



Storybank: The Milkfarm Years
(extract)

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England in the 2620's.

The silver-clad, aerodynamic future never came to pass. People got attached to the old ways, the old houses especially. They wanted either to keep or to replicate them, from the serried streets of back-to-back terraces to the great mansions. The fashion was to build brand new based on an old plan, with modern devices.

Some people had gone to live on asteroids to work as miners. Others had been taken to live on them as prisoners. There were trips to and from the moon for those who could afford it. Most people, though, were either uninvited, flatly uninterested, or both. They said, what do we want to be bothered with the Moon for? They said it in their various regional accents because, happily, accents still existed. In fact they became stronger since the Great Anti-Globalisation Revolt of the 2280's. All sorts of things had come back in then that were missing, presumed dead: allotments, mead, caring about your neighbours.

What do we want to be bothered with the the Moon for? They said this in their hypnotised multitudes, they said it to fat wives and skinny husbands and bustling, unheeding kids (such things being timeless) before turning back to their entertainment systems: screenless, 3D mini theatres in the corner of each room.

The most popular entertainment programme of the day had been "Guess the Asteroid", where the presenter, who only got the job because she had a famous mother (such things being timeless) talked the audience through a mystery location via satellite, supposedly from some lumpen, otherworldly landscape in green/purple/midnight blue. It hit the buffers when a disgruntled ex-runner let the cat out of the bag: it was filmed amid great secrecy in a converted photographer's studio in Solihull, West Midlands

Zone. It was taken off the air. People were incensed that they had been deceived, far more than with the various political scams which would emerge from time to time. Tamper with our very lives, such conduct seemed to say, but don't, whatever you do, bugger about with our light entertainment.

They, the ubiquitous 'they', had managed to rescue the air supply, the bees and the banks just in the nick of time. Since the end of fossil fuels and their ingenious replacements there were no geodomes or indoor cities. All life could breathe uninhibited. Flora and fauna waxed fat and plentiful, at least in the North. This was the time at which the North became water-rich and the South parched, irrigated by the great Northern reservoirs. This upended a long-established economic imbalance. Londoners migrated North for both work and fresh water; Leeds was the capital city in all but name.

Paper money had gone centuries before but nobody missed it. It was all electronic transfer, even the business of paying for a taxi. You could pay by looking and talking at a certain machine. It recognised your face. The banks were mere administrators of these transactions.

Electricity still pulsed its way around the world, zap, zap, zap, a force which could propel, kill or thrill.

Along people still trundled, or raced, depending on their lot in life, through birth and marriage and death and all stages in-between. Same sex married couples abounded like the plants and trees, flowers and fruits. The monarchy had gone, having gradually been seen by enough people as elitist and old-fashioned. There was no violence: like so many bodies, they just had their funding withdrawn. Though armed conflict, at least, was

nowhere near the default setting it had been because of the upsurge of female rulers, occasionally an ideological boil would from time to time appear on the backside of the planet. And so it was that during this snapshot of time, the 2620's, in the north of England, a very strange thing happened. This is part of the storybank detailing that time.