



Money for nothing: Notes with www.losethegame.com written on them spell trouble for players



Toilet humour: A note brings The Game to mind

The Game is up if you read this

MILLIONS of people are playing it worldwide – you may not even realise it but you are too. The problem is, that by reading this article, you've lost.

Welcome to the weird world of The Game, a cult phenomenon supposedly created when sound engineers missed their last train and had to spend the whole night on a platform.

Dennis Begley and Gavin McDowall tried not to think about their grim situation and whoever did first, lost – and The Game was born. If The Game pops into your head, you

By **Fred Attewill**

are out and must tell someone, even if means making a phone call in the middle of the night ... which, of course, causes the person you tell to lose as well.

But, as soon as you forget about The Game, you're playing again. Tricky, isn't it?

Jonty Haywood, who founded a site to explain its mysteries to a wider audience, said he came across the concept at university. 'It's not a concept I invented – in fact its

origins remain a mystery,' he added. Some online forums have banned discussions of The Game and it has even been blacklisted in schools.

'A high school in Ohio has banned The Game due to class disruptions and threatened students with suspension,' said Mr Haywood. 'This has backfired, with students littering the school with loss-inducing notes.'

Mr Haywood was previously in the public eye for creating a website luring tourists to a non-existent 'idyllic' beach in Cornwall.

THE RULES

1. You are playing The Game

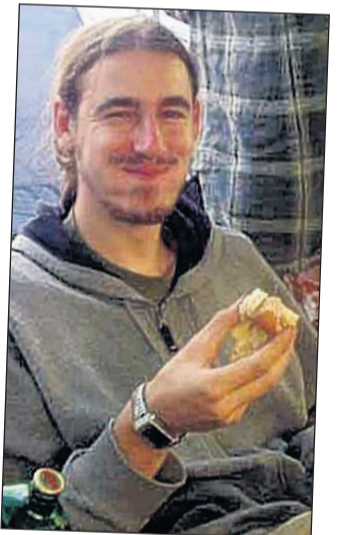
Some interpret this as meaning everyone is playing it – even if they are unaware that they are – while others say people must first be told about The Game before they can start playing (and losing).

2. Whenever you think about The Game, you lose

Most players maintain it is virtually impossible to train yourself not to think about something, explains Jonty Haywood (pictured).

3. A loss must be announced

Players must tell as many people as possible they have lost. At least one person must always be told, even if you have to phone someone in the middle of the night. The objective of The Game is to forget it exists, although experienced players maintain they can talk about The Game without realising they have lost. Bizarrely, some players claim it ends only when the prime minister announces The Game is up on TV.



Sign up to play: Graffiti throughout the world urges people to think about The Game ... which means they lose

Sophie's proved her metal



Scalped: Sophie's head scar

MEET the Meccano Mutt. Sophie the spaniel's skull is held together with screws and metal to stop her brain exploding out of her head. The five-year-old was suffering from syringomyelia, which meant her brain was too big for her skull and was trying to force its way through the hole at the back of the skull. Bubbles of fluid could have developed in the spinal cord, causing immense pain and paralysis. Half of all King Charles spaniels suffer from the syndrome to some degree but vets agreed this was the worst case they

had seen. A 90-minute cranioplasty procedure, which cost £5,500, involved slicing into the back of her neck to relieve pressure on the spine and the skull hole was then sealed. Titanium mesh was also placed on to metal screws to keep the brain in check. The operation was undertaken by Buckley House vets in Nottingham with support from animal surgeons from Bristol. Owner, Susan Moore, 50, of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, said: 'It's been lovely to have her back in the house and everything is looking good.'



Home again: Susan Moore with Sophie the spaniel

Pictures: Caters