

The Aspect Xmas Diary



We know that the massive program of replacing Win 7 machines will be dwindling to an end soon, so a suggestion about another way to earn money that dropped into our mailboxes in Oct had to be worth a look. It's just that we're not 100% sure we want to sell a kidney.

Tried to email a supplier recently, but every attempt bounced back as spam. So we phoned & they confirmed they were having email issues. Could we, then, speak to our account manager? Unfortunately, they said, she was busy. "Your best bet," we were told helpfully, "is to send an email"....

We weren't going to embarrass Mike with this, but apparently he's expecting us to, so OK! He managed to get himself stranded in a scissor lift at a client site. The basket had caught on some ducting & wouldn't come loose, & while he managed to jiggle it free, doing that tripped the mercury switch, which disabled the mechanism for lowering it.... leaving him high & dry in the air. To be fair, he never said a word about it to us, but the client threw him under the bus at the first opportunity.

The whole Black Friday thing was as annoying as ever. Our spam reports were choc-a-block with offers touted as being the most exciting thing since ... well never, in a lot of cases. I mean, come on - lever arch files?

Seriously, has anyone's heart ever gone pitter-patter at the thought of getting a lever arch file? Or a reel of Cat5e cable? Try giving that to someone this Xmas & you'll be wearing the turkey like Joey Tribbiani.

Well, it's time to wrap it up for this issue & this year (for this decade in fact - gulp!) As we hover on the brink of 2020, we'd like to hope you all have a very happy Xmas but we know with a general election in the way, no matter what happens, there'll be a fair proportion of you who'll be grumbling. But it's worth remembering at this time of year that it's been statistically proven that six out of seven dwarves aren't Happy either.

Good health to you all!



The Last Laugh



The Aspect Newsletter

Issue 45 - Christmas 2019

What's inside

Power sharing Don't hug all the responsibility to yourself	2
New engineer It's the same one; we just have a photo now!	2
Trust your backup to the Cloud Keep calm and carry on backing up	6

Regular Features	
ABC FAQs	2
Quiz page : Around the World in 25 movies	3
The Aspect Christmas Story: Alice in Windowsland	4
Vassilly's Xmas Blog	6
Helpdesk of Horror	7
Aspect Xmas Diary	8
The Last Laugh	8



Christmas, eh? Doesn't seem like hardly any time ago since we were issuing the Autumn edition. Oh wait, it was hardly any time ago. Which means this might turn out to be one of *those* editions, the ones with larger-than-normal fonts and more than the usual quota of cartoons. Yes, yes, go on. Pretend you'll be gutted if it ends up not being chock-full of tech stuff. We believe you.

It's been a chilly old run-up to Christmas, offset by the tremendous amount of hot air generated by an election campaign. And it almost doesn't seem like hardly any time ago since we had a General Election. Oh wait, it was hardly any time ago

On the subject of fairy tales and other made-up stuff, our Christmas tale this year is *Alice in Windowsland*. When it comes to the nonsensical, we reckon Lewis Carroll would've met his match on a helpdesk. Anyway, as usual, and for a limited time only, the collected Christmas stories are on the website.

As we always do at this time of year, we'd like to thank you all for your business and your support over the last 12 months. And if any of you have still to make the change from Windows 7 and / or Small Business Server 2011, remember the official end of support date is 14 January. If you're hoping we'll stop harping on about it in the newsletter after that, well yes, we probably will. We'll be favouring the more *direct* approach (cue the theme from *Jaws* ...!)

We wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Merry Christmas!



Aspect Business Communications Ltd

Unit 14 Brynmenyn Business Centre
St Theodore's Way
Brynmenyn Industrial Estate
BRIDGEND
CF32 9TZ

Tel 08458 277 328
Email enquiries@aspectbc.co.uk
www.aspectbc.co.uk

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Aspect BC FAQs

I want to create a desktop shortcut to a website, but I don't want it to use my default browser. How do I force it not to?

An excellent question that we were asked while compiling this issue!

So, first of all, you



want to create a

shortcut for the actual browser you

want to use -

Microsoft Edge,

Internet Explorer,

Firefox or whatever

(or possibly Chrome,

but for many

people, that is the default they're

trying to avoid).

To create the

shortcut, find the browser in your list of

programs, and then click-and-drag it onto the

desktop.

Right-click on it and choose *Properties*.

Click in the line labelled *Target*, and move the

cursor to the end of what's written in there

(which is the path to launch that browser).

Leave a space at the end

and then type the web

address you want it to go to. So what you'll end

up with in that box is the browser path in double

quotation marks, a space, and then the website

address.

Click *Apply*, then *OK*.

Right-click on the icon again and choose

Rename. Now give it a meaningful name so you

know what the shortcut is for.

Job done!

I keep getting pop-ups - how do I stop them?

To cover all the bases, you're best to stop them in three separate places.

In Chrome, click on the three dots in the top right corner and choose *Settings*. Scroll down to the bottom where it says *Advanced*, and click that to get more options. Under *Privacy and Security*, go to *Site Settings* and turn off both *Notifications* and *Pop-ups and redirects*.

Two down, one to go!

Click on the *Start* button in Windows 10, and choose the cog wheel to go into *Settings*. Select *System*, and then *Notifications and Actions*. Turn those off too.

*I'm annoying!
Look at me!!*



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).

I hereby deputise you, for the sake of my holidays

If you're the go-to person in your company for your phone lines, broadband, alarm system etc etc, can we suggest you also sort yourself out with a deputy?

According to the Law of Sod, if there's an issue with any of the above (or similar) and someone needs to talk to the provider, it's going to happen when you're away. Which is a bit of a problem if the provider in question hasn't been told they're allowed to talk to someone else.

At the very least, make sure someone else is in possession of the contact phone numbers, account details and any security questions that'll be needed.

It's lovely to feel indispensable, but it's also nice to be able to take time off and know the place won't fall apart without you. To that end, we'd also advise that you give someone the grand tour of your systems ("this is the file server, this is the router..."). Yes, OK, by and large, we know where everything is on our client sites, and can point people in the right direction and even describe what they're looking for. But when we have to do that, it's pretty obvious the person on the other end finds it stressful. They're already dealing with some kind of major outage, and they don't know what to do or where to look. And if the broadband is down, we can't connect. We depend on someone physically on-site to tell us what lights are on the various devices, what might be displayed on a screen and to push the buttons we tell them to.

So give them a break. Show them the 'standard' fixes, like how to reboot the router. And how that doesn't mean resetting it. (Reboot = good. Reset = baaaaad. Oh, so very bad).

.... And here, finally, is the photo of our newest engineer, Gareth Tucker. We didn't manage to include this in the last issue because he was unwell on the day we went to print.

So if you haven't met him yet, this is who you've been talking to.



The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

When the question you ask doesn't get you the answer you expect



"Yes, hello, my router isn't working properly."

"OK. Which lights do you have on?"

"The hallway and kitchen."

"I'm having some trouble with my printer."

"Is it a black and white one or colour?"

"Neither, it's more sort of ... beige."

"How many windows do you have open at the moment?"

"None! Are you nuts?"

It's the middle of winter!!!"

"Can you click the left mouse button?"

"... I only have one mouse."

"Is the cursor still there?"

"No, I'm alone right now."

"What shape is the end of the cable?"

"Purple."

"Is the light on your modem blinking?"

"No."

"So it's solid then?"

"Yes, it's solid."

Then it's off again.

Then solid. Then

off again...."

"Where does the other end of that cable go?"

"It doesn't have

another end."

"OK, then can we try rebooting please, sir?"

"Oh, my computer can't do that."

"Before I start then, have you backed up?"

"No.... how far away do I need to be?"

"Which web browser do you use?"

"What? I don't understand."

"How do you get on the internet?"

"With my computer."

"Are you sure you haven't spilled something on this keyboard?"

"No ... well OK, yes, but it doesn't

matter because I've scrubbed it in a

sink full of soapy water since then."

"Are you running Windows 7 or Windows 10?"

"Yes."

"If you could right-click on the desktop now."

"Hang on, let me shift some papers Do you want me to write it in caps or doesn't it matter?"

"Right then, if you could just type your name in there please?"

"Oh, OK. What's my name?"

"Your computer's stopped working, I understand?"

"Yes! I was playing Solitaire and it said there were no more moves left!"

"So where's the power cable for this router?"

"It doesn't need one. It's wireless."

"Can you login for me please?"

"But I don't know your password."

"Sorry, you're out of cyanide?"

"Yeah. The cyanide toner. It's run out."



Vassilly's Xmas Blog

Yes loyal fans, I am being shamed with undignified Santa costume again, but I am decide to suffer in silence this year....

Fri 11 Oct

I think it is rain now for maybe three months straight? Is seem like it anyways. I am have trench paw.

Mon 14 Oct

Rain.

Wed 16 Oct

More rain.

Thurs 17 Oct

Hey!! Sunshi...no, is gone. Is rain again. Sigh.

Thurs 24 Oct

Let me see if I am understand this. Is nearly Hallowe'en, yes? And this is day when witches is abroad. Is also day when maybe we are Brexit. So if we is Brexit when witches is abroad, is they allowed back in? Is all very confusing.

Mon 28 Oct

Nikki is book Aspects Christmas party. We is very late, and most places is say they is full (but she is believe is really because word about me is spread). Look, for last time, it was just one old lady's meal! And I am really believe she is finished when I am climb on table and start on leftovers!) Anyways, this party is have casino, so there is whole new set of rules for Vassilly:- no cheatings, no stealing other players' chips, no sticking paw in roulette wheel, no looking at other players' cards ... yeesh. Is lot of rules, peoples! Payrolls lady say she is play craps. If she is that bad, surely is better not to play, no?? Nikki say dress code is 'dress to impress'. Ah, so I am need to pull out best leather jacket. What? No leather jacket? But ... but ... I am always wear leather jacket! It is even under silly Santa suit! Nikki say I would look good with dinner jacket. (There is really special jacket just for eating dinner?? You peoples is weird). She is show me pictures from movie *Casino Royale* and I am understand now. She is notice my uncanny resemblings to Daniel Craig. Is the eyes, you know.

Fri 1 Nov

We is not Brexit yesterday, but is still not many witches abroad. Payrolls lady is over-estimate how many sweets she is need, so we are have plateful of chocolateness at Aspects today. There is even Oreo Eggs.... ohhhh.....Oreo Eggs.... Sorry, I am dribble little bit there.

Wed 13 Nov

Still raining. But Telecommmmms Boss Man is not care. He is off to Thailand. And rest of us at Aspects is not jealous at all, no siree.

Fri 22 Nov

IT Boss Man is also go away. Is it to exotic place, full of excites, culturalness and tropical weathers? No. He is go to Birmingham. Meanwhile, back at Aspects, we are get into the Christmas spirit big time! Payrolls lady is bring out the Santa tea towel and is not even December! (Some years, peoples, this is as Chrismassy as it is get at Aspects, but last year, Payrolls lady is pull sad little tree out of box, plug it in, and announce office is decorated. I am grumble little bit and mutter about humbugs, but she say if I am want more Christmas cheer, I am welcome to wear Santa suit till New Year I say 'what a beautiful tree!!!)

Fri 29 Nov

Black Friday. I am not understanding this, but Payrolls lady is explain is chance to go out and buy things you are not need for more than they are cost six months ago, but less than they are cost yesterday. And after you are get them home, you are decide you are not want them after all, so you are send them back.

Mon 2 Dec

Cyber Monday. Payrolls lady say is same thing but online. Stuff is still just come for day trip out before going back.

Wed 4 Dec

I am feel lucky, so I am buy lottery ticket. Payrolls lady is ask if I am maybe think of her if I am win. I say of course! She say really? I say yes - I am think, 'gosh, I am bet she is happy for me!' And anyways, I am still come to Aspects if I am squillionaire. I am love my job! IT Boss Man is suggest I am maybe try doing it more often then.

Fri 6 Dec

Is cold, is dark and we are have electamabobs next week. Payrolls lady say we is best send out newsletter to offset general Grinchiness, so here is me wishing you

Relax. You've got a backup.

We tell you often - backups are important. In the event of a disaster, they can be the difference between your business surviving or failing.

But if you use a rotation of disks or tapes, then first of all, of course, you have to remember to change the media every day. How often have you found yourself halfway home, in rush hour traffic, and realised you've forgotten? Cue dilemma - to turn around or not to turn around? If you're in the habit of taking the most recent one off-site (and that's a perfectly good idea), you have to remember to bring it back before it's needed again. If you're sick or on holiday, who takes over? How do they get hold of the media you've maybe brought home with you?

We automate so much in our lives already (bill payments, calendar reminders etc) why not automate this too?

Backup to the Cloud every night and cross it off as something else you don't need to worry about.

Off-site backups are becoming increasingly affordable and as long as you have a half-way decent broadband connection, you're set. Why not give us a call and see how little it could cost for peace of mind?



Merry Chrismassabobs loyal fans!



Around the World in 25 Movies

As you'll recall from the Christmas 2016 quiz, Santa has a bit of a problem with bored and unruly elves on his delivery. So he makes up quizzes to keep them out of trouble. This year, he's ticking off movie titles at places around the globe and he's managed to net almost a full, alphabetical list, clever chap that he is. (No, of course he didn't come up with a Q, but kudos to him for managing X!) No grid to fill in this time; you're just looking to put the right place name in the movie title - could be a country, a town/city or a region. We've given you the two main stars and year too, if it helps, plus the blue strips are sort of indicative of the length of word you're looking for.



Answers on the website (follow the link on the newsletter page).



North to A		<i>John Wayne, Stewart Granger (1960)</i>
The Boys from B		<i>Gregory Peck, Laurence Olivier (1978)</i>
The Purple Rose of C		<i>Mia Farrow, Jeff Daniels (1985)</i>
D		<i>Buyers Club</i> <i>Matthew McConaughey, Jennifer Garner (2013)</i>
Raid on E		<i>Peter Finch, Charles Bronson (1976)</i>
F		<i>William H Macy, Frances McDormand (1996)</i>
G		<i>Mel Gibson, Mark Lee (1981)</i>
Our Man in H		<i>Alec Guinness, Maureen O'Hara (1959)</i>
A Passage to I		<i>Judy Davis, Victor Banerjee (1984)</i>
Krakatoa: East of J		<i>Maximilian Schell, Diane Baker (1968)</i>
Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for K Make Benefit Glorious Nation Of		<i>Sacha Baron Cohen, Ken Davitian (2006)</i>
Film Stars Don't Die In L		<i>Annette Bening, Jamie Bell (2017)</i>
Once Upon a Time in M		<i>Antonio Banderas, Salma Hayek (2003)</i>
Judgement at N		<i>Spencer Tracy, Burt Lancaster (1961)</i>
The O		<i>Jon Voight, Maximilian Schell (1974)</i>
The Tailor of P		<i>Pierce Brosnan, Geoffrey Rush (2001)</i>
Hotel R		<i>Don Cheadle, Sophie Okonedo (2004)</i>
S		<i>Jackie Chan, Owen Wilson (2000)</i>
The Fast and the Furious: T		<i>Lucas Black, Zachery Ty Bryan (2006)</i>
The Man from U		<i>John Wayne, Polly Ann Young (1934)</i>
Good Morning, V		<i>Robin Williams, Forest Whitaker (1987)</i>
Mr Smith Goes to W		<i>James Stewart, Jean Arthur (1939)</i>
X		<i>Olivia Newton-John, Gene Kelly (1980)</i>
Salmon Fishing in the Y		<i>Ewan McGregor, Emily Blunt (2011)</i>
Road to Z		<i>Bob Hope, Bing Crosby (1941)</i>

Alice in Windowsland

Because life's no tea party when you work on a helpdesk



Begin at the beginning ...

Alice climbed into bed, her head still buzzing after another utterly ridiculous day on the Windows support helpdesk. It had started badly and gone downhill from there. First, the two trainees, now and forever to be known as Tweedledumb and Tweedledumber, had, between them, somehow managed to crash the system right before Alice's shift started. Once they got that sorted out, Alice had settled down to take her first call and then realised no-one but her had even turned up yet. Sighing, as she did most mornings these days, she realised Dora Mowse had obviously overslept again. Dora was very sweet, and it was hard to dislike her, but she really was hopelessly unreliable. Alice had sat there, silently cursing all her colleagues when Dwight Rabbett had barreled through the door, wailing "I'm late! I'm late!" He'd collapsed into the chair next to Alice and fanned himself with his hands.

"I have such a hangover," he'd moaned. "I tried that new club, Wonderland, last night? They had these amazing cocktails. I couldn't resist! They were practically screaming 'Drink me! Drink me!' But now my head feels like it's four times normal size."

"Well you'd better get yourself hooked up ASAP. It has not been a good morning and Mad Hattie's on the warpath." Alice had quickly picked up a call as their supervisor, Harriet Loud, arrived at speed. Unfortunately it was a really simple call, which meant she was already wrapping it up as Mad Hattie had appeared at her shoulder.

"... well that's no problem, you're very welcome..."

"Move on! Move on!" Mad Hattie had barked. "There's no time for chit-chat!"

Alice had sighed, ended the call and grabbed the next one from the queue. Honestly, could it reduce her productivity that much to exchange a few pleasantries?

Off with your head!

Well clearly it could, if the Company President was to be believed. Scarlet McQueen had swept down from the executive offices on the upper floor and treated them all to an increasingly irate review of their efficiency and performance. Her face had grown redder and redder as she'd ranted about call statistics and timekeeping.

"So let this be a warning! There will be

mandatory appraisals starting this afternoon! And if you're not pulling your weight ... heads will roll!" she'd announced.

I give myself good advice, but I seldom follow it ...

When it was time for Alice's appraisal, she'd been understandably nervous. It didn't seem to matter much how good you actually were at your job. Oh, McQueen had daily reports, but she classified those as either true (if they were bad, because they confirmed her poor opinion) or faked (if they ventured an opinion that wasn't hers). What good, Alice often wondered, is a president who doesn't believe their own advisers? ([answers on a Tweet, anyone??](#)) She'd fidgeted as McQueen read over her call statistics. Deep down, Alice knew she was a pretty good employee and that callers generally liked her, but was that a good thing? Or did it mean McQueen would assume she actually wasn't any good? Frankly, it gave her a headache.

"I've decided you're an entirely adequate employee," McQueen had declared finally. "So I'm giving you an un-pay rise."

"A pay rise?!" Alice had gasped. This was wholly uncharted territory.

"Don't be ridiculous. An un-pay rise. And since you're so adequate, I shall recommend you for another un-pay rise next month."

You must be mad or you wouldn't have come here ...

Yes, Alice reflected as she turned out the light, the whole place was completely mad. She sighed and tumbled down the rabbit-hole into sleep

Curiouser and curiouser ...

"Move up!! Move up!!"

Alice jerked her hand to her headset, but she wasn't wearing it. She opened her eyes and found she was sitting at a table filled end to end with computer screens. The table seemed to stretch to infinity. She blinked and shook herself.

"Move up! Come on! Everyone has to move up!" Mad Hattie poked Alice in the arm.

"Everyone, who?" asked Alice, looking at the empty chairs.

"Everyone-everyone!"

Phones rang up and down the table, and as they were answered, Alice noticed

people gradually fade into view. They nodded and smiled at her, chatting all the while.

"... Have you tried turning it off and on again?"

".. so you knew it was spam, but you clicked on it anyway, uh-huh ..."

"Yes, that is true, the error message would have been a blue box, but I was hoping you noticed what was in the box ... no? Just that it was blue, OK"

"... no, that was the monitor you turned off and on again... yes, I'm sure Because computers don't restart that quickly"

As each call ended, the people faded away again, till there was nothing but a smile and a headset, and then nothing at all.

"Move up!" snapped Hattie again.

Alice sighed and shifted into the next chair along, putting the headset on as she sat down.

But before she could take her first call, a silence fell across the immense length of the table as Scarlet McQueen appeared. Her face seemed even redder than usual as she stalked up and down the helpdesk.

"You!!" she snapped at a poor unsuspecting worker. He gulped, and shrank so far back into his chair, he became practically two-dimensional. "You've been on that call for twenty-six seconds! What've you got to say for yourself?"

"I ... I ... I'm waiting for her computer to reboot ...?"

"No excuse! You're on report!! I'm docking your pay!! Off with your head!!"

"You!!! She prodded a passing man hard in the chest. "Why aren't you at your desk? Well?!! Nothing to say for yourself? You're a disgrace to the workforce! Here .." she slapped £50 into his hand, "... consider that your severance pay. You're fired! Get out!!"

The man shrugged, pocketed the cash and strolled away, whistling.

"Appalling," muttered McQueen. "Who was he anyway?"

A timid worker raised his hand.

"Ummm... he was just delivering a parcel. He doesn't actually work here."

McQueen spluttered for a moment and then rallied. She pointed an accusing finger at the hapless man who'd raised his hand.

"Don't tell me things I don't want to hear! Disciplinary hearing at 5pm!! And prepare to lose your head!"

Casting about for someone else to victimise, she spotted Alice.

"You!! You .. you ... you're not even on a call!! Off with your head!"

"That's unjust and unfair!" Alice jumped up in indignation. "I'm appealing!"

McQueen frowned. "Do you think she's appealing?" she asked Mad Hattie.

"Not even slightly."

"There you are then," she told Alice smugly. "Off with your head."

"But ... but ... I'm good at my job."

"Who says so?" asked McQueen.

"You said so yourself! Why, you gave me an un-pay rise yesterday!"

Gasps sounded up and down the table.

It's no use going back to yesterday ...

"But perhaps you were a different person yesterday," pondered McQueen. "So we shall put you to the test on computer support!"

"Very well," said Alice confidently, folding her arms. "Fire away."

"Why is a pigeon like a keyboard?"

"What? What kind of question is that?"

"A very good one, evidently, since you can't answer it."

"What's it got to do with computers?"

"There was a keyboard in the question."

"Oh this is just nonsense!"

"She doesn't know the answer!" crowed Mad Hattie.

"I do .. I do ... it's ... because ... they both have 'home' built in!!!" finished Alice triumphantly.

"Do they?" asked McQueen.

"Well ... yes. Isn't that the answer?"

"How should I know? You're supposed to be the expert."

Alice was furious.

"You mean you're asking me questions and you don't even know the answers? How is that a test?"

"Ah, but the people who phone don't know the answers, or they wouldn't need to phone, would they?" asked McQueen, with annoyingly irrefutable logic.

Alice continued to fume.

"Look, I don't think ..."

"Then you shouldn't speak," snapped Mad Hattie.

"Ohhhh!" Alice was incensed. "This is as stupid as people who ring and ask where the 'any' key is!"

"Really?" McQueen looked over Alice's shoulder at the keyboard on the desk.

"Where is it then?"

"Well there isn't one, is there? It's what it says on the screen sometimes - 'press any key to continue', so people ask where the 'any' key is."

"But there isn't one?" McQueen wanted to be sure she was understanding this.

"No," said Alice, wishing now she'd never started down this conversational cul-de-sac. "It just means you can press any of the keys." She paused. "Well, except Alt or Control or Shift or ..."

"So it says any key, except there's no such key, but what it means is any of the keys, except it doesn't mean that either." McQueen gave her an accusing stare. "And you have the nerve to say my question was nonsense?"

"Oh, this is like trying to believe six impossible things before breakfast," Alice complained.

"I do that every day," retorted McQueen. "And twelve on Sundays."

At that point, Dwight Rabbett ran the length of the table, crying "I'm late! I'm late!" It took on a Doppler effect as he disappeared into the distance. Everyone stopped and stared. Then McQueen turned to Mad Hattie.

"When he returns ..."

"Off with his head," nodded Mad Hattie. "Duly noted."

McQueen resumed her terrorising of the staff.

"You there!?" Her angry gaze had fallen on Dora Mowse across the table, who was snoring faintly. McQueen ranting till she turned the colour of an eggplant, but Dora snoozed through it all. Frustrated at being ignored, McQueen set off to march around the table so she could scream at Dora from close quarters. Alice searched in her pockets for anything she could throw at Dora to wake her up. Ah-ha! She'd lost a button from her jacket earlier and had stuffed it into her pocket to sew back on later. She just hoped her aim was good

As McQueen hove into sight having rounded the end of the table, Alice's button pinged! off Dora's forehead.

"Huh? Wzzt?" Dora sat up and looked around.

Sentence first, verdict afterwards ...

Slightly out of breath, McQueen pulled up beside her.

"You were asleep!" she shrieked.

"I most certainly was not," replied Dora.

"You were! This must go to tribunal!"

McQueen drew herself up. "You have been found guilty of sleeping on the job," she pronounced with finality. She turned to Mad Hattie. "Write that down."

"Wait a minute," Alice interrupted. "What about witnesses?"

McQueen glared at her, but then conceded. "Very well. I call myself as the first witness. Did I see this worker sleeping? Yes I did. The guilty verdict stands! Off with her head!?"

Beedeley-beedeley-beep!

McQueen pulled her mobile phone from her pocket and checked the screen.

"Tea break!" she announced.

McQueen rubbed her hands.

"Excellent! Sentencing always makes me hungry."

All the computer screens faded away to be replaced by cups and saucers, while plates of cakes and sandwiches dotted the tabletop. Alice reached for a sandwich, but had her knuckles soundly rapped by Mad Hattie.

"Have you no manners? At this table, we wait till someone says grace." She nodded to McQueen, who stood and said, "Grace!" That done, she sat down. "Now you may begin."

Alice reached again for a sandwich.

"Move up! Move up!"

"What?" asked Alice crossly. "Why are we moving again?"

"It's the rules," declared Mad Hattie.

Alice grudgingly shifted one seat over and muttered "I don't even like tea. Why can't I have coffee?"

"Ah," said McQueen, "you'd prefer

coffee?"

"Oh, yes. Please. May I?"

"May you what?" asked McQueen.

"Well ... have coffee?"

"No you may not. There isn't any."

"Then why did you offer?" asked Alice.

"I didn't," said McQueen.

"You did!"

"I did not. I merely surmised you would prefer it. Anyway ..." she clapped her hands "... tea break is over!"

"But I haven't had anything yet!" wailed Alice, as she watched the teacups fade away and be replaced by computer screens again.

"Then you shouldn't have wasted so much time asking for things you can't have. Back to work!"

Alice jammed her headset on with poorly-disguised ill grace and pasted a smile on her face.

"Good morning .." she began.

"It's evening," hissed Mad Hattie from behind her.

"Good evening," Alice tried again.

"You're speaking to Alice, how may I help?"

"I have a hole in my window."

"I'm sorry?"

"Well your being sorry is no use to me," snapped the voice. "What are you going to do about it? It's double-glazed as well."

"Sir, we're not glaziers."

"Now you listen to me, young lady. It says right here that this is a windows helpline, so I demand you help me!"

"But it's not for that kind of window!"

"Oh! Oh! It's like that is it? That's false advertising, that is. I shall be complaining about you!!!" [Click!]

Alice shook her head and took another call.

"Good evening .."

"It's morning," hissed Mad Hattie from behind her. "You just had morning tea."

"I didn't have anything," pointed out Alice crossly. "And how can it be morning when it was evening a minute ago?" she shouted at Mad Hattie's retreating form. Sighing, she turned her attention back to her teeth. This was quite the most ridiculous place she'd ever worked. She answered another call.

"Good morning ..."

"And the patio door's cracked!"

"Sir, for the last time, I can't fix your windows!!!"