

**Examen VBO-MAVO-D**

**Engels**

Vorbereidend  
Beroeps  
Onderwijs

Middelbaar  
Algemeen  
Voortgezet  
Onderwijs

20 **02**

Tijdvak 1  
Donderdag 23 mei  
13.30–15.30 uur

**Tekstboekje**

## Tekst 10

# I'm Mike, I'm a beggar and this is my life

1 THROUGHOUT the winter and this last wet and chilly spring, Mike Newman was a pitiful figure. He sat on a pallet  
5 in the Underground station through which I pass daily on my way to work. He was wrapped in  
10 a blanket against the cold, inhaling dust and dirt. He was bearded, long-haired and shaggy.  
15 But he always behaved with a certain dignity, which made me curious to know his history.

the

ANGELA LAMBERT

interview

2 When I asked him if he would  
15 tell me his story, he thought about it for a couple of days, and then agreed. He has not given me his real name, though it is, he says, the name by which he is  
20 generally known. Certain questions he refused to answer.  
25 When I asked if he had any savings, he smiled wryly, looked sideways at me and said: 'The answer to that would have to be  
30 no, wouldn't it?' At times I wondered if he was inventing; yet a chance remark later on would nearly always bear out the  
35 truth of what he had said earlier.

3 Mike Newman is 38 (he says),  
35 a slim, fine-featured Irishman with olive-green eyes and a stunning smile. For the past ten months he has begged; for the past six weeks he has sold The Big Issue, the magazine for the  
40 homeless that now sells some 100,000 copies a week in six British cities. Selling it has given him a bit more self-respect, but what made him beg in the first place? Can he pinpoint a  
45 decisive moment, or was it just misfortune?

4 He reflects. 'If I was being honest, no, because I could probably do a lot better. Or could I? Let me think.' He grins and

50 shifts and looks at me sidelong.

Charm is part of his stock-in-trade, and Mike Newman has plenty.

55 'It's a no-win situation, because after my wife died I couldn't work because  
60 I was looking after my son by myself. I was determined to look after him very well, in case they tried to take

65 him away from me. That left a break of four or five years in my life during which I hadn't had a job and after that it was very hard to get started again. This  
70 was sexual discrimination, because if I had been a woman it wouldn't have mattered: a woman could say she'd been looking after her child – but with  
75 a bloke it doesn't cut any ice'.

9 Born in Belfast, the older of two children, into a stable and united family, he still goes back a couple of times a year to visit  
80 his father (his mother died eight years ago) and his younger sister. They all get on well. Do they  
85 know what he does? 'They know I work in London, but I don't go into any great detail.'

He was taught by (he says the words with deep irony) *Christian* brothers. Although he was clever enough to avoid most  
90 of the beatings and pass all his exams, he hated school. 'I was too frightened to do anything wrong, because the teachers were violent ... looking back  
95 now, they must have got some sort of sadistic pleasure out of it. Even now, when I think of them I still shiver. But it was all right for them, because they were  
100 *Christians*.' It is the only time he speaks with real bitterness. Otherwise, he is remarkably free of self-pity.

'In spite of them, Belfast was



Mike Newman with The Big Issue

105 a lovely place to grow up in. I had a secure childhood - whatever that is. By the time school was coming to an end I fancied being a sales representative, probably because I had a ready tongue and hated the idea of having to work in an office all day. I wanted to be my own boss. So that's how I started; and you name it, I've sold it.'

9 He came to London in 1972 and trained as a nurse. There he met his future wife. 'We were together for 12 years before she died.' For several years Mike and his wife lived a perfectly settled domestic and working life.

10 'We had one child, a boy who's now living in Northern Ireland with my sister. He'd have been there anyway, regardless of my, um, social standing, because the schools there are much better.' When I asked him about  
130 his relationship with his son he avoided discussing it.

11 The only time he becomes angry is when I ask how he feels about mothers with babies  
135 begging in the Underground. 'It's disgusting! There's no need for it! I wouldn't give a penny to people sitting there with a child. It didn't ask to come into the world, they should at least treat it with some decency and not trail it through Underground stations.'

*'The Independent',  
July 14, 1998*

# Signs from the sky

*ROBIN NEILLANDS clears up the unanswered questions of crop circle country*

1 The local estate agents keep quiet about this but  
people who live in my part of Wiltshire stand a  
better chance of being abducted by aliens than any-  
one else in Britain. I was brought up around here and  
5 I came back to live here a year ago because I remem-  
bered how beautiful it was but nobody told me about  
the aliens. If I am ever abducted in a flying saucer by  
green men, my wife intends to take legal action.

2 Our village, Beckhampton, is quite small. We have 6  
10 about 70 inhabitants, a racing stable, one pub and a  
postbox nailed to a tree but no shop and no church.  
That said, Beckhampton is famous, for it lies at the  
centre of the Wessex Triangle, and people flock here  
from all over the world just to see the crop circles.

3 15 Every summer, anytime between July and Septem-  
ber, crop circles appear in the corn fields around  
Beckhampton. Crop circles have been appearing in  
the fields of Wiltshire and Hampshire for at least 15  
years and no one has any real idea who – or what – 7  
20 creating them... and then I have not even talked  
about the aliens and the flying saucers, the white  
horses carved in the chalk of the hills, the prehistoric  
standing stones of Avebury and all the relics of a  
long-dead Celtic culture, which are common around  
25 here. If anyone is seeking Mysterious Britain, this is 8  
the place to find it.

4 Don't get me wrong. I don't believe in aliens or  
flying saucers or the popular theory that the crop  
circles of Wiltshire are created by men from Mars.  
30 Well, not much. On the other hand, how do they get  
there, every summer, circles of considerable complex-  
ity, which are created overnight, often within a few 9  
hours, without anyone being seen doing it? Every  
year more and more people come to see the crop  
35 circles and watch for one being built, so far without  
success. Moreover, some of the local people, all hard-  
working and soberminded country folk, are not half  
as sceptical as I am. Take David and Lynn, two friends  
who run the local pet kennels, they have very definite  
40 views on the circles.

5 'Some of them are a hoax but some of them are

real and maybe they are made by aliens. How else  
can you account for them? Three years ago, a crop  
circle appeared in the meadow behind our house. It  
45 was not there when we went to bed but it was there in  
the morning... and every clock in the house had  
stopped. Not just the electric ones and the oven timer  
but wind-up ones as well... and both our wrist-  
watches.'

50 I started making enquiries among the local  
authorities and this took me to RAF Lyneham, an air  
force base 12 miles from Beckhampton. The pilots  
were remarkably uncommunicative on the subject of  
flying saucers and aliens. Well, I can understand that;  
55 RAF pilots who see flying saucers tend to get  
grounded. This line of enquiry soon dried up and I  
returned to the best source of up-to-date information  
on matters mysterious; the public bar of the Waggon  
and Horses, Beckhampton's 450-year-old pub.

60 There I struck gold in the shape of a lady who  
claimed that a flying saucer 'quite large with yellow  
lights,' had flown past her when she was walking her  
dog by the White Horse on Cherhill. She became less  
talkative when she discovered I was a journalist but  
65 before that she seemed to be totally convinced of it.

Crop circles remain a mystery. They do no particu-  
lar harm and, indeed, people entering a crop circle  
often claim to feel happy and excited. They give a lot  
of pleasure to many people and attract visitors to the  
70 Wessex Triangle from across the world, but not yet, as  
far as we can prove, from Other Worlds. It all remains  
very puzzling.

Chris and Debbie, who run the Waggon and Hor-  
ses, are equally puzzled by some of their customers. 'I  
can't say we have ever served an alien but we had a  
customer last year who told us that he had been  
abducted by one near Silbury Hill, up the road, and  
we get New Age travellers carrying crystals and the  
occasional Druid. We had a visit from Charles  
80 Dickens about 150 years ago and Pamela Anderson  
of *Baywatch* had a drink last Christmas but so far no  
one has arrived from Mars... but we are still hoping.'



*Crop circles near Beckhampton*

*'In Britain', August 1997*



**It's a decade and a half since Scott, Chris and John (left to right) made us all quizzaholics. And they still can't take Trivial Pursuit seriously. Tania Unsworth meets them**

**S**cott Abbott, John Haney and his brother Chris are so rich, they say they don't know how much money they have. They sit round a table in the bar of their ultra-exclusive golf club, Devil's Pulpit, just outside Toronto, and make a show of trying to work it out. One magazine recently estimated their fortune at \$50 million, but they think this could be a bit too high. They shrug and smile, but it is hard to believe them.

John has stains on the front of his jacket. Chris swigs from a bottle of beer. All three have the vaguely shabby look of informal 1970s types who never quite got used to wearing suits. You 30 multimillionaires and that's the way they like it. After all, they have a legend to live up to: the legend of three regular guys who once upon a time had an idea for a board game and made themselves wealthy beyond their wildest dreams. The time was 1979. The game was Trivial Pursuit.

This Christmas about 75,000 Trivial Pursuit sets will be sold in this country. It is the second most played game after Scrabble, and nearly a third of all British households own at least one set. But this represents only a fraction of the market. It has been adapted for use in 30 countries and in

17 languages. There is a CD-Rom version, an audio version, a video version, a travel edition, and a pocket edition. At one point in the early 1980s it was being manufactured in America at the rate of one set per second. Not bad for something that took only 45 minutes 31.

Few common fantasies are as attractive as the fantasy of the One Big Idea, something perfectly simple but utterly brilliant that will bring us a fortune in easy money. The idea for Trivial Pursuit was of this kind. Where the idea differed from most others was that Chris and Scott, who actually came up with it, were crazy enough to think it could work. 'Most people don't take a chance,' says Chris. 'They're comfortable enough. Neither of us owned a house, didn't even have a car. We had nothing 32. We didn't quit our jobs because we had made it: we quit our jobs to make it. There's 33.'

They teamed up with John and started the long struggle to make Trivial Pursuit a reality. 34 to make prototypes was tough. They offered \$1000 shares in the venture to friends and workmates, many of whom laughed or dismissed them as irresponsible layabouts. 'It was life on the edge. It was like a war,' says John.

What 35, one suspects, was the sheer force of Chris' personality. By all accounts he is the most driven of the three - nervy, creative, charismatic, always coming up with far-fetched schemes. Today, however, he seems utterly bored and dejected. It has been a difficult summer, he says,

and he is longing to go to Marbella, where he passes the winter - as he passes the summer - playing golf. His straggly moustache and eternal cigarette set him apart from the crowd. He seems to want people to think that, at 46, he is still the hard-drinking, devil-may-care nonconformist.

When Trivial Pursuit was finally launched in America in 1982, it sold eight times better than Monopoly in its first year and made celebrities out of its creators. 'During those crazy days I thought, this is what it must be like for a rock group,' says Chris, 'because our personalities were so attached to the game, we were 36 it ourselves, just by appearing on TV.'

Now they can afford to spend most of their time playing golf and hanging out in the bar. It seems like a great life, so

why am I myself not 37? Maybe it has to do with Chris' evident frustration. 'If you set yourself a goal - earning a million by the age of 30 - and get it, then what?' asks golf friend Susan MacKay. 'Somebody like Chris will always be looking for the next big thing. It's his nature to be like that. He's a very complex person, but then he was like that before. 38 hasn't changed that.'

Do they ever play Trivial Pursuit themselves? The trio seem to shudder a little. No, never. So what board game do they play? They still enjoy the occasional best-of-seven Scrabble tournament.

*'The Sunday Times Magazine', November 24, 1996*



# Sorry chief, I've just lost supercar

By Eric Bailey, Motoring Editor

- 1 THE man who lost a car valued somewhere between expensive and priceless had his head down yesterday.
- 2 He had been towing a trailer from France to the Peterborough base of Perkins Technology in England. On the trailer was what looked like an ordinary Renault Safrane.
- 3 In fact, it was a testbed for a secret prototype engine being developed at huge cost by Renault and Perkins.
- 4 On Tuesday night he parked the trailer at the Pavilion Service Station at Gillingham, on the M2 in Kent, and booked into the Travelodge. On Wednesday morning, the trailer and its burden were gone.
- 5 "The theft was reported at about 7am this morning," said a police spokesman.
- 6 Queries to Renault UK were met with puzzlement. The telephone wires between Renault UK and Renault Paris reached meltdown, but the man who knew about the car in Paris had gone to lunch.
- 7 The value of the car is hard to pinpoint but, said Renault, it would have been adequately insured. Thankfully, at 1.30pm, after appeals on local radio, it was spotted by a local within three miles of the service station.
- 8 The thieves, perhaps recognising that they were in possession of a revolutionary top secret prototype engine which would be hard to trade with the local dodgy car dealers, had dumped it, taking the much more saleable four-wheeled trailer.
- 9 The communications office at Perkins, which had earlier released sketchy details in order to get the car back, became less than communicative, as befits a company involved in revolutionary top secret prototypes.
- 10 As for what would be happening to the poor driver, perhaps we can guess.

*'The Daily Telegraph',  
February 6, 1998*

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