

September 2021 Newsletter

Book of the moment

After 2 heavyweight reads in the last Newsletter, I thought I should go for something lighter, but I've ended up with "Homo Deus" by Yuval Noah Hari

I read/recommended this some time ago. It didn't do anywhere as near as well as his previous book (Homo Sapiens) as it attempts to predict the future and the outcomes are distinctly grim. I couldn't remember what he had to say about Pandemics. Impressively, he's spot on, which makes the rest of the book even more depressing.

Nick Lloyd on WW1/ The Western front next time for a bit of light relief.

Great Re-Opening Special? Part 2!

Traditionally, this is the "Back to School Special" newsletter. Given the ongoing uncertainty, I thought "Euro-disappointment Special" might be more appropriate, but that implies I care about football. It's actually the "disappointment" bit that's interesting. So, let's settle for a more upbeat "Opportunities Special" instead.

Forthcoming event - lots of them

Golf Day

Mark has been practising his golf all summer and is therefore keen to show off at the Golf Day on 15th September. I hope we're not about to redefine the term "hubris". [Apparently, we're now full, but I couldn't miss the dig about Vickress and hubris.]

BD events

7th October at the Green Dragon. James Watkins to talk about leadership and/or adversity as supported by various footballers. When I've got a clue, I'll let you know.

11th November. Posh dinner at Dewsall Court

Website, what website?

Ours is still there. If you're bored, try:

<https://www.chrisduckett.co.uk/useful-stuff/business-assesment-model>

Failure & the Euros

I have to confess that the last time I watched a whole football match was the 1970 World Cup quarter-final where (the best ever) England lost to Germany. I was 8 at the time and my Dad let me stay up late to watch the match. Football has been an uninterrupted parade of disappointment ever since. Maybe that's the point. At least I was never a West Brom fan.

What can we learn from that?

I asked a couple of local experts, and then massaged their answers:

The Sage of Bishopswood

"Southgate is a better leader than he is a football manager. Hard work and diligence get you to 7 out of 10. Inspiration gets you to 10 out of 10, but that requires risk."

Marco Vickress

"You can't win games by scoring a quick goal and then defending for the rest of the match. What would the Brazilians do?"

Capitalist theory

"Profit is created by risk. No risk: no profit"

And who was Dino Zoff?

The sanitised equivalent from HBR:

<https://hbr-org.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/hbr.org/amp/2017/11/how-coca-cola-netflix-and-amazon-learn-from-failure>



Who is this man?

An uncompromising leader who can juggle strategy and do detail. Has been called an “aggressive delegator” and sees the potential in others they can’t see themselves. More patient than you’d think. Always asks “how can this be better”?

As you might guess, he wrote this himself.

Free pair of glasses for the first right answer?



Defeat from the Jaws of Victory

Not content with warning us about the dangers of Christmas parties, lawyers can now get excited about warm weather:

“After a record-breaking July heatwave, another could be on the way in just a couple of weeks. For employers, high temperatures often spell transport disruption, issues with dress code, an influx of last-minute holiday requests and unauthorised time off. And with millions still working from home, it will be important to check in with your staff – particularly those who are vulnerable – to ensure “reasonable” temperatures can be maintained.”

Team changes

The announcement of the year is that I’ve taken Mark Vickress into partnership, although I should point out that I’m not going anywhere as a result.

There’s been some other changes too (over the last 18 months):

- Maria had her baby (Lyra) in early May. Standby for KIT.
- Jazz – joined Carrie & Dasha as a big hitter in the accounting team.
- Claire – left us. 4 months later and I’m still gutted.
- Rachel & Jake – apprentices with attitude.
- Lauren – doing Mark’s work in management accounting.

1975

Despite bad press, not everything that came out of the 70s was a disaster. [Blackouts and the 3 day week were great fun if you were still at school – I was 8 in 1970.] In fact a number of manual systems that we still use originated in that decade at either JE Duckett & Co or Nat West Bank. The significance of 1975 is that was the year in which the first ever cinema blockbuster, Jaws, was released. Despite (or because of) Netflix et al, its quite hard to watch films made before that date. As a (skewed) list for the under 40s, how about:

- North by North West (1959) – my role model, Cary Grant, at his most suave. And lots of time on trains.
- Electra Glide in Blue (1973) – extraordinarily obscure, but featuring the line “I’m going to do for you what they did for me when I got back from Vietnam – absolutely nothing”. Snowflakes beware.
- The Godfather Part1 (1972) – an instructional documentary? A baseball bat would certainly improve some Board meetings.
- The Wicker Man (1973) – an insight into the Wee Krankie’s view of the socialist utopia that will exist North of the Wall (if only she could get rid of the English).
- The Seventh Seal (1956) – black & white in Swedish. The Nordics show how to deal with a pandemic. Lots of self-flagellation. And they all die.

That should slow down any (young) budding buffs.



Minorities

I haven't made a particular secret of the fact that I've (so far) declined The Vaccine. Should you have a spare couple of hours, I can certainly explain why, but that's not the point I'm trying to get at. I'm a heterosexual, overeducated, aging white male and I've never been a minority of any sort. Suddenly, I'm in a 10%. I'm so excited.



Disclaimer

Please wear a mask when reading this newsletter. The oxygen starvation that results will improve your appreciation. Bit like auto-eroticism (I'm told).

Or, to paraphrase the Marx Brothers:

We have standards.

If you don't like them: we have others.



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