CHANGES BRISTOL NEWSLETTER
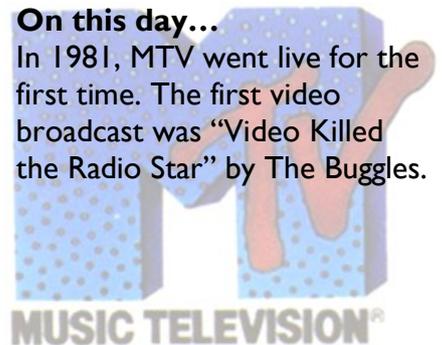
"We act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements in life, when all we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about. - Charles Kingsley

1/8/11

On this day…
In 1981, MTV went live for the first time. The first video broadcast was "Video Killed the Radio Star" by The Buggles.

CHANGES MEAL AT TEOH'S

There's going to be a Changes social event on **Thursday 11th August**. Meeting at the Hen and Chicken pub in Southville at **7pm,** we'll then go for a meal at Teoh's, Southville (next to the Tobacco Factory) for **8pm**. Please call the office on 01179411123 or email info@changesbristol.org.uk if you want to come along. See you there!

HEALTH WALKS

Walking for Health in Bristol organise walks around the city, providing people with the opportunity to make new friends and exercise at the same time. There are walks coming up all through the summer at various locations around the city. The groups are free and open to all. For more information, visit www.bristol.gov.uk/healthwalks.

DEPRESSION & DIET DOCUMENTARY

A short documentary about the way our meals can affect our moods has been published on YouTube. Including many expert testimonials, the film shows how omega-3 can significantly help those who suffer from long term depression. Click here for part one, or search "Igennus - Beating Depression" on YouTube.

For any feedback or ideas for the newsletter, contact sarah@changesbristol.org.uk
The next newsletter will be 15th August

KEEP ON CHUGGING BY SARAH

The general consensus, at least on the internet and among the people I know, is that street collectors (or "chuggers") are a bad thing. They're rude, they don't take no for an answer and most of them don't have much affiliation with the cause they're collecting for anyway. But now I'm not so sure.

As it turns out, street collectors do actually rake in quite a significant amount of money, much much more than other forms of fundraising. If someone signs up to give £10 a month and sticks with it for a number of years, it provides valuable funds for a charity to plan for its future. And at the moment, with the cutbacks, that kind of security is much needed.

While I don't think I can just ignore the amount of really rude people I've met who are also charity collectors, I also can't ignore the facts. If it's true that these people are bringing in a significant amount of money for charities who do vital work for people who really need it, then that's fantastic.

The main problems seem to be as follows:

1. Rudeness

The difficulty with the way street collectors talk is that it is rude to make comments about what someone's wearing or where they're going when you don't know them. I usually try and make a joke out of it, but it can get a bit tiring thinking of things to say. Also, when I've said 'No, thanks' and walked past them before, I've had several nasty comments made, including one guy who cheerfully turned to the woman walking behind me and said, 'Ah, you look like you've got more of a personality than HER'. Ouch…

2. Not taking no for an answer

Asking someone about what else they spend their money on, or trying to equate with other things is just insulting. When I was unemployed, I spent the majority of my money on therapy sessions… guess how happy I was about divulging THAT to strangers on the street?

3. Invasion of personal space

I understand that street collectors are doing a job, usually for a really good cause, and sometimes I'm happy to stop and listen. But if I stopped every time someone asked me to, I think my head would explode. I hate ignoring

someone when they're being charming, even if it is a deceptive sort of charm which isn't really specific to you at all. It makes me uncomfortable.

Those are problems that I've noticed. However, here are some problems that have been brought up by others, which I really don't think are problems at all:

1. The fact that they're not volunteers, they're (shock, horror) PAID to do this

As if being paid by a charity means you can't possibly have any sort of affinity with them, and you're just a soulless, money-grubbing so-and-so. I'm aware that street collectors get quite a decent hourly rate, but there's no way charities would pay these people if they didn't bring in a significant amount of return. Besides, charities do have budgets for paid staff, whether it's admin, fundraisers or consultants. It'd be lovely if we could all volunteer out of the kindness of our hearts but people need to do things like eat and pay rent.

2. Their appearance

The young women who do this job may also be quite attractive, and this apparently causes all kinds of problems. There's people wailing in every online discussion about these manipulative hussies, duping poor hapless men into giving over their bank details by shamelessly flirting with them. As far as I'm concerned, if you're silly enough to believe that someone who is paid to get you to hand over your phone number/address/bank details might be attracted to you, you deserve to lose a chunk of your monthly cash.

3. They may have another job

If you're a student or an out-of-work actor, then it apparently doesn't matter what you do the rest of the time, there's no way you could possibly be making a difference to anything, because you're poor and you've got dreadlocks. What people are basically doing when they complain about 'students' doing these jobs is showing massive amounts of snobbery. Who cares whether someone's only doing the job to support themselves through college? It doesn't make it any less worthwhile.

This article has been abridged. Check out more of my writing at trichquestions.wordpress.com!