

It's hardly surprising that I have a Peter Pan personality when I think back to some of the childish pranks my father got up to when we were growing up. He did like a bit of fun, usually on his terms though.

Before I share the main event for this reflection, another occasion is worth noting, to set the kind of humour he had.

It was a little past ten one night when mum called my brother, sister and me into the kitchen of our home. She was worried because she had heard some strange moaning noises coming from our bungalow driveway.

I've no idea what mum thought we could do about it; three gangly young teenagers dressed in our Andy Pandy pyjamas, huddled

together in the small kitchen, peering out into the darkness, looking to see where the noise was coming from.

The tension was palpable, the moaning sound was getting louder.

What was making the horrible noise outside?

Suddenly the face of a creepy old man shot up from below the window outside. In that moment, all of us screamed in terror. Mum yelled too, but worked out what, or who, it was in seconds.

"Ya fecking edyat," she said aloud. "It's ye [HERE] yer father, messing with us".

At that moment, the real-looking mask was lifted to reveal dad's laughing face. Apparently his workmate had done the same stunt to him

on shift change less than an hour earlier. Dad loaned it to repeat the stunt.

The main story happened some years before that, in our previous home in Seymour Road in Gloucester.

Dad always made his own cigarettes, roll-ups as we call them. We used to ask him how many Rizla papers he had left. The reason was because as the papers came to an end, there was a pink slip inserted above the fifth-last papers, as a warning to get more soon.

We almost fought over which of us would get the pink paper. What we'd do with it was hold it delicately between two fingers, with our arm above our head, before releasing it and watching it spin

to the ground, like a helicopter rotor. On this one occasion, we were all in for a treat. The pink paper appeared.

Instead of giving it to one of us, Dad decided instead to demonstrate the pretend helicopter from ceiling height. He removed his shoes, then first stood on the armchair. Wanting more height, he positioned himself higher by standing with one leg on each chair arm.

Our attention of the descending helicopter was immediately distracted when the chair tipped backward, sending dad backward, smashing through the glass and frame of the french doors behind.

There he lay on his back, armchair on its back with dad in the

same position, now lying on the floor of the adjoining conservatory.

What happened next? Mum laughed herself silly, so we felt obliged to.

Without moving a muscle, dad simply looked up at us shocked, at four faces filled with laughter.

"Typical!," he said, "just stand there laughing at the state of me."

Looking back, that must have been an expensive repair because of dad's prank that went so very wrong.

THE PRESENCE

While drafting this account, Jane and I are sat on the apartment balcony in Playa Blanca. I'm writing this draft using my kindle Scribe. It has no sound facilities as it is

devoted to reading and writing only. During this writing, (where I have placed [HERE] in the notes), there was a frightening sound of an explosion coming from this device. It was so loud that I jumped and dropped this kindle to the floor. Immediately, I blamed it on my dad in spirit playing pranks with me. I then thoroughly searched the device settings in hope of finding something that could have triggered the explosive sound. The device doesn't have a speaker, nor any way of playing sound. Giving up on finding the source, I simply blamed dad in spirit and gave up looking on the device, unscathed from the drop to the ceramic-tiled floor. I solved the mystery, minutes later.

when I realised that the sound had come from the vape unit I'd also been holding in my left hand. Somehow, a feature I didn't know it had, was switched on and the explosive sound had been generated through it. I still think it was Dad though, chuckling from his seat somewhere in the heavens. You got me again Dad.