

A Braw Guid Alarm

Anither true life triumph ower an auld problem for Geordie.

Geordie Jooks aye haed an awfu job gettin up in the mornin. He pit it doon tae the twa year he haed saired in the Royal Navy daein his National Service in his young days. The hail o thae twa year, apairt frae aboot seeven weeks, wis spent abuid ship an no in ony barracks or ocht an the first ship he wis on wis HMS Implacable, an auld aircraft cairrier yaised as a trainin ship for new recruits. Coorse, in thae days it wis aw hammocks for sleepin in – nae comfy cushie beds like in the ships ye hae noo-a-days.

Aince awbody wis settled in, they aw haed thair ain bit for slingin thair hammocks an Geordie's wis richt up alangside a Thermotank vent trunk, rinnin ablow the deck-heid, wi a Punka Louvre blawin air richt ower the middle o his hammock. Geordie aye haed tae mak shair it wis blawin ower the tap o it an no doon intae it sae he didnae get the cauld but at first he haed an awfu job gettin aff tae sleep for the noise o the air blawin throu the vent trunk no tae mention the endless sweeshin soond o the air blawin oot the louvre. As time gaed by tho, he got yaised wi aw the soonds an they stertit tae hae a kinna dreich sootherin effect that gart him faw ower tae sleep raither than bide awake.

Efter the Implacable, Geordie sailed in the battleship HMS Vanguard an then HMS Tyne, an auld destroyer depot ship, that taen ower the flag o CinC Hame Fleet efter the Vanguard wis de-commissioned an gaed intae mothball. Baith thae ships wis as noisy as the first ane. In fact, the Tyne wis waur than the ithers for Geordie wis aye slung up aside a vent fan that clanked awa aw the time but, like the ithers, he juist lairnt tae sleep throu it aw. The only time the fan gart him wauken wis the odd time it brak doon throu the nicht an Geordie waukened up wunnerin whit wis gaun on.

When thae twa year wis ower, Geordie cam hame an settled doon tae hame life but, tho he suin got yaised tae fawin asleep in a quiet bedroom, he aye fund the hypnotic buzz o the alarm clock in the mornins mair sootherin nor waukenin an he wis aye sleepin in an gettin up late for his wark. He tried awthin; pittin the alarm on tap a tuim biscuit tin, pittin it inside a tuim biscuit tin an e'en haein twa-three alarms aw ower the room an gaun aff at different times but naethin wis ony yuiss at aw.

It wisnae lang efter Geordie an Beenie flitted intae thair new hoose in the Honest Toun that he got his haunds on an auld electric horn aff a motor bike, the kinna thing some fowk wad cry a klaxon, an he thocht that if he could juist get this horn tae blaw at seeven o'clock ilka mornin, gettin up on time wad be a doddle.

He got haud o ane o his auld alarms an sortit a wire throu the back o the clock face sae it wis stickin up juist the richt heicht for the oor haund tae come roond an mak contact at seeven o'clock an he jyned the ither end o the wire tae the screw doon terminal o a bell battery. Anither wire wis fixed tae the chassis o the alarm wi the ither end connectit tae the horn an a third ane jyned the horn tae the ither terminal o the bell battery.

Geordie preed his new alairm bi birlin the haunds roond an, shair eneuch, juist as the haunds cam roond tae seeven o'clock, whit soonded like a Parisian traffic jam, loupit intae his bedroom. He lowsed ane o the terminal screws tae turn the horn aff juist as Beenie cam breengin throu the door tae see whit aw the racket wis about.

"Whit dae ye think o ma new alairm, hen?" speirt Geordie feelin fair prood o hissel.

"New alairm? Ye'll hae the hail street up if ye yaise that racket in the mornins!"

"A dinnae care if it waukens the hail toun or no as lang's it waukens me for A'm seek o aye sleepin in an here's howpin this'll dae the trick."

Weel, it fair did the trick aw richt an Geordie never slept in aince efter that. He kept the alairm weel ower frae the bed sae he haed tae get up tae unscrew the terminal an switch it aff. Maist mornins it gied ane or twa wee stutterin toots afore the oor haund makit richt contact an ye got the full blaw o the horn an aft it wis juist as Beenie heard thae wee toots, she kept on diggin Geordie wi her elbae till he got ower the bed tae turn the thing aff. Coorse, she haed him daured frae yaisin the alairm ony time he wis on holiday an didnae hae tae get up for his wark.

Geordie's braw new alairm clock saired him weel for the best pairt o a year an, juist about then, a new farrant kinna radio-alairm clock cam oot on the mercat an Beenie perswaddit him tae try ane. It turnt oot tae be juist the dab an aw, for he could set the wireless volume as high as he liked an it wad come on at the set time. Whit wi Radio Scotland's news reader yellin in his lug an Beenie's elbae diggin intae his ribs, he didnae hae ony bother wakenin up maist mornins an thochts o him sleepin in for his wark gaed strecht oot his heid. It suin got tae be juist a forgotten memory o days gane by.

Years efter when Geordie an Beenie haed bocht a hoose in anither pairt o the toun, efter bidin furth o Scotland for a nummer o years, Geordie jyned ane o the local boolin clubs an ane nicht efter the Seturday hat gemm, he fund hissel sittin at the same table wi Jimmy, that yaised tae be his throu-the-wa neibour in the auld hoose an wis, in fact, still aye bidin in it. No haen seen ane-anither for a guid when year, they haed a guid auld blether an efter a while, the crack turned tae when they haed baith flitted intae thae hooses when they war first biggit.

"Did you hae ony bother wi noisy pipes when ye first flitted intae thon hoose Geordie?" speirt Jimmy.

"Pipes? Naw A cannae say we haed ony noisy pipes at aw."

"Och we haed an awfu bother thon first year we war in the hoose. A think it wis the pipes rinnin up throu the chimney breist frae the fire but the orra thing wis, we aye heard the soond looder when we opened the door tae the big bedroom press."

“Weel oor press wis backin on tae yours Jimmy an A cannae mind o haein ony bother at aw.”

“A cannae mind hou mony times A wis up airlie in the mornin wi ma heid inside the press or up the garret an it got that bad A haed tae get the builders doon a nummer o times tae see if they could dae ocht. They pit ane or twa extrae pipe clips on some o the pipes in case it wis vibration but, apairt frae that, they didnae find onythin.”

“It maun hiv been a richt scunner no kennin whit wis wrang.” said Geordie.

“Ay, but it wis waur on Sheila nor masel for A’ve aye been kinna deaf but she aye yaised tae jump at the least wee noise an A haed tae hae anither word wi the builders. A telt thaim that it wis maistly atween seeven an eicht in the mornin that we heard the noise sae they sent twa plumbers tae the hoose ae Monday mornin. It wis an Edinburgh holiday sae A haed the day aff an got up airly tae let thaim in aboot hauf six an ane steyed wi his heid in the press an the ither wis up the garret but, tho they steyed tae aboot hauf eicht, there wisnae a peep an they juist gaed awa an said they widnae be comin back.”

“A wad maist like hae the Edinburgh holiday thon day an aw but A dinnae think there ony chance A’d hiv been up at hauf six, no on a holiday like.” said Geordie.

“Weel, efter that Sheila got intae the habit o sleepin wi ear muffs but a while efter, it juist seemed tae sort itsel oot an gaun awa.”

Bi noo, Geordie wis haein a sair time o’t tryin tae haud on tae his poker face an he juist said, “Ay, hooses is funny things Jimmy. Are ye ready for anither pint pal?”