

Who is Paul Roebuck?

The person behind *The Ostrakon*

All behaviour is learned behaviour. Not all behaviour is taught.

That sentence sits underneath Paul Roebuck's work. It is the thread that runs from the factory floor to the boardroom, from the therapy room to the cancer ward, and now into the behavioural study of artificial intelligence.

Paul Roebuck is a psychotherapist, executive coach, and author of *Mind the Gap*, working at the intersection of human behaviour and AI behaviour.

His route here was not linear, and certainly not academic. It began on the factory floor as an engineering apprentice. It moved through early manufacturing systems, SAP implementations across four continents, global commercial leadership, boardrooms, and performance cultures, while Paul completed eight years of study that led to qualification as a psychotherapist. In 2015, he left a successful corporate career to work full time as a psychotherapist, helping people, including himself, understand what gets in the way of their own potential. In 2017, mouth cancer and tongue reconstruction sharpened the lesson that still sits behind the work: **what matters becomes clearer; what doesn't matter becomes obvious.**

Across all of those chapters, one question kept following him:

Why do people do what they do — and what gets in the way of them doing it differently?

That question became the foundation of his clinical work. It shaped his coaching. It shaped his writing. And when conversational AI arrived, it became the question he turned back on the machine.

For more than three years, Paul worked inside long-form conversations with GPT and Claude. Across his lifetime use of conversational AI, that work now exceeds **7 million words**. Within that, **3.8 million words** form the documented construction corpus behind *Mind the Gap*. The book itself was written between **10 May and 23 June 2026**, then published on **1 July 2026**.

That compressed writing period matters. It was not a sudden book from nowhere. It was the visible output of a much longer behavioural investigation: thousands of threads, prompts, revisions, errors, corrections, decisions, doubts, and creative choices being gathered into final form.

The work was not simply about what AI could produce. It was about how AI behaves under pressure. When it does not know. When it performs coherence. When it smooths uncertainty. When it invents. When it agrees. When it drifts. When it defends the gap.

That work became *Mind the Gap*: a book, an artefact, an apparatus, and a behavioural investigation into the space hidden in plain sight between AI behaviour and human behaviour.

The Ostrakon

An ostrakon was once a shard used for marks, notes, records, fragments, accounts, decisions, and traces of ordinary human activity. This is a modern ostrakon. A record of use. A behavioural trace. A shard from the early AI age. Not a polished monument. Not a claim of mastery. Not a technology showcase. A working surface — a place where prompts, revisions, decisions, doubts, errors, corrections, and creative choices are treated as evidence.

We are in the bow and arrow phase of AI. The technology looks new because the machinery is new. The human condition around it is not new: wonder, fear, status, imitation, dependency, overclaim, misunderstanding, power, and the urge to leave a record.

The monument tells us what a civilisation wanted to be remembered for. The ostrakon tells us how it actually worked.

That is why The Ostrakon matters. The whiteboard matters because that is where this began: not as theory, but as marks, arrows, fragments, questions, crossings-out, and attempts to make visible what was happening between human intention and machine response.

Paul's work asks a simple but difficult question:

If AI is now participating in judgement, language, advice, decision-making, creativity, therapy, governance, and leadership — who is watching its behaviour?

And just as importantly: who is watching what it does to ours?

Images: Paul Roebuck, office working archive.