

The Hothouse Project

Charles Shaar Murray's Journalism as Craft and Art writing course

www.charlesshaarmurray.com/hothouse/hothouse-course

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DAVID MALF PALFREYMAN: Irritation Application

'I will shove that up your arse if you don't keep quiet' or the more simplistic, 'Shut the fuck up!' are phrases we should be hearing more and more when it comes to mobile phone users on public transport. Whether it is business men using the train carriage as their personal office, bored commuters spouting general nonsense or the serial headphone user with his swarm of maraca-playing wasps swirling around his head, there needs to be certain etiquette adhered to when it comes to using these wretched things. We also need to be able to escape from it.

In days of old a newspaper or a book would suffice to dull the monotony of the daily commute. While people still adhere to these old methods, we have now entered a new age of gadgets and noise and a generation that can't function without it. On the train or bus, nowhere is safe, a quiet carriage or an upstairs deck can suddenly be occupied by the arrival of someone who wants to spend his or her entire journey talking bollocks to someone who is not there. To the person sat quietly reading a book it's a pain in the arse. There is nothing worse than listening to a one-sided conversation especially if the person in your vicinity is shouting down the phone and, let's face it, some of them you could probably still hear if they were on the conveyance behind, never mind the one that you are travelling on!

Even people just listening to music on the their 'personal' headsets, and I use the term very loosely here, are just as much of an annoyance. The high-pitched tinny sounds emitting from their headsets are an irritation of the highest order. Not one fuck do these people give, it seems, or maybe they are so brass-necked they don't even notice? In the old days there used to be a smoking carriage, so why not have a carriage specifically designated for people that like to talk endless shit on mobile phones?

Surely, the stress of having to hear someone using one of these infernal things daily while commuting, already stressful enough as

it is, is bad for the health. A normally mild-mannered person constantly having to endure it could potentially be driven over the edge, resulting in the bludgeoning-to-death of some selfish wanker. Such a consolation appearing to be the only way to get any peace.

However, the curse of the mobile phone is not only consigned to public transport. Even merely walking down the street can be an obstacle course: trying to avoid slow-moving people looking down into their phones or stopping dead in their tracks mid-conversion. No town centre is safe now. Maybe it's time to move out into the country.

And stay there...

Dave Malf Palfreyman: Musician, Singer/Songwriter, Poet, and Actor from the north of England. Embarked on a pub crawl for 25 years and now plans to write about it.