

# The Aspect Diary



It speaks volumes about the level of sanity in this office that we spent some time seriously debating why Vassilly has never mentioned his birthday in any of his blogs & subsequently trying to assign him one. First of all, we toyed with making it Feb 29th, but since that fell on a Mon last year, that was no use as it was a working day (hey, when we say seriously debating, we really mean it). We needed a day when he simply didn't work (so pretty much any one of 365, according to Payrolls lady). Anyway, we've decided his birthday is Boxing Day. All this theorising also gave rise to our next quiz - we're going to get you to guess all the meerkats' ages, based on things that happened the year they were (nominally) born. Watch out for it at Xmas (which edition, we're sure you'll be delighted/horrified to hear, is well on its way to completion).

We ordered some goods recently from a distributor & they dutifully turned up next day. No big deal, except it turns out the warehouse was in Europe. (All right, yes, we're in Europe too - for the moment - but we meant mainland Europe). On tracking the delivery, we discovered the order was picked at 11:26am in Denmark. It then had another stop in Denmark before proceeding into Sweden, down to Germany, over to the UK & arriving with us at 3:30 pm next day in perfect condition. We make mention of that last part as we've had parcels that only came along the M4 corridor & still managed to look like someone had played keepy-uppy with them in hobnail boots all the way.

Received a stationary price list from a stationery supplier in Aug. Does that mean it'll never change?

We'd forgotten to look at the official photos from the SolarWinds conference last Nov until very recently, but soon spotted Steve in the background of one of them. While everyone else was clapping, Steve sat marooned in a bubble of innate Steve-ness, poster child for a tough audience. (He's often asked if he gets enthusiastic about presents. He says if the right present ever turns up, he'll let us know).

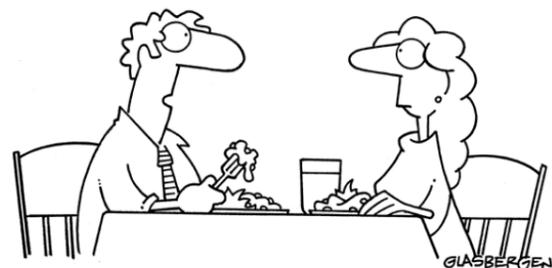
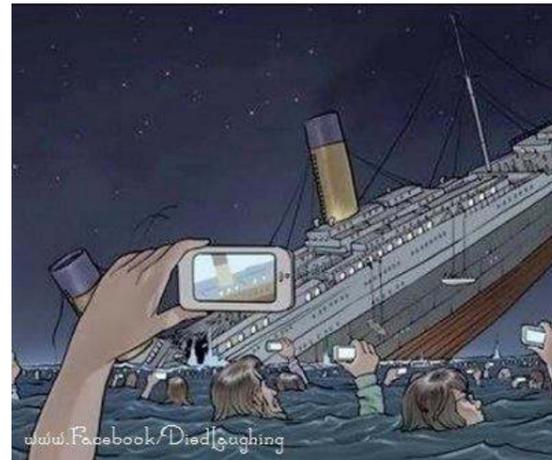
We sell Auto Attendant options for phone systems, so we know how they're meant to work. And it's not like this: "press 1 for [option], 2 for [option] or 3 for [option]". So you press 1. "I'm sorry, I didn't get that". So it repeats the choices. OK, try option 2 instead. "I'm sorry, I didn't get that" (it's a single button - what's not to get?!) Fine, we'll try option 3. "I'm sorry, I didn't get that... goodbye." WTH? Congrats to Vodafone for a system that doesn't recognise a single one of its own options.

Fun & games with the bank at the end of Aug - online statement showed several thousand more than we knew we had. Even better, each time we refreshed the screen, another few thousand added on! Tempting to just keep hitting refresh for an hour or two & watch numbers appear that we can only dream of.

Well that's a wrap for the Autumn issue & yes, we do know summer's scarcely ended. Oh sorry, you're right, the word we were looking for was 'started'. Hey, at least the reservoirs should be full.

See you at (whisper it) ... Xmas.

# The Last Laugh



# The Aspect Newsletter

## Issue 36 - Autumn 2017



## It's all part of my Autumn almanac

Spot the literary allusion! "*Quoth the raven nevermore*" is from the Edgar Allen Poe poem, *The Raven*. Ah, these newsletters are an education in themselves. Well the covers are. What goes on inside is another matter entirely.

So welcome to the Autumn newsletter, pitched as it is in that season of mists and mellow fruitfulness (Keats, don't cha know..) otherwise known as the interminable run down to Christmas with nary a Bank Holiday in sight. Oh yes, it's being so cheerful that keeps us going.

In a fun-packed edition this time (well of course we're joking - it's fun-packed every time) we bring you the second half of our sporting quiz, the distaff side. We suspect you'll find this one more difficult than the last, but we'll see. We also tell you all you (n)ever wanted to know about hard drives, and we're starting the countdown to the extinction of ISDN phone lines. Not literally, mind, as they don't conk out till 2025 and we can't be bothered to work out which number to start at.

You may have noticed that this autumn newsletter has arrived a scant two months after the summer one. There are two reasons for this:- (1) we had sufficient material fairly quickly and (2) summer turned out to be more like autumn, so we decided we might as well go along with it. Please remember though that a two-month turnaround is something we achieve all too rarely, so don't be expecting us to make a habit of it. You will not be getting Christmas in November. (Except in the shops. And on TV...)

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# Aspect BC FAQs

**I'm working on a spreadsheet, and while I'm moving the arrow around, it's the whole sheet that's moving. The cursor isn't going anywhere?**

Think you'll find you've got the Scroll Lock on. It's a button located beside the Print Screen and Pause keys. Very often it lights up when depressed (which is admittedly more than the rest of us do).

**My documents are full of weird symbols! Have I got a virus?!**

Do your weird symbols look like this, perchance?

¶... ¶...

If so, then fear not. You've just accidentally activated the display of the formatting marks (carriage returns, paragraph breaks and so on). Ostensibly, that's done by hitting **Ctrl-Shift-Y** but we're sure there's a back-door way to do it because those three keys aren't an easy combination to hit in error. Anyway, press **Ctrl-Shift-Y** in earnest (as long as Ernest doesn't mind) and your weird marks will go away. Alternatively, there's a button on one of the toolbars that looks like ¶ and clicking on that will toggle the display on and off.

**My screen is upside down!**

Ah yes, that old chestnut. Always good for a laugh. **Ctrl-Alt + the arrow keys** will rotate it upside down, through 90 degrees etc, depending which arrow key you choose. And if you operate on two monitors, it'll swap everything from the left onto the right and vice versa as well.



**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).



You may recall some time ago that we recommended using a service called **SendItBetter** for transmitting large files, rather than emailing them. It was only ever a free service, but just in case you had got into the habit of using it, well unfortunately it was withdrawn from service on 31 July.

The operators of the service - SolarWinds (formerly LogicNow, formerly MaxFocus, formerly GFI ... well you get the picture) - have decided to shelve it in favour of concentrating on their core business.

This doesn't mean you should go back to emailing documents the size of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. That's really not what email's meant for, you know.



## PowerPoint hits 30

The graphs! The slides! The ... *aaargh!* ... bullet points!

Can you believe that Microsoft's PowerPoint is 30 years old? It was - and is - a wonderful tool for business presentations, but is there an employee anywhere whose heart doesn't sink when their manager utters the words "I'd like a report on *such-and-such*.." and follows them with "... and I'd like it as a PowerPoint presentation" ?



## Helping us to help you

We've always advised that telephoning is the best - and fastest - way to book a service call, but we know lots of you prefer to email. It's fine; we understand sometimes people find it easier to get the information straight in their head when they put it in writing. (Though you might not think it to read the Helpdesk of Horror in this issue).

But we really, *really* would prefer that you email to **service@aspectbc.co.uk**

rather than sending to any one individual. Rest assured it's not an automated address where tickets go to die (we know all about some of our competitors' systems which acknowledge your email instantly but then leave it bereft for days for lack of human attention). No, **service@..** is just a group address that means your email will arrive with a whole bunch of us. Doesn't matter who's in, who's out, or who's shaking it all about (oh yes, every day is Mardi Gras at Aspect), your email will be seen, acknowledged and logged by a real person.



## FTTP broadband now available from Aspect

We're pleased to announce that we're now able to offer **Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)** broadband.

Most of you get your broadband from the green cabinets on the street (referred to, not surprisingly, as **Fibre to the Cabinet** or **FTTC**), but in some areas, this simply isn't an option. But FTTP *might* be an option, and that means the service comes direct from the exchange to your door.

Just to be clear, this is not the same service as FTTP *On Demand*, which offers speeds of up to 300Mbps, but with a hefty price tag and some pretty daunting surcharges up front based on your distance from the exchange. We don't do FTTP On Demand. Our offering is more strictly called **WBC FTTP** (Wholesale Broadband Connect), and would be for the usual broadband speeds of 80Mbps or 40Mbps. In terms of cost, it's approximately a little less than double the monthly price of a normal FTTC service. There is a connection fee, though, unlike FTTC.

It's still not straightforward though. FTTP doesn't use copper telephone line so you can't double up on usage and ask it to serve as your phone or fax line too. In addition to that, just getting the service to your premises isn't a walk in the park. Well actually it might be. Or a walk through a field, a forest, across a dual-carriageway or all of the above. You see, the FTTP service will need fibre infrastructure the entire way from the exchange to your door and that might mean bringing it across other people's land, across roads and all sorts. What with the possibilities for road closures, downed trees and wayleaves, it can mean a long lead time.

If you are interested in FTTP, we'd be happy to check availability and prepare a quotation for you. But be aware that it's not a question of just preferring to have your own connection - premises can either get FTTC or FTTP (if one is available, the other won't be).



## Captcha'ing the Imagination

Type the characters you see in the picture

Picture:

The picture contains 8 characters.

Characters:

You're probably familiar with these awful things. The dreadful swirly, sometimes utterly illegible, strings of characters that constitute the **Captcha** test. Variations include groups of photos where you have to pinpoint the ones with eg. a shopfront in them, and giant photos broken into grid pieces where you have to tick every square in the grid that contains a bit of a traffic sign.

Captcha is actually an acronym (who knew?), though it's such a neat term, you can't help thinking the corresponding words were made up afterwards by someone who was desperate to find something to fit:- **Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart**. Bit suspicious, isn't it? Anyway, it's used as a security check, quite commonly on web contact forms, to prevent bots from using them to spam you, and the reason they work is because only the human eye can read them. So you'll quite often see a tick box marked "I am not a Robot" and ticking this produces a Captcha test for you to pass (although we noticed that one of our suppliers has started using them on their order processing, except in their case, ticking the box seems to be the test. Certainly it carries on quite happily after that. Are they missing the point, or can robots not put ticks in boxes??)

If the test is so obscure / twisty that you simply can't solve it, you usually get the option to ask for another. This came in handy for us some time ago when the test involved typing in the house numbers displayed in a series of photos. All fine and dandy till we got to this one .....

noCAPTCHA™

Privacy & Terms

... Yeah, *pretty* sure that's a lamp.

I am not a Robot. But I'm not an idiot either.

# Jargon Buster #28 - Hard Disk Drives

SATA? SSD? SCSI? SAS? Do these mean anything to you? (If you thought SAS was only about "Who Dares Wins", then you'll be interested and delighted to discover there's another meaning. Well, maybe just interested ... or maybe just not).



They're all types of hard disk. Hands up who saw that coming? Good, now leave your hand up there. It'll make it harder for you to turn the page to something more exciting.

Let's start with **SATA**. Most of the PCs around today and a large proportion of the laptops have SATA hard drives. SATA stands for **Serial Advanced Technology Attachment**, often shortened to Serial ATA, or further to ... well, SATA. The name refers to the type of connector on the drive. There was an earlier drive type called PATA (Parallel ATA) which was also, just to confuse the issue, known as IDE. SATA drives are faster than IDE drives.

Then we've got **SCSI** drives (pronounced *scuzzy*, poor unfortunate things). SCSI stands for **Small Computer System Interface** and again refers to the type of connector. SCSI drives were very common in file servers, being faster than SATA, but these days, they've been replaced by ...

.... **SAS** drives, or **Serial Attached SCSI**, these being faster than SCSI.

And lastly **SSDs**. These are **Solid State Drives** and offer fast performance, so they're becoming increasingly popular in PCs and laptops. In some laptops (particularly ones with 14" screens or less) SSDs are often the only option these days as internal space is at a premium and these occupy less room. They are still comparatively expensive though, so the drive sizes on offer tend to be quite low capacity eg. 128Gb or 256Gb. The better performance of SSDs means that system builders will sometimes fit one to run the operating system of a machine so that it boots quickly, with a secondary SATA disk for file storage.

As always happens when the technology moves on, the new type of drive will be relatively expensive and you won't get a lot for your money. When I first started buying computer parts (*eeee, when ah were a lass*), a 40Mb IDE drive was the usual and it wasn't cheap. Now you can get a novelty USB thumb drive that holds a hundred times as much for a pittance.



# Another "Sporting Life" quiz!



Well well well. You're good at sport, aren't you?

As promised then, sporting quiz, take II - the female version. Let's see if you're as good with *these*. As before, we've got photos of some famous sportswomen, and an additional clue by way of their actual sport. Put their surnames into the grid, and reading down the blue squares will give you the name of someone who provided a landmark in Olympic history.

Answers on the website, with the link on the newsletter page.



A Athletics      B Tennis      C Swimming      D Pole Vault      E Equestrian



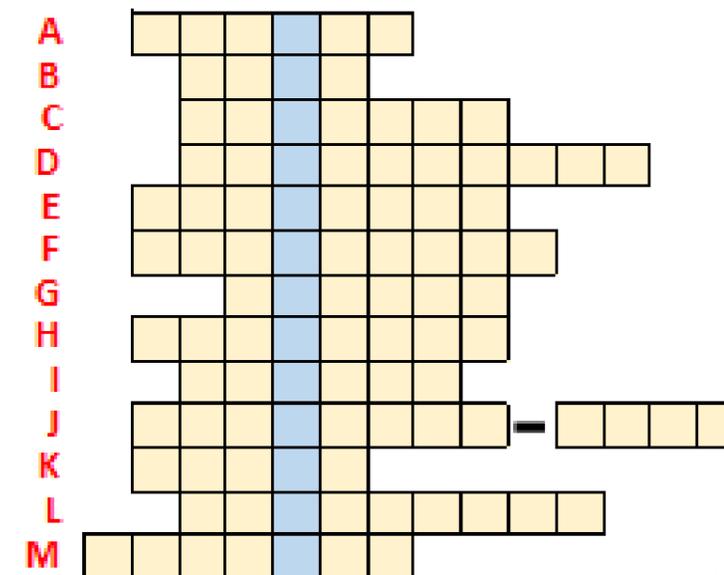
F Athletics      G Gymnastics      H Athletics      I Swimming      J Athletics



K Athletics



L Sailing      M Ice Dance



# Phase out of ISDN lines



Since we know you're curious people (as in filled with curiosity, not curiously odd in yourselves ... well not in every case anyway) we'll mention that ISDN stands for **Integrated Services Digital Network**, but don't knock yourselves out trying to remember it because ISDN lines

are on their way out. BT plan to have them phased out by 2025.



If you're using ISDN lines, it's time to start planning for the switch off and we'd be happy to discuss all the options with you. After all, for many of you we're the people who installed the system you've got. In those cases, we know where you are (OK, that sounded more ominous than we meant it to), we know how you operate, and we know which solutions will be viable for you. We've seen some clients receiving blanket mailings telling them they *must* go for SIP trunks, despite the fact that their broadband is truly horrible. But then to these companies, you're just a name. Not to us. Too many companies just want the sale; what happens

after that doesn't concern them in the slightest. Again, not us. We're with you for the long haul.

We've already been in touch with the majority of our own telecoms clients but we know this newsletter goes farther afield than that. So if you'd like to discuss your future plans with a company that cares about getting the right solution for you, give us a call.

## Never Can say goodbye ...

Since this has cropped up again for us recently while trying to migrate a client's emails to a new server, can we just remind you :-

- Emails are stored in files, one for each individual user.
- There is a limit as to how big these files are allowed to get, set by Windows.
- When it assesses the size, **it includes all your Deleted Items!!**

So our advice is twofold - if an email merited being deleted in the first place, *why* exactly would you keep it for posterity? And if you're not even in the habit of deleting emails at all ... come on, if you had a read receipt in 2009, do you *really* need to keep the notification?

Don't be an email hoarder...



## PAT pending?

Something else that cropped up at a client site recently - PAT Testing. That's Portable Appliance Testing ... er.. Testing.

We have mentioned this before, but please don't let your file server be PAT tested. It's not good for it, and it is not - let's face it - a portable appliance.



Heaters, desk lamps, kitchen equipment, fine. Servers, no.

## Vassilly's Blog

Mon 3 July

Holidays is over, loyal fans (sad face) but I am back with spring in tail and glow in fur (yes, I am get too much sun in first week of holidays. Wales is like Kalahari! Is just wrong). So, what is happening at Aspects? Ah-ha! Today I am get to share office with new person Louise. Payrolls lady is already show her computermabobs and filings and stuff, but she is overlook most important thing, so I am step up like good colleague and I am say: here is biscuit tin. See how is e-m-p-t-y....?



Tues 18 July

IT Boss Man and Payrolls lady is come back after weekend in St Malo. (What? You are just now asking if they is married? Of course they is married. You think they is



always just happen to go away at same time? Anyways, I think is good thing they is married. Is spare two other people). Louise is ask if they are have nice time - Payrolls lady say is OK for about an hour and then they is realise is pictures of me everywhere. On walls, on street cobbles, on mugs .... She say she is not go all that way to still be looking at me every day. (I am Google it. Is not meerkat. Is ermine. Is like posh branch of family).

Fri 21 July

Rain. Great weaselling bucketfuls of rain.

Mon 24 July

IT Boss Man is on job near Durham. Is where Pink Panther is live, yes? (Are you get it? Durrum, durrum, durrum-de-dum-de-dum... Ah, is way I am tell them).

Fri 28 July

Today, IT Boss Man is bring Welsh cakes. I am not have Welsh cakes before. Everyone at Aspects is full of amazements. But I am never see them before! They say no, is amazements that IT Boss Man is bring them. (For record, I am like Welsh cakes very much. Maybe ... just maybe ... even more than Kit-Kat).

Tues 2 Aug

I am change mind. Today we are have shortbread from engineer David. Is new favourite.

Mon 7 Aug

Louise is bake cupcakes! They is big as head and they is wunnnnnnnnderful. Aaaarrghh! We are have so many biscuity-cakeymabobs, I am not able to choose favourite anymore!!!

Fri 11 Aug

Is muffins today. Peoples, is too much. I think I am get cavity in fang. I am start to think fondly of old Aspect days (ie. start of Blog) when tumbleweed is blow through biscuit tin.

Wed 16 Aug

Payrolls lady is find remedy for sugar coma. She say Telecommmmms Boss Man is make big coughs and is not good for him to be doing liftings, so I am spend day in old Aspects unit moving things from upstairs to downstairs and downstairs to upstairs. She is send Sergei over too, but he is collapse from exhaustion. And he is only make it halfway across car park. I am end up doing work of 10 meerkats! (Payrolls lady say this is same as work of one person. If person is asleep).

Thurs 17 Aug

I am go out with IT Boss Man today. He is do surveyings for cablemabobs and is need to measure distancings. I am scurry back and fore with tape between teeth for hours. Legs is limp like spaghetti and I am cut tongue on tape measure twice. I am go flop on floor while IT Boss Man is read page of drawings and figurings that I am make. He is pull gadgety-thing out of pocket and make red light shine on far wall. He is nod and say gadgety-thing says yes. What the... ??? Apparently he is just buy it and is want some measurings for it to double-check! Peoples, is just as well legs is not work, or I think I am maybe kick him in shins.

Mon 21 Aug

Today, engineer David is make salted caramel shortbread. Ohhhhhhh... did you know, loyal fans, that drool is bad for keyboard? This is one of things I am discover today. Other is cavity in back molar.

Tues 29 Aug

Payrolls lady say is time to wrap up. What? Is winter already? She say no, is time for newsletter to go out, because pages is full. I say I am able to Blog on many more pages. (Because this is family publication, I am not repeat what she is say).

## The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

One might suppose that users could better articulate their problems in writing. One would be wrong ....



Dear sir,

I have a problem with inlet hookup,  
 1) No (company name) home page  
 2) Unable to get to my e-mail  
 3) Micro, which do not know  
 4) Crazy action on micro  
 5) A call from you about a verse, which i do not about  
 6) I call the local office at (city) and told what was wrong and all i got was a chac number from the person answer the call - it was a woman  
 7) It Been 6 day now  
 8) What wrong (I do not know)?  
 9) Is this going to be set right?  
 10) I Done not know how to correct it (you may has to send a tech to fix it.)  
 11) Each time you make a change but, one time, something happy craz,  
 12) Never set in, away make differ move, which i do not know why?  
 13) Each time update, add things which do not know what all about.  
 14) Each time make more problem  
 15) I do not know why or what is gone on, when thing happen

What is wrong?

Why?

Can you fix it?

Need a set up of my compelet to correct the problem

\* Look like i am in dark and losing money

Thank You!

P.S. Why is it not smoot to run this with all problem and each time, when update more thing go wrong, than straight out.

need help don't know what to do with website that lost files off hard drive for page can't edit page from personal publisher or publish them ... Please need assitistance

You passworded my email and I cannot get in. Thanks

10 mins later ....

Disregard last message. Damn windiws did it.

This is the 1ST time on internet. I'm as clueless as a pole right now, & I would be so happy if You could heLP me a little with my cluelessness Maybe a hint or two.

This morning I tried to sign on and for a purple screen. After several tried with different browsers then I got the message you were down. I tried to exit. It went to a background with huge pixels and stuck. I mean no amount of rebooting would get rid of it. Finally I had to reset my wallpaper.

HELP!!! HELP!!! HELP!!!

how to choose the telephone no. of internet using?

Today Igot avery strange sing that Ihave 440massages Iwas iwas in hurry ishbut ut down iwnt to school when icame back and tried to get these massahges idid not find any can you help?

tried to search the web and was told that it was not there

**We were looking for a teeny-tiny PC recently and came across one that seemed to fit the bill on a major UK supplier's website. Unfortunately, it appears they employed Vassilly to come up with the description ....**

Key Information

Full Details

Small and exquisite shape brings you the enjoyment of the beauty , whilst enabling you enjoy the life with speed and share worldwide splendidness, is the best choice of being placed at home or office.