



**EAT
DRINK
READ**

FOUR

**COFFEE
YARD**



STRANGE HAPPENINGS AFOOT

If you have happened upon our little gallery of late, you could be forgiven for thinking that you have unsuspectingly tumbled down a rabbit hole to find yourself surrounded by strange creatures at some kind of tea party. But fear not! You do NOT have to consume any strange liquids and go through an unpleasant metamorphosis to return to the world of reason. You are not in Alice's Wonderland.

Relax. You are still in the Yard.

These little fellows are simply a new edition to the gallery. The friendly little sock monkeys are handmade by Katie Blue, made from...you guessed it...socks. They are also 100% fresh too...no old gym socks here. And the tempting little plates of biscuits are, in fact, a lovely new range of jewellery, made to look like the classic biscuits of your childhood.

Wear a Bourbon with pride...just don't go chewing it.

DECISIONS DECISIONS

Have you ever been in a coffee shop and thought "What on earth am I going to get the kids to eat?"

Well, I haven't, since I don't have any, but if I did, then the answer would be clear: The Yard provides an all-in-one package of delicious healthy convenience for your little ones, all made to order containing a mandarin orange, seedless black grapes, a yoghurt and a Five Alive.

Unfortunately you still have to make a decision after choosing this option; as we offer four different sandwiches (ham, cheese, chicken, or ham & cheese) on a choice of white or granary bread. And even then, you're not off the hook, as you might decide to have the sandwich toasted as well...if you're having a bad day, why not ask the staff to make your decision for you?

It might be a nice surprise.



Sometimes you can't keep a good man down. And in no case is this truer than with our resident framer, George.

He has the work rate of six shire horses and the determination of someone who has to add the final storey to a forty-metre high house of playing cards, and yet...whisper it... he is over eighty years old.

Throughout his eight decades on the planet, George has risen above the many trials and tribulations that life has lobbed at him with the air of someone who has just found a 20p in their apple pie.

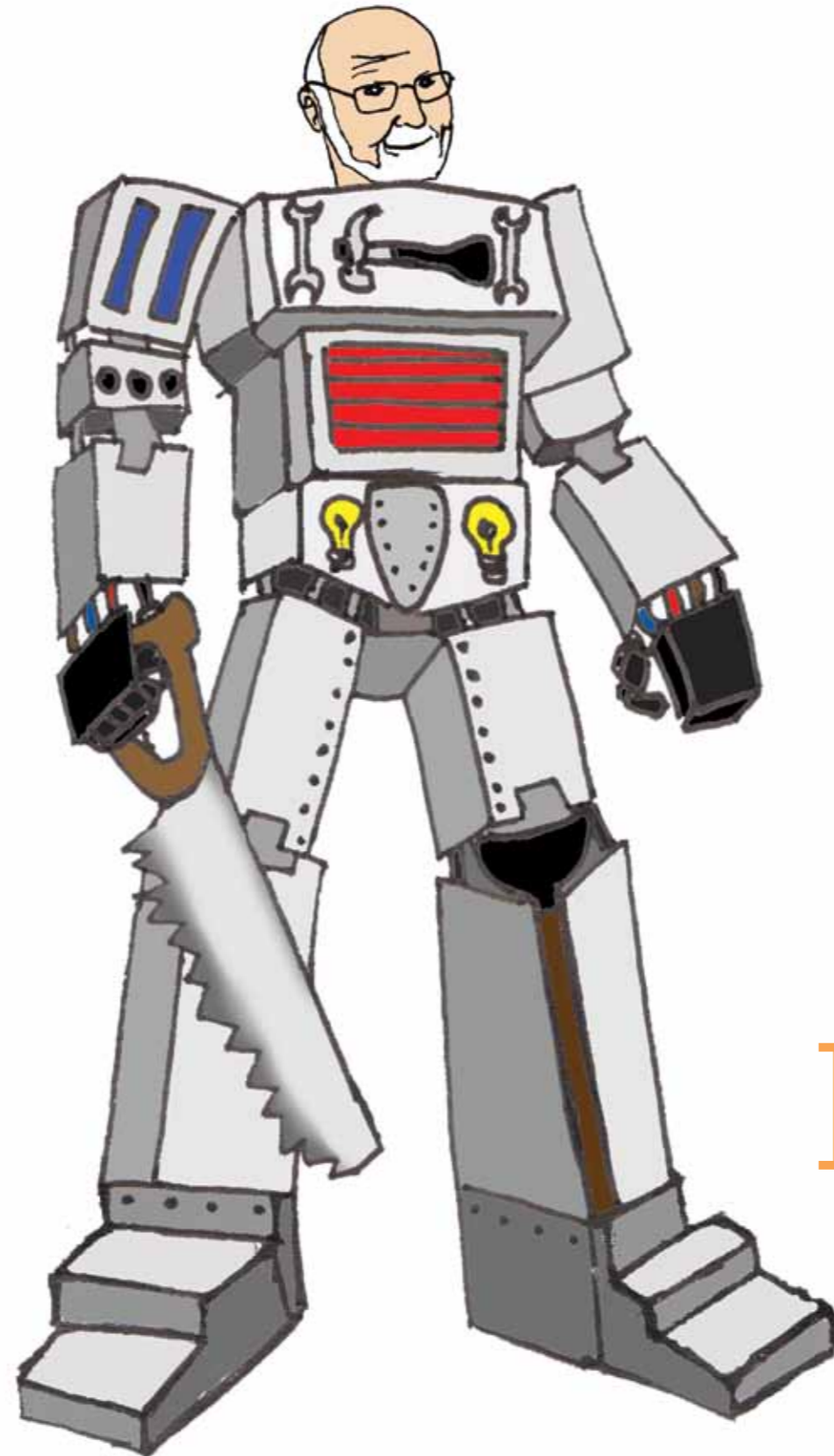
When Misfortune appointed someone to burn down his business in Belfast, George sat down with a large Tequila Sunrise and enjoyed

thinking about what manner of shop to open next.

When ill health told George's knee to give up the ghost, George built a new, Kevlar-reinforced model and performed the surgery himself after a couple of stiff brandies to avoid bothering the over-burdened NHS. He was back to his busy water-skiing schedule the next morning.

When Nature stepped up to the crease, armed with a particularly unpleasant spin ball in the form of chronic arthritis, George calmly picked up a length of willow that he had just stripped of all its bark with his teeth and hit a six into the next electoral district.

After Bad Luck and its entire XI had had their innings and retreated to the pavilion, exhausted by the struggle



with someone who pretended they weren't there, George retired to live on a boat in Carrick Marina for a while.

He considered all that he had hand-crafted in the past: motorbike sidecars, supercomputers, chairs, skis, canoes and a couple of skyscrapers, and decided that what he really wanted to move into was... framing.

Luckily George was very well known to the staff of Yard Gallery before it even opened, so he was the natural choice when we were looking for someone to take on the task of encompassing our finest artwork. Some of the artists feared his famous handiwork might steal the limelight from what was actually inside the frame, but we assured

them that George would be seeking to complement, rather than compete with, the artwork itself.

He surprised us when he managed to frame his first picture slightly before we had finished asking him, and then had another twenty on the doorstep by lunchtime. He apologized he hadn't done more, but he had been busy finishing off a new titanium spinal column for himself and had to get back to the workshop.

I am happy to report that, in the many months since his last meeting with them, George has not had any more run-ins with Bad Luck or any of his marauding cricketers, but he has a particularly huge cricket bat locked away in a glass cabinet, just in case any of those unsavoury chaps fancy a rematch.

POSITIVE
FRAME OF
MIND

YARD GREATEST HITS



You may well know the feeling when a friend recommends a musical artist to you, and on digestion of their melodic output, you decide you wish to proceed with adding them to your collection.

The problem is, where do you start? Their latest album? Their first one? Their most famous one? Or do you do as most people would and go for the easy option, the greatest hits? It's not very often that the worlds of music and healthy lifestyles collide (unless you're Madonna, of course), but here at the Yard we think we've found one exception.

If you're anything like, well, most

people, you will be fully aware of the magic 'five portions' flag that the Government like to wave in the face of the general public.

Likewise you will be fully aware that nobody pays any attention to it, for various reasons, be they time constraints, convenience or dare I say it, just laziness. (The last reason is the author's own personal excuse).

Finding five different portions of fruit and veg every day is quite an exercise in itself, so, as you may wonder where to start with your new musical hero's back catalogue, so you may wonder how best to go about delivering a parcel of vitamins

and fibre to your grateful inner machinery.

So, we are proud to present Coffee Yard's very own Greatest Hits album, our smoothies. Freshly made as soon as they are ordered, they pack at least two of your magic five portions as well as honey, fruit juice and deliciously creamy natural yoghurt in a deliciously refreshing elixir of health and vitality.

They are quite simply the dietary equivalent of an album of Number One singles.

And they're rather lovely at the same time.



DID YOU KNOW...?

Our scones are freshly baked at the scrake of dawn every morning, before even our baker has woken up.

Because our milkshakes are so thick, we give you two straws, in case one breaks down.

Without even breaking a sweat, former Mr Universe, Jim Beattie, ascends and descends 33 steps 24 times every morning! Nicki doesn't. But you wouldn't know.

We have a play area downstairs at the back to keep your little darlings amused while you get some well deserved R & R over a cuppa. Of course, if you're in for a bit of solitude without the kids, you may want to head upstairs!

We have musicians playing for your delectation throughout the week at lunch time on the first floor.

We have free WiFi for all you cyber buffs. Our top secret password is "mocha"...but keep it under your hat.

Because one customer told us it was "a wee bit dark" upstairs, Jim got his sledge hammer out and smashed his way through the wall to create a new window for them. (We think he did a fine job on the plastering). So any thoughts or suggestions you may have are welcome and we'll see what we can do.

If you are sick of meeting your business associates in a dreary office, drinking instant coffee that tastes of...well, instant coffee, we have a lovely bright conference room available for hire. Just ask at the gallery desk for details.

If you are looking for quirky little gifts or cards, you should call into our gallery. We have lots of new stock to rifle through!

Three members of staff long to throw off the shackles of modern life and join the Circus. Keep an eye out for the three-person clown car. Honk honk.

If you've lost something it may be in our lost property. Every week lots of stuff is left, abandoned and unclaimed. We hold on to it for about 6 weeks after which, we re-house it in a local shelter (namely a charity shop) so that it can find a new owner who will love and care for it. Poor little mite.

We intend to create a sparkly new bbq area for next summer! We'll keep you posted!



CRUMBLING IN ANTICIPATION

The best things in life take time. Waiting for Christmas morning when you were a child, waiting for your next pay day when you've blown all your wages, waiting for a beautiful girl to say yes (if that happens at all).

And so it is with our famed Yard apple crumble, which we would like to modestly proclaim as the best apple crumble in the whole country, if not the world.

As traditional as flat caps, buttered scones and watching the Queen's Speech at Christmas, our crumble is made according to the old adage that the longer something takes, the more it is worth waiting for.

You won't find another eatery in the country that is so fastidious about its pudding preparation. We have to cut sixteen huge Bramley apples every morning and coat them with our special hand-made crumble, before gently marrying them (Heston Blumenthal, eat your heart out) together in the oven until the top is golden brown and crisp.

We have had to install a drainage system along the front counter so that people don't slip on the wet floor when the crumble is presented to the hungry clientele each day. Why is the floor wet, you might ask? Well, I don't know about you, but my mouth's watering...

A painting of a wooden pier extending over a body of water. The pier is made of weathered, reddish-brown wood. A person is standing on the pier, looking out over the water. The water is painted with various shades of blue, green, and purple, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The sky is a mix of blue, green, and yellow. The overall style is expressive and textured.

HOWARD'S WAY

Back in March 2008 an unassuming man walked into Yard Gallery and approached the desk. In his hand he clutched some photographs of a couple of his paintings. He modestly presented them to us, wondering whether or not, we might consider showing a piece or two of his work.

That man was Howard Ross, and that was over two years ago. Since then, he has become one of our best selling artists and, with each brushstroke that captures the driving rains of Belfast, people hunched under their brollies, or the soft evening glow of Times Square, New York, it's not hard to see why.

Howard Ross was brought up around art. His Great Uncle, William Ross, painted portraits of visiting classical musicians on their trips to Belfast, and his father himself was an accomplished landscape painter.

When Howard was just a wee lad his father bought him his first set of paints and encouraged him to get behind an easel and pick up a brush. And though he enjoyed it, as with most young boys, his art had to compete with his other loves, running about with his mates, kicking a ball and playing sports.

It wasn't until much later, about twelve years ago, that Howard started painting seriously. He also owned his own gallery in Castlereagh for seven years. Yet he

continued, (and continues), to attend art college, believing that one always has more to learn. "Artists are a work in progress. If you think you've arrived then you can't improve".

"Today my biggest influence has come from my Art Tutor at College. He has inspired and encouraged me to develop my own style and not be constrained by market forces or commercialism, but be free to express my own identity through my work".

Howard also takes inspiration from great artists of the past, in particular the artists of the Impressionist movement. "Their freedom of expression and ability to represent an image with few brushmarks in a liberating way really inspire me"

"My ultimate aim is to be able to paint with as few marks as possible, to be able to represent something without too much detail. If I paint with great detail there's no movement and it's too stiff."

"Van Gogh is a particularly fascinating artist as his own struggle with illness is reflected in his work. Art should be a medium to reflect your thoughts. The work often changes and develops as you progress on your journey with it".

"Your personality comes out in your painting. I can be untidy and slapdash sometimes, so I feel more comfortable with oils, as they give you much more freedom to let loose as they're more forgiving than watercolour".

And so Howard sits each morning with his cup of herbal tea (preferably Peppermint or Lemon and Ginger, depending on his mood) in his home up in the Castlereagh hills overlooking the city, before embarking on another day of painting.

"I love the energy and colour of the city. When I was growing up, people were depressed and they didn't even know it. It's uplifting to see the difference in town, especially at my age, having lived through most of the Troubles. In the seventies, you thought about where you went, where you sat...you were searched everywhere you went. Now, it's great to see life about Belfast, the new tour buses...people with smiles on their faces".

"City life captures my imagination and allows me to study the human form in many differing surroundings and enhance the variety of figurative work that I can achieve".

For Howard, painting is an integral part of his life. His mood and wellbeing is effected daily by how well his painting is going. He is never entirely content with the outcome on his canvas, caught up in the constant pursuit of self improvement and always open and willing to learn.

"You don't ever really stop learning. Once you believe you have, you just stop."



YARD



HANNAH

It's impossible to annoy Hannah. Rumour has it that she was born without an adrenal gland, so she is unable to feel anger or anxiety. Or to put it another way, she is so laid-back that she walks upside-down. This bothers nobody at all, since it results in us all having a very amiable and reasonable-minded colleague.

However, being unable to feel fear, we had to keep an eye on Hannah on a recent staff outing to the zoo, lest she innocently climb into the gorilla enclosure for a better look. It's happened before...



RICHARD

Owner of easily the most flamboyant hairstyle the Yard has ever seen. Richard loves travelling the world and meeting new people. In his most recent trip to Africa he got lost up a mountain and was on board a canoe that sank into a lake full of crocodiles.

He has also been found in the early hours of the morning fast asleep on a Cuban street, after a tough stint of travelling. And to make matters more interesting for the overseas authorities, and for his worried family back home, Richard is profoundly deaf.

And for once, all of the above is actually totally true.



HOLLY

Holly worked in the Yard for a whole year before she even looked at anyone, never mind spoke, but now she's warmed up you'll have a job stopping her.

She can often be found in a corner, her mouth moving ten to the dozen, regaling other staff members with her thoughts on topics such as the meaning of life, the history of the British Empire, and the pros and cons of the metric system, but she can also move faster than the speed of light. She once left the kitchen to collect dishes and before we knew it, she arrived back where she started before she had left. It caused all sorts of cataclysmic space and time disasters when her present self met her future self (which I won't go into right now, but let's just say it was messy).

After that we had to ask her to slow down and not run in Coffee Yard.



CHRIS

Modest, ladies' favourite, Chris, like his colleague Richard, possessed a most breathtakingly huge, gravity-defying head of hair until one day, kind hearted Chris decided he would get the lot loped off for a good cause.

Crowds gathered. Children cried and adults looked on in disbelief as titanium strengthened shears slowly gnawed their way across his scalp through the densest naturally occurring fibres on earth. It took a solid 47 hours, twenty three minutes and six seconds to complete the job.

Unfortunately for trusting Chris, after the deed, his sponsors conveniently forgot their charitable pledges. His loss was in vain...oh well, he'll just have to grow it back and do the whole thing all over again!

BING BONG.

Welcome aboard this Coffee Yard 4 flight. I would like to introduce you to your cabin crew for this journey. They are here for both your comfort and safety. If you need anything during the flight, please feel free to stop one of them as they zoom past you and they will be happy to help.

Thank you for flying with us.



PENNY

Penny's main pursuit in life is to attain a moment of supreme perfection...that blissful moment when she can survey her surroundings and say, "Yes, I have done it, every cup, plate and utensil in Coffee Yard has been rounded up and is sparkling clean".

She silently flits here and there, eyes aglow with an unfathomable passion, seeking out every plate, cup and said utensil, stacking them high, before lobbing them one by one over counter and customer (Penny has a very over developed right arm, she almost made the under 21 National Baseball team until unforeseen circumstances scuppered her plans) to Alex in the kitchen, the other half of the dazzling duo.



ALEX

Around the Yard Alex is known as the Rain Man of Dish Washing.

She is often found in the kitchen, eyes darting and digits dancing from cup to plate, pure poetry in motion, as she swiftly, beautifully and delicately places each dish onto a dishwasher tray. And like the most perfectly completed Mensa jigsaw puzzle, every gap is efficiently filled until not a sliver of light could peek through. To the amazement of her colleagues, Alex's acute mind finds the most perfect solution, with any combination of dish, every time.

We only half wish she was a card counter*.

*Re-watch Rain Man

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