I'm doing quite well out of it' – that was my only reply. It sounded awfully mercenary. But I don't see that it is sexist. To me it's dressing up. I don't think of myself as someone's sexual fantasy. Obviously I realize that I must look sexy, people tell me I look sexy, but it doesn't make me feel sexy.

I live with someone – that can be difficult, especially when he's chauffeuring me around. Just the other day we were out and we had a tremendous argument because we couldn't find the place. Also there are always stagedoor Johnnies, and that has to be faced. And obscene phone calls – hundreds of them – oh, horrible disgusting phone calls. So that can make things difficult. And obviously if I'm out on a Kissagram and somebody starts to chat me up, that can make things very difficult too. Problems of jealousy.

There are some nights, the kind of nights where I may have been pushed against a wall and offered a hundred pounds, and those are the dark nights. I try not to dwell too much on it. Occasionally, you'll get a guy who'll just pick you up and toss you on to the floor and kneel across your arms – and what do you do about it? You can't physically fight; you have to beat them with chat.

Sometimes after a very, very hard night, perhaps doing two, three, four 'grams, I can feel very lost when I come out. Because one minute you're in a pub being watched by everyone, and everyone is there and the focus is on you; and when you come out there is nothing... suddenly

that tremendous rush of adrenalin that was present while you were doing the 'gram has gone and has nowhere to go. I suppose it's the same kind of thing that actors and actresses feel when they've performed for an hour. The work itself is very much an up-and-down syndrome, whereby I'm getting very excited, coming down, getting excited, coming down, getting excited, and when I get home I think, 'What can I do now?' And I tell my boyfriend, 'You're boring me! I want to do something exciting. You know I've just done *this* tonight and you expect me to watch the television?'

I've always hoped that there would be a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, that I would swoop into Stringfellow's, someone would meet me and say, 'Goodness me, she'd look ever so good in the next episode of *Dallas*, or *Dynasty*,' or some strange fantasy like that. I've always hoped that I could just make it by being seen and by being me. I have met a few people but they've all been rogues. I don't think that it's going to happen that easily, which is sad. It's a sad part of my life. Very sad sometimes. I battle with the sadness. I've just recently met somebody that wants me to sing in their pop group, but everything is going very, very slowly at the moment. I'm getting downhearted because nothing is happening really. I suffer from depression a lot. So there are times of depression, but I snap out. Being an up-and-down person, because my highs are very high, I must expect my lows to be low.

I'm getting old. That's how I feel, I feel very upset about it. I'm twenty-three. I feel that I had so many opportunities when I was younger that I didn't take, that I should probably be further on in a career. I left school with O-levels, was going on to college to take A-levels; I wanted to go and study Fine Art, and I have a sense of regret that I didn't plant my feet firmly on the ground and embark on some fantastic career. I always wanted to be a psychiatrist, I just ended up on the wrong side of the couch. I'm thinking about going to drama school now. I just wonder if I can take myself seriously enough to learn a piece of Shakespeare and actually to bring it off properly. Each time I turn to something, I put everything into it. My all. So that's it, really, that's me.

Lexicographer Robert Burchfield

The goal of finishing the Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary* has been the central part of my life for twenty-eight years. It's been my main consuming passion, to investigate how it was to be done and to set it in motion, and then to see it through to the end, and has occupied the time that I regard as my work time all these years. Once embarked, I was in some kind of very acceptable track with the end of the journey seeming a long way off with the accumulation of new evidence, the discovery of new kinds of vocabulary, the remorseless rise of space science, space travel, the rise of computer technology, the distributional problems of American English, Australian English and all the other forms of English. One had no idea, to begin with, of the profundity of difference between these versions of English and British English, and you could never find out without elaborate analysis. The editing process itself is so complicated at this level of lexicography that it took me ages to find out how to control all the divisions and sub-divisions and types of defining and grouping of words, and how to cope with the frightful prefixes like 'un' and 'non' and 'pre' and 'pro' and 'post' and so forth. I'm talking about entries that run to thirty or forty pages, each with three columns of type. Words to me are messy objects, capable in a chameleon-like fashion of acting differently each time you grasp them.

If anyone sets out on a journey, they don't want to stop short, to return home with the job unfinished. Any athlete who sets out on a mile race likes to run a mile. I would have hated to let everyone down, that was the primary thing. Once started on a project where you yourself had set the rules of what was to be included and excluded, how ambitious the project was to be, it was a terrifying prospect that I would not finish the project, and the relief that one feels now is the disappearance of that fear.

I started work on the Supplement to the *OED* thinking I might do the job in one volume of about 1250 pages. It's ended up four volumes in over 6000 pages.

All in a Day's Work

I don't separate my identity - career, work, identity - rough synonyms. Probably other people would say I was obsessive. I don't feel it to be obsessive in the least, it seems to me to be a natural thing. If I were a farmer I would be totally and utterly and completely a farmer - and extrapolate from that to any occupation you like. I could not abide an attitude of starting work on the dot of nine o'clock in a civil service way, and stopping at five o'clock and totally switching off. I don't understand how people can endure that as a way of life, where work is thought to be physical effort restricted within certain hours, and then the rest of one's life is not in any way connected to the nature of that work. My life is of a piece in that the work extends into the leisure, the leisure extends into the work.

I'm not elderly, I'm only sixty-two, but the first signs of conventional running down of the body machine have hit me this year. Whether it's connected with the completion of the Supplement or whether it would have happened whatever I would have done with my life, who knows? I've run up against that nasty beast called cholesterol, and am now on a diet as a result, nothing more than that, just first intimations that what people call elderliness is beginning to creep up. But feelings of mortality happen at my age in a completely natural way because your friends start to die - and they die aged sixty-two or younger.

In the nature of things lexicography is a sedentary occupation. When young I was an athlete, played rugby, ran at speed. But from the time I was thirty-four, when I started on the dictionary, until this time, my exercise has been gardening only, and so from time to time if I was looking a bit tired, somebody or other would make remarks about working too hard. Quite often you think you might not survive to see the end of it.

I find it difficult to imagine how I could exist without a project, and without a target. The pursuit of leisure as a way of life is to me almost wholly mysterious. Holidays have been taken in short bursts and they have had an object in mind, like taking the children on a camping holiday in France or Switzerland or Italy, and the enjoyment has been primarily that of the children, not of the parents. The whole aim and object of it was to allow the children to run free in foreign countries, and see strange objects, to eat strange foods, and so forth.

I see no connection at all between money and work. I know that society is split down the middle and the country is being pulled to pieces

Lexicographer

by people who want more money - teachers and miners and so forth. I don't know what it's all about: whatever they get, whether it's 4 per cent, 5 per cent, 15 per cent, the difference is imperceptible when the tax man has had his share, and when the expenses of life eat up whatever you get. I don't see the point of all these dreadful, splitting social arguments about money.

Life was very hard indeed when I had three children, on a very small salary, and decided to send them all through the public school system. It was a deadly combination, small salary, high school fees, so I was essentially living from hand to mouth until the last few years. When I remarried, two incomes were coming into a childless house with no more school fees. Since then things have been quite easy, and I find myself saying, 'What's money?' I travel on Concorde from time to time. I've discovered the deliciousness of the British Rail card and travel first class at half price, but money doesn't mean anything to me any more. I find that against perhaps my own expectations, I'm proving to be what people conventionally call generous, when for thirty years or so I had to be tight-fisted out of sheer necessity.

I don't honestly care too much about money. I worried about it when it was short, and I feel an absurd sense of security now that the worries are over.

In a quite hard-headed way, when you are sixty-two, you have reasonable expectation of eighteen years' day-to-day activity. In my case I will concentrate on grammar. Some people like to travel, other people like to garden, other people like just to visit or play cards or whatever. I don't play cards, I don't propose to learn how to play chess, I propose to go on with work.

I have made a start converting myself from being a lexicographer to being some kind of grammarian, but the time left to me is obviously not anything like as long as the time I've spent on lexicography, and so I must run with the speed of a sprinter in grammar, or it won't be done. But one cannot move with lightning speed in new, unfamiliar territory. Grammar, it may surprise you, is so distant from lexicography that one has only a layman's attitude towards primary rules of grammar, even after three decades of lexicography. I find myself floundering in the most primary things like grammatical concord, the gerund, the subjunctive and various other things where problems are lying strewn about.

All in a Day's Work

When I was in the army, the commanding officer of my small unit had a habit of saying at the end of each day if he happened upon you: 'How have you justified your existence today, Gunner Burchfield?' That quite fundamental question I suppose has been pursuing me all my life. One's here for such a short time and one must justify one's talents, one's mere existence, by stretching oneself to the limit, I've always felt and still feel. Simply standing on the sideline of life is not attractive to me, I have always wanted to be involved in something that seemed to me to matter.

Life is full of illusions, and one of them is that you don't notice the passage of time. You make conventional jokes when you turn forty and then fifty, and then sixty, but you don't actually notice that you are growing a little older. You're totally unaware that your hair has turned grey until people tell you it's turned grey. You can't even see it in the mirror. You are totally unaware that your reactions have slowed down until you play in a cricket match against the young and discover that the ball which used to fall into your hands to be caught falls a yard behind you or a yard in front of you. Age seems to creep up in unexpected corners and in unexpected ways. You're not aware of it. The illusion is that you are still young, vibrant, reasonably good-looking, athletic, all that.

With my work I've been unaware of the passage of twenty-eight years, that's really what I'm trying to say, it seems to me to have been the twinkling of an eye. I started, I got into it, and now I've finished it... and I'm amazed, because I wasn't conscious of the passage of the years.

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Literary Agent
Carol Smith

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The nice thing about my life is that every day is different, and it's only structured in the fact that when the mail arrives I answer it and take the problems one by one. Every letter that comes in is answered that day, every manuscript that comes in is acknowledged, and all telephone calls are returned. We get an average of three hundred unsolicited manuscripts a year, I counted them up once. They are mainly first novels and we look at every single one of them, and out of the three hundred, we take on about one a year.

Because I work for myself, I only take on writers that I can get on with, and sooner or later I part with the ones that I can't. I've got between forty and sixty clients, and I try to keep the agency as small as possible so that I can give time to each one, because I find that pays off in the long run. So I can truthfully say that all my authors have my equal attention. Maybe I could make more money if I took on more writers, but on the other hand if I gave each one less time, they might not do so well.

The relationship you build up with your client is so close that you have to put a barrier between you. It has a lot of the relationship between the psychiatrist and patient in it, because you really do get to know a writer very well, you know all their weaknesses, you know their depressions, you know their money problems. I've learnt over the years that you have to keep them at arm's length, however much you like them, because I don't think it would work if I let my clients into my life in the way they let me into theirs. Also my role is to talk about them, not for them to talk about me. I don't think they know me a fraction as well as I know them.

We have a very good relationship and they trust me, they trust my judgement and my advice. If any of my authors write something that I don't think is up to scratch I will send it back to them, I will not do what

many agents do and just send it out to the publisher, so I do a lot of editorial work on all the things I handle.

Authors do need to have their hands held a lot, and the main reason is that writing is a lonely business, particularly fiction, because it's all coming out of your own mind.

Because an agent is usually the only contact between the writer and his livelihood, I think it's vital to be totally involved. If you are doing a bad job for an author you could be damaging his whole future. On the other hand, if you are doing a really good job, it works the other way.

Most of my clients are earning quite a lot of money. But truthfully, money is of no importance to me at all, I'm genuinely in this business because I enjoy what I do and I enjoy the game. So the only role that money plays is that that's the way the game is assessed. It's like playing cards. Every deal is a gamble in my agency, they are all new hands, and it's the way you play the cards, the way you call the shots, and when you do the deal. Before I became an agent I used to play bridge regularly. I gave it up because I get exactly the same thrill out of doing a deal.

Several years ago when I was much less experienced, one of my writers wrote a book and we auctioned it in the States, and we sold film rights, book club rights and paperback rights in one night from London, and we got a total of three quarters of a million dollars out of that. I went to New York and I got him a million dollars for his next book, without even a synopsis. And it worked. It was extremely frightening because when you are dealing with money that big, it's no longer a game because it's the author's livelihood.

I think I've had more reward and pleasure out of being an agent and dealing with and watching other people's careers grow than sitting at home and writing myself. It is tremendously exciting to be the first person to read the typescript of a talented person, even if it's flawed; to have the right to say, I love it, or I don't like this character or this ending or whatever... it's history in the making. It's the reason that people buy literary biographies and volumes of letters, and it's actually happening in my life, and I think that is very exciting.

There is always the dream that one day one of these writers will become truly great, and perhaps in thirty years' time I will be able to look back and say, 'I remember the first novel whoever wrote.'

Most writers aren't grateful. It isn't important, really, except it hurts when they are not. It is surprising the number of writers who take for

granted things that I think it would be nice if they acknowledge, or the small number of clients who send Christmas presents or even Christmas cards. A lot of writers are rather self-absorbed and don't necessarily think of their agent. It is hurtful and if you have really done a lot for them and put a lot of energy and excitement into something and the author takes it without any comment, or worse still, isn't as pleased as they should be.

A lot of the social life I have centres round the work I do because it's a business in which I meet kindred souls. I find that nearly all my friends are in publishing in one way or another. We don't talk business all the time but we talk business quite a lot of the time, because that's the thing we have in common. There is almost no division between my leisure time and my working time because the two fit in so well together. I think of that as a privilege, that's the bit about my work I like best.

Everyone thinks they can write because most people were taught to put words on paper, whereas not everybody thinks they can paint, or play the violin. There is a lot of arrogance amongst writers who think they have something to say just because they were taught to put words on paper. I stop people introducing me as an agent because everybody has got something... they've nearly all got a half-finished manuscript, or they've got a wife who's written children's stories, or they always meant to write a book when they have the time, and everybody is fascinated by the whole subject - and they all think there is money in it, that it's a fast way to riches.

My father worked very hard, and I think it was the way I was brought up. For example, I'm never ill, I never take time off ever, and that's an echo of childhood in that my father was never ill. I only ever remember him missing about one day from work. My mother has never been ill. And my brother and I were never off school. And when I started work as a secretary, I always worked hard, and I often didn't take my full holiday allowance.

So I work hard but that's my nature, and I feel guilty if I take time off, even though I'm the boss. The reward is that it is all tremendously interesting, much more interesting than most people's jobs, and it has this endless variety. Theoretically any person in the world can write, and so you never know from one day to the next what's going to come through the door. If life is a little flat, suddenly the phone rings and it's another exciting thing.

All in a Day's Work

I don't think I'm so obsessive that it's unhealthy. I sometimes think I should develop other interests because it is probably fairly tunnelled to always be thinking about fiction, so lately I've been taking on a lot of non-fiction. I don't have any hobbies, but that's because the thing I'm interested in is writing and reading, so my relaxation is I'll read a lot outside of what I have to read.

When I step out of the world I'm used to, I find that the attitude of men to women is different, and I get a tremendous surprise when I go to, say, a dinner party, and find that the men dominate the conversation and are inclined to think that women should be passive. I'm astonished at the pig-like behaviour of men who aren't in publishing.

I've never been married, and one of the things that people constantly ask me is, 'Why aren't you married?' And there isn't any easy reason, because I've always had good relationships with men. I really believe that because I have a genuinely fulfilled life, I don't need to get married. Nowadays it's even more so, because I can afford to live well on my own without another salary coming in. And I have enough to occupy my life that I think a permanent live-in other person would actually get in the way. I mean I have the luxury of being able to work all the time because I'm on my own. For example, I can watch breakfast television when I'm having my breakfast, and I can fill up all the social gaps with reading manuscripts and so forth and get through a lot more work as a result than if I had to be polite to another body. I think that most people who aren't terribly happy in their jobs would be lost without someone to share their life with, but I really believe my work does fill in that sort of gap of another person.

The women I know of my age who are manless through divorce or just being in my situation are inclined to be much more anxious about it than I am. If I get bored, if I get depressed, I can get on a plane this afternoon and go to America. I can do anything I like, and I do. When I'm fed up, I go to New York for a bit, and I go to the West Indies for my holidays. I have a wide circle of good friends and I think that is more rewarding than having just one person to share all your angst with. The other thing is that most people find themselves set in a career, and that's it for the rest of their life. The nice thing about what I do is that it does evolve and change, and anyway, I don't want to be an agent forever, I don't want to do anything forever.

2
August 1977
By working hard for state of the world
for the world...

Monk
Father Paul

1977-1978

It was just a feeling, a conviction that came over me to call me to this life. I was about nineteen when I first thought that God wanted me to join this monastery, to be a monk.

That was many years ago, of course. My parents never put any obstacles in my way, though I think they might have liked it better if I had done some active religious work, but they wanted me to do what I thought God wanted me to do.

When I say 'active religious work', I mean going to God through serving other people, serving the sick or working in a parish. But I regard what I do here as serving God more directly through worshipping at the services in the church, and, as it were, consecrating my whole life to Him in a more hidden kind of way. An imitation of Christ praying on the mountainside, if you like, rather than healing the sick.

We get up at three-fifteen. Our first service of Vigils in the church is at three-thirty. That lasts for about three quarters of an hour, then we are free until seven to give ourselves to private prayer and study. Then at seven we have the second service of the day which is Lords, morning prayer. That lasts for about half an hour, then there is an interval for about half an hour when we do the vegetables for the day. At eight there is the Community Eucharist. From nine till twelve there is the first period of work, then at twelve-fifteen there is a short service before dinner. We have reading during the dinner, and we are free then until quarter past two. There is another short service, and then follows the second period of work at two-thirty, which can go on until five-thirty when it's Vespers. Supper is at six and we are free until half past seven. Sometimes we have a community meeting or a discussion with an outside speaker, and then at half past seven we have Complin, which are night prayers, and we go to bed just before eight.

There is a Strict Silence from the time we get up until after the community Mass, so that's from quarter past three until quarter to nine.

Then there's a Strict Silence of the Night from the time we go to bed until we get up again.

We like it when it's quiet, it means that there are no distractions and that one can apply oneself more easily than to prayer or study.

Because one is in church for so many hours a day, trying to give oneself to the praises of God and singing, it does demand a certain amount of mental energy and a certain concentration, and I think Saint Benedict was right when he called it the *work* of God. It is demanding.

In Genesis, work is a part of man's penance for his rebellion against God - 'Thou should earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow' - so that there is this penitential aspect of work, which is an important part of the monk's regard for work.

Well, the life is made up of three main elements, prayer, reading or study, and work. But you can, I think, call the whole monastic life the monk's work. Trying to form himself into the kind of person that God wants him to be is a life's work. It should be real work, work by which we earn our own living and have something over to give to the poor as alms. We live a simple, frugal kind of life, not necessarily a life of destitution, but we have sufficient and give what is superfluous over to the poor.

If one of our chores is a bit unpleasant, one can offer it up as part of the sacrifices that are part of our life. Work could be hard work on the farm, or there are the chores that have to be done in the house. One can be on a particular job, not a very interesting job, for quite a number of years. One might, say, be working on the orchard for about fourteen years, or something like that, and one would perhaps like a change. But somebody has to work in the laundry, somebody has to do the ordinary household jobs, keeping the refectory clean and things like that. We try and give people jobs that fit in with their particular talents and skills.

I have great sympathy for those whose work is oppressive, or exploited. Some people have work which is degrading, and my whole being goes out to people like that. We often pray at Mass for those people whose work is hard and unrewarding, and yet they may have very creative aspirations, and none of this part of their personality can be developed because they have to do this drudgery to earn their living or those they support.

I think a lot of people don't fully understand the reasons why a man wants to become a monk, and they may not appreciate it's simply a

personal conviction that one has, that this is valid for you. It's between oneself and God, one can't really prove the value of a life of prayer.

I would say that the standards of judgement of success are perhaps different here, because the monk's life is a life of faith, and you have to take it on faith that what you are doing has a value, that your prayers for other people, for the third world, for instance, for the sick, for the dying, for the oppressed, for those in labour camps, the praises you give to God, this demands faith that it is of value. You can't weigh it out and at the end of one's life actually see any results. It is a life of faith.

God is the whole meaning of our existence as monks, and Christ is one's personal friend. This means everything. Even though at times He may seem to hide Himself, I think trusting in Him, putting, as it were, all one's eggs in His basket, one is so dependent on Him, but I think when one does that, one finds a peace and also a freedom because one's whole life is in wiser and safer hands than one's own.

Of course it doesn't only apply to monks; but I think to anyone who has reached 'the end of the road', the point where we can do no more on our own and a new Power must enter in. The alcoholic would understand this, or the incurably sick, perhaps too an aged community with no novices, or someone entangled in some unwanted sin. Their hope, their meaning, their very salvation lies outside of themselves.

There's an old monastic adage, 'To work is to pray, and to pray is to work,' and for many monks, especially those who aren't drawn to a lot of study, manual work is a form of prayer offering their talents, their skills, their energies to God through their work. Some monks do see manual work as a particular form of offering their life to God. I think perhaps monks may feel happier when they're working, that might be the happiest part of their day.

We can deal with the unruly elements in our personalities to a certain extent by the penitential aspect of our work. For instance impatience, anger, intolerance, criticism, resentment, all these kinds of things I think can be helped by work, and it's amazing that after a couple of hours of manual work, one goes in the church to pray, then it's often said that some form of contemplation will follow that work, a sense of being with God or in His presence, or compunction, a sense of sorrow for sin.

I suppose the most self-indulgent thing I do is some forms of reading. I like reading Dickens. I like biographies, I like novels that teach you about life, about character, about personality. I think quite a lot of

You do fall in love with your instrument. It becomes part of you. It's the most distressing thing to see a damaged violin. It's extraordinary how people get affected by it. It's because you've played a violin for years, every day at least four or five hours a day. And also, it's because the violin is such a great work of art in itself, just the making of it. It requires tremendous skills to get all the angles and the weights of the woods right. And you can never get bored with a good violin because it's always coming up with new sounds if you care to find them. So it really is like a love affair, and that's why people do get very attached to their instruments.

I haven't insured myself. Some violinists insure their fingers. Well, I thought if I had a hand cut off by accident, I'd have to do something else instead. I don't want to pay money now just in case that happens. I like to take life as it takes me. I'm not very keen on insurance. There's something spooky about insurance.

I think you've got to consider music as something that you could give up. I see it as a kind of security that I have the willingness to attempt to do something else, that I'm not frightened by the fact I can only play the violin. Of course it would be a great test if I had to do something else. But it gives you a certain freedom to know that you're prepared if something horrendous did happen.

explains
I don't feel fulfilled particularly, but I feel as if I'm on the right path to being fulfilled. I suppose that's the best way of putting it. I suppose I get fulfilment from the fact that I'm rushing around, creating things, and I know if I do get to the age of fifty I'll be able to look back and say, yes, I did this, this and that, I did things. I have got a quartet. We have been going for many years, we have done interesting things, met a lot of people, and travelled a lot. So there's a sort of spiritual fulfilment, if not a musical one. It's still evolving, I wouldn't say I was there.

Out-of-work Actress Victoria Wilmington

pp 131-131

It's really important to get up early because if you lie in bed you feel a real slob, so I get up about seven or seven-thirty every day. Then I go for a swim, do my lengths, up and down; otherwise you get a bit vacant. And then on the way back - cycle back, cycle everywhere - buy *The Times* every morning, or if it's Monday get the *Guardian* - creative ads, of course, see what's going there - and I have my boogie pack, my Sony Walkman everywhere I go. Exercise keeps your mind going and you feel you're being positive and doing something, in fact exercise plays a huge part in being out of work because otherwise you just lie about and get more and more lethargic and tired and start sitting around for hours. I know it could happen, I know I could lie in bed until 10 or 11 and then get up and just wander around, so that's why I have to get up early and go for a hard swim.

I come back and immediately check the mail. As soon as I get back there's one thing on my mind - are there going to be any letters or replies, auditions or interviews? Usually it's disappointment. I check the post and hide any brown envelopes or windowed envelopes into the drawer, just can't face those at all, and then starts the phoning, phone, phone, phone, and letter writing, maniacal phoning, and I know it's the most expensive time to call but it's important to get it all done in the morning. Arranging auditions, setting up interviews with directors and producers, anyone I can think of, anyone at all who could be helpful.

Then I have to look at my diary because I have about five different part-time jobs on the go, and it's terribly complicated to know which day is which part-time job. It can be anything from working in a shop (antique shop this week), typing, being a nanny, doing research, anything at all. And if I'm not doing that I start writing something, just spend the morning being inside hoping the phone will go. I've done some fun jobs, like pretending to be a customer in a shop for a week. They actually pay you to be a customer if times are a bit slack. I

sometimes think these jobs I take on are a bit of a giggle. I sold soap at Barker's and was really bossed about by officious manageresses, and I often think to myself, 'One day you'll wish you hadn't said that to me...' I love doing market research because I can practise my acting. I pretend I'm interviewing them on live television when I go up to people in the street and talk to them. It all goes into the CV slightly glossed up.

And then in the afternoon it's voice class which I have twice a week to get my accent down, to stop sounding so upper class. If I'm not going to a voice class then it's going to be an interview, and sometimes that means travelling to different TV companies, Yorkshire, Granada, TVS, Thames - either they've invited me or I've invited myself to just go and talk to them. If I haven't got anything on like that I go to an exhibition and try and make the most of the afternoon, or I go and see a matinee and try and catch up. If you're on the dole you can always get in half price. I went to have an interview with Michael Parkinson for TV-am very early on when I was starting out, and he said, 'What do you do?' And I said, 'I see a lot of theatre,' and then I couldn't think of one thing I'd seen, so I swore I'd keep up from that day on. He was nice about it but he kept on saying, 'Have you seen this? Have you seen that?' and it was 'No, no,' and I thought, 'I'm not going to be caught out like that again.' If you say you keep up with current plays you've got to be able to do it. Because if you want to be connected with the arts you have to see exhibitions and plays, it might spark off an idea.

And when I come back in the afternoon, I go for my run, more of this routine thing. It will only be very short bursts of exercise but they're important. I go for a run around Kensington Pond. Not the Serpentine, the Serpentine's huge, it would be impossible to run round that.

Being out of work I find I make a lot of friends, like at the market in North End Road, I know them all there and they shout, 'Hello, Blondie!' and things.

In the launderette I was feeling rather low one day, and I saw a picture of a film star on the wall and I thought, 'Well, I'm jolly well going to put mine up, too,' so I gave a picture of myself to the man who owns the launderette and signed it 'Lots of love from Victoria', and he stuck it up. So he knows me now and every time I walk in he always asks how the parts are going. It just makes you feel, well I am someone, I am supposed to be an actress, or something.

My moods vacillate tremendously. I think on the surface it looks as if

I'm terribly optimistic about it but inside I always know what the truth is. It's very easy to say to everyone, 'Oh, there are lots of irons in the fire', or 'Everything's coming along nicely', or 'Yes, I'm waiting to hear on this', and I always do have something on the go. So if someone knows I've been up for an interview and asks if I got it, I'll say no, but then I can always say - 'but I'm waiting to hear on something else'. It's forget one, go on to the other. There's never any time to mope around on one failure, you just immediately go on to the next one.

I suppose I never want to show that I'm feeling really down about it. I don't think I could do it if I wasn't an optimist. I'm depressed if I thought I could have got a job and didn't. The lowest ebb of all was when I was told I had to change my accent, because I thought, my voice is my tool, my craft, and if I have to change it that's a pretty major thing to change, and I was seriously worried at that stage. A director recently told me I was up for a film part, but he said, 'You look great, everything's great, but we can't have your voice.' And that was a real 'Look you're hopeless' assessment, because your voice is everything, isn't it, if you're going to be on television or on the radio.

It's very hard if you have a day when you wake up and think, 'I feel absolutely bloody today.' You still have to ring up as if you're full of confidence and you're the only person worth seeing that day, and to put on such a show, such a charade. If you're feeling really down it's incredibly difficult, and often you know you don't have anything worth telling them, but you've just got to get them to see you at all costs.

I always get people to see me. A lot of people say I wouldn't have seen you if you hadn't sent your photograph in. Because I've done so many jobs my CV is extraordinary enough that it catches people's eyes, and also I'm afraid the fact that I'm a girl and blonde does give me an advantage. But if it gets me to see them then I'm glad, because I want to get into that room - although it may take me five minutes longer to prove that I have got something to say and that I am serious.

I might travel four hours on a train journey, and it's nothing to the director. He'll see you for half an hour and you're prepared to travel all that way in the hope that he may, when he's looking for someone, think, 'Oh, yes, THAT girl...' But they just love it, you come in, you're completely at their mercy and you know they haven't got any job to offer, they can just click their fingers and you'll go because you know you can't afford to turn down anything.

I used to go up for television commercials, and you'd walk in and there would be ten other girls with blonde hair and a fringe, and you know you'd have to go in and smile and flirt with real creeps. It made me feel sick having to do that.

It must be fairly nice for them, a lot of pretty girls coming in and being charming to them, bending over backwards to be nice. I've even had to put up with these creeps chasing you around the desk, it happens all the time. There's an art. You have to flirt just enough to keep them liking you and be interested in you, and yet not enough to get any kind of lead. It's such a fine line and I hate myself, I know I have to do this vaguely flirtatious act, otherwise if you go in there and grit your teeth and look bolshy, they think, well there are plenty of other people who want to see me. You can't walk in being pessimistic, you have to walk in thinking, 'I have got something to offer.' If you walk in pessimistic you've lost, you might as well not have stepped out the front door.

The casting director can't say yes right away, hence that awful agony of waiting. Then the worst thing is people asking if you've got work because everyone finds it so interesting. It all sounds so exciting to them. You get fed up at making excuses for yourself, saying you're terribly busy doing this and that.

When you're famous you're recognized the whole time, you can't walk down the street without people recognizing you, that's the first thing that I eventually will have to come to terms with. I don't want people knowing all about my personal life, but unfortunately that does go with the job.

I couldn't go on if I wasn't convinced I was going to make it, I might as well give up tomorrow, this minute. What's the point of going on putting so much time, money, effort, thought, energy into something if you think you might not make it? It's a totally all-consuming preoccupation and passion. Every day is angled towards making it, every single thing I do. It's a goal, it's what I get up every morning to do, it's what I want to do, and I've never thought of doing anything else. My parents are happy I've found what I want to do, a lot of people just haven't got a clue what they want to do.

Oxford Don Christopher Tyerman

10/13/95

In this university, Modern History starts at AD 285, because it is designed to distinguish it from Ancient History, But I have taught various subjects, English and foreign history from shall we say the seventh century AD and the break-up of the Roman Empire to the sixteenth-century Reformation, as well as some nineteenth-century constitutional theory.

If you're clever you lecture on things that you're actually researching on. I am at the moment writing a book on England and the Crusades over a period of four hundred years. There's a vast amount of material and therefore to help me organize it in my own mind I give lectures on it and see if I can make sense or shape of various themes. In Oxford the bulk of the teaching is not done by lectures; it is done in tutorials.

The point of teaching history is not actually to pump people full of information about the past, it's whether they can appreciate the workings of certain historical phenomena; social organization and political action, warfare and the economy, social class and things like that. It doesn't really matter whether someone's writing an essay on the ninth or the nineteenth century, the phenomena are there in different forms, in different guises, in different stages of development. We want people to be able to think, arrange material relevantly around topics that, as they applied to read history, one assumes they might be interested in.

Obviously there are some tutors who go out of their way to impress their personalities on the undergraduates, and that can be a function of personal inadequacy on the don's part. Some undergraduates will like you, some won't. You will like some undergraduates and detest others and be irritated by some and bored by some, and some you become very friendly with. It can depend on what year they're in; first year, nervous, shy, writing juvenile essays, or third year when you're teaching them more detailed subjects they'd be more interested in, and they'd be much more mature.

I've found over the years that I've taught a significant change. Ten years ago undergraduates were much more intellectually irreverent and questioning, now they sit in tutorials and take notes of what one says and they're much more deferential, respectful, worried about their careers.

The public image of Oxford, the sort of Brideshead image, is inevitable because how can you portray in an interesting way chaps sitting in chairs reading books? That's what most people spend a lot of their time doing. Working. And that is bad television, therefore anybody who comes to make a film about Oxford finds a party or a lunatic society or something because that's good entertainment; or they and we can give them news like not giving Mrs Thatcher an honorary degree, but most undergraduates spend most of their time being fairly ordinary people like the rest of us.

I'm accused of living in the past or living in an ivory tower. I'm an historian and I happen to be a medievalist but I'm equally interested in the present and the recent past, and have the same curiosity about the future as anybody else. One reads the newspaper, one listens to the radio, takes a part in matters, one does all the normal things that people do like buying houses and educating children, and failing to buy what you want in the shops and not having enough money and those sort of things. The idea that because you're, say, a commodity broker, in some sense you're more plugged into modern reality is misleading; their views on real life, whatever that means, can be just as plinkered, obscure, out of date and downright odd as any don's. I'm a modern person studying the past.

rely on observation, experiment, not on theory
I'm very much in the Oxford tradition of historians in the sense that I'm an empiricist. It seems to me to be entirely bogus to impose a modern theory on your understanding of evidence of the past if the evidence doesn't fit that theory. You've got to try and understand what the charter or chronicle meant then, how much you can trust it: you must never be bamboozled into using evidence merely because it's convenient. *mystify, cheat*

A good historian is one that is honest and discriminating about his sources. Honesty in an historian is the great thing. Instead of saying, 'Right, I want to take a view that's going to be appealing to people,' you ask, 'What does the evidence tell me of what view I can take?'

Obviously historians in one sense are going to end up knowing more about certain things than contemporaries did, and also less because one

isn't there, so one is always looking for the truth; what does this mean, what is this document I've got, not only physically, where does it come from, who made it, etc., but having established that it's genuine, what are the layers within that private or public document? It is important to study the past for its own sake and on its own terms, not ours.

The physical process of doing research can be grindingly tedious. You plough through some illegible documents in bad Latin or bad French, hoping to find something and you never do because what you hoped was there simply is not, and that's boring, but equally, the other day, for example, I was in the British Museum to read a fourteenth-century manuscript, partly burned in the eighteenth century, and it told the story of an individual who had a remarkable career as a crusader in the late thirteenth century, early fourteenth century. His career hasn't been covered, perhaps because the manuscript is so illegible and people have probably said, 'Well, life's too short.' There's a physical excitement of trying to decipher it and a physical regret that one's palaeographic skills are not greater, but the excitement of reading about this chap is genuinely stimulating. His career illustrates and confirms much wider theories of what people were doing at the time, how people viewed the world and what people were saying to politicians in the early fourteenth century. So the excitement isn't simply about this chap's life, although that was exciting enough. He was an English Hospitaller who had fought at Louis IX's last crusade at Tunis in 1270; he fought in Palestine and was at the fall of Acre in 1291 when the Egyptian Sultan threw the crusaders out of the mainland of Palestine for good, he was then captured and spent twenty years in an Egyptian prison before he came back to Yorkshire to raise his ransom. At the end of his life, when he was about eighty, he wrote this book for Edward III, advising him the best means of how to conquer the Holy Land, and he prefaces it by saying, 'My credentials are...' and narrates the story of his life. Roger of Stanegrave. That's fun.

You can't build up a reputation without publishing anything, and in the end you've got to put something down for all the world to see, and that's when the emperor either has or hasn't got clothes on. And being solitary, being presumably reasonably intelligent with reasonably active brains, we therefore have a lot of time to think, and if you have time to think, if you've got any imagination at all, you do quite a lot of worrying. You've got to be prepared to be your own man and that sometimes

papers about him that a person is what he claims to be

depend on self against their

means periods of solitariness and being able to stand up to other people. This is why dons get involved in rows with other academics, because you are a pedagogue, not simply in your teaching but also in your academic work and your research and your writing. It's Tyerman's book, it's not the University of Oxford's book, it's not the firm's book, it's your view. I think I have always been something of a pedagogue so in that sense I've found a suitable career for me.

I think the measure of success would be to write a great book, a great book not necessarily in the sense that millions of people read it, but that your peers in the profession said, 'This is a great book.' That presumably is the highest achievement, to become an acknowledged expert and writer of good books that one's colleagues admire. It's a fairly self-regarding exercise within a small world.

But the worst part of my job is finding oneself unable to achieve that through a mixture of technical and intellectual deficiencies. I find the margin between elation and despair is very narrow. If you're trying to write something subtle and you actually write superficial, misleading or obscure rubbish, which happens to us all, that's the worst part, the consciousness of one's own intellectual inadequacies on many occasions. A number of my colleagues give a fairly arrogant, self-assured exterior, but many of the historians I know best are riddled with self-doubt and have moments of depression and despair when they fail to do what they want with the material. It's an intellectual problem. Why isn't this better? Why is this shabby?

I think that institutional philistinism has long been the rule in this country - academic cleverness has always been frowned upon. There's never been the cult of the intellectual as there is, say, on the Continent, which I think on the whole is perhaps a good thing, but the spin-off is that they treat apparently irrelevant subjects like medieval history with contempt. One is always asked to justify why one is doing medieval history. Well, one can, but it's that sort of attitude and philistinism that one would have hoped that educated people don't have. If they can't see the use of people doing higher research in higher educational establishments, there seems to me to be a problem.

If there were no historians at all, nobody studying history, that would probably be a symptom of a totalitarian state, either left or right, it doesn't matter, because the study of history has always been part of man's curiosity and it's been a feature in this country, an important

reflection of liberty and democracy. The fact that you get the history wrong doesn't matter provided you keep on discussing history and looking at it and seeing what went on, because it breeds an accurate mind. You can see through the lies, the cheats of any government, you can see their mistakes, you can see them with their trousers down, and if you don't want people who see that wandering around, then you stop them. But the attitude of mind, the cynicism if you like - or one might put it more politely, the critical faculty, the refusal to believe just simply because one is told to believe - must be a good thing for a healthy society, and if you don't have that, it must be a symptom that something's gone very badly and oppressively wrong.

I think the point about being an academic, the great charm and the reason why people do it for so little money in this country, is that it is part of your life and that you're in control of your own time. This is sometimes a good thing, sometimes a bad thing, sometimes you wish you had someone to tell you what to do next, but therefore it is impossible really to separate out private and professional life. Obviously when one is bathing the children one is not being an academic, but there isn't a sharp divide between work and home.

Quite honestly, I don't feel sufficiently compensated. In real terms academic income over the last twenty years has decreased enormously. It's all very well, you say, you lead a comfortable life and lots of people want to become academics, therefore we can exploit the fact that it's a buyers' market and pay the buggers nothing. If you do that it says a lot about what value you put on higher education, and this society is putting less and less value on higher education. It's depressing.

I think the basic point about university life, and what the outside world doesn't appreciate, is the hours of tedium involved in simply reading books that both dons and their pupils go through. It's not a life of wine and roses, but equally it's a very pleasant life, one wouldn't deny that, and it would be foolish to be self-pitying. Sitting in a room with a view like this, it's indecent to complain overmuch.

correct, precise

you can't get a person longer when you're sitting with him

the attitude of the early 80s and 90s, and the nature

felt

count

philistine public

23
Palaeontologist
Richard Fortey

pp 140-141

My job is to do research on fossil animals, and in particular, things called *trilobites*, which are now completely extinct, but they were the dominant form of animal life about five hundred million years ago. They're extraordinarily interesting, because they were diverse in the way that insects are now diverse, except they lived in the sea, of course. Not only that, but they're important for dating the rocks in which they occur, and for inferring things about the environments of the past. There are an enormous number of them; that's one thing people don't realize, that fossils are in fact extremely common, and if you know where to go you can collect them in great quantity.

Well, if you're a natural historian by nature, which I was, almost since I can remember, you start off with birds, like most boys, and then you get interested in wild flowers, and fungi, which I still am. And then at some stage, I think it was on holiday in Dorset, I picked up my first fossils, and thought these were really rather interesting, and by the time I'd reached the sixth form, collecting these things and finding out about them had become something of a passion, so you could say I was pre-conditioned to it from an early age.

I work almost entirely on my own, and I would guess compared with most people my time-scale is completely different. The end-products of my work are scholarly monographs which can take several years to produce. I've been working on a piece of work on the rocks and fossils of Wales, which has taken me literally a decade. Eventually it will be published and will stand as the definitive work.

Providing you do a little bit of work on the collections, and generally broaden your level of expertise, it's perfectly possible to survive here, at the Natural History Museum, for years even, showing no visible signs of your activity. The motivation has to be to continue to write on the interesting things you've found out. And that's an entirely solitary

Palaeontologist

occupation. Sometimes it's lonely. You're sustained almost entirely by your internal motivation to get a piece of work done.

Almost more than anybody I know, I have complete self-determination, so that nobody knows if I get up in a slightly depressed state and do nothing all day; it has no repercussions whatsoever. I can determine both what I do short term and what I do long term. I have very few what you might call formal obligations to carry out. So I have total academic freedom.

Just today I've been looking at a particular kind of *trilobite* that lived five hundred million years ago, a thing called a *symphysurus*, with a view to working out what its life habits were. One thing that interests me is the methods that you use to infer how extinct animals lived. Quite a lot of the time if you look at popular books, you see dinosaurs gaily wading through swamps - how do people know that they waded through swamps? Quite often these things, although they're portrayed as facts, are actually only mountains of inference. I've been looking for structures on this particular animal and comparing them with the kind of structures that you might find on animals that are still living, and seeing if I could infer things about comparable structures having a comparable function. This particular animal, the *symphysurus*, was able to enroll, just like a woodlouse, for example, and by studying and looking at the animal in great detail. I've identified little locking devices, very precise, which enabled the tail to join up with the head and securely lock the thing into position when it was rolled up.

I find it interesting; that's all I can say. I write it up for a paper; other *trilobite* people around the world also find it interesting, hopefully, and it adds to my scientific lustre. If you wish for me to say, does it have any other spin-offs, the answer has to be no, any more than, let's say, finding Etruscan vases has any other spin-offs. You can't claim very easily that these kind of studies have any relevance to finding mineral deposits or oil deposits: they don't. You just have to be interested in the thing for its own sake, very much 'knowledge for its own sake', and the whole thing is predicated on the assumption that it's a good idea to have scholars in society pursuing this kind of esoteric pursuit - which I believe it is.

I think that a particular kind of curious person, if they're lucky, can be gainfully employed in doing things which just satisfy their curiosity.

Against that, you have to accept the fact that it's not remarkably well paid, but then why should you be particularly well paid for something

