

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

My father has never been much of a practical joker, but I discovered many years ago that when I was first born, he seriously considered naming me “Lord David Morgan” – where “Lord” would have been my Christian name, not a title! In the end he modified it to David Lloyd Morgan – as good a Welsh name as you can get – for an Englishman, that is!

But names are fascinating aren't they? I'm sure you've all got stories of people you know, or know of, with strange names. In our town there were a number of butchers including Messrs. Partridge, Lamb, Bullock, Badham and Grizzell – and they were all genuine names! In the next town there is an estate agent, called “Doolittle and Dally” and somewhere I've heard of an antiques dealer called Mr. Bastard – Mr Robin Bastard!

If you are a regular listener to Terry Wogan on Radio 2 you will be aware of all the people who write in under pseudonyms, like Bhutto Macar, Courtney Fish, Selma Body and Heide Vodka. But some people are saddled with odd names for real.

I've just taken on a new employee, whose surname is Chicken! What's more, he was living in Peckham, but he originates from Cokermonth!! (And yes, we HAVE done ALL the Chicken jokes – but now we just remind him to be careful how he crosses the road!)

For him, his name's one of his assets – he's doing a selling job, and no-one will forget him in a hurry! But I wonder how some people manage in life. Like the two little children I heard of recently in the same class together – Ben(jamin) Dover, and Ophelia Bottom! Imagine those two getting married to each other:

“Do you, Ophelia Bottom, take this man, Ben Dover.....”

Did their parents not think – or were they just being awkward?

And what about the gentleman whose name was “Balls” – seriously! Evidently (and this I have on good authority), he would answer the telephone in a very gruff way, with “Balls!” Well, one day, Mr. and Mrs. Balls (I still can't believe this!) found out they were going to hear the patter of tiny feet (or should that be the bouncing of tiny balls!) Actually, they had a daughter, and like Mr. and Mrs. Bottom, decided that Ophelia was such a pretty name.....!

Then there's Mr. Head – Mr. Richard Head, who introduces himself as “My name is Head, Richard Head, but please....call me Richard!” And what about the manager of a local shop in our town whose name was Mr. Dyer, and he answered the phone “Dyer 'ere!”?

Many years ago, I went to an interview for a job, and the interviewer was a Mr. Ivor Setter. Now we have always had English Setters, and when he introduced himself, he did so with his full name, by reaching out his hand and saying, “Good afternoon. Ivor Gordon Setter....”, to which I quite naturally replied, “Good afternoon. I've an English Setter!” – but I still got the job!

What about those people whose names have taken on different meaning because our language has changed. How would you like to be a heterosexual woman called “Gay(e)”. Imagine introducing yourself as “Hello, I’m Gay, but I’m not really!” And I always felt sorry for all the Gladys’s in the world in the sixties, when The Dave Clark Five brought out their record “(I’m feeling) Glad all over”!

You even get problems abroad, like the Spanish fireman who had a son and called him José, then he had a second, and called him Hose-B! In New York there is a gent listed in the ‘phone book as “Rection, Hugh G.” – you try ringing him up and asking is that Hugh etc....! In Arizona there is a Verbyl Belch (honestly) and in California, there is a man called Case – Justen Case!

And what about people who name their children after things or places, like Brooklyn Beckham, just because he was conceived there. What does that tell us about Austin Powers and W.C. Fields? But my friend, Backseat Smith, tells me it doesn’t tell you anything! The latest craze seems to be Chardonnay for a girl. What next? Merlot Jones and Leibfraumilch Brown? Where does it end?

So what’s the point of all this? Well, just like parents have to be careful when naming children, companies also have to be careful when naming products. I once worked on a computer system for Ford main dealers which went under the impressive title of Dealer Application Remote Terminal System or DARTS for short – but Ford were adamant it should be the Ford Application Remote Terminal System! Thankfully, we persuaded them it wasn’t such a good idea! Imagine being the salesman: “Hello, my name’s Dave and I wondered if I could show you what FARTS can do for you!”

Sometimes you need to rethink your name – like Sandwell Borough Council. Sandwell was a new council about 20 years ago and is made up of West Bromwich, and some parts of the Black Country like Smethwick and Oldbury. Many people did not like the name, so eventually they had a complete rethink to find a new one. At a big unveiling ceremony, a huge banner was unfurled to show that the new name was.....Sandwell Borough Council! I wonder how much they spent to come up with that!

And what of TVR? Well, they make life very simple by naming vehicles after people (real or mythical). But things could have been so much different.

Imagine what would have happened if Trevor Wilkinson had been David Wilkinson. We would all be driving round in DVD’s!! Or if he had been Christened Bartholomew – we could all be in BMW’s!!

And what about the models themselves? I mean, what would have happened if the car designer responsible for the early Griffith work had not been Jack Griffith but had been named Jack Ponsonby-Smythe, or Jack Higginbottom? Be thankful for small mercies – there could be lots of you driving round in 4 and 5 litre TVR Utterthwaites (or even BMW Utterthwaites)! There’s nothing wrong with these names - they just don’t sound right for red bloodied sports cars, now do they?

Another thought – what would have happened if my dad had been the designer – not that that would have been likely – he has trouble working out how to put a shelf up! – would the car have been a TVR Morgan? Now there’s a good name for a sports car – Morgan!

And what about the Tasmin – supposedly named after a friend of Martin Lilley – what would have happened if her name had been Betty or Sally? How would you like to be driving a wedge called a TVR Brenda?

Imagine saying to the Vicar, “It’s such a nice day I think I’ll get my Brenda out, take her top off, and give her a quick blast!”

It would appear that once they had run out of English names, TVR started on Greek ones. According to my dictionary, a Chimaera (also spelt Chimera) has 2 definitions – “a monster with lion’s head, goat’s body and serpent’s tail” and “a bogey”! How does it feel to drive a TVR Bogey! And did you Cerbera owners know you were driving a Bogey’s brother!

So what’s next? Well, if they stay with Greek Mythology, we might get a TVR Uranus (no jokes, please) a TVR Castor or a TVR Pollux (twin warrior brothers), or even a TVR Sisyphus - sounds like something you catch – probably from a Castor and Pollux!

Let’s just hope they don’t move on to American Indian Mythology. The chief Aztec God was Huitzilopochtli – try that with a TVR in front of it! Or imagine having a badge on the boot lid with the model name of Tezcatlipoca – their sun god! Knowing how TVR like to go for female deities, we are more likely to get the Aztec corn goddess – anyone in the market for a second hand TVR Chicomecóatl?

Doesn’t bear thinking about, does it? Mind you, I haven’t come up with anything better - I looked in Roget’s Thesaurus for words such as “speed” to get potential names. All I came up with was Velocity and Express. Trouble is I also came up with the “TVR Streak(er)” and the “TVR Flash(er)”!! But by picking up threads on my PC I also got to Lightning, Fearsome and Tempest. Better, but the PC also threw up “Drive Too Fast” and “Break The Speed Limit”! What do you think – would you buy a “TVR Drive Too Fast” or a “TVR Break The Speed Limit”?!

My suggestion is that TVR should have a competition for the next name – maybe give away a new Tuscan as the prize! Just in case they do I’m off to look in the dictionary for some ideas. Now then, Aardvark, aardwolf, aasvogel, abacus.....

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