

## I Can't be Sixty this Year!

This landmark age is either a milestone or a millstone, depending on the individual's character, but it is unlikely to be a balloons-on-the-gatepost occasion. To a young person, sixty sounds unbelievably ancient and alarmingly close to the pushing-up-daisies stage; to the senior citizen, it sounds wistfully nostalgic; and to the soon-to-be-sixty year old it seems, quite simply, very natural. Good health permitting, there are no major changes. Life goes on even if the word 'retirement' peers beguilingly over the horizon.

### Identifying an SC

So how do we classify this age? Even the most optimistic can't call it middle aged, although that brings to mind the old definition of middle aged as being when you bend down to tie your laces while pondering what else you could usefully do while you're down there. But neither is sixty 'old'; so how is it classified? Perhaps unkindly it has been dubbed the 'sub-crumbly' or, more unkindly still, the 'semi-crumbly' age. Whichever way it's viewed, sub-crumbly or semi-crumbly, SC for short, it's nearly there for the author.

How can an SC be identified by others and how can he recognize his own state? Perhaps the rest of this article will give a few clues. Getting dressed or undressed acquires new habits. Socks that used to



in the shag pile is best avoided.

be put on or taken off while standing on one leg are now dealt with while perched on the end of the bed. And when removing trousers, the SC subconsciously stands close to the edge of the bed to guard against overbalancing; burying his snout

### Gruntwork

A couple of new noises enter the SC's home. The first comes when cleaning teeth. There's the familiar 'phlut' of the toothpaste top, the 'ssshh' of the water then a 'click'. A click? Yes, that's when the dental plate is rested beside the tap; that winsome smile is not all that it appears to be. Incidentally, readers may notice the SC is often the one who slices his apple up before eating it - there is a reason.

The second noise comes after exercise, perhaps an afternoon of gardening or, perhaps less advisedly, sporting exercise. Once the exercise is completed, the SC is likely to sink or even collapse-gracefully, of course, into an armchair with an exhalation that resembles a grunt/groan/gasp, depending on the nature of the exercise. Taken to extremes, the noise can degenerate into a quiet and self-pitying mewling, representing a satisfying blend of fatigue and triumph. The SC gradually develops a new range of movements. One example comes when mounting his bike. Forsaking past

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methods of nonchalantly throwing one leg across the saddle, a method that could now preface emasculation, he tips the bike close towards him thus reducing the height for his swinging leg. Then there's carrying teacups - the morning cups of tea that used to be carried upstairs automatically are now carried upstairs carefully. One final movement comes when the SC picks up the morning post; rather than attempting to read it, he moves first towards the window where the light is better, acknowledging his limitations.

### **Grow Old Along with Me**

In all these changes, it should be noted, there is no hardship involved. The SC stage of life is, health permitting, a very pleasant one full of memories, replete with friendships and brightened with future hopes. He may notice, however,

that those people who come out with that well-known comment, "Well, you don't look that old," are increasingly older than himself. Younger acquaintances are either more honest or more tight-lipped.

### **The Best is Yet to Be?**

Whatever his age, whatever his condition, the SC can still smile. The author noted this tendency when he recently called into the *Little Chef* outside Ludlow, going first to the gents before ordering his food. He washed his hands and extended them to the slot in the hot air drier; it looked unusually small. Only at the last minute did he realise that he was about to insert his hands into the condom machine; maybe it's time he lost his 'S'!

**Bob Forster**

## **Wychwood School PTA Invites *YOU* to**

### **Their First Ever Spring Ball!**

This is the PTA's first ball, and it promises to be a wonderful evening of delicious food and great entertainment; also a great chance to dress up! We really hope that everyone in the Wychwoods will help our primary school by coming to the ball and/or purchasing raffle tickets. The school is very much part of the community, and it needs your support! All proceeds go towards buying new computers and books for the children.

#### **A Date for Your Diary**

The Ball will take place on **Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup> 2010** at the **New Beaconsfield Hall, Shipton-under-Wychwood** from **7.30pm to midnight**.

Tickets purchased before March 1<sup>st</sup> will be £27, (£30 after).

#### **Be There!**

There will be canapés and a bubbly reception, so dress: to impress! Enjoy a three-course meal, raffle and licensed bar. Dance the night away to the one and only *Ragged Edge* and DJ Rob.

Tickets will be sold individually or in tables of 8 to 10, and are available from Wychwood School Office, Milton Library, Milton Post Office, or by post. For enquiries and order forms ring the school office on: 01993 830059 or email [ferguswessel@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ferguswessel@yahoo.co.uk).

**Hannah Wessel**