BBC NEWS

Thursday, 22 November, 2001

Blair in letter spelling gaffe

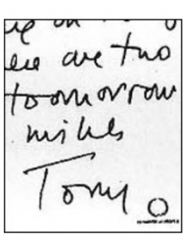


The opposition has jumped on the spelling gaffe

The prime minister's handwriting has come under scrutiny after he wrote a letter apparently misspelling the word "tomorrow" three times.

In a handwritten note to Labour's candidate in the Ipswich by-election Tony Blair three times used the word "toomorrow".

> **"This is just a note to wish you luck toomorrow"**
>
> **Tony Blair**



Tomorrow is 'misspelled' three times in the note

Downing Street aides said the mistake may be due to the premier's clumsy handwriting, but a Labour spokesman said the candidate was delighted to receive the note.

"And the prime minister thinks it's worth a little bit of embarrassment if it gets the Ipswich by-election some publicity," he said.

Football hope

The prime minister wrote: "This is just a note to wish you luck toomorrow.

"Best of luck to you and, of course to Ipswich Town in toomorrow's big game.

"I'm sure Inter won't be relishing this after Ipswich's superb performances in the last two rounds.

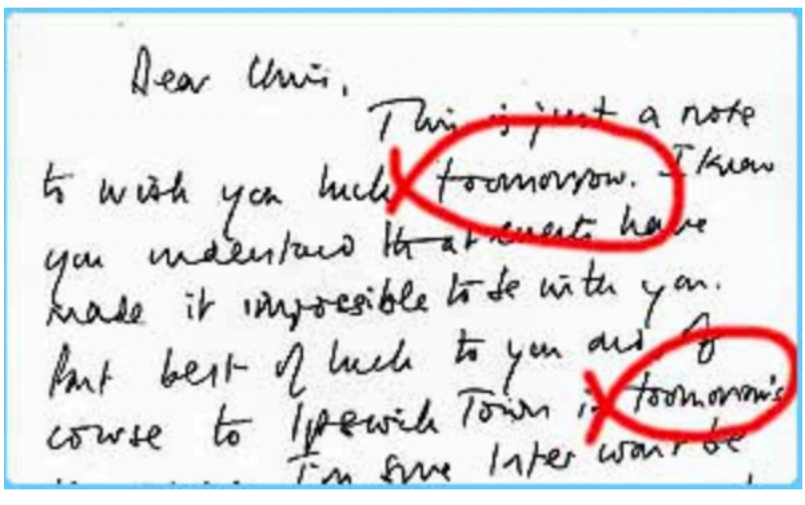
"I hope there are two good results for Ipswich toomorrow."

Ipswich Town play against Inter Milan in the Uefa Cup on Thursday, with kick-off taking place a few hours before the polls close.

The gaffe inevitably prompted ridicule from the opposition.

Shadow education secretary Damian Green said: "It looks as though the government's so-called commitment to life-long learning needs reinforcing at the top.

"As a symbol of promises in education not being matched by performance, this is impossible to beat."



The Guardian

Thursday 22 Nov 2001

Toomorrow, and toomorrow, and toomorrow

Ian Katz

Blair's gaffe will come back to haunt him. But he gets my sympathy

There are, very occasionally, moments that shatter the invisible wall that separates politicians from the rest of us: Tony Blair's sweat-drenched shirt at the end of his repentant 2000 conference speech; John Prescott's left jab; half the shadow cabinet admitting they had smoked dope. Yesterday, another joined the list: the time the prime minister misspelled the word "tomorrow" three times in a single letter.

I confess that I may be more delighted by this display of cringe-making fallibility than most. Until yesterday morning, few would have challenged my claim to be Britain's Worst Speller, or at least Worst Speller Currently Employed in the Media Political Complex. After all, how many people can imagine what it was like to watch colleagues guffawing at Dan Quayle's infamous "tomatoe" gaffe without being at all sure whether he was right or wrong to add the "e". My first reaction on hearing of Blair's undoing was sympathy. "Tomorrow" is always a tricky one for those of us who are challenged in the letter-ordering department. How many "m"s? One "r" or two? (Three even?) But not even I could have managed a howler of the scale and novelty of the prime minister's. This was a truly Archeresque performance: an extra "o" to make "toomorrow". Now where on earth did he get that from?

Certainly, and perhaps ironically, Guardian readers care intensely about spelling. The readers' editor receives more mail complaining about spelling and grammar than any other subject. He says there are two schools of thought on the effects of the paper's patchy reputation for spelling: "One is that it tends to undermine people's confidence in the facts as reported. The other is that it reminds people the Guardian is produced by human beings and gives the paper a human face."

When it comes to Blair's "toomorrow" gaffe, I subscribe firmly to the second view. Tony, you've got my voat.

<· Ian Katz is the Guardian's features editor. He is not allowed to proofread pages.

The Guardian

Sunday 25 Nov 2001

Toomorrow in tights

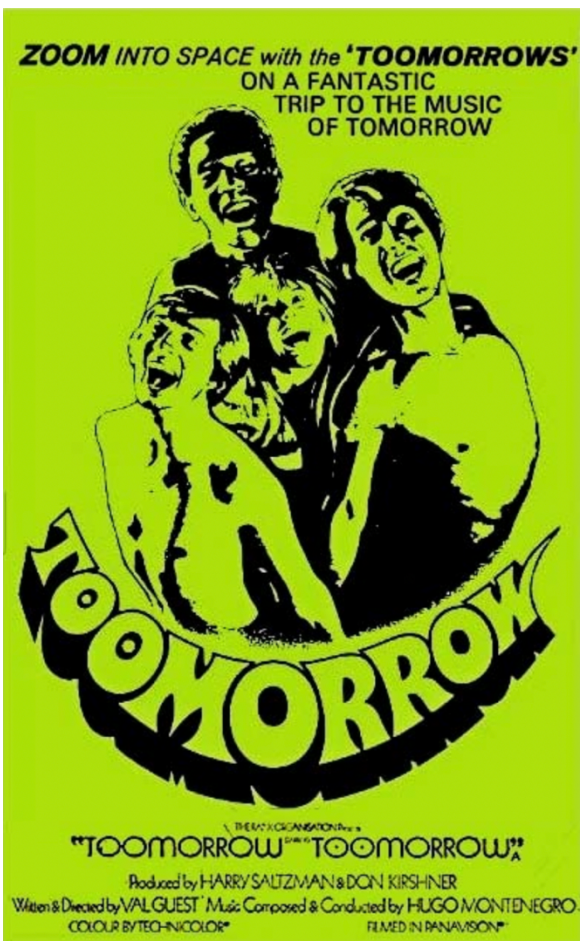
Ian Katz's sympathetic essay on Tony Blair's spelling of tomorrow (G2, November 23) asked with wonderment: "Where on earth did he get that from?" In 1970, a young Olivia Newton-John was cast in the role of Olivia in a spectacularly bad sci-fi musical movie entitled Toomorrow.

She played the lead singer of a pop quartet, also named Toomorrow, so gifted that an alien race doomed to extinction (represented by Roy Dotrice in tights) kidnapped the band from swingin' London and transported them to their planet so they could record their species-saving "vibrations". The film was an unmitigated flop.

At a recent screening of this lost "classic", which I organised in LA at the American Cinematheque, Miss Newton-John told the packed audience that producers Harry Saltzman and Don Kirshner had hoped to create "the next Beatles", which could then be exploited as a film franchise.

Over 30 years later a British prime minister is using the spelling of the name of this unlamented, prefabricated group in his personal missives. It is, perhaps, an indication that the filmmakers, and especially Miss Newton-John, left their mark on one British teenager destined for a brighter toomorrow.
Martin Lewis

July 1970: London - World Premiere





July 2000: Hollywood – Belated US Premiere!





Olivia Newton-John with Martin Lewis who instigated and hosted the screening. Lewis also secured Olivia's attendance at the sold-out event and conducted an in-depth post-screening conversation about the film with Olivia