

Tim Hunkin

Born 1950. Engineer, cartoonist, and maker of improbable machines.
Available online at www.livesretold.co.uk



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1. Introduction



The following chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Wikipedia website at www.wikipedia.org.

Tim Hunkin (born 1950) is an English engineer, cartoonist, writer, and artist living in Suffolk, England. He graduated in engineering from Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He is best known for creating the Channel Four television series *The Secret Life of Machines*, in which he explains the workings and history of various household devices. He has also created museum exhibits for institutions across the UK, and designed numerous public engineering works, chiefly for entertainment. Hunkin's works are distinctive, often recognisable by his unique style of papier-mâché sculpture (made from unpainted newsprint), his pen and ink cartoons, and his offbeat sense of humour.

Hunkin's *Under the Pier Show* at Southwold Pier, England, is a penny arcade featuring a number of humorous, coin-operated machines of his creation. Attractions include the "Autofrisk" (a device that simulates the experience of being frisked by multiple, inflated rubber gloves), the "Bathyscape" (a device that simulates a brief submarine adventure) and a somewhat rude sculptural clock. Hunkin has also opened *Novelty Automation*, an amusement arcade in Holborn, London, which has a more satirical tone, of which Hunkin has said "I don't think political art has an enormous effect, but in the short term it is satisfying to reinforce people's disrespect of the villains."

Many of his other projects are large-scale and theatrical, including gigantic clocks of unconventional designs, bonfires and pyrotechnic displays. In 1976, he designed the flying pigs and sheep for rock band Pink Floyd's In The Flesh tour, promoting their Animals album.

His displays are also featured in episodes of The Secret Life of Machines and relate to the machine covered by the programmes. These included a mountain of flaming televisions; flying vacuum cleaners fitted with rocket motors; a carhenge; a ballet of self-propelled portable radios; and a bizarre "pilgrimage" of an internal combustion engine carried, shoulder high, on a bier into the centre of Carhenge. The Pink Floyd inflatable pig was also featured in the vacuum cleaner episode. Other displays featured in the series were more informative, such as a free-standing central heating system and a "human sewing machine." The programs also include his cartoons in voiced and animated form.

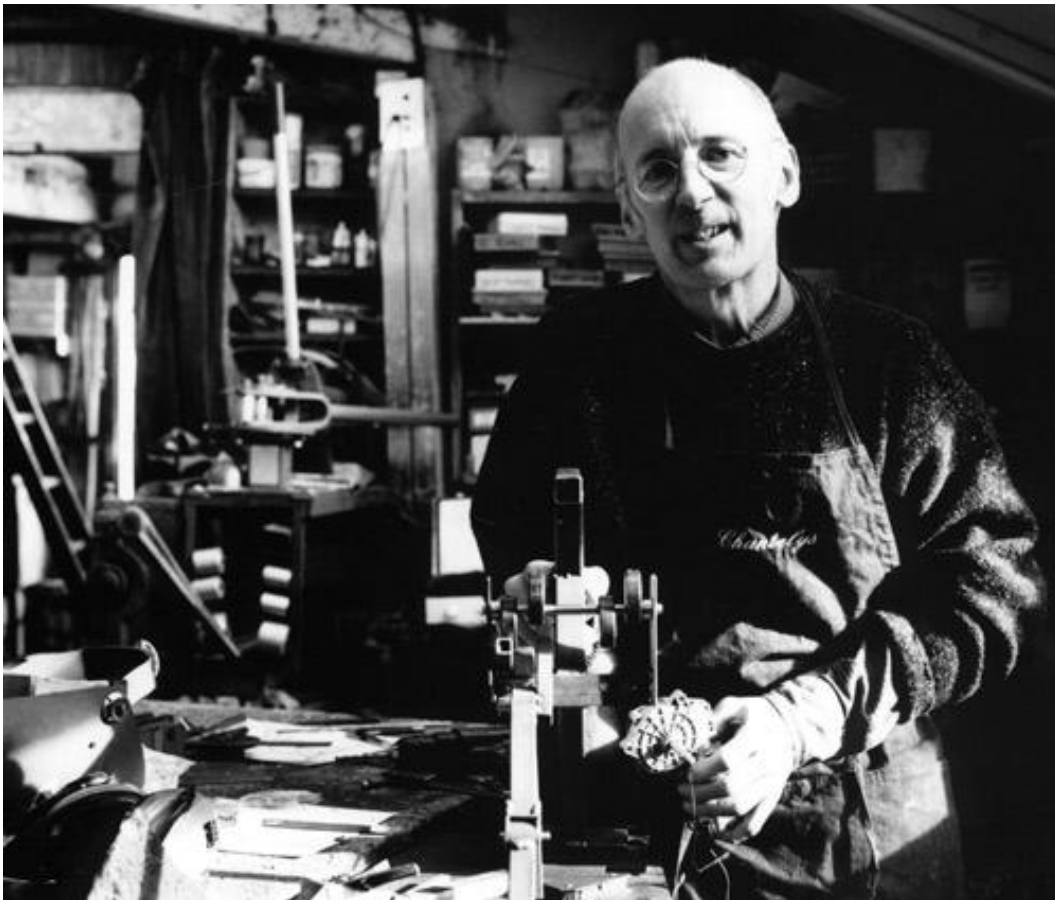
In 2013 he created a large, unfolding clock for the San Francisco Exploratorium.

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic Hunkin was inspired by other creators online to make a new series called The Secret Life of Components to be distributed on YouTube beginning in March 2021.

2. Essay on Making

This and the following chapters were archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from Tim Hunkin's website at www.timhunkin.com.

Hunkin writes: This essay about my machines and how I work was commissioned to accompany an exhibition called 'Rube Goldberg's Ghost' in Chicago (feb 2013). Rube Goldberg is not well known in the UK, he was a US cartoonist who drew contraptions with chain reactions, similar to Heath Robinson in the UK.

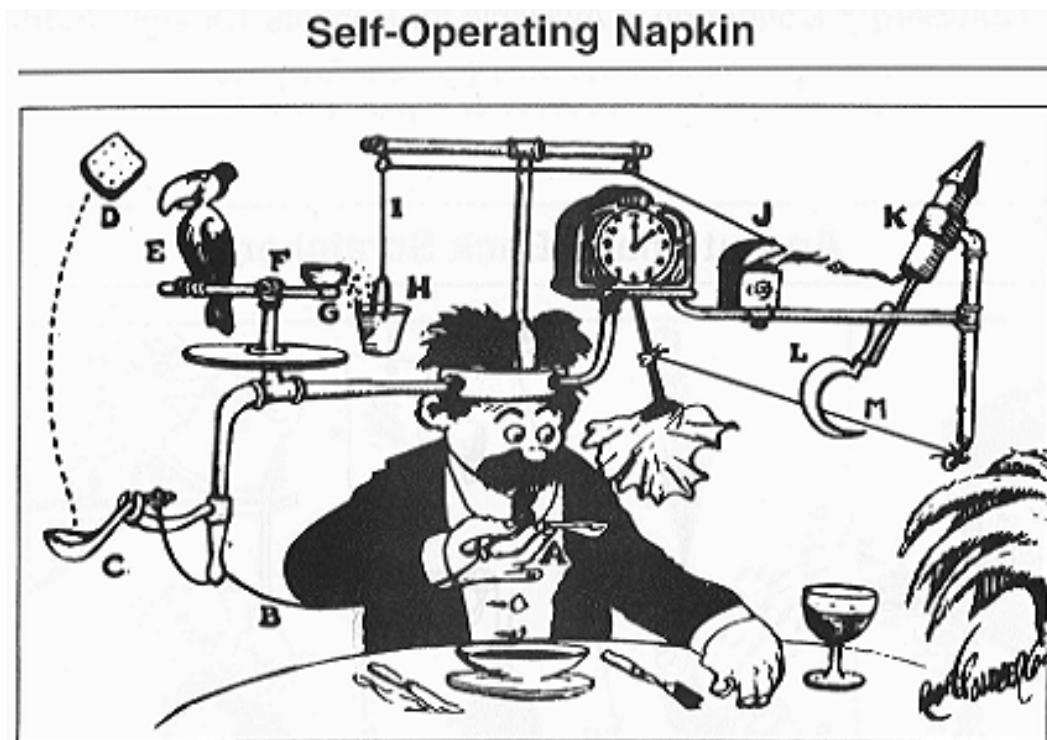


I've made things since I was a small child. Aged about seven, I found my most satisfying machines were ones that made people laugh. 55 years on, nothing much has changed. Like Rube Goldberg, I studied engineering and then became a cartoonist. I must have enjoyed engineering more than Goldberg, because I always wanted to actually make my machines, rather than just draw them.

Today, my main business is running a small amusement arcade on a seaside pier in the UK (The Under The Pier Show, Southwold Pier). It's unusual because all the machines are home-made, mostly by me. I feel very lucky to have it. Anytime I can go down to the pier and see people enjoying using my machines

and having a good time. This keeps me working, encouraging me to make the next machine.

Then at the end of each week I empty the coins. They are so heavy I can't lift them all – it feels like real money. And it really is a wonderful way to live – no schmoozing with people in power, no layers of bureaucracy to navigate, no cheques from stupid projects that should never have been funded anyway, and no exaggerating the truth to get grants.



An example of a Rube Goldberg machine.

Goldberg's machines are always described as useless and my machines are too. But they both made us enough money to live off, which is quite useful. Also making people laugh is useful, a lot more beneficial than many 'serious' advances in technology like yet another new computer operating system. My aunt Lis, who is very religious, describes my arcade as my ministry.

People often ask me where my ideas come from. I'm entertained by the absurdities of modern world and particularly enjoy media hysteria because it's so silly and yet everyone takes it so seriously. For example, 'Whack a Banker' came from the financial crash. Sometimes the ideas are more personal – 'Microbreak' came from arguing with my wife about a proposed holiday.

But I think initial 'concepts' or ideas are always over-rated. My starting points are usually quite simple – the fun and skill is in the making. Once I've started any machine I get completely absorbed in the research, and today Google images and Youtube make research such fun. So over the months in workshop

any initial basic idea, however bad, gets constantly embellished and usually turns out OK.

What I love is the physical process of making a machine. It's partly drawing - not pretty drawings but drawing as a way of thinking through problems. This gets better and better as I get older, with more experience to feed in. The making process also involves lots of prototypes – there are many problems drawings can never solve. This is where it's vital to have good stores, not only to have the parts to try something, but also to jog the memory for possible alternative solutions. Stores are a physical version of a memory map.

When the stores fail the internet takes over. Delivery in a small country like the UK is speedy so almost anything I need arrives the next day. For expensive parts there are always cheaper alternatives on Ebay. Since the advent of the internet I often feel like a child in a sweet shop, I literally have the world at my fingertips.

I also feel as if I have limitless territory. Today's world is full of machines with amazing software and simple physical interfaces, but very few machines are the other way round. Physical, electromechanical machines with a bit of software wizardry like the ones I make remain largely unexplored territory.

Personally, I don't think of my arcade as 'contemporary art', more as popular entertainment. I don't see myself as an artist, more as a mix of showman, cartoonist and inventor. Rube Goldberg is also usually referred to as a cartoonist or inventor rather than as an artist.

One difference is that cartoons aren't generally subtle, it's important that everyone understands the joke. In the same way my machines aren't subtle, the arcade depends on everyone enjoying them. Goldberg's cartoons and my machines are in the tradition of popular art, which is separate from fine art, particularly in Europe. The fine art tradition looks down on anything that is 'obvious', preferring high concepts, profundity and layers of meaning.

Another difference is that my machines can't ever be fragile or dangerous. I enjoy watching kinetic art machines that are scary or only just work but they really are fine art and it's not what I do. I spend 90% of my time solving conventional engineering problems, making my machines reliable and safe. I love doing it, nothing better than a juicy technical problem to work at. I never feel the need to do Sudoku. But I don't think people generally would consider spending days avoiding a finger trap on a machine as art, even though the process is just as creative.

But the main difference is that at heart I am an engineer – I'm not sure about Goldberg. I do occasionally get excited about a piece of contemporary art, but never as much as by technology. The most exciting place I've ever visited in my

life is a steel works. When I go to London, I walk round the city building sites rather than going to exhibitions. I particularly adore cranes, I wish I had one permanently sitting outside my workshop.

To me, technology is far more fundamental than art or science. It goes back much further (prehistoric man - the tool user) and it has arguably shaped our brains. At the same time that the first apes started walking on two legs 4 million years ago our brains started to grow amazingly rapidly, they are now 3-4 times bigger. To some extent this rapid brain growth must have been stimulated by having free hands, the enormous potential for hand-eye-brain co-ordination and hence the development of tools.

It certainly feels as if my hands are part of my brain. Sometimes when I'm distracted, it almost feels as if they take over and make things without any obvious conscious thought. I also get a bit crazy if I don't make anything for a few days. I'm not bothered if its artistic or not, I'm equally happy mending things or doing conventional engineering jobs.

Making anything is difficult, and its particularly hard particularly things that move. In retrospect I know I spent the first half of my life making things badly. I just wasn't good enough at it to make a living, which is why I ended up drawing cartoons. I don't understand why I none the less persevered so doggedly but the long learning process finally now gives me great satisfaction from my work.

Despite the high amount of skill involved, working with the hands was equated with low paid work until recently. But today the world has changed and low pay work is in catering or call centres. There's new respect for practical skills which is seen in the Maker movement (Make magazine and Maker faires etc). I'm delighted to see the movement grow, and feel proud to be a maker. Its much more relevant to me than whether I'm an artist or not.

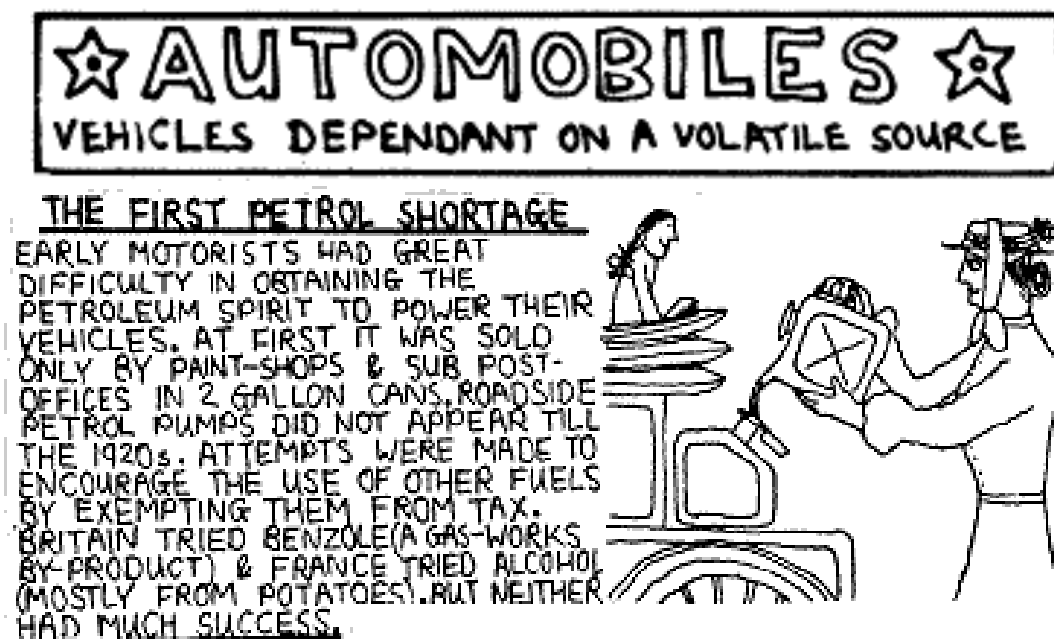
My arcade machines don't easily fit in any category of commerce or art, and I always used to think that I didn't fit any profession or career path. But reading through what I've just written, I realise that I have gradually turned into a classic eccentric inventor. I even have the classic symptom of an eccentric in that I think of myself as normal, but don't quite understand why others don't see the world like I do. It is reassuring though that I'm not completely alone, being in the company of Goldberg and others. And being a mad inventor is actually really good fun, I would recommend it to anyone.

3. The Rudiments of Wisdom

Tim writes: The cartoons appeared in the Observer newspaper from 1973 to 1987. The very first ones were drawn for a Cambridge student newspaper called Stop Press in 1972. The idea for the strip occurred to me after looking through the university library catalogue. Under the words like ‘odd’, ‘strange’, and ‘peculiar’ there were a number of books like Strange but true and Oddities of Animal life. These books were full of obscure advice, odd facts and ridiculous information. At first, the cartoons were not meant to be taken at all seriously (the first one contained advice on how to draw cows). About a year after leaving college, the Observer took them on for a trial period of 6 weeks – I stayed for 14 years!

As I continued doing new subjects, the research became more and more enjoyable. I quickly began to mistrust books like Ripley’s Believe it or Not, with such dubious facts as ‘the horse who was court marshalled’ and ‘the first man to wear trousers’, and took to more reliable sources. Over the years the research became more difficult as I ran out of obvious subjects, but I carried on, enjoying the challenge (there aren’t many jobs where you get paid to investigate anything you like). After I left the Observer Hamlyn’s published the complete set as an Encyclopaedia called ‘Almost everything there is to know’. After selling 50,000 copies this finally went out of print in 1998. Now the cartoons are on the Web, we are updating the facts, and hope to publish a new hardcopy edition in 2004.

An example of a Rudiments of Wisdom cartoon, on automobiles, is shown below:



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www.RudimentsOfWisdom.com

FRIENDLY ADVICE

MAGISTRATES WERE AT FIRST HOSTILE TOWARDS MOTORISTS, ACCEPTING DUBIOUS EVIDENCE OF SPEEDING & IMPOSING THE MAXIMUM FINES. THE AA WAS FOUNDED IN 1906 SPECIFICALLY TO WARN MOTORISTS OF SPEED TRAPS. A LEGAL ACTION IN 1907 RULED OUT THIS INTERFERENCE WITH THE POLICE BUT THEY OVERCAME THIS BY WARNING DRIVERS: IF AN A.A. SCOUT FAILS TO SALUTE YOU, STOP & ASK THE REASON WHY.



© Copyright Tim Hunkin www.RudimentsOfWisdom.com



MOTORING IN JAPAN

TOKYO HAS THE WORST TRAFFIC JAMS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. ONLY 9% OF THE CITY AREA IS ROADWAY (LONDON HAS 23% & WASHINGTON D.C. HAS 43%). IT ALSO HAS MORE FATAL ROAD ACCIDENTS, PER HEAD OF POPULATION, THAN ANY OTHER CAPITAL.

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REGISTRATION

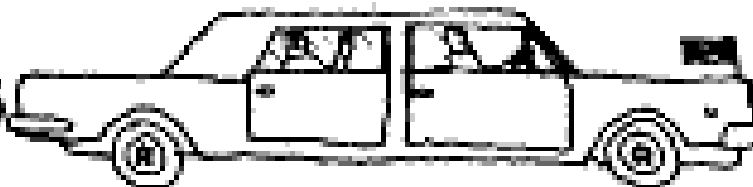


REGISTRATION NUMBERS WERE FIRST INTRODUCED BY THE 1903 MOTORING ACT. THE MOTORING GENTRY OBJECTED STRONGLY TO BEING 'NUMBERED LIKE CONVICTS & LABELLED LIKE HACKNEY CARRIAGES.' TO SOFTEN THIS BLOW TO THEIR PRIDE A CLAUSE WAS ADDED RAISING THE SPEED LIMIT FROM 12 TO 20 MPH.

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MR NIXON'S CAR



PROBABLY THE MOST EXPENSIVE CAR EVER MADE IS THE U.S. PRESIDENT'S BULLETPROOF LINCOLN CONTINENTAL. ITS MODIFICATIONS INCLUDED ONE INCH THICK GLASS & 2½ TONS OF ARMOUR PLATING & COST £208,000. EVEN IF ALL 4 TYRES ARE SHOT OUT IT CAN TRAVEL AT 50MPH ON INNER RUBBER EDGED STEEL DISCS.

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MOTORING IN RUSSIA

MOSCOW IS ONE OF THE LEAST CONGESTED CAPITALS WITH ONE CAR TO EVERY 29 INHABITANTS. RUSSIA MAKES THE WORLD'S HEAVIEST PRODUCTION CAR (THE ZIL 111, WEIGHING 3.12 TONS) & ALSO THE CAR WITH THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD TOOL KIT (THE MOSKVICH). RUSSIA MUST ALSO HAVE THE CLEANEST CARS IN THE WORLD AS IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO DRIVE A DIRTY CAR.



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4. The Under the Pier Show, Southwold



Southwold Pier.

I have had a recurring fantasy about having my own amusement arcade ever since I was a teenager. As a kid in the 1950s I made silly contraptions, struggling to get them to work at all. In the 60s as a teenager I had a Saturday job with Ruffler and Walker, a company building coin op machines. My own first coin op machine, built a few years after leaving college in 1974, was too successful - the coins completely overfilled the box and shorted the electrics.

I carried on to make others, still too unreliable to be left unattended, which I took to local fairs and fetes. These ended up as an exhibition at the ICA in 1981 – my brief brush with fine art. Then in 1984 I started collaborating with Cabaret Mechanical theatre – making machines to stand outside their museum in Covent Garden.

In 1999 I made The Instant Eclipse machine for Southwold High Street. When I put it out again in 2000, the people living next door complained. This was the reason I first approached Chris Iredale, the owner of the pier, and he let me put the Eclipse outside the pier cafe. It was not a great success. The salt air kept tripping the RCD, stopping it working .

Meanwhile, Chris had started rebuilding the pier. Despite the dismal performance of the Eclipse, he agreed to let me have a tiny arcade (about 12 ft square) for my home-made slot machines the following summer.

So The Under the Pier Show first opened in June 2001, initially just with 5 old Cabaret machines, and the pier still half built.



The Hut.

Enjoying my regular trips to the pier and taking to bits the old machines thrown out of the pier's conventional arcade – I decided to expand, investing some of my savings to make the first new machines. Before the pier opened, on a visit to my house to see the slot machines, Chris saw the water clock in my garden. He asked if I could put it on the pier. His enthusiasm for the clock was partly why he risked giving me the space for the arcade.



The Microbreak.

During the first summer Chris gave me a few old machines from the main arcade that had become too unreliable. I found the Sega Space Harrier particularly inspiring, and decided to convert it into a machine of my own.

By summer 2002 it had become the Microbreak, and I had also had time to make the Bathyscape. Test Your Nerve, another machine originally from Cabaret, returned from a holiday in Los Angeles, and Will Jackson refurbished his old Cabaret machines - Brainwash and Crankenstein - to join the collection. In June 2002, the arcade expanded to squeeze in the extra machines. The Booth of Truth, made in collaboration with Sarah Angliss, arrived in October 2002. By this time I was keen to take over the entire shed and built Instant Weightloss, Quickfit and The Expressive Photobooth over the winter and expanded the arcade again in June 2003 to its current size. Satisfyingly, I've recouped the investment and it now pays not only for new machines but also for my catalogue habit, playing with new electronic gadgets.



Queuing up for the Autofrisk machine.

The arcade could never have succeeded without the enthusiasm of Matthew Wade, the pier manager. He opened and closed the arcade at the beginning and end of every day, dealt with the public and kept an eagle eye out for any person or machine misbehaving. He also nursed the new machines through their teething problems - in the case of the photobooth, this was a continuing problem.

In March 2005, Chris sold the pier to another local family, the Bournes. I was nervous about the change, and sadly Matthew left, but in general things got better. The new owners were very appreciative of my stuff and encouraged me to start putting machines outside. The idea of having a whole pier to play with rather than just one small shed on a pier gave me fresh enthusiasm and many

new potential ideas. The first outside machine was the Quantum Tunnelling Telescope, installed in august 2006. I even got involved making the pier noticeboards, litter bins and signs.

In January 2013 the pier changed hands again. The new owners run a couple of hotels in East Anglia. I was greatly relieved they wanted to keep The Under The Pier Show! They are good employers - the pier staff are more relaxed and happy. I'm no longer making things to go outside the arcade, but it leaves more time to make new arcade machines.

5. Three Machines at Under the Pier, Southwold

The Chiropodist 1986.



Take off a shoe and put your foot into the treatment bay at the bottom of the machine. Insert the money and the chiropodist looks down at your foot, twiddles her thumbs rather menacingly, and then drops down beneath her desk. You then feel strange things happening to your foot.



The Chiroprapist.

The Doctor, 1987.



Hold the stethoscope to your stomach and you hear strange gurgling noises. The doctor listens, nods as he makes up his mind and then writes out a prescription, which comes out of the machine (totally illegible, like all real prescriptions).

The prototype writing mechanism for the doctor, which I turned into a book signing machine after the publication of *Almost Everything There is to Know*, to avoid having to hover in bookshops, signing books myself.



Prototype writing machine.

Autofrisk 1993.

The hands inflate and pat you slowly moving up and then down. I enjoy watching people use this machine, but its never taken as much money as some of the others as you have to be quite bold to try it with other people watching you. I'm sure I would be far too shy if I came across it, not knowing anything about it.

Technically the most interesting thing about the machine is the blower-sucker unit, straight out of a 1960s mainframe data store – the big tape recorder things - the unit sucked the tape down a tube to take up the slack because the drive changed direction so fast.

It was also the last coin-op machine I made controlled by a cam timer. This is an ingenious electromechanical device I used to buy from industrial surplus shops. The motor on the end turns the drum round slowly. This switches the line of microswitches on and off at any point – set by adjusting the cams.



The Autofrisk machine checks a visitor under the arms (and legs below).



6. Novelty Automation



Novelty Automation is a mix of humour and engineering. It's a new home for my arcade machines, with some guest machines made by kindred spirits. I'd run out of space in my Under The Pier Show seaside arcade and felt it was time for a new adventure.

I became hooked on making arcade machines in the 1980s, for Cabaret Mechanical Theatre in Covent Garden. The first one was the Chiropodist, which has a hole at the bottom to insert your foot for treatment. At the time I was really unsure if anyone would even take their shoe off, let alone put their foot in a dark unknown space - but they did. In fact 20,000 people did every year. I was excited by the money it made, but even more excited that people were enticed to follow weird instructions to get their money's worth. I've been addicted ever since.

I started my seaside arcade 'The Under The Pier Show' in 2001 with a missionary zeal to 're-invent' amusement arcades. Arcades used to be at the forefront of technology, but have been in decline since the early 1990s when arcade games could no longer compete with home computer games. Although my arcade has thrived, I now realise it could never help other arcades. My machines are too expensive to build and the themes are probably too odd. 'Novelty Automation' is a bit different. Its part of a tradition of one-off London entertainments and irreverent humour.

My favourite period of history is the late eighteenth century – rightly named the 'enlightenment'. It's when, I think, history starts to have relevance to our lives today. Further back history is just too alien to have much meaning for me. But the enlightenment sets the foundations of science, industry, politics and culture.

The excitement and playfulness of the enlightenment gentlemen playing with science is so attractive. They shared my passion for electricity, which is now so rare. The engineers at the beginnings of the industrial revolution who developed the extraordinary power of the steam engine shared my love of the practical.

The enlightenment also had an irrepressible sense of fun. Cartoonists like Gilray and Rowlandson established an irreverence towards authority that is still uniquely English. Their cartoons of the politicians and George 4th were completely merciless. Jokes don't age well but at the time their cartoons were so popular that crowds gathered outside the London print shops where the latest ones were displayed in the windows. The cartoonists made a good living selling their prints.

The print shops were situated in Covent Garden, an area which has now lost its charm, but the nearby area east of Holborn has survived remarkably intact. Many buildings depicted in Hogarth's prints still stand. Lawyers and jewelers still prosper so their territory has remained unchanged. 18th century museums like the wonderful Soane museum and the Hunterian museum now thrive. It's the perfect location for Novelty Automation.



The automaton swan which catches a fish at the Bowes Museum, Yorkshire.

Amongst the huge variety of popular entertainments in eighteenth century London, Cox's museum of automata was particularly successful. Cox had previously sold jewelled automata, known as 'Sing-Songs', to China at inflated prices. However demand stalled, so in 1772 he rented a hall near Admiralty arch

and put twenty of his unsold pieces on public display. Despite the exorbitant cost of admission, it became the talk of the town. His exhibition only lasted three years but individual works or imitations remained on public display for another 60 years. The only ones to survive are a peacock in The Hermitage, Leningrad, and the amazing silver Swan that catches a fish in the Bowes museum in Yorkshire.

At the time, Britain led the world in making automata and also in clock making (Swiss watches were then regarded as cheap imitations). But the British automata were one offs, not reproduced in quantity. Inventing things is much more interesting than reproducing them. So the Swiss took over watch making and the French took over automata making.



One of John Dennison's coin operated automata.

John Dennison revived British automata in the 1890s, opening an arcade of coin operated automata in the base of Blackpool Tower. His arcade lasted until the 1970s and tempted many manufacturers to introduce their own machines,

known as ‘working models’. Compared to the French singing birds and dancing acrobats, English arcade automata were wonderfully vulgar. Burglars, crying babies, hen-pecked husbands and even execution scenes were popular themes. I was fascinated by ‘The drunk in the Graveyard’ and ‘The miser’s dream’ when I was a child and they got me started.

Traditional automata had lots of clever mechanisms all connected to a single clockwork motor (or to an electric motor in the arcade ‘working models’). I started out differently, using separate motors for each action, linking them together with timers. It seemed easier to me because in the 1960s London had several industrial surplus shops that sold cheap motors and timers. The shops have long closed, but I’ve carried on making things with the same approach. Instead of timers, my machines now have computers to control the timing and logic of the motors. I didn’t know it when I started, but industrial automation machines use the same approach. In fact, most of the parts I now use are intended for industrial automation. Even my computers, called Programmable Logic Controllers, are specialist automation components. It’s not the cheapest way to build an arcade machine, but perfect for any one-off machine that has to be reliable. It makes modifications and fault-finding simple and quick – both vital.

The ancestors of Novelty Automation are this unlikely combination of industrial automation, 18th century history, cartoons and automata. The novelty of its ancestors gradually faded, despite their ingenuity and flare. But today we are in a virtual age where arcade machines are mass-produced and most entertainment is screen based, so my homemade machines are once again a novelty.



The premises of Novelty Automation in Covent Garden, London.

7. Home Made Cameras



I started researching cameras for my 'How to Cheat at art' lecture in 1996, and became hooked on making my own cameras and playing with photographic chemistry. I soon found that the processes that appealed to me were ones that produced a positive image - but quickly!



Box camera.

My first camera was a wooden box, one half telescoping inside the other, with a lens taped on one half and sensitised paper or plastic taped inside the other half.

(I only later realised this design was almost identical to Daguerre's original camera).



Tea chest camera.

Besides wanting results immediately, I also wanted big photos. I converted a tea chest into a camera big enough to take 16 by 20 inch Ilfochrome paper, using the lens from a pair of 'readispex' reading glasses. This is not as crude as it might seem. Early cameras often used simple meniscus lenses as they produced a relatively flat field in focus. The results with the tea chest were so satisfying that I built a second camera, incorporating everything I'd learnt.

The Road Sign camera is made out of old aluminium road signs (they happened to be in the scrapyards when I was starting work). I've used this camera ever since, doing portraits of friends and the occasional events or parties. The photos have a wonderful quality of light, mainly because of the simple lens. Things can be in very sharp focus (as there's no enlargement, it's like having a 16 by 20 negative), but also have a glow round the edges (due to the centre of the lens not being in exactly the same focus as the periphery). The Ilfochrome process gives an enormous depth of colour so it is possible to pick out details in deep shade that could never be seen in a normal print. The lens is about f8 and exposures range from a quarter second outdoors to 30 seconds indoors. At first I thought

everyone I photographed would have ‘frozen’ expressions – but they don’t seem to. The face muscles have to be at rest to hold an expression for half a minute, but I now think this helps to make portraits more recognisable and telling. It removes the transitory expressions that make so many ‘snaps’ look unrecognisable. The cliché of the frozen expression comes from victorian photos, when people felt they were expected to look formal in their photos.



Road Sign camera (above). Suitcase camera (below).



The suitcase camera is simply a suitcase with a lens (from an old graphics camera) screwed in the front. It takes great 12 by 16 ilfochrome prints. As with the roadsign camera, the photos are developed by pouring the developing chemicals into the camera. I developed it for a British council tour of Australia - it was the main prop and the suitcase for all the other props for my 'How to Cheat at Art' lecture.

I spent months playing with collodion wet plate photography producing ambrotypes. Seen against a white background, these appear as negatives, but against black they appear as positives. These fragile, spooky images are wonderful – and working with them made reading tales of 19th century photographers very vivid. I hope to return to them sometime to make the results more repeatable and to make the process portable – but at the time I got side-tracked by Ilfochrome. Ilfochrome (Originally Cibachrome) photo paper is intended for use in the dark room for making prints from positive colour transparencies. Used in a camera Ilfochrome paper will produce a positive image given long enough – it has an ASA of about 5.

I've spent a week with the camera in the V & A taking pictures of the galleries and visitors, and a month in America (as part of my residency at the Tryon centre for Visual Arts, Charlotte NC). My portrait of Richard Gregory is in the national portrait gallery (though not always on display).



Tim Hunkin's photograph of Richard Gregory, in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. Professor Gregory, author of 'Eye and Brain' is an expert on vision.

8. Bonfires

Campsey Ashe 1984.

The theatre company Welfare State first asked me to work on one of their Guy Fawkes bonfire shows in 1979. There was a sort of performance, but the audience seemed more interested in watching the huge set burn down with accompanying fireworks. I found that I really enjoyed building something big and then watching it burn - much more satisfying than letting off fireworks that had been manufactured in China.



Campsey Ashe, 1984.



Bob Pendred's sawdust 'bomb' going off at Campsey Ashe.

It's amazing just how fast two people, working for a week, can build with pallets. The interior of the hotel had a variety of rooms and the local kids did a sort of performance inside while the audience filed through - before we set it alight.

Woolwich 1985.



This was built for Emergency Exit Arts. It was my one and only attempt at a mobile bonfire. It ran on a steel frame welded to four car axles. It worked fine until the day of the show when we loaded it up with firewood. The extra weight almost prevented it moving and we never got enough timber on it to make a good blaze.

Catford 1980.

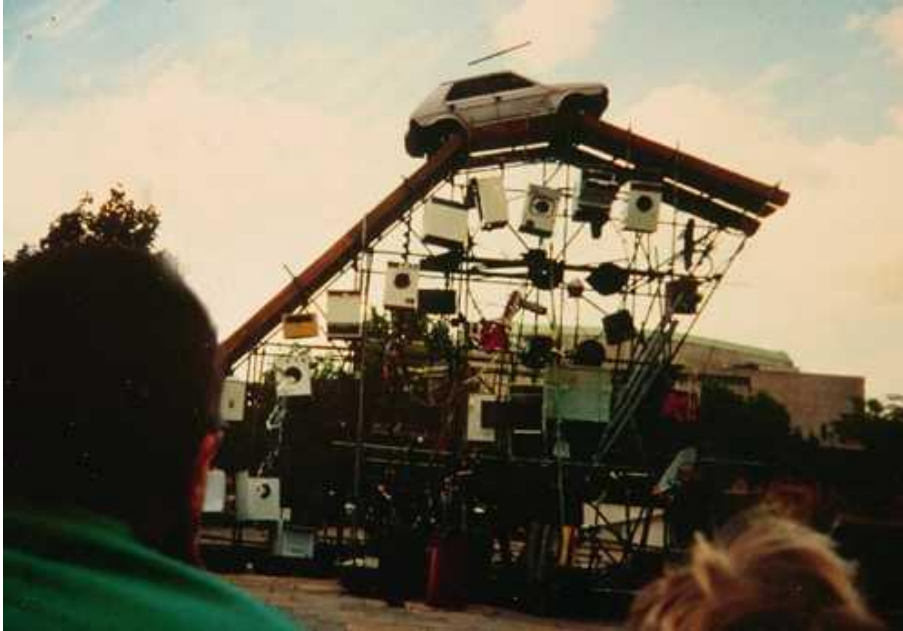
This was Welfare State theatre company's biggest ever bonfire show - note the size of the car (bottom right). Big Ben was nearly 90ft tall. It took a team of about 20 people three weeks to build. It burnt particularly well because it was

largely built of wooden beer crates (breweries were changing to plastic at the time). My own role was modest - I built the Stork with Andy Plant.



9. Sounds Unusual

Sounds Unusual, of 1987, is one of many spectacles and performances for which Tim Hunkin has been responsible. It was an Emergency Exit Arts performance.



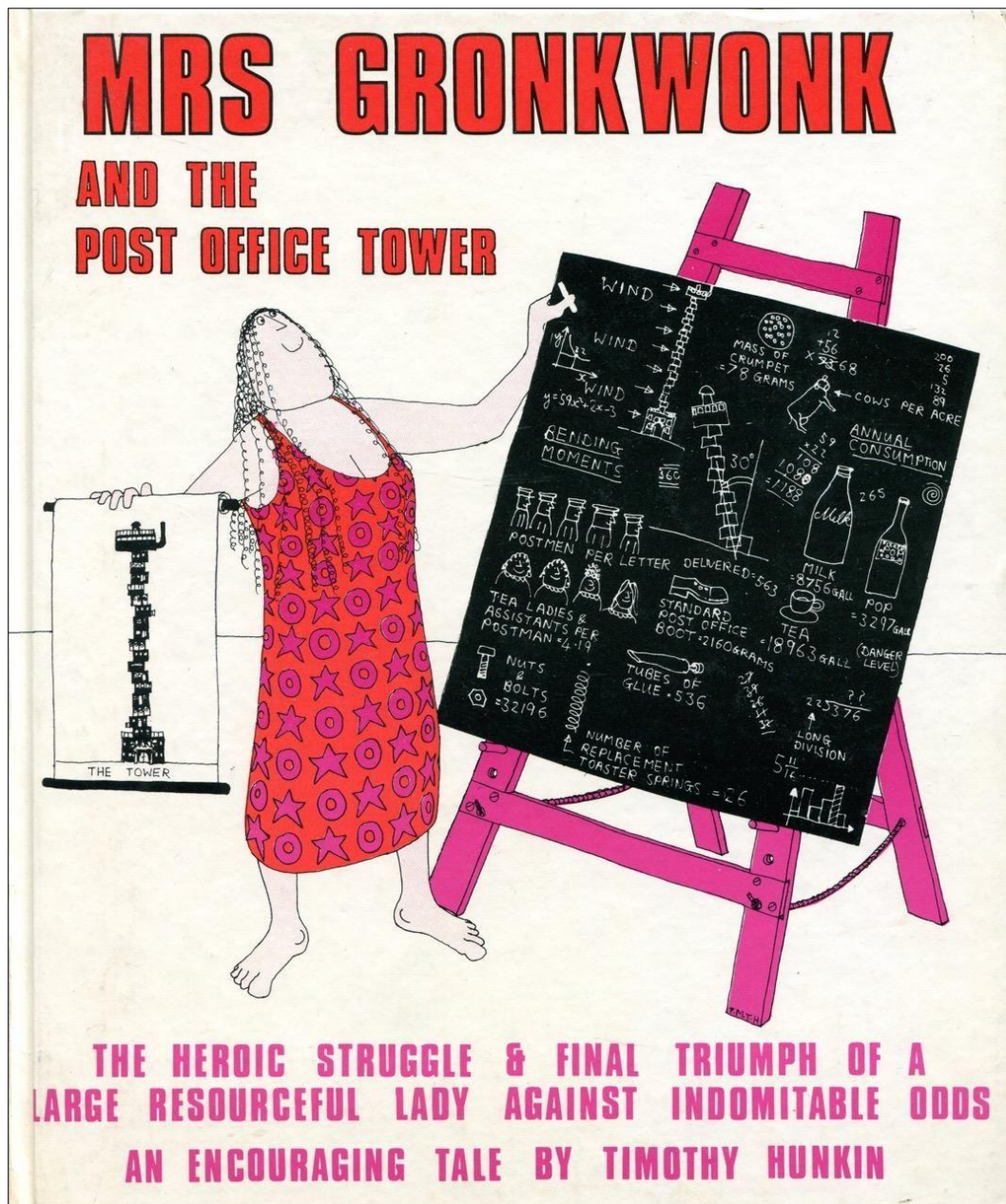
The car was slowly winched up the ramp while a variety of noise making contraptions in the scaffolding built up the tension. It paused at the top, when fireworks inside the scaffolding go off and the working washing machines, spewing foam, crashed to the ground. Finally the car falls off the end of the ramp into a skip.



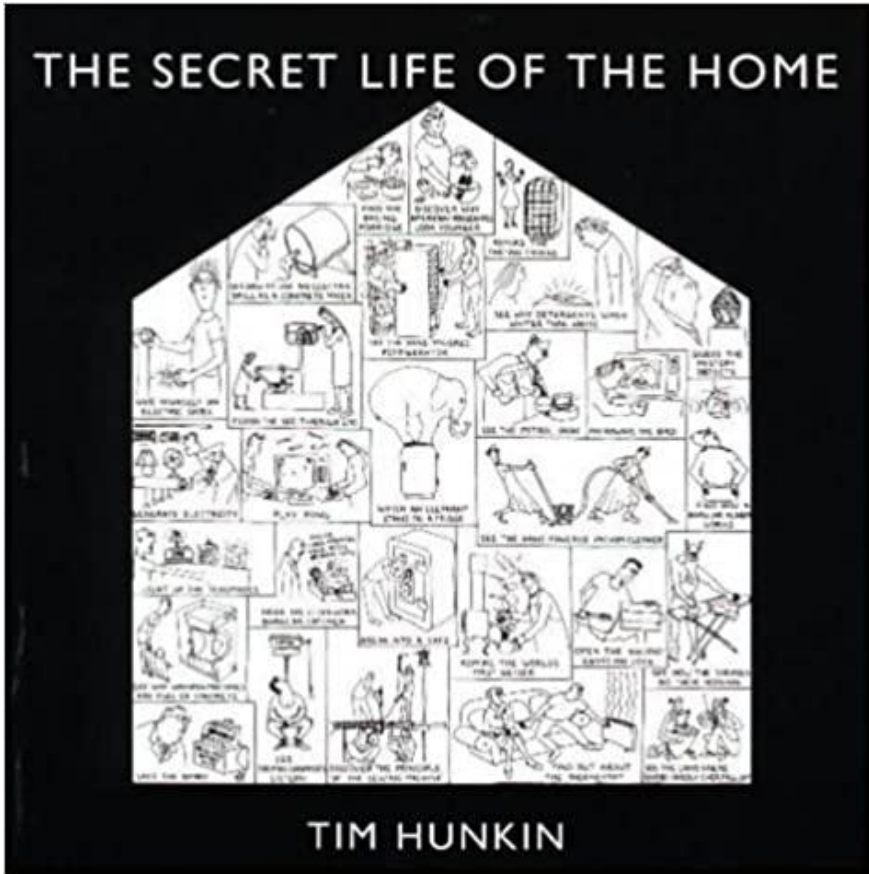


10. Books

Books written by Tim Hunkin



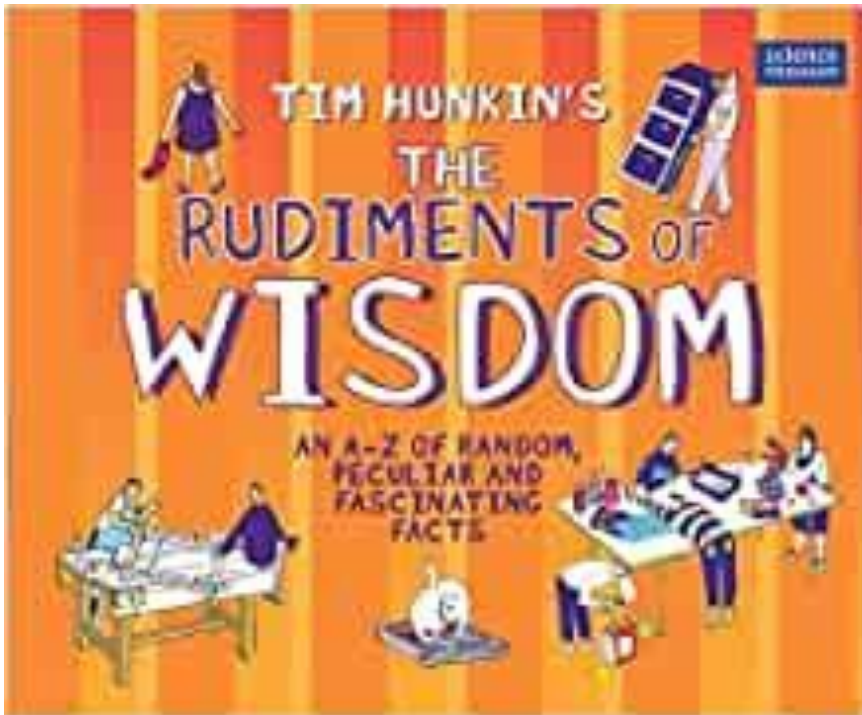
Mrs. Gronkwonk and the Post Office Tower, by Tim Hunkin. Published in 1973.



The Secret Life of the Home, by Tim Hunkin. Published in 1995.

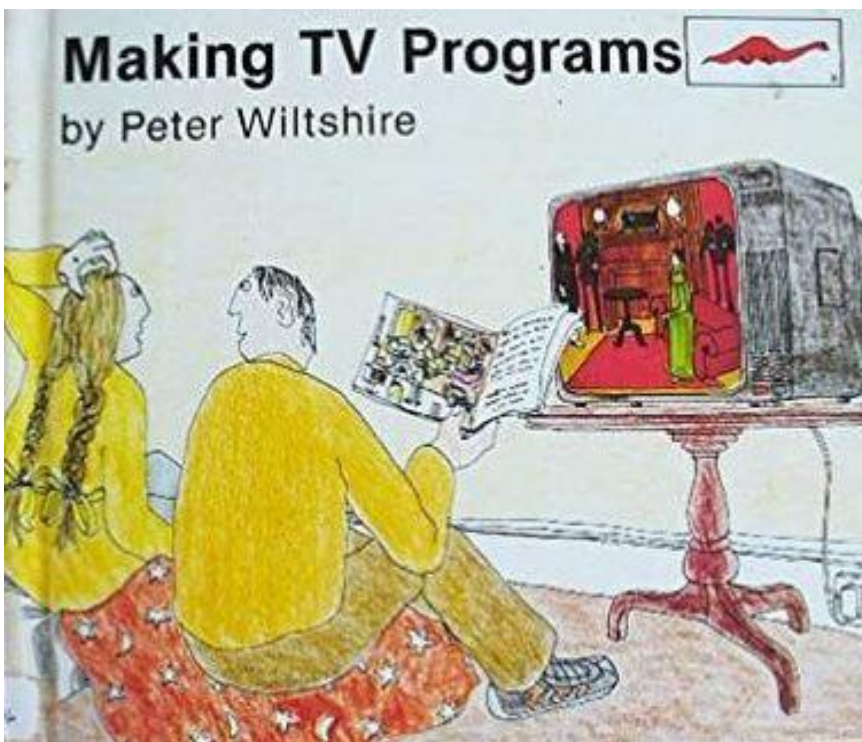


Hunkin's Experiments, by Tim Hunkin. Published in 2004.

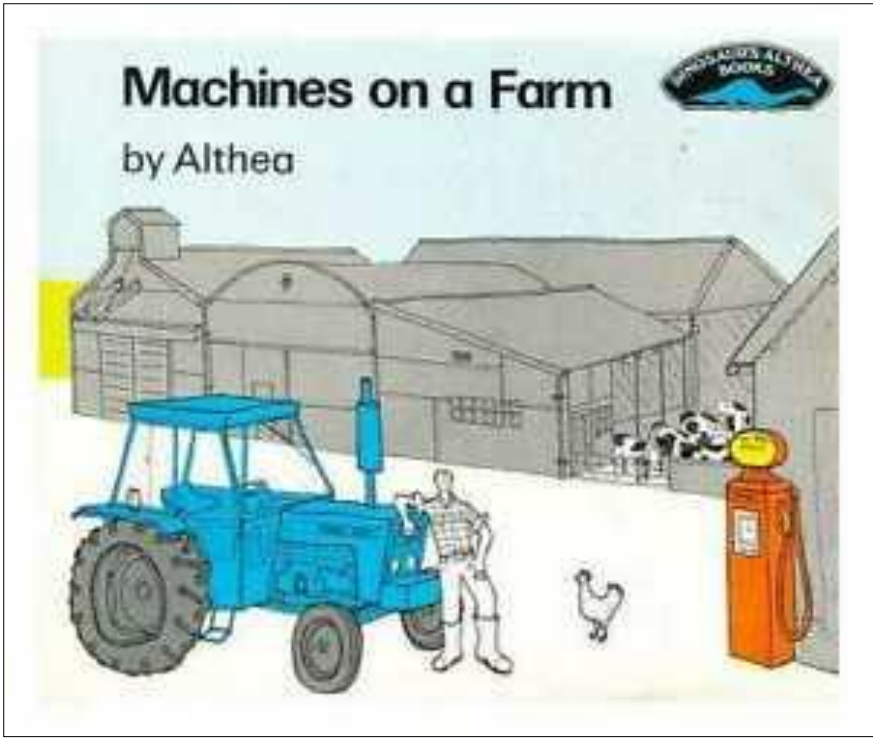


The Rudiments of Wisdom, by Tim Hunkin. A collection of his cartoons for the Observer. Published in 2009.

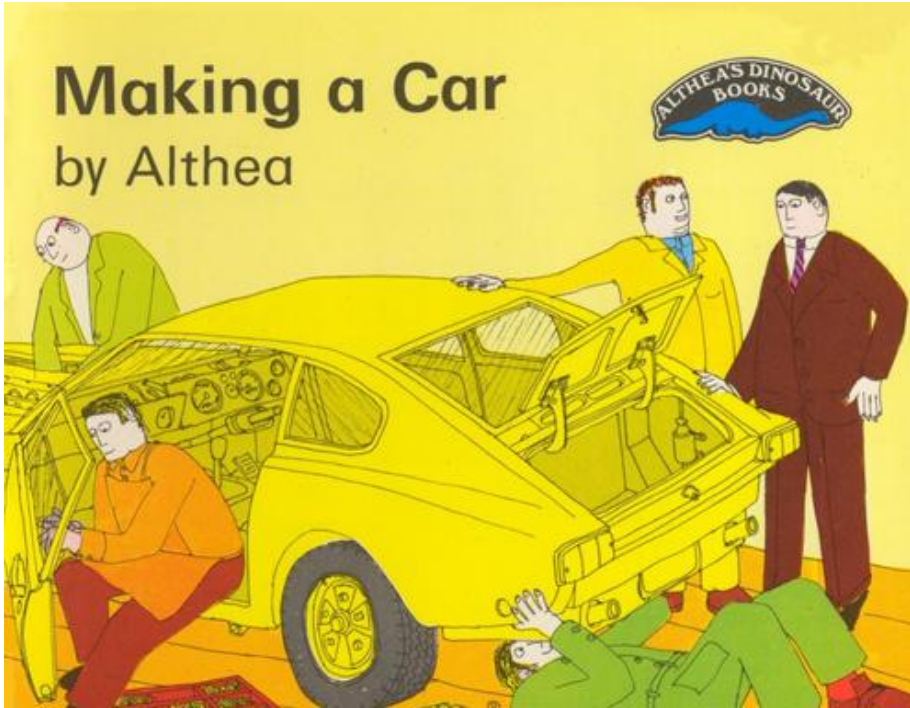
Books illustrated by Tim Hunkin



Making TV Programs. By Peter Wiltshire with illustrations by Tim Hunkin. Published in 1981.



Machines on a Farm by Althea, with illustrations by Tim Hunkin. Published in 1983.



Making a Car. By Althea with illustrations by Tim Hunkin. Published in 2011.