

## The art of Sleeping

Have you ever lain awake at night wondering why you are so cold?

Have you wondered why the duvet that was of adequate size and thickness last night has become the size of a pocket handkerchief and as thin as a butterfly's wing?

There is a secret property of the common duvet known only to insomniacs with poor central heating.

When it is warm the duvet will hang to the floor on both sides of the bed, causing the sleeper(s) to toss and turn, flinging bundles of over-warm stuffing from one side of the bed to another.

In cold weather the same bedding will shrink so that it will barely cover the would-be sleeper's shoulders.

After a week's solid use the bedclothes are taken off and placed in the washing machine where they demonstrate another of their weird properties.

If the opening in the duvet cover is not fastened up it will turn itself completely inside out.

It isn't a random chance otherwise it would sometimes be the right way out after washing.

It is never a tangle of half inside out and half not, always totally inside out.

Nobody knows why...

The other problem that we have always suspected is the way that the duvet migrates to your partner's side during the night.

When you confront him/her about it they accuse you of the same thing.

The truth is that the Duvet Elf, a relative of the Tooth Fairy, pulls it upwards in the night, depriving both members of your local formation sleeping team of its benefits.

Pillows suffer from the same perversity. When you are trying to get off to sleep they are unruly and lumpy. They are too thick or too thin, too high or too low, too hot or too cold.

A few short hours later, when the alarm goes off, they are blissfully comfortable.

When you are ready to settle down for a really good sleep it is time to get up and face the cold. You spend the day thinking about the warmth and comfort that was fleetingly yours.

When you go to bed that night, you've guessed it, the pillows are lumpy, the duvet is up to its tricks again and you spend another night of discomfort.

These properties are discussed in Professor Von Schnoozen-Zimmer's latest book and the effects described above have become known as Schnoozen Zimmer's Syndrome or SZS for short.

The Professor is researching the subject at Harvard University, funded by grants from the British Bedding Council, a consortium of UK bedding manufacturers, and America's largest chain of drive in bedding stores, Colonel Kipper's Snooze-U-Like, (We never rest so that you can).

Teams of volunteers take part in trials of the latest in sleep technology.

One of the problems with this kind of mass trial is that the subjects often emerge

fuddled and unable to answer the 22 page questionnaire until they have had a cup of coffee and a slice of toast.

Those in the control group, the ones that are put into their own beds for the trials, report that they benefit greatly from the experience.

The all night floodlit golf driving range in Boston Massachusetts is doing great business with this group.

They are finding it difficult to drop off after spending their working days diligently sleeping to further mankind's knowledge of the twilight hours.

I have been privileged to obtain some preliminary finding of the good professor's work.

He covers a good range of common sleeping and bedtime activity problems.

One of the findings of his research is that insomniacs can alleviate their problems by turning round in bed so that their feet are where their heads usually are.

Tests have shown that this is a good way of breaking the cycle of sleeplessness.

Other people have found that they sleep better if their beds are aligned North-South so that the Earth's lines of magnetic flux pass down their bodies.

Presumably situating the bed directly over a ley-line would be beneficial as well.

The first published report makes some recommendations as to the type of activity to be avoided in bed.

To be encouraged are: reading, listening to the radio or watching television, conversation and crocheting.

Activities that are to be discouraged include: Cockroach racing, basket weaving, fretwork, carpentry and eating toast.

It is rumoured that some countries are governed from the beds of their most senior leaders, even when those leaders are not ill or infirm. This is not as bad as it may seem. A lot of people have their best ideas in bed and anything that helps politicians to think more clearly can only be a good thing.

The other good thing about government from the bedroom is that is very difficult to be pompous when addressing a nation from between the sheets.

The bed is the place where you spend a third of your life. It is your retreat from a cold cruel world and is your comfort when illness strikes. As such it deserves a far greater status in our lives. The bed maker and duvet-stitcher should be revered as master craftsmen.

The purchase of a bed should be the most carefully considered decision of our lives.

We spend thousands on our cars, in which we spend but a few minutes a day yet many of us are sleeping on mattresses that should have been consigned to the tip years ago.

Have we got our priorities a bit mixed up?

Pleasant dreams...