



"Oh, isn't celebrity a terrible thing, thank God"
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Autographs are weird things collected by weird people

Do you love to hate celebrity or hate to love it? That's the question that has always puzzled me. Sure, Kerry Katona's Iceland adverts make everybody's skin crawl but there is no doubting the joy contained in a Lionel Blair tap dance or Ken Dodd joke. In January 2007 I thought enough was enough. I had to get to the centre of these confused celebrity feelings so I decided to become a celebrity myself.

I made a list of who I thought were the top 1000 celebrities in Britain. They included soap stars, newsreaders, actors, comedians, sportsmen, WAG's, Prime Ministers and even poets and members of the Royal family. I then made my own signed photo, because you can only talk to these people on their own terms. I practiced my autograph and starting writing to all of the people on my list. Each celebrity got a handwritten letter and signed photo of me. I asked for the same in return and started licking stamps. Over the year I got over 240 replies from celebrities all over the country. Some sent back just normal autographs forgetting to mention, or thank me for, the remarkable gift I had sent their way. Others said thanks for the photo and were obviously quite grateful for something bright and attractive to put on their fridge at home. A few went even further. Terry Wogan sent me a jumper; Andy McNab a CD and Gyles Brandreth sent me a photo of his uncle and aunties.

It was my aim to find out how celebrities would react to my somewhat fanatic letters. Would they ignore me and hope I would go away or would they humour me...in the hope I would go away. Some celebrities seem very down to earth, almost normal. Others very much think of themselves as a celebrity. The collection of autographs is a reflection of Britain's celebrity culture in the year 2007/2008 and before you ask...I've still not decided if I love to hate it or hate to love it.

The gospel according to Jeremy Kyle

The gospel started as a bit of a joke. If you have ever watched Jeremy Kyle in action you will have noticed that he thinks of himself as a saviour of the people. He comes out at the start of his show and shakes people's hands and works the audience like a true leader. He's a straight talker and with this comes some of the most fantastically barmy catchphrases known to man. In 2008 I am starting the gospel according to Jeremy Kyle. Take a postcard and watch his daytime show. If any catchphrases leap out to you then write it down and send it in. A collection of watercolours will follow with a gospel to be distributed amongst the people.

