

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No. 12

5th June 2020



Coronation Special

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

Item on the News programme today: "Supermarkets have reported a significant rise in alcohol sales since the start of the lockdown. Doctors are concerned that people are drinking to excess at home." So -

Let's All Drink to the Lockdown

Our current problems notwithstanding,
This isolation is demanding,
So Gents and Ladies, be upstanding,
The toast is this - "The Lockdown!"

Down our throats the booze is trickling,
Refreshing and just slightly tickling,
And though our liver's gradually pickling,
Our toast will be "The Lockdown!".

The neighbours will be none the wiser
As we down another chilled Budweiser,
A US brewer's appetiser
With which we toast "The Lockdown".

We'll swig a bottle whilst we're gardening,
Whilst nonchalantly disregarding
The fact our arteries might be hardening,
And happily toast "The Lockdown".

Enjoy the sunshine. Let's be jolly,
Say goodbye to melancholy,
Give all the kids a cider lolly,
They too can toast "The Lockdown".

We'll keep our spirits up although
We're out of work or on furlough
And our bank account's run out of dough,
So we will toast "The Lockdown".

The lure of booze we can't resist,
The doctor's warnings we've dismissed,
We'll just continue getting ever so slightly merry,
And then we'll toast "The Lockdown".

But the hand of fate is beckoning,
There has to be a reckoning.....

And all too soon will come the day
When for excesses we must pay,
We'll all be members of AA,
When we finally come out of lockdown.

The Dying Village by Martyn Vaughan

Richard Jones stared worriedly at Donato Toma. There was something wrong here. A creeping disquiet was beginning to stir deep in his mind.

Toma was still smiling.

'We are glad Signor Jones, that you have come to live here in Roccasicura. We are in urgent need of fresh blood here.'

Jones gave a weak smile.

'Thank you, Mr Toma. You have a very nice village. It's – it's ...'

'Yes,' Toma inquired, leaning forward slightly.

'It's very...,' Jones' thoughts swirled as he tried to think of a suitable compliment. 'It's very sunny,' he finally said, rather weakly.

Toma smiled. 'Si, you come from cold, grey Inghilterra, no? It always rains there I have heard. But the sun, you can have too much of it you know. It is bad for the skin.'

Jones grinned weakly. 'I suppose so but we don't really have that problem in Cwmfelinfach.'

An awkward silence fell. Jones finally broke it by asking 'What kind of job skills are you actually looking for, Mr Toma? Your advert just said that you need more people, new blood, but didn't mention any qualifications.'

Toma's expression saddened somewhat.

'We have a big problem, Mr Jones, a problem found throughout our beautiful region of Molise. We have sun, we have scenery, but fewer and fewer people. Soon Macchiagodena and Roccasicura will be empty of people. Only ghosts will live here, Mr Jones, and they don't enjoy our favourite red drink. We will be finished. That's why we need more people.'

'I understand that,' Jones said with a touch of eagerness. At last this conversation was starting to make sense. 'We have exactly the same problem in the Valleys. People moving out of old areas. Looking for excitement. Looking for the bright lights.'

Toma nodded. 'Si, we in Roccasicura like excitement but perhaps not so much the bright lights.'

Jones relaxed. This was going to be OK after all. If all they need were people, he was quite prepared to lounge around the bars, quaffing the vino rosso that Toma had mentioned. But there was still the problem of his suitability for employment. What could he offer this dying village? Then, at last he had it.

'I'm not very good with my hands, Mr Toma. But I did work in the library in Abercarn. I'm very good at sorting books by the Dewey Decimal System. Do you have a library here?'

But Toma was no longer listening. He had crossed to the window and had parted some of the slats of the Venetian blinds. Over the soft hills of southern Italy the last rays of the sun had already winked out, leaving a clear sky of rapidly deepening blue.

'Bellissima,' he said in a soft, breathy voice, apparently to the landscape itself.

'Mr Toma,' Jones said, experiencing the odd feeling that he was interrupting something, 'Did you hear what I said? About Abercarn, I mean. What would you like me to do?'

Toma turned back to his visitor. There was now no illumination in the room, except that from the darkening sky.

'Do?' he enquired in a tone which held an odd mixture of puzzlement and amusement. 'Do? Why nothing. Except die of course.'

Jones' brow furrowed. 'Dye? But I don't have any experience of that. I'm not at all familiar with the textile industry.'

'Pardon, Mr Jones,' Toma said and Jones was alarmed to see that his smile had become quite wolfish. 'Your English language. She is such a difficult way of speaking. I said 'die' not 'dye'.

'Ah – here they are.'

He had turned to the door as he had uttered that last sentence and gave a look of pleasure as it opened and three figures came in.

Jones leapt to his feet. The light was now poor in the room but there was something odd about those three figures. They were smiling broadly but – but they appeared to have fangs!

'Mr Toma, I ...' He turned to his interviewer and then stopped, unable to move.

Toma was there in the gathering gloom and was also smiling broadly. Being much closer to him Jones had no doubt about his possession of a pair of very sharp-looking fangs.

'You see, Mr Jones,' Toma said with the hint of a throaty chuckle, 'we don't need engineers, or computer programmers, or financial advisers, or' and he gave a real chuckle 'librarians. I told you right at the beginning exactly what we need in Roccasicura. Fresh blood.'

Jones screamed.

But not for long.

An Interesting Singles Ad

This has to be one of the best singles ads ever printed. It is reported to have been listed in the Cornish Guardian.

SINGLE BLACK FEMALE seeks male companionship, ethnicity unimportant. I'm a very good girl who LOVES to play. I love long walks in the woods, riding in your pickup truck, hunting, camping and fishing trips, cozy winter nights lying by the fire. Candlelight dinners will have me eating out of your hand. I'll be at the front door when you get home from work, wearing only what nature gave me. Call 01632-642079 and ask for Annie, I'll be waiting.....

Of course, any Singles Ad needs a recent photograph for maximum impact. Unfortunately, there was no room to include it with the text, but I have included it at the foot of page 9.

Easypeasy Cryptic Crossword Clues No. 11 - Angela Robins.

There are a dozen types of Cryptic Crossword Clues and here's a taster of the A-Z Abbreviations and Associations Clue.

Individual letters or syllables of an answer's word can be represented by commonly used connections and strung together to form the word you need. There is a definition of the answer needed, but no hint to tell you it is an Abbreviations and Associations clue. With practice, you will become familiar with these

e.g. The prime minister (PM)/ went 'round' the queen (ER)/ for a hairdo (4). = P er m.

The most commonly used abbreviations and Associations are chemical symbols - au, fe etc; Musical notes and terminology - A-G Do Re Mi etc, f, mp, p; Cardinal points; NSEW; Weights; ton k lb; Greek alphabet - eta pi chi etc; Roman numerals - I IV V X L C D M and numbers O I IO II I00; American States' abbreviations - FL NE etc; International Vehicle Registration Codes - AUS CU etc; and dozens of other well known abbreviations or acronyms.

Often basic foreign words are used. e.g.

French 'the' = le, la, les. 'a/one' = un, une. 'of' = de, des. 'and' = et

German 'the' = der, die, das. 'a' = unt

Spanish 'the' = el, la, los.

Italian 'the' = il, lo.

Also national names are used. i.e. A Scot = Ian. A German = Hans/Otto. A Welshman/Taffy = Dai.

Try these clues - the answers are on page.

1. Boast/ regarding railway/ silver (4)
2. Two secretaries for Dad (4)
3. Left/ Old Boy/ a throw (3)
4. Trade/ South East/ for two quid (4)
5. Every way but South/ for a change (3)
6. U.S. soldier/ took note/ of band's performance (3)
7. For example/ nothing/ for self (3)
8. Check/ Ford model/ is French (4)
9. Californian city/ wife/ makes statute (3)
10. Require/ North Eastern/ journalist (4)
11. Penny/ each/ for vegetable (3)
12. Concerning/ morning/ paper quantity (4)
13. Pull along/ Doctor/ Silver (5)
14. Slaver gives physician/ 2 degrees/ left. (5)
15. Take a note/ this morning/ to mother; a Greek letter (5)
16. And French carbon and so on (3)
17. Cake decoration/ here in Paris/no good (5)
18. Rugby Union/ one/ direction/ bankruptcy (4)
19. Stone/ circle/ next to New York Times (4)
20. Footballer/ getting physical education/ from the French (4)

Contact me on valdemosa2@gmail.com if you would like to receive my group's easy weekly crossword with hints and answers.

The Great Timetable Mystery

My article on page 6 of DIT 10 gave an account of my use of railway timetables to plan and carry out a week's holiday using the railways of Wales in August 1963. Railway timetables have always been models of clarity to some and quite the opposite to others! This tongue-in-cheek "spoof", written by Anthony Gittins and published in Punch in 1948, shows the opposite viewpoint. It has been slightly adapted. SB

Dear Sir,

Although I have not travelled anywhere by train since purchasing my car some twenty years ago, I was constrained to do so today (Thursday) whereupon I found my copy of your book of timetables and notices which I have had in my possession against emergencies for some years now. I had to travel from Rumborough in Wiltshire to Podchurch in Devon. I am now, owing to the incomprehensibility of this same book, at a place called Ffynnyffllannell in Wales. As there is no train south from here until tomorrow afternoon I shall have to stay the night. I am taking the opportunity, therefore, to bring to your notice the outrageous inconvenience I have suffered by depending on a publication which can obviously be only understood by those who patronise the railway every day. I do not. I use my car, but understand as well as anybody does what 'am' and 'pm' mean and I understand abbreviations such as arr. and dep.

What I do not profess to understand is this confusing welter of italics, capitals and hieroglyphics dotted everywhere among the time the trains depart, arrive and stop at various stations on the route. 7B32 for instance. That was the train I took from Rumborough this morning. It was due to reach Taunton at 10.58. (Incidentally it starts from Rumborough in ordinary numerals, runs into a boxed notice of an omnibus service half-way down the page, then continues, heading a cortège of dots in triplicate in *another* column in *italicised* numerals. | I had to use a ruler and spectacles to follow it. Why can't you put things down consecutively and simply?

Now, where was I? Ah, yes – it was due to reach Taunton at 10.58. Very well. After perusing my newspaper from cover to cover I turned for mental exercise to your timetable to find out how long I should have to wait in Taunton, discovered to my surprise that B signified *via Banbury*, and was trying to find on the map a place called Banbury in Somerset when the train pulled in to Leamington Spa.

Naturally I was dumbfounded. The time was nearly 9.30 and I was due at Podchurch in the afternoon for the christening of a fellow-author's baby. I hastily looked up the trains from Leamington Spa to Taunton, discovered that the 9R43 would get me there just in time to catch the 2¶11 to Podchurch; it reached Bristol at 12.09. As R signified Restaurant Car I waited for the train to leave Bristol before partaking of lunch, but after waiting fifteen minutes I grew impatient and walked along to find a window seat. Imagine my exasperation then on finding that the train was empty and the carriages drawn up in a siding without a locomotive attached.

Blind with anger I searched feverishly through the timetable to see if I could still catch the 2¶11 from Taunton to Podchurch. There was a 1.5 (pq) which went only as far as Brean Road Halt (F). I looked up F and it signified For Brean Sands and Lympsham. I looked up these places on the map, turned back, looked for connections from Brean Road Halt to Taunton (there weren't any), then turned to page 260 paragraph 14 as directed (by note pq) and found myself confronted with a warning against using profane language on the railway.

My first impulse, of course, was to get right away from your railway. I climbed down from the carriage, dropping the timetable as I did so. Stooping to pick it up I found that it had fallen open at the page giving the trains from Bristol to Taunton. There was one at 12*55. This mollified me somewhat. I rushed through

the goods shed to the station, found from which platform the 12*55 left, was just in time to jump into it, and then turned back to the timetable to see if * meant that there was a Restaurant Car attached.

To my stupefaction * signified that this particular train on which I was travelling was not scheduled to run until the following year. Then I suddenly remembered that this was an old timetable and, realising that the train must have been running now for a number of years, laughed heartily at my consternation until I saw that the 2¶11 – the only train from Taunton that would enable me to reach Podchurch in time – only ran on Saturdays.

For some minutes, Sir, I was too infuriated to think well of any department of your railway. Eventually, however, I consoled myself with the fact that there was a good train back from Taunton to Rumborough. I read all the footnotes very carefully – this included a note to the effect that pianofortes and harmoniums could only be left as left luggage if twenty-four hour's notice was given – I cross-checked the times and drew a graph, and satisfied myself that this train would take me back to Rumborough from Taunton. Finally I ventured to ask my fellow passenger if he could confirm the existence of this train. He did so with assurance. I was content. My heart warmed towards him. I asked him the name of the tunnel we were passing through. He said it was the Severn Tunnel.

Well, Sir, when I reached Newport I took the 5V15 back to Bristol (V – change at Stapleton Road if travelling to Temple Meads), and, finding myself some three hours later in Shrewsbury, I wondered if I should have to return via Banbury. I found a train to Banbury at 8K35 (K - through coaches to Swindon – that was even better) and I stepped into a coach and found a seat. It is now 11 o'clock and I am now in Ffynnyffllannell, somewhere near Snowdon. I enclose a list of my expenses, including telephone calls to my wife in Rumborough and my friend in Podchurch and a greetings telegram to the baby. Whether or not my absence at the christening mattered is beside the point. What does matter is that I am up here in Ffynnyffllannell in a morning coat and trousers with no other personal items except for a Prayer Book, purely and simply because your timetable and every other timetable I have ever seen – is too abstruse a compilation for anyone not possessing an honours degree in nuclear physics to understand. I trust that you will see to it therefore that I am not compelled to take this matter further.

Yours faithfully,
Chas. Cursett

PS – You had better reply to me here at the Gwesty Bwlchgwyryl, Ffynnyffllannell, Sir Caernarfon. I find that the train which I understood to leave tomorrow afternoon does not leave until the morning after, tomorrow being St Pfyddel's Day (Pf in the timetable. I thought it related to depositing pianofortes again).

Cryptic Crossword Clues (page 5) - Answers

1. BR/ag 2. PA PA 3. L/OB 4. SE/££ 5. NEW 6. GI/G 7. e.g./O 8. T/est. 9. L.A./W
10. NE/ed 11. P/ea 12. Re/a.m. 13. Dr/ag 14. Dr/°/L 15. G/a.m./Ma. 16. Et/C. 17. Ici/NG.
18. RU/1/N. 19. o/NY/X. 20. PE/le.

No Pressure, Then! Submitted by Barbara Phillips

An older gentleman was on the operating table awaiting surgery and he insisted that his son, a famous surgeon, perform the operation. As he was about to get the anaesthetic, he asked to speak to his son.

"Yes, Dad , what is it?"

"Don't be nervous, son; do your best, and just remember, if it doesn't go well, if something happens to me, your mother is going to come and live with you and your wife...."

Frank James by Gerald Lee

It was wonderful to read the many reminiscences of VE Day in the issue on 8 May 2020.

Last year was another seventy fifth anniversary. On D-Day, 6 June 1944, the largest invasion force in history landed in Normandy in Northern France, its objective to liberate continental Europe from German occupation.

It was my privilege to be acquainted with a veteran of D-Day who lived in Newport, Frank James. He was a man of great modesty and courtesy, who always maintained he was not a hero. All those who took part in the war were ordinary people. They were not looking for medals, just doing their duty.

With two others, I accompanied Frank on three trips to France and Belgium. For the first time since the end of the war he was able to revisit the beaches and other parts of the country.

The most poignant was that of 2014, when Frank took part in the celebrations of the seventieth anniversary of D-Day.

At the outbreak of war Frank was a reservist in the First Monmouthshire, a Territorial Unit. He was working in Lysaghts when he heard the message on the wireless that all reservists had to report to barracks. From barrack duties near home, he was transferred to the Royal Welch Regiment in Monmouth, and from there to 60 Training RAC, where he trained as a driver of three tonne munitions lorries. His final posting was to the 4/7 Royal Dragoon Guards.

Like many young men in the services Frank decided to marry his fiancée Edna before he was posted on active service abroad. His regiment granted him 48 hours leave to return to Newport, get married, and return to barracks.

On the train journey back to Banbury he was delayed due to an air raid in London. Although it was certainly not his fault, army logic said he had to face a charge. For this 'offense' he lost eight days' pay.

His regiment landed at Gold Beach following the tanks and artillery for which they transported the munitions. Immediately his sergeant, who was stood next to him, was shot dead by a sniper.

In 2014 Frank was able to meet the sergeant's daughter and together they laid flowers on his grave.

Cruelly was the first town to be liberated. The mayor presented Frank and other veterans with a medal. The reception he received was tremendous in its warmth. Many asked for photographs and autographs.

At every town and village, the local population greeted him with gifts of wine and cheese. The mayor would be summoned to meet him and any the veterans. Sadly, due to time restraints we could not accept any invitations to stay longer and participate in local celebrations.

From Gold Beach Frank's division moved through Belgium, where he took part in a battle at Berringen. His munitions lorry would have been a prime target. He had to stop his companion firing back betraying their position. He was suffering severe shell shock, which clearly affected his judgment. A direct hit would have blown up the wagon and killed them both.

There was a coal mine nearby where for the first time since leaving Britain they were able to have a proper wash. On a previous visit to Belgium Frank met the local historian, who was glad to listen to Frank's

reminiscences and show us some local records. Alas, we did not have sufficient time to stay longer and participate in a civic event to remember the battle.

The war ended for Frank when he arrived at Bremerhaven, near Hamburg. The news reached them that Germany had surrendered. The war was over. Frank returned to Britain. Soon afterwards he was able to return home to meet Edna, whom he had not seen since the wedding. Also waiting for him was his daughter Pamela, whom he was seeing for the first time. She had no idea who he was and ran for cover behind the furniture.

In 2014, Frank revisited Gold Beach. It was an emotional occasion for him. He was never sentimental. He was not looking for glory, although he appreciated the warm reception he received on his trips to France and Belgium.

To commemorate the anniversary the French government declared its intention to award the Legion d'Honneur to all surviving D-Day veterans. My wife and I helped Frank prepare his application, which first had to be submitted to the Ministry of Defence in London.

Sadly, before he could receive the honour Frank suffered a stroke. On 1 December 2014, at the age of 95, he died in his native Newport.

He was a well-known personality in Newport, particularly through his willingness to meet groups, especially local schoolchildren. A frequent question was, had he ever shot any Germans? His reply was he had fired at them, but never knew if he had hit anyone. Very often he was asked about his attitude to the Germans. Having witnessed the horrors of the war and the pain inflicted on the local populations, he was never able to reconcile himself to them.

Most of all, it was Frank's quiet modesty that made the biggest impression on me. He left six children, sixteen grandchildren and sixteen great grandchildren.

He never called himself a hero, but he was still a man to admire.

Singles Ad – photograph of Annie



Over 150 men found themselves talking to the Truro RSPCA

Desert Island Challenge – Mike Brown

Some of my favourite music....

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) - Fantasia in F minor for piano (4 hands) D940 opus posth.

The story of Schubert's life is not a long one. Like Bach before him, Schubert never achieved international fame during his lifetime; his reputation was confined to a circle of admirers in the city where he was born, lived and died - Vienna. Schubert composed this Fantasia in 1828, the year of his death. The theme of the 1st movement has something strangely fatalistic about it; as it wanders through the piece, it takes on an ever more tragic tone. Schubert first played his Fantasia 6 months before his death with his fellow composer Franz Lachner. <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=v6VK-Fl2YC4>

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) - Concerto for violin, cello and orchestra in A minor, opus 102.

Brahms was the 2nd of 3 children of an impoverished double-bass player from the dockland area of Hamburg. His music can be fearsomely difficult to play, but today, every aspiring young virtuoso must have his major works in his repertoire as a matter of course. This, and the music's continuing popularity with every kind of audience, is testament to its appeal. Brahms finished writing this 'Double' Concerto in the Summer of 1887 in Switzerland. The work allows the 2 soloists to make the most of their respective tones within a symphonic blending which often makes them sound like a 'single instrument with 8 strings'. This was Brahms's last symphonic work. From then on he dedicated himself exclusively to the creation of piano works, song and chamber music. <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=5OjLKhmzQTA>

Ernest Chausson (1855-1899) - Concert for piano, violin and string quartet in D major, Opus 21.

Chausson's wealth (born in Paris into an affluent bourgeois family) while not great, removed the need for him to play in an orchestral pit or toil at copying other composer's orchestral parts. Free from this necessity to make a living by his own music, he found himself looked upon as an amateur; consequently, he developed a feeling of inadequacy. That lack of faith in himself and the leisure to write only what he wanted, when he wanted, prevented his development into a professional composer, with all the ease and versatility that comes with it. Instead, he worried about every note, becoming a perfectionist. Because of this, Chausson's small body of compositions has given him high rank among French composers. This Concert composed between 1889 and 1891 is a darkly affected work in 4 movements in a cyclic form. <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=VBNmqUYHTxw>

Jan Sibelius (1865-1957) - Symphony No.5 in E Flat Major, Opus 82

At the time of Sibelius's birth, Finland was a province of Russia. His family would have liked him to have taken up a legal career and he was enrolled as a law student, but it was soon clear his real interest was in music. Sibelius had to watch his country undergo various political upheavals. His feelings for his native land were strong and this was reflected in some of his compositions. He was regarded with great warmth by his fellow Finns and his music is generally considered to be the first true musical voice of Finland. This is a work full of sparkle and power which has rightly taken its place as one of the most popular symphonies in the concert repertoire. <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XlIfMjRMqRs>

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) Les Nuits d'Ete (six Poemes de Theophile Gautier)

1/Villanelle; 2/Le Spectre de la Rose; 3/Absence; 4/Sur les Lagunes; 5/Au Cimetiere; 6/L'Ile Inconnue
Berlioz was the son of a doctor from La Cote-St-Andre, a small town in the Dauphine. The broad hilly landscapes rising to the French Alps perhaps left their mark in that feeling of light and space found in so much of his music. He was educated by his father whose culture was literary rather than musical. Indeed, no other great composer heard so little actual music in childhood. There was no piano in his household and he had to make do with a flute and a guitar. The town had no theatre and the church choir and the town band were probably dreadful! Berlioz left behind many innovative compositions that had set the

tone for the Romantic period; though the originality of some of his music may have worked against him during his lifetime. He had huge successes but also suffered disastrous failures. However, the modern age has rediscovered Berlioz in all his variety and colour, his unique passion and yearning, his sharp brilliance and deep human insights. There is no one like Berlioz! His "Les Nuits d'Ete", conceived around 1840, shows his genius at its most subtle with the broad, lyrical tune adapted to the individual character of each piece. The variety of moods suggested by Gautier's poems is wonderfully reflected in Berlioz' settings.

2: "Le Spectre de la Rose" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJzvqX_phcE

6: "L'Ile Inconnue" <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=sqtgWifOojU>

Mike's choices have been split into two instalments – more to follow next week.

Don't Mess With the Old Folk!

George Phillips, an elderly man from Walled Lake, Michigan, was going up to bed, when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the garden shed, which she could see from the bedroom window.

George opened the back door to go turn off the light, but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things.

He phoned the police, who asked "Is someone in your house?"

He said "No," but some people are breaking into my garden shed and stealing from me. Then the police dispatcher said "All patrols are busy, you should lock your doors and an officer will be along when one is available"

George said, "Okay."

He hung up the phone and counted to 30. Then he phoned the police again.

"Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people stealing things from my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them now because I just shot and killed them both; the dogs are eating them right now," and he hung up.

Within five minutes, six Police Cars, a SWAT Team, a Helicopter, two Fire Trucks, a Paramedic and an Ambulance showed up at the Phillips' residence, and caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the Policemen said to George, "I thought you said that you'd shot them!"

George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"

GETTING OLDER

A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor's office.

"Is it true," she wanted to know, that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her.

There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied,

"I'm wondering, then, just how serious is my condition because this prescription is marked 'NO REFILLS'.."

AGEING

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

This is so true. I love to hear them say: "You don't look that old."

What We Were Doing This Week ... Last Year by Angela Robins.

On 7th June 2019 members of our Skittles Group travelled to Tidenham to play a friendly match against Chepstow U3A. At the end of the first roll we were only one point down but the gap kept widening and unfortunately we lost the match - but as they say 'It's not the winning...'

We had a great afternoon out, in good company, and our spirits soon revived as we tucked into a superb buffet provided by Chepstow's members. There was some friendly rivalry and banter as we mingled with them and the promise of a rematch at the St Julian Inn gave us hope that we might redeem ourselves.



Can you find the 14 words associated with cats in the grid?

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

Submitted by Barbara Phillips – answers on page 14

The Scene from the Window by John Murray



“Push me closer son, so I can see out”.

I was used to his commands rather than requests, so I moved his wheelchair as close to the window as possible.

“Be careful Dad, do not touch the glass, some of its broken, I don’t want you cutting yourself,” I warned.

The window was filthy, cracked with broken panes, peeling paint, loose putty, old cobwebs, dead flies, dirt, and grime accumulated over the many years since the building was last used. The late Autumn wind whistled through the broken panes and the many gaps in the old building, making an eerie howling sound.

Today he had insisted on coming to his old airfield, he even marked the occasion by wearing his medals. He sat in silence, just looking. It was some time before he spoke. His voice was still strong but now it carried a sadness that I hadn’t heard since his wife, my mother, died some twenty years before.

“This used to be our crew room, we would just wait here till the shout came, then we were off.” He paused. “We would play cards, listen to the radio, talk, laugh, write letters, read books, but mostly, just wait.” Again he paused. “I can see they have ploughed up the ground, it was grass then, we would sit out there, catching the sun, drinking NAAFI tea, smoking, and waiting, and afraid.”

He closed his eyes and his head went down as if asleep. I looked round the old room, it was as dirty as the windows. A few torn, faded posters hung off the damp walls, their message long forgotten. Names were written there, Snowy, Jock, Taffy, Bill, Johnny and many more. Some were crossed out, all were faded, victims of age and the creeping damp. “Kilroy was here”, it proclaimed. Swastikas indicated “kills” with a date, 3rd September 1940, 3 kills. Other dates, other scores.

His head began to lift, but his eyes remained closed.

“They’re still here you know, I can feel them, they’re in the room”

“Who are Dad?”

“The boys of course” a little impatiently. “I can hear them talking, laughing, joking, they’re here I tell you”

“Yes Dad” I said, humouring him. I was used to his dementia now; it had been getting worse with only brief periods of near normality.

“You don’t believe me, they are here, all of them, I can see them now.”

I pulled the blanket over his knees, hoping the added warmth would calm him, but he continued.

“We waited here till the phone rang telling us Jerry was on his way, Scramble, scramble, scramble, came the shout. We ran like mad, got into the cockpit, strapped ourselves in, started the engine, what a lovely sound it was, all those Merlin engines roaring into life. Smoke and noise. Then we were off.”

A long pause. “Many didn’t make it back, I was one of the lucky ones.”

His head slumped forward again; his eyes remained shut. I decided on a few more minutes then I would take him back to the Nursing Home, I did not want him to get upset. I was about to release the brake on his wheelchair when he sat up with a start. He raised his right hand and pointed to the window.

“It’s there” he shouted, it’s there. My aircraft, that’s my aircraft, I can see it, it’s there. Look son, it’s waiting for me, I must run and get in ready to scramble. Can you see it, can you see it?” pointing to the window. “Look.” He was now quite animated, his voice almost a shout.

I looked over his shoulder, the dirt and grime, not helped by the grey sky made seeing difficult.

“Can you see it?”.

I saw something, whether it was dirt, a shadow caused by a moving cloud or just my imagination, I wasn't sure, but there was something. To satisfy him I said, “yes Dad, I can see it”

Then I heard a noise, it sounded like shouting, a roar, was it the sound of an engine starting up, or was it the wind?

His eyes closed; his head went down for the very last time. The wind began to fade, taking the image in the window with it. The grey clouds briefly parted revealing a patch of blue, then there was silence.

Wordsearch (page 12) - Answers

(In no particular order)

PURRS
CLAWS
GINGER
SCRATCH
SLEEP

FUR
PEDIGREE
MANX
FERAL
TOM

WHISKERS
TAIL
TABBY
ANGORA

If Only

*Two words so insignificant
it's hard to realise
how much they can convey to some
while others they just antagonise.*

*If only we had this or that
is the cry from the material man.
If only they could see, like we,
it's a shallow and selfish plan.*

*If only we could do this or that
is the cry from those who can't
but many will not attempt it
unless they get a grant.*

*If only we hadn't done this or that
we've heard it many times
but actions always have consequences
ask anyone who's committed a crime.*

*If only we'd done better,
now there's a common thought
we often wish we'd considered first
before our actions turned to naught.*

*If only we'd been able to help
we're closer to the nub
we're starting to think of each other
not trying to join some club.*

*If only we could remember
to treat each stranger as a friend
then maybe, just maybe, we'd begin
our problems and fences to mend.*

*So as we adjust to a new life
a resolution let's all agree
is to stop shouting out 'if only'
and replace it with 'didn't we'*

© Ian Lumley

An Eventful Year by Jean Comfort

I recently sorted out a number of photos (a great little project at the moment) and up popped a blast from the past, thought I might share one of the stories of my teenage past.

At sixteen I had been a Post Office telephonist since leaving school at fifteen. A tiff with my mother sent me off to the excitement of the Big City, this was 1952 and no thoughts entered my head about white slavery or drug dens.

'Asking a policeman' as you do, I found a Church Army hostel and moved in with a number of other girls who had also gravitated to London for various reasons; it was run by very nice do-gooder (that is not a criticism) ladies, we shared dormitories, basic meals and 50's bathrooms, a bit like a posh school I suppose.

Finding a job as a telephonist in a big Insurance firm in the city was no trouble but the pay wasn't terrific. Palling up with 'Lenny' we decided to move into a bedsit together landing up in Victoria. Nearby was a small cinema called The Biograph, it had two entrances one in Vauxhall Bridge Road the other in Wilton Street. I applied for a job as an usherette was successful and a new career was added to my talents.

Leaving my day job which was in Cheapside near the Guildhall, I travelled by bus and tube to the cinema where I was usherette on Tuesdays and Fridays, in the box office on Vauxhall Bridge Road (the regular lady's night off) on Wednesdays, and Ice Cream girl for the Saturday morning children's matinee. There was no balcony and I dimly remember that the first couple of rows, more like benches than seats were 6d, middle rows 1 shilling, back rows 1 shilling and ninepence, of course you all know we are talking old money here!

The films were changed two or three times a week and I saw a lot of films including Bela Lugosi, Frankenstein, Abbott & Costello, various forties love stories and of course Saturday morning every boy was Tom Mix, Gene Autrey or Roy Rogers, the noise was unbelievable.

During my time there the manager entered me in The Miss Cinema contest, this took place in The Locarno in The Strand, I still have a photograph of all the staff in the foyer on the big night. I didn't win but had a fantastic night, the judges were John Gregson (starred among others in a film called Genevieve) and Eve Boswell a well-known singer from South Africa I'm sure many will remember her big hit Sugarbush.

Our bedsit was not in a particularly upmarket street and one day when I had to leave work early as I was unwell, I opened the front door and coming towards me down the stairs was a 'gentleman', I knew there were no men in the other bedsits but continued up to our 1st floor bedsit, at the bend in the stairs I met a friend of our landlady coming down with a towel over her arm. 'Strange,' thought I, and related the incident to my flatmate when she got home from work. Now, remember I was sixteen from a home where S.E.X. was never mentioned and was obviously rather naïve. Lenny however had grown up in a different household and proceeded to educate me in the working practises of a prostitute and that it was probably our room being used as we were both at work during the day, needless to say we then moved to a flat in Haringey.

By now I had celebrated my seventeenth birthday in March and we, along with some friends from the hostel, would dress up in our glad rags and go to 'The Locarno' a dancehall in the Strand on Saturday nights. Nothing like the Majestic or Lysaghts (where I learned to dance) or St Mary's on Stow hill in Newport. A fabulous Oscar Rabin and his band were the regular orchestra and no shortage of partners, unfortunately I was tall and yes you've guessed it, when I stood up after being asked to dance I very often ended up towering over the poor chap, not always I hasten to say. I was also taken by one of the

aforementioned partners to the Hammersmith Palais where Jo Loss and his Orchestra played, and to a theatre to see Abbott and Costello.

During my time in London 1952-1953, I had the good fortune to see the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. With a number of friends we headed off at midnight to make sure we had a good view, 'bedding' down on the edge of the kerb in Whitehall (I think that's where we settled) we had a great view. It rained most of the night and day, not buckets just steady on off light showers but it was worth it. We saw the whole procession, I'm sure you all remember the Queen of Tonga, a large lady who refused to have the top on her carriage so that she could be seen, had a wonderful smile and we all gave her an extra cheer. We were hoarse by the end of the day because the whole day was a fantastic combination of noise and colour; we ended up in the Mall, could see the Palace in the distance and just tiny figures of the Royal Family on the balcony but didn't care, WE WERE THERE.

I did see the Royal family close up again. I worked in an office in Cheapside and one day the Queen was going to the Guildhall which was at the end of King Street where I worked (day job). Only people who worked in the street were allowed passage and our employer let us go down as the open carriages drove past, I could have reached out and touched the carriage I was that close, my long lasting memory is of how small both Elizabeth and Margaret were and what lovely complexions they had.

I eventually returned to Newport a year later having made peace with my mother many months before, and here I stayed.



MUSICAL JOURNEYS
JOHN BARRY - TO BOND AND BEYOND

Before you read on, give this video clip a whirl:

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE (MATT MONRO) - JAMES BOND 007

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lcdmq07u2T8>

Is that music familiar to you? The composer is John Barry who will always be associated with the golden age of James Bond. Though much of his most famous music was written to accompany the outlandish adventures of 007, his work covered a huge variety of moods and styles. Barry wrote epic, sweeping film scores for Zulu, Born Free and Out of Africa. He was also multi-talented, composing musicals and even became something of a pop star in his own right. In his long career his music developed from the popular to the dramatically orchestral, but never lost its appeal to wide audiences. I'm going to celebrate the music of this outstanding composer, and will include music covering his musical life from the late 50's to the 1990's. I hope the pieces I have chosen will show you that as well as his music having a timeless quality, it can stand on its own(apart from the films) as some of the finest music of the last 60 years. This is maybe your chance, also, to wallow in some great movie nostalgia. I've Included a number of movie clips to "title your palette"

John Barry was born in York in 1933 where his father ran a chain of cinemas. His mother was a talented musician but had abandoned the attempt to establish herself as a concert pianist. "My father had seven or eight cinemas, so I was brought up in the cinema," Barry recalled. "I remember my dad carrying me through the foyer of the Rialto in York and pushing the swing doors open at a matinee. I was looking at this big black-and-white mouse on the screen, and he'd taken me to see a Mickey Mouse cartoon." Barry cherished an early ambition to join the family business and become a projectionist. The combination of film and music made a deep impression on him. As he was brought up in a cinema environment, he soon began to take in the music which accompanied the films he saw nightly, to a point where, even before he'd left school, he had decided to become a film music composer. He was helped by lessons provided locally on piano and trumpet, followed by the more exacting music theory taught by tutors as such as Dr Francis Jackson of York Minster and William Russo, formerly arranger to jazzman Stan Kenton and His Orchestra. He soon became equipped to embark upon his chosen career but had no knowledge of how you actually got a start in the business.

He then served for three year in the army as a bandsman and combined this with his evening stints with local jazz bands. It gave him the idea of forming a small band of his own. This was how The John Barry Seven came into existence, and Barry successfully launched them during 1957 via a succession of tours and TV appearances. A recording contract with EMI soon followed, and although initial releases made by them failed to get into the pop charts, Barry's undoubted talent showed enough promise to influence the management at Abbey Road Studios. They allowed him to make his debut as an arranger and conductor for other artists recording with EMI. It's about time for some music, and what better way to start than with music you may be familiar with from your youth, composed in 1960. It's "Hit and Miss" with John Barry on Trumpet. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxn5BdoVr_g

That was the opening music to the TV Series "Juke Box Jury". The John Barry Seven was the way the British public first came to recognise the name of composer/conductor/arranger John Barry, years before there were any James Bond movies for him to score. Though they're only a footnote in Barry's overall career,

for seven years the John Barry Seven were among the two or three busiest and most successful rock & roll bands in England, their only rivals were the Shadows. So what was next for John Barry? He socialised with Michael Caine and Terence Stamp, collaborated with the pop stars Adam Faith and Nina & Frederik, and guaranteed himself the attention of gossip columnists by marrying the actress Jane Birkin. In 1960 he was asked to write music for the Peter Sellers/Richard Todd film "Never Let Go" and then for the Adam Faith comedy "Beat Girl". In 1962, he was signed up to work on the first Bond film, Dr No, although only as back-up to the composer Monty Norman, for a fee of £250.

Subsequently Barry's scores for From Russia With Love (1963), Goldfinger (1964) and Thunderball (1965) became popular the world over. Such was the appeal of the Bond mystique that Barry's soundtrack album for Goldfinger knocked the Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night" off the top of the American charts in 1964, and earned the composer his first gold disc. He scored 10 consecutive Bond films, and decided he had had enough after The Living Daylights (1987) because he said "all the good books had been done". How's about listening to the main theme from Goldfinger. No prizes for guessing the singer!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D1nK7q2i8I>

Barry went onto score 10 consecutive Bond films and decided he had had enough after The Living Daylights (1987) because in his own words "all the good books had been done". Back to 1964, and a young John Barry has written the music to an epic British war movie called Zulu. By this early point in his career, Barry was not the household name he later became. But it wasn't long after Zulu's success that people really began to take notice. Not only was this guy a skilled orchestrator, he could also write tunes catchy enough to rival anything in the pop charts. It's now that Barry's career took off. In 1965 he scored the music for The Ipcress File. In a nutshell this is a story about a famous scientist Dr Radcliffe who is abducted and his security guard is killed, British spy Harry Palmer (Michael Caine) steps in to investigate the case and rescue the victim. The Ipcress File was designed to be in direct contrast to the Bond adventures, although the director Harry Saltzman ended up employing much of the same production staff, including John Barry. Superficially, there are many similarities, like Bond, the hero is clearly his own man, has a taste for fine foods and is popular with women. But the similarities end there. The protagonist, named Harry Palmer in the film, wears spectacles, shops in a supermarket (still a novelty in 1965) and is a sergeant working off a two-year sentence for black market activities in Berlin. Here's the opening credits from the film. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBCqP7R42K0>

By the way that's one hell of strong coffee and what about leaving it for 4 mins, tut-tut! Having said that, he probably had more important things on his mind -like winning on the races or perhaps A BIT OF SPYING! It was with Born Free, however, that Barry moved into the front ranks of popular film composers, with the score and the Oscar-winning title song. Born Free. Made in 1966 was a hugely successful wildlife film about Elsa, an orphaned lion cub in Africa who is nursed to adulthood by a husband-and-wife team of nature enthusiasts played by Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers. Based on the true-life account by Joy Adamson, the film was the rare family adventure that was adored by audiences and critics alike. Key to the film's success is it's famous score by Barry. Born Free would help to build his reputation as one of the leading composers of the 1960s in any medium. Barry's main theme—with lyrics by Don Black and sung by Matt Munro—became a pop sensation and one of the world's most recognisable movie songs.

The song "Born Free" has been so successful that it has overshadowed the rest of the score, which is a thoroughly satisfying in both a romantic and dramatic way. Barry maintains the film's tone of charm, but ranges from dark passages of suspense (for the hunting of a man-eating lion) to great set pieces for Elsa's

development, and finally a heart-breaking finale as Elsa is returned to the wild. The sound is symphonic, but with ethnic African touches (in Barry's inimitable style); the score is a far more serious and diverse work than most people realise. This is the original soundtrack.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhGeH07Io5M>

In 1969, Barry scored John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy*, one of the first movies to use a selection of pop songs on the soundtrack. It was a technique that would be copied by countless imitators. "That movie is still shown at the cinema school at University College of Los Angeles as the epitome of how songs should be used in the movies," Barry said in 1997. "We only bought in a couple of songs, "Everybody's Talkin' ", sung by Harry Nilsson, and a John Lennon song, and for the rest we got young songwriters to score the scenes with songs. The songs work because they were written for the movie."

John Barry might be known for a heavy reliance on strings and brass in his film soundtracks, but *Midnight Cowboy* is evidence of his experimental side. The strings make an appearance eventually, but the most striking aspect of the tune is the meandering harmonica solo. In 1970, the theme was covered by Ferrante & Teicher and reached number 10 in the US pop chart. The film itself, which is often hailed as an American classic, is perfectly matched in melancholy tone by Barry's soundtrack. As the narrative unfolds the two main characters, played by John Voight and Dustin Hoffman, develop their relationship as the music gradually sweeps around them, leading to the movie's poignant climax. Let's see the opening credits.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lb5LdJ7cLc>

In 1971 John Barry scored the cult film *Walkabout*, also *The Last Valley* and *Mary Queen of Scots*, plus a musical version of *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* and the hit musical *Billy*. *The Last Valley* was heralded as a magnificent piece of visual and aural storytelling. Set during the Thirty Years' War, the film depicts the struggles of a village (it was filmed in Austria) that deals with an occupation by forces of a foreign army. Lead actor Michael Caine asserts that it is among his favourite personal works, although he, like the others involved with the project recognised that its brutal violence made it a difficult film to stomach.

In order to provide the best score possible for the production, the filming schedule allowed Barry an outstanding six months to write music for the film (usually composers are lucky if they get 2 months). The result is a deeply thoughtful score that makes use of large orchestra and the voices of the choir of the Accademia Monteverdiana. Given so much time to complete the score, Barry wrote six original basic instrumental and choral songs that were inserted as source material into the film, sometimes using lyrics from Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century German poets and folk songs. The score for *The Last Valley*, as often is the case with Barry's works, is surprisingly simple in construction, but relies upon its great emotional power to accomplish its goals. John Barry's music was, as usual, very well suited to the material and enhanced the movie. In recognition of this fine original score we'll hear the 'Entry into the Last Valley' scene. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbVE472KITk>

In 1974 Barry made the decision to leave his London penthouse apartment for the peace of a remote villa he was having built in Majorca. By this time, as you might imagine, he wasn't short of a few "bucks". He had been living in the villa for about a year, during which time he turned down all film scoring opportunities, until he received an invitation to write the score for the American TV movie, *Eleanor and Franklin*. In order to accomplish the task, he booked into the Beverly Hills Hotel for six weeks in October 1975. He was eventually to live and work in the hotel for almost a year, as more assignments were offered and accepted. His stay on America's West Coast eventually lasted almost five years, during which time he met and married his wife, Laurie, who lived with him at his US residence in Beverley Hills.

Barry was married four times and divorced three times: in 1958 to Barbara Pickard, one daughter; in 1963 he had another daughter from a brief relationship with his Swedish au pair; in 1965 to actress Jane Mallory Birkin, one daughter; in 1969 to Jane Elizabeth Sidley; in 1978 to Laurie, with whom he had one son. He certainly got around a bit! In the early 1970s he had severe financial problems which took 10 years to resolve. In 1988 he was seriously ill, had major surgery for a ruptured oesophagus, and was on the critical list for months.

After adopting a seemingly lower profile towards the end of the seventies, largely due to the relatively obscure nature of the commissions he accepted, the eighties saw John Barry re-emerge once more into the cinema limelight. This was achieved, not only by continuing to experiment and diversify, but also by mixing larger budget commissions of the calibre of *Body Heat* (1981), *Out of Africa* (1985) (another Oscar) and *The Cotton Club* (1984) with smaller ones such as the TV movies, *Touched by Love* (1980) and *Svengali* (1983). Barry's music for the film *The Cotton Club* satisfied his love for big band jazz, and in particular the music of Duke Ellington, some of which he adapted for the film. This is a drama, centred around the famous Harlem jazz club of the 1930's. The story follows the people that visited the club, those that ran it, and is full of the Jazz music that made it so famous. Here's a quirky little number from the film: *The Mooche*. The music was based on a jazz piece written by Duke Ellington in the 20's. By the way a *Mooche* is a beggar! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qE4Er8EdOM>

In 1985 *Out of Africa* hit the big screens. It tells the tale of Karen Blixen, a Danish woman (played by Meryl Streep), who marries a friend in order to achieve the title of Baroness. They subsequently move to Africa and start a coffee plantation. Things unfold when her husband begins cheating on her and is away on business often, so she's at home alone, working on the farm and bonding with two men she met in her first day in Africa. She eventually falls in love with the one, noted hunter and adventurer Denys Finch-Hatton (Robert Redford), and goes on Safari with him.

Later, she begins to want more from him than the simple friendship/relationship they have and pushes marriage, but Denys still wants his freedom. By the end, she's found enduring romance and gained a much better understanding and respect for the African culture than when she came. John Barry's music for the film is some of the best he composed - it tugs at the heart strings! This scene from the film shows them flying over some of the most spectacular landscape of Kenya, the music really enhances these wonderful scenes. What an amazing landscape and fantastic wildlife!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrnC7QzfFwQ>

John Barry was one of the most successful film composers of the late twentieth century with over 120 scores for cinema and television to his credit along with songs, instrumentals and musicals. He won Academy awards for best music for *Out of Africa* in 1985 and *Dances with Wolves* in 1991. His sweeping string sounds perfectly suited the epic nature of *Dances with Wolves*' skylines. It's normally natural when watching a film to pay most attention to the action and story line and give less attention to the musical score. On occasions however it pays to listen to the music without any visual distractions, and thereby fully appreciate the music in its own right. This is certainly true of the score for this particular film.

This is Barry at his best with beautiful haunting music in keeping with the storyline. *Dances with Wolves* is set during the American Civil War. It tells the story of Lieutenant John Dunbar (played by Kevin Costner) who is sent to a remote outpost in the wilderness of the Dakota territory where he encounters, and is eventually accepted into, the local Sioux tribe. He is known as "Dances with Wolves" to them, and as time passes, he becomes enamoured by the beautiful "Stands With a Fist". Soon after the frontier becomes

the frontier no more, and as the army advances on the plains, John must make a decision that will not only affect him, but also the lives of the natives he now calls his people. This epic Western is consistently engrossing and staggeringly beautiful as it details the tragic outcome of white man's expansion westward, leading to the virtual annihilation of a proud society and culture. Costner has never been better as the most conflicted of men: a U.S. soldier converted to a way of life that is dying, due to the destruction and injustice wrought by his own countrymen.

In 1999 Barry was made an OBE at Buckingham Palace for services to music. In more recent years, Barry released albums of his own music: "Moviola" starting with an unused theme for the film of that title. These albums might be described as soundtracks without the intrusion of film visuals. Needless to say, Barry's position as the sound of James Bond is still recognisable despite its modernisation under the helm of the current Bond composer David Arnold. At the age of 71 in February 2005, Barry received the BAFTA Fellowship Award in recognition of his services to film music. Among Barry's last work was a co-composing credit (with lyricist Don Black) for the song "Our Time Is Now," sung by Shirley Bassey on her 2009 comeback album "The Performance". John Barry died of a heart attack in New York in 2011, he had lived in Oyster Bay New York State since 1980, and was survived by his fourth wife Laurie, their son and three daughters. Although his work in the 21st century had been comparatively sporadic, his wide-ranging career, both critically acclaimed and popular, secured his position as one of our leading composers. I'll end with a taste of the wonderful music from *Dances with Wolves* with the Farewell Ending Scene.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLABrigZ2PU>

Sudoku

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

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.

More material required, please! I am receiving a steady supply of poems and stories, puzzles and jokes, but I do need more articles – see the last section of page 30 for some new challenges and ideas. There is no limit to length, but longer articles may need to be split over two or more weeks. Thank you!

Some Memories of the Coronation, 1953

Barbara Phillips

We were living in Haverfordwest, and my dad was on an unaccompanied posting in Singapore, so it was just my two big brothers, mum and I in the house. The Coronation was being broadcast during the morning of 2 June, on the radio of course as TV wasn't available. Not to us, anyway, but I understand it was on the newsreels in cinemas. But not in public houses, in case men listened to it without taking off their hats ...

There had been the never-ending descriptions of the pageantry, robes, weather, more pageantry, Prince Phillip looking splendid as ever, the young Elizabeth carrying the day with truly regal splendour, calm and collected. Unlike in our house. Mum was doing the household chores, sorting out my brothers (probably sent them into the back yard to play), getting lunch for everyone including a fractious infant. Things got a bit tense: Elizabeth processed up Westminster Abbey, amid more descriptions of her dress, the jewels, the magnificent train, lords and ladies in their ermine dancing attendance and said her vows, all while mum was trying to listen and placate me. Meanwhile I was hungry, and strapped into my high-chair, bowl of whatever and spoon at the ready, wanting to be fed. Just as the Archbishop put the crown on the new Queen's head, in that very moment of solemn silence, I got really fed up waiting, and bashed my spoon into the bowl and sent it all crashing to the kitchen floor ...

Jean Daniels

I had just taken up my first teaching post at Maesglas Secondary school (headmaster Bob Gray) and I was asked to accompany another teacher to take a party of children to London to see the decorations for the event. I was convinced that some of my charges would stray and never be found again! I was quite wrong; they were afraid of getting lost and clung together in pairs. It was a very exciting day for them - and for me as I had never taken schoolchildren anywhere before! Of course, I took many parties on trips in the years that followed, and I was quite confident after that first trip.

Andrina Whitfield

Yes, I remember that day, I lived in a cul-de-sac called Cwm Barry Way in Barry, I was brought up in Barry. All the residents and their children in the cul-de-sac were friends and we all did a lot together, all of us children went to school together. There was only one resident in Cwm Barry Way who had a TV, (really novel in those days). So we all piled in to that house to watch it. Really fond memories, your email made me remember them!

Jackie Kerr

To ensure we could see such a Historic Event my Parents bought our first television- a little box television in a wooden cabinet which they perched on top of the sideboard in the corner of our "back room" . We were the first house in the road to have a television so my parents invited our neighbours to watch the Coronation with us, but they had to provide their own chairs, so from the start of the day there was a real party atmosphere with chairs and people squashed into the small room.

One of the BBC Commentators was Richard Dimbleby and I remember him telling the audience the names of the different people in the Abbey, and for the first time we were able to put a face to people we had heard about on the wireless. I remember thinking how big and heavy the Crown looked on the Queen's head, but the experience of actually seeing the procession and Ceremony live from London on a little box in our house was hard for me as a eight year old to comprehend.

We then had a street party, our whole street was decorated with streamers and flags with tables laid out down the middle of the road, the weather was quite cold so we had to wrap up in coats but still enjoyed the jelly, blancmange and home-made cakes.

Gerald Lee

I was born in August 1950, so I was young when it took place. I still have some vague memories. One is being at a party in a local school. The children had small flags and we dressed in red white and blue tissue paper.

Very few people had television. The sets were very small compared to those of today, probably 12 inches. I remember being sat on the floor with the other children whilst the adults stood or sat behind us watching the ceremony. Although television started before the second world war it was still too expensive for most working class families. The Coronation gave a boost to television. At that time I would think most people rented.

Sorry, I do not have any more to share with you. Most homes still had souvenir mugs with the new queen. I have a small penknife, which belonged to my mother.

John Murray

June 2nd 1953 is a day I remember well. In the orphanage we were aware that the Coronation was going to happen but that was about all. Early that morning one of the Nuns informed us that some boys would be going to people's houses to watch the event on television. I was one of the lucky ones. I seem to remember being excited as I had never seen a television working.

I think there were six of us chosen. We had to dress in our Sunday best of white shirt, blue tie, grey short trousers, knee length socks, and, as it was a special occasion, we were permitted to wear our brown boots which were normally reserved for Sundays. We waited on a wooden bench by the front door with nothing to hold our attention but the ticking of a huge clock and the strong smell of floor polish. A nun sat opposite reading her prayer book. The doorbell rang, signalling it was my turn to go. A woman in her late twenties was introduced to me by the duty nun. I think she said her name was Martha, but after all these years I cannot be certain. She held my hand as we left the grounds of the orphanage and walked in the lightly falling rain. I recall seeing flags flying and as we passed the 'Battle of Britain' pub, there was a lot of noise as people enjoyed themselves. We arrived at her house which I recall was not a particularly large one.

The front room was quite full, not only was Martha's husband there with their two boys of about my age, but some of the neighbours as well. On one of the walls hung a white sheet on which a moving image was projected from a strange looking contraption at the other side of the room. The adults were seated on chairs or the settee, I had to sit cross-legged on the floor with the other boys. It was not long before I began to feel uncomfortable.

There is a limit of how many views of horse and carriages, soldiers stood to attention, cheering flag waving crowds and scenes inside the Abbey a nine year old can take, especially when he didn't know anybody else in the room. The two other boys felt the same, but we were told we had to sit there. The monotony was broken by the arrival of food brought to us on paper plates which proclaimed, "God Save the Queen." I tucked into a round of fish paste sandwiches, washed down with some home-made lemonade out of a paper cup. I was also treated to a plate of jelly and blancmange, the highlight of the day. Just when I thought it was all over and I would be able to stand up, we had to watch all the carriages going back to where they came from. The best part was seeing Queen Salote of Tonga being driven in an open top carriage, waving to everybody, and thoroughly enjoying herself, even though it was raining.

I wish no disrespect to Her Majesty, but I don't think I have ever been so bored, and it certainly wasn't worth a numb bum.

Soon it was time for me to be taken back to the orphanage. Martha's husband joined us as far as the 'Battle of Britain' pub, she promising to join him on the way back. When we arrived at the front door of the orphanage, she gave me a sixpence piece before handing me back to the waiting nun.

Geoff Pritchard

Coronation Day came just a few months after my being demobilized from His Majesty's Armed Forces after serving for two years National Service in the Intelligence Corps on the strength of GCE-level ability in French and German, and, at 20 years of age, I was working during the week as a clerk in the Cashiers Accounting office of a printing firm in Bristol. Weekends were spent at home in Newport and I had just met a new girl friend, Ruth Davies, daughter of Muriel and Harold Davies, who was a former Newport Rugby player of considerable fame. Ruth would become my wife four years later.

A relative of the Davies family was Councillor Percy Jones, owner of D.B. Builders Supplies, and more senior readers will remember his stock yard was a wharf on the east end of Newport bridge next to the old paddle steamer jetty. He was the only one in the family with a television set at the time and, with an invitation to come to a Coronation Day party at Glasllwch House with Ruth and 30 other family members, I thought I had "arrived" !

Wenvoe TV transmitter had not been in operation for very long but the picture on the 14" Television screen was quite clear with the lounge curtains drawn to darken the room. 30 people grouped themselves around the set to watch the events of the day. Apart from the Queen and the Coronation service, it was the crowds in the streets outside and the processions in horse drawn carriages, including the exuberant and enthusiastic Queen Salote of Tonga, who caught everybody's eye.

I can't remember a lot more about the day, but it was seven years after the end of WW2 and we were just emerging from some extreme poverty and shortages of basic luxuries which we take for granted today and food rationing was still in force but it was a unique experience to be able to watch the Coronation "live" all day inside a house ! The normal way to view such events in those days was in Newsreel clips on the cinema screen or, in the case of the Coronation, there was a full-length film being shown in the cinemas. Today's equivalent of pay TV.

The news also arrived on the day that a New Zealander, Edmund Hillary and his companion Sherpa Tensing, had just become the first men to climb to the top of Mount Everest – 29,002 feet. We were told, and we believed it, that we were right at the beginning of a new Elizabethan Era. It all sounded very exciting and challenging after the deprivations of war time.

Were our hopes fulfilled? I think so. In the years since that day our country, on the whole, has enjoyed an unprecedented standard of living, many would say at the expense of damage to the planet on which we live, but, more important I think, is the stability Her Majesty the Queen portrays through our Constitution which was summed up for me some years later by Dr. Samuel Abraham a friend of mine visiting England from Malaysia who said these words to me:

"You have a political and financial stability here that is the envy of many countries. You are very fortunate."

For the past 68 years our Queen has presided over this stability through thick and thin and we are very well blessed that she has survived to be with us today.

Pat Dicker

I was 6 years old and we had a fancy dress party at school to celebrate, the costumes had to be red white and blue. My mother made me a 'Little Miss Muffet' outfit complete with spider attached by a cord. She told me many years later what an arduous task this was for her! I don't remember much about the party but I do remember a boy in my class being dressed as a green lamp post. I thought this was a marvellous costume, but I was concerned about the colour and asked him why it wasn't red white and blue. He told me that he was a lamp post on the coronation route, and if it was something directly connected to the coronation it could be any colour. I don't have any other memories - it was to be another 6 years or so before we got our first TV set and we didn't know anyone who had one so we didn't see it on TV as many people did.

Ann Anderson

I attach two photographs from 1953 of our street party in St. Edward Street, Baneswell. I was only 5 years old so do not remember a lot about it. I am the little girl in the front row (second photograph) with not a lot of clothing on. The reason for this was we had a fancy dress party and my Mum chose to dress me as Eve. All I had on was a pair of pants and some leaves dangling. I do remember we had a wonderful party with lots of jelly and cakes. Also my sister was born on 3rd June and guess what? Her name is Elizabeth.



Bernard Hiscocks

I came across an old photograph of the Hewertson Street party to celebrate the Coronation. A very much younger Bernard is seated second from the right in the photograph. My two elder sisters who were aged thirteen and fifteen at the time weren't interested in children's parties, especially as there were no boys of their age. I don't know the year [*almost certainly 1953*] but I can clearly remember standing in High Street opposite the market entrance waiting for the Queen to arrive. It seemed like we waited for ever along with most of the children in Newport and with the blink of an eye she swept before us in her carriage. It may have been very quick but the memory has stayed with me for quite a few years.



Dave Woolven

I was aged 11 and in my last year at St Woolos Primary School, my brother was aged 5. My parents took the two of us to London for the Coronation. We caught a coach from the Odeon cinema which left very early in the morning - as we were living in Baneswell, we must have walked to the bus. When we arrived at the dropping-off point, we made our way to a Lyon's Café for tea and a bun (mine was a rather dry slice of something with strings of coconut on it). As we came out of the café, someone shouted that they were closing the barriers - all side streets had solid barrier walls with a small door in them. The crowds lining the route were already quite deep but children were pushed to the front and stood alongside the policemen - and, as it was raining, the police sheltered the youngsters with their capes. Obviously everyone wanted to see the Queen and the Golden Coach but one of the following coaches still sticks in my memory. I was raining and cold, so, all the coaches had their covers up - all except one. Queen Salote of Tonga. She was a rather large lady but she was a ray of sunshine on a bleak day, her smile was a mile wide as she waved & waved to the crowds. She couldn't care less about the weather as she sat in her open and rather wet coach, she was thoroughly enjoying herself. While we were waiting for the procession, news came through that Mount Everest had been climbed by Edmund Hilary & Sherpa Tensing.

A month later, St Woolos School pupils were marched through Belle Vue Park to Cardiff Road to see the Queen on her visit to South Wales. The cortege was being followed by either a beer or rubbish cart, the driver and his mate giving the 'Royal Wave' for which they received a rousing cheer from the Whiteheads men sitting on the works wall. I wrote an article for the school magazine - I still have my copy 67 years on.

Jan Rowell (via her daughter, Janine Gibson)

When I first met John, his parents had a public house called "The Mitre", it stood opposite St Thomas' Hospital which was south of the River Thames and opposite Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, alongside Westminster Bridge. The pub is no longer there as it was knocked down along with other properties in order to make St Thomas' Hospital much larger.

Whilst they were at this pub, the Coronation took place of Elizabeth II. I went up to the city to help in the pub and I stayed overnight for which I had to have a special pass to be allowed in the area. The horse drawn coaches carrying various dignitaries to Westminster Abbey for the Coronation were each allotted "parking places" in the area. Lord Shaftesbury's carriage was allotted a parking space outside The Mitre pub! Hence, after the coachman had taken the Lord to Westminster Abbey, he then returned to "park" his carriage and horses outside The Mitre and proceeded to come into the bar in all his finery complete with his white wig under his hat. He had a drink and chatted socially with everyone in the pub then left at the allotted time to collect Lord Shaftesbury from the Abbey. It was all very exciting. That night, the pub stayed open until midnight and we ran out of small glasses so were having to serve "shorts", (whiskey, etc) in pint glasses!

Julie Fry

I clearly remember listening to the coronation ceremony on the radio. Some of my friends had been invited in to one of the few houses in the village with a TV set, but I had to wait a few days before the cinema newsreels revealed the full splendour of the occasion.

In the meantime the Daily Mirror the next day provided all the detail in black and white. As a result of Stephen's request for Coronation Year memories I have found this copy, together with 2 scrapbooks I kept that summer.



I also remember a day when we were given the afternoon off school, as the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh were visiting Aberdare on their Post Coronation tour of Wales. They were travelling over the mountain from the Rhondda valley. As the steep descent into the town included a few hairpin bends, our girl guide group decided this would give us the best view of the Queen. As the car slowly negotiated the bend we were indeed the only flag wavers around.

An internet search tells me the date was July 9th and the tour had started that morning in Newport. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hM-V4xgrMxE> will take you to a short film of the Queen arriving in Newport station. When she arrives at the Civic Centre, there are brief shots of children outside. Do you remember the day? Are you in the picture?

Have you a memory of the Queen in her white coat?

Fashion postscript

Newspaper photos show that “the white grosgrain coat trimmed with navy blue “ was worn by the Queen on at least 2 other occasions. Once at a garden party at Buckingham Palace when the Queen knighted Hunt and Hilary and presented the G.M. to Tensing. Also at the Spithead Review in the Solent on June 15th. (see photo)



Alan Fry

The Llanelli experience was much the same when it came to the tour. It was a wet blustery day and the streets were packed all along the route from the railway station to the town hall. My home was about 300 yards from the station so my place in the crowd was not far from where I lived. The glimpse of the Queen was fleeting despite the slow movement of the cavalcade, but everyone was cheering and waving flags. My lasting memory of the whole event was the fact that the route was specially treated with tarmac, and not only the immediate route, but all the side streets adjoining the route. So, our street ended up with a spanking new surface and the railway station gleamed with new paintwork.

Stephen Berry

I was four in 1953 and, though I had little idea of what all the fuss was about, it was clear that there *was* a tremendous fuss and something important was happening! I suppose the first tangible sign was the arrival at our house at teatime on the day before the Coronation of a neighbour (Harry Stevens – he owned a large shop in Maindee, one which sold, among other things, electrical goods) who carried in a large box

with a tiny screen. This was placed in the living room, ready for the great day itself. Our living room on Coronation Day itself was something like Woolworths on a Saturday, except that the crowd was seated. Most had had to bring their own chairs, of course; my family simply provided a minimum amount of space. From memory those present were my parents, four grandparents, one great grandmother, two great aunts and a great uncle, my father's younger brother and his wife, four neighbours – and myself and my cousin.

I certainly attended at least three “street” parties. We lived on Chepstow Road, just before the Old Borough Boundary and a large gathering for all of the families of the area took place in the grounds of Dan-y-Graig House. The house is now a nursing home and the grounds have been extensively developed for housing, but there was plenty of space in 1953! I also attended a small party in Myrtle Grove, Somerton, where my great grandparents and one great aunt lived; and, finally, one in Vivian Road, where my grandparents lived. I have a hazy recollection of something taking place at Orb Works, but as I used to go each year to the Sports Day that was held there it is possible that I am confusing events. I definitely did have some Coronation china from Orb – hence my confusion!

I found the ceremony in the Abbey long and tedious, though I did enjoy the music. This was my first experience of choral sound – and it impressed me. I have always loved choral music, so this may well have been the first seeds of that love being sown.

Music and the Coronation

If you want to watch the BBC transmission from Westminster Abbey which includes the entire service you can do so at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52NTjasbmgw> though be warned – this is only just short of three hours!

The major musical highlights of the service and event are:

I was glad (C H Parry) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgThh7sDgNM>

Zadok the Priest (Handel) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiXgOQ9 -RI>

Old Hundredth (Vaughan Williams) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mj9w7IUQ5AU>

Te Deum (Walton) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QANTLzPTzp4>

Orb & Sceptre March (Walton) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qir5ndllsJ8>

New Challenges

The VE Day and Coronation challenges have proved very successful and, from feedback I have received, popular. I am therefore setting some more challenges to you all – these are not date-specific and will not necessarily be bundled together in the same way that the date-specific ones have. So, please forward your memories of any or all of the following:

Your earliest memories
Childhood toys and games
School experiences
Memorable childhood holidays
Favourite childhood books
Any outstanding experiences of childhood
Your childhood home
Your favourite job
Hobbies and interests – in childhood and adulthood