

# Do Not Forward This – Not a Joke

by Esmerelda Weatherwax (Oct. 2008)

hoax buster websites which have traced the first story back via the US where much of the language used originated (purse for handbag, shift for gear level, guy, store etc) to Australia.

The advice is not to forward these stories as they i) clog up IT waveband in the same way that spam does and ii) they spread fear and despondency and increase the atmosphere of mistrust in society.

The answer I got back was that if these stories make us think twice when out and about it has done its job, and in her opinion, passing them on has been worthwhile.

Worthwhile to who? Who benefits from women being scared to travel alone, or without a man? Who has a vested interest in keeping women fearful in their

homes?

Well, it is not the gluelman that's for sure. He saw the error of his ways and his scheme was roundly condemned because we have this tradition in England of woman having freedom of movement.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Emanuel Van Meteran the Dutch ambassador observed that Englishwomen "were not shut up or kept so strictly as in Spain and some other countries. On the contrary, they had free management of their households and could go and could go out to market to buy what they liked best to eat. They are well dressed and fond of taking it easy; they sit decked out in fine clothes, in order to see and be seen by the passers-by.

Thomas Platter of Basle who visited London in 1599 said "Now the women-folk of England, who have mostly blue-grey eyes and are fair and pretty, have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes,

and the men must put up with such ways".

Shakespeare described Mistress Page, a respectable, merry and good wife of Windsor, thus, Reuters reported recently that :-