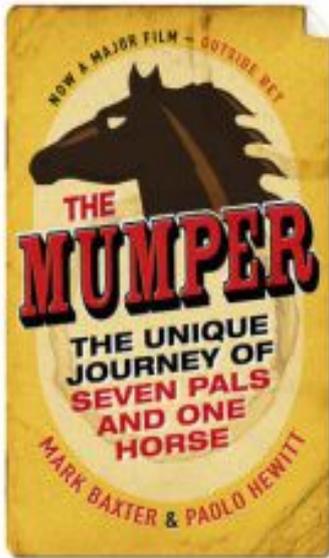


## The Mumper? He's an OUTSIDE BET

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*The Mumper is the second book by Mark Baxter and celebrated author Paolo Hewitt. The first was the cult classic The Fashion of Football, voted as one of the top 50 football books of all time by Four Four Two.*



*The Mumper is the book and Outside Bet is the film inspired by the book.*

I first met 'Bax' many years ago at a Paul Weller gig I was attending with Paolo Hewitt [I've known Paolo since he asked for "my leaflet" in the mid 90's, the leaflet being an early release of The Style Council book, 'Mr Cool's Dream']. Back then I was simply introduced to Mark as the guy who sorted out Paolo's website and that was that.

Forward on a few years and as my interactions with Mark increased we discussed the best way to self publish and promote online a book he was writing with Paolo about 'buying a racehorse.'

An email back to April 2007 confirms I was responsible for putting the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of The Mumper onto the internet as a teaser on Paolo's site – 5 months before the book launch at The Gladstone in Lant Street, London on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2007. The guys didn't forget, I got an invite to be an extra (sadly couldn't make it), a name check in the book and am the proud owner of the exclusive Mumper tie.

It's March 2012, the book has been turned into a major movie starring the legend that is Bob Hoskins. It's out next month. I just had to catch up with Mark .....

*I meet Mark, not at the races but in London, Soho, Bar Italia to be exact ...*

**Describe yourself, other than "The Arfur Daley of Mod" which I heard on one of 'The Modcast' podcasts.**

Over the years I have had many 'careers' from working on market stalls to owning clothes shops, to DJ-ing, running events and managing bands - as well as keeping a 9-5 job going for most of that time. One job has never been enough, too much energy and too many thoughts going on. Since 2000 though I have also been involved in books. Researching and writing them.

The 'Arfur Daley' name check I take as a compliment actually. I guess with my dulcet London tones and 'dodgy geezer' spiel I can come across as a 'ducker and diver' much like dear Arfur. I've also been self employed for the past 5 years, and doing a bit of PR for various people and companies, like Peckham Rye, Nicholson and Walcot, Gama Clothing, Threadneedleman, Delicious Junction shoes and here at Bar Italia. Its hard graft fitting it all in, but I'm very lucky, I enjoy what I do.

**The book, The Mumper is now a major Movie – In your wildest dreams did you ever get to this point when you were self publishing this?**

The simple honest answer would have to be no I didn't, although half way through the writing, I started to think the characters were very strong. I actually used to enjoy finding out what they would get up to as I was writing the book! They seemed to have a life of their own after a while



Paolo Hewitt, Iain Munn and Mark Baxter, Bar Italia, London

**How long was it from deciding to write it to the actual paperback being released? Then from that release to signing up for the film?**

I was toying with writing The Mumper for many years. I knew I had the basis of a great story, but just didn't have the skills to write it. Enter Mr Paolo Hewitt, who you know well. PH, as his disciples call him, schooled me in the way of the publishing world and to his eternal credit, saw something in the idea of the book when I was sending him sample chapters for his feedback. We had worked on a book from 2004 called 'The Fashion of Football', got on well, despite him being from North London, in fact he became a mentor to me, fact. We then collaborated on The Mumper, with Paolo shaping the book, with help on the narrative, back-story, plot points etc. When the book couldn't get a publishing deal, I self-published as you mentioned in 2007.

### **Who was it that spotted its potential?**

In 2008 I showed it to writer Trix Worrell (who wrote 'Desmonds' about the West Indian barber). Trix put me in touch with Tony Humphreys from Talent TV who then optioned the book in 2009.

So the potential was spotted by a couple of Industry people, but I was also getting fantastic feedback from those punters who had read the book, so I knew I was onto something

### **Did you get to the filming and meet the actors? Including yourself!**

I did get to the filming, and went down on the very first day, that had to be done. I was made very welcome by the actors and crew, especially director Sacha Bennett. Yeah, I spoke to most of the actors on the first day, including Calum MacNab who plays ME! Surreal that was. He turned out to be a fellow Millwall fan, so you could say we got on well! When I first heard Bob Hoskins speak the lines, I was struck dumb – which is a very rare occasion believe me. Totally bizarre. I stood there looking at the set, thinking, blimey I created all this.

### **I guess the most obvious question is Does the film do the book justice?**

I think it does. I'm really proud of it and I've seen it three times now. The first two times, I struggled to take it all in, but on the third time, I genuinely loved it. The scriptwriter is a lovely man called Nigel Smith. He's from the Midlands and when I first met him, I thought, nah, he'll never do it. But he shut me up and came up with a cracking script. It had to be good to get the likes of Bob Hoskins, Jenny Agutter, and Phil Davis involved, they wouldn't touch poor work



Some of the cast from *Outside Bet*.

**Do you make an appearance in the film?**

I do mate! I do my impression of Alfred Hitchcock and appear in my own story. Well, I've got the chins to do an Alfred, shame to waste them. I won't spoil it by telling you what I play, but it's a bit of type casting. There are also one or two other faces you might recognise from our 'scene' as well. All a bit blink and you miss it really.

**Will there be a red carpet London Premiere? You got your suit at the ready?**

If I can get a ticket! Yeah, sounds like there will and I'll be there sporting a Threadneedleman suit for sure. George Dyer has been my tailor for twenty years and is a lovely fella. He actually appears in the book. Great suits folks.

**Will it be nationwide?**

Yeah, sounds like it'll go nationwide, just not sure of the number of cinemas at this time. I'm guessing it'll be on DVD at some point, but I'm concentrating on getting 'bums on seats' at the cinemas first, so buy a flaming ticket!

**There's a horse called The Mumper now! Co-incidence?**

Yes there is, but it's no co-incidence. It's actually owned by a couple of the film's producers who have an interest in the racing game. I'm looking forward to meeting the real thing when the weather warms up, looks a lovely creature.

**So you didn't get the syndicate together then!**

No, though I have often been tempted to. One or two of the chaps in the book would no doubt join me, they love a gamble

**Should we be putting a fiver on it?**

From what I'm hearing you should. He's still a novice, but Paul Murphy who was the racing advisor on the film, tells me he's a good 'un.

*We discuss the period the book is set in 1985, talk about the strikes, pickets and we drift onto music of that generation.... An interesting names crops up! which I'll get to shortly, make Mark think I haven't been listening ...*

**You happy with the Soundtrack to accompany Outside Bet?**

On the whole yeah. As the film is set in the mid 80s, I was worried about some of the music that was around then, but actually it works well in the film. Culture Club, Haircut 100, and Ultravox are in there among others. A band you might have heard of also make an appearance The Style Council, you should check them out Iain - Someone should write a book about them actually. The one surprise for people might be that Paul Weller has given me a track for it, which will be the theme song. Its called 'No Need To Be Alone' and it's a lovely little tune, perfect for the film.

**So Paul Weller for theme tune! Excellent. Is this a song from Sonik Kicks period, an unreleased tune or written for the film?**

It's a track that I believe was going to be on Sonik Kicks, but in the end didn't fit in, so he gave it to me. Steve Cradock told me he remembered demoing it and Marco Nelson played on the version I've got I believe. The production team loved it too, and it appears over the opening titles of the film. Not sure if it will also get a 'stand alone' release at some point, but I think it should, it's an instant sing-a-long classic.

**How did that come about?**

This is where the Arfur Daley bit comes in handy. Basically, I was blagging away to PW, saying I was up to this and that and oh yeah, by the way, we have Hoskins and Dudley Sutton in our film and he said, 'I might just have the perfect song for that' and bish bash bosh, a week later he couriered it over to me. Me and my missus Lou, loved it immediately and knew it would fit the film perfectly. We had one or two things to sort out before it was agreed, but delighted it all worked out in the end. As I say, it's bang on for the story.

**I take it Paul read the book?**

Yeah, he has. When his dad John was dying, I sent him a copy because I write about my dad dying in The Mumper. I

thought Paul might identify with what I was saying in it. A lot of people who have lost a parent and have read the book, say I capture the hurt really well. That was a painful chapter for me to write, but in the end it has been quite cathartic really. He rang me to say he read the book in a couple of days, which was rare for him, and that he loved it. Obviously he and Paolo have fallen out so it was all a bit sensitive, but it was lovely to hear that he enjoyed it. Whenever I meet Paul, he is always on about what are you up to, what you working on, it's all about the graft with that boy and he has been very encouraging with it all. I mean, I am a massive Weller fan and have been since 1979, so it's amazing to be friendly with him, but at the end of the day I keep it sensible.



**What music were you into at that time? Is this reflected in the Soundtrack**

In the 1980s, I was into my 50s/60s Jazz and Northern Soul as well The Small Faces, The Style Council, well Modded up basically. There's not a lot of that in the film actually, but in a way that didn't bother me too much. I also bought a bit of 80s Pop, the Haircuts and Culture Club back then, and they did use those songs, so I agreed with those being in there

**You also mentioned The Style Council. What song?**

Two! Walls Come Tumbling Down and You're The Best Thing.

**Nice, where do they feature within the movie?**

Do you know Iain, I can't actually remember! I last saw it back in July and I've done a few brain cells since then mate. All will be revealed in time.

**That's fantastic, from my point of view, The Style Council on a soundtrack. I can get a lot of miles from this on Twitter and Facebook! There are still thousands of fan out there looking for news and releases.**

I did it just for you my old mucker. Seriously, when they mentioned the tracks in the running to be on there, I was well pleased. I was a big Style Council fan, not in your league mind, but I had my moments, so lovely to have a drop of that in the mix. "You're The Best Thing" is a real fave of mine and 'er indoors as it happens

**Any other tracks we should listen out for?**

I would just say 'No Need To Be Alone' which the Weller completest's will love and the one Nick Heyward wrote for the film too, that ain't bad.

**This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> film you've appeared in - Can we mention your role in Cemetery Junction?**

Ha ha! Yeah I did a bit of 'Supporting Artiste' work on a couple of films back in 2009, when I was struggling for a few bob. I had no idea who was directing 'Cemetery Junction' when I turned up for the first day of filming, and then I heard that famous cackle from behind a camera and realised it was Ricky Gervais. Funny old four days that was and a real learning curve. I am all over the ballroom scene, for the train spotters out there.

**What else? A part in 'Svengali'?**

Yeah, my old mucker Jonny Owen has got that film away and I'm well pleased for him and that is currently being made. He asked me and my lovely wife Lou to come down on the first day of filming in London and we ended up playing 'Customers in a record shop' and on-set with Martin Freeman. Enjoyed that, top lad Jon.

**Future work – Amazon tells me about a book, "A to Z of Mod".**

The 'A-Z of Mod' is all done and will be out in the bookshops at the end of April. I co-wrote that with Mr Hewitt and the foreword is by 'The Moddit', actor Martin Freeman. Martin loved the whole Mod world so he was perfect for sprinkling a few words of wisdom onto it all. Got to know him through Paolo and he's a lovely chap. Great to see him on top form in the Sherlock Holmes TV series and I know he will be massive when The Hobbit comes out. Couldn't happen to a nicer fella.

## Anything else?

Apart from that I'm finishing off a second book on the photographic history of the area of Walworth in SE17 with my old DJ mate Darren Lock. Locky is the King of photos for that area and it's been a pleasure to work with him. The first book sold really well and the publisher then came back for another one. That should be out in August. I have also started work on a new novel, very early days on that and I've got an idea for a kids book, which I will develop at some point. I really want to make TV docs, like the stuff you see on BBC4 and Sky Arts, so hopefully if *Outside Bet* does well, I might get asked for more ideas. We'll see mate.....

*With that Mark needs to go. He's a busy man, off to record a webcast for his Football and Fashion book. I'm left to finish off my Coffee, kicking myself for forgetting to remind him I featured in the original paperback, "It's for Scotch Iain." If you read this Mark, I'm free 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012*

Interview by Iain Munn (Wholepoint Publications) [www.wholepoint.co.uk](http://www.wholepoint.co.uk)  
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***[Feel free to use or extract from this interview, please quote the source]***

## ***OUTSIDE BET, Opens 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012***

Synopsis by Mark (<http://baracuta.tumblr.com/post/8477613811/outsidebet>)

The book is set in 1985 and is the story of a group of seven Londoners of all different ages who buy a racehorse that they were offered in their local pub one day. We then follow the journey of them racing the horse around the country. Also thrown into the mix is the Wapping newspaper dispute of 1986, which I was personally involved in. The book is 75% factual and the screenplay for the film follows this pretty closely. The humor and the warmth from the book was captured very nicely by the script writer Nigel Smith. We were delighted with the casting for the film, with the likes of Bob Hoskins, Jenny Agutter, Phil Davis, Emily Atack, Adam Deacon and Calum McNab, (who plays Bax) all involved.

## *OUTSIDE BET, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012*

*The official trailer*

<http://youtu.be/BdbLDUp1BjY>

*Article feature in the Daily Mail, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012*

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2114942/The-Inbetweeners-star-Emily-Atack-swaps-small-screen-silver-new-movie-Outside-Bet.html>



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*THE MUMPERS - BAXTER and HEWITT*



Photograph courtesy of Phil Dias