

Martin Edward Baker
Former Attendant,
Plymouth City Museum
and Art Gallery

With regard to our educational system, I would like to start with our school education.

If you would have asked me some ten years ago what I then thought of school education, I would have said without a shadow of a doubt, **THE BEST IN THE WORLD**. But over recent years, due to shortsighted people in our system and the greed of a percentage of its staff, the educating of our youth is starting to go backwards, with the integration of schools putting up their attendance into the 1000's with classes ran by one teacher in some cases doubling. How can one teacher give the attention required to its students? My final comment on school education must be the private school, is it not time that everyone (and not only those born with a silver spoon in their mouths?) had the chance of this exclusive system.

It is not for me to say how we are to make the changes required to bring back an educational system that is second to none (money is the obvious big divide), then again that is why we have highly paid puppets in our councils. It is time we brought the people with money and the people without money closer together.

I wonder how far some of top politicians who brag they come from working class backgrounds would get if they had to be educated today. But school albeit the most important part of our education today it is still only part of it.

Museums can be very dowdy places but a great deal can be learnt if the time is taken when wandering around these places and in Plymouth there has been a great deal of time and work spent on one of our museum houses which I think has made it one of the most interesting in Devon and with several other large houses around this area which are well looked after with all the artefacts of their periods in prime condition make Plymouth in my opinion the prime historical area in the country.

It is such a pity that the main museum and art gallery in Plymouth cannot ensue the same enthusiasm from me. With council spending very tight and getting tighter if something is not done to brighten up this museum and to try to split it from its pathetic art gallery it will remain as a lot of visitors have pointed out to me (boring with little to look at) and comments about the art gallery like "I would not give these pictures the light of day" and "What a waste of wall space" - some comments I'm afraid I couldn't put down on paper.

Let's bring in some dinosaur skeletons and treble the size of the natural (or un-natural museum as someone has put it) for the smaller kids, and have a futuristic section. Because not only should the main museum deal with the past, but look to the future as well.

I know all this will cost money but after all we are here to serve the public and the public are the ones who are paying and at the moment I don't think they are getting value for money from these sections of our museums.

I hope by the time this picture starts its rounds someone will have started to sort out the main museums.

One section of education all around the country has gone from strength to strength - our social education. More and more effort is going into entertainment so our younger people can get out and meet others with different creeds and ideas with the hope of some sort of relationship at the end, with discos, night clubs and coffee bars springing up around everywhere, and reaping the profits from their vast expenditure. One area of our social education I do have a comment on is with regard to sex and video shops. Why courts refuse licenses to these shops because a few prudish people disagree with them is beyond me. After all sex is one of our major pastimes when we grow older and for people to think that if younger people see sex books or videos they will turn into Jekyll and Hydes is just stupid. After all we came into the world naked.

I feel if the same effort was put into other areas of education as has been put into entertainment our education system would without doubt be the best this or any other country has ever seen.

My final words are on the item I was asked to select from the museum. These three birds are called "The Conspirators"; every time I see these three pretty beasts I think of three politicians cuddled together in a dark corner deciding the fate of the world.