

Excerpts from a Natural History



Holly Painter



Titus Books

Concerning the Imaginary Unit

Comment [dph1]: Thanks for that clarification. Please note that this point was first raised by researcher C.K. Dower in the 15th year of the project. Refer to *History of the Natural History*, pg. 31 in your New Employees Introduction Packet.

While $(a,b) \xrightarrow{\lim} (0,0)$ $\frac{a}{b}$ suffers the elegant misfortune of non-existence,¹

its fellow oddling $\sqrt{-1}$ more capably stakes that bold claim of being.

It admits that it's imaginary. It parades its unreality. It teeters on the edge of utility.

In a word, it is complex.

But whatever else it is, it is.

Comment [dph2]: Welcome aboard, E.J.! We look forward to receiving your field notes.

Let us call it i .

¹ In an effort to avoid speculation, these notes will only record those things that definitely are not, as opposed to those things that probably are not. But the only things that definitely are not are those things that logically cannot be. Such analytic judgments are outside the experiential scope of the natural history.

Concerning Grade I Listed Buildings

The charge from Mother England prays,
Preserve these, my precious things:

- Oxford's former Prison, now hotel to penthouse girls
- The stone seal perched in peril upon a wall in Cardiff, Wales
- The Worshipful Society of Apothecaries' Hall, which brings help throughout the world

Let not our glorious heritage be recklessly erased
by building alterations manifesting poor taste,
but repair and maintain these at the owner's expense.
Guard tourism and history with vigilant defense.

Comment [dph3]: Surely this is not an exhaustive list? Choosing only a few examples can inadvertently shape the facts into a theory. Please provide a complete inventory. You can leave this particular assignment until later, if it would be easier to complete the survey in the course of other Natural History travel. (And don't be discouraged. This was perhaps a little tough for your second assignment.)

Comment [dph4]: Good description. Formatting is non-standard. Refer to your *Natural History Style Guide*.

Concerning the Regenerative Properties of Asteroidean Echinoderms

The unfortunate starfish who, owing to carelessness, accident, or aggressive posturing, misplaces an arm or two need only wait. The star's stumps will sprout new arms in time, each supplied with spines, microscopic eyes, tube feet, and ampullae teeth, all trim and tidy. Meanwhile, the mislaid arms float away to some private place, each to undertake the growing of an entire replacement sea star. Some populations supplement or supplant sexual reproduction with calculated amputation drives. Individuals appear undisturbed by these infinite divisions and revisions of identity.

Concerning Source 96.1 FM, Cornwall

Broadcasting out of a town called Falmouth, you'd expect Source FM to be staffed by irreverent shock jocks who swear like sailors.

Comment [dph5]: Clever, but what you think the reader would expect is irrelevant.

It's not. Each week, its 50+ programs are entirely written, performed, and recorded by volunteers aged eight to eighty and drawn from the community.

The station's focus is locals, discussing local issues, showcasing local talent, and recruiting local layabouts for media production training and accreditation.

Comment [dph6]: I think you must be referring to people designated as currently Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs). It should be obvious why you cannot call these people "local layabouts."

Available online and in Cornwall, Source FM primarily plays music, though there is some (quite civil) talk radio, as well as one of the UK's only community-produced radio dramas.

Comment [dph7]: By the way, it was lovely meeting you in person the other day! Nice to put a face with a name.

Comment [dph8]: Much better tone. (Hope you're enjoying your tour of the West Country!)

Concerning the Minster Church of St Andrew, Plymouth

In spirit, it dates from the early 12th century though the original parishioners are long dead and the present building was only constructed in the 15th century, and subsequently restored twice in the 19th century and again in the 20th.

Between 1940 and 1944, the Luftwaffe launched a series of air raids known as the Plymouth Blitz. The attacks totaled 59, killed more than a thousand civilians, and injured another five thousand. St Andrew's Parish Church was bombed in March 1941.

The attack was devastating to the building and yet, while the church still burned, a local headmistress nailed a sign over the door that read simply, "Resurgam." Translation: I shall rise again. The church now restored, it remains the Resurgam door.

Concerning the Bridport Railway Stations (disused)

Maiden Newton (junction with disused Wilts, Somerset, and Weymouth line)

Toller (building removed to Littlehempston)

Powerstock (formerly Poorstock)

Bridport (formerly Bradpole Road)

East Street

West Bay (terminus)

Concerning the ‘Synopses of the British Fauna’ series

Comment [dph9]: You’re doing great, E.J. This is just a gentle reminder to keep your opinions out of these. If the *Synopses of the British Fauna* series has been awarded some distinction, this should be noted, but your personal view of its quality should not.

Research fellows of this very Natural History, officially affiliated with the Linnean Society, launched in the 1940s an outstanding series of identification guides to the many British species, each book providing an expert analysis of a specific group of animals aimed at the experienced layperson with some knowledge of technical terms. These volumes of taxonomy now number 58, so many, in fact, that the series itself must be listed in this History.