

Birthday Boy Bonanza

It all began with the Amazon delivery which arrived on my birthday. We had been away at our residential caravan in Fife and our neighbour Rita kindly accepted it on my behalf.

The package was book shaped and heavy. We share my Amazon account and I thought it might be for Alice and so I waited for her to return from golf before we opened it to find it was the *RSPB Complete Birds of Britain and Europe*. We are only moderately interested in birds and decided we would leave it at the caravan, use it to spot shore birds.

I had been hoping for *The Hornby Book of Trains*, a birthday idea I had hinted at several times on the run-up to my birthday. To be honest, I had been disappointed with my haul of cards and gifts for my big seven-oh.

Over coffee we tried to figure who might have sent me this book but could not come up with any answers. After puzzling for a while, I thought of ringing round friends and family but we decided against this, in case it might be interpreted as soliciting.

The following day a further Amazon delivery arrived, again heavy but not book shaped. As before it was addressed to me, Arthur John Smith, flat 8/3, Redcroft Court with the correct postcode. Neither of us had ordered anything and so, with great anticipation, we opened it together to reveal huge 10x50 green binoculars with fog-proof prism lenses and a compass rangefinder, ruggedized, heavy duty, for boating and birdwatching.

We still had the packaging from the bird book and using the two order codes, we contacted Amazon online and after a short delay we received a guarded apology.

Hi Arthur John Smith,

We apologise for these two unexpected deliveries.

Thank you for your patience.

Please keep the **RSPB Complete Birds of Britain and Europe** and the **BOSSDUN Military Marine Binoculars** and enjoy these items with our compliments.

Thank you for your patience.

Please be assured these items have not been charged to your account.

Thank you for your patience.

Our software team are working on this glitch and will sort it very soon.

Thank you for your patience.

Jason Beale, your Personal Amazon Logistics Agent.

Later that evening, the door entry system buzzed while we were eating our evening meal. We were not expecting guests and when I answered it, a girl's voice said, "Hiya Mr Smith, your delivery is here at the door. Got to fly, double parked. Enjoy!" Before I could

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respond, she was off. Alice saw her from the lounge window; she had her hood up, scooting through the rain to a small red car with its wipers on then racing off into the night.

The box was large and heavy and, fearing for my hernia, I left it just inside the entry hallway while I went back up in the lift for my porta-trolley. On opening the box, we found a case of mixed reds, two of each, twenty-four in total. All had French labels. Alice and her golfing buddies did a wine tasting course a few years ago and her iPad app confirmed her suspicion; these were vintage wines, with a total value of around £1,000, she estimated. We double checked and, according to the Amazon paperwork, I was the correct recipient.

Although we were tempted, we put the box in quarantine. Nowadays we only drink alcohol at weekends and on special occasions.

After we had finished eating, we sent off another message to Amazon pointing out the disruptive effect of such unexpected deliveries so late in the day.

The reply arrived just before lunch the next day by which time Alice was at golf and I was already on my way out to my bridge club. I read it late in the afternoon, on my phone, on the train, after the match.

Hi Arthur John Smith,

Thank you for your patience.

We regret the delivery of **Vintage Wine Selection** was charged to your **Arthur John Smith** account in the amount of **£1,234**. This amount has been fully refunded to your **Arthur John Smith** account.

Thank you for your patience.

I have arranged for our software colleagues to delete this transaction from your record.

Thank you for your patience.

We should have this glitch ironed out within a few hours so.

Thank you for your patience.

Please accept this delivery of **Vintage Wine Selection** as a gift from Amazon for your inconvenience.

Thank you for your patience.

Jason Beale, your Personal Amazon Logistics Agent.

On the kitchen table there were two Amazon packages which had been accepted by Rita on our behalf and handed to Alice when she returned from golf.

We checked they were correctly addressed then opened the rectangular box first. It contained a pair of Rohan waterproof trousers and a matching jacket. I tried them on

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and they were a perfect fit. The longer, slimmer package contained a one-person tent in camouflage colour with bendy poles.

I wrote again to Amazon and received a similar reply from Jason Beale asking me to accept these as a gift from Amazon and thanking me for my patience.

The bonanza continued. Over the next two weeks my Amazon gifts included an electronic keyboard, (neither of us play and we gave it to Rita for her grand-daughter), a wine fridge, a huge affair which we gave to Alice's friend Jessica who has a wine cellar room in her house dedicated to *Wines of the World*; a 50" Samsung TV which we have in our bedroom; a professional hunter's archery set complete with field targets including several species of target ducks; a multi-function weather station and numerous items of clothing including dozens of underarmour items all in my size. We had three repeats of the Vintage Wine Selection and two further copies of the *RSPB Complete Birds of Britain and Europe*.

Sticking to our protocol, each item was faithfully reported to Amazon and each received a reply from our new friend Jason Beale whom we suspected was an algorithm.

After two weeks our Amazon gift deliveries finally ended, without explanation. To protect ourselves from possible legacy charges, we cancelled my Arthur John Smith account. A few days later we opened a new Amazon account in the name of Alice Jane Smith.

Alice's big birthday will be in a few weeks' time and well, yes, we are hopeful!