



## **DAVID STIRLING: The funniest way to start the week**

### **Why my pal is happy being in the doghouse . . .**

MY PAL'S wife was missing the pitter-patter of little feet, but him delivering a puppy was not what she had in mind. He said it was cheaper, and she got twice as many feet. "Got anything to cure fleas on our new pup?" he asked the vet. "It depends what's wrong with them," he was told.

My pal has always had a four-legged best friend, ever since we were kids. I remember a school summer camp under canvas at Kilchattan Bay on Bute, when a teacher asked after a week if anybody was homesick.

My pal piped up: "Only the ones who have dogs."

He loved that particular animal. It came down the chimney one year with Santa, and on Christmas Eve my pal lay awake all night - much like the dyslexic agnostic insomniac who wondered if there really is a dog.

His old man was proud of that dog, too. I can still hear him boasting to neighbours.

"You won't believe how clever our dog is. He only brings in The Herald and Evening Times every day!"

"Well, lots of dogs can do that."

"Maybe so, but we've never ordered any papers."

HE took the dog to a play at the Kings Theatre. It was a comedy, and my pal's dad and the dog spent the night in stitches.

When the lights went up at the end, a man sitting behind tapped my pal's dad on the shoulder.

"I have to say, I just couldn't believe how your dog reacted there."

"Neither could I," he was told. "He hated the book."

That dog featured in every photograph at every family occasion, so you can imagine the surprise when it failed to appear anywhere in their 20th wedding anniversary album.

There was more than a hint of sarcasm in the question: "What, no dog?"

My pal's dad looked at the questioner as if he were daft and said: "Someone had to take the pictures."

Today, my pal's new pup struggles to gain the approval of its new mistress. The Wicked Witch of the East is not what you'd call an animal lover.

And she's certainly not impressed after being subjected to regular drunken rants from my pal about what she could learn from man's best friend.

The later you are, the happier a dog is to see you.

A dog does not shop.

A dog's mother will never visit you.

A dog loves you even when you leave your clothes on the floor.

A dog never expects you to telephone.

The Wicked Witch has not been slow to retaliate. My pal and his mutt are perfectly matched, she says.

Both take up too much space on the bed.

Both have an irrational fear of the vacuum cleaner.

Both insist on marking their territory.

Neither of them notice when you get your hair cut.

Both pass wind endlessly, effortlessly, and shamelessly.

Much of that wind is caused by what they both eat and drink, and we're at a time of the year when over-indulgence could prove particularly nasty for them both.

Vets are warning animal lovers not to feed their pets chocolate. Did you know it contains a chemical called theobromine, which has been known to kill?

Stick to special doggy choc, we're told. Or how about buying for your pooch's stocking a cookbook, such as the glossy 96-page tome called *Cooking for Dogs*? You couldn't make it up.

Anyway, my pal's two maiden aunts had food on their minds on their first trip to New York.

"I read on the plane they eat dogs here," said one.

"Well, when in America..." said her sister.

"We'll have a dog each, please," she told the hot dog street vendor.

Once served, sister one looked at her dog and then turned to her sibling: "What part did you get?"

7:38am Monday 17th December 2007

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