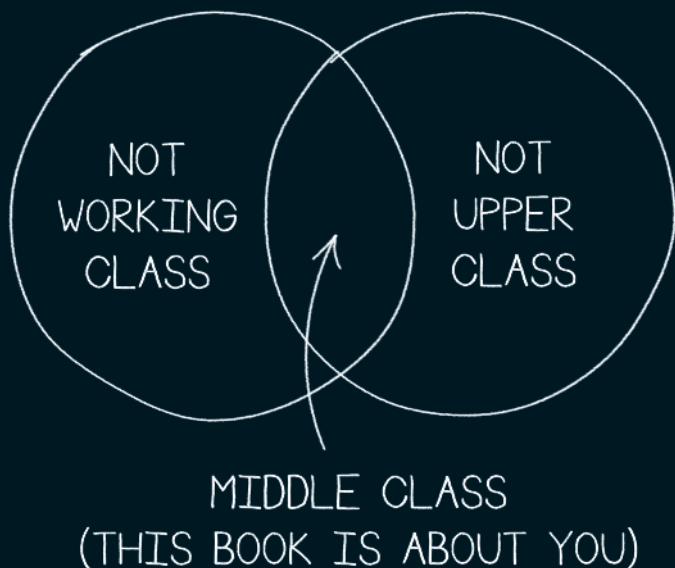


THE MIDDLE CLASS HANDBOOK

An illustrated field guide to the behaviour and tastes
of Britain's new middle-class tribes



As researched by Not Actual Size

Foreword by Peter York

THE DAMN-WRIGHTS



Jeremy and Carol (“Jez” is fine for friends, but Carol is definitely *not* Caz; she thinks it sounds like “a bloody chav name”) work in business – Jez for the UK sales division of a German food-processing equipment manufacturer, Carol as a manager in a media-sales company. Educated at local state schools that they claim were rougher than they really were, they are now in middle age with two kids, Jack and Francesca, in primary school. They live in the first village you come to after crossing the ring road of their Midlands city, but they never name the city as their home because they are proud of being “rural”.

What people notice most about meeting Jeremy and Carol for the first time is their anger. They seem to be angry about *everything*. Politicians. The police. Bankers. Chavs. Speed cameras. Premiership footballers. Call centres. Eco-prats who whine about cars (Jeremy has a beloved Subaru Impreza, Carol uses the VW Sharan). Modern pop music (they believe it has been going downhill since 1988). Most things on television (Acceptable: *Top Gear* and *Loose Women*). Did we mention politicians?



Carol 1 Sat Nav 0

The truth is that Jeremy and Carol always were a bit grumpy, but their dislike of political correctness, Labour's nanny state, the bank bailout, and then the MPs' expenses scandal, made them more political. Now, feeling ignored and equally angry at both the "benefits class" and the bankers, both of whom seem to be prospering at their expense, Jez and Carol are stormtroopers of the first group for many years to be aggressively, even militantly, middle class. They openly admit they want to live as far away as possible from the poor and working classes, but they are also scathing about the nepotism and vague crookedness of the super-rich. They loathe both old- and new-money establishments, and have no time for the old-fashioned snoots who run things in their area. As for Cameron and Clegg, well they might be an

ACCORDING TO JEREMY, PEOPLE DON'T REALISE



The Queen is now actually subject to EU law



Gareth in *The Office* was actually right about a lot of things

Britain is bankrupt

Climate change has happened before



Most of the Labour Party were Communists



In 10 years' time white people will be in the minority in Britain



Aids isn't actually caused by a virus

Women and men are biologically different



Milton Keynes is actually really nice, and a top night out



Every shop assistant is empowered to knock up to 50% off the price of anything



Did he mention Britain is bankrupt?



Don't get Jeremy started

improvement on Brown, but Jez and Carol are still unconvinced. Ideally they'd like Maggie back.

In many ways the restless Damn-Wrights are more comfortable travelling than doing anything else. They don't exactly *like* functional, on-the-move environments such as airports, business parks and service stations but they are at ease with them. For work and leisure, they tend to travel away from the city centre rather than into it; they both have an immense knowledge of the motorway system, which they secretly like to pit against their full-spec sat navs, anticipating where they might misread the road.

Work is important to them, and it draws out strong emotions. Convinced that Britain has millions of scroungers who choose not to work at all, Jeremy and Carol profess annoyance at the long hours they

SPIRITUAL LEADER



BANDS JEREMY AND CAROL WOULD GO TO SEE

Jeremy and Carol love going to see bands from their youth. Their favourites include:

- U2 (though Bono “should give it a rest”)
- Genesis (post Peter Gabriel)
- Dire Straits
- Simple Minds
- Queen
- The Who
- Jools Holland
- Take That (Carol only!!!)



Queen are actually better without Freddie

have to do themselves, although friends think they seem to enjoy “slaving away”. They certainly enjoy the equipment. Both, for example, have the best in-car phone speakers you can buy. Both secretly love it when they have a passenger, and they talk to someone else in another car in a three-way conversation; it makes them feel like a good host, although in reality the passenger and the other person tend to be aware of each other feeling slightly awkward.

Away from work, visiting retail parks or holiday centres perhaps, their personal style has the curious quality of belonging to no definable period. Jeremy likes light-blue jeans (worn quite tight, a 1980s hangover), leather jacket, suede shoes, and keeps a pair of Merrell trainers in the boot with his golf clubs. Carol is well groomed, blonde and favours tight, bootcut jeans, pointy boots and an outsize chunky cardigan rather than a coat. For holidays they’ll get some new bits at M&S, Jez always being impressed by the value for money offered by the Blue Harbour range.

They love their holidays, because almost every

PLACES JEREMY AND CAROL DON'T GO TO ANY MORE



Ruined by idiots



Overrun by chavs



Too many screeching kids



Taken over by people you want to kill



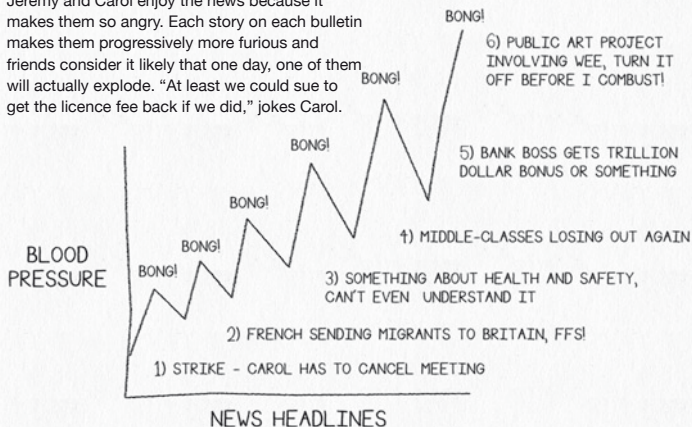
Full of students



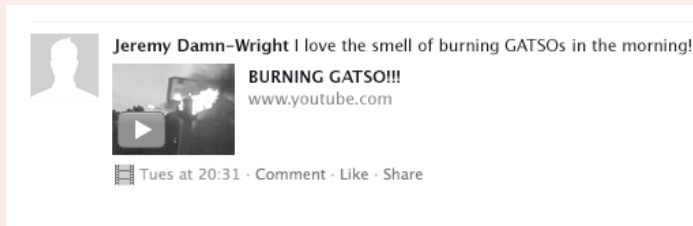
Hosts annual international moron convention, seemingly

THE NEWS: IT JUST GETS WORSE AND WORSE

Jeremy and Carol enjoy the news because it makes them so angry. Each story on each bulletin makes them progressively more furious and friends consider it likely that one day, one of them will actually explode. "At least we could sue to get the licence fee back if we did," jokes Carol.



THE FACEBOOK FREEDOM FIGHTER



Jeremy and Carol joined Friends Reunited a few years ago to see what had happened to the people they were at school with, but after that they did not bother much with social networking. In fact until recently they were not overly excited by the internet in any form, regarding it as a nerdy substitute for face-to-face conversation. What changed things was Jeremy's discovery that you could embed

YouTube videos in your Facebook page – he now competes with friends to find ever-funnier footage of vandalised GATSOs and people having painful accidents. Carol joined at the same time, but used it mostly to play Farmville (which she has now given up) and bitch about contestants on TV talent shows. Both of them are increasingly annoyed by receiving endless requests to join groups.

country in the world (except France) seems to them more sorted out than bloody Britain – although the Brits are good at ruining anywhere of course. The Damn-Wrights used to holiday in Florida but like other places they used to go, it got spoiled when “every idiot with a passport” started going. Now they prefer Portugal or Phuket, where Jez will relax with a Lee Child and Carol will annoy herself with her *Marie Claire*. They will also discuss how annoyed the teachers were when they took Jack and Francesca out of school in term time so the holiday would be cheaper. The Damn-Wrights think that most of the teachers are bloody useless; Jeremy reckons he could do a better job himself sometimes!

It is important to note that Jeremy and Carol do hold some “seriously different” attitudes. When

OH FOR CHRIST'S SAKE



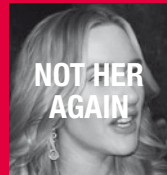
Jamie Oliver



Amy Winehouse



Caroline Flint



Kate Winslet



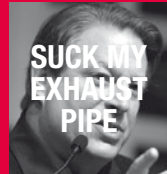
Andy Murray



Rowan Williams

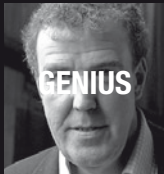


Daniel Radcliffe



Al Gore

WE'LL THANK F**K FOR THAT



Jeremy Clarkson



Ann Widdecombe



Gordon Ramsay



Duncan Bannatyne



David Davies



Arthur Smith



Dan Brown



Jenson Button

THE DAMN-WRIGHTS SUB-TRIBES

PSYCHO YUPPIES

Fraser and Ruth. Live in contemporary gated riverside housing complex. In their twenties, employed by mid-sized corporation and equity company respectively, dedicated to work and highly aggressive in pursuit of material reward. High-street tastes but fans of what they call the “greed-is-good era”; may even wear 1980s clothes in tribute.

Role models: Ben Clarke & Ruth Badger from The Apprentice

THE NEW LARKINS

Adam and Phillipa. Live in Victorian terrace in provincial city, most commonly in the west country. Work for local authority and struggling small retail chains (wine). Feel bitter that intelligence and taste “being squeezed out”, and that “being middle class is a disadvantage”. Hate fashion/celebrity but grumblingly watch *The X Factor* and shop on the High Street.

Role models: Ian Hislop & Jo Brand

COWPUNKS

Simon and Nicky. Live in detached house in rural area. Works in sales for agri-chemical company/as part-time admin role for local hospital. Previously conservative and non-political, found frustrations galvanised by campaign against the hunting bill; have only become angrier. Work in public sector increases irritation at “chucking money away”.

Role models: Ann Widdecombe & Nigel Farage

MATALAN'S DRAGONS

Ken and Barbara. Live in ex-local authority terrace in mid-size ex-manufacturing town. Ken is supervisor in car components factory, Barbara secretary in higher education college. Enjoy doing up house, gardening and going to Canary Islands. Former traditional Labour voters, patriotic, proud of never claiming benefits; feel assailed on all sides, particularly by new immigrants and underclass.

Role models: Few, but susceptible to unexpected nostalgia for Mrs Thatcher

it comes to politics, for example, Carol tends to be more vituperative and blames individuals, while Jeremy shakes his head and blames the Government. They bicker about each other’s personal faults, often publicly and entertainingly when they’ve have two bottles of the excellent Chardonnay they buy from the wine club. This is the only trouble with them as a couple, say their friends. They’re good company, in fact they can be quite charming (Jeremy knows this, and thinks he is a good flirt) but they can get a bit aggressive when they go off on their rants.

Feeling they are likely to be done over at every turn, Jeremy and Carol are increasingly happy to turn this aggression on people who cross them. They

often have it in for shop assistants, who tend to annoy them with their aloofness. Jez and Carol love telling visitors how much of a discount they got off all their white goods, although their very close friends know the story behind this is not always as rational as they make out. The reason they have such a huge fridge, for instance, is that Jez thought the assistant thought he couldn't afford it. Actually they were dithering over the purchase because Carol correctly thought it was too big to look nice in the kitchen.

Where many middle-class people worry about appearing decent to other people, Jez and Carol want less to do with "society", particularly the welfare state. "Go on," says Carol, "explain to me why I should pay tax for someone who *chooses* not to work?" They tend to think they are the first people to have thought of the point, and have a habit of saying, "What people don't realise is..." when actually, the newspapers have been telling people about the relevant fact for weeks. All this annoys liberals ("Good!") but then, as Jeremy points out, the liberals are not queuing up to pay more tax either. It might be easy to criticise the Damn-Wrights, but they are not, at least, hypocrites.

**“Indispensable... whether you’re middle class
or pretending not to be.” GQ**

**“Hilarious... we laughed our organic,
brushed cotton socks off.” Grazia**

What does it mean to be middle class in Britain in 2010? Does it depend on where you live, or how you speak, or what you wear – or even who you marry?

The Middle Class Handbook offers a comprehensive, tongue-in-cheek guide to the sub-tribes of the nation’s new middle classes.

Who are the Chaveau Riches? What is the political significance of Jeremy Clarkson? And what does the way you eat pizza have to do with it? Read on and find out. You’ll never look at Britain in quite the same way again.

Guide to the new middle-class
tribes as determined by taste,
attitude and aspiration

What your choice of favourite
celebrities says about you

Discover which tribe you belong
to – and how you get on with all
the others

Ways of working your way up,
down and sideways on Britain’s
social ladder

The nine circles of office hell

The secret meanings of chain
restaurant brands, dinner-party
sign language, social networking,
wine and Cheryl Cole

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