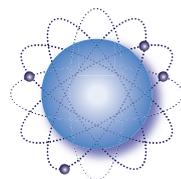


BIRMINGHAM
2050

narrativium project
ONE FAMILY
FOUR STORIES

Ellie Richards &
Keith Richards



the new
optimists

in partnership with mac birmingham



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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COMMUNITY SCENARIO 2050

In this scenario we envision a city that has succeeded in taking advantage of opportunities that are already available. It may seem a utopian prospect, but it is nevertheless worthy of our ambition.

- ◆ The multiplex is thriving. Birmingham's 'synaptic system', bringing together different constituencies to facilitate the 'firing' and rapid spread of new ideas, now serves as a model for other cities.
- ◆ The success of this system is in part the result of an 'intelligent city' initiative driven forward by its leading higher education institutions. This led to an early decision to invest in digital technology, providing free wireless access throughout the city.
- ◆ One outcome of increased connectivity was the development of local enterprise units and local accountability, which in turn served as a breeding ground for new forms of local democracy and representation.
- ◆ The most effective of these succeeded in involving groups that had previously felt excluded and the resulting social benefits (reduction in crime, improvement of local environment, etc.) persuaded those who had previously been sceptical of the need to involve all sectors in decision-making.
- ◆ The synaptic system developed out of a fortuitous meeting of key social brokers who were able to invest considerable social and political capital in marshalling essential assets to promote a people's movement.
- ◆ Birmingham has its own local currency used for a variety of purposes. The fortuitous extension of one local community market's use of a 'local pound' into a mainstream enterprise caught the public imagination and grew rapidly until the 'Brumbuck' became an accepted currency for local trade.
- ◆ One of the factors that enabled the Brumbuck to get off the ground was the presence of well-established asset exchange systems within the city.
- ◆ The existence of strong local communities, local cooperation and local financing has enabled Birmingham to develop the sort of integrated technologies that are necessary in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Climate change, food production and energy generation continue to be serious problems, but they are nevertheless manageable thanks to Birmingham's focus on endogenous solutions. Rather than threatening its social fabric, they serve to strengthen it by reminding citizens of their shared purpose.

For more information about the community challenges we're facing now and what might be facing us in 2050, see the full version of the [Narrativium Project Birmingham 2050: One family, three futures](#) pp 41-43.

JASON'S TREE

On an anniversary of Jason's death, members of his community have decided to celebrate his life and achievements by planting a tree in his allotment with a commemorative plaque at its base. His son Cal has been asked to make a speech about his life and his contribution to the development of Birmingham. What follows is the text of Cal's speech with and indication (in square brackets) of how it was received by the audience.

Well thanks again for inviting me to do this. It's a huge honour for me, especially because I know so many of you would have been able to do it a lot better than me – I'm more at home with a watering can in my hand than a sheet of notes.

[Pause. Smiles.]

It's great to see so many people here. Mind you, it's come as a bit of a shock to me because it's hard to recognise some of you when you're not wearing your wellies!

[Polite titters.]

It seems a bit strange to celebrate the life of Jason and not have him here to chip in himself, but if he were sitting there with you I'd be a bit chary of asking him afterwards what he thought of my speech, because if the question is [pause] 'What did you think of it?' [pause] the answer's...

[Brief silence; sporadic laughter. From the left of the second row, a strangled 'Shit!' then 'Sshhh! Children present!']

Well, we all know he loved muck. And he loved mucking in, and that's why people remember him with a smile. He wasn't so keen on speeches, though. I remember him turning to me when someone was banging on at one of our annual shows and saying, 'Needs the clematis treatment.' What's that? I asked.

['Cut it short!' shouted from the back.]

Well I wish you had!

[Loud laughter; a smattering of claps.]

I'll try to keep this short, though, because Jason would've wanted it that way. It's not that there isn't plenty to say about him, just that it's not what we're here for.

What we've come for is to plant a tree. And to put that stone with the plaque on it in front of it. I'll read what it says later.

And if you're not old enough to remember Jason, you're probably wondering why we're making such a fuss about just another tree in the middle of our allotments. You're probably thinking it should be a statue or some such in a square in town. But statues don't grow, and they don't breathe and they don't put roots deep down into the earth. And that's why they're not right for Jason.

[Earnest nodding; a couple of quiet *ah-ahs*.]

He was my dad and I called him dad to his face, but we all knew him as Jason, so it's not hard for me to talk about him like that. And it's Jason I want to talk about. But of course I took him for granted because he was my dad. That meant I had to come back to him through other people; see him through their eyes. That's the only way I could see how special he really was.

I remember sometimes he used to sit me on his knee and he'd just look at me and screw up his eyes a bit, then he'd sort of shift his head to one side and raise his eyebrows as if to say, 'Come on – surprise me.' And you'd find yourself talking and when you talked his eyes would twinkle and

he'd shine your ideas back to you as though there was a polish on them brighter than you could ever dream. So you'd want to tell him more, and you'd talk and you'd talk. And sometimes, when there was two penn'orth of silence, he'd seem to weigh up your words and he'd ask you a question or take one of your ideas and turn it on its side to make it something new.

He was a wonderful listener, my dad, but he was an even better talker. He didn't say much; it was more a matter of turning things round, finding an idea that you didn't know you had. Then he'd plant it, like something in a garden, and it'd grow, and before you knew where you were it was best in show.

I'd say that was his gift, and I can see from the nods that I wasn't the only one, but you still have to be in the right place at the right time – and he was. He could have been sitting in any old allotment, drawing out people's ideas and leaving them to grow bigger pumpkins or sweeter tomatoes, but Birmingham has always been a bit of a mix, and he got talking to some interesting people at an interesting time.

To get some idea of how interesting, you have to imagine a city without naps and without the Brumbuck. You have to try to see it as fragmented, the way some other cities are, with nothing to draw people together and no sense of belonging. That could have happened. Forty years ago it could have gone either way. He used to say it was all money then and everything coming down from the top – people didn't matter as long as the books balanced.

Who knows what would have come of it if he hadn't sat down over a cup of tea with a head teacher and a professor from one of our universities who happened to know a silly old bat fond of banging on about growing food in cities and good at persuading people to do odd things. I don't think he planned what happened next; the whole thing just took off from school to street and then worked its way up to the council. But it did.

Everyone says he was the one to come up with the idea of naps, but he always insisted it wasn't as simple as that. He reckons he was talking to his professor friend about the way things seem to be connecting in new ways and firing up new ideas, and they were saying how quickly things were changing as a result. He said it seemed to him a bit like the human brain and its synapses (he always joked that it was a word he didn't even know he knew until it popped out). The he left it to his friend to work out what became known as the synaptic system – naps to you and me. And no, he didn't come up with the idea of Birmingham as an endogene: that was his friend's idea.

So that's what we're here to celebrate. And all that's sprung from it. He wouldn't thank me for crediting him with the idea of using local money because that was just an idea he took from a village he heard about. What he did was persuade people that it could work in a place as big as Birmingham. Then when someone at the Birmingham Mail came up with the Brumbuck there was no turning back.

For Jason, anyway, it wasn't the thing itself, it was the way it came into life, the way it grew from the ground up, from the people. He was all for growing things, Jason. Plants, ideas, communities – it was the same to him.

So we're here as a community to celebrate his life and the lives of the other diggers and dreamers who got thing moving. And we'll plant a tree because that's the sort of memorial he would have wanted. And I think it's fitting because his real memorial is the city, drawing on its roots and growing organically, making the best of what time and the climate can throw at it.

[Pause. Hint of a sigh.]

Of course, if you plant a tree as a memorial, you have to stick a plaque in front of it, and you have to write something on the plaque. Well, we gave that one a fair bit of airing...

[‘You can say that again!’]

... but I think we hit on the right words in the end.

If you knew Jason well, you’ll know that he wasn’t one for griping. When he was getting one of his new schemes off the ground and things got a bit heated, he’d remind everyone that it should be settled by ‘free consent without grumbling’. Well, we tracked that down and it turns out to be from a pamphlet by a revolutionary who lived four hundred years ago. We think that it sums up Jason’s philosophy and what we’ve worked towards in this city, so this is what we’re putting on the plaque.

Here it is:

Give thy free consent to make the earth a common treasury, without grumbling; that the younger ... may live comfortably upon earth, as well as the elder: that all may enjoy the benefit of their creation.

Gerrard Winstanley

[Long pause. Murmurs of assent.]

I’m winding up now, so no dashing off for a quick mulch.

[Pause. Smiles.]

When I was asked to do this speech, I was told to end it by looking forward, so I will. And when I asked around for advice, someone told me to mix a bit of good and a bit of bad, so I will.

We’re gardeners, so we know that you have to be careful about counting your carrots before they’re pulled, and that looking into the future is a mug’s game. You’d have to be stark staring bonkers to think you can look even a year ahead, let alone thirty or forty, so I’ll stick with what we know.

Well we know we’ve had it with the weather. We used to worry about that when we thought we could do something, but we didn’t do anything – not anything big enough to make a difference at any rate – and now we know it’s past helping. We sat and we watched like two gardeners stuck in their sheds, each of them watching the slugs go at their greens and waiting for the other to do something to stop it. Well, things will carry on getting worse now and there’s nothing we can do about that.

That’s the bad thing. But it makes what we do all the more important. We have to keep growing. We have to grow food and we have to grow ideas. Thirty years ago nobody would have believed we could get the yields we do with the weather as it is, but thirty years ago people were locked into set ways of thinking. We move quicker now and we share faster. That’s Jason’s legacy and we can use it to make the bad bearable.

So much for the bad. I’d like to end this talk on a personal note and with a bit of good news.

Those of you who know us will know that Dan and me followed dad into gardening, but I think our Kris got the wrong end of the stick. He picked up his spade but never got past digging and that’s how he ended up in tunnelling. He’s the mole in the family.

[Sporadic titters.]

And, he’s tunnelled his way back to us.

[Mild laughter.]

It’s all tunnels now, and some of us wonder if in fifty year’s time anybody will know what the sky looks like. But the more they shift underground, the more space opens up for growing and sharing, so we shouldn’t complain. And the good news is that somehow my little brother

managed to tear himself away from his tunneling team for five minutes to run into Juanita, the loveliest woman you could hope to meet.

[Kris: '...in a tunnel! Laughter. Dig in the ribs from Juanita.]

Well believe it or not it happened more or less underneath where we are now. He was burrowing his way towards Wales when she caught sight – and I'm getting this straight from the notes she gave me – she caught sight of his 'wiggly bottom'.

[Hoots from the front rows. Cries of 'Show us your wiggly arse, Kris!']

Apparently he was poking into the gears of one of those massive cutters they use and trying to work something free, and that was what started it. But what I can't understand is why she didn't run for cover when she got as far as his head.

['How can you tell the difference!' Laughter.]

Because we've all dug up cabbages with more brains than our Kris. Juanita is at least a thousand times brighter than he is, which makes it very hard to understand why today she finally gave in and said she'd marry him.

[Sound of surprise from the front three rows. A whistle.]

But she has. So I decided I'd use this speech to announce their engagement.

[Applause.]

And that might seem a bit personal, but dad wouldn't have missed the chance if he'd been giving a speech. Personal is where it all begins.

And, in any case, there's another reason. Juanita is an engineer – I said she was a lot brighter than Kris – and not long after we met we got down to having a long talk about Jason, and naps and the Birmingham endogene, and I got onto telling her about our storage and security problems. Turns out that's her speciality – in mole terms of course!

But that's the good bit. She's already working on a plan to use the underground systems we've already got as the basis for an adaptive system to solve our storage problems and – who knows? – perhaps extend our connectivity.

If Jason was still alive, nothing would please him more than to see his youngest son bring a naps like that into the family! So now let's go out and plant that tree, and when we do let's hold onto that thought of growing together.

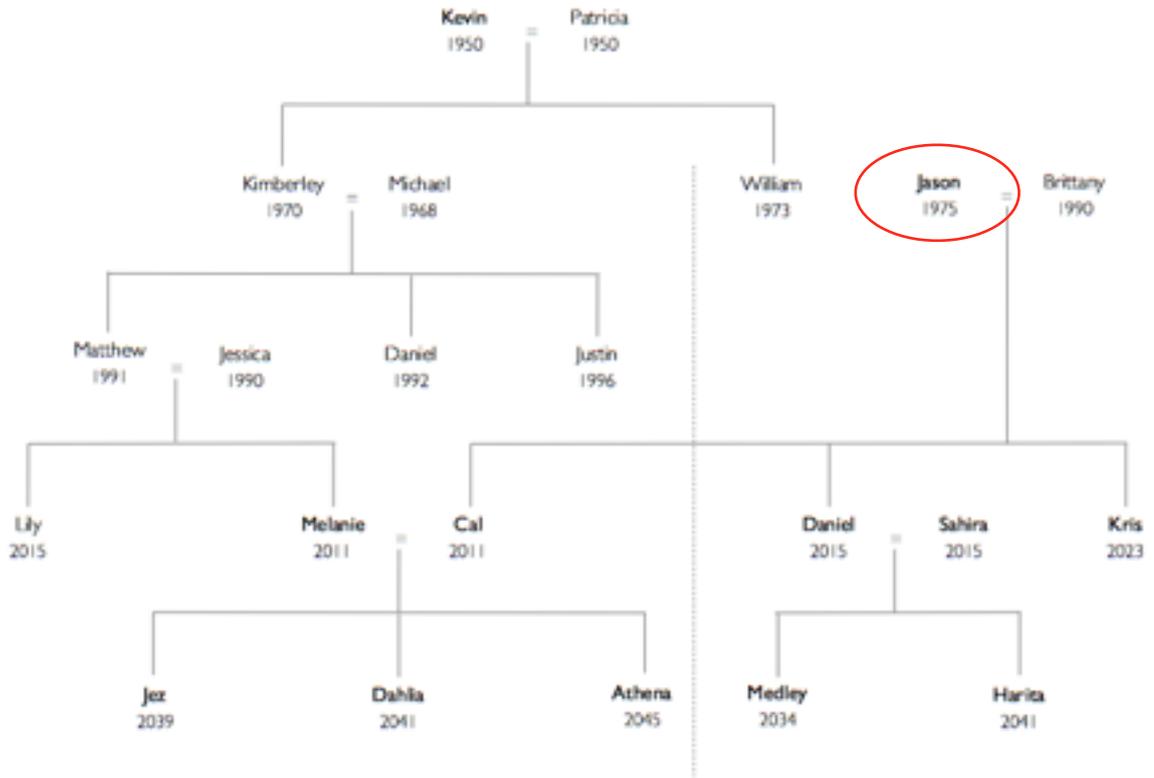
Thank you.

[Loud applause. Room slowly empties.]



JASON'S FAMILY TREE

Jason's tree is one of the four Birmingham 2050 Scenarios about two interconnected families living in three possible futures. The family tree is below.



ENERGY SCENARIO 2050

In this scenario we have deliberately avoided the sort of dystopian vision that is characteristic of many recent movies set in the near future. Neither have we assumed that the next half century will see any events sufficiently catastrophic to throw things seriously out of kilter. Which is not to say that such events are impossible . . .

- ◆ Having failed to develop sufficient technologies to plug the energy gap, the UK now experiences rolling blackouts.
- ◆ In addition to this, the country's heavy dependence on unstable global energy markets causes infrequent but major shocks to UK energy supplies, costing billions of pounds and producing periods of extended energy rationing.
- ◆ Demand-side technologies play an important role in mitigating the effects of energy shortages and price volatilities. However, continued high prices make these technologies inaccessible to the lowest-income households and fuel poverty is a growing problem.
- ◆ Blackouts are unevenly distributed, with the poorest areas (the 'sinks') disproportionately affected by them. This is not official policy and the authorities consistently deny it, blaming infrastructure problems and criminal interference with supply, but those in the sinks can see the difference between their situation and those living in less deprived areas. This is one of many sources of social unrest
- ◆ The big energy companies have realised that in order to maintain their monopoly on energy they must make the transition to greener technologies.
- ◆ Part of this transition involved the financing of community bio-energy reactor schemes. As global markets became increasingly volatile, local bio-energy reactors became increasingly attractive as a stable supplement to national energy supplies. There were also notable economic incentives, as excess energy produced locally could be sold at a profit to the National Grid.
- ◆ Private financing was vital to the success of these schemes, as government energy policy rested heavily on private sector investment. However, it also meant that the communities were forced to cede much of their control over the schemes to the big energy companies.
- ◆ The key challenge in local energy production is the security of supply. To protect their commercial interests, the big energy companies began buying up various uncommitted municipal and industrial waste streams.
- ◆ Local energy reactors were linked to local waste processing depots. Individuals can take waste to these depots and are paid according to its energy value. However, most households allow the council to collect their waste. They are not paid, but are saved the inconvenience of travelling to the depot themselves. The council then sells the waste to the private depots for processing. .
- ◆ However, some individuals move door-to-door buying domestic waste, which they then sell at the depot at an increased price. Whilst this practice is legal, some in the waste trade also collect waste from municipal and industrial sources. Where these sources have been committed to the energy companies, this is stealing.
- ◆ Waste traders are often associated with theft, although in practice only a minority of waste traders steal from the energy companies. When they scavenge, they tend to scavenge from uncommitted waste streams.
- ◆ Waste traders are adept in identifying and recovering high energy value waste products; they perform a useful role in the energy-waste nexus, although this role generally goes unnoticed.
- ◆ There is a hierarchy amongst waste traders, with those at the top (some with connections to organised crime) dealing with the relatively large-scale movement of expensive waste. At the bottom are scavengers ('scavs') who collect low-value items, usually from within the sinks and scrape a living by selling these at the depots.

For more information about the energy challenges we're facing now and what might be facing us in 2050, see the full version of the [Narrativium Project Birmingham 2050: One family, three futures](#) pp 17-21.

THE ANSWER'S SHIT

Medley lives in the sinks and makes a bit of money on the side by trading in waste which she collects from 'customers' outside her estate or finds lying around. One of her regular suppliers has passed on to her some high quality industrial plastic which technically belongs to one of the companies who have the rights to all high-grade waste. When this is spotted in her barrow by a police officer, she is taken into custody. The following scene is set in the police interview room. We hear the interrogating officer's words and see what she is thinking as the questioning progresses.

'The answer's shit.'

She looks at him across the table almost pityingly, sensing that he's trying to be clever. She knows he has a pile of it in the barrow out back, caked into nappies she collected that morning. If they do decide to charge her, they won't feel like laying that before the magistrate as evidence.

'Don't smirk at me. If I switch on that machine, you know where this is headed.'

She doesn't because this is her first time and the routine is unfamiliar.

'I don't care about the nappies. It's the plastic sheets I'm interested in – top grade industrial. You didn't get them on the doorstep.'

She did, but she's not letting on because there are sources to protect. At least that's the way she sees it. Number 14 is a good supplier. Too absent-minded to sort things out with the Council, he lets them pile up and is only too happy to pass them on to her for free – all pure profit. She thinks he's some sort of scientist judging by the stuff he gives her. Metals, some of it, and worth a fair bit. She didn't give the plastic a second thought when he passed it on, making no effort to cover the livid trapezoid sticking out of the front of the barrow. There's a lesson for next time.

'It's all on the vids. All we need to do is run a face match and it's all there from the minute you left the estate. But you can save us the trouble and get yourself off the hook.'

There are vids on the estate but at best they work sporadically. Spiking them has become a form of entertainment. It stops only when the word goes round, then they disappear, sometimes all of them at once, stolen to order for an overseas buyer. Things are easy to move out of the country from a trancity like Birmingham. Outside the sinks it's different – blanket vidcover – but one of the first things she learnt was that they don't waste time tracking shit.

He seems to think she's considering his offer so she waits.

'All I need is a name. He'll never know it was you.'

She looks at him blankly.

'We're not interested in collectors, it's the suppliers and traders we're after.'

The light flickers briefly. Blackout, she thinks, then she remembers that they don't have them here. Blackouts are taken for granted in the sinks; if you get through a day without one people remark on it. Even in her relatively short life they've got worse, increasing from one or two a week to a daily event. It's got to the point where people wish they would just publish a schedule so they can get on with working round it, but they won't do that because then they'd have to admit it's deliberate policy and not just fluctuations in the energy flow. No point in kicking up a fuss because toptrash all have their own generators and a vested interest in keeping things sweet – bought off by the globals.

'You know what will happen if we charge you and you're found guilty of illegal trading in Category A plastics.'

This time the blank stare is genuine. The standard line in the sinks on trading is three-one: three arrests to a charge. But that's B- and C-grade because only the toptrash deal in A – and the thought of that them finding out worries her much more than anything the courts might hand out.

'And your parents would have to know.'

She laughs. Probably just relief, but the juxtaposition is ludicrous.

'It may be funny to you, but that's not the way we see it.'

Medley is only 16 so technically her parents should be informed, but she knows they don't bother if you're from the sinks. As it happens, hers would go wild. They're straight. It's a hard line to hold, but somehow they manage to make ends meet on clean income. They'd be mortified to think of their daughter dipping below the surface for the sake of more buy-in on her habitoid. 'There's no such thing as holding your breath and coming back up,' her dad never tires of telling her. 'Once you're under, you drown.' Well, as far as she's concerned she hasn't lost sight of the surface.

'Look, Medley, we're not out to get you on this. We know this is the first time you've been pulled in and we want to help. We want to work with you.'

Up to this he was just someone doing his job; now she despises him. He's service, which means that he's part of the state and technically working within the legal system. But so much lawkeeping is in the hands of the globals that nobody believes the service are properly independent. They do the regular sinkwashes that pass as policing on the estate, negotiating the pock-marked streets and dug-up pavements as swiftly as they can, then signing off their visit in a fade of sirens. They come mob-handed, pick up a vansworth of low level offenders, then cart them off for processing and a few online paragraphs to reassure the Golds that things are under control.

'We don't have to be on different sides on this.'

That's harmless enough in itself, but it's a smokescreen. The hardcore policing is done by the globals. Her granddad used to tell her that when he was a lad there was no private policing, but it's hard to see how that could have worked. The squads are supposed to work under the service, but nobody in the sinks buys that line. Outside it's different and as far as she knows they deliver the sort of protection the Reds seem to crave (the Golds have their own fix), but inside the sinks they're vermin. People disappear all the time. Not many and when they do there are usually rumours about them stepping out of line – at least up until recently. Now the disappearances don't always fit and there are rumours about the squads. Worse than that, the disappeared are getting younger. The service must know about it, but that's as far as it goes.

'You're intelligent enough to weigh up the pros and cons on this. Own up to a mistake, explain how it happened and walk away. We get the information for our files and your record's wiped.'

Nothing is ever wiped. He knows that.

'You can understand that. Don't pretend you can't because I know you were scoped.'

It's true, she was. Even the sink schools were included. The scoping picked up those with outstanding potential and pulled them into the key academies where they were groomed for work in the globals.

'And I've scanned your test. If they'd had any sense, they'd have pulled you anyway.'

Her responses in the test were wittily obscene beyond her years and would have earned kudos amongst her peers if they'd ever got to see the paper. But her father destroyed the copy he was sent as soon as he'd read it. He couldn't understand why she'd wasted the opportunity but was wise enough not to make an issue of it.

'Are you listening to me?'

What was he? Twenty? Twenty-one? Too young to frighten her. His anger, like his pretended world-weariness, was gauche.

'You should listen. I'm not like some of my older colleagues who treat your sort of low-level scumming as not worth the effort. For me it's about the law.'

But not stupid.

'So why don't we see what we can work out?'

There's always a fix. She should take it because all she wants to do is rub along quietly. Losing number 14 and perhaps a few others who got to know about it would be no more

than a temporary dent in her collecting. It's not that; it's something she can't put her finger on.

'Think about it. Think about your future.'

It's something to do with her dad and his dad before him. Her mum would be hurt but her love would see that forgotten. Not her dad, though; he'd never forgive the betrayal of her source. She didn't know how she knew this, but it came from something inside herself. She could hear herself trying to explain it and there was emptiness in her voice. In her voice and in his eyes.

'If this gets on your record, you can kiss goodbye to a job.'

Those farewells are long in the past. Schools in the sinks barely deliver an education, let alone qualifications. The state's policy of non-discrimination is a fiction that salves Red consciences and nobody believes that the government will ever do anything about two generations of jobblockers because the grey vote is too powerful.

'You don't want to spend your life collecting nappies.'

Not a niche she wants to occupy for any longer than she has to.

'Look at you. You don't belong in the sinks.'

She's not fat and pasty – that's what he means.

'Put this behind you and move on. All you have to do is explain the set-up and you can go back to your friends.

And lie to them as well. Nearly all her friends are fat and she has to pretend she has a medical problem to explain away her shape. Her parents are strict on diet and her dad is a secret grower, which makes them freaks. You don't want to be a freak in the sinks and most of all you don't want to be seen to be deliberately aping Red bodymorph.

'So take me through your calls. Just talk me through the section between Trayne's and the underpass.'

The vids must have been out on that stretch. They can't have seen her going into number 14 after all.

'Just what you picked up and where.'

She cocks her head to one side and looks at him as though she's puzzled.

'That or I charge you.'

'If it's the plastic you want, I picked it up from an entry where someone had dumped it.'

He shakes his head slowly, almost sadly.

'It's true. Take it or leave it. I always check entries for stray bags or bins and there it was, leaning against the side of a fence. So I took it. I didn't know it was A, just plastic.'

'You didn't know it was grade A and you're a trader.'

'I'm a shit shifter. I know every make of nappy by sight and I can weigh a barrow-load just by looking, but I don't deal in plastic. It's like metals. I grab it if I find it and that's as far as it goes.'

'So this is the first time you've carried plastic.'

'Not the first time but I don't do it often. Check your vids.'

He laughs. She knows they'll have all her trails and it wouldn't take long to retrieve them using face recognition, but he's not going to waste his time sitting through hours of vidstream just to check for the odd bit of plastic or metal, illegal or not.

'Check them then.'

'Don't play the fool – just take me through that stretch.'

'Number 4, three fresh fulls. Pampers. Then across to 7 but nothing. Back across for 12 and that's when I found the plastic. Eleven from 12: they have two and they pump it out. Then on to 24 for a couple. Huggies. Back across for...'

'Alright. Leave it.' He pushes his pad away and looks across at the frosted window to his left and then down. His next question is addressed to the floor. 'Why do they bother? They've got bins.'

'Bins get full, nappies take up space and they stink. I do them a favour.'

'Do they ever give you anything else?' He's looking at her now, but he asks the question without conviction.

'I've had metals and plastics, but not often and never A-grade.'

'What would you have done with it if we hadn't pulled you?'

'If I'd known it was A-grade I'd have taken it back to the estate.' No harm in mixing in a bit of truth – he'd know that anyway. 'But I didn't so I would just have taken it to plastics.'

He folds his arms and looks at her across the table. That's it – she's safe. She can feel it.

When he speaks his tone has changed. It's softer.

'But why do you do it? It brings in next to nothing, it's hard work, it's filthy, and there are other things you could do. Sooner or later we'll pull you in and charge you. Why shit? Why is shit worth a second thought?'

She remembers visiting her granddad Jason on a moist autumn morning when she was a little girl and watching the mud fall from his boots in small clumps as he stomped down his garden path. How she ran after him chased by the sharp words of her grandmother: 'And don't go treading all that muck back in the house!'

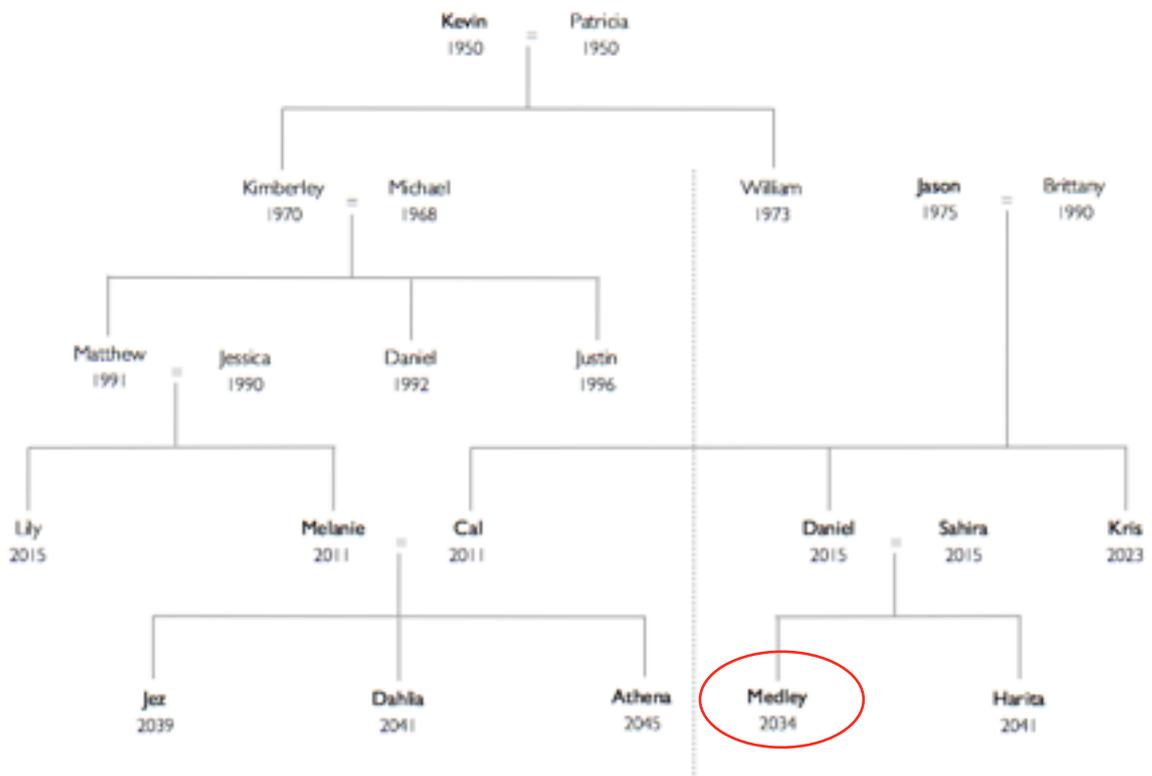
She must have looked frightened when she caught up with the old man because he bent down and touched her gently on the arm. 'Don't you worry about your grandma,' he said. 'She just likes a shiny kitchen floor.' Then he sniffed loudly (that's what she remembers most about her granddad – the long, bubbling sniffs always ending with a loud catch that made his nose twitch) and said, 'Now you look at all those green vegetables and you tell me what makes 'em grow. Go on.'

She thought very hard but in the end could only look at him and wait for his answer.

He glanced back to check that the path was empty all the way to the kitchen door, then he stabbed a crusty finger in the direction of a steaming heap at the bottom of the garden and whispered ever so quietly into her ear, 'Well I'll tell you then. The answer's shit.'

MEDLEY'S FAMILY TREE

The answer's shit is one of the four Birmingham 2050 Scenarios about two interconnected families living in three possible futures. The family tree is below.



IDENTITY SCENARIO 2050

In this scenario, we focus on the concept of identity, which is the most difficult aspect of our lives to pin down but also arguably the most central. The concept of a stable 'self' has already been replaced by the idea of identity as something constructed in situ, and we merely extend this idea, taking into account what may be termed 'e-developments'. We have not tried to predict the exact nature of these but have suggested what we think are likely trends.

- ◆ Bodies are perceived more objectively and are increasingly disassociated from notions of identity.
- ◆ Distinctions between 'real' and 'virtual' identities are no longer valid.
- ◆ Individuals still hold multiple identities in their multiple social roles, but the separateness of these identities and their inherent contradictions are more explicitly accepted.
- ◆ Feelings of social connectedness and participation have been redefined in the context of virtual space. Levels of social integration in the virtual world are relatively high, but this has not translated into the physical world.
- ◆ The illusion of privacy is lost and trends in 'disinhibition' are reversed; individuals are more aware of the information they share and the identity they present.
- ◆ Instead of identifying with fewer groups around more diverse issues, individuals tend to identify with a far greater number of groups but around a single issue, belief or trait. Groupings are often more transitory, as opinions and characteristics evolve over time (i.e. in virtual settings, individuals tend to move from groups rather than evolve with them).
- ◆ A far greater proportion of interactions occur in the virtual space. As a result, individuals may build relationships over the course of many years, without ever meeting in person.
- ◆ 'In-person' relationships are of increasing significance as more and more relationships are developed in virtual contexts.
- ◆ As a result of these changes, the concept of individuals inhabiting single physical space (home, city, etc.) has been replaced by the concept of a habitoid.
- ◆ Although human beings are as physically varied as before, the idea of being physically unique has lost sway.
- ◆ Advances in bioengineering and increasing use of robotic technologies have led to an acceptance that the emergence of cyborgs represents a natural evolutionary step. The ethics and metaphysics of this are still debated but the change itself is accepted as inevitable.
- ◆ In the context of a rapidly changing and increasingly threatening environment, the idea of self-sustaining systems, organisations and even individuals has led to a diminishing interest in larger coherent units (whether things or people) in favour of an emphasis on 'replicable adaptive agency' (the ability of any part to actively replicate itself with appropriate adjustments). This has accelerated the shift away from seeing the person as a relatively stable and enduring entity.

For more information about the community challenges we're facing now and what might be facing us in 2050, see the full version of the [Narrativium Project Birmingham 2050: One family, three futures](#) pp 41-43.

WHERE'S GRANPOPS?

What is 'learned by body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is.

(Pierre Bourdieu. 1990. *The Logic of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Page 73.)

The family are gathering for the funeral of Kevin, who has died at the age of 100. Since cremation is no longer a legal option (for environmental reasons), all bodies are buried in biodegradable coffins either on land identified for that purpose, or in approved 'cultivable sites' requested by the next of kin. Kevin's family have chosen the latter and his coffin has been placed at the front of the hall where his burial service will take place.

By law, all non-biodegradable elements in the body (e.g. pacemakers, joint replacements) must be removed prior to burial and where possible recycled. The remaining body parts are placed in a coffin corresponding to the original size of the deceased, but smaller coffins can be supplied if requested. Kevin has always joked that he would be able to 'fit into a shoebox' for burial and indicated that this would be his preference. His family have respected this wish.

Melanie has arrived early with her children, Dahlia and Jez, and is awaiting the arrival of her husband, Cal and other daughter, Athena. Dahlia is puzzled by the size of the coffin.

What's the nice box for? Well, I suppose it's for granpops.

No, he won't be coming to get it. He's not with us anymore. It's for granpops because that's where he is.

Yes in the box.

No he hasn't got smaller.

Yes, I know it's a very small box, Dahlia, but you see he only needs a very small box now. He's very comfortable there.

Well, no, he didn't say he was comfortable because he can't tell us things anymore – Jez, take that smirk off your face and leave your sister's screen alone – but I know he'll be fine and that he'll be alright there.

Yes, I know it's very small.

No, I wouldn't put you in a box like that.

Jez!

No Dahlia, he isn't in bits. Your brother is just saying that to upset you.

And they haven't bent him either. If you say one more word, Jez, I'll make sure you don't get to the holo for a week. Just play on your rhizodeck.

It's difficult to explain. He's in the box but the way we have to understand it is that when he leaves us he'll be the same as when he came into our world as a baby.

No he hasn't shrunk.

Well, you can't be a baby again exactly. But as you get older sometimes it's better to have some bits changed so that they work better.

Yes, like the nutriculture pod when Jez tried to make it into a bioshelter. Do you remember how they came and replaced some parts of it?

I know it makes bottyburps now when you use it but if we'd kept the old bits it wouldn't have worked at all. So we had to change them. We had to take out the bits that came with it at first and put better bits in.

No, granpops hasn't got bits of pod in him, but he did change some parts of his body for new parts that worked better.

Well, you know how he was always talking about how strong his legs were and how they were younger than your dad. That's because his old legs had been replaced.

They were hard, weren't they? That's why it didn't hurt when Jez hit him with the hammer that time.

I know granpops asked him to but it was silly because Jez tried it on lots of other things that weren't polytitanial after that.

It just means very hard.

Yes you can be old and silly.

What other things did they change? Well, his heart and kidneys were different and just before he died he paid for new shoulders because his were wearing out.

Yes 'ropey'.

It just means not very good.

Jez is right. It can mean not feeling very well. Granpops used it both ways. But his new parts were very good and he didn't feel ropey with them.

Well he might have felt ropey when he died.

No that's not why he's so small now. It's just that when we take things to use we have to return them and it's like that with granpop's parts. They were his to use but they were made of precious materials that we don't have enough of.

A bit like teddy, yes. And we can't just put them in the ground and forget them because that would be very wrong. So we need to take them out again and use them.

Jez isn't making that up. Birmingham is famous for its transversions. That means it takes things like granpops' arms and shoulders or his heart and it finds ways to use them again or turn them into other things. You've heard us talk about technofarming.

Well you shouldn't listen to your dad when it comes to technofarming. That wasn't a nice thing to say and I'll tell him that myself. There's nothing wrong with technofarming and we'd be in a right mess without it.

No Jez, I'm not telling him here. I'll wait until later.

No it didn't hurt when they took those bits out of granpops. He didn't even know they were doing it. And now they can put him into the earth in that box and he'll feed the earth the way the earth fed him.

Not exactly the same way as you feed Starry, no, and you'd better not let your dad hear you call him that. He's just a rabbit.

We don't bury rabbits because we eat them and we use their bones.

Because we need them, the way we need to take the bits that aren't granpops and use them. Then we bury the real granpops.

Yes, the real granpops is in there without the bits and that's why it's small.

No there's nothing with him in the box.

I know it's hard for you to understand, but it is just one place.

No, he doesn't have a habitoid.

I know it's silly, but his brain has gone to sleep now so he can't have a habitoid.

Yes, but it's not like going to sleep at night.

It's just different. And when granpops grew up people didn't have habitoids, or at least they didn't call them that.

Well it wasn't silly then.

Alright, it's silly now. Do you know what a Brummie is?

Where did you learn that word?

Just wait till I get you home young man. And you can forget the new skin.

No, Dahlia, I can't explain, but don't ever use that word again.

Yes, you can use Brummie.

It's an old word for someone who was born in Birmingham. Granpops was a Brummie and he was very proud of it.

I don't know why we don't have it now.

No Jez, I don't think it's because we're Reds. That's not the same as belonging to a place and anyway it's not a good way to look at things.

I don't care if everybody does. And your idea of everybody is very different from mine.

You can belong to a city, Dahlia. Granpops did.

That's hard to explain. They didn't have comnodes when granpops was born. They were districts then and people from different codes lived together – or at least they weren't in different districts.

I don't suppose you would like it, Jez, but that's because you've never got to know anyone from the other codes even on holo. It was different then, and there was what they called mingling.

Well you would think it meant that, Jez.

No Dahlia, I'm not going to explain what that word means.

No 'mingling' is level. It just means different people being together and doing what they normally do but not keeping separate.

Yes, Jez it could be Golds and Violets.

Or Reds and Violets. And I don't like that word Viles.

Because I don't, Dahlia. It's too complicated to explain. But if your brother uses it again and I hear him he'll wish he hadn't.

Yes, I'm sure you won't use it. And granpops would have been very angry if he'd heard Jez use it.

My word! You remember he said that.

Even if he did always say that, Dahlia did very well to remember it – she’s a lot younger than you. ‘We’re a multicoloured mix.’ That’s what he used to say when people started that nonsense. When he grew up they didn’t have reds and violets.

Well they didn’t have those sorts of colours at all and I think when you’re as old as granpops they won’t have them anymore. He thought it was much more important to pull together. Those are the words he used.

It’s nothing to laugh at. And anyway, young man, you’re going to be meeting your cousins Medley and Harita after the farewell to granddad.

Well, a habilink isn’t the same thing and I doubt whether you’ve ever bothered to share space on that.

There you go then. Well you won’t have any choice this afternoon. Your dad says himself it’s about time he spent a bit of space with uncle Daniel. Too much dispersal.

Why are you crying?

Here, take one of these. You don’t have to be sad for granpops; he would have been very happy to be buried here. This is his city.

I know we won’t see him again, but he lived a long time and he was very tired at the end. He’ll be glad of the rest.

It means he’ll be happy to have a rest. I got it from my mum. She used it a lot.

Yes, I suppose she was a Brummie, even though she never called herself that.

Of course you can if you want to.

No, you don’t have to do anything special. You just have to care about the place where you live and where all your friends are. Granpops used to say a place is its people.

I don’t know what you’d call this place if it’s full of people like granpops.

That’s it! Now look at your sister – she’s in floods of tears again. Go over and see your dad. He’s over there with Athena.

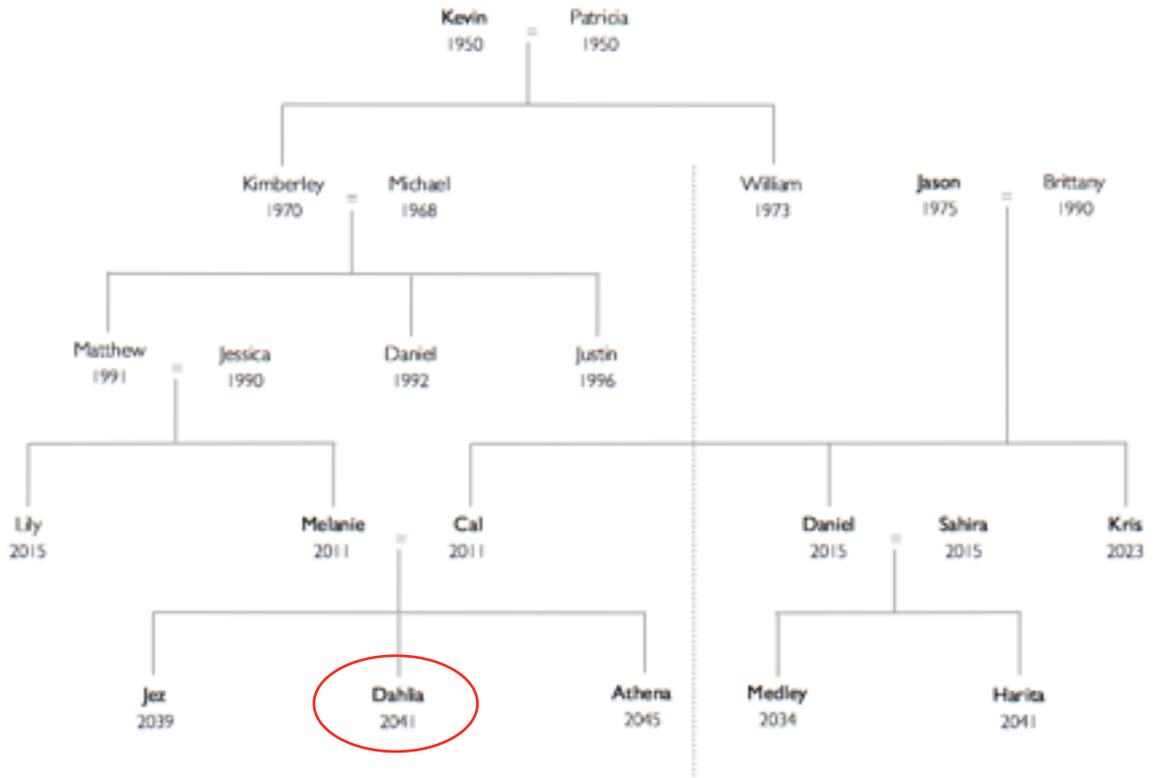
No my love, it’s not a vermipot ,whatever your brother says. It’s not a vermipot. It’s just the earth and it’s a place for granpops to rest.

Alright, not all of him...



DAHLIA'S FAMILY TREE

Where's Granpops? is one of the four Birmingham 2050 Scenarios about two interconnected families living in three possible futures. The family tree is below.



FOOD SCENARIO 2050

In some ways, this is the easiest scenario to predict because current trends are so clear and it is a 'middle' case. However, the following list has to be treated in the same way as all predictions of the future – in other words, as highly speculative.

- ◆ Increasing socio-spatial polarisation has evolved into a two-tier food system.
- ◆ The most deprived households are increasingly concentrated in small areas of acute need. Food deserts exist in which cheap, nutritious food is virtually unobtainable. Retail provision is largely limited to small shops, where prices are high, products are processed and fresh fruit and vegetables are poor or non-existent.
- ◆ This has led to the increasing use of available land (gardens, allotments) by families having access to these. In such families, the growing and eating of food is seen as a core family activity.
- ◆ Theft of food from gardens and allotments has shifted from a minor offence committed by individuals to a mainstream criminal enterprise, while ensuring security of food sources has itself become a lucrative business.
- ◆ A lack of access to food integral to a healthy diet has contributed to widening health inequalities; mortality and morbidity vary by socioeconomic status and place of residence.
- ◆ Calorific intake is high but malnutrition is a major problem.
- ◆ BRICS markets (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are absorbing a huge proportion of global imports and many of the foodstuffs that were once considered staples, including fruits and vegetables, are now in limited supply.
- ◆ Global food price volatility also means that access to and affordability of imported foodstuffs fluctuates regularly.
- ◆ The reclamation of urban green space, innovative urban growing schemes, allotments and urban gardens (many supported by hydroponic and aeroponic technologies) provide an important nutritional supplement. However, despite a range of community initiatives, the majority of what is grown is produced (and consumed) privately. A majority of private growers are of middle and higher socioeconomic status.
- ◆ Processed foods comprise a much larger part of the average diet. Healthy processed goods, making use of salt and sugar substitutes, are widely available. However, their less healthy counterparts remain the cheapest option available on the market.
- ◆ Meat is a much smaller component of the average diet. Fresh meat is a luxury item and as part of our day-to-day diets has been largely replaced by 'mini-livestock' (insects) and synthetic meats, especially in processed products like sausages and burgers. Some animals previously seen as pets (e.g. rabbits) are now raised as food sources.
- ◆ Diets rich in meat and dairy have been replaced by diets rich in plant diversity as an indicator of wealth.
- ◆ Staple foods are those which can be grown rapidly, which require the least input and which exert the least pressure on land and resources (e.g. seaweed).

For more information about the food provenance challenges we're facing now and what might be facing us in 2050, see the full version of the [Narrativium Project Birmingham 2050: One family, three futures](#) pp 27-29.

FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE

It is 2150 and Kit, an academic at a university in Birmingham, is preparing a paper on family food production and consumption in 2050. Online resources are now unimaginably vast, taking various forms (e.g. 'cloud' and 'skyware'). Although sophisticated search engines are available, the use of these requires mastery of very complex procedures and high-level technical skills. There are companies offering search services and all universities have their own dedicated units, but most academics prefer to use freelance operators because these have access to legal but unofficial ('offbank') resources. Kit uses Mina and has asked her to track down data she can use in her talk. She will pay in 'bits' (online currency) and has specified the 'bitrange' in which Mina has to work.

What follows are the e-communication exchanges between Mina and Kit with extracts from Athena's diary included. These extracts are also collected at the end of the episode.

Ecom102615:140150K372/M3

Kit: Got just what youre looking for. Offbank obviously and dont ask the source. We're clear because its L[level]3 and therefore openuse. Diary of a 9yearold bang on the time you want for your paper. With the markup youre looking at six dips max within your bitrange, 3000c[haracters and]s[paces] each. Can you work it on that?

Mina

Ecom103408:140150M79/M3

Mina: Can you supply the authenticics? Cant risk the rest of my bits until I know.

Kit

Ecom103712:140150K372/M3

Kit: Pukka. Scans registered and all lines check out. My source has the release rights. Wanna taste?

Mina

Ecom103830:140150M79/M3

Mina: Run me one that delivers direct evidence of social division around food consumption or production.

Kit

Ecom142253:140150K372/M3

Kit: She's a 9yearold not a crumpy academic like you. I ran social division and got Ø.

Mina

Ecom144017:140150M79/M3

Mina: You'll need to play around with some other terms around nutrition/health/ or poor/rich.

Kit

Ecom195820:140150K372/M3

Kit: Try this for size. Dug up better than just a split because it turns out Athena has a cousin on the other side. You might want to chase that down. Ever tried a cauliflower? She obviously hates them but they sound sweet to me.

Here goes (2795cs):

I met my cousin today and I got in trouble over cauliflowers. Miss took the whole class to where there was an exhibition about the changes to where we all live and how we can help. There was another class there because the room was very big and when there was a break we could talk to the other children. I knew it was my cousin because I saw her in the picture dad showed us last week when he was clearing up some of his mess. She was supposed to be at

great-great grandad's funeral but she didn't come. I've got four cousins but this is the one we don't see. Her name is Harita but she says everyone calls her Hari. I don't think her mum and dad will call her that but I didn't ask.

She doesn't have to eat cauliflowers. They don't have cauliflowers at their meals and they don't sit round the table, even though that's what we're all supposed to do. Most days she just eats when she wants except when her dad has got some meat off-ration, then they all share it. They don't have rabbits or pigeons or chickens because there isn't a garden but she says her dad has his sauces and they sometimes even get beef. She doesn't eat vegetables because they don't have an allotment. She said you can always steal anyway but I wouldn't want to be her if my dad caught her at his runner beans.

I didn't see Hari after that because we were taken out first. Ellis told me it was because they were from the sinks and they didn't want us to mix but then why did they let us talk in the break. Ellis says they shouldn't be there in the first place but he's always like that. His dad's in utilities so he thinks he knows everything.

We had cauliflower again tonight and I said I didn't want it and I'd rather have seaweed every night and dad said what he always does that I should be grateful we could get fresh vegetables and my mum said (as usual) thanks to all his hard work in the allotment when he's already done a full day's work. But this time I told them about Hari and how she never eats vegetables and says it's better without them. My mum says it isn't and that's why we check our nutrients, but I told her Hari didn't have to because that's all on the packets anyway. Then mum went quiet and said it wasn't her fault (Hari) and she felt sorry for her. I don't see why we should but my mum says I don't understand. Then my dad told us about the food deserts. I didn't ask Hari about them because I didn't know she lives in one but dad says there terrible places and you don't get proper nutrients whatever Hari says because cheap food is usually bad food and it just makes you want to buy more bad food. He says you can't see what it's doing to Hari because it's all inside and why do you think they spend so much time telling us at school about how to make the best of things.

By then my cauliflower was cold so I didn't have to eat it.

Mina

Ecom203618:140150M79/M3

Mina: Prime. Might even make the cousin thing central to the paper. Did you know you ate cauliflowers in florets?

Kit

Ecom204009:140150K372/M3

Kit: What's a floret? One of those eating places you're collecting?

Mina

Ecom204555:140150M79/M3

Mina: You broke up the cauliflower before you ate it and the bits were called florets. Nearest you'll get to the taste is drynuttygreen if you want to try it.

Can you find me something with rabbit/hutch/garden or if you cant manage that chicken/coop/garden?

Kit

Ecom081324:150150K372/M3

Kit: Got you a shed as well (1245cs):

I got in trouble with dad today but I shouldn't have done. It was Dahlia's fault but she got away with it as usual.

Dahlia wouldn't tell me why she kept going into the garden so I stayed in the shed till she came out and watched and she went straight to the first hutch and took out the rabbit. It didn't scabble the way they do with dad and it let her put it on her lap and stroke it. Then dad came out the back door in his wellingtons and saw her and she let go the rabbit and it ran off up the garden. Dad was very angry with her and began to shout. He went up to her and stood right over her then he said 'See what happens when you play with your food!' That's when I laughed and he must have heard me because he came straight up to the shed and opened the door. I pretended I was laughing at what was written on one of his pots but he didn't believe me. 'You should have more sense at your age,' he said. He told me I should have stopped her and not been larking about in the shed.

While he was doing that Dahlia ran off into the house and that was that. I got the blame as usual. But it wasn't fair because I didn't do it in the first place and anyway dad caught the rabbit straight away because it was just in his lettuces eating a leaf.

Mina

Ecom091023:150150M79/M3

Mina: Cant make any sense of the laughter and if I use it in the presentation someone is bound to ask. 'Don't play with your food' on G using standard lookup has plenty but all consistent with Dahlias actions. Same with 'stroking rabbit' – turned up one interesting line but not something they'd have tried in the garden.

So what the hell was she up to with the rabbit? Can you check it out with that linguist you used last time?

Kit

Ecom111542:160150K372/M3

Kit: She just got back to me. An expression used to refer to moving food round the plate or otherwise playing with it instead of transferring it to the mouth. In those days parents used it with children who didnt want to eat what was on their plate (not surprised given some of the crap they were expected to swallow). I guess the joke is that the food on the plate would have been cooked and the rabbit here is still alive. Doesn't seem like much of a joke to me, but if youre 9 and stuck in a shed...

Mina

Ecom123005:160150M79/M3

Mina: Hard to get their sense of humour. Perhaps something to do with the hard times. Thanks for tracking it down.

Now an easy one that gets harder. I want allotment (should be easy) but not just for the output. I need the social dimension. We know food was a social indicator and so was the growing of it, but I want to get at the community angle. Growing (together) and eating (together) as social glue.

Kit

Ecom123059:160150K372/M3

Kit: Sounds foul to me. What's an allotment?

Mina

Ecom123442:160150M79/M3

Mina: Small pieces of land you could rent for growing food. They were very popular in my period. Helped supplement the diet.

Kit

Ecom164812:160150K372/M3

Kit: Not sure about the social cohesion – his pairing flared on the allotment. He was right about things getting worse, though (2143cs):

I'm sitting right next to my bedroom door now so I can hear what mum and dad are saying and because I want to hear if mum goes away. I'll go with her if she does but I don't know whether to wake Dahlia. Mum says she's sick to death of dad's allotment and now they're having a big row.

It's because Dahlia was trying to eat the vermicompost which mum says will make her sick even if it doesn't kill her but that's silly because dad puts it on his greens anyway which is probably why they taste horrible. But it's not just that and dad saying he's sorry isn't going to help. Dad tramps his dirt through the house and mum found half a field in the middle of her new rug. He's supposed to take his wellingtons off when he comes in but sometimes he forgets especially when he's got a whopping big brassica or something he wants to show us. Sometimes it's funny but mum's tired of it now. She says he spends too much bloody time in that allotment of his with his pals and he should think of his family more. Then he said where would we be without his vegetables because even on his salary they couldn't afford them and then where would the kids be. But she says he doesn't need to spend so much time there and we could make do with the garden now that there are new efficiencies. Then he wouldn't spend every hour that God sends digging up the mud for the sake of a few bits of green that they'll probably not get on the plate anyway because the thieving is getting worse and they can't spend any more time taking turns to watch over them and anyway she worries about him sat in that shed on his own all night when anything could happen.

I think mum's worried about dad and she misses him. He says he's lucky to have an allotment and thousands haven't but mum wonders whether it's worth it kids or no kids because they need to spend a bit of time with him as well. But dad says things will only get worse and you can't rely on the rations. He says we're all in it together and his tithe counts for something. And in any case what if it comes down to what you can grow for yourself. Mum says it won't come to that.

Now they're quiet after the shouting and I think dad knows that mum's upset. They're worried about the war on three fronts because I heard dad say that's what we're fighting now and we're all in it together.

Tomorrow I'll ask dad if I can help in the allotment and I'll clean out the hutches without being asked.

Mina

Ecom180715:160150M79/M3

Mina: Can you grab me a meal? I don't have to have the recipe but a description of something she ate would be good.

Kit

Ecom210351:160150K372/M3

Kit: Be impressed. Got a meal and a recipe. When I was a kid I sometimes used to wish I could go back to those times for the authentics. Not any more. I chased the recipe for a T[aste]&T[exture] to see if she was just blowing, but the P[arental]unit is a moosher. Eat before reading (2827cs):

We had a right noble feast today. Well that's what dad called it. I thought it was horrid except for the cheese. The pudding was worst.

Mum got the recipes from a book. The first was Lord Woolton pie, but I bet Lord Woolton never ate it. If you were a Lord you'd eat better stuff than that. Here's what you do. You get loads of horrible vegetables then you boil them until there done then you make a sauce with some flour and butter (that's what the recipe says but of course we didn't have butter so that

was even worse) and herbs from the garden then you pour that on the veg then make the mashed potatoes and pipe them in fancy patterns over the top and put cheese on the top. The you put the whole lot in the oven for about half an hour until it goes brown and looks delicious. The only problem then is you have to eat it. Being as it's winter dad brought us the worst vegetables you can have. We had swedes, turnips, onions and carrots. I was nearly sick. Next time mum says she's going to try it with gravy but that will just make it brown and horrible instead of white and horrible. Mum won't have any meat except our own because of the scares, but that means we have to eat vegetables and more vegetables. Yaaarrgh!

That was bad enough but Duke pudding is even worse. Mum had got the recipe written down on a piece of paper but she said I could have it afterwards because it wasn't her finest moment. She says you just can't make up for chocolate and that in future she won't try. We'll just have to wait until we can get some she says. Dad said he really enjoyed it, though, and after a couple of mouthfuls said it was too good waste on a full stomach so he'd eat it as a special treat later. Mum said there was plenty more but he said that was best left to go cold to take the allotment. Later on he took his bowl into the garden to eat it in the fresh air. Dahlia of course wanted to go with him to see Starry (that's what she calls the rabbit but dad would be mad if he knew because you shouldn't give names to what you want to eat), but he said it was too cold for her. It was too cold for him as well because he didn't stay out for long and he must have eaten it very quickly even though he says we're not supposed to gobble.

This is the recipe in case I ever have to cook for someone I really don't like, like Derrick.

- Soak half a dozen slices of stale bread cold water then squeeze all the water out until the bread is dry.
- Use a fork to beat out any lumps in the bread.
- Add 2 tablespoons of fat or butter, 2 tablespoons of sugar, 3 tablespoons of dried fruit, 1 teaspoon of cinnamon and one large or two small carrots, grated.
- Mix a teaspoon of bicarb of soda with a few teaspoons of milk and blend this into the mixture.
- Grease a tart tin and spread the mixture evenly over this.
- Cook in a moderate oven for about half an hour.
- Serve hot

(And good luck to you)

Mina

Ecom085338:170150M79/M3

Mina: Will get the techs on that and serve it at the end of the presentation. Memory fix.

All I need now is shopping. Itll be F2F anyway so no discrimination needed.

Kit

Ecom121237:170150K372/M3

Kit: Done (1439cs):

I hate Mrs Crabbe. In future I don't care what mum says I'm going to Wallaces even if it takes twice as long. At least Mr Wallace won't be so horrible and when you ask for fresh fish he won't laugh at you in front of everyone and ask whether they teach you anything in school. Mum says you should always eat fresh food so I don't see what's wrong with that. We hardly ever eat fish anyway because dad says you can't risk all the poisons building up and I don't like it much anyway so I just won't eat it then I won't have to get it again. Or I'll go to Wallaces because he won't laugh at me and tell everyone to listen to that and tell me if I want to sit down she'll send her Jack out to catch me one and which particular one did I want. I went red when they laughed but I told her I wanted white fish and it was with the frozen stuff so could she please give me a piece. Then she said they'd had three bananas in and they were in the back and perhaps I wanted them as well but I told her no because we had my dad's

pears. Then they all laughed again but I'd rather have my dad's pears anyway and not have to worry about all the ups and downs and getting a taste for something that costs a fortune and you might not see again for months or even years. She gave me the fish though and all my mum could say was well you took your time I could have caught it myself in the time. Sometimes she's just like Mrs Crabbe except without the scarf.

That's 5. Whats your last?

Mina

Ecom142304:170150M79/M3

Mina: Can find photo of Mrs Crabbe or her shop or better both? Will make full transfer for 6 anyway.

Kit

Ecom142539:170150K372/M3

Kit: Both and with her holding a fish. Its there somewhere, cloud, skyware or offbank. They all are.

Mina



ATHENA'S DIARY

Athena's Diary I

I met my cousin today and I got in trouble over cauliflowers. Miss took the whole class to where there was an exhibition about the changes to where we all live and how we can help. There was another class there because the room was very big and when there was a break we could talk to the other children. I knew it was my cousin because I saw her in the picture dad showed us last week when he was clearing up some of his mess. She was supposed to be at great-great grandad's funeral but she didn't come. I've got four cousins but this is the one we don't see. Her name is Harita but she says everyone calls her Hari. I don't think her mum and dad will call her that but I didn't ask.

She doesn't have to eat cauliflowers. They don't have cauliflowers at their meals and they don't sit round the table, even though that's what we're all supposed to do. Most days she just eats when she wants except when her dad has got some meat off-ration, then they all share it. They don't have rabbits or pigeons or chickens because there isn't a garden but she says her dad has his sauces and they sometimes even get beef. She doesn't eat vegetables because they don't have an allotment. She said you can always steal anyway but I wouldn't want to be her if my dad caught her at his runner beans.

I didn't see Hari after that because we were taken out first. Ellis told me it was because they were from the sinks and they didn't want us to mix but then why did they let us talk in the break. Ellis says they shouldn't be there in the first place but he's always like that. His dad's in utilities so he thinks he knows everything.

We had cauliflower again tonight and I said I didn't want it and I'd rather have seaweed every night and dad said what he always does that I should be grateful we could get fresh vegetables and my mum said (as usual) thanks to all his hard work in the allotment when he's already done a full day's work. But this time I told

them about Hari and how she never eats vegetables and says it's better without them. My mum says it isn't and that's why we check our nutrients, but I told her Hari didn't have to because that's all on the packets anyway. Then mum went quiet and said it wasn't her fault (Hari) and she felt sorry for her. I don't see why we should but my mum says I don't understand. Then my dad told us about the food deserts. I didn't ask Hari about them because I didn't know she lives in one but dad says there terrible places and you don't get proper nutrients whatever Hari says because cheap food is usually bad food and it just makes you want to buy more bad food. He says you can't see what it's doing to Hari because it's all inside and why do you think they spend so much time telling us at school about how to make the best of things.

By then my cauliflower was cold so I didn't have to eat it.

Athena's Diary 2

I got in trouble with dad today but I shouldn't have done. It was Dahlia's fault but she got away with it as usual.

Dahlia wouldn't tell me why she kept going into the garden so I stayed in the shed till she came out and watched and she went straight to the first hutch and took out the rabbit. It didn't scamble the way they do with dad and it let her put it on her lap and stroke it. Then dad came out the back door in his wellingtons and saw her and she let go the rabbit and it ran off up the garden. Dad was very angry with her and began to shout. He went up to her and stood right over her then he said 'See what happens when you play with your food!' That's when I laughed and he must have heard me because he came straight up to the shed and opened the door. I pretended I was laughing at what was written on one of his pots but he didn't believe me. 'You should have more sense at your age,' he said. He told me I should have stopped her and not been larking about in the shed.

While he was doing that Dahlia ran off into the house and that was that. I got the blame as usual. But it wasn't fair because I didn't do it in the first place and anyway dad caught the rabbit straight away because it was just in his lettuces eating a leaf.

Athena's Diary 3

I'm sitting right next to my bedroom door now so I can hear what mum and dad are saying and because I want to hear if mum goes away. I'll go with her if she does but I don't know whether to wake Dahlia. Mum says she's sick to death of dad's allotment and now they're having a big row.

It's because Dahlia was trying to eat the vermicompost which mum says will make her sick even if it doesn't kill her but that's silly because dad puts it on his greens anyway which is probably why they taste horrible. But it's not just that and dad saying he's sorry isn't going to help. Dad tramps his dirt through the house and mum found half a field in the middle of her new rug. He's supposed to take his

wellingtons off when he comes in but sometimes he forgets especially when he's got a whopping big brassica or something he wants to show us. Sometimes it's funny but mum's tired of it now. She says he spends too much bloody time in that allotment of his with his pals and he should think of his family more. Then he said where would we be without his vegetables because even on his salary they couldn't afford them and then where would the kids be. But she says he doesn't need to spend so much time there and we could make do with the garden now that there are new efficiencies. Then he wouldn't spend every hour that God sends digging up the mud for the sake of a few bits of green that they'll probably not get on the plate anyway because the thieving is getting worse and they can't spend any more time taking turns to watch over them and anyway she worries about him sat in that shed on his own all night when anything could happen.

I think mum's worried about dad and she misses him. He says he's lucky to have an allotment and thousands haven't but mum wonders whether it's worth it kids or no kids because they need to spend a bit of time with him as well. But dad says things will only get worse and you can't rely on the rations. He says we're all in it together and his tithe counts for something. And in any case what if it comes down to what you can grow for yourself. Mum says it won't come to that.

Now they're quiet after the shouting and I think dad knows that mum's upset. They're worried about the war on three fronts because I heard dad say that's what we're fighting now and we're all in it together.

Tomorrow I'll ask dad if I can help in the allotment and I'll clean out the hutches without being asked.

Athena's Diary 4

We had a right noble feast today. Well that's what dad called it. I thought it was horrid except for the cheese. The pudding was worst.

Mum got the recipes from a book. The first was Lord Woolton pie, but I bet Lord Woolton never ate it. If you were a Lord you'd eat better stuff than that. Here's what you do. You get loads of horrible vegetables then you boil them until there done then you make a sauce with some flour and butter (that's what the recipe says but of course we didn't have butter so that was even worse) and herbs from the garden then you pour that on the veg then make the mashed potatoes and pipe them in fancy patterns over the top and put cheese on the top. Then you put the whole lot in the oven for about half an hour until it goes brown and looks delicious. The only problem then is you have to eat it. Being as it's winter dad brought us the worst vegetables you can have. We had swedes, turnips, onions and carrots. I was nearly sick. Next time mum says she's going to try it with gravy but that will just make it brown and horrible instead of white and horrible. Mum won't have any meat except our own because of the scares, but that means we have to eat vegetables and more vegetables. Yaaarrgh!

That was bad enough but Duke pudding is even worse. Mum had got the recipe written down on a piece of paper but she said I could have it afterwards because it

wasn't her finest moment. She says you just can't make up for chocolate and that in future she won't try. We'll just have to wait until we can get some she says. Dad said he really enjoyed it, though, and after a couple of mouthfuls said it was too good waste on a full stomach so he'd eat it as a special treat later. Mum said there was plenty more but he said that it was best left to go cold to take the allotment. Later on he took his bowl into the garden to eat it in the fresh air. Dahlia of course wanted to go with him to see Starry (that's what she calls the rabbit but dad would be mad if he knew because you shouldn't give names to what you want to eat), but he said it was too cold for her. It was too cold for him as well because he didn't stay out for long and he must have eaten it very quickly even though he says we're not supposed to gobble.

This is the recipe in case I ever have to cook for someone I really don't like, like Derrick.

- Soak half a dozen slices of stale bread in cold water then squeeze all the water out until the bread is dry.
- Use a fork to beat out any lumps in the bread.
- Add 2 tablespoons of fat or butter, 2 tablespoons of sugar, 3 tablespoons of dried fruit, 1 teaspoon of cinnamon and one large or two small carrots, grated.
- Mix a teaspoon of bicarb of soda with a few teaspoons of milk and blend this into the mixture.
- Grease a tart tin and spread the mixture evenly over this.
- Cook in a moderate oven for about half an hour.
- Serve hot

(And good luck to you)

Athena's Diary 5

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ATHENA'S FAMILY TREE

For what we're about to receive is one of the four Birmingham 2050 Scenarios about two interconnected families living in three possible futures. The family tree is below.

