

Skyfall, the new James Bond movie

Ben Bennetts

1 December, 2012

I watched the latest James Bond movie, *Skyfall*, yesterday on the big screen I should add. The movie has been hailed as 'possibly the best (Bond movie) ever' (Philip French, *Observer*) and 'might be 007 agent's finest hour' (*Daily Record* film critic) and many other congratulatory remarks: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skyfall>. Unfortunately, I don't agree! Here's why. My reasons are not listed in any particular order; just as they occurred to me.

1. In the opening action sequence, how did Bond, played by Daniel Craig, survive the fall over the side of the viaduct into a river below after being shot, twice; once by the villain he was chasing and a second time by his female accomplice Eve (played by Naomie Harris)? The scene where Bond enters the water after a long fall and then commences to descend motionless morphs into the opening credits and his subsequent escape from certain death is never mentioned again. In previous Bond movies, his escape from seemingly inescapable situations has always been explained. Is he becoming invincible? Are we to believe that he will always survive? Is Bond the new Superman?

After his unexplained escape, why did Bond then hide away somewhere in Turkey? What was the reason? Was he angry because he didn't catch the villain? Was he aggrieved because he was shot by one of his own side acting on direct orders from M? Or was he just fed up with being a spy and needed a rest? We didn't discover the reason. All we found out was that he was out of shape and needed a shave by the time he decided to return to London.

2. What happened to the outrageous gadgets that used to be devised by Q? All we had was a gun that only Bond could fire and which, in the event, he never did fire - in fact he lost it to some fearsome dragon; and a matchbox-sized radio transmitter that was used to track his journey to the island hideaway of the arch-antagonist, Silva. Neither of these gadgets is rocket science.

3. Why did Bond have sex with the gambling casino girl, Sévrine, played by Bérénice Marlohe? There was no relationship development, no seduction scene and she was not especially attractive in my opinion. (I am not attracted to females with thin-faced aquiline features such as Nancy Dell'Olio, Sarah Jessica Parker and Jerry Hall. I recognise that this is a personal preference but apart from Naomie Harris, I was struck by the dearth of attractive females in this movie.) In fact, did Bond have sex with Sévrine? All we saw was the outline of a female body, presumably Sévrine, in a shower behind opaque glass and then Bond entering the same shower. That was it! In the past, we at least had some soft-focus shots of naked bodies writhing around on a silk-covered bed and with occasional flashes of what might be breasts or buttocks. But not this time. Maybe the 12A certificate influenced the once trademarked very-soft-porn sex scenes. It seemed to me that this particular scene was in response to someone on the set saying, 'Hey, we better have a sex scene 'cos it's a Bond movie.' If the scene had been omitted, it would not have detracted one iota from the story line.

Similarly, what happened to all the Bond Girls? There used to be three or four per movie and to have been a Bond Girl was an achievement proudly touted in subsequent résumés. There was only one Bond Girl in this film. Eve (Naomie Harris) and the unknown girl in Turkey where Bond was supposedly recovering from his wounds don't count. One didn't get her kit off and the other did, but that's all she did.

4. Why did Silva kill the girl Sévrine at the whisky shootout - what had she done? - and what was the point of Bond's sardonic and even callous comment afterwards, 'Waste of good whisky'? Are we to believe that Bond had no feelings either for the girl he may have had sex with in the shower or for human life in general?

5. How did the bad guy Silva escape from the see-through prison in MI6's underground headquarters? This too was never explained. Was it because Silva's laptop computer de-activated all the electronic locks once Q started to decrypt the contents? If so, how did someone as clever as Q (now portrayed by a geeky Gary McKinnon lookalike) let a possibly dangerous laptop corrupt one of the most secure and top-secret networks inside MI6? It makes no sense. What happened to firewalls?

6. Why did the bad guy, Silva, caress Bond's chest and face in a sexually suggestive way when Bond was tied up awaiting his fate? The sexual undertones were unmistakeable but Peter O'Toole's torment

in *Lawrence of Arabia* was more sinister and suggestive of latent homosexuality. Was this scene a sop to the gay camp? Are we being groomed for Bond to have an affair with a homosexual in a future Bond movie? Bond hinted as such with his throwaway comment, 'How do you know it's the first time?' when prompted by Silva. Uh-oh.

7. Javier Bardem (who plays the bad guy Raoul Silva) was not especially threatening in this movie - silver tongued and, in the end, physically threatening but he plays a more frightening character in *No Country For Old Men*. Bardem's fantastic ability to portray menace was never used effectively in *Skyfall*.

8. The personal relationship between Bond and Eve (Naomie Harris) could have been developed but was not, maybe because she finishes up as the new Miss Moneypenny with whom Bond has, so far, not had a sexual relationship. The lack of development was a pity. Naomie Harris is more attractive than any other female lead in *Skyfall* and development of her character would have helped in the closing scene when she revealed her new position as Miss Moneypenny.

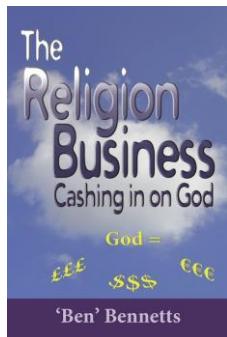
Okay, I accept that James Bond films are pure escapism renowned for their improbable story lines, impossible action scenes, hard-nosed villains, and seductive attractive females but, to my mind, *Skyfall* did not succeed in anything other than the action scenes and, these days, action scenes are two a penny - look at the *Die Hard* series, *Terminator* series, *Mission Impossible* series, and so on. For *Skyfall* to be awarded all the critics' plaudits as listed in the Wikipedia article beggars belief. The film caused two-and-a-half brain-dead hours to pass but left too many unanswered questions and stretched credibility beyond the limit. I do not agree with the critics' general applause for this film. It was average run-of-the-mill entertainment and failed on several fronts to be a memorable Bond movie.

Ben

Extracted from *Fingers to the Keyboard*, published 2014.

BOOKS BY BEN BENNETTS

The following e-books are available on www.smashwords.com and in Amazon's Kindle Store.



The Religion Business: Cashing In On God

Ben Bennetts

Published 2012 (e-book and paperback)

Faith Warning!

Do not read this book if you have a blind faith in the existence of God, or any other god(s), and you don't want your faith shaken, stirred or otherwise disturbed.

If you make the assumption that all gods, including God, are the inventions of fertile, imaginative and in some cases, manipulative minds, and then take a look at any specific religion, you see it for what it is – a business like any other commercial business, marketing and selling a product in exchange not only for money but, in many cases, mind control of a large group of people. This book is written from this point of view and surveys both ancient and modern religions, questioning the evidence for the existence of God and challenging the beliefs, doctrines and practices of major religions such as Christianity and Islam.

Memories of RAF Negombo Ceylon, 1950 – 52

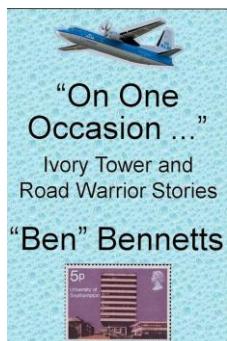
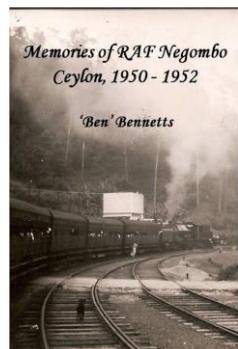
Ben Bennetts

Assisted by Maureen Wyatt (néé Bennetts)

Published 2012

My father was stationed in RAF Negombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in the early '50s. I joined him along with my mother and sister. This is an account of my life in the camp, my first experience of living outside of the UK. The essay tells of trips to the jungle, life on the camp, long troopship journeys, encounters with wild animals (some in the living room), and falling in love for the first time (I was 10 years old!).

This essay was also my first attempt to publish an eBook containing photographs and other images. I've improved my skills in later eBooks.



“On one occasion ...” Ivory Tower and Road Warrior Stories

Ben Bennetts

Published 2013

I am a retired electronics consultant engineer. During my professional career, I spent eleven years as a researcher and lecturer at Southampton University (the Ivory Tower) and a further twenty-eight years in industry, mostly as a one-man-band consultant roving the world (the Road Warrior). These are my stories: some funny, some sad, and some interesting

Tales from the Trails Part 1: UK trails

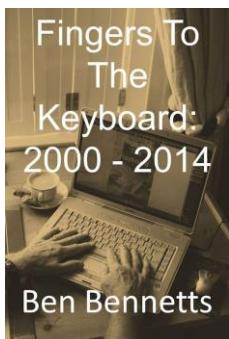
Ben Bennetts

Published 2014

Walking is good for you. It provides physical exercise and stimulates the senses. It gets you out and about. You see places that can only be reached on foot. It also has its moments, sometimes funny sometimes dangerous, plus mishaps and other adventures. This book is a collection of observations, stories, advice and photographs from the long-distance walks I made with my wife, after retiring at age 66 in 2007. Part 1 covers UK



long-distance trails including ten UK National Trails. Part 2 (below) covers walks in other countries, notably Nepal, India, Spain, Switzerland, and Madeira.



Fingers to the Keyboard

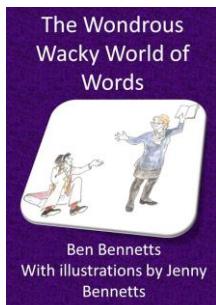
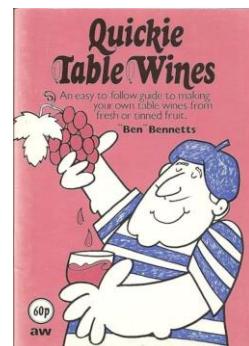
Ben Bennetts
Published 2014

In-between writing 'proper' books, I often dash off an essay on anything that amuses me or otherwise catches my attention. *Fingers to the Keyboard* is an eclectic mix and collection of these essays on topics such as the stupidity of politicians, the idiosyncrasies of English grammar, the baiting of scammers, the trials and tribulations of being hard of hearing, commentaries on various sports, religious extremism, the beauty of mathematics, film and book reviews, and a miscellany of grumpy old man moans and groans.

Quickie Table Wines

Ben Bennetts
Published 1977, re-published 2015

In 1977, I published a small 16-page booklet titled *Quickie Table Wines*. It was a simple "do this, do that" set of instructions designed to produce palatable home-made fruit-based table wines within 4 to 5 weeks. The technique had been well researched and proven by experiment and the booklet went on to become a UK best seller, selling just under 12,000 copies until publication ceased sometime around the mid-'80s. Friends and family still talk about the booklet and their wine-making experiences and I have decided to re-publish as an e-book. The prices in the booklet are 1977 prices but the technique is ageless. Download a free MOBI (Kindle), EPUB (iPad) or PDF file from Smashwords and enjoy.



The Wondrous Wacky World of Words

Ben Bennetts, with illustrations by Jenny Bennetts
Published 2015 (e-book and paperback)

How are you on words? Do you know your oxymorons from your tautologies; your alliterations from your euphemisms; your acronyms from your homonyms; or your onomatopoeias from your palindromes? Is *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* a nonce word or a nonsense word? Can you create neologisms by prefixing, suffixing, back-forming, compounding, and blending with the best of them? Can you define the word *word* without using the word *word*? Do you know what it means to *munch a brick* or *bend someone's ear*? Is a *fire distinguisher* a spoonerism or a malapropism? Are you a logophile, an etymologist, a lexicologist, a philologist, a logologist, a linguist or just someone who enjoys a walk in the park?

If you know the answers to all these questions, you've no need to read this essay. If not, read on and be amused, amazed and ameliorated.

Tales from the Trails Part 2: non-UK trails

Ben Bennetts
Published 2015

Tales from the Trails Part 2 is a follow on from Part 1 and covers long-distance walking in the Himalaya Mountains in Nepal and India, the lower Sierra Nevada Mountains in Spain, snow-shoeing in Switzerland, and along the *levadas* of Madeira.



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