

Speed Limits In Albania

by Philip W Baker

Chapter 1

Tony White was a jazz drummer.

His main full-time job was as a sales engineer with a firm named John D Hotchkiss which was located at West Kingsdown on the A20 not far from Brands Hatch in Kent.

Tony got the urge to bang drums at an early age and took lessons. Later he married and bought a house in a quiet road that ran parallel to Death Hill.

He played in gigs with a jazz band on weekday evenings and sometimes at weekends. Another hobby was photography and Tony developed his own films in a spare room at the house.

The employer, Hotchkiss made special bolt-on devices for machining surfaces on industrial plant and got orders from many countries, including some projects in Australia.

When at work Tony White invested a lot of time at the drawing board producing designs for such devices.

At times he admitted to being a bit on the vain side and that came out during a conversation with his wife and sister-in-law one evening.

He called the sister-in-law "Sil" from the initials and Sil didn't seem to take offence.

"Why are you playing that old rubbish, I thought you were a jazzman through and through!" asked Sil.

"I read somewhere it was a "tone poem" and people call me "tone" so I adopted it as "my tune", came the response from 'Tone'.

"Lucky you weren't born tone deaf, then" Sil retorted. The banter was normal when they met and, for the best part, good humoured.

Sil often acted as companion to her sister when Tony went off on business trips to oversee projects involving his designs.

The piece he was playing from an old 12" record was "also sprach Zarathustra" by Richard Strauss.

Sil recognised it as the theme music from the 1968 film "2001: A Space Odyssey" which she had seen but didn't like much, hence her remark about "that old rubbish".

But Sil didn't mind jazz music and rather liked the tradition of bands playing "Take The A Train" and "St Louis Blues" to start and end their sessions.

She grinned to herself once when thinking musicians call their gigs "jam sessions" and the notion of 'jamming'. In a pub one Sunday she had heard a guy named Mark ask his friend "How does Bob Marley like his sandwiches?" Quickly followed by the answer "with jam in".

The friend understood it and grinned because Bob Marley had made a track titled "We're Jamming".

"I was reading in this here encyclopaedia about your Zarathustra guy" said Tony's wife when he got home from a jazz session one night.

Sitting up in bed with a table lamp on she looked perky and wide awake, even though it was approaching midnight.

"Oh, yeah!", he replied, "Anything interesting?"

"Well the same guy was called Zoroaster and Zaratosht in Persia and other places. It all links to good and evil religious stuff with judgement after death and all that."

"Good stuff" yawned Tony. "I'd better get some sleep, early start tomorrow".

"Where are you off to?"

"West Sussex, a farm in a village called Pease Pottage, near Crawley".

"Sounds creepy to me!" as she smiled to herself, then shuddered as she thought of creepy crawlies in the bed.

As she lay down ready to join her husband in slumber for what was left of the night she said "Pottage

is a kind of thick soup made of vegetables, so I suppose your village destination is a kind of pea soup. Better hope it's not foggy in the morning!"

As he nodded off Tony muttered "Pease on Earth and goodwill to all..."

The radio alarm worked and they got up on time.

"Were all the usual suspects there last night?" asked Tony's wife over the breakfast table.

She was, in her own words, a little bit pregnant and that was another good reason sister Sil wanted to be a round when 'daddy' was away.

Because the sisters joked around the idea of being in the pudding club both Sil and Tony called her "pudding" sometimes.

"If the proof of the pudding is in the eating the proof of the stuffing is in the pudding!" quipped Sil on one occasion, quoting the vernacular version.

"Yes", answered Tony to the 'suspects' question, Richard, Mike, Simon the new trombonist, Pete the pianist, Bill Bass, etc, all there.

A short while later the phone rang.

"Could you get that darling, I'm fighting a broken shoelace here" asked Tony.

From the hallway Pudding said "It's your trombonist. Did you forget your cymbal Simon says!"

"Oh, bugger. I may have done. Tell him I'll call him back tonight or tomorrow, thanks".

"OK. He said he'll keep hold of it for you. By the way, if you are back in time, any requests for dinner?"

"I'd love a pork chop with roast potatoes, gravy and peas, Pudding. Any chance?"

"You might be lucky", she answered.

"Good, how about the dinner though?" He winked, kissed her and went off to work.

Chapter 2

The West Sussex project was uncomplicated and Tony was able to get back to his trombonist about the cymbal he left behind at the gig hall.

He took Pudding and Sil with him when he went off to collect it after dinner. He'd enjoyed his requested meal and managed to devour it all quickly without dropping any peas on the floor.

As they drove along Sil started singing "Hi hat silver lining", as joke because a pair of cymbals on a stand and worked by a pedal is called a 'hi hat' and there was an old pop song titled "Hi Ho Silver Lining" sung by a freakbeat band called The Attack and later by Jeff Beck.

Tony was used to Sil's sense of humour and rather than be disdained he joined in, so did Pudding.

The gig had been in a hall at Eynsford, a village near Lullingstone Castle, an old Roman villa, and The World Garden. It was close to Chelsfield, Well Hill, Badgers Mount, Pratt's Bottom and a lot of visitors were attracted to the area

As they arrived they saw the trombonist standing outside looking rather concerned. He lived very close to the venue and evidently thought the cymbal would be safe in the hall overnight.

"I'm afraid it's gone, old chap. Terribly sorry!" was the short apology, followed by "Why did you only leave one, I thought there was a matched pair?"

"You're right", Tony responded. "I can't get the whole drum kit in the van with everything assembled so usually I dismantle the hi hat kit and lay the cymbals by the bass drum so it is all compact. I must have got distracted. Where did you find the one I left behind?"

"My left behind is aching a bit", chimed in Pudding. "Must be the way I sat!". Sil grinned, Tony didn't, the trombonist had his mind on something else. Loyalty among jazz players was quite strong and he was wondering what a new cymbal or pair of cymbals would set him back if he felt obligated to reimburse Tony for failing to look after the brass disc.

"I'm afraid I dropped a clanger there", he said. "If there's something I can do..."

"Let's look inside" said Tony and the quartet ambled into the hall. There they found a man named Colin who said he was a manager for an amateur dramatic group which had used the place for a comic opera a couple of nights before.

“I was just checking the corners to see if any costumes or props were still here, Colin informed them.

“What was the production?” Pudding asked.

“The Mikado, you know, the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta” Colin said, clearly a fan of such things.

“Set in Titipu as I recall” said Sil, grinning as she said it, then going instantly silent as she realised this was not the time for comedy. “Coming between a man and his cymbal spells instant death” she mused to herself.

“Who else has been here?” Tony asked Colin.

“Nobody except the landlord ... but hang on a minute.” He paused and thought, then said “The group uses a large trunks because of all the Chinese dresses and things, I wonder if your cymbal could have got mixed up with the junk.”

“Don’t tell me”, said Pudding, “the wardrobe mistress thought it was a Chinese hat!”

“Definitely something wong there!” thought Sil, but didn’t dare say it.

A few phone calls later Colin confirmed that one of the helpers had indeed put a two foot brass disc in a trunk but didn’t know what it was.

“Where was the trunk headed for?” said Tony, asking the obvious question.

“The railway station, for the next production.” Colin looked rather serious as he said it, perhaps realising how small errors can turn into nightmares for someone.

“Which station?” asked Sil, thinking it time she said something.

“Orpington, the nearest one.” Colin thought everyone would know that.

“Next question”, this time from Pudding.

“Penge East, then West Croydon.” Colin offered. A place near Crown Hill for the production. We couldn’t get Fairfield or the Ashcroft, too posh and expensive!”

“Too bloody bad”, thought Tony, “Where’s my cymbal!”

They agreed nothing more could be done that night. The sisters said they would see what they could find out next day, then they all went home.

Chapter 3

In West Kingsdown next morning the Works Manager John Bryant and one of the Hotchkiss directors, Bartholomew (Barty) asked Tony into the office for a “chat”.

“We have a job in the South Atlantic region and wanted to know if you are free to go or if it would interfere with your family plans. Could be away for many weeks” said John.

“The family planning is already under way and there won’t be any bedtime romps until later on anyway, but I would have to talk to my wife and her sister first” Tony told them.

“OK, an outline”, Bryant continued. “We got a recommendations from that job we did in Albuquerque, New Mexico for Zotefoams, and from the job in South Australia.

There is a satellite tracking station on an island called Kerguelen. It’s basically French territory but the nearest administration is New Zealand. They would have to transport equipment by boat from there to the island after machining and they want someone from here to go with it for reassembly and commissioning. Interested?”

Barty added “They are also called the Desolation Islands and are quite remote. There is no airstrip and all travel is by sea so we thought you have the full picture. You don’t have to speak French, by the way, because the technical people there use English as the business language.”

Over dinner Tony raised it with the women.

“I have been asked to go abroad for a while, may be a long while” he said.

They knew international travel was in his contract of employment and that he had to be reasonable.

“Where is it?” from Pudding, asking the obvious question.

“The other side of the world” Tony told them.

The firm had given him a file with all the essential details and the sisters looked through it with great curiosity whilst Tony did the washing up.

“My sister said you can go as long as you bring her back a penguin” chirped Sil.

Tony grinned, went to the fridge and returned with a Penguin biscuit. “Already done!” he said.

After the laughing and nudging they agreed he should take the opportunity and make the trip. Sil would stay with Pudding and they would talk frequently over a video link. The file stated there was an excellent Internet link via satellite.

Tony left a few days later after passport and visa matters were sorted, flew from Gatwick to Dunedin, to New Zealand, liaised with the engineers there and caught the next “ferry” to Desolation. It took three weeks to get there by sea.

The time zone was UTC + 4, four hours ahead of GMT, so evening chats with the girls shouldn’t be too difficult.

The native population of the islands was only around 50 but the satellite tracking crew added to the numbers. Thermal insulation of the buildings was high quality and Tony suspected the crew stayed well insulated off duty because of the medicinal brandy stock. After all, brandy is supposed to dilate blood vessels and improve bloodflow.

What he missed second most of all was his drumkit.

The accommodation was comfortable, the technical work on the equipment went smoothly and Tony embarked on compiling a list of essential spares he thought the operators should have to hand.

It was whilst looking through a storage room that he saw it.

A trunk with the initials KTP marked on the end in large capital letters. “Kiwi Transport Package” he mused to himself, thinking of organisations like UPS – United Parcel Service.

But he looked further. The trunk was light and moved easily away from the wall. On the side were the letters “Kentish Town Players”. Could it possibly be?

Considering himself an honest chap Tony asked his host about the trunk and if he could look inside. The trunk was empty.

The crew told him it was a mix-up. The trunk had been delivered by the boat but contained a load of theatrical stuff and not what they expected. Enquiries told them it belonged to the Kentish Town Players which was the name of an amateur dramatic society.

They added that Kentish Town is an area of north-west London but the society was based in a town in Kent so calling themselves the Kentish Town Players was a kind of play on words which they thought added to the fun. Evidently others disagreed and they never got any bookings in Kentish Town.

“What happened to the contents and why is the trunk still here?” Tony asked.

“When the KTP people hear what happened they claimed off the transport firm to get their stuff returned free of charge. But the insurers wanted it returned via India, not Australasia. To satisfy the shippers it had to be in a waterproof container which the trunk wasn’t, so it could go on the deck of a ship if necessary.

It seems KTP accepted a new type container instead of the trunk and the stuff went off to Mumbai a couple of weeks ago. We think it would most likely go from there by ship to Aden then through the Suez Canal and on to the London docks.”

“So I could get back before it does!” said Tony, wondering. Then he added “Did anybody do an inventory of the content when the stuff was moved from box to box?”

“No, all too busy with our work here. It was all just picked up and transferred. But nothing was left here except the trunk, we can assure you of that.” Tony believed them.

The boat wasn’t due for a couple of days so Tony continued to work with the crew as far as he could with the machinery and in spare time contacted the shipping lines to get a reference number for the waterproof box containing the KTP items. It took a while but he eventually got the tracking information.

The container reached Mumbai but there was no trace of it reaching the port of Aden in Yemen or going any further.

Chapter 4

Tony asked the firm if he could return to England via India, adding that he had picked up some sales leads which he would like to pursue and that the trip back may be quicker by that route.

Barty agreed, so Tony cancelled his booking to New Zealand and got a place on the next boat to India.

Whilst waiting he took some photos and videos of the island for the folks back home. All those penguins at Port-aux-Francais, more than he'd ever seen at the zoo. Plus some trekkers and cave explorers. It could have been a Hebridean island or the Falklands. Plenty of rocks and greenery.

Some of the research station buildings with their green and white facades reminded Tony of a metal shed he'd built in his back garden a few years before. Elsewhere were wooden lodges which looked like Swiss chalets. "Won't the sisters be envious" he thought. But as he breathed warm air on his cold hands he thought "Maybe not!"

The boat trip north to the Arabian Sea was not unpleasant. Alighting in Mumbai Tony got an immediate impression of just how crowded India was.

All those TV documentaries he had seen with people sitting on roof top trains and those inside carriages like sardines suddenly came to life and he was likely to become one of the sardines.

There was a respite, though. His first stop was to track the container with the theatrical goods and see if his cymbal was with them.

The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd was at Nariman Point and the area was served by buses. Whether being a bus passenger was better than being a railway carriage sardine may have been a matter of opinion, but as long as he got to his destination perhaps it was all academic anyway.

The shipping company told him the container had been taken off the ship and had gone on to somewhere else. It took some time before he established the location of 'somewhere else'.

Tony got back into central Mumbai and luckily did find a prospective customer, or "prospect" as salesmen call them in a firm called Aker Solutions at Kurla East. They wanted a special cutting machine which could be adapted for facing large areas of concrete or steel on construction sites around the Indian subcontinent.

"Right up my street" Tony thought and happily used their drawing office machine to sketch out what Hotchkiss could offer, but without giving away enough information to allow them to steal the idea.

They allowed him to e-mail an outline to West Kingsdown so Hotchkiss could arrange a draft contract. That kept Tony in his employer's good books whilst he pursued his cymbal quest. He was OK for expenses, had enough clothing with him, so could relax for a bit.

As he walked away from the Aker building to find a hotel he started singing softly to himself "To dream the impossible dream..."

The shipping office had told Tony there was a confusion over barcodes. Some transporters used older black and white bars, some used different barcode standards, some used QR codes and some used 3D barcodes.

They explained that in their experience sometimes one barcode label got put on a package so it overlapped an older label and confused the code reader.

They said according to their database the container from Kerguelen could have gone to either Abu Simbel in Egypt or Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. They didn't know which.

"Only over two thousand miles apart", thought Tony, "Maybe I should try both." But he didn't believe his bosses would indulge too much jollyng around the Middle East and Pudding may be concerned, so he tried more technology.

With cooperation from the port authorities and a description of the container from the guys at Kerguelen he was able to view CCTV recordings and see which route the container took. It was destined for Riyadh by airfreight. So he got on a Spice Jet plane and went there.

Tony knew that a firm called Baker Hughes was in the oil and natural gas industry and had offices in Riyadh. He made a phone appointment whilst on the way and using some ideas he had developed from sketching the cutter in Mumbai, thought he'd try to sell a variation of it to them.

They were interested. Although the oil and gas industries have plenty of expertise of their own, they also saw the good sense in outsourcing some specialist tasks. One example Tony knew of was a firm called Broadbent in Mytholmroyd, Yorkshire which made pipe facing machines for the oil industry. Tony's designs were for bigger surface areas and different materials but were generally viewed in a similar context to Broadbent's products.

The meeting went well and Tony later phoned John and Barty to tell them of another possible order.

What he didn't expect was another intercontinental trip.

John Bryant: "We got a call from Albuquerque. They asked if you could go over to assist with a new idea they are developing. How are you fixed?"

Tony: "Can I have a couple of days at home first to recover, then if everything is OK there I can fly over."

"Sure" was the answer.

"Where's my bloody cymbal?" Tony muttered to himself. "All this gallivanting around and I still haven't got it back!"

He thought for a moment, but only a very brief moment that perhaps there was some merit in the philosophies of Mazdayasna and Eschatology, or the 'end of the world' that they preach in Zoroastrianism. But he soon discounted it in favour of the Pollyannaism theory.

As an engineer he had to be realistic about what can be achieved because it comes down to the laws of physics. During sales courses trainees were told to always think positive and never say die. He recalled one story about a salesman who used to beat the table with a rolled up newspaper every morning and say to himself "It's going to be a great, great, great day!"

"Keep going, Tone baby!" he said to himself and imagined stroking his cymbals in a diminishing riff as a background to his thoughts. Then back to reality.

A trip to the airport and freight handlers revealed that the container had been forwarded to Denver, Colorado. How or why it happened was never explained.

Tony was very glad to get home the day after and be able to hug his Pudding again. He showed her and Sil the pics and videos he had recorded, then downloaded them onto the computer so they could view them any time.

They discussed New Mexico, guessed how long he might be away, and helped with getting stuff together for the suitcase. With consent from the girls Tony even managed half an hour on the drums, because he needed to. Those drums took a really good bashing that evening. Too bad there was only one cymbal!

Jefferson Street, Albuquerque was not unpleasant as Tony walked along from the motel to his meeting. Temperature 21 degrees C, no rainfall, Relative Humidity 36%, Wind about 7 mph.

The road was wide with single and two storey building on both sides, trees which looked as if they could do with some water, and plenty of places to eat.

He made a mental note of The Donut Mart and later saw the Lovelace Women's Hospital. Through conversation with locals he found there was a Lovelace Medical Center but not a men's hospital. Then decided it was nothing to do with cymbals so forget it.

The business was going to take a few days so Tony arranged a couple of days off whilst in the States so he could pursue his quest.

Denver was about a seven hour drive from his motel. He hired a car and went.

After parking in the West Economy Lot at Denver International Airport he sought out the freight office and went through the tedious business of trying to locate the container.

Again, some video recordings of luggage etc on conveyors proved useful and Tony spotted the one he was after just about the time he felt like giving up. He noted some chalk or crayon markings on the container and asked what they were.

The supervisor was curious too and ,always on the alert for anything that may in some way be terrorist related, he got an enquiry going. Freight handlers were questioned and answers started to flow.

“Seems there was a metal band named Tyrant came down from Canada to play in the Denver show and a coupla freight handler guys talked about it. One of them was from Mexico and the other guy asked him what tyrant was in Spanish. Just then the first guy's phone rang so the Mex wrote ‘Tirana’ on the container and walked away to get on with his work.

When the case got to the other end a worker thought it was a redirect call and sent it to Europe.

Tony asked the obvious question “Where in Europe?”

“Albania.”

Tony thanked the supervisor profusely for all his help and left. Seven hours or more later he was back in Albuquerque. Two days after that he was back home in England.

“Got any donuts?” asked his wife, who had started to develop a craving for things.

“Stick to the pickled onions you bought or you’ll get fat!” chimed in Sil.

“Finished them” came the response.

They ordered some home delivery pizza with all the bits on top and that seemed to satisfy them all.

“Long day in the office tomorrow” said Tony. “Got to do a debrief of all the business stuff I’ve been into lately!”

He did a debrief about the cymbal and asked for any suggestions.

“I’ve been to the Australian continent, South Atlantic, India, Saudi Arabia, USA, now it seems I’ll have to go to another country in Europe.

“Let me go” said Sil.

“Too risky“, said Tony, “anyway your sister needs you here. But if I go I may be able to magic up some business somehow.”

“Can you speak Albanian?” asked Sil.

“No, but it’s quite close to Italy and I’ve done business there before, so it may not be too bad. It can be done by train, bus, and ferry from Bari to Tirana. There are planes but I don’t know if I could swing the fare with Hotchkiss.”

“What is Albania famous for?” Sil enquired.

“Mother Theresa”, Pudding promptly replied.

“Get you, walking encyclopaedia”, said her sister, mimicking giving her a jab in the ribs.

Tony caught a plane from Gatwick to Bari on the Adriatic coast of Italy and wondered how many trulli still existed in the area.

He had been to southern Italy before and was told about the round houses with conical roofs and a centre pole to hold the roof in place. Back in history people had to pay taxes on houses with roof but no tax on those without roofs. So lookouts were on watch and if a tax collector was spotted the lookout would send a signal so the centre pole could be removed causing the roof to collapse.

The trip to Tirana was very long and not so much fun. Tony felt uneasy there and guessed it may be the same in many of the eastern European countries with troubled pasts.

From a guide book and road signs he noted the official speed limits were

40 km/h (25 mph) within built-up areas;
80 km/h (50 mph) outside built-up areas;
90 km/h (56 mph) on expressways;
110 km/h (68 mph) on freeways

Not that he intended to drive there. He would use cabs and public transport.

Later in a hotel room Tony composed a piece of drum music based on the speed limits. The numbers were the tempo in beats per minute (BPM).

Jazz and funk music typically have 120-125 BPM, Pop music 100-130, Rhythm & Blues 60-80, Rock 110-140. So it would be slow and build up in a crescendo, then fall back down.

He imagined the roads it may apply to and thought of music such as “M1” by the Ted Taylor Trio when the first English motorway was opened and “Route 66” which was written in 1946 by Bobby Troup as an R&B song then covered by the likes of Nat King Cole, Chuck Berry and The Rolling Stones.

Chapter 5

The first place he headed for in Tirana was Mother Tereza Square and the University buildings. They had a Faculty of European Studies at the university and Tony reckoned he stood a chance of finding someone who spoke good English to help him along. He was fortunate.

He found that Albania, although a small country, exported modest amounts of miscellaneous goods to over thirty countries in the sub-Saharan African continent. As a successful salesman he was good at charming people along and got one of the university staff to go along to the shipping agency with him, after buying them lunch, of course. Tony was grateful for plastic cards in view of all the foreign currencies he had encountered on his travels. What a nightmare currency exchanges would have been!

Trying to express his interest in a waterproof “trunk” type container with a variety of code labels and chalk or crayon markings was difficult, even through an interpreter. It wasn’t the language so much as the reason for his interest which seemed to be questioned. Some of the things Tony had learned from travelling were that Germans were very superstitious, countries in Eastern Europe treated everything and everyone with suspicion, and very few foreigners understood the English sense of humour. Although some awkward situations could be escaped from by telling them it was down to the English sense of humour.

Luckily, being a photographer, Tony had some pictures to show the official. He’d had the presence of mind to put them on an image viewer and leave the camera behind, just in case he got arrested as a spy or some other evil befell him.

Perhaps needless to say, the container wasn’t there. It had been there but was sent abroad before Tony arrived.

How can a package with the KTP address on it have been moved to so many countries ... and who was paying the postage? He guessed nobody was paying because the origin and true destination seemed to elude everyone on the way.

By going through a list of words and country names, a few of which seemed to ring a bell with the official, Tony and his university helper established that the container had been forwarded to a man named Geoffrey Kent who arranged safaris in South Africa.

The flight from Tirana to Johannesburg was very expensive and very long, nearly 5,000 miles. The plane went over the Ionian Sea, over the Mediterranean, and down the whole length of Africa.

The views were magnificent and the camera was kept very busy.

Once in Joburg Tony made a point of looking up some business acquaintances, hoping to get some sales enquiries to send back to the ranch. He did have some success, partly because he could tell prospect honestly that his firm had recently made sales in so many continents.

Then he went after the container.

The Kent office was easy to find and after hearing the whole background story the staff realised the container was nothing to do with them and agreed to open it.

The cymbal wasn't there. The theatrical stuff was, but not the cymbal.

The safari people were very helpful and arranged to have the container sent back to England. Some of their colleagues in the same business had offices at Harrods and elsewhere in London and often sent hampers back and forth. They said it should be straightforward.

"Yeah, in your dreams!" thought Tony White, not caring if it ever got there, no disrespect to the Kentish Town Players intended, of course.

Later that week Tony was back in his home town.

He got a hug from Pudding, a hug from Sil, and was just about to take his suitcase upstairs when Pudding said "That came for you" and pointed toward their large wing chair in the corner of the lounge.

Tony went over, curious, pulled the bath towel away from whatever leaned against the back of the chair, and there it was. His bloody cymbal!

"Where on earth did this come from?" he asked incredulously.

"Some girls brought it round." Sil answered the question.

"Tell me the rest" he said.

"It seems they were local schoolgirls doing a play about tennis at Wimbledon and wanted something to represent the women singles trophy "plate". They said things like the pukka Venus Rosewater Dish were about 18.75" diameter and when they saw the cymbal in the hall, although it was a bit bigger, they thought they could embellish it a bit and the size wouldn't matter.

They said they asked the cleaning lady who it belonged to and although she didn't know, she thought borrowing it for one day wouldn't hurt. They did leave a note but that stayed in the manager's office and still hadn't been opened when Sil called there to check. It wasn't even a schoolgirl prank, just a misunderstanding!"

After letting it all sink in and letting the frustration subside he began telling the girls all about his latest trip and showing them all the pics and videos he had taken.

“Well, if those girls hadn’t been so persistent you wouldn’t have had so much fun or taken all those wonderful pics, or got that lovely suntan, would you now!”

Tony loved the way his wife put a positive spin on things and hoped she would keep it up when junior arrived and messed the house!

Just before he fell asleep that night he thought of schoolgirls messing things up, decided to forget roads and call his drum music composition “The Belles Of St Trinians”.

“Wouldn’t Mother Theresa be proud” he thought silently to himself.

The End

This was a story by Philip W Baker

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