

# Working Day

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**Professor Brian J Ford, is a Cambridge-based research biologist, author, lecturer and broadcaster. He has been described as the world's leading expert on obtaining images with early microscopes**

08:00

People hold such curious beliefs. Young men think of sex every seven seconds, they say. You will suffer cramp if you swim within an hour of eating. Sitting on a wall gives you piles. There is no scientific basis for any of these views; they are ridiculous inventions. One current tenet of faith is that a hearty breakfast is vital to kick-start your metabolism, but this too is a myth. I don't eat breakfast – there isn't time. So many projects demand one's attention, and life is too short.

11:00

Since childhood my favourite activity has been observing living cells through a microscope and there are mornings when you will find me busily studying the intricacies of microscopic life. Often I am overseas, and in recent years you might find me chasing for research or to give a lecture. Once in a while we will have a television crew coming to film, or a live programme to do for the BBC, so then I must aim to be coherent. I don't have lunch either if I'm preoccupied with a project, but might join a publisher if there is a book to discuss, or in London call to the Royal Society in Carlton House Terrace or the Linnaean Society in Piccadilly.

13:00

Years ago lunches with colleagues and friends were expansive and elaborate – the longest publisher's



FLASHBACK: Introducing Carol Vorderman and her daughter Katie to Prof Ford's college, Gonville & Caius

lunch I ever experienced went on until gone half-past six and I didn't sober up completely till next day. It's different now. Recently I was taken to lunch by a multi-millionaire: in a pub. It tasted like cardboard and lasted less than an hour.

14:00

Public transport offers the chance to reflect. Did you know that if you send a PDF as an attachment to your own kindle email address, with 'convert' in the subject line, it appears in readable form? That way I can read a recent paper or check proofs on a train or a plane. Writing remains a preoccupation – I have a regular column in an American magazine, and there is always at least one scientific paper taking shape for publication in a journal. Currently

I am finalising my next book (on the future of meat) and discussing one or two more, though contracts take more care to negotiate these days, with the encroaching pressures of the digital world.

15:00

Charity work is always beckoning. I think that everyone should work for a charitable body in a voluntary capacity, to plough back some of the experiences that we gain in life. Some of the adventures I've had chairing a charity have been far more fun than working for a living. Start a fund. Launch a project. Revive a club. Commission a community building. Give time as an administrator. You're bound to have challenges yet the results endure long after you're forgotten.

16:00

Lecturing takes me to universities and conferences around the globe, and regularly to America. These days I am often asked to appear as guest speaker on international cruise liners. As a bonus, we have the chance to meet up with chums in favourite ports of call and explore new places. I once wrote 38,000 words of a book in a week aboard ship, indeed this is being written during a voyage to Venice on the Queen Elizabeth. A cruise ship is a wonderful working environment: the phone rarely rings, friends do not call in asking a favour, nobody is scrounging money from my wallet; casual callers don't drive up to the door.

18:00

When we have a day at sea I usually give a lecture, which acts as aerobics for the mind. They have to be wide-ranging and assimilable so they're excellent practice – and the audiences are demanding. A public presentation is often followed by an exuberant book-signing session. If we have a day in port, my wife and I are among the first to be ashore. We may be met by friends with a social programme that will fit the time we are in town; more often we will explore by ourselves and end up in a local restaurant. Then we take back ideas that we can recreate for the family at home. I have also accumulated an extensive knowledge of beach bars around the world that have become regular haunts. We don't hurry back to the ship, and the crew are usually taking down the welcome banners by the time we return, preparing for departure. Then it is time for a reviving glass – if we are at home my wife will call me away from the study for canapés and wine in the rose garden.

19:00

On a conventional lecture tour you usually have a driver and official attaché who takes care of arrangements. If we are aboard ship there is an air of effortless elegance: stewards are courteous, caring and kind, and the passengers revel in a contrived civility as they dress for dinner in a way their busy lives normally preclude. No wonder formal prom nights are now so popular amongst the young – dressing for dinner is back in fashion.

21:00

Discussions over the evening meal draw the day towards its close. When I was president of the Cambridge Society for the Application of Research I entertained distinguished academics to dinner at Churchill College every week. Now when in Cambridge I dine at high table at Caius, where the staff are attentive and the company convivial, though I don't get to the college as often as I'd like. Later in the evening I might be revising an article, writing a book review, wondering where I've put my keys. At home I try to stop work in time for the *Big Bang Theory* or the *Simpsons* so then we can settle down and enjoy enticing evenings together.

24:00

There is no bed-time. Sometimes we're early, sometimes we're late, and there is another of those spurious beliefs that dog our heels: to be healthy you must have eight hours' sleep. Nonsense. Five or six hours can more than enough – it depends who you are. Then there are projects to plan and reports to review. Life is far too brief to lie there unconscious when there is the excitement of new knowledge waiting to be explored.

## Price Bailey tops the M&A charts this year

PRICE Bailey has topped the East of England league table for mergers and acquisition activity in the first half of 2015. Figures from Experian show the firm advised on 14 deals, more than a number of the country's much larger financial advisers.

"These figures show the growth of our strategic corporate finance activity year on year, and stake our claim as the leading corporate finance team in

the region," said head of Strategic Corporate Finance, Simon Blake. "We now have the largest corporate finance team in the East of England, and we are confident that our activity in this area will continue to grow."

The report also shows that there were 376 M&A and ECM (Equity Capital Market) deals announced in the East of England during YTD 2015, a 19% increase on the 316 on last year.

## Industrial units sell for £1.5million

BARKER Storey Matthews Huntingdon office has negotiated the sale of a multi let industrial investment opportunity at Halcyon Court in Huntingdon to an offshore investor.

Halcyon Court is a modern development of 22 light industrial units ranging in size from 600 sq ft to 1,200 sq ft.

The development is situated on the Stukeley Meadows Industrial Estate in

Huntingdon and comprises a multitude of tenants.

The multi-let investment was placed on the market in July 2015 and terms were quickly agreed with an offshore investor.

The final sale price was just over £1.5m reflecting a net initial yield of 7.8%.

Alan Matthews, director at Barker Storey Matthews, said: "There is strong demand for this type of multi let industrial investment."

## October is Free Wills month, so get writing

OCTOBER is Free Wills month which means you can speak to a participating solicitor and get your will written for free, if you choose you can make a donation to charity.

Statistics released earlier this year show only 35% of people have written a will, and only 28% of parents with children under 18, risking their wishes about who would look after their children, and inheritance

being ignored.

On top of this, changes to inheritance tax law made earlier this year and the high-profile deaths of comedian Rik Mayall and television personality Roger Lloyd-Pack – neither of whom had a will in place – are reminders of why you should speak to a solicitor and get your will written. Otherwise, a large chunk of your estate could end up going to the taxman.