

London  
Thursday 7th May, 2020

Dear 6H,

Once again, I've enjoyed speaking to you this week and it's been lovely to read your work on Seesaw. I hope that knowing your teacher is reviewing that work is giving you a little extra motivation; in any event, the current need to be more independent/ self-reliant is excellent practice for secondary school.

It was clear from the diary writing last week that you are maintaining your standards. Keep going.

Right now, I have about five unfinished books that I'm reading (by that, I don't mean that the author is still writing them). I expect that I'll be recommending some of them soon (provided the author didn't stop trying in the last 50 pages). In one of those novels, I'm an athlete (a hurdler, no less); in another I'm a detective solving a murder mystery; and finally, perhaps\* the biggest stretch, I'm building a tiny house (slightly bigger than your air raid shelters and with less Sellotape involved).

During lockdown, I've been cutting my own hair. Lots of people have been talking about 'lockdown haircuts' and some have posted photos of theirs on the Internet. A lot of haircuts are what I call 'Michael Rosen's Chocolate Cake' haircuts – basically, one side is tidied up, then the other to even it out, then a little more hair is removed and so on until there is very little, if any, left. No such problems here – for me, that is Plan A.

Another feature of lockdown for me has been competing in online quizzes with friends. Each week, one of us writes the quiz and the others compete. One of the rounds we have each week involves predicting/ guessing/ remembering whether the quizmaster (the person setting and asking the questions) likes or dislikes certain things. The reasons for these likes/ dislikes do not have to be reasonable (as you will soon discover).

I thought I'd set you 10 questions like this, under the heading '*Fan or Not a Fan?*' I will list 10 items and you can guess whether I am or am not a fan of them.

By fan, I don't mean in the sense of a serious music fan. Imagine I'm a fan of jam jars (they are useful, after all): this does not mean that I go to jam jar concerts at Wembley Stadium, buy jam jar-themed T-shirts and hoodies, and collect rare, imported jam jar calendars (both official and unofficial) from Japan. It just means I think they are a good thing.

Remember this.

Here is the list – your mission, should you choose to accept, is to guess whether I am a fan or not a fan of the following (answers at the end of the letter, but please don't cheat – it's hardly worth it is it?)

Is Mr Hudd a **Fan** or **Not a Fan** of the following?

1. Liquorice
2. Pop music
3. Cows
4. Dr Seuss
5. Artificial grass
6. Being bald
7. Books that are supposed to be funny
8. Cordless irons (modern ones)
9. American chocolate
10. Fish

## Answers

### 1. Liquorice (**FAN**)

Liquorice is great. One of many things Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) have got right is liquorice. They take it seriously. I have even seen a Scandinavian advent calendar where behind each door there was a different flavour/ style of liquorice.

If I'm being good, I often choose liquorice as an alternative treat to chocolate. I never regret it.

Unfortunately, I've just made myself want to eat liquorice and there isn't any here.

### 2. Pop music (**FAN**)

In a previous letter, I believe I proved that your taste in music is terrible (and would be improved by the addition of vacuum noises); however, pop music overall is a great thing. There have been so many brilliant pop songs; of course, with any creative pursuit there will be much that is terrible brought into existence (hey, just check out one of your playlists), but little else has the same immediate impact on mood/ memory as a fine pop song.

This is all very positive so far, isn't it? Perhaps this 'quiz' is being set by an impostor.

### 3. Cows (**FAN**)

Cows are massively underrated\*\*. While horses are (rightly) praised as beautiful creatures, cows are lucky if they get the odd pun about cinema ('moovies'), jokes ('amoosing') and Curtis Mayfield singles ('Moove On Up').

In my first year as a teacher, I had to take regular assemblies. One of them was about falling out with friends. I asked one of my colleagues to sit sulking on the stage in the hall as if we had fallen out; the children were told we had argued because my colleague had insulted cows (calling them rubbish), knowing how much I loved them.

I then delivered a 15-minute assembly about the various ways in which cows were/ are brilliant (I might have also said something about being willing to apologise when you upset your friends).

At the end of my first year of teaching, 87% of my gifts were cow-themed.

### 4. Dr Seuss (**NOT A FAN**)

I do not like Green Eggs and Ham nor any other of his books. Sorry.

I feel the same way about the *Mr Men/ Little Miss* books. Too long and too many of them. There are so many of them that lazy teachers cannot even ask

children to make up their own Mr Men/ Little Miss characters because anything their pupils think of will already exist.

In Germany, they even have Herr Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte (Mr Black Forest Cherry Cake) and Miss Schadenfreude (a character who takes pleasure in other people's misfortune).

5. Artificial grass **(NOT A FAN)**

I don't like artificial grass at all (except for hockey pitches). This is not only for environmental reasons but because my 'artificial weeds for artificial grass' business lost me what was left of my money after all the other financial disasters already set out in these letters.

6. Being bald **(FAN)**

Please see above.

However, one disadvantage is that moisturiser is generally more expensive than shampoo (not helpful when you've just invested millions of pounds in an artificial weed business).

7. Books for grown-ups that are supposed to be funny **(NOT A FAN)**

Some of my biggest reading disappointments have involved books that were said to be funny in the blurb. Be wary of books for grown-ups, later in life, that are supposed to be hilarious. They will often disappoint you (like sweet potato milk sales and teachers that are supposed to be funny).

8. Cordless irons (modern ones) **(NOT A FAN)**

Irons were all cordless once upon a time and may well have done their job. Modern cordless irons need recharging every seven seconds which is barely long enough to iron a button.

Cordless? Hopeless, more like.

9. American chocolate **(NOT A FAN)**

I'm happy to admit to loving chocolate, but I draw a line here. However, on my recent two-day trip to America (since which the polar bears have stopped talking to me at parties), I did discover the wide range of available flavours of Milky Way, some of which are actually pleasantly edible.

They are not enough to avoid this snap and almost certainly unreasonable judgement, though.

10. Fish **(FAN)**

Fish are great. I can't walk past a body of water (or even a jug of water) without checking for fish. Coelacanths are remarkable. And there's a great Radiohead song which has a title based upon an incorrect plural of the word fish.

I saw some tiny fish on the River Wandle today. It was amazing.

How did you do? If you got 10 out of 10, you either cheated or are me. It's pretty obvious which one it is then. isn't it?

Have a good weekend,

**Mr Hudd**

\*Other soft drinks are available.

\*\*I was so tempted to write udder-rated here, but what does that even mean?

Planet Earth  
Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Dear 6H,

First of all, it was great to speak to you over this past week. I enjoyed hearing all of you; I'm glad you're all well and adapting to the present situation. I look forward to calling you and your parents again later this week.

Apologies for the delay in writing this letter – it's been like the period between Radiohead releasing *Ok Computer* (1997) and *Kid A* (2000). As you know, successful similes use a comparison that everyone can understand - I'm sure you'll agree I've demonstrated that very well indeed here.

This week's English home learning is based around a core book, *Lori and Max*, which is a wonderful detective novel; I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. The 'lessons' should be more like you're used to when we're in the classroom. Incidentally, I've heard it said that after being left unwashed for a while, hair starts to clean itself; I'm wondering whether that applies to classrooms (it'd be wonderful if they tidied themselves as well).

As part of this week's home learning, there are videos of teachers reading the core text and introducing the tasks. In his video, one of the Year Six teachers broke the world record for saying 'perhaps' the most times in a one-minute period. Now, you may think that teacher (me, in case you hadn't guessed) was afflicted by nerves, verbal clumsiness or a lack of vocabulary.

However, you would be so wrong.

My over-use of the word 'perhaps' is an example of product placement. This is when products are used or named in the context of a film or television show to encourage viewers to buy them. *Perhaps* is my new soft drink and what better way to launch a product than by product placement in a 12-minute clip about writing a diary entry that hardly anyone in the world will see?

After that, I'll launch the drink with a multi-pence advertising campaign built around the following slogan:

*Perhaps... you might like it.*

I'll admit it's not as confident-sounding as most advertising, but I'm hopeful that *Perhaps* will be more successful than my previous venture in the drinks market. Years ago, when concerns first started to be raised about the negative impact of dairy farming on the environment, I launched sweet potato milk. Unfortunately, it left many people disappointed: half the people who bought it thought it was sweetened potato milk and the other half thought it was the milk of sweet potatoes.

It cost me a lot of money just as I was getting back on my feet after the Iron Man debacle.

Hopefully, the next letter shouldn't be too long in arriving - rather like how Radiohead released *Amnesiac* so soon after *Kid A*.

Until next time... perhaps.

**Mr Hudd**

Yep, still there  
Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Dear 6H,

Hope you're well and have managed to find some ribbons to cut into equal (or unequal) parts since I last wrote. Last week, walking beside the Wandle, I saw herons, a cormorant and a kingfisher - perhaps they're enjoying the cleaner air out there.

Being inside means carrying out household chores. Of these, ironing is my favourite. When ironing, a person can still do many things: listen to music, watch television or paint. Ok then - I admit that painting (whether artistic or decorative) will be neither safe nor successful whilst ironing.

Ironing is still better than vacuuming, though. Vacuuming refuses to let you do anything else: for example, you can't listen to music and vacuum. Having written that, perhaps some of the music **you** listen to would be improved with a bit of vacuum noise -Dua Lipa *feat.* MC Hoova or Stormzy *feat.* Henry.

I know so little about modern music that those collaborations probably exist. You may be nodding, thinking 'bangers', at what I thought was a joke.

Ironing is the reason I paid a lot of prize money from my sewing career to Marvel Comics. Back in the early 1990s, I innocently created a comic book character called 'Iron Man'. This was not some guy in metallic armour, but a superhero blessed with incredible powers when it came to removing creases from clothes.

Of course, someone with superpowers like that is going to have a lot of enemies amongst villains who don't like smooth clothes.

My Iron Man's nemesis was Kreseus, a baddie who would enter clothes stores, people's homes, and anywhere else where there was clothing, throwing shirts on the floor, leaving clothes in too-tight spaces and putting trousers on hangers in a way that meant extra creases appeared in them.

This guy was bad news.

He and *my* Iron Man went back a long way. Once, Kreseus replaced Iron Man's iron with a cordless one. Sounds great? No - *my* Iron Man had to recharge his iron every 25 seconds and ironing took much longer. Meanwhile, Kreseus was causing chaos going through people's wardrobes, removing things from coat hangers and shoving them under the bed.

I'm sorry if I'm scaring you, but remember Kreseus doesn't really exist.

The comic had a small following until my masterpiece (issue #4). My Iron Man is ironing one of his favourite shirts, which seems more creased than usual, when he notices a small (or minor) tear in it. Immediately, *my* Iron Man knew that his scruffiest foe - Kreseus - must have done it, meaning his foe must have escaped from jail.

*Kreseus and the Minor Tear* was hugely successful (this is a good piece of word play, but if you don't find it funny, you only have yourselves to blame). Suddenly, no-one cared about Iron Man (the Marvel one); Marvel got scared.

They claimed my comic was only selling because the people buying it were confused.

At the time, I was talking to the BBC about turning *my* Iron Man into a television series. The discussions were taking ages because the BBC felt I wanted too much ironing in the show (is there even such a thing?) I also wanted lots of flashbacks to *my* Iron Man's origin story, something the BBC described as 'tedious'.

I'll let you judge.

All superheroes have an origin story (we talked about this when thinking about how Katherine Barlow became Kissin' Kate Barlow). Spider-Man was bitten by a radioactive spider; Wonder Woman was a sculpture given life by an Amazon queen; and Iron Man (mine) became great at ironing by practising.

Lots.

I wanted children to have a positive, inspiring message about hard work. My Iron Man's superpowers came from tens of thousands of hours of ironing. Compare this message to that of Spider-Man: how many people look back on their lives regretting trying to get bitten by every spider they saw, hoping it was radioactive?

Eventually, Marvel sued me, ordering destruction of all copies of the comic, removal of all references to the character from the Internet (oops – where are you reading this letter?) and winning several million dollars from me.

Completely broke, I had to go on a live needlework arena tour *The Sew Must Go On* to pay my lawyers' fees. The first date of the tour – at the Sew2 – was disastrous.

But that is another story (and it hasn't been written yet).

Take care,  
Mr Hudd

You guessed it

Friday 10th April, 2020

Dear 6H,

I hope you have enjoyed the first week of your holiday.

I've read some excellent books since the week began. *The Unteachables* by Gordon Korman is a great uplifting read - an underdog story about a class that the education system has given up on. I bought it at an airport (remember those?) on the way back from my extraordinarily short trip to America; it appealed because one of the narrators is a teacher. It's moving and definitely more upbeat than most books I read. *Overheard in a Tower Block* by Joseph Coelho is less upbeat, but a wonderful collection of poetry nonetheless.

However, the standout read has been *Felt: The First 2500 Years of a Revolutionary Fabric*. At 843 pages long, this is the book about that much loved, but much misunderstood textile I'd been waiting for all my life.

Although I consider myself something of an expert on the subject of felt, reading this book has caused me to rethink everything I thought about it. Felt (or FLT in textspeak) is something you kids spend a lot of time talking about (and sometimes trash talking about when you're debating the best colours and manufacturing processes): one cannot be a successful teacher without staying in touch with the latest trends.

Believe me: everything you thought you knew about felt is wrong.

This incredible book by Sam Stanford, the Emeritus Professor of Felt Studies at the University of Cambridge, covers the history of its subject right from its invention around 500B.C. up until the year 2000. It is remarkably thorough.

We have all pondered, at some time, what was happening in the world of felt on the day we were born; the back of the book features a section called *On This Day in Felt History* which will tell you just that. On the day I was born, Andorra declared war on Spain over a disputed 173-metre roll of rainbow felt. Perhaps, it was an omen.

The book is full of beautiful illustrations which showcase the versatility of felt. Below are two cars: one is a classic Volkswagen beetle and the other is a 2-d felt version of the same car. Can you spot the difference?



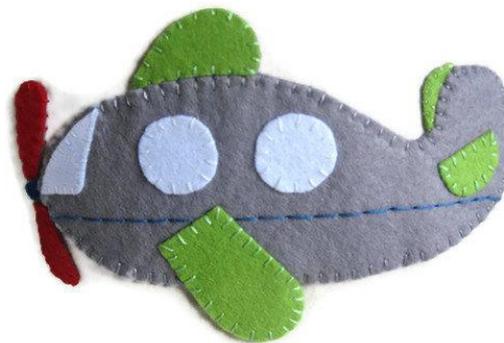
If you identified the car on the left as a felt impostor, then pat yourselves on the back (but perhaps I made it too easy by including the trees in the image on the right).

Now, study these two photographs carefully: can you tell real fruit from those which are made out of stuffed felt?



If you identified the pears on the left as made out of felt, you are obviously quite an expert as only 13.7% of people can accurately identify them.

This is so much fun that I'm going to give you one more chance. One of the next two images is a felt rendering of a spitfire, lovingly recreated by a keen felt hobbyist; the other is the iconic fighter plane, credited with a decisive role in winning the Battle of Britain, causing Adolf Hitler to abandon his plans to invade Britain (Operation Sea Lion) and to launch the Blitz. Once again, can you tell the difference?



Actually, the spitfire is the one on the right. It is an early prototype which explains the lack of livery (markings on the wings and main fuselage of the aircraft).

Felt's history is a glorious one and this is perhaps why, in previous years, the final Year 6 DT assignment has been to make a mobile phone cover from this wonder fabric.

Although the covers that children typically make don't protect phones against breakage, they do make the owner look like a time-traveller from the 1970s.

*Felt: The First 2500 Years of a Revolutionary Fabric* also includes a chapter on some of the more troublesome moments in history. For example, Captain America's near-fatal first battle with Red Skull in which his shield was fashioned from felt (after this he switched to a vibranium-steel alloy).

The Soviet Union's advantage in the first years of the Space Race (Yuri Gagarin was the first man in space in 1961) was partly because NASA insisted on building its early test rockets out of felt; unfortunately, the engines set the felt alight. These failed space missions – which should probably be called ground missions or bonfires - are ignored by the world's space museums.

I'll not spoil the book for you, but recommend that you read it. One thing is for sure, I will be first in the queue for the sequel, *Felt: The Second 2500 Years of a Revolutionary Fabric*.

Having finally worked out how to record a video message, please watch the website after the holiday. Those kind folk at *Pixar* have created a CGI version of me – see if you can spot the difference.

Please don't forget to share any home learning of which you are proud.

Stay safe and well,

**Mr Hudd**

Still there  
Friday 3rd April, 2020

Dear 6H,

Today is the last day of term – had anyone noticed? I hope that you have fun spending time with your families and carers, enjoy some of the suggested activities on the Home Learning website and, above all, stay safe and well.

There may be things you are missing right now. For me, one of those is teaching you. Although I am working from home, the part of the job that I am most passionate about – helping you maximise the choices you have in later life – is missing. That's a bigger hole than anything Stanley Yelnats has dug.

Another thing I miss is bookshops and libraries. You're probably thinking that this is going to be another way for Mr Hudd to encourage us to read. Let's not jump to conclusions, shall we?

I always walk into bookshops and libraries when I have the time and often when I don't.

Walking into a library or bookshop offers so many opportunities: to discover a new or previously-unknown-to-me book as beautifully hopeful as *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan; to read something as positive and unvarnished as the work of Jason Reynolds; or to laugh as much as I did at Jon Klassen's *I Want My Hat Back* that first time in Gosh Comics.

Over the past two or three years, I've found out about great authors – some of whom will be familiar to you: Ce-Ce Bell, Rita Williams-Garcia and Thanhha Lai – by walking into bookshops and libraries.

I've also learned recently about some remarkable people. Two less well-known names spring to mind: Mary Walker, a former slave, who learned to read at the age of 116; and Nobuo Fujita – the only pilot to have bombed mainland America during the Second World War – who went on to form a special friendship with the town he once tried to destroy.

Right now, there will be experiences you miss, but the opportunities to do those things you love will return. When you are all able to do those things again, perhaps you will appreciate them more. They may become even more special to you.

Did I mention that I think you should read as often as you can?

I suppose you were right, after all.

Stay well and take care,

**Mr Hudd**

Have a guess. Yes, still there.  
Tuesday 31st March, 2020

Dear 6H,

I hope you and your families and carers are well, staying safe and making something positive of this situation.

When I was at school, I never really took time to think about what my teachers did before teaching. Perhaps I imagined that they were beamed down from space, fully formed (maybe they thought that of me too). For that reason, today, I plan to share an extract from my autobiography *And Sew On* but – before I do that – I need to offer some context.

Usually, in the Summer Term, Year Six make mobile phone covers, developing their sewing skills in the process. For me, that is always a bittersweet time as many of the best (and worst) moments in my life have involved sewing. Many memories flood back as I watch pupils spending a few days grappling with needle and thread.

As a child, I did not want to be a sewer. However, in my family, there was an expectation that you became a fantastic sewer.

I blame my dirty-rotten-Bayeux-Tapestry-weaving-great- great- great- great-great- great- great-grandfather.

My ancestor had impressed Bishop Odo (William of Normandy's half-brother) with his invention of text (short for textile) messaging in the Eleventh Century.

Textile messaging involved people sewing abbreviated (often pointless) messages on to fabric, before delivering them by hand to friends. The sender of the original textile message would then return home and wait for the other person to respond, often with a piece of fabric featuring a face embroidered in yellow thread featuring an expression reflecting the textile message receiver's response to it.

Knowing of his 50%-brother's intentions to claim the English throne, Bishop Odo thought that such a moment in history should be recorded. He asked my multiple-great-grandfather to create a tapestry of the forthcoming invasion.

From there, it could all have gone so wrong. First, my ancestor arrived weeks early, setting up his linen and coloured woollen yarns in the field that would soon become the battlefield. If any English knight had asked him what he was doing there with his embroidery equipment, King Harold's men might





Still at home like everybody else  
Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Dear 6H,

Here we are again – back by unpopular demand for Volume 2. Please don't assume (or worry) that this letter will be a daily occurrence – as you know, you cannot determine conclusively any pattern in a sequence with only two entries.

Over the weekend, I had the chance to read through your World Book Day letters again. The first piece to be uploaded to the website will be the class letter you wrote - *Here's Why 6H Read* – it is a piece of which you should all be proud. Individual letters are now on the website somewhere near this letter; I found your writing engaging and uplifting (I took time to work out the authors of a couple of the 'anonymous' letters).

Before writing this letter, I've been reflecting on the varied ways we are using technology in the present situation. Teachers have been using Zoom for online meetings (an inappropriate name as everyone sits still during them), Google Drive (though it is unsafe to use whilst driving) and WattsApp (like WhatsApp but you can only discuss electricity and current affairs).

Think about it. And then be disappointed once you've thought about it.

This weekend, I was in the garden digging for minibeasts (sadly, there was no sign of Kate Barlow's treasure). Do you think minibeasts refer to humans as maxibeasts?

Additionally, I gave some thought to your non-chronological reports and tried writing a model paragraph:

### ***Diet and Shopping***

*The **panda** is one of nature's most selective eaters. Its diet consists almost entirely of the leaves, stems and shoots of various bamboo species. This means that the panda is vulnerable when bamboo is in short supply; however, panda bears' shopping lists are*

conveniently short (though a trolley is needed to hold the 12-38kg of bamboo they need to eat each day.) Further, those who work in panda supermarkets have an easier job than their human counterparts:

**Panda:** *Could you tell me where the bamboo is please?*

**Shop assistant:** *Aisle one. Look around you. We only have one aisle and we only sell bamboo.*

**Panda:** *Is that aisle with an 'a' or an 'i'?*

**Shop assistant:** *I really don't think this dialogue is revealing character or moving the action forward, not to mention that it doesn't belong in a non-chronological report.*

This week's Home Learning includes reading one of the poems mentioned in your World Book Day letter and watching a wonderful animated interpretation of Elton John's *Rocket Man*. I hope you find something engaging there.

I hope you are well and I'll write again soon.

**Mr Hudd**

At home like almost everybody else

27<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Dear 6H (Volume 1),

If anything could make receiving a letter from your teacher worse, it must be the fact it's called Volume (suggests it will be long) 1 (suggests there will be more).

Well, this is all rather odd, isn't it? Me writing a letter to you. Actually, it might be odder if I had written letters to you as a class from the front of the room while you waited for me to start teaching. That would be like people texting each other from different rooms and nobody does that, do they?

You do remember question tags, don't you?

I hope you are well and keeping yourselves occupied – I am sorry that I was unable to teach you for the final few days of last week. Seriously, I had a really good feeling about those lessons.

Apart from stockpiling shampoo, I've been discovering all the things in a Lego box that aren't Lego and reading lots of poetry – you may have read some of the poems on the Home Learning website. If you haven't visited it yet, stop reading this rubbish and head over there.

Although this is an unusual situation, the opportunity to spend time with your families and carers is something to be enjoyed. This is also an incredible opportunity to read some books; when I first typed that, I wrote 'read some minds' – actually, that is something you could learn to do with all this time, I suppose.

You knew I was going to write that? You're doing well already.

It seems odd that we read a letter on World Book Day – '*Here's Why I Read*' – and now you have an opportunity to escape social distancing/ self-isolation by reading (as long as it's not a newspaper).

Hopefully, there will be some other ways to stay in touch with Belleville before too long. Once I have worked out how to do special effects/ CGI, I will appear in a video on the website; I may even read extracts from my autobiography. Then, you'll remember what boredom really feels like.

Though I am trying to keep it light, I want you to know that I miss teaching you. On that note, if you still haven't done your home learning for this week, here's a suggested topic sentence starter for your non-chronological report:

### **Behaviour**

*Known for stealing other birds' sentence starters and vocabulary, the magpie...*

Please don't all use that one as I'll know it's mine.

With best wishes,

Mr Hudd

Here  
Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Dear All,

This letter was intended to be Volume Six, but has been delayed for legal reasons.

Since I wrote to you about my problems with Marvel, I've received a lot of mail.

First, I must admit that I have done no ironing since lockdown began. I guess you could say Kreseus is having a good time - maybe, he's self-isolating in the clothing section of a department store. That guy, honestly.

Secondly, I heard that people wanted to know about what went wrong on my arena sewing tour. Obviously, if you're asking that, you've not read my autobiography in full. That may not be a bad thing - the way I handled this episode in my autobiography was somewhat bitter.

I'll try and be a better person here.

The opening night of *The Sew Must Go On* tour was at the sew2 arena on 21st February, 1994. That arena no longer exists, but the O2 Arena in North Greenwich now stands exactly where its sound-alike predecessor once stood.

As some of you who have attended a concert will know, often before the artist you go to see performs, there is a 'support act'. Usually, this is a singer or band that is not as good as the singer or band you've gone to see, but the drums are very loud.

Although I was still struggling to come to terms with Seoul '88, I felt confident enough to return to public sewing. I wanted to give the fans a great show; unfortunately, I made the fateful decision to ask an old school friend to help out.

You may never have heard of Trevor Dream-Wevers, but if I tell you that he is better known as internationally successful basket

weaver Dreemz Weeva, you'll be on my w(e)avelength. Back in the Eighties and Nineties, he was weaving baskets from the future.

If you take a moment to look around your home at all those baskets, his influence is impossible to miss.

Like me, he had enjoyed international fame with his skilful handicrafts and we agreed that we wanted to put on the greatest sew on Earth for that tour.

He was world-famous and on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1994 - the opening night of the tour - he lived up to his reputation. Dreemz Weeva's performance was spectacular: he flew on a trapeze above the audience, raining freshly weaved baskets on adoring fans; he climbed the huge lighting towers whilst weaving baskets from titanium; and his show finished with a world-first – he speed-wove a basket that could hold 19 (nineteen) eggs (large ones, if that number weren't mind-blowing enough by itself).

It is difficult to state just how brilliant Dreemz Weeva's act was. If you imagine the best basket weaving performance you've ever seen, and multiply it by a million...

Hang on. Actually, if you do that, what you imagine will be much, much better than Dreemz Weeva's show that night. His show would be quite rubbish by comparison, actually. A million is a pretty big number. In fact, it's the third highest number I know after 1,000,003 and 999,999.

Unfortunately, following this futuristic basket weaving masterclass was close to impossible. Weeva's show was too much for the towering screens at the sides of the stage and they malfunctioned.

During my performance, this meant that the people at the back of the 20,000-seat arena could not see my fine needlework skills. Adaptable as ever, I ran back to my dressing room, unplugged the television and set it up onstage. Unfortunately, the screen was about as large as today's average computer monitor, so the image of me on screen was *smaller* than the real thing. It was a fiasco.

First, there was silence. Despite the huge crowds, you could have heard a pin drop in that arena. In fact, I was so nervous that they regularly did.

Later, the crowd became restless and police had to ask audience members for silence. Do you know how difficult it is to sew in front of 20,000 people discussing the public transport they will use to get home?

Of course, you don't – there are limits to human empathy.

I was soon fed up of hearing people saying, "What time is the next Jubilee Line train from North Greenwich?" I did, however, allow myself a smile as I knew they would have to wait several years for that train – North Greenwich Station did not open until 14th May, 1999 in the lead-up to the Millennium celebrations.

This smile did not compensate for the terrible reviews for my part of the show that I had to read the next day. For example, the Evening Standard described me as 'about as entertaining and enjoyable as pins and needles'. There were also many disgraceful sewing-based puns in the headlines for the show, so I shan't repeat them here.

Let's just say it was all sew unfair.

Stay well and take care,

**Mr Hudd**

PS Last week, you read *These Are the Hands*, Michael Rosen's poem paying tribute to the NHS and its staff; on a serious note, I think we should be full of gratitude for all those helping to deal with the present situation, including those making their own equipment for the NHS, whether by sewing, use of 3-D printers or other means.