

Fully revised and updated **3rd Edition**

THE NAKED TRADER



**How anyone can
make money
trading shares**



**“Makes share dealing
sound fun and tempting”
Daily Telegraph**

Robbie Burns

Hh



• • • **Sample** • • •

Praise for The Naked Trader
previous editions

“The book covers an impressive amount of ground, from the basics of setting up as a trader, to the meat of strategies and psychology, and plenty of honest examples of where things have gone wrong. As an introduction to the world of shares, *The Naked Trader* scores highly.”

– Dominic Picarda, *Investors Chronicle*



“*The Naked Trader* is a huge hit because it makes novice investors money.”

– Clem Chambers, *ADVFN*



“The tell-it-to-you-straight style will appeal to those who fancy dabbling in the stock market but are put off by the jargon and City gent image ... designed to be easy to dip in and out of ... makes share dealing sound fun and tempting.”

– *Daily Telegraph*

“The relaxed way to **make a fortune!**”

– David Schwartz, market expert



“Personable, calm, witty and great company, **Robbie is an inspiration** ... he has a knack for spotting undervalued or overbought companies and for picking just the right moment to trade them.”

– CNN



“Burns is **really good for trading advice**; incredibly amusing to read, you might read it in an evening.”

– *Citywire* Readers’ dozen



“Robbie is his own man and his book will show you that it is possible to **build a substantial portfolio** using common-sense techniques.”

George Hallmey, Click Events

**The
Naked
Trader**

Also by Robbie Burns

The Naked Trader's Guide to Spread Betting
How to make money from shares in up or down markets

www.nakedtrader.co.uk

The Naked Trader

How anyone can make money
trading shares

3rd edition

by Robbie Burns

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About the Author



Robbie Burns has been a journalist and writer since he graduated in journalism from Harlow College in 1981. After starting life as a reporter and editor for various local newspapers, from 1988–1992 he was editor of ITV and Channel 4’s teletext services. He also wrote ITV’s daily teletext soap opera, ‘Park Avenue’, for five years.

He then went on to freelance for various newspapers, including the *Independent* and the *Sun*, and also helped set up a financial news service for CNN. In 1997, he became editor for BSkyB’s teletext services and set up their

shares and finance service. While there he also set up various entertainment phone lines in conjunction with BSkyB, including a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* phone line that made him nearly £250,000.

He left full-time work in 2001 to trade and run his own businesses, which included a café in London that he later sold, doubling his money on the initial purchase. While at BSkyB, Robbie broadcast a diary of his share trades, which became hugely popular. He transferred the diary to his website, www.nakedtrader.co.uk, which became one of the most-read financial websites in the UK. Between 2002 and 2005 he wrote a column for the *Sunday Times*, ‘My DIY Pension’, featuring share buys and sells made for his pension fund which he runs himself in a SIPP. He managed to double the money in his pension fund from £40,000 to £80,000 in under three years, as chronicled in these articles. By mid-2011 he had turned it into £250,000. Robbie now writes a weekly column for ADFVN.com.

Robbie has made a tax-free gain of well over £1,000,000 from trading shares since 1999, making a profit every year, even during market downturns. His public trades alone – detailed on his website – have made more than £900,000.

He lives in a riverside apartment on the Thames with his wife, Elizabeth, and young son Christopher. His hobbies include chess, running, swimming, horse racing, and trading shares from his bedroom, erm ... naked. After all, he wouldn't be seen dead in a thong ... (you might catch him in Speedos).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to my wife Elizabeth for her support and putting up with me moaning constantly while I was writing (and rewriting) the book. Also, thanks to all the contributors to the real-life stories section.

Finally, thank you to my editor for his always valuable contributions (especially the boring chart stuff I'm too lazy to do myself) – and for making sure everything is as accurate as it can be. If there are any spelling mistakes they are his fault and not mine, okay?

Preface

Welcome to the Crazy World of Shares



Ever wondered whether you could make money by buying and selling shares? And maybe eventually quitting that damn job to do it? Being able to tell the boss to stuff it?

I think you can – whatever your age, job, status or character defects!

I did it. And honestly, I am not a planet brain, I'm not great at maths and I'm pretty lazy. So if I did it, you can too!

This third edition of *The Naked Trader* will be your best friend if you want to learn how to make money from shares. I'll reveal to you common-sense stock market knowledge that's taken me more than 14 years to learn. You can learn from the things I've got right – and learn even more from the things I've got wrong. Not to mention things that other people have got right and wrong, too.

Oh, and don't worry – I speak plain English, not the financial gobbledegook others hide behind. I hope you'll gain from my experiences without having to trawl through a lot of boring old financial twaddle found in so many other books about the market.

Is this book for you?

Who is this book aimed at? Well, anyone interested in making money from trading shares. For starters, it's perfect for total beginners to the stock market – the first bits of the book, for instance, are all about exactly what your first steps should be, and all the core information you absolutely must know (but for once written in a way that won't give you concussion).

But it's also very much for those of you who are already trading, and who want to improve. It's packed to bursting with strategies and helpful hints that have all worked for me. I think that should also make it equally interesting to the more experienced investor, who perhaps wants to try out some new ideas.

And no matter your experience, if you have ever bought books about making money in the markets before, but found yourself collapsing off your chair in boredom after five minutes, this book is for you too. Trading isn't dull, so there's no reason for a trading guide to be a papery equivalent of Ovaltine. That's why this one isn't.

The only trading topic this book doesn't cover in any great depth is technical analysis. So if double bottoms are your thing, I'm afraid you'll need to look elsewhere. [Oo-er, missus, etc. – Ed.] I'll touch on them briefly. [I bet you will. – Ed.] But that's all. [I'm out of innuendoes now. – Ed.]

Put simply, this book will teach you everything you need to know about how to make money from shares – and without giving you a headache. I've got a low concentration threshold myself. If I can write it, you can read it!

*Robbie
London, 2011*

Introduction

Trading Shares, Eating Toast, Making Money

When I wrote the original *Naked Trader* back in 2005 I thought it would be a one-off. I never expected it to sell many copies. I had felt there was a gap in the market for a simple-to-read book on how to make money from shares, written by someone who has really done it full-time, but I was stunned when it turned out that gap was pretty big and the book went on to be a bestseller. Three years later I wrote the second edition, which sold even more than the first one.

I'm so pleased that my writing seems to help people. The emails from those who tell me they've never even bothered reading a whole book before, but have managed to finish *The Naked Trader*, are very satisfying indeed.

This completely updated third edition is designed to be read from scratch, so there is no need to buy the previous two editions. In fact, if you bought one of those, I hope you will find this new edition worth getting too. It's a top-to-bottom revision, adding another four years of market experience to the core material of the earlier books, with tons of refinements and new stuff throughout.

Why a third edition?

Markets change and move fast. Since I wrote the last edition (2007) many things have happened in the world of shares, and I've learned a lot too. I only want to bring out new editions when I think I've got something genuinely new and valuable to add, and the time definitely feels right now.

This book contains lots of new strategies and ideas that have arisen out of the past four years of trading. In that time, my trades have actually become more profitable, and I've been able to refine a number of new techniques

that are definitely worth passing on. In fact, since the last edition I've become a millionaire. [It's true. He dresses like Mr Monopoly now. – Ed.]

So if you bought either of the previous editions and enjoyed them, I hope you will like this one just as much. Of course, there is some ground that has to be covered for new readers, and old hands may find some of this familiar.



But much else is new, and everything else has been updated, refreshed and spring-cleaned. This is still the one book you need to get started in trading, as well as a source of seriously decent strategies for making that trading worthwhile.

Jargon-free, common-sense advice

If you've never traded a share before it doesn't matter, as I'll guide you every step of the way. And if you have traded for a while and have made losses, I am confident I can put you on the road to long-term stock market success by getting rid of your bad habits.

If you have traded shares for a while, but you're struggling to make money, I hope you'll find some of my strategies useful.

You won't find any inexplicable stock market jargon in this book – I write in plain English. You won't have to start scratching your head and think,

‘Has he lapsed into Esperanto?’ I’m going to explain how to buy and sell shares the easy way, and guide you to the winners. I’ll be taking you through every step and explaining all the silly jargon.

The fact is: stock market investment is easier than you think.

Brokers and tipsters love to spout jargon because it makes them look clever, and helps persuade you to part with your hard-earned money as a result of their ‘advice’. But I’ll guide you through all that nonsense so that *you* can make your own decisions and do your own research.

This is not a get-rich-quick book (sorry!)

One thing I certainly can’t do is promise that £10,000 you have spare is going to become £100,000 overnight as a result of reading this book.

Though I have become a millionaire, it has taken me many years. Building a fortune from trading takes time, and you will make more money by growing your money slowly than by trying to make a million in a year (you won’t succeed, and the flame-out could be pretty disastrous).

You know those ads:

“Make £400 a day from the markets ... ”

“Become a stock market millionaire with our software ... ”

Come on, you’ve always known in your heart of hearts that when something sounds too good to be true – it is!

This book is about building your wealth slowly and surely – with realistic targets and time frames. Using discipline, good stock-picking techniques and avoiding the mistakes new investors nearly always make, I believe I can make you richer. But you just aren’t going to become a millionaire overnight.

I became a millionaire, but believe me, it took loads and loads of nights!

Trading shares is an exciting roller-coaster ride with plenty of thrills and spills. I really hope that excitement comes over in *Naked Trader*.

If you have never bought or sold a share before, I hope I’ll arm you with the information you’ll need to start trading. This includes everything from how to buy a share to getting real-time prices.

Then I'll tell you everything I've learned over 14 active years of trading. You'll learn what makes shares move and what to watch for before pressing that buy button. I can also reveal how to make money by backing shares to go *down*. And I hope to provide you with tons of useful info you just won't find anywhere else.



Whether you have a small amount to trade, or you've inherited £100,000, I hope after reading this book that you will be well-armed to enter the fray.

So, get a cup of tea, put your feet up and welcome to the crazy world of shares. Oh, and never forget the toast.



Part I

Rat Race, Exeunt

“Money can’t buy friends,
but you can get a better
class of enemy.”

- **Spike Milligan**



Escaping the Rat Race

My story

In about 1998 I remember sitting in a grim office overlooking a dismal carpet warehouse on the A4 and thinking: “Is this how I want to spend my life?”

I was earning quite a bit, but I wasn't happy. I didn't want to be in a horrible office working for a big company anymore. I knew what I wanted: freedom!

I quit the rat race in 2001 and have never looked back. I love my lifestyle. No moody bosses or targets. Just me! Of course there are no office politics – but I can live without them!

I now sit at home in my office overlooking the Thames, with my feet up, putting on a trade here and there and relaxing. My wealth continues to build in the markets over time.

Luckily for me, I realised working for someone else – unless you absolutely *love* what you do – is a mug's game. You're just there to pay the mortgage every month.

So while I worked for BSkyB, I also worked for myself. I had a shiny Reuters machine on my desk (after the cleaner had been), and I learned everything about the markets through practice.

I quickly realised I could make a lot more money trading than in my full-time job, and in 2001 I quit to trade more or less full time. Before this, though, I had to get some extra money to trade with.

The delectable Buffy

So while still employed I started to develop other income streams – one of which, incredibly, included a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* information line. This made me £250,000 over four years! It simply involved me reading out the latest Buffy news on my phone at home – eager viewers would call a line to hear the recording, and I made money out of each call. Sadly the series ended in 2000, and so with it the line.

I started it for a bit of a laugh ... but on its first day the guy who owned the phone company called me and said: “Bugger me, it’s just taken £400!”

Happiness is ... residual income

And I sold mobile phones and cut-price phone calls and energy for a company called Telecom Plus. And still do now, actually, from time to time via my website. I got – and still get – a cut of every phone call made or energy used by customers that have signed up through me. It’s called residual income and it pays all my bills even now. I still earn from customers I sold to in 1999!

Armed, therefore, with a huge pile of cash, I quit my job and decided to trade full-time.

Waiter, there’s a fish in my fish pie

However, I did want a bit of a fallback in case I wasn’t such a great trader, so I bought a café near a tube station in Fulham. That proved a lot of fun and I made quite a bit of money. My wife and I improved it till it made £1,000 a day instead of £300 – it was very successful.

So successful, in fact, that it actually became a pain in the neck. More customers, which led to more staff, which led to more problems. Classic growing pains.

Sometimes staff didn’t turn up and I found myself making coffees at 7am! It involved all kinds of problems: firing staff; talking to customers complaining there was fish in their fish pie; and dealing with all the mess a café brings.

The worst incident I can remember was when all the staff were sick, and I was on my own behind the counter trying to deal with a large queue of people.

So I shouted out to the café: “I need help! Anyone want a short-term job? £10 an hour.” And one of the customers came to my rescue and started serving. There was a lovely community spirit and I met a lot of great people.

But with my son arriving on the scene it became too much effort to run it, and enough was enough.

I had originally intended it to be the start of a chain, and I nearly bought a second café, but decided in the end I didn’t want to be a retail mogul. Too much effort – I’d rather have less money and enjoy relaxing.

So I sold the café for roughly double what I paid for it. Interestingly, running the café helped my trading because a café business is quite complex, and learning the accounts helped me evaluate stock market businesses.

A lazy life

So now I just trade and run my website **www.nakedtrader.co.uk**.

I also hold five to six seminars a year, where I show readers my techniques using live markets on a large screen. I really enjoy them and it gets me out of the house too.

And it’s amazing how many share picks come out of these seminars which go on to make me plenty of dough.

It’s also good fun to meet readers and have a drink with them. If you want to come to one, see the info on the seminars at the end of the book. Maybe we’ll have a drink together sometime!

The markets have certainly made me very happy. There are plenty of other people like me around who have managed to quit their office jobs and trade. And they, like me, are nothing special. All it takes is some discipline, determination, and – I’m afraid – some trading capital. I can help you sort out the discipline and determination, but you have to come up with some capital.

I hope *The Naked Trader* will put you on the first rung of the escape ladder. Trading stock markets really is much simpler than you might imagine once you see past the jargon. And I promise you won’t find any of that here.

What sort of trader am I?

I suppose I am more of a medium-term investor/fairly frequent trader than a day trader. Maybe I should be called the Naked Investor. I expect you imagine a *trader* to be someone sitting at a desk all day feverishly buying and selling shares.

Well, that's not me at all. I don't want to be like that. I want to be, oohhh ... drinking tea and eating toast. Having a snooze. Going to the gym. Watching the racing. Sitting in the garden with a good book (or a bad one – I always fall asleep, whatever the book is like. Especially if it is a finance one). And I enjoy playing with my son. And, okay, basically I'm a bit lazy (is it time for a nap yet?).

What I hope you'll learn is that **you don't need to spend 40 hours a week in front of a screen watching every move the market makes.** And it is even possible to trade or invest if you have a full-time job, as long as you can get some peace and quiet on the internet at work at some point during the day.

In fact, that may be the best way to start trading. Begin by making some extra money while you're working, and learn the tricks of the trade.

Instead of spending all day emailing your friends, getting addicted to Facebook or Twitter, fiddling with your iThing or BlueBerry, spend a bit of time at work learning how to invest.

Keep this book handy

I suggest you keep me handy, even when you think you've sussed out how to make money. Because, even if you've read the book once or twice, you may need me again if you fall into bad ways – and believe me, you will be tempted. And I will always be here for you to skim through ...

Anyway, I really hope you enjoy the book. You don't need to read it all in one sitting. Read it in bits and let it sink in. Take it on holiday and read it on the beach. Keep it handy when you're going through a bad trading patch. Don't take it on a date, though. There just isn't room for the three of us in the relationship.



A Day in the Life of a Naked Trader

Dear diary ...

6AM

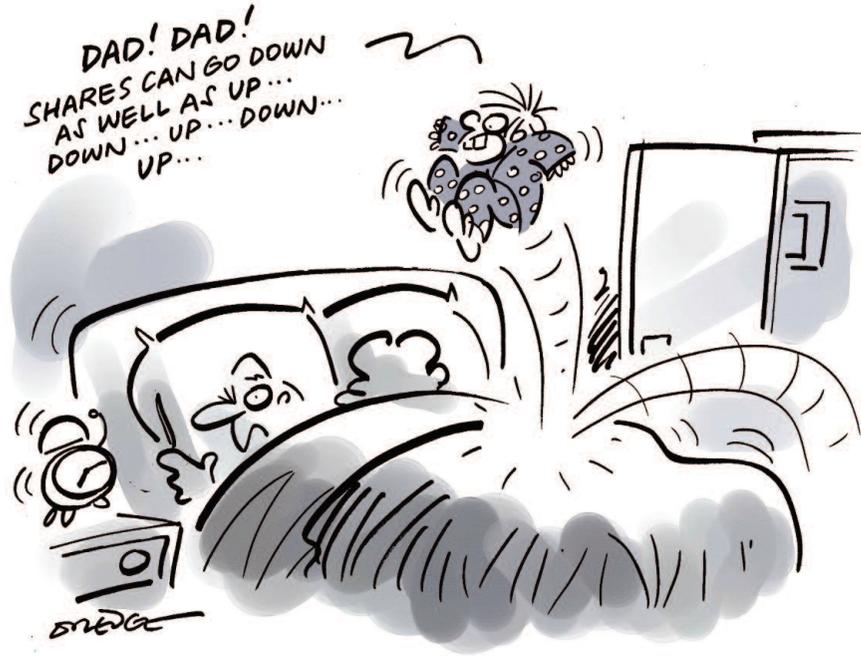
I'm in bed of course! What on earth is 6am? I know people in the *Sunday Times*' 'A Life in the Day' column always wake up at 6am, go running for five miles, have power breakfasts, make executive decisions and are dressed and at their desks by 7am. But this day-in-the-life is an honest one. I will be asleep. And if you try and wake me up I will hospitalise you. It really is quite simple.

7.15AM

My young son Christopher awakes on the dot of 7.15am and so promptly brings us all hurtling out of the Land of Nod.

I grab some tea and toast and head for my trading desk (well, it's just a desk with a computer on it). I lift the blinds up on my office windows and I always smile: I think I have the most spectacular view in the whole of

London. I live right by the Thames, just off the towpath. And because I'm opposite a wetlands centre, I see the river, trees and the sky! No buildings are allowed to be built on the opposite bank. The view (which the government will no doubt tax shortly) is so great it always reminds me how lucky I've been and how glad I am that I got into buying shares so I could afford to buy the apartment without a mortgage.



Actually this hour is one of the most important parts of the day, because at 7am every morning companies report their results and release announcements. First thing to do is to check whether there are any announcements on shares I own.

If there are, I try and quickly judge whether I need to take any action. Is a report looking a bit dicey ... any question marks come up? How are profits looking? Should I sell and take my gains, or perhaps buy some more?

Next I check the spread betting firms to see how the FTSE 100 is set to open. They tell me – and pretty accurately – whether it looks likely to be a good or bad opening, which often sets the tone for the first couple of hours.

However, I tend to mainly hold smaller companies, so if the FTSE 100 is scheduled to open lower it doesn't necessarily mean I've got to worry: they aren't listed on it.

Then I click on a few reports to see if anything catches my eye. Sometimes a company report looks good, so I make a quick note to check on it later. Or a company might, say, announce it is hoping to move to the main market from the junior market. I would make a note of that, as it would mean that in the future I could buy it tax-free in my ISA.

7.56AM

Four minutes to make a fresh brew and some more toast before the market opens at 8am!

8AM

The stock market opens at 8am and my monitors of various shares suddenly spring into life. Always interesting to see how your shares are starting the day.

The first half an hour of the market is important, and I whizz through all my positions to check nothing is tanking for any reason. However, one thing I think I have really learned since I wrote the last edition is: it usually isn't worth trading during the first hour of the day, regardless of whether or not a share of mine is racing up or down. That's because there is always an initial overreaction by the market to news, and this can be magnified early in the day when there are fewer people buying and selling.

It's easy to get caught out. So I always wait for the markets to settle and simply watch with interest.

On the smaller shares, market makers will often mark a share up or down because the share has been tipped in the press. By the opening, a share will often already start higher or lower – you can never deal at last night's closing price!

8.30AM

Everything begins to calm down and the gaps between the buy and sell prices – the spreads – start to narrow. But it's rare at this time that I would either buy or sell. This is the time my son, Christopher, needs to be taken to school, and either myself or Mrs NT do it. I hate driving, so if it's a



reasonable day I will cycle to school with him. If it's ridiculously rainy or a cold day, Mrs NT will drive him in.

I love cycling with him, especially on a lovely sunny day. The fact I'm not a day trader, having to be hunched over a screen from market open to close, suits me. After all, the whole point of quitting full-time office work was to relax and enjoy having time to do other things.

9AM

Time for a look at the email inbox. I get quite a few emails, sometimes more than 100 a day, and I answer them all, unless they are abusive or the person is obviously mad. [Finally, an explanation. Wait – what? – Ed.]

Sometimes people become aggressive if I try and tell them it's their fault they've been losing money, not the market's fault – a lot of people tend to blame everyone but themselves. But blaming the market is meaningless, and it's dangerous for a person's trading. I'd rather warn them, on the off chance that the red mist won't descend, than send them a bland email agreeing with them just for a quiet life.

The hardest emails to answer are those with the subject line: 'Just a quick question'. Of course, that means it's an extremely long and complicated one! So if the email is very long or complex it goes into a folder marked 'pending' and I answer it at the weekend. Otherwise I try to reply as fast as I can and keep the inbox clear. The ones I hate ask me whether they should buy or sell a specific share. I have to reply that I can't give an answer to that, as you have to be a regulated advisor. I wouldn't want to in any case. If I tell someone to buy something and it goes down it will be my fault, and ditto if I tell them to sell and it goes up!

9.45AM

Mrs NT usually heads off to play tennis. I have a look at the markets and see what's happening. This is about the time of day when I might consider a trade. Or not. Sometimes there isn't anything I need to do, sometimes there is. I never rush anything. I usually call a friend – the only other person I know well who also trades shares – to have a chat about

today's market, and discuss if there is anything one of us has spotted. It's good to have someone like this to talk to, as he can often bring up negatives about shares I am interested in and vice versa.

10AM

Time for another round of tea or coffee and toast. And a read of the paper. If it's a sunny day I might do that outside in the little garden I have by the river. I'll then come in and have a good look through the current portfolio. It is divided up into spread bets and shares held in an ISA – both of which enable me to avoid paying any tax on profits.

Is there anything bothering me, anything about to produce results? Anything I should take a profit on? If there is something that is on my mind to buy or sell I'll look at Level 2, which gives me a snapshot of how many buyers and sellers there are around. It gives me a good idea of whether my trade is sensible, and a final push to either make the trade or leave it till later.

These days I only push a buy or sell button if I really feel the time is right. The absolute worst thing to do is to make a boredom trade.

Things are generally busier for me if the markets are going down, as I might then have a shorter-term spread bet open, betting on the market to carry on falling, and that takes a bit more looking after.

If I feel like it, at this time of the day I'll also either do some research on anything that came up when I was looking at news stories earlier, or do a bit of web surfing. I don't tweet and I'm not on Facebook, as both look too addictive.

11AM

Markets tend to go quiet around 11ish, so time for a bit of exercise. One might be able to trade naked, but now it's definitely time to don my shorts as I'm off for a slow run. I go around the Thames, up over Hammersmith Bridge, down past the wetlands centre and back over Putney Bridge. It's lovely, like running in the country but living in London – best of both worlds! I take an iPod or a radio and listen to my usual rubbish dance music.

11.45AM

Quick shower and back to the markets. At about this time I look through my shortlist of potential buys and see if any are rising. Is it a good

time to buy? I try and suss out the mood of the market and will trawl through Level 2 again to see if anything looks likely to rise. This is probably the best time of the day to buy.

12PM

Wednesdays I'll write up my website update, which I quite enjoy – though it takes some time to write. I blog about my life, a bit about things in the news that annoy me and then any trades I made in the last week. Often I've forgotten what I traded, so I have to go through my accounts.

On other days I'll reply to more emails. Again, it could be anything! Could be someone interested in a seminar, wanting some info about some aspect of the market, perhaps wanting me to make a speech (I never accept), or do an interview (I rarely do). Often someone asks to advertise on my site. I refuse as I want the site to remain independent, and I wouldn't want to advertise tipsters or systems and suchlike, as I don't believe in them. I turn down some big sums, but would rather that than get emails along the lines of, "I bought this via your website and now I live in cardboard".

12.30PM

Time for lunch. That might be a sandwich or something, or me and Mrs NT might meet up for lunch somewhere. Or I might meet a friend. I may go and practise some golf, as I am just starting out! The only exception is Wednesdays, when I am probably still writing stuff for my website update ... the sacrifices I am willing to make for my loyal readers!

1.30PM

The market sometimes changes at 1.30 pm. This is because in the US it's 8.30am in New York, when they often release important economic data. The FTSE 100 as a whole, and individual shares, can suddenly move quickly in one direction or another, depending on what is announced. It doesn't affect me that much usually, but if it's a down market and I am betting on the FTSE 100 to fall, I might quickly close that bet and take my profits if news from the US is good and likely to make the FTSE 100 pick up a bit.

1.45PM

If it's a nice sunny day I'll go for a sleep and a laze in the garden. Otherwise, a cup of tea and a KitKat, Twix or Yorkie bar! Told you I was honest – this is definitely not a diary c/o the Sunday Times!

2.15PM

This is when I'll have a look at my higher-risk shortlist of shares. I buy some high-risk shares for my pension, which I run myself in a SIPP (self-invested personal pension). I'm sensible in my ISA and spread bet accounts, and so view my pension fund – or at least around half of it – as a place to open the throttle up a bit and try a few dangerous picks. I will often buy high-risk oil or mining shares in it. This satisfies the gambler I know is in me, and it doesn't matter much if one dives. I've actually done rather well with it, though this kind of thing can easily leave you looking like a prat (and is definitely not to be recommended for money you can't afford to lose).

2.30PM

The Dow Jones opens across the pond, where it's now 9.30am in Manhattan – and where it goes, UK shares tend to follow. I check through the main portfolio again. The worst time is when a share goes down quite a bit and I have to decide whether to get rid of it or not. If the market is going well, it's unlikely I'll place any more trades for the day. If it is going very badly, I might consider buying a good share that seems to have dropped purely because of the market-wide panic selling.

3PM

I'll usually have a chat with my share-buying mate to see if he has discovered anything. On Wednesdays I'll check through my website update and see if it all makes sense and then publish it. If I make a terrible error, someone usually puts me right straightaway.

A new update generally means a whole lot of new emails to reply to after people read through what I've written and comment on it. Sometimes I get a rude email if I mention I've sold a share that someone really likes. If



it's close to a seminar I might read through some questionnaire answers from those coming, to start to judge what to cover on the day.

3.30PM

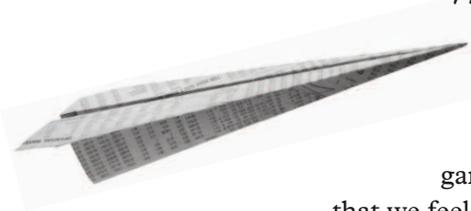
It's school run time. Either me or Mrs NT does the honours. If it's a nice day and the market is quiet, I'll do it. I am usually the only dad doing pick up. If the market is very quiet I might even call it a day at this point and go straight to the park with Christopher for a sit down and an ice cream.

4PM

Time for a last look at the portfolio as the market shuts in half an hour. How have I done today? What did I miss? How much money did I make or lose? When you have a lot of money in the market (I have more than a million usually), it can be up or down £10,000–£20,000. It took some getting used to this. Over a month I could end up down or up by £50,000 plus!

4.30PM

That's it! The market's shut: hurrah! I have a final look through and close ADVFN down for now and turn off the computer. This is time for playing with my son. We might go for a swim, or a game of football, or do his reading – anything that we feel like.



5.30PM

Time for tea. Mrs NT tends to do it, though I do my best Heston Blumenthal impression about twice a week. We try to eat healthily, but pizzas, chips and sausages do sneak in sometimes. We try and make sure Christopher has something decent, but he is always on the hunt for sugary things.

7.30PM

Time for Christopher's bath and bedtime. It is so rewarding being with him all the time. Being a stay-at-home trader gives me precious time with

my son which could never be achieved as a full-time worker. Some of the dads round here leave home at 5am and don't return till 9pm, never seeing their children. Not something I could do.

I enjoy doing the bedtime story. Once a week, though, we get a babysitter in and Mrs NT and I go out for dinner with friends or to the cinema. We think it's important to get out for some 'us time' once a week at the very least.

8.30PM

Nothing on TV, so time for a cuddle with the Mrs! The next 5 ... I mean 30 minutes are censored ... I watch *The Apprentice* if it's on, or *Dragons' Den*. I also like *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Have I Got News For You*. Sky Atlantic, which shows all the new HBO programmes, is good too. But there's so much old crap on these days that I find I'm watching less and less. And I really hate most UK sitcoms and soaps.

9PM

I check to see where the Dow Jones closed. This always has a big effect on how my shares might start the day tomorrow. I also spend a little time doing research on companies flagged up from this morning's news stories, and check to see what's being launched on the market in the next few days. And I might look through some share lists and see if anything new comes up. More emails usually ping in and I get through some of those.

9.30PM

If there is a seminar coming up in a week or so, I do some preparation work. I never intended running seminars and have only been doing them relatively recently. I don't do that many, maybe five a year, but people seem to really enjoy them and they are very rewarding personally. The feedback is always good and I'm glad to be able to help.

So many nice people come and we have great fun chatting over lunch and in the bar afterwards. I read through replies to questionnaires I have sent delegates in advance and they really help me plan the day – I try and give people what they want. There is a lot of interest in Level 2 at the moment, which the professionals use to judge good entry and exit points. I explain Level 2 in depth and try and make what is complex simple. A lot of the day also depends on what's happening in the markets.

We've even started friendships with people who've attended the seminars. A very nice couple who actually live near us have become great friends. I also made friends with someone who became my dentist, and a lovely couple who live in Switzerland.

The seminars came about by accident as a suggestion from a reader. I was really nervous doing the first one, but now I love the days and stay at the hotel the night before and after. I need recovery time afterwards – you just try and talk non-stop for ten hours and you'll see what I mean!

If there's no work to do, I might curl up around about now with a book – on the terrace if it's warm.

10PM

I have a check of the news and hope Robert Peston isn't on it – his presence usually indicates economic trouble! Sometimes we watch something we Sky-plussed. Or even half a movie, which we'll finish off the next day. By now the computer is most definitely off till the morning!

10.30PM

If we went out, we usually get back around now. The babysitter also does the ironing which is rather handy, so now we just have a chat, a decaf something and then ...

11PM

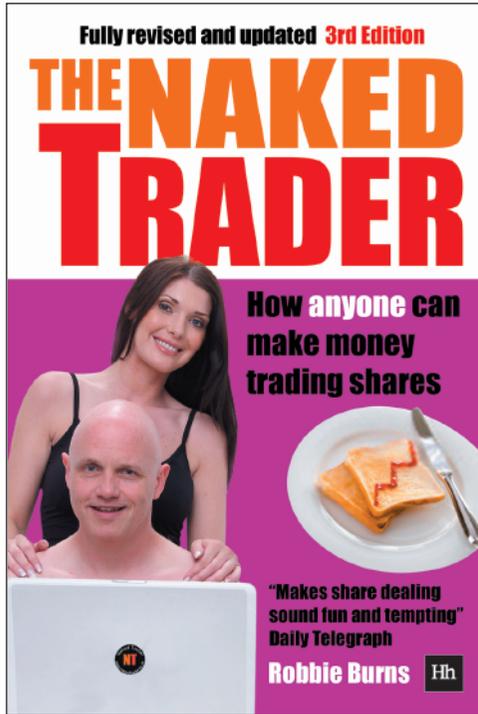
... off to bed and I'm asleep the moment my head hits the pillo—zzzzzzzz ...



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