

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No. 11

29th May 2020



*DIT 10 was almost delayed.
His "Assistant" objected to the Chairman pressing "Send"!*

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

Easypeasy Cryptic Crossword Clues No. 10 by Angela Robins.

There are a dozen types of Cryptic Crossword Clues and here's a taster of the 'Numbers Representing Letters' Clue.

This is a sneaky tactic by the setter to use Numbers, Numeric Words and Roman Numerals to represent a letter or string of letters to form a word for the answer.

Here is a list of the most frequently used examples.

Nothing, Zero, Nil, nought	indicates	0
One	indicates	I
4 or Four	indicates	IV
5 or five	indicates	V
6 or Half Dozen	indicates	VI
10 or ten	indicates	X
20 or twenty	indicates	Score
25	indicates	Pony
50 or fifty	indicates	L
100 or one hundred	indicates	Ton or C
144	indicates	Gross
500	indicates	Ream or D
1000 or thousand	indicates	M

There is no wordplay to 'clue you in' that it is a Numbers clue but you will learn to recognise them.

e.g. Nothing/ one/ takes to fifty/ will lubricate (3). = O I L.

Try these clues - the answers are on page 8.

1. It takes five hundred/ to one/ thousand/ to lower the light (3).
2. Use fifty one and five hundred to cover jar (3).
3. Ten after zero rustles up cattle (2).
4. Rocker opposes nought between a thousand and 500 (3)
5. 50/50 with (500 and nothing upfront) is a poppet (4).
6. Hundred before 500 is cosmetic (5).
7. Fifty after zero reaches 500 that's senile! (3).
8. 20 + 500 tallied (6).
10. Poet composed one between a thousand and fifty before a hundred (6).
11. Combine a thousand with nine (3).
12. Lyons Maid makes a thousand and four for a half dozen (5).
13. A hundred and nil around fifty with 500 throws up divot (4).
14. The verve of Six thousand (3).
15. 500 before five hundred is pure fantasy (5).
16. Al's wench is 50-50 after thousand nought (4).
17. One of The Seven is zero 100 after 500 (3).
18. One hundred and four plus one fifty becomes agreeable (5).
19. Copy one between two thousand and one hundred (5).
20. Ton zero 6 500 contracts bug!! (6)

Contact me on valdemosia2@gmail.com if you would like to receive my group's easy weekly crossword with hints and answers.

I MARRIED INTO A FAMILY OF BIGAMISTS!!! By Janine Gibson

Some years ago, when sat alone with my father-in-law late one evening, he shared with me the story of his childhood - a story that was to touch me deeply, but more so because he had never shared it with anyone else other than my mother-in-law; even his three children who included my husband, were totally unaware of his early life. I asked his permission to trace his family history as he only knew the few facts he remembered; as a result, the following is the story I uncovered with some surprising outcomes along the way, beginning with my father-in-law's own father – John Joseph Gibson.

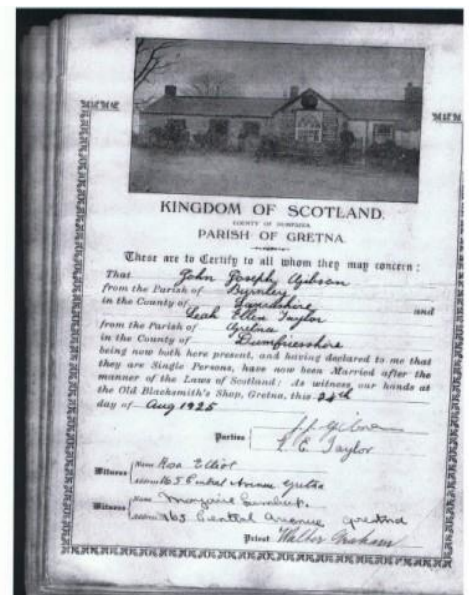
In June 1893, John Joseph Gibson was born to Joseph and Elizabeth Gibson in Burnley, Lancashire where they worked as cotton weavers in the industrial cotton mills. At the age of only fourteen years, he joined his parents at work in these same mills, alongside his brother and sisters. However, John Joseph wanted something better for himself which his father was insulted by, feeling that his son felt he was better than him. Hence, John Joseph was neither supported nor encouraged in his ambition. He knew he had good drawing skills though, so he eventually left the Mill and got himself a job in nothing more than a shed, working for a builder doing drawings for him. However, as soon as his father discovered what he had done, he dragged John Joseph back to the Mill to resume his work as a cotton weaver.

In the meantime, John Joseph, a short lightly built man, had fallen in love with a young girl who also worked at the cotton mill – Leah Ellen Taylor. No-one though, least of all his father, approved of this relationship, for Leah was twelve years younger than John Joseph, so the couple took the brave step of running away together and eloped to Gretna Green. Before the marriage took place, John Joseph used his talents with a drawing pen to alter the date on his birth certificate to make him appear much closer in age to his wife, in an attempt to silence the scandal of the older man marrying the much younger girl!

This served to cause me major problems in tracing him and finding official records relating to him! Only when I discovered a newspaper cutting of their marriage did I find out they had married at Gretna Green.)

So, on the 24th August 1925, John Joseph Gibson and Leah Ellen Taylor were one of the last couples to be married by the Blacksmith.

The archivist for Gretna Green forwarded me a copy of their marriage certificate along with a detailed explanation, which included the fact that the "Priest" was actually not a priest but one of the few remaining practising blacksmiths who would oversee the marriage declaration with two witnesses alongside as required by law; these would be two friends or family members of the blacksmith, as they would be paid for the service and they liked to keep the money within the family! The Declaration of Marriage did not have to be registered anywhere else hence the difficulty I had in tracing their marriage, along with the family! The Declaration of Marriage did not have to be registered anywhere else hence the difficulty I had in tracing their marriage, along with the fact that John Joseph had changed his date of birth prior to their marriage.



Their story actually made the newspapers, including a double page spread in the "News of The World"! Below is a press cutting from "The Sunday Post" entitled "Elopers Wed At Gretna Green".

The newspaper report reads: "Gretna Green's famous smithy has been the scene of yet another romantic marriage – that of a young couple who eloped from Burnley because the bride's parents refused their consent to the union. It goes on to give an interview with John Joseph: "Our marriage at Gretna Green has been the source of a great deal of talk in Burnley since the news leaked out. The reason for our getting married in this unusual way was that our parents would not consent to the match, as my wife is not yet twenty-one. One day a gentleman who had just returned from Scotland told me that in passing through Gretna, he had stopped his car outside the Smithy to look at a couple who had just been married there. He told me all about the ceremony and qualifications, so taking the weekend off work, my wife and I set out for the Border, thinking that we would be able to return the following Monday. We were doomed to disappointment however, for upon our arrival, the law was explained to us – one of us must reside in the country for 21 days." Mrs Gibson pluckily volunteered to remain in the village for the stipulated period. "I returned to my duties in Burnley, and my wife kept in constant communication with me. At last the great day arrived and we proceeded to the famous Smithy. The Blacksmith, Walter Graham, a tall Scot, entered the room straight from his work at the forge. There was no preparation for the ceremony on his part. His sleeves were rolled up and his face begrimed with the dust of the forge. He asked us to step forward and placed us one each side of the anvil whilst he stood at the point. The whole ceremony did not occupy more than a few minutes. To my great surprise, there was a great crowd gathered outside when we appeared at the door, who pelted us with confetti and offered their congratulations. We felt happy, secure in the knowledge that we were now legally married."

Eighteen months later, on the 19th January 1927, my father-in-law, John Gibson, was born in Burnley, Lancashire to John Joseph and Leah Ellen. His birth certificate states John Joseph's occupation as "Architect (Builder)", so he was now working successfully in his chosen employment, using his self-taught drawing skills and living with his wife and son at 6 Middlesex Avenue, Burnley, Lancashire.

The following year, a daughter, Jennie Gibson was born, so young John now had a sister, but her birth certificate shows that although John Joseph's occupation is still "Architect (Builder)", their address of residence is now 176 Hessle High Road, Hull.

Between 1927 and 1935, my father in law recalls the four of them living in Perth, Scotland where their father then worked for the aircraft industry, still in drawing and design. But nothing prepared John and his sister Jennie for the day in 1935 that was to change each of their lives for ever and leave a great impact on them.

On an unknown date, John and Jennie were taken on a train journey from their home in Scotland by their mother, together with a man called Patrick Nelson whom they had never met before. When the train stopped, they found themselves to be in Hull where they had once lived. Their mother, Leah, gave eight year old John an envelope, telling him that Patrick would take him and Jenny to their Aunt Chrissie's house, whom neither of the children recalled knowing and that eight year old John was to hand his Aunt the letter. They said "Goodbye" to their mother at the station and Patrick took them in a taxi to the address Leah had given him, handed them over to Aunt Chrissie at the door, got back into the taxi and left. John handed his Aunt the letter and there they were to stay for the foreseeable future. Neither John nor Jenny saw or heard of their mother ever again!

This photo was taken of John and Jennie with their father, John Joseph just months before they were taken away from him by their mother.



(Aunt Chrissie was John Joseph's sister and lived at 65 Graham Avenue, Hull which, through Google maps, I have learnt to be just around the corner from the aforementioned Hessle High Road where John and his sister had once lived with their parents.)

Two years later in 1937, their father John Joseph arrived at Aunt Chrissie's to collect his son John, leaving Jennie to stay at his sister's home, the reason, I assume, being an older man than his birth certificate showed, he had no idea how to raise a daughter. The future years saw father and son constantly moving around the country and living in temporary lodgings wherever John Joseph could find work.

(My father in law recalls this time as being very lonely and sad, never settling in one place so never making friends, and never being able to keep possessions - each time they moved, his father would only allow John to take his writing implements with him ready for the next school, and nothing else.)

Neither John nor Jennie have any idea of how much time passed, but eventually, Jenny was put on a train by her Aunt Chrissie, taking her to London to be met by her father. The three of them were now at last reunited and lived in Hatfield, Hertfordshire for a while, but all too soon, they were on the move again, until John Joseph decided he was right to have felt he was not up to raising a daughter and sent her back to his sister's home in Hull. However, he must have had a change of heart once he secured a more secure job as a draughtsman for the Architectural and Aircraft industry at Cuncliffe Owens aircraft factory in Southampton. Here, he was able to rent a flat and make a more permanent home, where Jennie re-joined her father and her brother, living there together in Southampton until the Second World War started. Sadly, being reunited was not to last long, for due to the war, John and Jennie were evacuated from Southampton so parted from their father once more, as well as each other, with John being sent to Andover and Jennie to Lymington.

Meanwhile, still residing in Southampton, John Joseph had met a new love whom he married on the 16th March 1940. His second wife was Dorothy Humby, a 29 year old domineering lady who was apparently desperate to be married, and it is thought that "she set her hat" at John Joseph seeing a vulnerable man needing a mother figure to help him to keep his family together when his children returned from their evacuation. On their marriage certificate, John Joseph is aged 41 years whilst his true age was now 47 years. This means that for a second time, he had doctored his own birth certificate. His face, etc., was now ageing so it was growing difficult to retain the claim that he was six years younger than he truly was, according to his altered birth certificate when marrying his first wife! Dorothy only being 29 years old, again he felt his true age would disgrace them so he aged himself a little by bringing his age up to 41! (He was to alter it a third and final time later on so that he could retire at the correct age in order to have his pension!) The other interesting piece of information on their marriage certificate is that John Joseph claims to be a widower, so enforcing his children's belief that their mother had died in the war

Jennie returned from her evacuation in Lymington in 1942, to live with her father and stepmother in Nottingham, where John Joseph was now working for Rolls Royce at Hucknall, so had now proven himself well able to carve himself a career away from the cotton mills. Sadly though, Dorothy did not fill Jennie's need for a mother figure, and when Dorothy and John Joseph went on to have two sons of their own, Dorothy completely side-lined Jennie from her life. John, meanwhile, remained at Andover where he was settled at school, enjoying farm work in the school holidays, and had joined the Air Training Cadet Force.

In 1944, Jennie left school and, to escape her sad life at home with her stepmother, joined the RAF, having only seen her brother John once in the preceding five years. With them having hardly spent any of their childhood together, a sibling relationship was non-existent, although Jennie told me when I finally met her in her eighties, that she had always had a soft spot for John.

Five years later, Jennie became pregnant to a lad in the RAF to whom she was engaged, but unfortunately the engagement ended together with her employment by the RAF. However, Jennie's wish was to keep her baby to bring up herself which her father agreed to. Her daughter was born and she brought her home to John Joseph and her stepmother. However, Dorothy had decided she had enough children in the house with her own two sons and didn't want another child there, so after three weeks of Jennie bonding and caring for new baby daughter, Dorothy won the day with John Joseph and Jennie was forced to give her up for adoption. At this time, her brother John was serving his National Service in the Middle East and as there was no contact with his family, he never knew about his sister's pregnancy or her having her baby adopted until I discovered the fact whilst researching his family history. Amazingly, the "baby" who was now in her sixties and called Jill, connected with me through "Ancestry.co.uk", as she was researching her Gibson birth family and had in fact found her mother Jennie ten years earlier with whom she had created a good and loving relationship.

Interestingly, when John left the RAF, he gained employment as a Junior Assistant in an Architect's office where he worked for about five years whilst studying architectural subjects at evening classes. After spending his childhood and teenage years with his father, watching him work in the evenings on architectural drawings, etc., John had learnt the technique and was now following in his father's footsteps.

In the early 1950s, John was to meet the love of his life, Celia, on a blind date. They married and went on to have three children. His career progressed successfully, ending with him being Chief Structural Engineer in the Architect's Department at Gwent County Council for many years until his retirement. How proud his father, John Joseph, would have been.

As for the research on John's mother, Leah Ellen, contrary to what John and his sister were led to believe by their father, their mother was not killed in the Second World War.

Leah Ellen remained with the man she had run away with - Patrick Nelson, living together in Streatham, London. She married Patrick but not until 1953, when she was 47 years old, claiming herself to be a widow on their marriage certificate. However, John Joseph Gibson was still alive so she was committing bigamy. And in turn, with Leah still alive, this also means that John Joseph also committed bigamy when he married his second wife, Dorothy! I have found references to a son for Leah and Patrick, who was given the middle name of John - could this show her still having an emotional link to her first born? Leah died in 1973 aged only 67 years.

I left John and his sister believing that their mother died in the Second World War as they had been told, for I saw no reason for them to hear different now and having to realise that she went through all those years without contacting them. Sometimes, ignorance is a blessing.

Whilst working on this research, John's previously unknown niece Jill had become a really good friend (over the internet) of mine and my husband, Chris', and in May 2011, Jill came over to the UK to see her birth mother Jennie (John's sister) again. Jill approached Jennie with the idea of meeting up with John, whilst we did the same with John, and they were both keen to do so, having last seen each other briefly over 40 years ago, and both now in their eighties! So, Jill and Jennie travelled to us from Derbyshire whilst John and Celia came to us from their home now in Devon for what became a life changing day for them, albeit sadly so late in their lives.

Their day together was amazing, beginning with John walking through our front door, holding his arms out to Jennie, and saying "My little sister" and Jennie being enveloped in his hug. What a moment for us all. After the general chit chat, John and Jennie suddenly started talking about their childhood and giving their reasons to each other why they had never felt close to each other. They then moved on to talk about

the day their mother, in their words “dumped” them; they talked about the train journey where they both recalled being given sweets by Leah and told to go and play in the other carriage - they now realise that she wanted to be alone with Patrick, her lover, and of their mother giving John a sealed envelope, then saying goodbye to their mother at the station never realising that they would never see her again. It was all very moving for us to witness but so therapeutic for John and Jenny. After 75 years or more, this was the very first time they had talked about it together. They went on to talk about their following years where they switched between living with their aunt and their father and the hardships they went through individually but throughout their conversation, they showed huge admiration for their father which was amazing when they had such an awful upbringing. At the end of their day together, each of them felt it had helped them so much and put them at peace with so many things in their past. This has proved to be so for the remainder of their lives, as both John and Jenny went onto talk freely about their childhood to their children which they never had before. Below is a photo of John and Jennie on that very special day.

Brother and sister, John and Jennie, back together after over 40 years apart.



John and Celia lived a happy and joyful life together for 58 years until her death six years ago, with John passing away only eighteen months later to join her. Jennie passed away only a year ago and we like to think of her being back with her big brother for ever more.

As an amazing closure to this story, some years after both John and Jennie’s passing, the niece of Leah contacted me through “Ancestry.co.uk” having seen our Gibson family tree on the website bearing Leah Ellen Taylor’s name along with John Joseph Gibson which she immediately recognised. She told me that her mother - Leah’s sister, nor Leah’s parents had ever known what had happened to Leah after her elopement with John Joseph Gibson and had lived the rest of their lives heartbroken.

(It turns out that when John Joseph and Leah were living with their two children in Hessle High Road in Hull, they were only a few streets away – walking distance - from Leah’s parents who were still living in the home she’d walked away from, yet she never made contact with them. When Leah left she cut herself off completely. We met her sister’s granddaughter a few years ago and they also knew nothing of what had happened.

The niece still lived in Burnley where this story had first begun. She invited us to stay with them so we could learn more about Leah and share all that we knew since her marriage to John Joseph. Jill came over from Australia to join us and we had the most wonderful few days, being taken to all the addresses we had for John Joseph’s history as well as Leah’s, seeing the chimneys remaining from the cotton mills where they had worked, etc., walking the streets they themselves had walked. But the most amazing fact, was that for the very first time since John Joseph and Leah had walked away from their families in order to marry, the Taylor and Gibson families had at last come together. It was quite an emotional moment when we all raised our glasses to John Joseph and Leah’s union over 100 years later. After all, if there had been no union between them, I would not have had my wonderful husband and father in law.

THE STATION by Robert Hastings

Tucked away in our subconscious is an idyllic vision.
We see ourselves on a long train trip that spans the continent.
We are travelling by trains. Out of the windows we drink
in the passing scene of cars on nearby highways, or children
waving at a passing crossing, of cattle grazing on a distant hillside, of
smoke pouring from a power plant, of row upon row of corn and
wheat, of flatlands and valleys, of mountains and rolling hillsides
of city skylines and village halls.

But uppermost in our mind is the final destination.
On a certain day at a certain hour, we will pull into the station.
Bands will be playing and flags waving. Once we get there so many
wonderful dreams will come true and the pieces of our lives will
fit together like a completed jigsaw puzzle. How restlessly we pace
the aisles, damning the minutes for loitering waiting, waiting,
waiting for the station.

When we reach the station, that will be it! We cry!
“When I’m 18”. “When I buy the new 450 SL Mercedes Benz!
“When I put the last kid through college.” “When I have paid off
the mortgage!” “When I reach the of retirement, I shall live
happily ever after!”

Sooner or later we must realise that there is no station, no one
place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip.

The station is only a dream. It constantly outdistances us.
“Relish the moment” is a good motto, especially when coupled
with Psalm 118:24 “This is the day that Lord has made:
We will rejoice and be glad in it.” It is the regrets over yesterday
and the fear of tomorrow. Regret and fear twin thieves who
rob us of today.

So, stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles.
Climb more mountains, eat more ice cream, go barefoot more often,
watch more sunsets, laugh more, cry less.
Life must be lived as we go along. The station will come soon enough.

Submitted by Bernard Hiscocks

Answers to Cryptic Crossword Clues (page 2)

1. DIM 2. LID 3. OX 4. MOD. 5. DOLL 6. Cream. 7. OLD. 8. ScoreD. 9. COD 10. MILton 11. MIX.
12. MIVVI 13. CLOD 14. VIM. 15. Dream. 16. MOLL. 17. DOC. 18. CIVIL 19. MIMIC 20. COVID.

THINGS A LADY WOULD LIKE TO KNOW – PLUS OTHER TIDBITS by Ros Lee

I had a look at an old book of 1875 with this title and decided to write something about it. This will be interesting for all you cooks out there.

It has a date for every day, and since today is publishing time for the DIT, I am looking at May 29th.

On the menu for that day was Oxtail soup, complete with a couple of glasses of sherry thrown in the mix.

Capon a la Duchesse was the main course, which could be served with Dutch sauce. Actually, for our French speakers, it is now called Hollandaise sauce. Why it was called Dutch, I've no idea. It's one of the mother sauces in French cuisine. It was being made about 1573.

The desert was Carrot Pudding, again sherry was the ingredient in this. They certainly knew what they liked!

The next things a lady would like to know are things connected with her toilet. This a recipe for chapped hands. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pound of unsalted hog's lard, and rose water, with the yolks of 2 new laid eggs and a large spoonful of honey. Add as much fine oatmeal or almond past as will work in a paste. No sherry there then! Mind you, after all that palaver, I suspect they would have had a few sherries at least!

Here's another tip but you'll want to think twice about this one. Rub your tooth brush on the soap you use. Ugh, I'd rather have the camphor tooth powder made with chalk!

They seem to have had recipes for everything. Here's one for the medicine chest. Opium plaster, sounds good. Don't fancy this one for indigestion. Drink the juice of half a large lemon immediately after dinner every day. Eek! I like the next one for a cut. Bind on toasted cheese. Presumably Cheddar?

Another little hint is given about life. 'The happiest life is full of hope.' Especially after another sherry.

Here's a little gem about low spirits. A quick dash to the local public house is indicated here. Seriously though, here's another recipe. A rather nice one, I think. Take an ounce of the seeds of resolution, mixed well with the oil of good conscience. Infuse into it a large spoonful of the salts of patience, distil very carefully a composing plant called 'other's woes', which you will find in every part of the garden of life, growing under the broad leaves of disguise. Add a small quantity, and it will greatly assist the salts of patience in their operation. Gather a handful of the blossom of hope, then sweeten them property with the balm of prudence and if you can get any of the seeds of true friendship, you will then have the most valuable medicine that can be administered.

Hope that cheered you up. That's all for now I'm off to have a glass of sherry or two!



WOULD YOU BEE-LIEVE IT - Jane Parsons

For a long time now, Bryn (hubby) and I have worked one of the plots at Christchurch Allotments. Over the years, for a variety of reasons, most of the plots on this site have been given up by the original tenants and, not having been taken on by new tenants with sufficient staying power, the plots have joined the fashionable trend for re-wilding. This has undoubtedly been a bonus for us over the last couple of months as a visit there is as good as a trip into the countryside. We are often the only people present, we are surrounded by woodland and if we sit quietly will be visited by a variety of wildlife - I was even honoured by the visit of a couple of Mallards recently, not a bird you often see on allotments! However, I digress.

On one plot, unworked now for several years, a beehive had been installed which was abandoned there when the owner gave up the plot. In the winter of 2018/19, Bryn noticed that this hive, which was still occupied by an active colony, was beginning to disappear under encroaching undergrowth and had developed a drunken lean, thanks to rotting supports. So, having press-ganged a couple of intrepid friends into helping him, he moved it to a new location in a scrubby area next to our own plot (no-one got stung - not on that occasion) and gave it new legs.

There followed many hours on YouTube trying to self-initiate into the mysteries of beekeeping. Thanks to a friend of a friend of a friend (you get the picture) mainly located through the pub grapevine he located a couple of other amateur bee geeks who took a look at the hive, and made a few suggestions (the rule seems to be try A and if that doesn't work try B and if that doesn't work try C and if). Last summer we were able to extract a couple of jars of honey and a quantity of beeswax which has come in very handy for another of his lockdown hobbies of woodturning. This gave an added impetus to his enthusiasm and he decided to start a second colony. An order was placed for a nucleus to be available late Spring this year and a second hive prepared in readiness.

Late morning on Wednesday 20th May the two of us were in the house having a quiet cup of coffee when we noticed several bees had come to join us. On investigating we found a couple of hundred of their companions in the back porch and several thousand more which had taken up residence in the shrubs bordering the back garden. Our intrepid hero donned his makeshift beekeeper's suit and, armed with a large, sturdy cardboard box, managed to persuade the bulk of the swarm from their favoured resting place and into the box which was then left out in the hope that the presence of the queen would encourage the rest to join them as the day cooled. This proved quite successful and in the evening the box was closed, wrapped in an old duvet cover in case of any escape attempts and transported to the allotments. Most of the bees were successfully tipped into the brood box (the bottom tier) of the new hive and a tasty evening meal (sugar solution) was provided to persuade the colony to make this their permanent residence. Many bees still remained clinging to the cardboard box so a wide ramp was set up leading from the ground to the hive entrance, the recalcitrant insects were tipped onto this and obediently walked up it in an orderly manner (though without due regard for social distancing) to enter the hive. Fascinating to watch. The only setback at this stage was a temporary traffic jam at the hive entrance but it soon cleared.





The following morning we went back to check the colony and it was still there. A few bees were out foraging and the feed had all been consumed so was replenished. We felt quite smug as we returned home - until we ARRIVED home and found the few (actually several hundred) bees which hadn't been persuaded into the cardboard box the previous evening had stayed in their temporary home overnight and now, in the heat of the day, were buzzing around our back garden, no doubt desperately trying to find their missing queen. We were unable to go into the garden for fear of angry bees and had to keep all the house windows closed

to prevent an invasion - this was Thursday 21st May, the hottest day of the year so far, the back porch became an oven and the rest of the house not much better. Every silver lining has its black cloud!

Thankfully the next day was cooler and windy and the remnant of the swarm gradually disappeared. There was just one problem remaining. The nucleus which Bryn had ordered should be ready for collection any day now but its accommodation, having been taken over by 'squatters', is no longer available. Hopefully Hive number three will be ready in time.

Wordsearch submitted by Barbara Phillips

Can you find eleven words connected with HANDS? The solution is on page 23.

C	S	D	H	B	L	I	A	N
G	U	B	F	S	M	A	E	P
N	R	T	S	D	E	U	I	E
I	T	A	I	I	E	R	H	D
R	R	G	K	C	G	A	S	T
S	I	N	T	E	L	H	P	R
T	I	A	E	L	M	E	A	S
P	M	T	E	C	D	R	N	A
N	L	S	R	E	G	N	I	F
E	A	L	T	A	B	R	H	U
E	P	K	N	U	C	K	L	E

A Warning to All by Jackie Mills

A warning to all: avoid using Aldi in Cwmbran at the moment if you can. I've just got back from a truly awful shopping trip.

Having queued up, patiently and socially distancing, as I neared the entrance a shop worker clipped a carabiner onto the belt loop of my jeans, my perplexed expression must have said it all as she explained that whilst people are distancing in the queue outside, they aren't distancing once inside the store. So what some Donut has dreamt up is to rope 6 or so customers together with 2m of rope between each of us.

Well these are strange times and with the threat of a second wave of infection I thought I'd best not complain and just tow the line (so to speak). I'm telling you now, what an absolutely idiotic idea this is. We've negotiated our way into the store, some with trolleys and others trying to grab a basket before the berserk conga line drags them away.

I was near the middle of the rope picking up some veg, the woman at the front, who was trussed up like a kid in a harness was trying to drag the whole line to the apples and the bloke at the back trying to pull the other way to get his hands on last week's courgettes which were now this week's courgette offer. It was like tug-of-war for the deranged.

It's embarrassing to say, but I lost it, started ranting and raving about the rope and how the hell are people meant to shop like this, I went to unclip the carabiner which miraculously brought the attention of the staff who told me I'd be asked to leave the shop if I unclipped. "For god's sake we're not rock climbing, we're trying to buy cheese" are words which I'll carry with me to my grave.

Strangely, this outburst had the effect of bringing our train together as a team. We carried on now with lots of communication, people passing stuff along the line to other to fill their baskets. Now I know passing things to one another could spread the infection as much as person to person contact but I honestly think if we hadn't done this, I'd still be there now.

As we started along the aisle I generally refer to as "biscuits and creosote", it was clear from the melee that all was not well in the adjacent aisle. As far as I could tell there had been 2 trains of people and a lady in the middle of one chain had ducked under the other to get her hands on a pop-art cat bed. The tangle had resulted in a multi-pedestrian pile up in which the epicentre resembled the deity Durga. It wasn't clear how long they'd been there but one old chap was trying to free himself by feverishly sawing at the rope with his house keys.

We navigated the remaining aisles without major trauma, other than having to rescue Doreen (2nd in line) after she fell in the chest freezer trying to reach the last Beef Wellington. We were individually unclipped prior to the till, at which point any camaraderie we'd had quickly evaporated as everyone scrambled for the first available till.

With the ordeal still impeding rational thought, it was a welcome and familiar sight to have the check-out throw all my shopping on the floor in the normal 1000mph fashion. I really did not appreciate being strung along like that, but I hope you did.

I don't think I'll be going back there in a hurry!

Musical Memories by Ian Lumley

Music and, more particularly, singing has occupied a prominent place in my life and been part of many treasured memories for as long as I can remember. At the age of eighteen I stood alone on a stage in my hometown theatre and sang 'You'll never Walk Alone' (the 'Carousel' version rather than the one from 'Gerry And the Pacemakers'). A sixteen-year-old girl was in the audience and, after I had finished singing, she turned to her then boyfriend and suggested he go home alone. Five years later she became my wife.

A working career which led to house moves every five years or so, inhibited any singing abilities I had for quite some time. I would just find out about local choirs when I was moved to a different part of the country. Retirement gave me a steady platform to get back in the groove. I sang with the local Male Voice Choir and then, following yet another move, family related this time, my wife and I joined two choirs! One whose repertoire consisted of high classical music - Verdi's Requiem and Rossini's Stabat Mater became the order of the day. Very challenging to sing, as well as beautiful to perform. The second choir - the U3A one - sings more modern music, if you can call The Seekers and Elvis Presley, modern! In one of life's strange coincidences, amongst the repertoire for this choir's 2019 performances is 'You'll Never Walk Alone'! Will my wife walk away from the current man in her life - again?! Watch this space.

My love of singing, however, started much earlier in my life and the memories created then will stay with me until the day I die.

Electric razors were a long way in the future when I was five or six years old. My father used soap, a brush and an open-bladed razor to shave. I was fascinated by the suds on his face and how he scraped the stubble away. As I stood at the side of the sink while he shaved and sang, I was old enough to be scared of what might happen if he tried to sing a high note just as he was bringing the razor down across his throat. They were called cut-throat razors for a reason!

I was even more fascinated by the songs he would sing when occupied like that. 'The Holy City' and My Heart And I' were two of his favourites, and I learned the words and the melody of these without ever realising what I was being taught. I could sing them both here and now without either missing a beat or a word.

Neither of those songs, beautiful though they are, could compare in my memory to another of his favourites. The first time he sang it I cried - not because of the words, or the tune, poignant though they are, but because of the sad human situation involving children it describes. I've always been a sucker for stories about children, I was one myself. I have four Grandsons now and the two oldest at nine and eight have already been told about that song, and the fact that I cried. I also told them that I still - over sixty-five years later - cannot sing it all the way through. Emotion kicks in as I say the title and gets the better of me long before the end - every single time. Ann and I always sing to and with the boys whenever we are in the car together. Oliver now takes fiendish delight in asking me to sing THAT song for them 'just to see if you can finish it this time Grandad'. I do try to meet his request, if for no other reason than to show them that 'little boy fears' do eventually disappear, but still fail - every - single - time.

Nat King Cole recorded the song at the time (just after the war), and I have listened to his attempt. I say attempt because while he may have had a beautiful voice, he didn't even come close to my father's version of the song.

Sometimes I find that I can clear my mind of a difficulty that plagues me by writing things down, and I have tried to do the same for this song - without success. I eventually wrote a poem with the same title,

just to try and exorcise this particular demon. That hasn't cleared my mind either. All it has meant is that now I have both a Poem I can't read, and a song I can't sing!

The title of the song and the Poem? Oh, yes, it's:

The Little Boy That Santa Claus Forgot

He was only a very little boy
But old enough to know
When his Dad had walked out, with no backward look
And his Mum had lost her glow.

He knew that Christmas was coming
He'd seen a few before
They'd never been very happy times
When his Mum and Dad just swore.

But somehow he knew this was different
This time it was truly a change.
This time his Mum would be on her own
It was going to feel quite strange.

She was upset when buying him presents
She was upset when buying him food.
She was trying to do her best for him
She was hoping he understood.

He didn't know how to explain to her
As she tucked him up in bed.
That he didn't mind all the other things
He just wanted rid of the dread.

He didn't know how she would manage to cope
If she'd be there when he'd grown.
He needed to know that she'd still be with him
He didn't want to be left all alone.

He was only a very little boy
But old enough to know
That the love he'd felt until then in his life
Was no more, as tears started to flow.

Two Little Quotes contributed by Ivy Forkin

'Just when I finally got my head together my body fell apart'. Anon

'She says she's young at heart - but slightly older in other places'. Anon.

What We Were Doing This Week - 4 Years Ago - Angela Robins.

On the 1st June 2016 members of our U3A Art Group had a display of their work at the Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, High Cross. The exhibits portrayed a great deal of innovation and know-how from the artists, with some trying completely new methods. Included were charcoal drawings, a semi-abstract mixed media study and precise detailed townscapes. The exhibition was a great success with favourable comments from visitors on the standard of work and ... the sale of some paintings!

The exhibition was quickly followed by another at the Caerleon Arts Festival where the collage 'Art Collaboration' (contributed to by all members of the group) was displayed. This was later sold to one of our members for £75 and the money donated to the Army of Angels Charity.



Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre

A ballad written by Edward Senior, Newport submitted by Monty Dart

This was discovered by Ifan Kyrle Flether, antiquarian and book shop owner; his address was the Bridge, Newport. Many Newportonians will have fond memories of the shop. He was a great friend of Newport poet W. H. Davies.

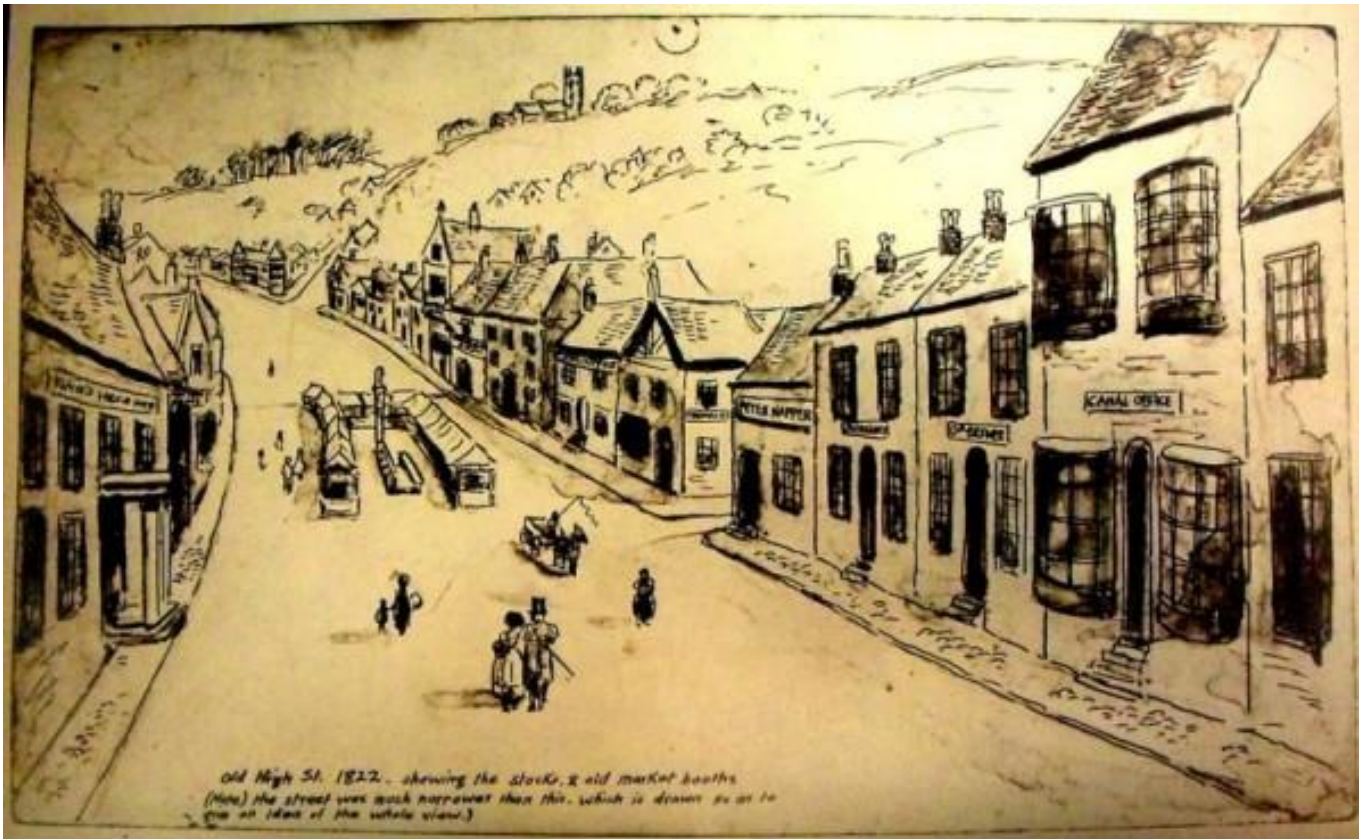
Newport in AD 1774

In Newport town the other day, as I did try to wend my way,
A hundred faces I did see, not one of them was known to me.
Mark my words, I'm telling you I have lived in centuries two
And in my time there has been three Kings of England and a Queen.
What alterations have there been in the days that I have seen;
When to Newport I did go to school 'bout sixty years ago.
Then I did know the streets and houses, and almost all the old faces.
Newport then was not so great, no houses farther than Corn Street.
The old bridge I do remember; it was built of oaken timber,
All but one pier in the centre, that was built of stone and mortar.
Near the bridge was the old doctor Hawkins with his medicine and powder.
Opposite just on the corner was Mrs Morgan the ironmonger.
Old Cornelius was a cooper, he lived where now lives Peter Napper.
The Kings Head I do remember was kept by Chambers, the old Quaker.
Tom Williams kept the Sloop and Betty and famous beer there was and plenty.
There was a stone fixed in the ground with staple and a ring all round,
The purpose was as people tell was for the baiting of a bull.
The market butchers and their meat was in the middle of old High Street.
Old John he kept a blacksmith's shop not very far from Latch's clock.
Where Dew now lives, there stood the Griffin it was a dark and dismal building;
Bad women of the lower sort in this house they did resort.
Morgan William's on the Green the only house 'twas plainly seen.
By the Westgate was old Sal Bettle making lozenges in the kettle.
There was Tom Frost, the old cordwainer, Old Joe Latch the expert gardener,
And John Thomas the foremost butcher. not far off was Billy Brewer,
In Newport he was chief grocer; indeed, then I do remember
His shop was full of goods from India, and yet no glass was in the window.
Old Tom Davies he did swagger; he was a butcher and corn dealer.
A place that's now called Friar's Field, was a rich meadow that did yield
Plenteous crops of grass and hay, and tack for cattle night and day.
In the middle stood Old Fryers surrounded all with thorns and briars;
The Clark of Stow he lived in that, with his long brown coat and three cocked-hat.
The shipping then it was but slender, The Tredegar and the Moderator
Were the two vessels that did come every week to Newport town.
Were the two vessels that did come every week to Newport town.
Places of worship there were but two, Old Mill Street Chapel and the Church on Stow.
The Westgate entrance to the town was built of very rough red stone,
I have been under it for shelter when a boy at school with Viner.
No coal or iron was there found on any of the wharves all round;
No railway was there or canal and coal was carried on the mule.
At Pill no houses there did stand, it was all rich and meadow land.
From Newport down to Pill, I say, there was no house but old Mountjoy.

If old Squire Krimmin could but rise, he would open wide his eyes,
 To see his farm land at Fair Oak, covered with buildings and with smoke.
 These are a few faces I remember of Newport when I was but slender.
 What alterations there have been in the days that I have seen.

The King's Head Hotel is on the left. Peter Napper's pie shop is on the corner of Thomas Street (first on the right.) The Bull referred to as the bull ring was found and is now in Newport Museum. The whipping post is on there as well, surrounded by market stalls. Note St Woolos at the top of the hill and the Westgate Hotel at the bottom.

The caption on the illustration reads: "Old High St. 1822, showing the stocks and old market booths. (Note) the street was much narrower than this which is drawn so as to give an idea of the whole view."



DO YOU KNOW YOUR POEMS ? - Submitted by Rob Wilkinson

Here are the first lines of some famous poems. Name the poem and the writer. Good luck !

- 1 "Twas brillig and the slithy toves....."
- 2 "I met a traveller from an antique land....."
- 3 "What passing bells for these who die as cattle....."
- 4 "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness....."
- 5 "If you can keep your head when all about you....."
- 6 "Earth has not anything to show more fair....."
- 7 "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone....."
- 8 "Half a league, half a league onwards....."
- 9 "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day....."
- 10 "Had we but world enough and time....."

Answers are on page 30

Water Music by Stephen Berry

Descriptive music (or programme music) is a fairly modern phenomenon. It really dates from the early years of the 19th century – Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony might be considered one of the first pieces and this dates from 1808.

Music written to portray water – generally river or sea – is reasonably plentiful and I have put together a list of suggestions which you might like to explore. In general I have arranged these in batches with the most complex *genres* first. The exception is opera – this comes at the end.

SYMPHONIES

Alfven: Symphony No. 4 (“From the Outermost Skerries”) This Symphony is a lavish depiction of the Swedish seacoast, rich in plaintive melodies and evocative orchestration. Alfvén creates a series of tableaux that suggest the turbulent ocean and the haunted shoreline in a highly Romantic manner, watery and windswept tone-painting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkpSdyLON5M>

Bantock: Celtic Symphony This has to be one of Bantock's finest works. It is scored for string orchestra and six harps. If you listen to nothing else from this list, do make sure you try this one!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3O2B3ZJ0mE>

Bantock: Hebridean Symphony Bantock is somewhat underrated and was, for many years, almost overshadowed by Arnold Bax. These two symphonies show that he was a fine composer in his own right and very capable of conjuring up images of the Celtic landscape.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2dfj45wSYU>

McEwen: Solway Symphony The Solway is a firth to the north of Carlisle, marking the western end of the boundary between England and Scotland. It is a bleak and exposed area and the three movements of the symphony (Spring Tide, Moonlight and Sou'West Wind) capture the atmosphere of the landscape and waters of the firth extremely well. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3Z0ZW6uKZc>

Rubenstein: Symphony No. 2 (Ocean Symphony) A rarely heard work by a rarely heard-of composer! The work dates from 1851 and musically is less obviously “water” than other works on this list

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3Z0ZW6uKZc>

Vaughan Williams: Symphony No. 1 (“Sea Symphony”) Although other composers have written choral symphonies (notably Beethoven, of course), they are by no means common. Vaughan Williams was inspired by the poetry of the American poet Walt Whitman which he uses throughout the four movements of the work. The opening minute or so of the first movement make a lasting impression on most listeners and the music reflects the words perfectly. Gill and I had the great pleasure of singing in two performances of this magnificent work with Newport Choral Society some 40 years ago – absolutely unforgettable!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT0BIZK7lgA>

TONE POEMS

Bantock: Hebridean Sea Poem No. 2 (“Sea Reivers”) A quite short piece, certainly not in the same league as the two symphonies. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdVN0ql0p_o

Bax: Garden of Fand “A poetic evocation of a limitless, sunlit ocean” well describes this music. Bax had a deep feeling for Celtic legend and an ability to translate that into music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83vIbAnTz0E>

Bax: On the Sea Shore <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hG5hbPeI03Y>

Bax: Tintagel This is probably Bax's most well-known work. Anyone who knows Tintagel in Cornwall – and particularly its castle on the cliffs overlooking the wild waters of the Atlantic – will find this music effectively matches both scenery and ocean. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erw06L4U6ks>

Delius: Summer Night on the River Delius was an impressionist. This music describes a balmy summer evening as he experienced it from his garden which overlooked the River Loing near Fontainebleau in France. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6pquwsisEc>

Finzi: Severn Rhapsody Finzi is not one of the “big” names in English music, but his works are beautiful, well-constructed and orchestrated. This piece is reminiscent of George Butterworth's “Shropshire Lad” Rhapsody – and, of course, the River Severn does flow through Shropshire for some of its length. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tf9QWnNbHQ>

Moeran: Lonely Waters Moeran is another of the “minor” British composers, but his music is quite exquisite. He drew his musical styles from Delius, Vaughan Williams and Sibelius amongst others. This piece portrays the quietness of the Norfolk Broads. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebP_ehR6oLE

Scott: Neptune (“A Poem of the Sea”) This is a rather unusual piece of music by another less well-known composer. Without a specific programme, it captures the ocean in its various moods. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDc3yUezJsU>

Sibelius: The Oceanides Sibelius was essentially a “nature” composer – much more at home with the elements than with human beings! The Oceanides as its name suggests describes the northern oceans. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPYdlrMBYbY>

Smetana: Vltava (No.2 of “Ma Vlast”) This picturesque impression of the river which flows through Prague is one of Smetana's most popular compositions. It falls into four sections, of which the third depicts the river in the moonlight, a tranquil and beautiful piece of music. It starts at 05:10 on the recording and is around two and a half minutes of simultaneous busyness and serenity. Sheer pleasure! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1y3cu0k8sFw>

SUITES

Bridge: The Sea This particular subject does seem to have appealed to a number of the less well-known composers, all of whom have approached it in a unique and interesting way. Frank Bridge is no exception to this. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgK8L2QAYuA>

Britten: Four Sea Interludes (“Peter Grimes”) Though I frankly admit that I do not hold Britten in any regard whatever so far as 99.99% of his output is concerned, these four pieces (which do not actually form a suite but are interludes within his opera Peter Grimes) are worth listening to. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTd2aXLTA84>

Debussy: La Mer This is among the most well-known suites of “sea” music. Debussy was an impressionist and these three pieces give an impressionist's view of the sea in its different moods. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOCucJw7iT8>

Elgar: Sea Pictures This is a song cycle rather than a suite, five poems by different poets which, although originally written for soprano and piano, is usually heard in the version for contralto and orchestra. The music is recognisably “Elgar” from the first few chords and yet also “sea”. A brilliant work! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaulMo8Manc>

Respighi: Fountains of Rome Beautifully descriptive music of four of the Roman fountains.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGZ9oslaeak>

Williams, Grace: Sea Sketches A fairly modern work (1944) by a Welsh composer. Very pleasant listening!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfO6SodPQWo>

OVERTURES

Carwithen: Bishops Rock Overture Here we have the full force of the Atlantic beating against the lighthouse off the western end of Cornwall. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-jlK7B28Cg>

Mendelssohn: Hebrides Overture THE classic piece of sea music, inspired by a visit Mendelssohn made to the Hebrides and Fingal's Cave. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d_vZ6OJ1oQ

Mendelssohn: Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage Overture The sea is in a far more gentle mood in this overture! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VUz-PZx528>

Sterndale Bennett: The Naiades Overture The Naiades are a type of female spirit, or nymph, presiding over fountains, wells, springs, streams, brooks and other bodies of fresh water.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn4fHLUutC8>

LIGHT MUSIC

These pieces are all fairly short and their titles are good descriptors. I am providing links only for them.

Bath: Cornish Rhapsody

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaGNnzqvjQE>

Binge: Sailing By

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz-aZE-2DIw>

Binge: Trade Winds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seYPpPHAvnQ>

Binge: Watermill

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_cAWMI1bQg

Coates: By the Sleepy Lagoon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u0c2t08-U8>

Ketèlbej: By the Blue Hawaiian Waters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxTnjkpDRfo>

Tomlinson: Kielder Water

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv_usQ9FCp8

HMMM! – these don't really fit in elsewhere!

Arnold: Padstow Lifeboat (brass band piece) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efbVDpqW6CY>

Chopin: Barcarolle (piano solo)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cv7diEOZMc>

OPERA

These operas all have some passages of music which depict the sea and are worth investigating, although both the Smyth and the Wagner are lengthy works. The Vaughan Williams is just over half an hour.

Smyth: The Wreckers

Vaughan Williams: Riders to the Sea

Wagner: Flying Dutchman

If you have looked in vain for any reference to Handel's Water Music that is because, although written for a concert ON the water, it in no way sets out to be descriptive music in the way that the above pieces do.

The Fantasia on Sea Songs (by Henry Wood), which features each year in the Last Night of the Proms concert, is a well-written piece based on well-known sea songs and shanties and the same applies to it.

You might not be able to travel to the seaside yet, but enjoy it through some of this music – in your homes!

RAIN by Pam Cocchiara

I like to go out in the rain though some think the idea insane.
Of course I love sunshine but when there's a day
When it's weather for ducks, as country folk say,
With incontinent clouds slung in vast shrouds of grey,
Well, that's when I walk in the rain.

When rain drums my window pane, with a non-stop hypnotic refrain
It's a rhythmical beat that to me's heaven sent.
I know that to some it can be a torment,
But when I hear that sound I'm in my element
And long to go out in the rain.

When it's pouring persistently, connecting the sky to the sea,
When for days the rain has been bucketing down,
And people have started to grouse and to frown
'Cause, like Noah, they think the world's going to drown,
It's not a disaster for me.

I quite like to lie in the sun, on holiday that's often done,
But at height of summer, in mid-July,
When sailors see with their weather eye
That the atmosphere's starting to liquefy,
That's more my idea of fun.

At the end of a period of drought, how I welcome a real waterspout,
When it's weather that's heaven for frogs and for newts,
When in puddles are paddling ducks and coots,
It's then that I reach for my wellington boots,
'Cause that's when I love to go out.

When hot summer days start to pall, I can't wait for air pressure to fall.
With a promise of showers so sweet and so fair
Driven by west winds, cleansing the air,
And, very faintly then, I'm aware
Of the rain's soft siren call.

I'm lured by its sound once again, miraculous, life-giving rain.
And whilst other folk shelter indoors in the dry,
I lift up my face to the streaming sky
And relish the raindrops that fall from on high,
To taste on my tongue like champagne.

Bathing Birds – Angela Robins

Feeding birds is generally not encouraged this time of the year but we always put an old plastic food tray in the garden filled with water. It gives us so much pleasure to see the birds drinking it and even lovelier to watch them bathing.

Bird baths need to be deeper in the middle with a shallow border so we put the tray on an angle. They would particularly appreciate one in your garden this year. We put one out recently and within 20 minutes there were a dozen birds queuing up for a dip.

50 Mile Challenge – Pontypool by Mike Brown.

A trip to Pontypool makes a pleasant day out, and it's right on our doorstep!

We park the car at Pontymoel Basin on the Mon and Brecon Canal (follow the brown tourist signs depicting the narrow boat). From the picturesque moorings with its attractive boats and iconic toll house we walk back to the road and turn right towards the entrance of Pontypool Park. There is a bus stop here for those travelling by bus. The fine iron gates were presented to Major John Hanbury in 1721 by Sarah Churchill (widow of the 1st Duke of Marlborough). It is said that the maker of the gates committed suicide when he realised they were not a perfect pair; I've never managed to spot the difference, can you?

Go through them and into the 158 acre park with the Avon Lwyd on our left; for many years it was sullied from industrial pollution but now you can watch the Dippers bobbing up and down to catch food under the water. It is hard to believe this area was the heart of the town's industrial life for 400 years and here in the 17th century the Hanbury's owned the most efficient ironworks in the world! We walk on between the leisure centre and the rugby ground. In the 1970's the famous Pontypool Front Row did the donkey work up front for the Wales National Rugby Union Team and have rightly gone into rugby folklore. From here we can see a school which was once the seat of the Hanbury family for 200 years.

Taking a path to the left we make our way up to the pretty Italian Garden which is now a war memorial.

This part of the town is so attractive with a group of Victorian listed limestone buildings, including the old Register Office, St James Church Hall, the Vicarage and the Town Hall. The latter was presented to the town in 1856 by Capel Hanbury Leigh. He changed his surname in order to inherit the estates of his cousin Lord Leigh. Even the bus shelters here have been sympathetically designed.

A short walk along this road brings us to the recently refurbished indoor market: yet another of the dozens of listed buildings in this historic town.

We start our return through the town centre's narrow streets which Lord Haw-Haw, in one of his propaganda broadcasts, threatened that German bombers were coming to widen them in their quest to obliterate the Ordnance Factory at Glascoed! We re-enter the Park near the Town Bridge, passing the museum and tea-rooms which are housed in the Georgian stable block. Then back through the park to the car.

For our walkers there are signposts in the park that direct you to the Grotto. This rustic building is decorated inside with shells and bones and was used by the Hanbury's as a hunting lodge; until WW1 deer roamed this park. Further along the ridge with its awesome views across Monmouthshire, is the Folly; a watchtower that was used as a summerhouse. Edward VI I was once entertained here, though it was reported that the champagne was corked! The tower was demolished in 1940 to prevent its use as a landmark by German bombers. It was rebuilt in 1994.

Important News Regarding Newport Scouts Christmas Post

Margaret Swabey, who has, for a number of years been actively involved with the Scouting movement in Newport and was our supplier of stamps for this scheme, has informed me that it will not be running for 2020. This is largely because one of the two volunteers who ran the scheme so efficiently has decided to retire and it is not known whether a replacement can be found. The current crisis and the uncertainty surrounding coming out of lockdown also makes planning extremely difficult.



Pontymoel Basin

Wordsearch (page 11) - solution

C	S	D	H	B	L	I	A	N
G	U	B	F	S	M	A	E	P
N	R	T	S	D	E	U	I	E
I	T	A	I	I	E	R	H	D
R	R	G	K	C	G	A	S	T
S	I	N	T	E	L	H	P	R
T	I	A	E	L	M	E	A	S
P	M	T	E	C	D	R	N	A
N	L	S	R	E	G	N	I	F
E	A	L	T	A	B	R	H	U
E	P	K	N	U	C	K	L	E

The 'Sixties by Gerald Lee

It is a peculiarity that so many years after the decade ended, there is still so much nostalgia for the nineteen sixties. It is the music in particular that keeps the legend alive. 'Sounds of the Sixties' is still one of the most popular programmes on Radio 2. So, what made the music so different?

The invention of the 45 RPM record must have played a large part. It was a lot lighter than the old 78 rpm records. This was coupled with the invention of the transistor radio. Suddenly music became so much more accessible. Most of us will remember the old Danette record players with the arm that allowed you to stack the records. Unfortunately, this did not always work properly, and two or more discs would fall together.

It is remarkable how little pop music was on the Radio in the early 'sixties. 'Saturday Club,' presented by Brian Matthew on the Light Programme, was one of the few dedicated pop programmes. Due to union rules there was a limit on 'needle time,' so much of the show was live or re-recorded. Brian Matthew recalled how Brook Benton, the American singer, had difficulty understanding this, and was convinced it was an attempt to make a bootleg recording.

On another occasion the Everly Brothers were booked for 'Saturday Club.' Due to travel delays they arrived at the theatre with barely enough time to do their set. They gave a perfect recording without rehearsal and were extremely polite calling Brian 'Sir.'

Otherwise, there was only the odd pop artist on programmes like 'Family Favourites.' On Television Juke Box Jury played the new releases with a panel of celebrities who gave a review and had to say whether it would be a hit or miss. The panel was rarely representative of the younger record buying generation. Brian Matthew presented an alternative show on ITV, 'Thank your lucky Stars,' which became very popular. Sensibly the channels arranged times so that they did not directly clash. The artists mimed to the records, sometimes with embarrassing results. No-one really knew how to handle the 'fade out' at the end of the record.

On television the stars of variety shows were more often middle of the road artists. If a pop star appeared, he or she was usually part of a variety show with all kinds of acts, usually comedians, and might have to join in a routine. The 'Beatles Anthology' has an example of this, with the world's most popular group singing 'Moonlight Bay' with Morecambe and Wise. In my opinion, best forgotten.

For all of us this changed in the mid-sixties when pirate radio forced the BBC to adapt its output. For many of us Radio Luxembourg was difficult to receive. I remember holding my transistor radio next to a copper pipe to find a better signal. Even then reception fluctuated. Radio Caroline could not cover the whole country, so for us in Northern Ireland, Radio Scotland, which was anchored off the NI coast near Ballycastle, provided our supply of current pop.

In the lives of younger people music was all important. On a Sunday I would rush home from Sunday School to hear as much as I could of Alan Freeman with his top twenty show, 'Pick of the Pops.' Alan Freeman had a catch phrase I can still hear, 'Hi there, Pop Pickers.' Unlike the other presenters, to keep the show moving quickly, he talked over the introductions. Occasionally he would trip himself up, which earned him the nickname 'Fluff.'

In school we followed avidly the movements of the charts. Everyone had his own favourite group. The rest were rubbish. My own favourite was the 'Searchers,' with their more gentle harmonies. Of course, not all pop stars are millionaires for life. The Searchers drummer, Chris Curtis, had the worst fate of all. Like me he was condemned to earning his living in the Inland Revenue.

In the 1980's the BBC introduced a radio programme, 'Sounds of the Sixties' with Keith Fordyce. After a few changes, from 1990 the regular presenter was Brian Matthew. In effect, he was reaching to the same audience as in his old days in 'Saturday Club,' a bit older, bit still alert. He even invited anyone who had a request played on 'Saturday Club' to write to him.

Just as the invention of the 45rpm single, boosted the music scene thirty years earlier, the CD allowed the same audience to rebuild their music collection in a way that was even more portable and cheap.

Round about this time I discovered a magazine, 'The Beat Goes On.'

In 2000 I celebrated my fiftieth birthday. The magazine was organizing a festival of 'sixties music in Brighton. Brian Matthew had given it some publicity on the radio. With the great names of the Sixties pop scene, how could Rosalind and I not go.

Our first piece of luck was that we found a train that would take us from Newport to Brighton without a change. We left Newport on a very wet Friday in August, a week or two after my birthday. When we arrived in Brighton it was tropical, just like Majorca. We were completely unprepared and had to buy some beachwear.

The festival was extremely well organised. After each act had been on stage there was a 45 minute interval to go backstage for autographs and pictures. It is only fitting that artists should be accessible to fans who had supported them for so many years.

The first act we saw was Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers, one of my favourite artists; after that it was a succession of big names.

As performers two artists in particular stood out. Marty Wilde topped the bill on the first evening. He gave a perfect performance of many of his own hits and a tribute to his onetime rivals, Billy Fury and Cliff Richard. Although Marty was a major figure from the late 'fifties, he never actually had a number one record. He was extremely tall, so really dwarfed both of us.

The other artist who really impressed was Helen Shapiro, who topped the bill on the second night. She was outstanding onstage and included some amusing stories. As a child performer (she was 14) the record company insisted she wear her school uniform, complete with berry, when she came to visit the studios. Sadly, her career did not last long once the group era began. Nevertheless, a great artist.

When I said we came from Wales, she told us she was now Mrs Williams and pointed towards her husband, who was sat nearby. Unlike Marty she was quite short. It was one of the few times in my life when I was lost for words.

Normally I do not like tribute acts. However, the Billy Fury Experience were amazing.

The musicians had worked with Billy Fury later in his career and had known him well. He was a gentle, shy, modest person who loved animals. He was certainly not the stereotype.

At the end of his life due to financial pressures he was still hoping to continue working. One of his friends confided in them that Billy was extremely ill and would certainly not be capable of a major tour or any kind of strenuous performing. Shortly afterwards he died of the heart disease he had developed as a child. The group still thought of promoting the legend of Billy Fury under the name of 'Fury's Tornados.' Then one Saturday on 'Stars in Their Eyes' they spotted a young singer, Colin Gold, performing 'Halfway to Paradise.'

They knew straightaway what they had to do. Together they created a truly inspiring show. You could have genuinely believed you were listening to Billy Fury. Brian Matthew in his introduction recalled working with Billy Fury and felt it was a tribute in the full sense.

Mike Berry, also known as an actor in 'Are you Being Served?' was extremely charming and friendly. Like Marty Wilde he was very tall.

There was an amusing incident with Peter Sarstedt when he forgot the words to a song and had to ask the audience to help. He then sang one of his own songs 'Frozen Orange Juice.' When he remarked how hot it was on stage, someone fetched a frozen orange juice for him and left it by his feet. With a bit of sign language from the front rows, he realized why everyone was so amused.

For me the highlight was to meet Brian Matthew himself. We spotted him as we were walking through the lounge. He readily agreed to have a photograph with us. He was very genial and chatted to us about the show and how he hoped the BBC would continue to be satisfied with him and his then producer. He knew many recorded the show so never spoke over the introductions.

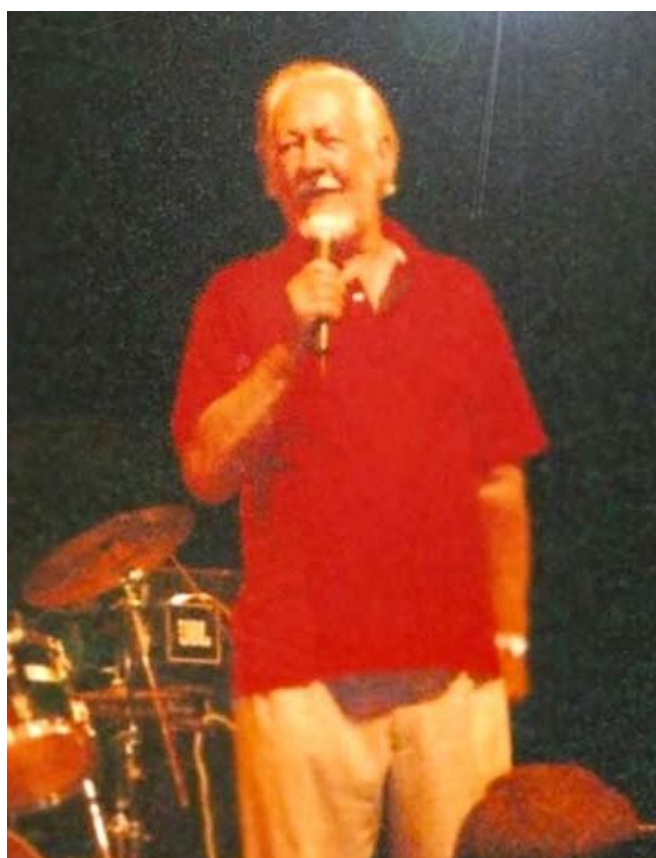
We discussed re-broadcasting some of the old editions of 'Saturday Club.' He explained it would be very difficult, although they had done it once. On another occasion they had recreated 'Saturday Club' with some of the stars of the time such as Marty Wilde. To re-broadcast an original show, each artist would have to be re-contracted at current rates.

Brian Matthew continued to present the show until 2017 when he had to take a break due to ill-health. The BBC then announced, much to his chagrin, that he had retired. There was a media campaign to keep him. Sadly, after a final show, when he was allowed to choose the records, he again suffered ill health and died.

The current presenter is now Tony Blackburn, whose own career began with the pirates on Radio London. The show now is very similar to his 'sixties shows with the deliberately bad jokes. Until the virus struck the show was live with Tony reading messages as they came in. Simon Dee had wanted to do the show live during his short spell on the show. Unfortunately, his reputation of being difficult to work with meant it did not lead to a revival of his career.

To many of us Brian Matthew had a better approach with the first half of the show dedicated to the obscurities and lesser known recordings. Irrespective of who presents the show, the music is eternal. It now starts at 6 am on a Saturday. Something we did not have in the 'sixties is a blessing to us today, I mean of course, serial recording.

Today 'sixties tours still attract large audiences. Unfortunately, many groups do not have all the original members. Sometimes there are even more than one version of the same group. However, the best advice is just to enjoy the music and relive the old days, like the song by George Harrison, 'Long time ago when we was fab.'



Brian Matthew

A Walk over the Carmarthen Vans by Jan Wagenaar

We drive into the grounds of the Red Lion Youth Hostel at Llanddeusant, having earlier that morning left Babb's car, another member of our group, at the Dan-yr-Ogof show caves car park. I enter the hostel to obtain permission to park my car for the day. The hostel was once a public house and described in a 1960's guide to South Wales "as a very humble inn. I step onto old stone flagstones into the lounge, a cosy room in which to relax after a long day's walk. At one end, around which various chairs and settees are placed, is a large open fireplace. There are shelves of books and a bar; there is a definite ambience to this country retreat. Here I meet the manageress, 60-ish from Cardiff, a very amiable woman, slim with light hair and fine features. I ask about the car "That's O.K" she replied, and I also asked if she was familiar with the area. "No, I'm afraid not, I'm only here for a week or so." At that moment two walkers enter, a father and teenage son. "It's been chucking it down all morning" the father said, his son nods in sympathy. The pair appear a little bedraggled. However there is clearly a look of satisfaction on their faces for where they had been and what they may have fleetingly glimpsed that wet and blistery morning. I bid them all a good day and return to the group.

My companions and I are a group of 5, Val and Babs, both retired teachers; Chris, an Employment Law consultant; Patrick, a retired Deputy head Teacher and myself. After a last minute check I lock the car and off we go. Pat has already orientated his 1:2500 O.S. map no.12, to ensure we start off in the right direction. The tarmac track leads due south through farmland to Cwmsawdde and soon falls steeply into a narrow ravine, through which flows the Afon Sychlwch. This stream rises beneath the north face of Bannau Sir Gaer high above us. We stop on a Stone Bridge; on the inside of the parapet is a stone inscribed with the name of the builder, John Jones 1895. The track climbs steeply out of the ravine through deciduous trees. With one more stop at a junction to check our route and off to the left we go. The rough track climbs evermore steeply reminding us what closely packed contour lines on the map mean on the ground. One of the group, Chris, has gout in his right big toe, a very painful complaint. "I'm taking it easy on the uphill because of my toe" he says; the pain eases somewhat following a number of offers to cut it off.! We reach a stile and are onto the open moor land, we can now see that the weather is clearing. The fine drizzle is slowly petering out. The path meanders up to Carreg Ogof, a rocky crag at 585m. We take a left, striding out over open moorland. We dodge the many bogs that litter the area. Pat reminds us that he is the only one wearing gaiters, we pretend not to hear and hope that his feet are just as sodden as ours. We climb higher up the west shoulder of Bannau Sir Gaer. The brighter weather is moving in and we catch sight of the ridge rising above us, the top is still lost in the mist. Val and Babs have between them lifted the tempo and are soon far up the steep slope.

The top can now be seen and at 749m is not the highest section of the ridge. That honour lies further to the east of the Carmarthen Van at Fan Brycheiniog. Bathed in warm August sunshine we arrive at the ridge overlooking the cold dark water of Llyn-y-fan Fach reservoir, nearly 200m below us, and take a welcome break. Several ravens are putting on an aerial acrobatic display using the updraft from the near vertical face of the ridge. Their repeated "kark-kark" together with the wind are the only sounds to be heard. We finish our lunch and repack our rucksacks. Out of the corner of my eye I see Pat stealthily pick up my walking stick hoping that I would think I'd lost it, Oh, why did I invite him? - but I'm glad I did.

We continue up the ridge taking in the views. Far to the south we can see Swansea bay, the Mumbles, Worms Head, Rhossili bay and Carmarthen bay. The long ribbon of the Bristol Channel can be seen shimmering in the summer sun. Further to the southwest the dark outline of the Preseli Hills.

Suddenly! above us, we see a large bird of prey. "It's a red kite" shouts Pat. He borrows my £120 bins but then says he not sure and quickly lays the blame on my cherished binoculars. The bird soon disappears but not before Val and Babb's had observed an important feature, a pronounced vee in its fan shaped tail.

This confirms that Pat is probably right, as this distinguishes it from the similar sized Buzzard which has a wedge-shaped tail. The occasional Wheatear, a summer visitor can also be seen, identified by its white rump as it flits from rock to rock. We pass a group of walkers and exchange pleasantries. At 749m the path reaches the end of the ridge at Picws Du. We now have a steep descent to Pant-y-Bwlch. An even longer steep ascent from the pass to Fan-Foel. The path along the whole of the Carmarthen Van escarpment lies very close to the edge of precipitous drops. In some sections, almost vertical and in some sections overhanging. Signs of erosion are everywhere and many of the gullies are filled with scree to the valley floor. The steep northern grass covered slopes have huge vertical scars. They look as though they could have been made by the claws of some mythical monster. laying bare the red sandstone beneath. Some of the dangerously steep north facing gullies contain many wild plants, probably arctic alpines, but were too inaccessible to examine.

We take another stop at a drystone roofless windbreak near the triangulation pillar on Fan Brycheiniog and at 802m. the highest point of the walk. From here, off to the west is the Usk reservoir and about 1 mile north of Fan Foil on the open moorland is the source of the Usk. To the east can be seen the bold outline of the Brecon Beacons and at 886m, the highest point in South Wales. Further east, the long ridges of the Black Mountains and the bold outline of Waun Fach can clearly be seen. Our stop over, we leave from the windbreak. Increasing cloud cover has obscured the sun and the temperature has dropped, an extra layer is needed. The going now will be easy, downhill all the way. We repack our rucksacks, I keep a wary eye on my walking stick and off we set. The Llyn-y-Fan Fawr Lake lies 200m. below us, a large gully filled with scree can be seen disappearing into the lake. The valley bottom to the north is devoid of trees. To the south lies a gentle water shed with many crags, streams and a myriad sink holes. Some are quite large depressions, some filled with water and some narrow, steep and deep. About 200m south of Fan Brycheiniog at SN825214 is the crash site in 1939 of an Anson L9149 aircraft. The cause of the crash was Pilot error due to very bad weather and loss of radio contact. The pilot of the plane, which was on a training flight, was lost and disorientated when the plane struck the ground. The pilot was killed but two civilians on board survived. The bald outline of Fan Gyhirych at 725m. looks more and more imposing the lower we descend the ridge. We encounter a group of mountain ponies; the foals have grown considerably since our last visit two months earlier. Sheep are everywhere and keep a wary eye open for strangers; I must be as vigilant as they!

The descent off Fan Hir is at first very steep and then levels out somewhat, we must cross over to Cwm Haffes. Chris checks on his GPS the direction back to the Dan-y-Ogof carpark. This will take us back to where Babs parked her car earlier that morning In the same direction but beyond the Dan-y-Ogof caves we can see Graig-y-Nos (the rock of the night) now a country park but once the home of Adelina Patti, the world famous operatic soprano. She was the super star of her day, known as the Queen of Song she performed at Covent Garden and the opera houses of Paris, Milan, Vienna, Berlin and Moscow. She died there in 1919 she was found dead at the bottom of a flight of stairs. There was a suspicion that her Italian husband Niccolo had pushed her. He apparently had huge debts and wanted total control of Adelina's fortune. We must search out a way to cross Cwm Haffes as no path is shown on the map. Overlooking the ravine but with some distance to go we see a stile and cross over. We find a path, which winds down evermore steeply into the gorge of Cwm Haffes. Pat takes the lead clearing the undergrowth which towers above us. His fleece jacket is tucked loosely on top of his rucksack. The sun has come out and its warm work. He passes some particularly thorny bramble, which gently grabs his fleece and slowly removes it, as surreptitiously as any one of Fagin's eager young recruits. I grab my chance, untangle the fleece and pass it to Chris who hides it in his rucksack. The path leads to a fence, we climb over and cross the stream, before we know it we are standing on a grassy bank from which a path connects to the main path back to the car park.

We talk about what a good day it has been and the stark beauty of this part of the Brecon Beacons national park. I mention the clearing skies and how cold it would be tonight if one did not have a coat! The word

coat causes a convulsive reaction from Pat, his arms flail wildly behind him and his body is contorted as he frantically tries to reach the extremities of his rucksack. Unfortunately, this extraordinary display lasts only for a few moments, it seems a switch had suddenly been thrown, his eyes narrowed and a wry smile appears on his face and he knows he's been had We drag it out for just a few moments more and then return his fleece, for which we received some polite obscenities.

Fifteen minutes later we are driving back to Llanddeusant. We catch glimpses of the escarpment in the clear evening sunshine, it looks stark, remote and lonely. The setting sun has cast a ruddy glow over the north western flanks of the ridge, reminding me somewhat of Ayres Rock. The only thing left to do now is to collect the other car and make the return drive home. The first section of our walk across the Brecon Beacons National Park done!

A Little Brain Workout submitted by John and Beth Smith

Answers are on page 30

DON'T BE FACETIOUS!

We aren't being facetious when we say that '*facetious*' is an unusual word. Do you know why this much used word is unusual?

NATIONALITIES

Seven world champions were among the delegates who attended the International Conference on Puzzle Solving. If Anna Caid is Canadian, what nationalities are the other six?

Tina Gype, Dina Rojan, Des Ansue, Brian Zila, Roy Pict and Ian Bragul

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PARAGRAPH?

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual though. Study it and think about it, but you still might not find anything odd. But if you work at it you might work it out.

Sudoku

		9	1	8		5		7
4						3		8
	8	3	2	5	6	9		
	4							
3	6		4		7		2	9
							1	
		8	5	4	1	2	7	
	1		7					8
2		4		9	8	1		

		8		9				3	
4	3	5				7	9		
1			4		2				
	2			7	6	1	4		
		1					7		
	5	4	3	9				8	
			7		9			4	
		6	1				5	7	9
	7				8		1		

Each row and each column has to contain numbers 1 to 9 once only; each large square of nine smaller squares likewise. Do not guess numbers! Work out each by elimination.

The Confession by Martyn Vaughan

I confess that I haven't always liked my wife. She always takes a great delight in belittling me. Everything I did was never good enough, especially my gardening, my DIY, my driving, my dancing, my activities out of the bedroom, my activities in the bedroom, my feeding of the goldfish, my grooming of the cat.

She loved that goldfish more than she loved me she informed me once; she gave it a pet name and cooed over it when it came to the surface for its fish food. And the cat – it wore a lovely pink bow and always ate the best salmon pieces. That horrid stuff in packets – not good enough for Tiddleywink! (Yes, that's what she called the moggy).

I'll never forget the time I brought some cheap cat food from the store – I'm still missing some layers of skin.

It all blew up one day when she detected a look of mild dissatisfaction on my face as I chewed a particularly indigestible curry. "So you think you can do better do you?" she roared, standing over me with a mixing spoon.

Well, I showed her. I cooked the next day and watched as she chewed *my* curry. She tried valiantly not to show it but I could see she was grudgingly enjoying it. She said nothing – but from her that was a compliment.

The next day I went looking for the mysteriously missing Tiddleywink.

But I confess I didn't look too hard.

A Little Brain Workout (page 29) – Answers

DON'T BE FACETIOUS.

It is unusual because it contains all the vowels in order (fAcEtIOUs)

NATIONALITIES.

Egyptian, Jordanian, Sudanese, Brazilian, Cypriot, Bulgarian

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PARAGRAPH?

The letter 'E' is not used in this paragraph at all.

Do You Know Your Poems? (page 17) – Answers

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • 1 The Jabberwocky | Lewis Carroll |
| • 2 Ozymandias | Percy Shelley |
| • 3 Anthem for Doomed Youth | Wilfred Owen |
| • 4 To Autumn | John Keats |
| • 5 If | Rudyard Kipling |
| • 6 Composed upon Westminster Bridge | William Wordsworth |
| • 7 Funeral Blues | W.H. Auden |
| • 8 The Charge of the Light Brigade | Alfred Tennyson |
| • 9 Sonnet 18 | William Shakespeare |
| • 10 To His Coy Mistress | Andrew Marvell |