

“Cha nod an-chasllys ve cronnit eddyr çhaghnoaylleeaght erbee ta foddey dy liooar er e hoshiaght, as druaightys,” rere raa creeney yn scrudeyr far-skeecal sheanse Arthur C. Clarke. Foddee dy vel yn çhenndeeaght goaill baght er shen tra t’ad fakin çhellvaneyn aghal y laa t’ayn jiu nagh row nyn lheid çheet rish ayns y vranlaadee ny’n ashlish s’keoi lieh-cheead blein er dy henney.

Daesyn ta red beg saa ta ny nheeghyn shoh aa-ghooghys, agh ta ny naightyn mysh çhaghnoaylleeaght noa ny laghyn shoh tannaghtyn dy chur yindys orrin.

Son sampleyr, er y gherrit shoh haink eh lesh jeshaghteyryn ec MIT ayns America dy etlagh yn chied etlan fegooish peeshyn ta gleashagh ayns halley-spoirt ’syn ollooscoil. Ta’n etlan shoh jannoo ymmyd jeh electrodeyn fo ny skianyn ta croo ‘geay ionagh’ ta gimman eh er-oaie gyn jannoo feyr erbee. Dooyrt fer jeh ny jeshaghteyryn dy dooar eh yn smooinght voish *Star Trek*.

Ga dy row ny chied eabyn dy chroo etlan ‘ionagh’ jeant ayns ny 1920yn, choud shoh cha row sheanseyrn er n’yannoo veg agh croo gaihghyn beggey oddagh floateil erskyn boayrd son grig ny ghaa. Nish t’eh treishtit dy vod droneyn tostagh v’er nyn groo (bee sheshaghtyn-caggee yn theihll goaill boggey jeh shen, var-a-mish...), as fy-yerrey etlanyn hybrid ry-hoi troailtee as lught nagh bee cur magh wheesh dy charbon.

Va mee lhaih neesht dy vel saaseyn noa ayns ‘jeshaghey genneeyn’ er lhiggey da studeyr PhD enmyssit Bhart-Anjan Bhullar ec Harvard gobbraghey magh cre ny genneeyn v’ayns shenn-ayr cadjin ny dinosauryn (goaill stiagh eeanlee) as crocodileyn.

Hooar eh magh dy vel ny genneeyn son cummey corp ny dinosauryn foast follit ayns ushagyn y laa t’ayn jiu, myr sampleyr son jannoo beal feeacklagh ayns ynnyd gob. Liorish casteey ny genneeyn ta jannoo yn gob ayns mwane kiark, va Bhullar abyl croo ushag lesh beal casley rish tyrannosaurus as y lheid. Va’n mwane er ny varroo roish v’eh guirt, agh ta jalloo scell-X jeh’n eean ’syn ooh soilshaghey cummey ny cabbyn dy cleer, as ta Bhullar credjal dy beagh yn cretoor er ve slane slayntoil as dy bee mammothyn as Neanderthalyn er nyn ruggey ayns ny bleantyn ry heet.

T’eh smooinit dy re yn gob ren lhiggey da ushagyn tannaghtyn bio tra hie ny dinosauryn elley mow, son dy row ad abyl spulgey brinneenyn beggey dy vee ass yn trustyr v’er y thaloo ’sy traartys lurg da’n asteroid bwoalley yn ooir.

Nish dy vel sheanseyrn yn UN gra nagh vel agh daa vlein jeig ain dy hauail yn seihll voish caghlao climate nagh vod ve sthappit as oddagh shin ooilley ’chur mow, as y chooid smoo dy heeraghyn goll dy bollagh y raad elley, foddee dy beemayd oilley spulgey trustyr kione lieh-cheead blein elley, as cha bee etlanyn ionagh as dino-kiarkyn cooney lhien edyr!

“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic,” goes the adage of the science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke. Perhaps the older generation is reminded of this when they consider today’s smartphones, the likes of which were unheard of in the wildest fantasies of fifty years ago.

For those a little younger these things are second nature, but news bulletins on technological advances continue to surprise.

For example, engineers at MIT in the States recently succeeded in flying the first plane with no moving parts in a university gym. The plane uses electrodes under the wings to create 'ionic wind' which propels it completely silently. One of the engineers reportedly got the idea from *Star Trek*.

Although the first attempts to create an 'ionic' plane were made in the 1920s, until now scientists had got no further than making small toys that could hover above a desk for a few seconds. Now it is hoped that silent drones can be developed (the militaries of the world will be pricking their ears up, I bet...), and eventually hybrid passenger and cargo planes which will produce fewer carbon emissions.

Another development I read of recently is 'gene editing' which has enabled a PhD student to work out genetic properties of the common ancestor of dinosaurs (including birds) and crocodiles.

He discovered that the genes to form the body shape of the dinosaurs are still hidden in today's birds; for example, to produce a toothy snout rather than a beak. By inhibiting the genes which produce the beak in a chicken embryo, Bhullar was able to create a bird with a tyrannosaurus-like snout. The foetus was killed before hatching, but X-rays of the chick in the egg clearly show the jaw shape, and Bhullar believes the creature would have been healthy, and that reconstructed mammoths and Neanderthals will be born in coming decades.

It is thought that the beak is what allowed the birds to survive when the other dinosaurs died out, since they were able to peck little pieces of edible matter out of the debris on the ground in the devastation after the asteroid struck the earth.

Now that UN scientists tell us we have only twelve years to save the world from runaway climate change which could kill us all, and most countries going in completely the opposite direction, perhaps we will all be pecking in the dirt in another fifty years, and a fat lot of good ionic planes and dino-chickens will do us then!