



**EAT
DRINK
READ**

SIX

**COFFEE
YARD**



SIXTH OF THE BEST

Hello, good evening (or morning) and welcome to the sixth edition of Eat Drink Read, Holywood's number one coffee shop and art gallery in-house magazine.

It's been eighteen months since the last edition. In the wider world the Olympics were a roaring success, our own Rory McIlroy ascended to the top of the world golfing rankings, and the Attik on High Street changed its name to the Frisky Bear.

What's been happening in the Yard? Quite a few things, as you will learn...

The ever-evolving shop has seen a few new visual additions - the most obvious of which is our new mascot, Dave the pigeon, who was probably eyeballing you when you were ordering your Americano. If you venture upstairs you may be momentarily forgiven for yelping in fear and bracing yourself for impact with a sliding Slovak and a couple of smoothies - but this is merely a vinyl representation of

Peter, surfing down the banister.

If you've ever been here at lunchtime or on a Saturday, you'll know that we're busier than ever. We've got the serving and preparation processes whittled down to a fine art, as slick and quick as a Brylcreemed greyhound. But all this is no good if the plate of piping hot food sits beside a whistling wind.

So, in response to a suggestion made by a customer, we are happy to announce the addition of our new heated serve-over, complete with bulbs so powerful they wouldn't be out of place on the landing gear of a 747. Your toastie, panini, roast, bagel or soup will arrive at your table as we intended: tasty, filling and hot.

Talking of food, our repertoire has now expanded to include bruschetta, two new roasts of the day - succulent pulled pork and slow cooked beef - a Parma ham and pear bagel and, for something a little different, a chilli dog. If

your mouth is watering - we asked about the possibility of this page being printed on absorbent paper, but sadly to no avail - napkins are situated near the till. And you may want to grab another as we're not finished yet:

If you fawn over scones, you now have the option of Devonshire clotted cream with your freshly-baked favourite. It took a crack team of enthusiasts (Jim, Nicki and Chris) many intensive months' research before they found an accompaniment worthy of our bakers' hallowed handiwork. It was a tough job trying them all out, but someone had to do it. For a little bit of the West Country in North Down, look no further.

Have fun reading through the magazine, and if you've enjoyed it, feel free to walk past and wordlessly pat Jim on the cheek, like an Italian gangster. He will pretend to be surprised, but he secretly appreciates it.

WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME... AND YOUR ORDER

If you're reading this magazine you're very probably one of our customers, unless this magazine has, by some odd twist of fate, ended up in the hands of a Tunisian camel herder (in which case - hello: if you're ever tempted to visit County Down swing by and pay us a visit, although we'll have to ask you to leave the camel in a parking space where it can't nibble the hedge).

Many purveyors of fine coffee claim to have some social relationship with their patrons - including shops of the sort where a cheerful blackboard on the counter proclaims "We love our lovely customers!" with lots of hearts and unicorns and that sort of thing peppered liberally round the bubbly scrawl. The barista, obviously living and breathing this mantra, glares at any new arrivals for two minutes before shuffling over and muttering "What can I get yis?"

Now, we don't have such a barista or blackboard hanging above our menu.

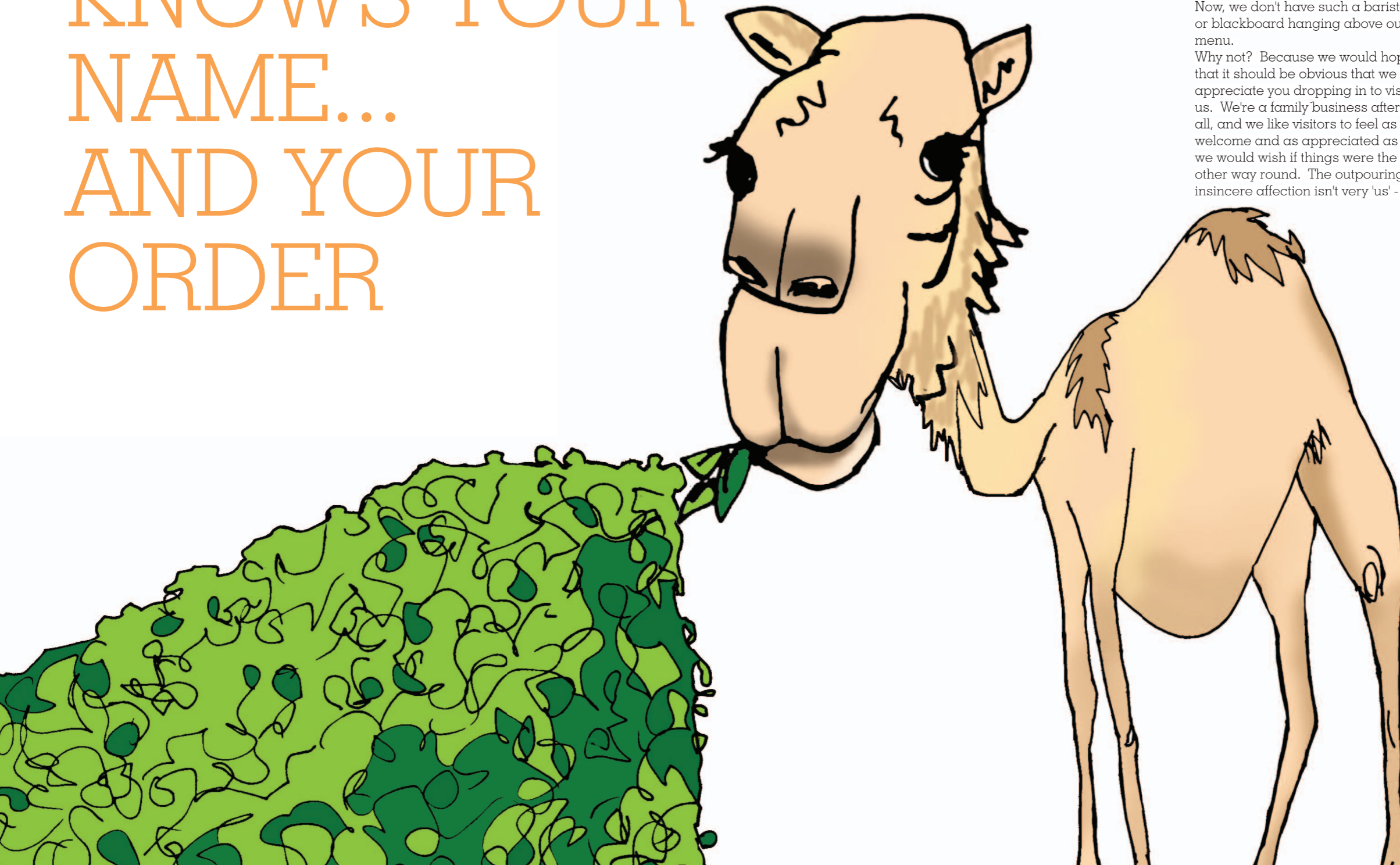
Why not? Because we would hope that it should be obvious that we appreciate you dropping in to visit us. We're a family business after all, and we like visitors to feel as welcome and as appreciated as we would wish if things were the other way round. The outpouring of insincere affection isn't very 'us' - the

only thing that gushes in the Yard is the filter coffee - but we like to think that, like our product itself, our relationship with our customers is something from a rather higher tier.

In many ways there are many parallels with the classic sitcom Cheers, right down to our lynchpin Jim's similarities to the cocky, lothario Sam Malone. It's uncanny: the only disparity being that we have to admit Jim never pitched for the Boston Red Sox.

He was a catcher for the St Louis Cardinals instead.

So this is a big thank you to all the people who have swung by the Yard over the last seven years, and in particular the regulars - some of whom have been here pretty much every day since we opened. You know who you are, and we know who you are too!



THE YARD WANTS YOU... TO COME FOR LUNCH

Did you know that for five years there was only one gantry crane at the Harland & Wolff shipyard? It seems strange to think of Goliath standing there by himself for all that time until Samson showed up in 1974, and such a famous pairing being only half-finished.

I'm going somewhere with this, bear with me...

As the New Year starts, it's not just our waistlines that have been expanding. As we said at the start of the mag, our menu, and therefore our need for preparation space is too. So 'General Kitchen' set about appointing a second-in-command.

Our new culinary centre is based upstairs, in what was part of our conference room. There is still a conference room of course, but it didn't mind giving up some of its space for the greater good. The Yard has had more configurations than a Rubik's cube as we adapt to the changing demands of our customers, and the General is running at Heathrow airport levels of capacity. Thankfully we haven't had any placard-waving protestors outside the door demanding "No second kitchen at the Yard!" and there is no doubt that the old trooper needed to

conscript some new blood - he has been flat out every day since 2005.

He's not retiring yet, of course: he is merely delegating some of his duties to his trusted deputy.

We envisage great success for the new partnership, which should enable us to keep the Yard Empire marching along even more briskly than before. In fact it's already working so well, it's almost funny to think that there was only one kitchen for so long.

Like the crane analogy at the start, we believe that one day people will look back and think "Do you remember when there used to be only one kitchen in Coffee Yard?"

Well, possibly.

MY FIRST DAY AT THE YARD

5.45am - Wow, this is an early start. I feel all over the place.

5.50am - I'm feeling a bit more together now, thankfully. I needed that bit of sugar to liven me up.

5.55am - I'm feeling a bit doughy - hopefully being in such a busy environment will get me in shape.

6.00am - Phew, it's like an oven in here!

6.20am - I'm cooling off a bit now, thankfully. This kitchen gets very hot in the early mornings!

8.00am - The door is open, the tills are on, the butter is out of the fridge, the jam is potted, and I'm ready to go.

8.15am - The boss wants to see me. I'm heading round to his desk right now.

8.20am - Well, my time at the Yard was short-lived, it seems.

8.25am - I got the chop. I've also been smothered in jam and clotted cream and had a large bite taken out of me. And I love it: it's everything I ever wanted.

You may think I've taken leave of my senses, but then again, you're probably not a freshly baked scone.





UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

A TALE OF TWO STOREYS

In the seven years the Yard has been open, we have welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors through our doors. And yet, after all this time, there remains a rather well-kept secret.

Like the gateway to the Secret Garden, the wardrobe in *The Chronicles of Narnia* or Platform 9 3/4 at King's Cross, our staircase has a seemingly ephemeral quality, only appearing to those who seek it.

Sure, we always ask at the till, "Would you like to sit upstairs or downstairs?" but to many people, only aware of the existence of one option, this is like being asked "Would you prefer to drink your coffee from a cup or a flowerpot?"

We're not surprised by this really: for starters, the stairs are not immediately visible from the main door - what beckons most patrons

is the straight path to the welcoming arms of Downstairs.

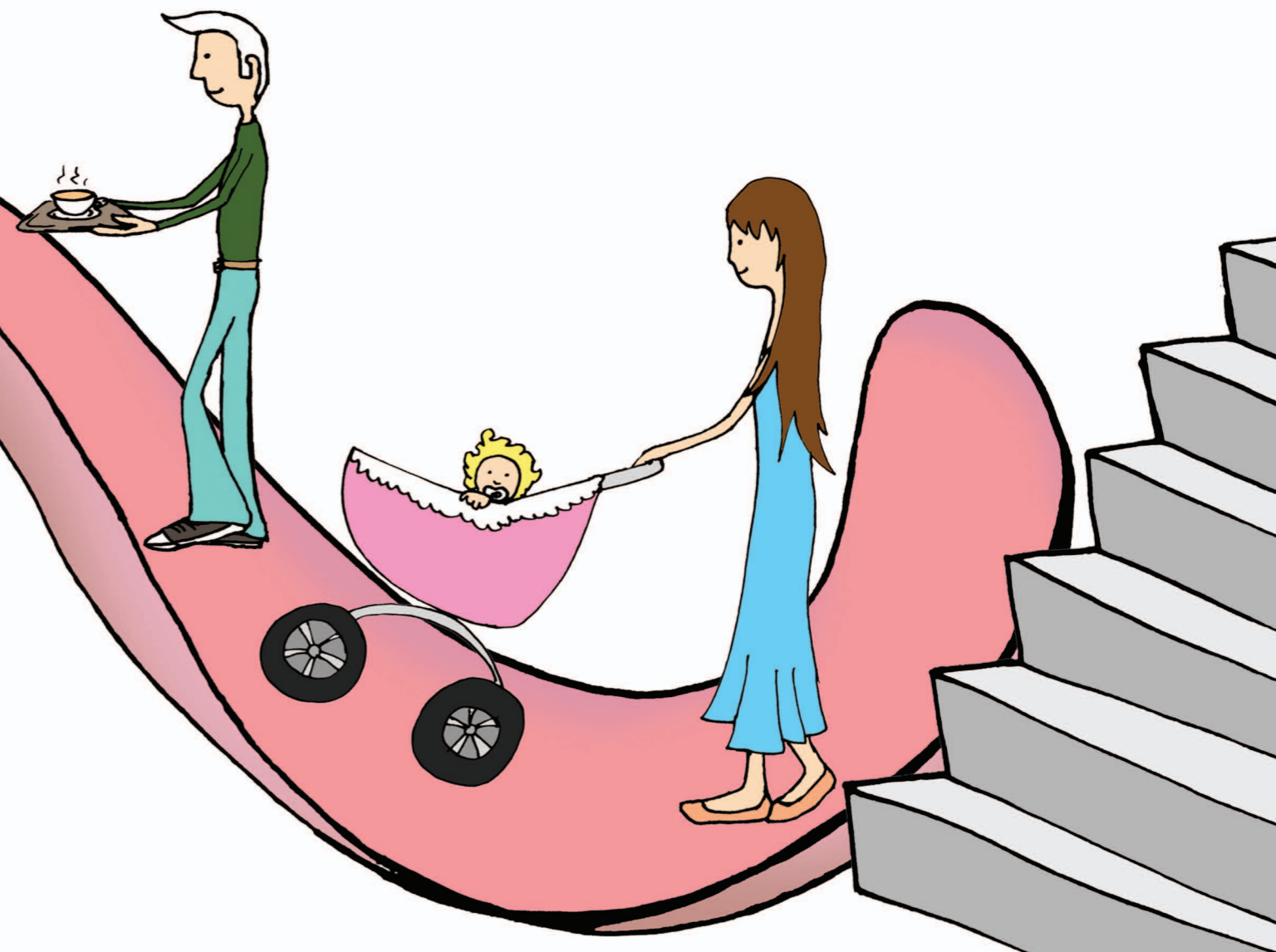
Now, Downstairs is a bit greedy, we have to admit. Not being prone to favouritism, we love both our floors equally, but we admit the little blighter has a tendency to gobble up the lion's share of the customers until it's quite full. It can't help it: it's just got that type of personality. And it's a charmer too, sweet-talking customers into joining it for lunch while its oft-overlooked sibling wonders where everyone has got to. Downstairs is constantly buzzing like it's been hooked up to our entire morning supply of espresso. It looks directly on to the car park and the high street because it loves people watching. It's a bit edgy, it loves children, it feeds on the hubbub.

Of course, just because there's no overt preference from our side doesn't mean that there isn't

rabid rivalry between the floors themselves. They're as disparate but as competitive as Bart and Lisa Simpson.

Upstairs, on the other hand, is a bit more laid back about everything. It prefers a more sedate pace and takes its time appreciating the finer things in life. Upstairs plays the long game - the comfy sofas, the live music every lunch time and the works of fine art adorning the walls are all physical embodiments of its philosophy. It likes people to hang around. Even the Wi-Fi signal is better - so Upstairs welcomes laptop and tablet users with open arms. And the final piece de resistance? It now features a roaring fire for those colder months. Which, let's be honest, is pretty much all of them.

You can even have a wee snooze if you like. We don't mind.



THE PRAISE IS STACKING UP

It's hard to believe now, but when Only Fools and Horses first hit the airwaves in 1981, it made as much of an impact as someone hurling a grain of sand at the Saturn V rocket. It was only through perseverance and the passage of time that justifiable success eventually beckoned.

Of course in these scenarios it is tempting for the people behind the product to lose faith and start fiddling around with their formula - maybe Rodney Trotter should be replaced by some sort of wisecracking pet hamster? - but this did not happen.

In this case, those in the know are assured of their product's quality - they just need to wait for the devotees to find it.

This is broadly similar to the case with one of our stalwarts in the dessert cabinet - the peanut butter stack.

It's been around for as long as anyone can remember, but it is only in recent times that the penny has dropped with our pro-pudding patrons just how delicious it is.

Quite why this has happened remains a mystery. It always sold steadily, but was more of a cult favourite than a Hollywood blockbuster. Like cask-aged whiskey, mature Pie d'Angloys and pizza left over from the night before, some things need time to be appreciated.

The stack's success is no surprise. It isn't a gargantuan dessert in the manner of a Chocolate Lovin' Spoon cake, but it doesn't need to be. Within a mere eight cubic inches or so it packs two layers of milk chocolate, peanut butter crunch and buttery caramel, all nestling on a foundation of "brownie-cake hybrid."

And if your peanut stack isn't peanuttty enough for you, there is a layer of honey-roasted peanuts on top. Oh, and more caramel.

We've kept pretty quiet about this tantalising treat ourselves, but it seems that its reputation has spread organically. By word of mouth? Well yes, but people tend to have trouble talking coherently when those mouths won't stop watering.

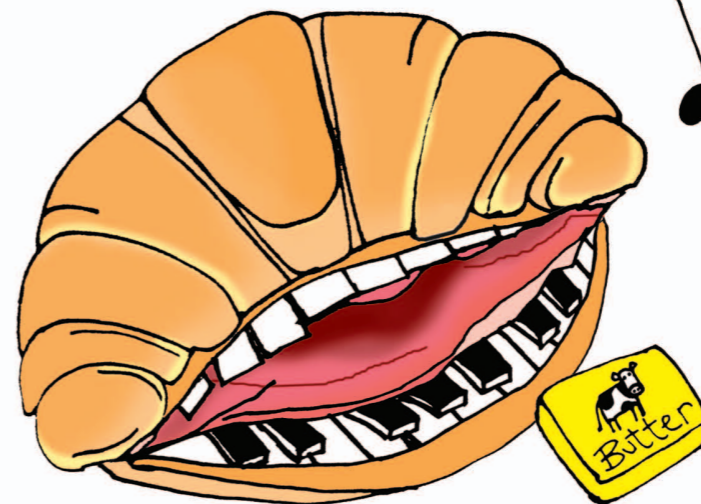
Once upon a time, there was a piano. For many days and nights, the piano sat alone and unused. The days and nights turned into weeks and months, and the piano would dream of those halcyon days when its melodious sounds had fallen on attentive, appreciative ears.

One day, when the poor piano thought it might never be played again, it was roused from its early afternoon nap by someone gently lifting the fallboard and placing a hand over its keys. The stranger then sat down, tried the piano's pedals, and began playing like he and the piano had known each other all their days. This was the happiest day of the piano's life, and thenceforth, once a week, it was played regularly all lunchtime, and

was delighted to see the passers-by nodding in time with the music as they walked with their trays.

The piano, being a selfless creature, eventually decided that it would welcome other musicians and instruments into its home on the first floor.

These days, the piano is just part of a happy musical family here at the Yard, where the crotchets and quavers are served up with the coffees and croissants every day of the week. If you like a serenade with your sandwich or a ballad with your bagel, visit us upstairs and get acquainted with the performers. Our melodic menu keeps expanding and changing - so check out who's currently playing on our events page at www.coffeeyard.com.



WE LIVE FOR OUR LIVE LUNCHES

Yard Gallery is a very magnanimous entity - for mag after mag the Coffee Yard and its products are endlessly discussed and the Gallery sits by patiently. But the Yard is a twin-pronged affair, so we thought we'd give more exposure to our beloved emporium of art. Starting with a reminder of who everyone is...

Jim: Although he had his pick of the entire building for his office, Jim chose a three foot square space under the stairs. His fondness of his chair is at 'Father Jack' levels and even extends to mealtimes. He will occasionally permit himself to enjoy a quick bite of a sandwich, but does so in the utmost secrecy. He also prides himself on being able to conduct conversation while his mouth is full - something he has developed with years of practice. His wardrobe consists of nothing but blue shirts and black trousers. He prefers to avoid wearing ties and has therefore developed an austere look simply called 'The Jim' which is currently very popular among trendy Guardian readers. Jim's trademark slicked-back hair is something that remains rigidly invariable - except during busy periods when it breaks free and waves about like a Mohican. Jim surprised everyone in 2009 by going away on holiday, the first time he had left his desk since 1974, and returning with a fashionable beard and a new pair of glasses. But only because his old ones had broken.

Sarah: is the voice of the Yard. If you follow us on Facebook (which you should) it will be her relentlessly cheerful and whimsical thoughts that pop up on the official page. Sarah's hair was dark until one day a few years ago when she awoke to discover it was bright red. This, as we discussed all the way back in Issue One of Eat Drink Read, made her a target for male predators so she has developed twin strategies to combat this - a devastating line in withering put-downs that can cut a man to the core of his soul, and an ability to climb vertical surfaces in five seconds flat, the latter of which she has honed at circus school. Sarah doesn't use the stairs at all - we have a rope tied to the outside walls for her. Her thick tights may look like a fashion statement but they are in fact made from Kevlar to enable her to slide down again without incurring lesions to her legs.

Gail: has bags of energy and does everything with astonishing efficiency. She is up at 3am every morning for a 10km warm-up jog (396

laps of her garden) before running to work from Bangor and back again eight times. She holds the world record for the quickest construction of a flat-pack cardboard box, the most slices of toast buttered in a minute and the fastest F1 pit-stop (single-handedly beating the entire Ferrari team in the process). She has also played chess with more squirrels than anyone else in Europe, but sadly this record is unverified. Before she joined the Yard she read the news on Radio 4 so has an immaculately polite phone voice. Her shiny long hair occasionally causes problems when Sarah, through force of habit, scampers up it and perches on her head, but she is too nice to mind. She practices what she preaches, too - she paints regularly, often on a large scale. She also loves Etnies skate shoes - although she does tend to burn her way through a lot of them.

Melody: is our newest Galleryite. She is currently sporting a hairstyle modelled on 50s pin-up Betty Page (you can Google her in your own time

and not when someone is looking over your shoulder) with her purple fringe cut into a V. This forms an arrow which directs people to her smiling face, where they may ask for assistance or just have a chat. She is a technical whizz, which comes in handy when the Gallery's steam-powered computer plays up. She has offered several times to overhaul the car park infrastructure and design a new system from scratch, but Jim is reluctant to give up his mantle of The Keeper of the Car Park. When she's not helping out at the Yard, she is studying to become a computer game designer. We have a strong suspicion that her first commercial title will be an epic role-playing fantasy, based in an alternative universe called Yardinium, in which three fearless heroines - of black, red and purple hair - battle to free the land from the clutches of Lord Jim, who has been on the throne for countless centuries. Her favourite time of the year is Halloween, since the fireworks give her inspiration for her next hair colour.

MINSTRELS IN THE GALLERY



THE STRONG SILENT TAPE

What's the most annoying sound in the world?

We would suggest, if you have to listen to it all day, it's the screech of Sellotape being unwillingly yanked from its comfortable spool.

Packaging up the works flying out the door is a full-time pursuit in itself, with any square inch of free space soon occupied by cardboard boxes and the demand escalating. It's got to the point that no sooner has the artist turned around to rinse their paintbrush than Sarah, Gail or Melody has zip-wired through

the window in their ninja gear and grabbed their canvas off the easel.

The drawn-out howl of the Sellotape has however remained a sticking point, no pun intended. Until now. Months of careful research and development by the devoted team here has resulted in a revolutionary discovery...silent tape.

No longer is any squawking, squealing, screeching or squeaking to be heard. The tape glides off the reel serenely, grateful to be such an integral part of the general feeling of Gallery Goodwill.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED...

...why doors that are "push only" feature handles?

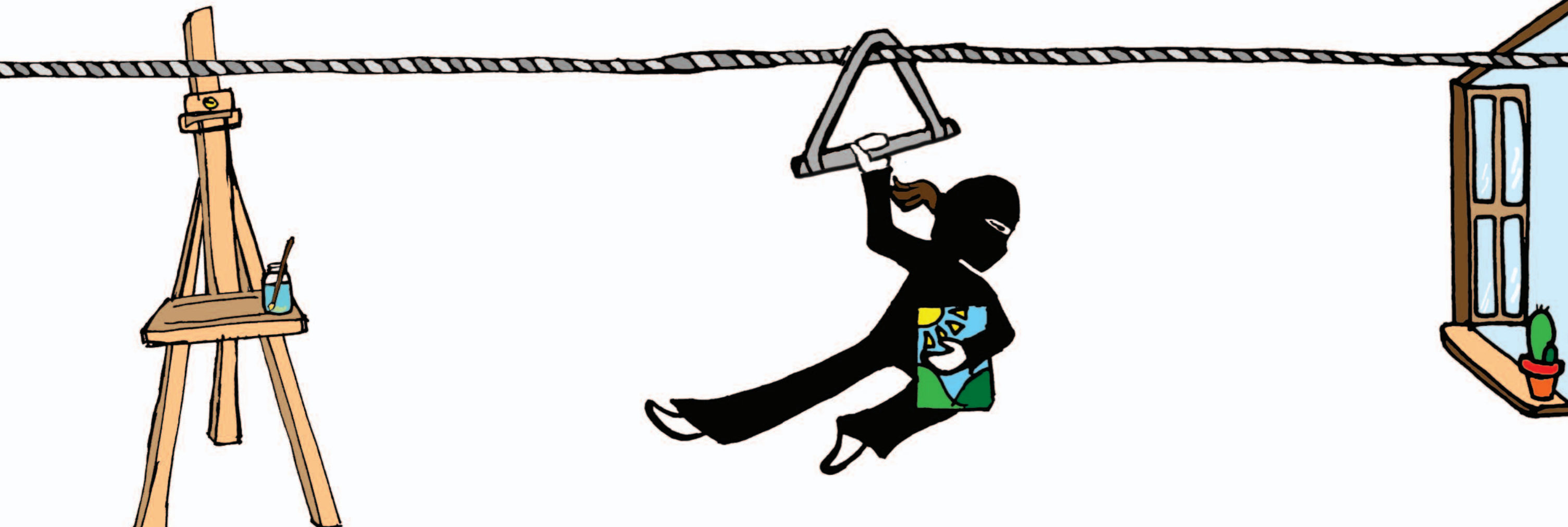
The Yard features three such doors - two at the front, one at the rear, and they are all equipped with these apparently extraneous attachments.

But they are anything other than surplus to requirements - each one has its use for the 'Girls of the Gallery'...

The handle on the main Gallery door is Gail's - it is in fact a telescopic pole-vault that she can use to leap around the car park on her lunch break.

The handle to the Coffee Yard door is Sarah's - it can be detached and used as a bugle that she can blow to call for help if one of her climbing escapades has gone wrong and she is stuck up a tree. She also uses it as a physical deterrent by swiping it at male admirers.

The handle to the rear door contains Melody's cosmetic reserves - a supply of emergency hair dye and eye-liner pencils await. She's not precious about it though - she says anyone who wants can help themselves. Rumours abound that Jim has first dibs on the eyeliner...



Written by Richard Craig
Illustrated by Sarah McAvoy

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**Questions, comments and
happy thoughts send to
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