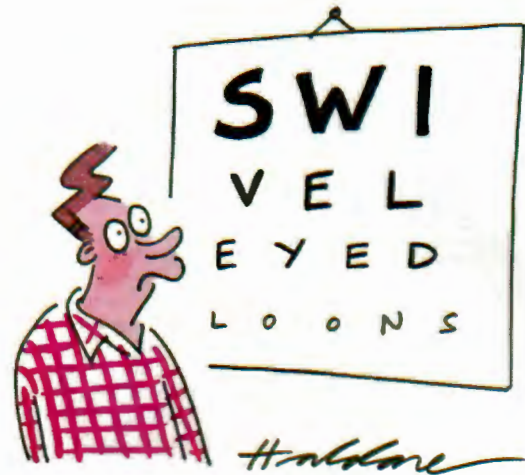


# Joining the masses

**Richard Barr** wants to become a swivel-eyed loon like everyone else, and no-one can stop him



I was not on the road to Damascus at the time that I saw the light. Hereabouts one has to be more prosaic. The road between Knapton and Trunch would have to do instead.

I now know that the one thing in life that I want to be (and have always wanted to be) is a swivel-eyed loon – even though I could not bring myself to vote for UKIP. In fact I cannot even remember the name of its leader. Nonetheless I will be in good company as apparently 25 per cent of people voted for UKIP, so there are plenty of us to make up the noble company of swivel-eyed loons.

Imagine a world full of swivel-eyed loons – swivel-eyed loony judges, making contradictory and mad judgments, the EC's swivel-eyed bureaucrats imposing a ban on olive oil in open dishes in posh restaurants (then changing their minds), swivel-eyed surgeons cutting off the wrong leg and of course the swivel-eyed politicians, hell bent on denying access to justice with their plethora of recent so-called reforms.

Sadly UKIP is no better at sticking to the truth than its contemporaries. In its recent full page advertisement taken out in *The Daily Telegraph*, it said (among other things) that this government is "happy to open the door to 29 million Romanians and Bulgarians."

Now that is an interesting idea. The total population of those countries is just 29 million. Presumably, if UKIP are right, 29 million people will show up here on 2 January next year, the last one having switched out the lights in Bulgaria and Romania.

If they do, there is a simple solution for the rest of us: move over there. The weather looks pleasanter than it is here. The countryside is attractive and house prices are incredibly cheap. You can buy

a very respectable property in Bulgaria for under €50,000. And above all we could happily be swivel-eyed loons: nobody would criticise us and we would be far, far away from UKIP and the man whose name I cannot remember.

In fact memory is a problem these days, not just for those of advancing years but also for those who are much younger. I had lunch a few days ago with two solicitors who had recently had children. We were

**"Apparently 25 per cent of people voted for UKIP, so there are plenty of us to make up the noble company of swivel-eyed loons"**

trying to identify potential speakers for our local Law Society's next annual dinner.

"It's on the tip of my tongue," we collectively said as we tried to recall the names of a recent Bafta winner, a talented and famous musician and the actor who played judge John Deed, all of whom had Norfolk connections.

Most of us have the experience of marching into a room with the intention of performing a task, only to arrive and have no idea why we were there. We then have to retrace our steps to the place where we first had the thought, and hope that we will find a clue.

If you think you are losing your memory, the chances are that you are not. We have to carry so much more around in our heads than we ever did in the past that it is sometimes just a question of waiting for the right piece of information to bubble to the surface – and what IS he called, that UKIP man?

A report recently in *New Scientist* discloses that it is never too late to learn to remember, and that older people are just as

capable of learning as those a tenth their age. Old dogs, apparently, can learn new tricks.

I used to be able to memorise a list of a hundred objects, then recall them instantly, even in and out of order. I could not do that now – or could I?

The answer is: yes I could and so could you. While others were reading works of great literature in their youth, I was studying *How to develop a super power*

memory by Harry Lorayne. His books are still available, though the pages are a little brown around the edges.

Most of the memory feats that people carry out are a combination of plenty of practice and memory tricks. You remember things far better by association and exaggeration – especially if you can conjure a picture to remind you of what you want to remember. I will return to the theme of memory in a later article, but for the moment, think of a very large garage overflowing with swivel-eyed loons, their eyes darting hither and thither. Then place the garage on a hill far away, and you have it: Far + garage = Farage. And you will never now forget his name – even if you are the most swivel-yed Loon on the planet (or at least in Bulgaria).



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