

An intro from our Chair,

Dear members, "The sun has got his hat on, hip, hip, hip hooray"

At last it appears we have light at the end of the tunnel. By now you will have received notification concerning the meeting in St Aidan's Church Hall on 14th July at 2pm. We hope to see many of you there.

For those of you that would be interested we plan to offer Zoom lessons over the summer and will be giving out more information about this at our July meeting. Also at our July meeting, Sharon Waller, our new group Co-Ordinator, will be giving out information about all our activities and how we plan to run them going forward. Some of the groups will continue to run using Zoom.

Enjoy Janet's Newsletter, I know I always do.

Gill

News from our Groups

As some restrictions are still in place, our groups have been limited as to how and when they can hold their meetings.

Interesting Essex - this is a newly started group and we are continuing on Zoom with the next meeting scheduled for 21st May at 2pm.

Recent chats have been about Mersea Island, Hanningfield, Wat Tyler and the Shoeburyness booms.

If anyone would like to join this group on Zoom, please contact our Chair on chairleighbelfairs@gmail.com.

The Book club - at the time of composing this Newsletter our next meeting is planned for Tuesday 25th May and we are meeting at the Woodland centre in Belfairs Woods.

Psychology - continue to hold Zoom meetings.

Bridge - is still continuing on line which members are enjoying.

Sugarcraft - hopefully will restart this year

Grumpy Old men - is on hold

Lunch club - is on hold

London Walks - is on hold

This month's recipe is a large All-in-one Victoria Sandwich



INGREDIENTS

CAKE

8 oz (225g) soft margarine

8 oz (225g) caster sugar

4 eggs

8 oz (225g) S.R. Flour

2 tsps baking powder

FILLING & TOPPING

Raspberry jam

Icing sugar

CHOCOLATE VERSION

2 tbsp cocoa

3 tsps boiling water

Blended together and cooled slightly

BUTTER ICING

2 oz (50g) soft margarine

6 oz (150g) icing sugar

1 tbs milk

50g cocoa - if desired

Method

Pre heat the oven to 180°C/160°Fan/Gas 4

Grease and base line 2 x 8" (20cm) sandwich tins with greaseproof paper

Measure all the ingredients into a large bowl and beat well for 2 minutes

Divide the mixture evenly between the two tins and level out

Bake in the pre-heated oven for about 25 mins or until well risen and the tops of the cakes spring back when lightly pressed with a finger

Leave to cool in the tins for about 5 minutes and then turn out, peel off the paper and finish cooling on a wire rack

When completely cold sandwich the cakes together with the jam and sieve a little icing sugar on top of the cake.

Note - A traditional Victoria Sandwich only has a jam filling, but you can add butter icing.

To make the **chocolate version**, simply add the cocoa to all the ingredients at the start of baking. You can use butter icing, with or without added cocoa, to sandwich them together.

Southend Pier Nostalgia

The pier has been subjected to many trials and tribulations over the years, in fact we are lucky it is still there! Sadly, some news is not as good as others.

In 1887 a mother and daughter who were on a day trip to Southend were involved in an accident with one of the tramcars that used to convey people to and from the end of the pier. At this time the tramcars were just running along the pier and there were no barriers for pedestrian's safety. They heard the tramcar coming from behind them but sadly became confused and got on the wrong side of the line and the mother was crushed to death. The little girl suffered horrendous injuries and was rushed to a London hospital. What became of her is not known.

Eleven years later three workmen were left with serious injuries after some scaffolding fell on them whilst renovating the inside of the pier pavilion.

In 1971 a 4-year-old little girl from Rayleigh plunged through rotting planks after jumping off a bench onto the pier. She fell 30ft into the water below but fortunately was able to cling on to one of the pier supports until one of her family members rescued her. She was taken to hospital, where she was treated for shock. Gladly this was all she suffered as the outcome could of course have been much worse. An investigation

into the accident was called for and the report uncovered a number of serious structural failings. Southend Council made the decision to hire three carpenters who were tasked with walking the length of the pier, twice daily, regardless of the weather

In the same year two New Zealanders visiting Southend, were embarrassed by being refused entry to one of the bars on the pier, The Golden Horseshoe. The couple were staying with friends in Basildon and had made the trip to Southend especially to go to this pub. Apparently, the gentleman's crime, although smartly dressed, was that he was not wearing a jacket and tie and was therefore denied entrance. This incident was published in The Echo.



In 1976 a bad fire caused a lot of damage to the pier which resulted in a long debate by the council as to whether they were going to invest money in it or shut it down completely. The future of the pier hung in the balance for several years. It has suffered fires, boat crashes and economic depressions but still remains with us!

The infamous A127, Southend Arterial

We have all, at some time or another, spent wasted hours in traffic jams on the A127. In 1920 Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, announced plans for a programme of road constructions to be built around London to create jobs for former soldiers from WW1. Work began on constructing the first seven miles of the A127 in December 1921.



By 1924 the road was ready for the final surfacing, having cost £1.5 million to complete.

On 25th March, 1925 Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, visited Rayleigh to officially open the Rayleigh section of the A127. Prince Henry was the son of Queen Mary who ruled from 1910 - 1936. A crowd of over 100 people flocked to the roadside to witness the official opening which saw the Prince accompanied by Southend Mayor, Robert Tweedy Smith. As can be seen from the above dates, the road is fast approaching its centenary!

The Cruise Liner, The Athenia

Just after 11am on Sep 3rd 1939, Chamberlain spoke on the radio and announced his famous speech:

“.....I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and consequently this country is at war with Germany”

Eight hours later a German U-boat torpedoed The Athenia, a passenger ship, which had left Glasgow headed for Montreal, via Liverpool. The commander of the U-boat had mistaken the liner for an armed cruiser but the German naval authorities tried to cover up the Sub's actions. She had on board over 1100 civilians consisting of crew and passengers.



Of these, 117 were killed. Among those on board was a 16-year-old German girl, named Hildegard Ehrlich. With rumours of a war breaking out she had been sent to stay with her aunt who lived in Woodgrange Drive, in Southend. Her parents had already sailed to America and the plan was that she was to join them in New York. Sadly Hildegard was one of the casualties and died, thereby never being able to join her heartbroken parents.

It was not until the Nuremberg Trials after the war that the truth about the sinking of The Athenia finally emerged. In 2017 an Oceanographer and marine archaeologist, David Mearns, found a wreck he firmly believed to be that of The Athenia. He located the wreck using sonar imaging that had been scanned by The Geological Survey of Ireland to map the sea bed. This revealed that the transatlantic passenger liner could be lying 200m down on Rockall Bank, off Ireland.

Heart Transplant



Whilst of course major surgery, heart transplants now have quite a high success rate. It is more than 50 years since the first heart transplant was successfully carried out in Britain.

In May, 1968, Frederick West, a Leigh on Sea resident, received the organ in an operation led by South African surgeon, Donal Ross, at Marylebone's National Heart Hospital. A team of 18 doctors and nurses took seven hours to complete the surgery. The donor had passed away after a fall from a building site. This operation took place 6 months after the first heart transplant was carried out on Louis Washkansky in South Africa. Sadly, Mr West, the 10th person worldwide to undergo this surgery only lived for 46 days.

The QE11 Bridge



The bridge was officially opened by Her Majesty, The Queen, on October 30th, 1991 and cost £120 million. This was sorely needed as the tunnel crossings could not cope with the rising number of vehicles needing to use it. It gave motorists and passengers alike a view of The Thames, rather than concrete walls underground

There have been changes over the years, not least of all, the on-line toll charges, which resulted in the payment booths being removed in 2014. Bicycles are not permitted on the crossing, but cyclists and their bikes can be transported across the bridge by the Transport Authority at no charge. Cyclists report to the crossing control offices on either side, using a free telephone service.

Of course, prior to these crossings, vehicles had to cross The Thames by means of the Tilbury to Gravesend ferry, a far cry from what we now have. This ferry is still in operation but only for passengers; they do not transport vehicles. It is open from Monday to Saturday, runs approximately every 30 minutes and costs £5 for an adult return ticket.

Household Census



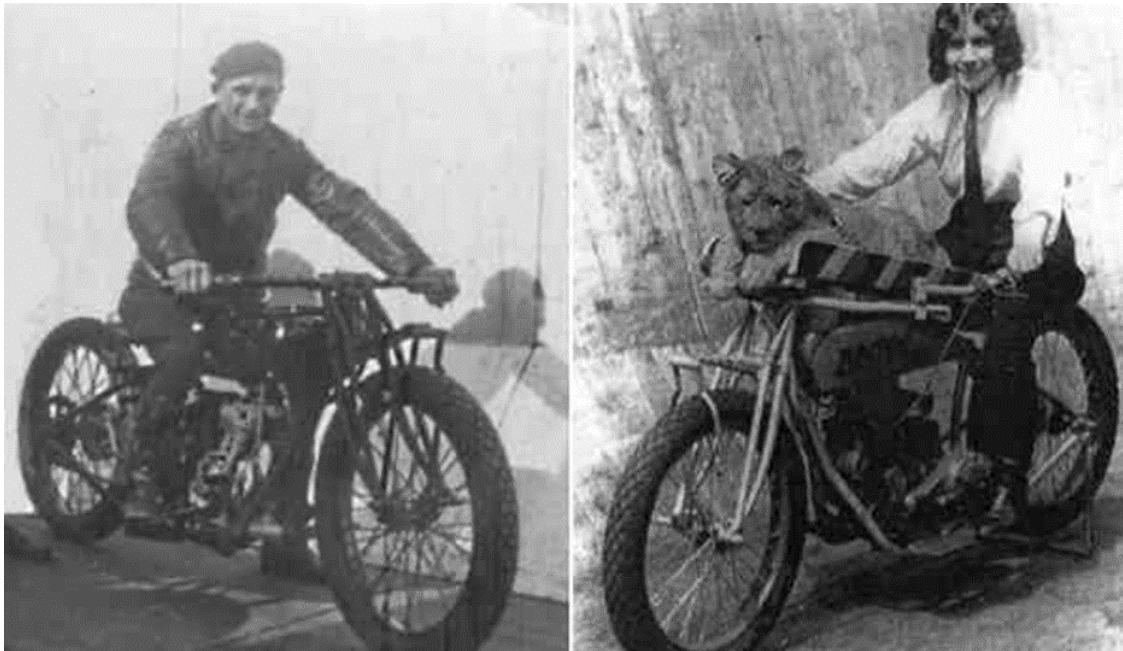
We have all been busy completing the latest census, whether this be on-line or returning the completed forms by post. A census has been conducted in England and Wales every decade since 1801, apart from 1941, due to the war. The original survey was taken to find out how many men were eligible to fight in the Napoleonic wars! Back in 1935 a horse census was taken, which was conducted for military purposes. This revealed that Southend had a horse population of 606, a very high figure compared to other seaside towns. Brighton had 593, Eastbourne 338 and Hove 230. Hastings was the lowest with only 165. Generally, seaside towns had fewer horses than countryside towns and villages where there was more agricultural land. Horses played a large part of life in Southend; for decades they ferried passenger up and down the pier in a carriage. In the Victorian era they were also used to haul bathing huts to and from the beach.

The Kursaal and The Wall of Death



Most of us that have been brought up locally will remember the Kursaal from our youth. This was where weekly dances were held in the ballroom and young ladies attended in their finery, hoping to catch a beau. There was also another attraction, notably, The Wall of Death, opened in 1929 and where dare devils flocked to take this on. Although there were 'professional' motorcyclists performing, the general public were invited to 'have a go'. This involved motorcyclists riding around the inside of a wooden dome and was reputed to be the first of its kind in Britain. The dome was 20 feet high and 32 feet in diameter.

George 'Tornado' Smith became synonymous with the attraction. There were also women riders, one of whom was Marjorie Dare, who was in fact Tornado's wife. She would ride the wall with Briton, a young lioness, who rode on the bikes handlebars as can be seen in the following picture. Maureen Swift was another young lady rider who, on a busy day, could clock up some 75 miles.



As the lioness grew and became too big for this method, they attached a sidecar and she rode in this.

If you copy the below into Google search you will see a YouTube video of the lion riding the Wall of Death in the sidecar. Today this sounds like a nightmare - where was 'Health and Safety' then!

<https://youtu.be/8LqFApyS6ls>



1. What does the Roman numeral C represent?
2. What colour is a panda?
3. What nationality was Chopin?
4. What's the capital of Ethiopia?
5. When did the Second World War end?
6. What year did Elvis Presley die?
7. What's the real name of Siddhartha Gautama?
8. What's the name of the famous big clock in London?
9. What's the best known artificial international language?
10. Who lived at 221B, Baker Street, London?
11. Who gave his name to the month of July?
12. Where did Salvador Dali live?
13. Who painted the Mona Lisa?
14. What horoscope sign has a crab?
15. Where does the British Prime Minister live?
16. When did the American Civil War end?
17. Who painted the Sistine Chapel?
18. What's the hardest rock?
19. How much does a litre of water weigh?
20. When was President Kennedy killed?
21. What nationality was Marco Polo?
22. What's the capital of Ecuador?
23. Who invented television?
24. What colours make purple?
25. When was Elvis' first ever Concert?

(Answers at the end of this Newsletter)

Scams

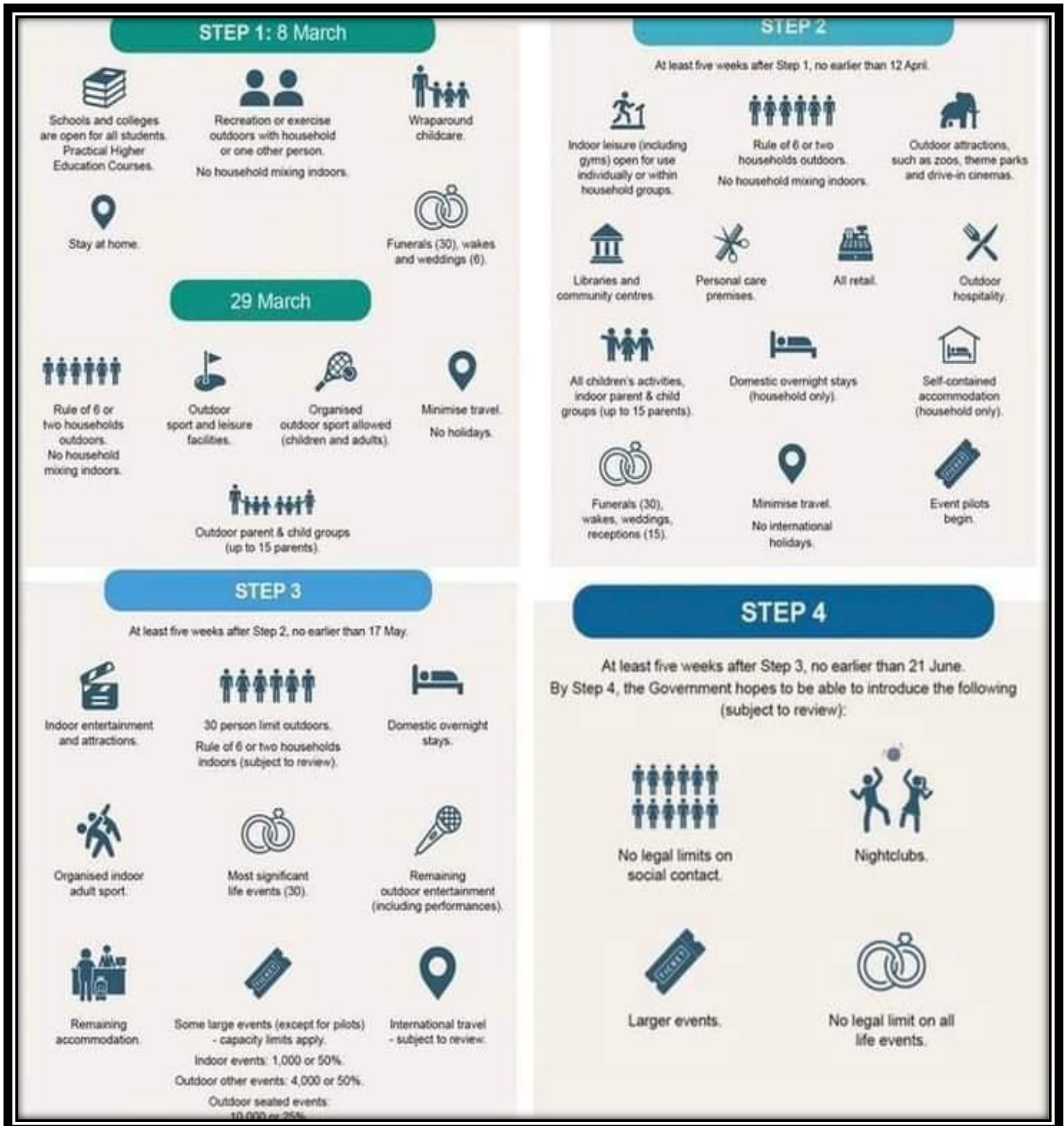
Just a reminder for you all to be aware of the many scams that are doing the rounds. These people get more ingenious by the moment.

- ❖ You may receive a phone call from someone purporting to be from your Bank's fraud department saying they have noticed suspicious transactions on your account. To avoid further fraudulent transactions, they try to get you to transfer the balance to another account, which of course, they are in control of. No bank would ever ask you to do this. **Do not enter into a conversation, terminate the call and if you can, block the number.**
- ❖ You may get a phone call, purporting to be from your Internet provider. **Do not enter into a conversation, terminate the call and if you can, block the number.**
- ❖ There are also fraudulent National Insurance phone calls - **but again, do not enter into a conversation, terminate the call and if you can, block the number.**

ARE THERE ANY CRUISE ENTHUSIASTS OUT THERE?

Fred Olsen Cruises- 10% membership discount (on top of any other offers) on your first sailing with them; 5% in addition to 5% Loyalty Club discount for existing customers.

A reminder of the Covid Exit plan from Boris, which to date, has been running to plan....



Quiz answers

1. 100
2. Black and White
3. Polish
4. Addis Ababa
5. 1977
6. Buddha
7. Big Ben
8. Esperanto
9. Sherlock Holmes
10. Julius Caesar
11. Figueres
12. Da Vinci
13. Cancer
14. 10, Downing Street
15. 1865
16. Michelangelo
17. Diamond
18. 1kg
19. 1963
20. Italian
21. Quito
22. John Logie Baird
23. Red and Blue
24. 1954