

The Aspect Diary



We begin this edition as we ended the last - in lockdown, though perhaps with a light at the end of the tunnel. We hope you're surviving it with good humour & that your other half doesn't blink too loudly, breathe in an annoying manner or generally grate on your nerves like fingernails down a blackboard. For those of you attempting to home-school your children, we have two words of advice. Chocolate. Alcohol. For you, not them.

Communicating with clients over the last weeks (yes, we're still getting in touch with them. We send them bills. We're of the opinion they're thrilled with the contact), it's become evident that we all feel we're getting stupider the longer this lockdown lasts. We start talking, get halfway through a sentence & the next word we planned to say suddenly vanishes into the abyss. Being struck dumb mid-sentence isn't the only symptom. After 3 weeks of working on a tiny laptop at home, I went to the office, sat down to the keyboard I've used for more than a year & utterly failed to locate the Delete key.

One of the other hazards of working from home (besides the neighbourhood DIY orchestra - "Bang! Bang! Bang! Nyeeeeeee-yahhhhh!!!! Whheeeeeep-duh-duh-duh!") is you have to be careful who's listening inside your house. Making a call to a client in May, Steve only managed to say "Alexa, it's Steve from Aspect...." when our Amazon Echo piped up with "I'm sorry, I didn't understand that."

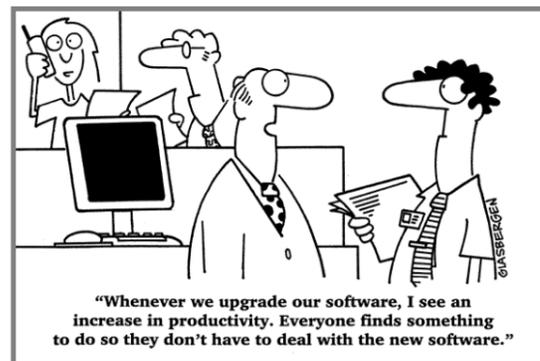
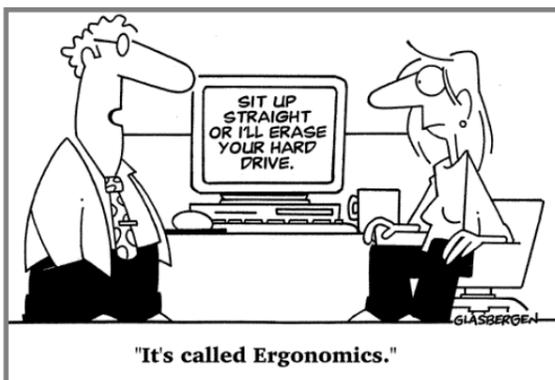
As Aladdin put it, it's a whole new world. Meals are the high point of every day (& it's scary how many of them can be fitted into a single day). What we're saving on fuel, we're spending on beer. But by the same token, where exercise used to be something to be avoided, being told we could only do it once a day made us desperate to get out there. OK, maybe not desperate. Keen, perhaps. Well, all right, we gave it more serious thought than usual, OK? Speaking of the daily exercise thing, thanks to the Thurs night clapping, we've even learned to recognise some of our neighbours when they walk or jog by!

Before we go, can we give a shout out to our landlord, Business In Focus? They've been quite simply superb throughout this pandemic. From day 1, they've kept all us tenants advised of every bit of financial help available, with links to the sites, often weeks before HMRC or the local council got in touch.

Well that's it for now. We hope you'll forgive the seriously truncated issue this time & hopefully the autumn edition will be a proper newsletter.

Take care & stay safe everyone.

The Last Laugh



The Aspect Newsletter

Issue 47 - Summer 2020

Editorial

This is normally where we tell you What's Inside. Well, compared to the usual, not a lot! We've kept your favourite bits (Vassilly, Helpdesk of Horror, the Quiz etc), but there's not much technical stuff. Yes, we know - you're gutted.

If we can take a moment here to do a very minor techie sales pitch Some of you have been geared up for remote working for a long time; others had to make plans in a hurry. Some of you have had no option but to shut down and wait for everything to blow over. Even then, you still need to be able to get emails, get calls diverted and so on. Obviously we all want life to go back to normal as soon as possible, but isn't it good to know that there's technology around that lets you carry on functioning? That lets you take phone calls as though you were at your desk and transfer calls between your staff as normal? That lets you have meetings with multiple people, wherever you all happen to be?

It's been mooted that all this may make businesses take a long, hard look at how they operate, and that the new 'normal' will see something of a sea change in working practices. So while we're not going to do a sell-sell-sell here, just know that if your new 'normal' turns out to have a greater emphasis on remote working, we've got a whole host of IT and telephony solutions to make it all just a little bit easier for you.

We're still here - if you want to discuss options, just call.



Summertime Blues

To do a newsletter, or not to do a newsletter? That was the question. Whether t'was nobler in our stultified little minds to suffer the indignity of not being able to fill eight pages, or, like Hamlet, to accept that we've gone slightly barmy and just throw something out there. The fact you're reading it tells you which way we opted to go.

For our part, it's a way of staying in touch, letting you know we're still here for you and - we hope - injecting a little light into your lives. But not UV light. And definitely no injecting disinfectant (We do mention in the Diary that people are complaining of feeling stupider as time goes on. But then you come across someone who's set the stupidity bar so very, very low and it makes you feel a whole lot better about yourself).

This is going to be an abbreviated edition, though. Cut off, as we are, from so many of our clients, suppliers and indeed each other, it's been a bit difficult to find material. Not only do we depend on industry news, but it turns out we really depend on our interaction with the outside world to be able to put our wry spin on Aspect daily life.

Will this pandemic change the way we work in future? Possibly. Women who were drafted in to fill the men's jobs in the war weren't about to be shunted out of the workplace when it was over. Will those of us who were able to work perfectly well at home be eager to return to the daily commute?

For now, we just want things to go back to a semblance of normality. To be able to leisurely browse in a supermarket without getting the stink eye from those still queuing outside, walk in any direction up and down the aisles and be allowed to go back three aisles for something we forgot without doing laps of the entire supermarket. But most of all of course, we want to be able to be with all our friends and family again.

I wasn't looking at her funny! I always look like this!



We wish you all health, strength and patience. We will get through this.

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Vassilly's Blog



Wed 1 April

Is day for jokes, but I am being home for whole week now and is not funny. I am go to supermarket yesterday and is sign saying I am only allowed three of anything. OK, so I am buy three 12-pack of Kit-Kat and three Kit-Kat Easter Egg. Lady on tills say no. No?? She say is not essential. We are have full and far-reaching discussion on whether Kit-Kat is essential and - long story short, loyal fans - I am now barred from this supermarket. I am text Payrolls lady as she is always full of good advice. She is explain where I am go wrong. Apparently I am fail on social distancing when I am launch myself across conveyor belt at till lady. Ah. OK. This is good to know. In future, I am stand well back and throw things.

Fri 10 April

Payrolls lady is get in touch. She say she is make difficult decision to furlough me. (If 'kats is furloughed, is peoples skinloughed???) I am tell her that is nice she is wrestle with decision. She say no, is because it is mean I am being paid for doing nothing and she is struggle to spot the difference. I say I am carry on with Blog anyway, to be reaching out to peoples so they is feel I am being there with them. She say is certainly add new terror to lockdown.

Mon 13 April

Bored.

Tues 14 April

Very bored. I am go and look in fridge again. Is same as it was half hour ago. Maybe I am go get some exercise! (Drastic measures, peoples). I am go for scurry around block, but some woman is scream and phone Rentokil.

Fri 17 April

A new low. I am choose (choose!!) to phone Sergei for conversation. He is tell me is like wartime (he is never in war, he is just watch many film). Then we are have 20 minutes on his achy bones, funny rash on left paw and new scaly patch on chest. My phone is beep and I am see he is send me picture.... Blech! But this is all good, because when I am hang up, isolatings is look very much better.

Fri 15 May

Is no Eurovisions this weekend!! First time ever Meerkovo is qualify, and is cancelled!!! And we is have beautiful ballad too, rich in evokings of old Kalahari! Is called "You Is Precious To Me Like Treasured Find Of Dung Beetle". *Sniff!* Sorry, is very emotional song, peoples. And Pyotr is able to scale three octaves. He is have some trouble scaling model of treasured find of dung beetle in rehearsals though. Foot is slip and he is fall inside. I think maybe they are make very realistic model because he is not look well when they is pull him out.

Fri 22 May

Is many week since I am furloughed. Here is things I am learn:- (1) if you is keep vodka shot in each paw, is impossible to touch face. (2) Strawberries:- some is have 210 seeds, some is have 235. Who knew? (3) I am able to stare at ice cube and melt it with just my mind. Is take long time though.

Mon 1 June

I am back from furloughs!! Payrolls lady is in office today and I am offer to come in, but she say no (actually, she is shout no. Maybe phone line is not good?) I am ask if she is miss me - she say yes, but aim is sure to get better.

Be safe, loyal fans, and keep washing paws.

"Guess the Year" quiz!

It's been a little while since we did one of these, back when we had you guess the ages of our meerkat team. Same plan as before:- a couple of films, a couple of songs, and some major news headlines. Since we're all being force-fed a diet of old programmes on TV, this should be easy for you!

Answers upside down at the bottom of the page.



- Big films:** 2001: A Space Odyssey
Oliver!
- Big hits:** Hey Jude
Mrs Robinson
- Big news:** Tet offensive begins in Vietnam
Martin Luther King Jr assassinated
- Goodbye:** Charlie Chaplin
Tony Hancock

60's



- Big films:** Alien
Moonraker
- Big hits:** Tragedy
Message in a Bottle
- Big news:** Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister
Earl Mountbatten assassinated
- Goodbye:** Sid Vicious
Richard Beckinsale



- Big films:** Ghostbusters
Gremlins
- Big hits:** 99 Red Balloons
Relax
- Big news:** Miner's strike begins
IRA bomb Grand Hotel in Brighton during Conservative party conference
- Goodbye:** Tommy Cooper
Eric Morecambe

(also Marvin Gaye, James Mason, Richard Burton, Indira Gandhi, Count Basie, Diana Dors, Peter Lawford, Leonard Rossiter, Johnny Weissmuller, Jackie Wilson, Sam Peckinpah, Dame Flora Robson ... it wasn't a great year)

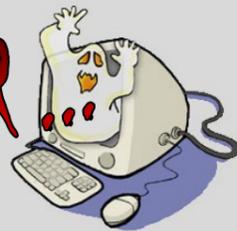
80's



- Big films:** Pretty Woman
Total Recall (the proper one!)
- Big hits:** Nothing Compares 2 U
Vogue
- Big news:** Nelson Mandela walks free
Margaret Thatcher resigns as PM
- Goodbye:** Roald Dahl
Terry-Thomas



The Helpdesk of HORROR



"Okay, you'll need to hit the back button on your browser."
"I don't have a browser. I'm on an iPhone."
"It's still a browser. Do you have a back button, or maybe an arrow?"
"Wait, I think I got it ... oh, no, that turned my phone off."

"I'm trying to set this new passcode but it doesn't work. The instructions in the recording say to enter 4-2-8 numbers, and I enter 4-2-8 but it doesn't work!"
"No. It means choose a code with 4 to 8 digits in it."

"So how will you let me know when my phone's repaired?"
"I could email you?"
"But I don't have my phone."
"Well could you give me someone else's number? A friend or family member, maybe?"
"But how are they supposed to let me know if you've got my phone?"
"Well, can't they just tell you?"
"But YOU'VE got my PHONE!!"

"You've introduced a BIG DELETE button on the page, so I wondered what it'd do and it deleted what was on the page! This is unacceptable. Recover everything I had immediately!"
"OK, but what did you think it would do?"
"I don't know! It was a new button!!"

"Yes, after that scheduled power outage on the weekend, I've come back in, and as per your instructions, I've plugged my computer in again, but it's not working."
"That's odd. Do you get any lights when you power it on?"
".... Your instructions never said anything about switching it on!"

ABC Aspect BC Tips

There's just a couple of topical things we'd like to mention:-

- One of the recurring service ticket issues we've had during lockdown is people's remote connections dropping. In the majority of cases, switching from working wirelessly to wired makes a world of difference. We know it isn't possible in every situation but if you can do it, do.
- Next one is Be Alert. Not the Government 'Be Alert' (which no-one understood anyway) but Be Alert to scams. As we warned you going into lockdown, this is going to bring out the scammers in their droves, and it did. Think twice before you click on anything.



We'd love to hear your comments and feedback.
Just email:
newsletter@aspectbc.co.uk

(Recent issues are on the website if you missed them).