

Mud, Malcolm and A Great Way to Deter Jehovah's Witnesses.

I had been looking out of my study window when I should have been writing. I had been watching our cat, Malcolm, sauntering down the road to the water's edge. The shore line there is fringed with tall stands of reeds and bulrushes which, at low tide, stand in a sea of mud and at high tide stand root deep in salt water.

Malcolm is an independent character who for the most part is happy in his own company but turns into a real "Daddy's Boy" when alarmed. He is also a substantial animal, some twenty pounds in weight, most of it well toned muscle.

Malcolm disappeared into the reeds and I was only able to follow his progress by the movement of the reeds. He wandered aimlessly around until there was a flurry, not to mention a commotion some thirty yards into the reed bed.

A heron broke out of the reeds, climbing into the air in the way that only herons do, looking for all the world as though it was climbing an invisible staircase.

Malcolm must have been startled as he bolted from the scene, the only sign being very agitated movements of the reeds in a line from there to the edge of the reed bed, once at the edge I could see him bolting towards the house, ears flattened against his head. He streaked across the road, across the front garden and leapt at the six-foot high gate at the side of the house. He hit the gate his full weight causing the gate and the fence to shake and a couple of seconds later there was a bang as he hit the cat flap in the back door.

Performing a cartoon-style wheel spin on the kitchen floor he hammered through the hallway and passed up the stairs, he leapt from the top of the stairs and hit me in the chest as I stood in my study.

Then the smell hit me.

The mud in Poole Harbour is a rich mixture of mud, semi-rotted vegetation, various types of fish and animal manure mixed with a magic ingredient that tops off the cocktail of odours. He started to calm down once he was in my arms and the smell hit me.

I then saw the trail of mud all through the house and up the stairs. I went down and started to clear up the mess. The cat flap was an explosion of mud, the kitchen floor had a very interesting pattern on it and the carpet through the house bore deeply ingrained paw prints. The kitchen floor was easy to mop but as I moved towards the carpets he was following me, replacing the mud as I cleared it up. There was nothing for it, I had to take him upstairs and give him a bath, not a process I would normally recommend with an agitated tom cat of large proportions.

Ten minutes later he was clean but the house and especially the bathroom was a mess. A lot of the mud had transferred itself onto me, masking the scratches he had inflicted as the shower rinsed off the clinging ordure.

Another hour later I had sponged up the mud but the smell was lingering. I realised that I was now the source of the odour.

I stripped off, put all my clothes into the washer, set it going and took a long hot shower.

As I was getting out of the shower the doorbell rang. Thinking it was my wife returning from work having forgotten her keys; I ran into the bedroom and grabbed a dressing gown.

I stumbled down the stairs and opened the door. Instead of a work-weary wife there were two coloured people, a man and wife team intent on sharing the word of God with me. I think it was the lingering smell along with the sight of a fat, bald middle aged bloke wearing a woman's bath robe, not too well tied around his damp and naked body, that stopped their pitch and left them staring in disbelief.

They turned and left hurriedly, proving that the best way to deter Bible-bashers is to be a smelly transvestite.