

THE BRAINBOX



1 What is the name of the actor who played long-running Corrie character Jack Duckworth?

2 Which Italian team beat Liverpool to win the Champions League final in 2007?

3 Which American rocker with a girl's name was born Vincent Furnier in 1948?

4 Which James Bond actor was nominated for a Golden Globe in 1970?

5 What would you expect a Spaniard to do if you gave him some espadrilles?

ANSWERS:

1) Bill Tarmey; 2) AC Milan; 3) Alice Cooper; 4) George Lazenby; 5) Put them on his feet.

QUESTION 1

Which goalkeeper was also a rugby player in a World Cup Final? **ANDY JOHNS**, Lincoln A Jan Jongbloed. The Dutchman wore No 8 in 1974 against West Germany as (most of) the squad were numbered alphabetically.

ASK US ANOTHER

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BRAINS OF BRITAIN

We asked you to name a TV show starring Victoria Wood:

- dinnerladies
- Acorn Antiques
- Wood & Walters
- Victoria Wood
- The Victoria Wood Show
- Housewife, 49
- Men Behaving Badly

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OUT NOW

WE REUNITE OLD JUDO SPARRING CHUMS THE TWO BRIANS WHO ADMIT...



It's a Blessed life

FIGHT BACK: The pair get to grips with each other again

"RETIRE?" roars actor Brian Blessed. "I will never retire. Everyone's concerned about bloody dying and retiring – bugger off!"

"I push myself every day because of the adventures I want to have."

"I want to be the Terminator for the next 50 years. I've been up Everest three times and I'm going into space."

Blessed has no intention of slowing down even aged 83 as he explains over lunch with old pal Brian Jacks.

The Daily Star arranged for the pair to meet up after we featured Jacks' autobiography last week in which Blessed wrote a foreword praising the former Olympian and Superstars athlete.

They first became friends doing judo together in London during the 1960s and have stayed in touch ever since.

Blessed says: "I was in Z-Cars at the time as PC 'Fancy' Smith, the tough guy, and the BBC were worried because I could get hurt."

"We had 28million viewers a week."

"Brian was wonderful to watch at judo – he had tremendous energy, technique and power, a true champion."

Jacks laughs: "Going on the mat with you was like going on with an ox. It was like trying to throw a block of houses!"

Problems

As the pair reminisce about their days in the dojo and the stars who would pop by – Sean Connery, the Goons – Blessed tells of his next ambition of going to Mars.

"From the age of seven I've wanted to go," says Blessed. "I'm a fully trained cosmonaut. I've done space training in Moscow and with Nasa and I tell them: 'Will you get on with it?'"

"We don't just belong on Earth. We're the guardians of the planet but we need to get out of here. You cannot solve the Earth's problems by just remaining here. We've got to go to Mars and beyond."

Blessed might be going to the planet for a new film as he has been approached about a sequel to Flash Gordon – the camp 1980 space adventure in which he was king of the bird-men Prince Vultan.

There's even talk of him being digitally de-aged for the role, like Robert De Niro and Al Pacino in Netflix movie The Irishman.

"I'd do it again," he says. "They want to do Flash Gordon on Mars and make us younger – they have the techniques to do that now."

His famous line in the film has followed Blessed all over the planet, from the North Pole to 10 Downing Street.

"Wherever I go in the world, I get asked to say: 'Gordon's alive!'" he says.

"In 2012 I was 20 miles away from the magnetic North Pole on an expedition and a Russian submarine came through the ice alongside us."

"Out got the admiral, he saw

EXCLUSIVE

by NADINE LINGE

me and went: 'Please say "Gordon's alive!"

"Halfway up Kilimanjaro, a Masai tribesman asked me to say it. I was once at a meeting at 10 Downing Street when David Cameron was PM and he suddenly appeared and said: 'Brian, please say "Gordon's alive!"' And I went inside and said it to the whole Cabinet."

Jacks, 73 – who smashed out a record 100 arm dips in less than a minute while he was on

Superstars – now lives in Thailand where he runs a hotel.

While he is happy we are getting out of the EU, he has no intention of coming back to Britain.

Jacks says: "I've represented my country in the Olympics and there's no-one more patriotic than me, but I have a great life in Thailand and I just don't understand this country now."

Blessed says he never goes into politics, preferring instead to work with animal charities, but says he could

have been the new voice of Big Ben when it went under repair.

He says: "There was talk of my voice being the bong. I did Watchdog when it was looking at how technology damages our hearing."

"They measured my decibels against a jet. The jet got 118 decibels and I did my King Lear roar every day."

"I get sick of all these adverts on TV for retirement and insurance – no tricky ques-

and it was 127 decibels. It's nice to know we can beat the machines."

While both men keep themselves active, Blessed is still full of admiration for his pal's sporting efforts.

He says: "No-one has ever equalled his dips – it's one of the greatest achievements in the field of athletics."

"I keep myself fit so I can achieve all the things I want in life. I train like s**t with weights every day."

"I call them wobbles," he booms. "I don't have one."



Pictures: TIM MERRY



SCREEN TEST: Blessed in Flash Gordon with Sam J Jones and, above, Jacks on Superstars



LIFE OF BRIANS: Our Nadine with the two old pals