

Over the next 24 hours I will be delivering my Habbo story. The memories, the people (no real names, sorry!), the competitions, the rooms and the Habbos.

I doubt that it will be anywhere near as in depth or high quality as I would like it to be. I know that 24 hours is not nearly enough time. However, I'll do my best to leave you a little something. Perhaps one day a more polished version will be available to read.

'One In A Million' by Lost_Witness - 19th August 2010

Chapter 1 - The Early Days

I arrived for my interview way back in November 2004 and was given a job by Smash. No idea if he had a particular passion for instant mashed potato (I never asked) but I did discover he loved yoga, smoothies and 'taking a step back'. He didn't get inside the Hotel often, so I expect many of you won't remember him. He did have a Bot twinned with his personality in the Dusty Lounge for a while, between 2006 and 2008 that probably gave you the best chance to get to know him!

I joined the Player Support Team, alongside Jay and Glitterkat. Back then, our support team formed almost half the office! Glitterkat was Head Hobba and looked after all of our volunteer moderators (Hobbas) as well as our Official Moderators. Jay and I were responsible for answering your lovely emails involving all sorts of things from bans and lost pass to missing rubber ducks and desire to do work experience.

The Hotel Manager was Callie and her assistant was Dionysus. They worked on the really old Habbo Homepage (not to be confused with the really, really old version) which had an orange colour theme, just three pages and had a weekly Newsie crammed full of the latest news, competitions, Furni rankings and your stories.

There was only one other office Staff member way back then, and that was UKchaserAI. He started a week before me (something he often reminded me of down the years) and helped to launch the RAF competition that you will probably remember, since it was awesome.

And that was that really. Seven members of Habbo Staff in an office somewhere in Central London.

Chapter 2 - Player Support

Well, I guess I should start by thanking you all for your wonderful emails down the years! When I started, there was no such thing as an auto-reply and we simply had to reply to every query from scratch. We did of course have a few phrases that we stored to re-use in any similar emails, but that wasn't to make the email less personal for you, it was simply to help us answer your email more quickly. Sadly, we could never answer them fast enough. I guess, that's one of the joys of a 24 hour online service!

Jay decided to move on around 6 months after I had started and we were soon joined by Helkat (now I know you remember her). Pohjola also started around that time, as the first ever Ad person in Habbo UK. She wouldn't be lonely for long though and there have been many additions to your Habbo UK team down the years, but more on that as and when we get there.

Player Support got quite creative during 2005, with the launch of Postbag Of Joy (where you created models of Habbo things out of paper and pipe cleaners), Office Non Swearing Day where we had to pay a pound every time we said something naughty (we didn't raise any money at all. Honest!) and Dress Up for Chavity - our own personal take on charity fundraising that involved some impressive bling and tracky b's (aka UKchaserAI's regular clothes).

Incidentally, it was around this time that UKchaserAI first started his Swap Shop. Now, I wouldn't dream of speaking for him, but I think it's safe to say that he held that competition in a special place in his heart. Mainly because you sent us such memorable items as pickled bread in a plastic freezer bag and a toilet brush with brown paint on it. We also received a Giant Calculator (A4 size!), which still exists in the Office to this very day.

Heidster was next to join us and she stepped into the role of Community Manager around February 2006. She looked over Player Support with a big glee filled smile, most of the time, and thus our team grew to four (a Habbo world record at the time, no less!)

What else happened in this period of time? Well, we had Bling Elfs and Reindeers at Christmas, SUPERlove for Valentine's and Habbotics took over at Habboween. BattleBall arrived for the very first time and we launched the BattleBall Challenge in the second half of 2005. This proved to be very popular with Gold, Silver and Bronze Dragon Lamps being awarded as trophies to the most successful challengers.

Chapter 3 - HM Starting Out

In May 2006, Callie departed Habbo for pastures new and Dionysus moved onto a new role, as you will no doubt already be aware. During this period of change, I was announced as acting Hotel Manager and became the 4th and perhaps last person to take on the challenging role.

Some of you may be able to remember that the very first thing that I did was the Pirate's competition which saw you exploring the lost island of R'Lyeh. Polar bears, secret bunkers and a sinister plot from those guys at Habbotics followed, as well as the pieces of eight quest and various games including Pirate Ship Battles (who'd have thought spinning dice on rollers could be so difficult?). The skull necklace badge was awarded to a few quest winners and remains to this day, one of the rarest badges in the Hotel.

My first Summer was incredibly busy. It was still just me on my own at this point with the Dream Team World Cup competition, Mei Ling making an appearance along with Asian themed Furni and the big August event was Around The World in 80 rooms which, thanks to your help, saw a vast network of rooms from 80 different Countries shared.

After the Summer holidays, Colmc joined the UK Staff team and Glitterkat moved on to new things. This was in September, when we had the first Streets of Bobba competition. Once I had returned from my holiday, Helkat became Assistant Hotel Manager and Colmc went the other way to join Heidster in Player Support.

Halloween this year saw the Serpent of Doom make sporadic appearances in your Catalogue and Christmas soon descended with Rasta Santa attempting to make it snow! Surely you remember the videos? They're still on YouTube if you want to check them out!

Chapter 4 - Hotel Manager

There are too many memories to share in this tired old story, but I intend to cram as many as possible in a period that saw no fewer than FIFTY big competitions, 40 celebrity visitors and a plethora of various other activities. This Chapter is going to be long, longer and longest!

2007 - personally, I'd have to say that the Traxfactor competition at the end of this year was the best thing to happen in 2007, but there was a lot of stuff that came close! Pixel Maze, Trax Machine launch, the biggest Habbowood ever in which one lucky Habbo won a trip to LA, Helkat's Easter talent search (while I sunned on a tropical beach and watched the Malaysian Grand Prix!) and the epic battle of the Green Tea Elementals against the far superior and all powerful Grey Pixel Warriors, to name just a few. Perhaps the most popular event of them all though, was The Battle of the Resorts in which upwards of 80 individually owned Resorts took on the challenges of the Inspector to claim a 5 Star status achieved by just 8. Valentine's this year was all about the NEWLYMETS (you know, that little soap opera of dramatic genius!), Habboween returned with another Pumpkin Design competition and the midnight release of the Rare Gothic Fountain and Christmas this year saw Smilla, 3000, Sinister and Bobby all audition to replace Rasta as your official Habbo Santa. Smilla was our winner, but she never made a return visit, sadly! Even more sadly, it was here that HelKat departed us and started a new journey. She is still missed by many and is one of the best people I have ever had the pleasure to work with. Along with a sad farewell though, we did have some big new arrivals including Flynn500, BerbaNo9 and Nilsn - all of whom remain at Habbo UK, though you don't see them as often as they would like to.

2008 - For me, 2008 will always bring back very fond memories. I believe that the competitions this year were among the best that we have ever created. Just look at this list... Jan to Mar: Nifty Nine arrived with the super hero battle to save Habbopolis City from various monster attacks, Valentine's saw the cruise ship Habborella set sail across the pixel seas and we had all the fun of the Fair in Theme Park Challenge. Apr to May: We had many an Arabian night as the Alhambra Furni arrived along with a gripping plot to save me from an evil spell, as Russia won Eurovision so too did all the Habbos that correctly predicted their victory and Kitsune returned with a sushi Parlour challenge that got you all Chopping! Summer 2008 saw three massive competitions arrive in Habbo UK including the first ever Habbo Big Brother competition that saw some 80,000 Habbos join the Group page and 30,000 apply to be Housemates. Prior to that we

had the Euro 2008 Predictions, which despite England/Scotland/Wales/N Ireland and Rep Ireland all failing to qualify still had everyone football crazy as various games were played and everyone adopted a team. I chose Poland, who failed massively! August saw the HabbOlympics arrive and it's amazing to think that the next time they swing around, it'll be in London 2012. The year drew to a close with arguably the best Habboween ever as a Virus engulfed the Hotel and the Hospital Furni made an appearance. To cap off such a packed year, we had the Christmas Advent Campaign which saw 26 Penguins squark their way into your Big Hand!

2009 - I think it was very difficult to follow in the footsteps of 2008, but we gave it a pretty good attempt with a selection of competitions that included popular new ideas as well as some old favourites. Donnie Santini made an unexpected return in January as he explored a mysterious frozen land and found Greek treasure! Valentine's took on a fantastic Bollywood theme in February and we also launched the first ever HabWrecked the very same month! HAFTAs and Habprentice followed in March with the earlier replacing the very popular but sadly discontinued Habbowood theme. The Spring months saw the arrival of some of the most popular competitions we have ever created. Habbo Raceway in which 16 race courses were created and split into 4 grand prix events, Yukka Tree Hill which was a village themed take on the popular Resort competition and the Lost City of Bensalem which saw the largest Habbo quest ever take place in the dark, deep seas. Summer was dominated by the Lost Tribe and Sci Fi competitions that saw your Tomb Raider skills put to the test and then recruiting you as rookie astronauts to go in search of the deep space exploration vessel the Starship Habborella 300 that had mysteriously disappeared along with all her crew. Due to popular demand, Habbo Big Brother returned for a second bigger and better series that included daily video highlights from the house courtesy of our Press Team. Kitchen Furni finally arrived in September having been requested by most Habbos for many years before and Habboween this year followed with a very Paranormal theme that included great Haunted House Furni. The year ended on a massive high with Christmas celebrations that included three new Pets, the first addition to the popular critters for 6 years!

Celebrities - Every single Habbo UK Celebrity visit has been the real deal. There are photographs of every single person listed below, playing Habbo in our office and chatting live to you. The vast majority of these visits were arranged by UKchaserAI (with help from me of course!) and later by SoyLentBob.

More big name Celebrities have visited Habbo UK than all the other Habbo Hotel's combined. Hopefully, you got to meet one or two down the years.

In no particular order, because frankly, knowing the correct order would be scarily good memory, the following Celebrities have visited Habbo UK (plus many that I've forgotten)!

Miley Cyrus, Selena Gomez, Paramore, The Sugababes, The Saturdays, Akon, Chamillionaire, Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne, The Gorillaz, Lily Allen, Jet, Shayne Ward, Stacie Orrico, Diana Vickers, Justin Bieber, Funeral For A Friend, Jason Derulo, The Automatic, Bullet For My Valentine, The Subways, Faithless, Calvin Harris, September, Booty Luv, JLS, The Ting Tings,

Girls Can't Catch, The Dolly Rockers, George Sampson, Fugative, Vanessa Amorosi, Owl City, Erik Hassle, Demi Lovato, Family Force 5, Taio Cruz, The Veronicas, Basshunter, DJ Ironik, Eoghan Quigg, Alesha Dixon, David Guetta, Sean Kingston, Matt Willis, Simon Webbe, Lil' Chris, 365, Stephen Baldwin, Area 15 and an interview with Rooster by Glitterkat!

Chapter 5 - Merge: New Beginnings

There comes a time when everyone must end a certain chapter in their life and start a new one. Sometimes it is easy to do, especially if it's something you are keen to put behind you, but other times it is very difficult. For me, Habbo is an enormous chapter in my life that I will always remember. That's thanks, in no small part, to each and every one of you. Whether I was lucky enough to chat with you or not, thanks for all your fantastic competition entries, quest entries and, most importantly, creative ideas.

The merge has allowed us to create a bigger and better Habbo for everyone to enjoy. I'm sure that, despite the obvious bad points that come with such a big change, at first, you'll now be used to it and probably enjoying it! I think the merge was a good thing and that the pros far outweigh the cons. Don't forget, way back in the day, the UK and Ireland Hotel was in fact on .com and did have a massive international following. Many of us claim those to be the good old days, and perhaps now, after the merge, things are closer to those days than ever before?

All the best to each and every one of you. Thanks for the memories.

Epilogue 1 - The Hobba Days

I never intended to become a Hobba. I always found that I could offer help in my own time without the need for a Badge or a so-called elevated status. Perhaps it was that thinking that ultimately made me a good candidate. Truth is, I do not know, as I never thought to ask. So why did I become a Hobba then?

I had a very good friend, who I shall not name although I do not believe that she plays anymore, and she was already enrolled as a Hobba. I wouldn't want to give the impression that it's "who you know not what you know" that gets you somewhere in life, as I honestly do not believe that's true. It can help, of course, but the truth is, why would someone recommend you and put their own reputation at risk, if they didn't really think you were good enough? I did not ask to apply, I simply humoured her by putting in an application and not expecting anything to come of it.

It was only once I had received confirmation that my application was going to progress into an interview that I started thinking about whether I really wanted to do this or not. Sure, it was just a voluntary role, but there were very real responsibilities involved and moving from a group of 1 million to a privileged group of just 140 was going to change my personal experience of Habbo forever. The interview process is of course top secret (sorry!), but I can say that it was a virtual interview inside the Hotel, which was a pretty unique experience in itself! Once I had been taken through everything, I was given an insight to a whole of Habbo that I never knew existed. Upon

seeing that and just how helpful the Hobbas truly were, I decided to accept the role and became a Silver Hobba.

It is often said that power is the main thing in life that can change someone (closely followed by money). I can honestly say that I have not changed one bit from the very first day I started Habbo through my time as a Hobba to this very day as a member of Habbo Staff on the verge of departing you. Habbo is exactly what you make of it and I have always been intent on respecting every single member, rightly or wrongly(!), and treating everyone equally. I hope that there are plenty of examples of this that you have seen through the years and for those of you that I have never met, perhaps you will find some - whether it's a joking "I need to take a screenshot of this" in a creatively worded room, saying a line in "All I Want For Christmas Is You" or visiting a random room to ask for a coffee.

Silver Hobbas were essentially trainees and this period lasted for approximately 2 weeks (unless you were really struggling!) before you received your Gold Badge, added responsibilities and started work. I say work, because that is exactly what it was. Answering your calls for assistance to offer our experience and help to you, whether it was someone blocking a door, flooding or a missing rubber duck, there was a team of Hobbas there to visit you in your room, talk about it and on rare occasions take action.

I'd estimate about 90% of the Habbo population that knew about Hobbas, wanted to become one. Whatever their reasons for that desire, whether it be fame, respect, desire to help, genuine or not, they were right to want to. These were amongst the greatest days in my life as a Habbo and to a degree, in my real life as well. I hope that one day you'll have the same opportunities that I once had and manage to

There were a lot of fantastic people on Habbo back in these days and some of those people were lucky enough to form your Hobba team. I don't think we'll see anything like it again, certainly not to the level of detail that it was way back then. As I pack up my bags for the last time, do not fear. It is not the final Hobba saying his goodbyes, as in true Star Wars fashion, "there is another..." and some of you will undoubtedly know who that is.

Epilogue 2 - Checking In

I arrived at Habbo for the first time way back in the Summer of 2002. When I created my Habbo name, a song was on the radio by Lost Witness and thus Lost_Witness was born (the song was called Happiness Happening, for those that would like to check it out - it remains one of my favourite dance songs). The underscore in my name was available to choose back then but has since become an invalid character (probably because it doesn't work with some Habbo features such as Tag searches). Funnily enough, underscores were seen as a bit rubbish back then, but they are quite desirable now it would seem. Things like that change all the time in Habbo, so often you are best sticking to what you have.

I started my Habbo days with a small group of Habbos that soon became very good friends in a room called Inch High Private Eye. We worked as a private investigation agency, and although we didn't really do much investigating, we did help lots of Habbos with their various problems. It was just a regular room really but we had some really good fun meeting up and chatting about all manner of things.

Back in 2002, there was no such thing as Habbo Club and I can remember its release being met with a very mixed reaction. Some people thought it was amazing and loved the idea whilst others felt that it split the community into two groups - the fortunate and the unfortunate. Ultimately, it simply became whatever you made of it and I think most people would agree that the most important things in Habbo are not things that you can buy. Like the Throne and Dino Egg (before MarketPlace of course!) Nah, I'm talking about friends of course. The people that you become close to, not because of what they own or who they claim to be but because of those late night chats about random rubbish like the difference between Celery and Celeriac.

Something that didn't get a mixed reaction was the Pet release. I remember buying my first pet 'Yoda' the cat and he lived in my room Land of the Rising Sun. Sadly he had to be put down many a year ago now but he lives on in the memory of those that met him! The original release of the Petal Patch was one of the most popular items in the entire Hotel and I bought quite a lot of them to decorate my room.

My room Land of the Rising Sun became quite a popular place for people to visit and meet with experienced Habbo players who could help them out with a wide range of things thanks to their Habbo wisdom. One of the main reasons the room was popular was due to its unique Japanese garden theme using Petal Patches and also the fact that due to me being a HC member from the very first day it launched, I was able to display the new HC item each month that many people had not seen yet.

Habbo could be described as a very different place back then, but actually, in reality, it's very much the same. If you take a little time to think about what really matters to you on Habbo, why you login each time, I'm sure you'd find everything that existed back in the so called 'good old days' lives on even here in the present. It has been and always will be whatever you choose to make it become, so make the most of it, for it is yours to keep.

