

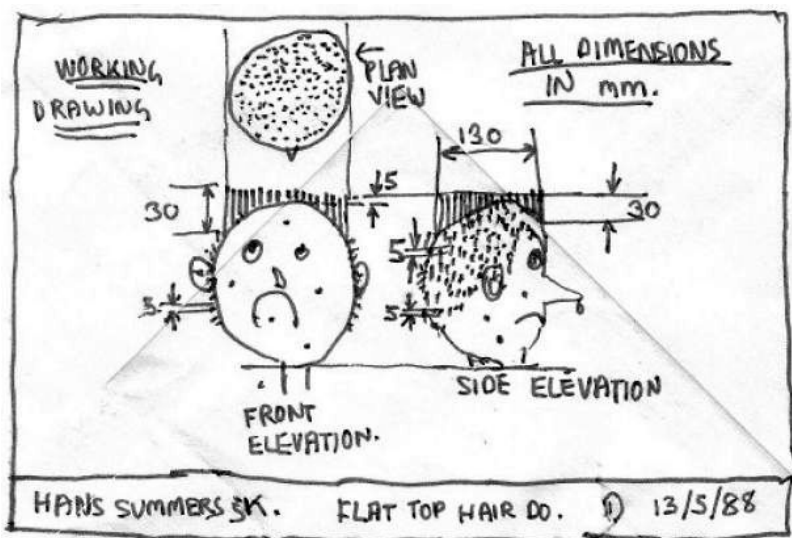
## Historic cartoons

Written by Hans Summers

Tuesday, 02 December 2014 06:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 27 January 2015 02:51

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Here are some cartoons I drew, mostly long ago. Each one has a lot of history attached, the context has to be understood. So below are some descriptions as well, to help understand the context.



### 1988 flat top

It's 1988 and Laurie Summers, always the most stylish among the Summers' brothers, favours the most up-to-date hair-do: the "Flat top". Yes, the top really was flat as a board, and the hairs do require a certain amount of gel products to remain in this highly aligned formation. Morning preparation is key, along with maintenance at regular intervals throughout the day.

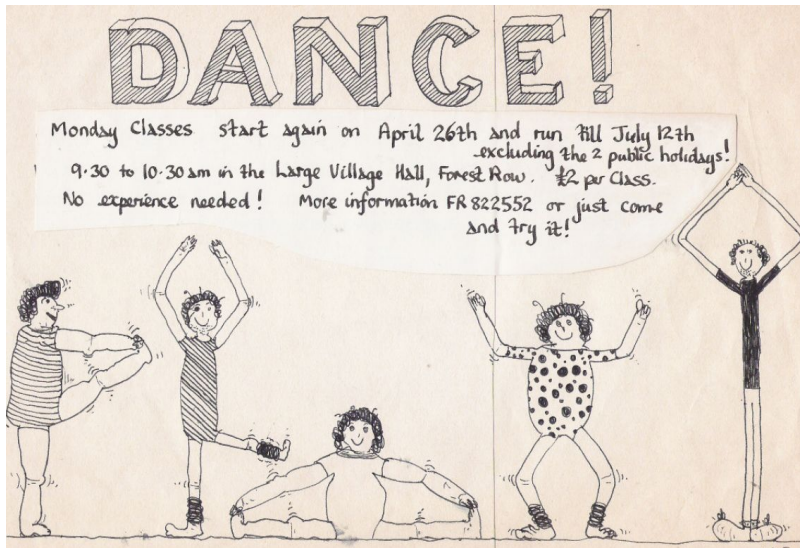
In the interests of preservation of the style for the future good of mankind, I produced this engineering drawing, on what appears to be the back-of-an-envelope.

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### Dance!

Mum used to run dance classes in the village hall, and I drew the advert for it. Mum was rather nervous about what I might write about this but I'm not going to say anything much :-)

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### The London Mosque

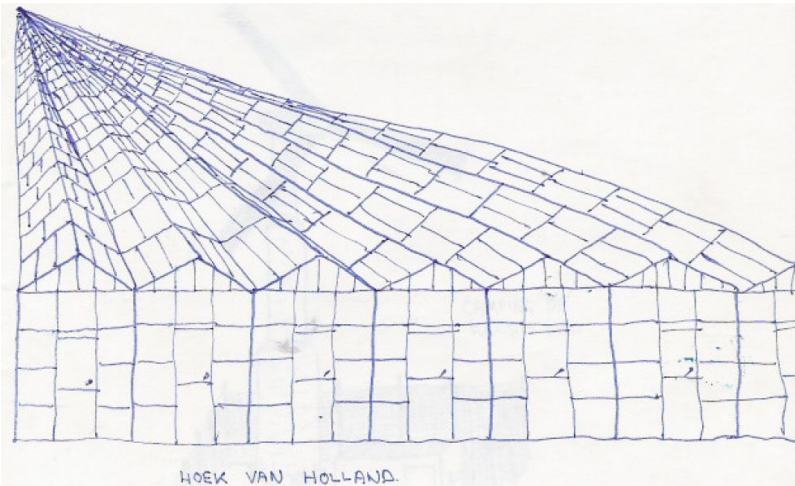
Here we are at the London Mosque, where your elongated correspondent, already having reached an almighty height despite his young years, is attracting attention again. This time, from the other faithful, who realise that their journey to heaven is inevitably going to be a somewhat longer one.

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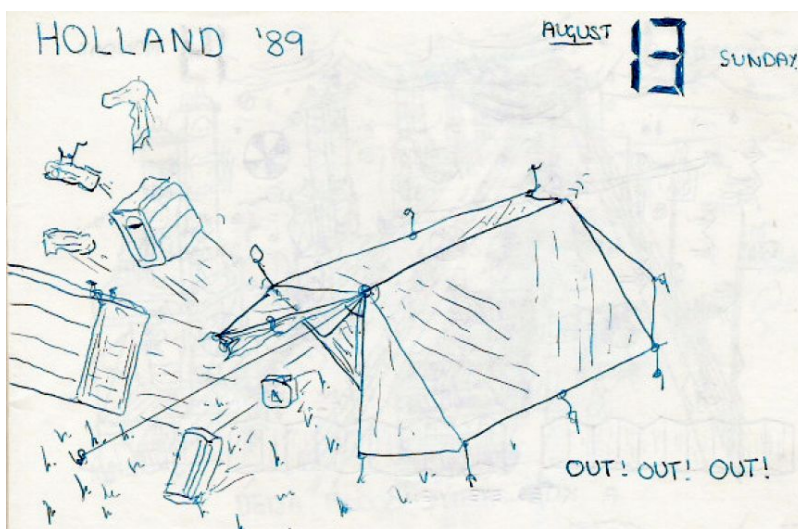
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### Hoek van Holland, first impression

The following few drawings are from a family cycling holiday in Holland, 1989. Mum had imposed a diary requirement on her sons, and I didn't much like the idea of writing while on holiday, so decided to draw a highlight from each day instead.

Upon arrival in Hoek van Holland on the ferry from England, one of the first things you notice, is the rows and rows of greenhouses, stretching into the distance as far as the eye can see.



### Get OUT!

Right, so this one has a long story behind it and remains an unresolved dispute to this day. The abbreviated version: the location is Holland, 1989. Summers family camping trips always used to use two tents, one orange and one blue. These are heavy, fabric tents, manufactured decades earlier, when manufactured products were capable of lasting decades.

Now, baby brother John Summers took it upon himself to save up his pocket money and purchase his own, modern tent. It was a green colour, plastic and lightweight. A very nice tent, if I may say so. A bit small, maybe.

The problem arose because I (longest, and oldest, Summers brother) was sharing the tent with John. John felt that in order to recoup some of his capital expenditure, he really ought to be receiving rent. I felt disinclined to agree with this demand, on several grounds.

Firstly, any such rental payments ought to be determined and agreed, documented, contracts signed etc BEFORE the holiday started - it is completely unacceptable to create this demand spontaneously once the holiday is already underway, and one of the parties (me) is already in a weakened situation of need. Secondly, yes it was a nice tent, a bit small perhaps, but the levels of rent demanded were disproportionate. Finally, there was the question of practicality. We were there in Holland on bicycles, tents (and other carried items) had to be shared between everyone. Old Mother Hubbard was on a strictly limited budget and paying the campsite fees, which were per tent. It simply would not be possible for each traveller to randomly create their own conditions, bring their own tent, dictate who would set foot in it, etc. A degree of cooperation was mandatory.

Therefore I refused to pay the demanded rent, and the kind of chaos depicted in this picture ensued. This was not a one-off event, it soon got annoying, very. Particularly if it was raining, which did happen.

There were also various side-threads to this story, which tended to end the same way. For example, your vertically exaggerated author would find that if he did not curl up when inside the tent, either his head or his feet would touch the walls. Upon the incidence of rain, or early morning dew, touching the walls would bring water in from the outside and make things wet. All

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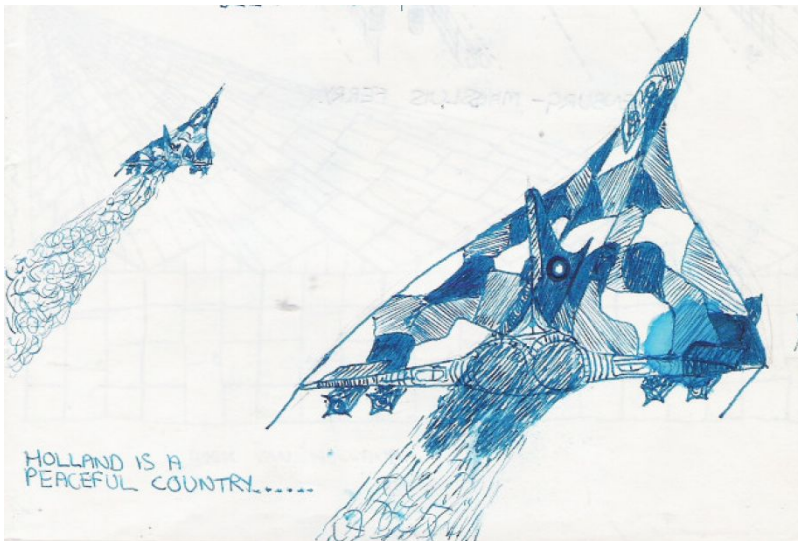
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very well? Just curl up. But you can't always stay curled up, can you. Other disputes involved farts or some other minor brotherly disagreements.

As I said, this dispute is still unresolved to this day, and particularly since by the passage of decades various quantities of interest have increased the size of the debt beyond reasonable consideration.



### **Holland is a peaceful country...**

The peace on one (at least) occasion, being suddenly shattered by two passing fighter jets. Hastily sketched in a mere blink of the eyelids, then they were gone.

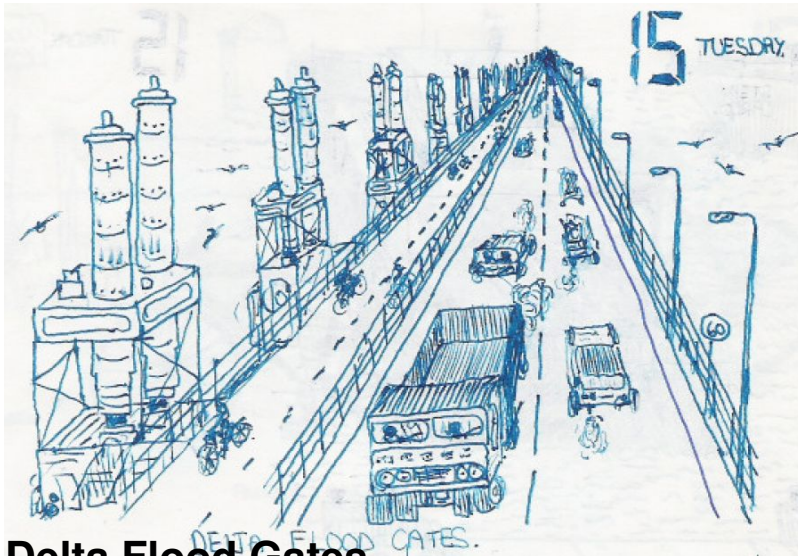


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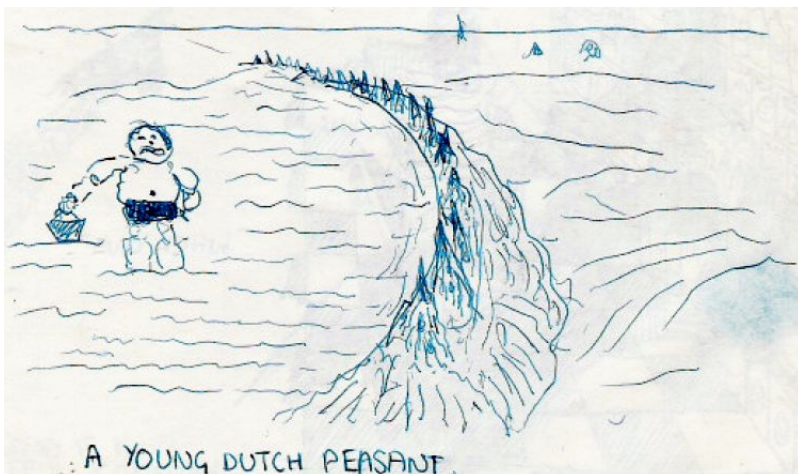
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### Delta Flood Gates

A very impressive set of flood gates guards Netherland's low-lying territories. Long and dead straight, and windy enough that I recall cycling along the dedicated cycle path (shown left, here) and going for miles without pedalling, by holding out my jacket like a sail.



### Sand sculpture in Holland

The sandbanks on the beach in Holland in the summer, created rivers of draining water, which could be dammed into huge pools. Dam construction would take hours and hours, and the top

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of the dam was lined with special sand pinnacles. Such an elaborate sculpture always attracted attention of passers' by and sunbathers. The least welcome attention come from small toddlers (a.k.a. as the caption in the picture says, young Dutch peasants). Neither appreciating the artistic value, nor understanding that it had created for them a large perfect pool of warm water to play in, they were often determined to crush the sand pinnacles, break the dam, destroy all the hours of work. It was therefore necessary to patrol the battlements unceasingly, as well as attend to maintenance activities.



## The racing dude

Cycling in Holland is a great pleasure, because everything is so flat. Cycle paths are everywhere so you are relatively safe from traffic. In particular, cycle paths run up the length of the North Sea coast and we made good use of these.

One thing you commonly see is what I call the "Racing dude". Racing dudes abound, on the coastal cycle paths. The racing dude is a very serious-looking fellow. Clad in heat-dissipating tight lycra and composed almost entirely of muscle with no ounce of fat anywhere: built strictly for purpose, indeed. His bicycle is a masterpiece of high strength, low weight engineering. From the curled racing handlebars to the pencil-thin tyres, lack of mudguards or luggage carriers, everything is specialised for one thing only: SPEED. The racing dude feels the need for speed addictively. each weekend he takes to the cycle paths and may easily traverse the entire length of the nation's coastal paths in a day. He travels light, and he moves fast.



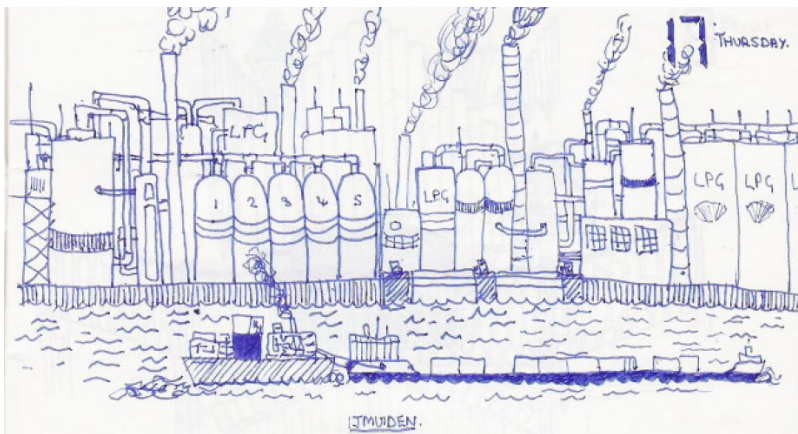
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Well, along comes the annoying teenager (yours truly), also without an ounce of fat anywhere on his body. Well frankly, without an ounce of muscle either, I suppose. A pile of bones and some skin around it to keep it all in one piece. His bicycle has 35mm wide touring tires, mudguards, luggage rack, lights, dynamo. Everything you need to tour around, get from A to B and even beyond that to C and D. It is designed for practical travelling not speed. With a certain amount of effort, one could accelerate one's dramatically inferior machine, and one's dramatically inferior body, to exceed the speed of the "racing dude". Temporarily, at least. Upon overtaking him at high speed, never fail to take off your baseball cap and offer greetings and salutations with a smile. Then sit back and watch the annoyance. Hhahaha. Of course, this sudden burst of pure speed is not sustainable for 100, 200km as the racing dude does. But so much fun!



## Ijmuiden

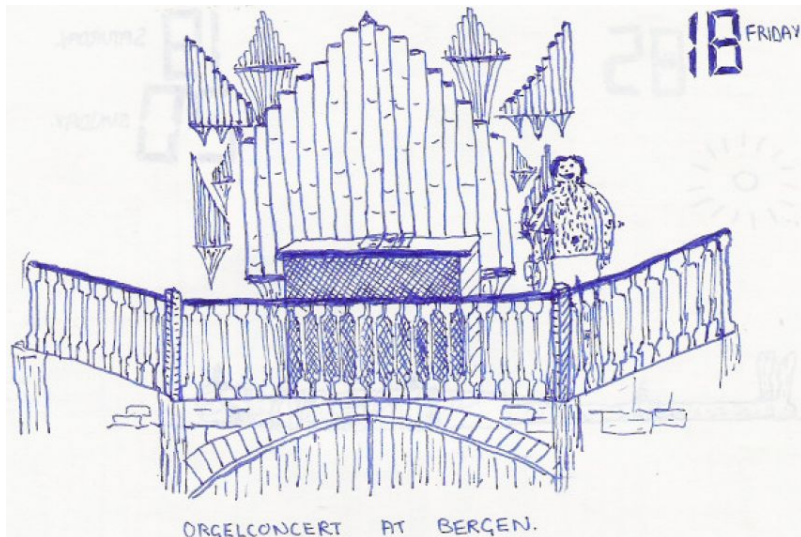
As you work your way Northwards up the Netherlands' North sea coast, you come to the town of Ijmuiden, and a heavily industrial sight greets the weary traveller's eyes.

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### Organ Concert at Bergen

One of the best things about touring in Holland is the church organ concerts, which I love. This drawing is of the organ at the coastal town of Bergen. The drawing captures the moment the organist has finished and is reaping well-deserved applause. He isn't wearing any shirt, because of the high summer temperatures combined with the expended effort of giving such a great performance. That old organ was a "tracker action" type: it means all the mechanisms are operated mechanically when the organists presses a key; this is a lot more hard work than a more modern electrically assisted organ.

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### Camping de Woodhoeve

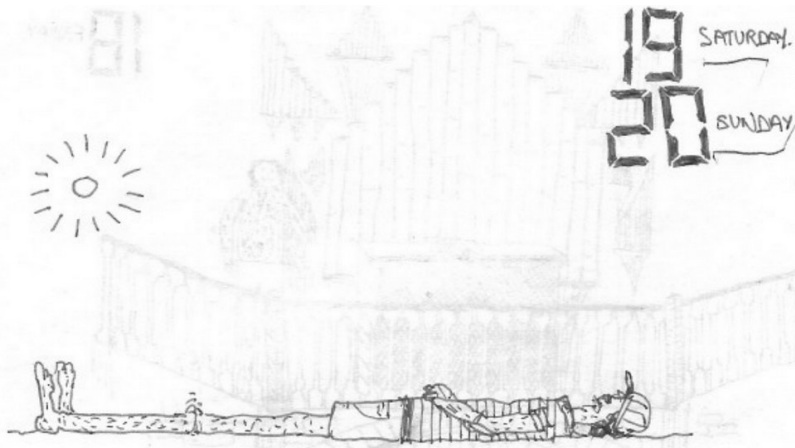
One of our favourite places to camp was Camping de Woodhoeve, just north of Egmond aan Zee. We went to Holland several summers in a row, and we always headed to this camp site and spent about a week there. They were powered by a wind turbine, the subject of this drawing.

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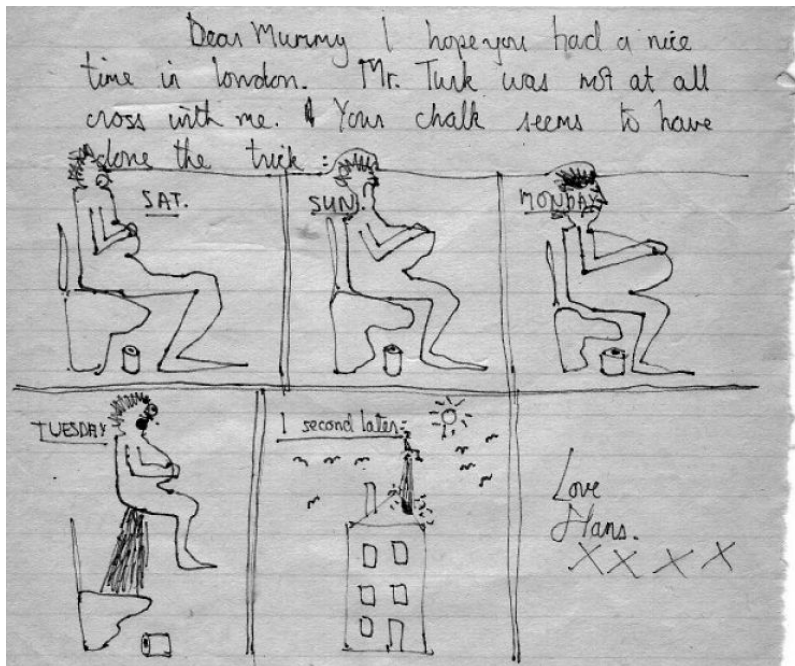
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### Resting on the beach

After all that activity - here is your humble correspondent's elongated bodily instance, stretched out on the beach recovering peacefully. The 20'th was a Sunday, Sunday is the 7'th day, and on the 7'th day, he rested.



### Constipation

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This one really speaks for itself. Evidently some days had elapsed without evidence of bowel movement, building up a considerable pressure. Mum would go to London for a day trip once a week, this note would have been for informational purposes on her return.

The date is not known but Mr Turk was the PE teacher at school, this places the date around 1986/7/8.





## Playing the 'cello

Here I am, playing the 'cello. Elongated as usual. Note the tears falling. It isn't clear, are the tears because I am carried away with the emotion of the music? Or are they because rather than practicing the cello, I would rather have been playing with all my electronics?



### Is it STEREO?

This is an absolutely iconic moment in Summers family history. Some time in the mid 1980's and in those days (as these) Mum was teaching some kind of weekly dance classes in the village hall. Ballet most probably. She needed a means to produce music. I don't recall, was this an original need, or something broke and created a replacement requirement. Either way. We're talking audio cassette here. It would be a while before CD's came on the scene and even longer until CD's looked obsolete too, replaced by MP3 players and all kinds of devices being able to play perfect HiFi music.

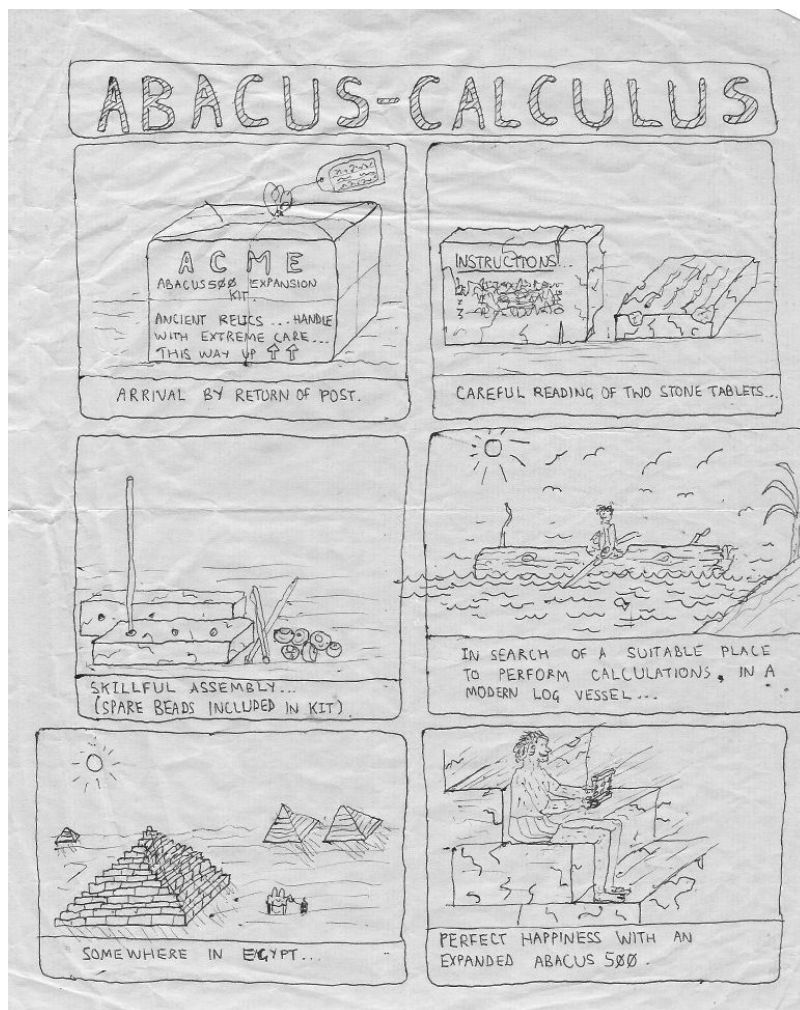
Therefore we find ourselves in the neighbouring town, where the Curry's electrical store's

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bemused staff are about to encounter a perplexed customer indeed. Here we are facing an array of 80's dual cassette players, typically having one loudspeaker either side. One could copy tapes from one of the tape deck to the other. Mum: "Is it stereo"... a phrase that would instantly go down in the history books and still create uncontrollable mirth, many decades later.



## Abacus calculus

Depicting the arrival of an ACME Abacus500 expansion kit, construction and operation.

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It's important to understand the context here, which is a bit of a complicated excursion into 80's home computer technology, but here's a brief summary.

In the early 80's [Sinclair](#) released a series of inexpensive home computers that brought computing into everyone's home for the first time. The [ZX80](#) , [ZX81](#) , then

[ZX Spectrum](#)

. For a while I used my Grandfather's

[ZX81](#)

when he upgraded to the (then new)

[ZX Spectrum](#)

. Briefly I had an

[Acorn Electron](#)

computer until a brother who shall remain nameless plugged something into the edge connector on the back, that was not intended for

[Acorn Electrons](#)

. Then I had a

[ZX Spectrum](#)

, I think also from my Grandfather when he upgraded to

[ZX Spectrum+](#)

. Something like that.

The other big manufacturer of home computers in UK at that time was [Commodore](#) with their [VIC-20](#)

,

[Commodore 64](#)

, and later Amiga series such as the

[Amiga 500](#)

.

Regardless of the complicated path of how things ended up the way they were, in the end I was a [ZX Spectrum](#) owner and my two brothers were [Amiga 500](#) owners. Of course there was always a lot of heated debate and argument about which was best. The term "

[Abacus](#)

" referring to the ancient calculating device, we used to insult each other's computers. In this drawing the "Abacus 500" of course is a reference to the

[Amiga 500](#)

computers owned by the other Summers brothers.

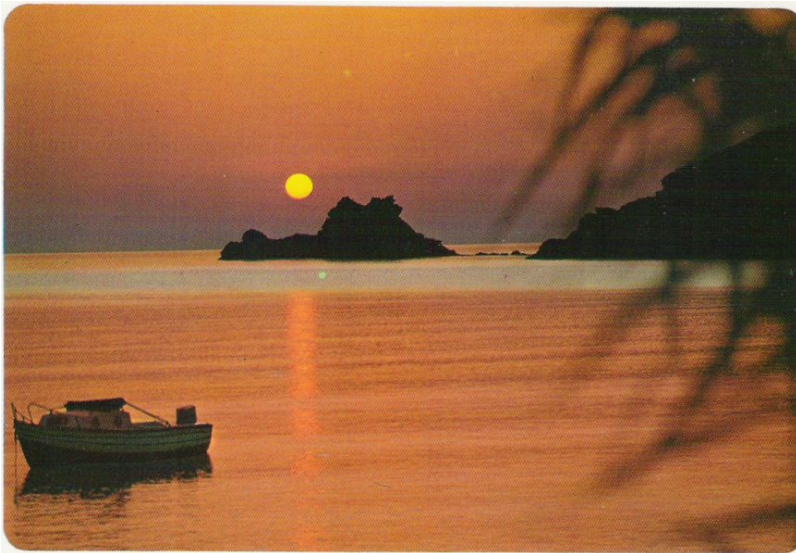
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You'll see the "Abacus" insult returning below in the "curious case of the postcard which took 25 years to deliver". In this case he is referring to my [home-made Z80 computer](#) project.



## A postcard from Greece

**Or... The Curious Case of the Postcard which took 25 YEARS to deliver...**

And this wasn't even the fault of the usual suspect, Royal Mail. Not exactly a cartoon, I know. But here it is, a nice story anyway. Here we have a classic example of multiple concurrent incompetencies, severe crimes of omission committed by several Summers' family members.

It is probably summer 1990, or maybe a year or two later. For the record, the text on the back of the postcard reads:

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"To dear Lope, Today is Sunday and we have been in Greece for nearly 1 week. My sunburn has healed now and it does not hurt any more. Last night it was very windy and we had to shut the windows because they were blowing about so much. Mum has done something very stupid! She took 25 pictures with out a film in her camera! Thick or what! After a while she realised that the number of pictures taken wasn't changing so she put a film in and took some proper pictures. This morning Mum has gone to a church in the port of Patitira (I'm not sure if that's spelt right, but that's how it sounds). By the way, how is your abacus that you are building? Have you got all the parts yet? I hope so! This is all for now.... Lots and Lots of Love from John XXXXXX XXXXX"

The card is written to me. The mention of the abacus is a somewhat disrespectful reference to my [Great Z80 computer](#) project. Let's ignore the disrespect for a moment, and concentrate on the incompetence.



There are at least three issues of incompetence here:

1) Firstly, the story related in the card itself. Mum took 25 pictures, without having any film in the camera. I mean, SERIOUSLY.



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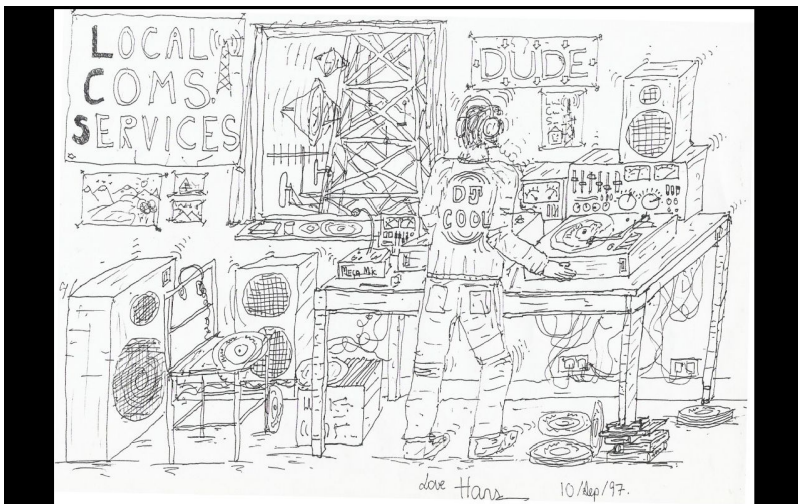
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2) Now the next thing: this card wasn't actually posted. Why? Well, John had I think, been traveling in Europe, and had not got any Greek money. This is incompetency number 2. You cannot NOT have money to buy a stamp to send your beloved BIG BROTHER a postcard, can you.

3) Next, John gave this postcard to Mum to post, but she failed to do so. Maybe she intended to bring it back to England (after all, John was to continue his European tour), and post it from there. Never happened. Incompetence #3. Instead this artefact was relegated to some pile of photographs somewhere in a cupboard, finally to resurface nearly 25 years later.



## DJ Cool

It's now 1997, and I'm not 100% sure I remember the motivation for this one. It almost certainly depicts middle Summers brother Laurie, with his passion for DJ stuff - records, mixing, FM transmitters, you name it.

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### **...and the streets of Highgate were paved with gold...**

Now we fast-forward to 2014. Well, that depends on your viewpoint. The cartoon is drawn in 2014. The story starts long before that. Many decades before that, actually.

For as long as anyone can remember, certainly as long as 1982 when we came on the scene, the surface of Highgate Road has been a matter of some concern to the residents. It is a long, narrow road near the forest. This road is of a somewhat unusual legal status. It is neither a private road, nor a council-maintained road. That's hard to understand, for an outsider. Actually, it's hard to understand even for an insider.

The difficulty is that the road has NO proper surface. It is full of holes. For decades, residents have haphazardly thrown various things in the holes, in a vain attempt to fill them up, or at least decrease their depth.

The holes are perilous for automobiles. You can try to come up with various strategies for traversing this street. Drive very slow, so your poor car's suspension doesn't get totally destroyed. Or maybe drive fast so that you bounce over most of the holes. Or drive with one wheel on the pavement. That might have once worked, since the pavement was in better condition than the road surface (since some point in pre-history when it was made). But as the

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years passed and the pavement crumbled, that strategy didn't help either.

In the end, nothing helps. Each winter the weather cracks things up and day by day, the cars crush things up and wear things down, more holes appear as sure as the passing seasons.

What to do about this predicament? The residents have debated this for decades. There are almost as many opinions as there are residents. At various points in the chequered history of this in-illustrious street, various proposals were proposed and de-proposed, debated, un-debated. Surfacing the road would be expensive. Who would pay? How would the cost be divided? By yard of frontage? Well, some folk have narrow deep properties and would pay little. Others have wide shallow properties and their bill would be enormous. What about everyone pay the same? How would that be fair, when some live in a mansion, some rent a floor of a building, and everything between. What about people who disagreed, and didn't want to pay?

Do they really want to pave the road nicely anyway? To make it more easily passable, would make it more easily passable. Exactly that. So traffic could drastically increase, since it would make a nice short-cut from one end of the village to the other, without going through the middle. Not many residents (or any, probably), want that. So what? Put some pillars at one end so it cannot be passed through from one end to the other? What happens then to the residents near that end, how do they get out? Drive all the way to the other end?

No ideal solutions, no easy answer to any questions. No agreement. Paralysis. So it appears that the Highgate Road Residents association for some years, have been holding an annual "repair-the-road" day, when they collect donations from residents to buy rubble, and all get together and try to select the worst holes to dump the rubble in, then jump up and down on top, expending any remaining energy they may have, to flatten the rubble into the holes.

And so it is, that when 2014 came around and it was time to ask for donations, your humble correspondent undertook to humourously illustrate the request for donations in the Residents' newsletter. Hence the cartoon above!