

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No. 13

12th June 2020



*Mount Everest – visible thanks to the huge reduction in pollution
One of the few Covid-19 positives!*

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

50 Mile Challenge – Brecon - Mike Brown

Each summer we like to visit Brecon on a Friday during June, July or August. We especially like to drive there via Ebbw Vale and take the B4560 across the moors. As the road drops down towards Bwlch the panoramic views towards Llangorse Lake and beyond are breathtakingly beautiful. On a clear day it seems as though we can see across all of mid Wales.

Approaching Brecon we park the car on a street between the Barracks and a roundabout. At the roundabout we walk down Gasworks Lane and over the Mon & Brecon Canal and turn right. There is a short pleasant walk along the towpath, passing old wharf-side buildings that have been renovated into homes. Very soon we arrive at the picturesque canal basin. Here we have a morning cuppa outside Theatr Brycheiniog whilst watching the antics of the ducks and admiring the canal boats: it is possible to go on a narrow boat cruise from here.

We then make our way into the town where there is a museum and some independent shops. Following the signs we head for the cathedral to attend one of the free weekly summer organ recitals that start at 1pm. Then afterwards a tour of the cathedral before we cross the courtyard to the Heritage Centre and gift shop where we have a wholesome lunch in the Pilgrim's Restaurant.

We retrace our steps to the car and head for home via the A470 which passes through the stunning scenery of the Brecon Beacons.

Do you have a favourite day out you would like to share with us? Please send an account to Stephen.



The Letter by Ian Lumley

When Jimmy heard the knock on the door, he wondered who it might be. Probably more of those infernal attempts at doorstep selling, he thought. It had reached the point that they were coming around almost every week, and he was getting a bit sick of it. If it wasn't for some charity, it was double glazing salesmen trying to get him to upgrade his nearly new windows. He had told the last one - just last week - that if he couldn't tell that his front door was already at the latest specification, then he couldn't be much of an expert, and certainly shouldn't be trying to sell anything like that to people at the door. The man was quite rude after that, until Jimmy closed the door in his mid rant

Jimmy had always been quite generous when it came to Charity donations. Whenever he came across someone with a box in a shopping centre, he gave something. He didn't even bother sometimes to ask what the Charity was. He recognised that there were a lot of people in the world who were worse off than he was, and felt he should help where he could. Nowadays the boxes seemed to be disappearing however, and were being replaced by fresh faced youngsters standing at the door. They didn't want just a donation either, but to set up a standing order so that he could contribute regularly. He didn't like that. He knew that after he had retired several years ago, his income would not match the continual rise in prices and he refused to commit himself to expenditure where he felt he no longer had control.

There it was again, the knock on the door. He hadn't even managed to get through from the kitchen before they were knocking again. He looked out of the side window as he came up to the door. There were two of them, and one was wearing a postman's uniform! What on Earth could that all be about?

'Mr Tasker?' the man wearing the suit said when he opened the door on the latch. 'Yes' Jimmy replied. 'I'm the manager of the local Postal Sorting Depot' the man went on. 'I've something I need to explain to you. Could we come in for a few minutes?'

Jimmy recognised the man wearing the uniform. It was his regular postman, and when the 'manager' showed him his identity card, he felt it would be ok to let them in. They followed him into the lounge of his small two bedroomed terraced cottage. He'd never seen the need to have a bigger house. This had been his parent's house and he had lived in it for over sixty years. He had never had brothers or sisters and he only rarely had visitors of any kind. He had sometimes wondered what it might have been like to have had a wife, children and grandchildren, but had given up on that possibility a long time ago when his one shot at romance had ended in disappointment.

When he sat down, the manager started to speak. 'You know that, even in our own small depot, we handle something like two million letters and parcels a week. With that kind of volume, it would be surprising if some items didn't get mislaid from time to time. We usually manage to find them fairly quickly most of the time. Our organisation now uses the most up to date technology to keep track of them - bar codes, post codes and the like.'

Jimmy was beginning to wonder what the man was trying to say amidst all this technospeak. He surely hadn't come all the way up here to give him a potted history of the local sorting office, had he? The local Postman was beginning to look a little awkward, as if he too wanted the manager to get on with it. He nudged the manager and handed over the letter that he had been carrying.

'Anyway' said the manager, turning back to Jimmy, 'we have only just found this letter which was lying in a bag which we hadn't used for a long time. We were tidying up an area at the back of the depot to make way for some new equipment and uncovered this bag. There were, I'm sorry to say, two letters still in it. How they were missed, I don't know. That area has needed to be cleared for as long as I've been at the

depot. We've not been able to find the person, yet, that the other letter is addressed to, but this letter here was for you.

You'll see from the postmark that it was sent on the 3rd of June 1966, nearly forty years ago. I can only apologise and hope it wasn't too important.'

Jimmy took the letter in silence. The two men stood and Jimmy showed them to the door. Jimmy knew that they wouldn't have realised that the date on the letter had been his twenty-first birthday. It was only when he sat back down in the lounge that he looked more closely at the letter in his hands. The handwriting looked familiar, but it had all been so long ago. When he opened the envelope and took out the single piece of paper, the memories came flooding back. It had been written by his childhood, his only, sweetheart. He remembered how he had so wanted to marry Gillian when he was twenty. He had wanted her to stay and marry him when she was about to leave the area for good, but she had said she needed time to think. She had never said more and so they had never married. He had never felt the desire to look for anyone else.

He slowly read the few words on the paper. She said she loved him too, but she needed to know he really wanted her. She would be leaving on the last train the next Friday night and if he came, she would know he truly cared, and she would stay.

Car Quiz

These clues all relate to the make or model of past and present cars. Answers on page 6.

- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. School Monitor | 7. Dance with Bells | 13. Insect | 19. Dog's Name |
| 2. Star Sign | 8. River Crossing | 14. Sport | 20. Chaperone |
| 3. Small Skirt | 9. TV Company | 15. Dependable Bird | 21. Precious Stone |
| 4. Go with Butter | 10. Anne or Margaret | 16. Earth Wanderer | 22. Vocalist |
| 5. Rolling Mint | 11. Old Mother | 17. Big Cat | 23. Coronation City |
| 6. Earth meets Sky | 12. Exotic Flower | 18. Has Yours Burst? | 24. University |

Lunch at Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwylllantysiliogogoch.

On a beautiful summer's day, two American tourists were driving through Wales.

At Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwylllantysiliogogoch,
they stopped for lunch, and one of the tourists asked the waitress,

'Before we order, I wonder if you could settle an argument for us.

Can you pronounce where we are, very, very, very slowly?'

The girl leaned over and said,

'Burr ... gurr ... king'

RIVETING HISTORY THAT'S STILL IN USE TODAY

(This collection has been submitted by a large number of readers!)

We hope the following answers some questions you may have asked yourself at some time:

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then, once a day, it was taken and sold to the tannery if you had to do this to survive you were “piss poor”. But worse than that were the really poor folk who couldn't even afford to buy a pot they “didn't have a pot to piss in”.

Most people married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, so they were still smelling pretty good by June. Since they were starting to smell though, the brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. So we have the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the sons and men, then the women, and finally the babies. By then, the water was so dirty that you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, “Don't throw the baby out with the bath water”!

Houses had thatched roofs – thickly piled straw with no wood underneath. It was the only place for small animals to get warm, so all the cats and dogs lived in the roof. When it rained though, it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall from the roof, giving us the saying “It's raining cats and dogs”. There was nothing to stop things falling in to the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with posts with a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. This is how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor of the house was “dirt”. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, and so came the saying of “dirt poor”.

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. So a piece of wood was placed in the doorway; hence, a thresh-hold.

In these days gone past, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day, they lit the fire and added things to the pot; they ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes, stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence, the rhyme: “Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old”.

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came to their home, they would hang up their bacon to show off, as it was a sign of wealth that a man could “bring home the bacon”. They would cut off a little to share with their guests and would all sit around and “chew the fat”.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests were given the top – or the “upper crust”.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whiskey. The combination of the alcohol and lead would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead

and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days whilst the family would gather around, eating and drinking whilst waiting to see if the body would wake up. Hence, the custom of “holding a wake”.

Since England is old and small, the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins, take the bones to a bone-house, and re-use the graves. When re-opening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized that they had been burying people alive! So from then on, they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground where they would tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night – “the graveyard shift” – to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be “saved by the bell” or was considered “a dead ringer”.

Now, whoever said that history was boring?!!

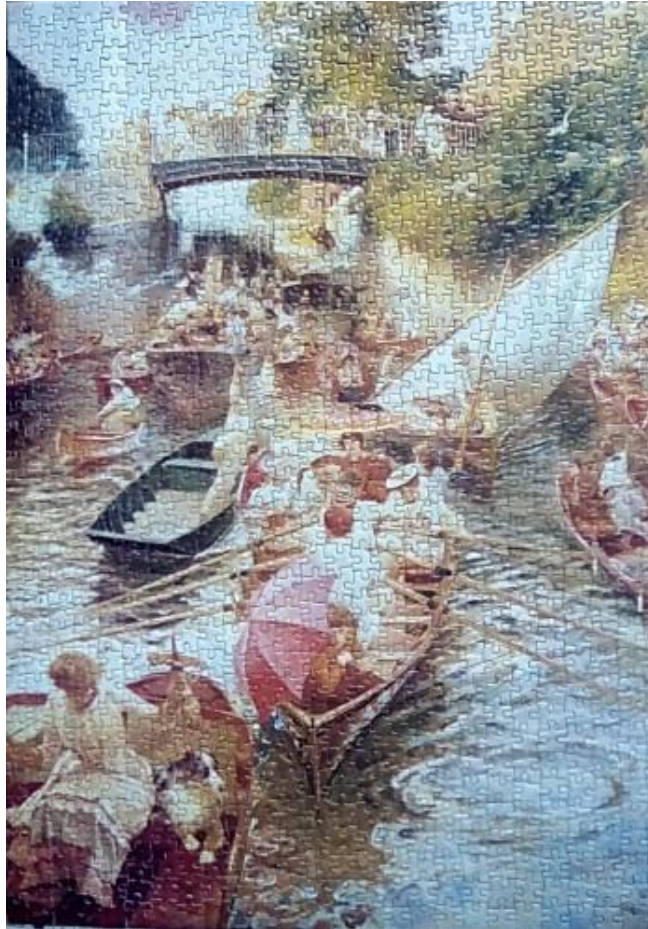
Answers to Car Quiz (page 4)

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Prefect | 9. Granada, Carlton, Anglia | 17. Jaguar, Cougar, Tigre |
| 2. Zodiac | 10. Princess | 18. Bubble Car |
| 3. Mini | 11. Riley | 19. Rover |
| 4. Rolls | 12. Lotus | 20. Escort |
| 5. Polo | 13. Beetle, Spyder | 21. Sapphire, Ruby, Opal |
| 6. Horizon | 14. Golf | 22. Singer |
| 7. Morris | 15. Reliant Robin | 23. Westminster |
| 8. Ford | 16. Land Rover, Gypsy | 24. Oxford, Cambridge Bristol |



Could this be a vision of the future? Submitted by Mo Dunn

Desert Island Challenge - Angela Robins



This jigsaw that I've just completed is my favourite painting. It is of Boulter's Lock at Maidenhead, and was painted by Edward John Gregory (1895): a picturesque and fashionable venue at the height of the Thames boating craze in the 1890s. On one day it was recorded that 1129 craft passed through the lock whilst more than two thousand day-trippers looked on.

Biographers Joseph and Elizabeth Pennel wrote this evocative account as they watched the lock gates opening:-

'Out they came pell mell, paddling, poling, and there was great scrambling, and bumping, and meeting of friends, and cries of "How are you?" " come to dinner at eight!" "Look where you're going!" and brandishing of boat hooks, and glaring eyes, and frantic handshaking, and scratching of paint. Then somehow we all made our way into the lock. The lock-keeper helped the slower boats with his long boat hook and fitted all in until there was not space for one to capsize! - Both banks were lined with people looking on, for Boulter's Lock on Sunday afternoon is one of the sights of the Thames'.

One can almost hear the furore, and it was pretty much the same on the many times I cruised through it during the 70s and 80s whilst holidaying with friends. It is still a honey pot for tourists, but the motorised fibreglass boats and functional clothes are not quite as picturesque.

My other favourite things are:

Book - 'Rebecca' by Daphne Du Maurier.

Film - 'The Piano' (1993) featuring music by Michael Nyman.

Classical Music - 'Vltava' a movement from Ma Vlast (My Country) by Bedrich Smetana

Pop Music - 'Something In The Air' by Thunderclap Newman (1969).

The Easiest Thing To Say by Alan Barrow

Keep it under your Bonnet
Whatever the Americans say
There are 14 lines in a sonnet
It was a long time ago and is still today .

Though I am the first to admit
It is more a matter of lines
And the breaking and spurning of rules I submit
Is undoubtedly the sign of the times.

It is important to stress with more than a mention
You must know with what you are dealing
For with the sonnet there's always this tension
Between a formal pattern and an endless flow of feeling.

It's narrow parameters is, in a good sonnet, pride
The wonder is that it's themes and passions are so wide.

St Melangell by Alan Barrow



The Simple Tale

Within a hair's breath
of a hare's death
stood the gentle Melangell.

The Holy Maid
stood firm, unafraid,
regardless of the price to be paid.

Headstrong, rampant his pace
the Hunter, flushed of face
Prince Brychwel himself came to that quiet place.

In the valley of peaceful sounds
her power knows no bounds.
she stills the baying hounds.

Melangell the fair
in her girdle of care
guards the hunted hare.

The Prince in the presence of her peace
feels aggression cease,
a calmness and tranquillity increase.

"By right this valley is mine,
to this land you bring
something beyond time,
through me I make it thine."

The virgin smiled
"To catch the hare
that lies within,
first you must
calm it with care
and everlasting trust."

Then she smiled
a smile that is huge,
"Here for them
there will always
be a safe refuge."

NOTES: The shrine of Melangell lies deep within the Berwyn Mountains near the village of Llangynog. It is an early Christian treasure and is the oldest existing Romanesque shrine in Northern Europe. Little known outside Wales and Great Britain, it is dedicated to a sixth century Irish woman, a hermit who lived there for many years, alone and unknown. The church was restored in the 1960s and relics were found under the chapel floor. In 1992 it was rededicated and is now an important site for pilgrims, with more than 10,000 visiting each year. Her festival is 27th May. The story of Melangell and the hare comes down to us from oral tradition, through songs, poetry and carvings, some only recently discovered and translated. Wild hares are called Wyn Melangell (St Melangell's lambs).

Easypeasy Cryptic Crossword Clues No.12 - Angela Robins

There are a dozen Cryptic Crossword Clues and the 'Parts of Words' Clue comes in several forms: It is not necessary to remember the titles: you will soon 'tune in' to these ploys. The answers to the clues are on page 16.

A. INSIDERS. This clue requires the REMOVAL of one or more letters from the MIDDLE of a word to find the answer. Hints will include:- remove middle, heartless, decore...
e.g. Remove centre of timBers to make clocks (6). = Timers.

1. Brave Darling lost heart (6). 2. Hellcat disheartened puts up with warmth (4). 3. Beaker emptied spills ale (4). 4. Heartless Londoners are solitary figures (6). 5. Matter of regret when Pisa City centre is emptied (4).

B. INSERTIONS. This variation requires letter/s to be INSERTED into a word, using 'Abbreviations and Associations' or 'Numbers' or short 'Word Exchangers', to make up the answer. Hints will include:- go inside, within, between, fill, contained in, into, insert, swallowed by...
e.g. One can enter place to get fish (6). = Pla 1 ce

6. Fifty entered party, a proportion (6). 7. Reef is right in the middle of coal. (5). 8. Lid hiding little devil - that's clear (6). 9. Fear concerning dad being on the outside (5). 10. Indisposition of young boy during spring month (6).

C. HEADLESS AND TAILLESS. A straightforward type of clue. It instructs you to remove the OUTER letter OR letters from a word and the remainder is the answer. Hints will include:- endless, headless, head off, tailless, tail off, tail away (and topless for a Down Clue).
e.g. Boys name means endless time (3). = Tim.

11. Headless mascot arrived at racecourse (5). 12. China tail away to a feature (4). 13. Top of slide topped and tailed (3). 14. Stripped, first off and stumbled (7). 15(D). Smell unpleasantly like a topless Greek (4).

D. HEADS AND TAILS. This is the reverse of 'C': you need to TAKE the first or last letter of a word and use it to contribute to the make-up of an answer. Hints will include: - first, leader, head, start, last, cut off, end of.
e.g. Trail leader request for an assignment (4). = T/ask.

16. The Motorhead took food to a friend (4). 17. Pa started washing dog's foot (3). 18. In addition last chisel is utensil (4). 19. Dropped hollow broly and called in (7,2). 20. We start browsing the internet (3).

Contact me on valdemos2@gmail.com if you would like to receive my group's easy weekly crossword with hints and answers.

Gerontion by Martyn Vaughan

As usual for the time of year the brilliant sun blazed unshielded in the harsh sky. The heat lay like a suffocating blanket over the yellow hills.

David stopped crumbling a clod of earth into fine dust with his toecap and yawned. He was vaguely aware that his grandfather had noticed that he hadn't been listening and was staring at him. David felt no remorse: he was bored with this strange trip; bored by his grandfather's promise of a wonderful revelation at the end of it if he would only be patient.

Patient! David snorted mentally, why was it that old men were always telling him to be patient?

'Yes, Grandad, I was listening', the boy lied, lifting his eyes to meet his grandfather's irritated gaze. For a moment he almost felt sorry for the old man; he obviously enjoyed telling these cobwebbed tales of the old days, filled as they were with all manner of unlikely happenings and fantasy. But he threw the feeling of empathy off and stared fixedly back at the man and it was his grandfather who looked away first. He suddenly looked very tired.

'You don't believe me, do you David?', he said at last, his eyes turning to the parched ground. 'I'm trying to explain to you how things were in the old days. I know you find it hard to believe but I was young once, and when I was a boy, things were different – I'm telling you!'

David half-succeeded in stifling a smile. He'd heard it all before from other members of the dwindling band of old-timers. Did it really matter how things had been in the dead past when those wrinkled creatures were as young and vital as he was? (if such a thing could be imagined). Did it matter if that slime-choked pool they had passed earlier had indeed been a wide, shining lake in days gone by? It was a slime-choked pool now and that was all that mattered. He reassured himself that this was probably the last time his grandfather would be making this pilgrimage: there obviously wasn't much life left in him.

Automatically and without noticing it, he brushed the descending sweat from his forehead. It was all so irrelevant to the urgent demands of modern living! He looked away from his slumped grandparent, away to the haze-shrouded vista of the northern horizon. There he was mildly surprised to see a greyish cloud rising wispily above the scarred ramparts of the nearest hill, like a dusty cobweb.

'So many people,' the old man was muttering, 'so many, all busy with their little lives, going around making money, planning foreign holidays, moaning about the weather. The weather!' This last observation seemed to afford him some grim amusement for his cracked lips jerked spasmodically a few times. He turned and looked directly at David again.

'Well, I suppose you want to know why I dragged you up here into the hills,' he said and there seemed to be a hint of a note of triumph behind the question, as if some grand revelation was about to be made manifest.

David shrugged to show his indifference but there was something about his grandfather's look that seemed to puncture his insouciance. There was a hungry expectancy in those pale eyes.

'1...'

The boy's sentence died. Something was wrong. There was a subtle change in the quality of the light which beat down upon them, as if it were suddenly evening.

He turned northward. The grey cloud he had noticed earlier had darkened into a powerful ebony shape and no longer was it a thin veil: it was developing a billowing, castellated structure and was swelling visibly like a pool of black blood from some dying creature. A deep shadow was crawling across the tortured plateau towards them.

His grandfather spoke again, and somehow his voice had strengthened and become resonant like an Old Testament prophet declaiming the imminent destruction of Nineveh.

'It only happens at this time of year now, and only up here can you really feel it!' He laughed, but with a slightly maniacal edge to the laughter.

The shadow passed over them and David was shocked by the sudden drop in temperature. The shadow had been like some obscene bird of prey, swooping towards them.

'I want to go back down now, grandad,' he said, keeping his voice slow and firm.

His grandfather did not look at him but shook his head. He was looking up at the cloud with a fierce expectancy.

'No, no yet,' he snapped 'No, the best is still to come!'

David stood up: he had made up his mind to leave this weird place. Down there in the valley there was normality; his mother, his brother, the girl he had chased last week and nearly caught; the chickens nesting in the flaking metal skeletons which people said had once had the power to move by themselves.

'Well I'm going,' he said quickly, 'I've had enough, mother will...'

He stopped. Something small and soft had hit in on the side of the head. Now really alarmed he turned and looked in the direction of the blow but as he did it happened again. It took his spinning mind some moments to realise something strange and magical was happening.

'Grandad, grandad!' he yelled, feeling a liquid coursing its way over his cheeks to his bewildered lips 'Water – water is falling from the sky!'

'Now do you believe me!' the old man cried, raising his arms as the drops came thicker and faster, punching little craters in the dust.

David too felt an exhilaration rising and went to his grandfather's side and held his withered arm, almost tenderly.

'I'm sorry grandad,' he whispered, 'how was I to know?'

And so they stood there, the old man and the boy, neither really knowing of the terrible discovery that had been made in the forgotten twentieth century, of how the world leaders had been warned of the possibility of a runaway greenhouse effect due to humanity's stupidity and how they had not done enough to curb the gases flooding the atmosphere and how in the middle of the following century the climatic zones had suddenly shifted, deflecting the weather patterns that people had relied on and making parts of their planet uninhabitable.

They stood there together in the first warm drops of the British Rainy Season, looking out over the splintered ochre hills, as the January winds whipped the fading cloud into tatters above the peaks of old Blencathra.

Wordsearch - submitted by Barbara Phillips

Can you find the 11 words associated with jam in the grid below? Answers on page 24.

I	D	H	T	E	S	Y	B	Y
D	A	M	S	O	N	R	F	W
C	P	J	I	J	N	R	P	L
O	I	R	A	N	O	E	E	T
N	D	R	E	I	N	B	A	O
S	I	T	H	S	A	W	C	U
E	M	T	I	L	E	A	H	A
R	U	L	C	N	M	R	S	O
V	L	T	E	E	C	T	V	D
E	P	A	I	N	P	S	S	E
R	U	O	V	A	L	F	E	O

I May be Blind – a Villanelle by Hilary Lester

I may be blind, my guide dog helps me
Get around safely and without a grumble
Please spare a thought for those who cannot see

Flowers have pollen sucked by the bee
Making honey, wonderful Mr Bumble
I may be blind, my guide dog helps me

Birds singing sweetly from the tree
Windy day, see the leaves tumble
Please spare a thought for those who cannot see

She gives me independence and sets me free
Life no longer such a jumble
Please spare a thought for those who cannot see

Two metres, social distancing not easy
She's not trained for it so we may stumble
I may be blind, my guide dog helps me

Out in the fresh air, a takeaway coffee
Maybe some cake or apple crumble
I may be blind, my guide dog helps me
Please spare a thought for those who cannot see

The Origins of British Surnames by Stephen Berry

Surnames have not always existed in the English-speaking world. During the late Middle Ages surnames gradually re-emerged, first in the form of bynames (typically indicating individual's occupation or area of residence), which gradually evolved into modern surnames.

Traditionally it was the custom that a woman would on marriage take the surname of her husband. The surname for children of married parents is usually inherited from the father. If a child's paternity was not known the new-born child would have the surname of the mother.

A four-year study led by the University of the West of England, which concluded in 2016, analysed sources dating from the 11th to the 19th century to explain the origins of the surnames in the British Isles. The study found that over 90% of the 45,602 surnames in the Oxford English Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland are native to those countries, with the most common in the UK being Smith, Jones, Williams, Brown, Taylor, Davies, and Wilson.

In Ireland, the use of surnames has a very old history. Ireland was the first country in Europe to use fixed surnames. Apparently the first recorded fixed surname was Ó Cleirigh, which is recorded in the record of the death of Tigherneach Ua Cleirigh, Lord of Aidhne in Galway in the year 916.[18]

In England, the introduction of family names is generally attributed to the preparation of the Domesday Book in 1086, following the Norman conquest. Evidence indicates that surnames were first adopted among the feudal nobility and gentry, and slowly spread to other parts of society. Some of the early Norman nobility who arrived in England during the Norman conquest differentiated themselves by affixing 'de' (of) before the name of their village in France. This is what is known as a territorial surname, a consequence of feudal landownership. In medieval times in France, such a name indicated lordship, or ownership, of the village.

Surnames were uncommon prior to the 12th century, and still somewhat rare into the 13th; most were originally occupational, and served to distinguish one person from another if they happened to live near one another (e.g., two different people named John could conceivably be identified as 'John the Butcher' and 'John the Chandler'. Over time, the "the" disappeared). This can still be found, in some communities where a surname is particularly common; for instance in the South Wales valley communities where such names as "Jones the milk" can be heard, though this is more by way of a nickname and Mr Jones who delivers the milk might well be David Jones or similar!

Locational surnames were also making their appearance at around this time and it is possible that, rather than emulating their "betters", those who adopted them did so because they had moved from elsewhere. Those who had been lucky enough to avoid the ravages of the Black Death in the 14th century found two things. In the first place they were suddenly no longer the oppressed majority, the peasants whose lives were subject to the whim of the Lord of the Manor but were now workers whose skills were in demand. In the second, although they were able to offer their services away from their native parish, this inevitably meant a move to a different area. Sometimes these moves were over a very long distance, particularly if the Lord of his Manor of birth was also Lord of other Manors elsewhere in the country. It was therefore convenient to append the name of his place of origin to a labourer who moved elsewhere. We still have a number of locational surnames in existence – Hull, Wells, Newport and Darlington to mention a few. A slightly different type of locational name would probably have been used by people who did not move from a parish but who shared a common occupation with many others. In such a case the locational name might be a specific topographical feature within the parish, for example Hill or Green (being the village green).

Surnames can be 'patronymic', enshrining the originator's father's name. Many examples exist such as Jackson, Williamson or Jenkinson. Although these still exist as separate names, they have, over time, often been shortened, for these examples, to Jacks, Williams and Jenkins. Jones is equivalent to Johnson, both meaning son of John.

There are also names where the origin describes the original bearer such as Brown, Short, or Thin – though Short may in fact be an ironic 'nickname' surname for a tall person. Whereas those names describing physical appearance are fairly obvious, a number of such names are very much less obvious. My mother's maiden name was Pedlar which might, at first site, appear to be an occupational surname. However its origin is not from this source at all. Its original form seems to have been *Pie-de-lièvre*, meaning Hare's foot. Scholars of this era in English history are agreed that the name refers to someone who was a fast runner and was likely to have been a messenger who conveyed correspondence between members of the aristocracy. His residence at the time of the earliest record of the name in 1205 was in Devon, very close to the border with Cornwall, from which all known branches of the family descend.

By 1400, most English and a few Scottish people used surnames, but many Scottish and Welsh people did not adopt surnames until the 17th century and often even later – in some cases not until the second half of the 19th century. This was particularly the case in Wales where the traditional way of naming was somewhat complex when compared with the general way. If a man, William Jones, had a son David that son would be known as David Williams (David son of William). If he then had a son William he would be known as William Davies!

Scottish culture used additional descriptive terms in identifying individuals. These terms indicated clan affiliation and often developed into fixed clan identifications that in turn became family names as we know them today.

In the main, then, we can say that most surnames are occupational, locational, patronymic or characteristic. As with any grand scheme, though, there are exceptions – and some, well, misfits! Take, for instance, my own surname – Berry. A fruit-grower, perhaps? No, the name actually comes from the same root as "burgh" or "borough", found at the end of place names such as Edinburgh. It is thought that the name originally was applied to someone who worked at a fortified place (a "burgh"). Possibly, then, a non-specific occupational surname with a hint of locational thrown in for good measure! Historically, there were concentrations of the surname in Devon (my family originated in the eastern part of the county), Lancashire and Scotland (particularly in the north east around Aberdeen). We still have obvious examples in such place names as Berry Pomeroy (Devon) and Bury (Lancashire). Many questionable surnames are, in fact, locational but refer to a small (and possibly abandoned place), a hamlet or even a farm.

The mention of Bury as being of common origin with Berry leads on to the thorny question of spelling. How often I have heard the comment "We can't be related to so-and-so because our surname is spelt slightly differently." It is a fact that settled spellings of surnames was quite uncommon before the late 19th century when education became more widely available. My mother's maiden name, Pedlar, is a case in point. Her great grandfather, born in Instow, north Devon, was married in 1861 – spelling Pidler, reflecting the strong accent of the region and its effect on pronunciation. Her grandfather, born in 1870, had a birth certificate – spelling Pedler. He married in 1892 – spelling Pedlar, at which it has settled.

This is a vast subject, but one which is fascinating. However, be warned against making any instant judgments when thinking about someone's forbears – there are many instances of one's ancestors changing their surnames, as every family historian knows. There may be a sound reason for doing so (or even a criminal reason) but some changes and aliases have no apparent reason behind them at all.

Sudoku

By popular demand I have included a double dose of Sudoku this week!

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

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

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.

Cryptic Crossword Clues (page 10) - Answers

1. Dar_ing 2. He_at 3. Be_er 4. Lon_ers 5. Pi_ty 6. PartLy 7. CoRal 8. LIMPid 9. DREad 10. MaLADy 11. _ascot 12. Chin_ 13. _lid_ 14. _tripped 15. _reek 16. M/ate 17. Pa/W 18. Too/L 19. Dropped/b_y 20. We/b.

Buxtehude by Gerald Lee

Of all the trips I have made in my life, it is my visit to Germany when I was 17 years old that I remember best. At that time, I was living at home with my parents in Belfast and studying for A levels.

Although I have spent more of my life studying French, German is probably my preferred language. I particularly liked the regularity of its spelling and grammar, compared to French or Spanish. It was probably my best subject at that time.

One day our teacher, Mrs Weil, whose son was also in the class and has become a life-time friend, brought us details of a language course in Germany. The course lasted three weeks over Easter 1968. The students would meet in London and travel to Buxtehude, near Hamburg, where they would reside with a German family with a son or daughter of the same age.

In the morning there would be tuition in German at the local school. Afternoons were free to spend time with the German family and included in the trip was a visit to the theatre in Hamburg to see 'Urfaust,' the original version of Goethe's 'Dr Faustus,' which we would study in the morning.

I had never travelled outside Ireland, so it seemed a real adventure. I managed to persuade my parents to allow me to go, so along with two classmates, Barry and Richard; in April 1968 we left Belfast to travel to London to meet the rest of the party.

In those days air travel was expensive, so we travelled overnight by ferry from Belfast to Heysham, and then by train to London.

Barry stayed with relatives over the weekend, so Richard and I had the chance to discover London. It was a new experience. Above all it was the London Underground that impressed me. The speed and the crowds were amazing. I also remember seeing 10 Downing St. In those days you could walk into the street and stand outside Number 10. There was a fashion shoot outside the front door, which seemed to amuse the policeman on duty.

We stayed in a hostel in London for a couple of nights and then on Monday morning we met Barry and the rest of the party to travel to Germany. We had a German lecturer to supervise us. We crossed on the ferry from Harwich to Bremerhaven, and from there by coach to Buxtehude, near Hamburg. It seemed really odd when the Customs Officer asked us if we were carrying any tea. Gradually we learned the names and personalities of the rest of the party.

My German family was Mr and Mrs Schulze, and their son Frank. Fortunately, we struck up a friendship immediately. They made me very welcome.

The first impression I had was that the Germans had much bigger appetites than the British. Sometimes we went out together as a family. They introduced me to Schnapps, which seemed to burn more than have any taste, and massive cream cakes. They found it very amusing that I could only manage one enormous slice. A standard serving was two.

The food was different, but I never had any real problems except the large servings and readiness to eat at any hour of the day or evening. I really loved Ruhrei, a type of scrambled eggs with potato, rather like a Spanish omelette.

A real surprise was when some of us went into a café for a drink. One girl asked for a cup of tea. To her amazement she received a glass of hot water with something floating in it. We had no idea what it was. It was the first time any of us had seen a tea bag!

In the mornings we met at the school for classes with our Supervisor, who was a lecturer in German, and the other teachers from the school. Politics can be a difficult subject. One teacher expressed his dislike of the East German state, known then as the Deutsche Demokratische Republik. He told us no-one in Germany would ever use that term, and instead said 'Dort Druben,' which means 'over there,' spoken quickly through the side of the mouth.

At the first class we met the school principal. We were asked to write about our journey and then introduce ourselves. The 'Direktor' then told us we had an invitation to go to the town hall and meet the mayor. First, they would need someone to volunteer to speak to the mayor and council members. I do not know why, but he suggested me!! I should have stayed quiet.

I made a nervous speech, which must have sounded awful. As well as having some refreshments we received a small copy of the town seal, which I still treasure.

We had the afternoons mostly free except for a couple of organised trips. The German attitude to alcohol seemed much more relaxed, with beer on sale in all cafes and restaurants. In the evening we often went with Frank and his friends to a club with the incredible name of 'The Western Lady.'

The young Germans loved British music. It was the era of the Beatles. Very often we would be asked to explain the lyrics of pop tunes, which was not always easy as they sometimes did not make much sense in English either. The Beatles recorded a German version of 'I want to hold your hand,' as 'Komm gib mir deine Hand.' Even Cliff Richard sang in German. 'Ein Sonntag mit Marie, literally 'a Sunday with Marie,' was his British hit 'The Day I met Marie.'

'Magical Mystery Tour' had just been released, mostly to derision in Britain. The Germans loved it. Young Germans had posters in bedrooms of the group in costume. I watched it on German TV, where it was treated as a work of art with an introduction to explain its significance. Over time most critics agree it was ambitious, but insubstantial. In Britain it had been shown at Christmas. Most viewers expected family entertainment and were, to say the least, very disappointed.

The biggest hit record of the time was definitely 'Nights in White Satin' by the Moody Blues. As an Easter gift Frank gave me the Move's record, 'Fire Brigade.' I still have it in its original sleeve.

We still heard world news. It was during this time I remember hearing of the death of Martin Luther King. Just as today, the death of a black man released racial tensions. A lot has changed, but not enough.

There were also strains in German society. As in France students were in rebellion. In Germany the radicals attacked newspaper vans and disrupted public events. Frank was sympathetic. The country was ruled by a coalition of the Conservative and Social Democrats. The tiny Free Democrats, or Liberals, were the only opposition in parliament.

Herr Schulze had fought in the war and was partially deaf. He had seen anti-democratic forces take politics to the street and was very much against the disturbances.

We were free to make our own trips with our German friends instead of going to the class. Frank and his friend offered to take us to Hamburg, where Barry wanted to visit some bookshops. Hamburg was not an attractive city, possibly because it had been rebuilt quickly after the war. The buildings were plain, square, and uniformly the same brick colour.

Frank asked us if we would like to see the 'entertainment area.' Having lived a sheltered life in Belfast I had not expected to see such a rough place. In the same street as the Star Club, where the Beatles played, were many seedy bookshops and clubs.

The real night life began at 8pm. In Germany everything is organised. This was the time when the 'not so nice ladies' were permitted to enter the street. Mrs Weil had given us veiled advice about not finding 'nice girls' on the street. We knew then what she meant. Certainly, it was not in any way glamorous. One evening we went to the cinema to see 'Der Hund von Blackwood Castle,' which if translated as 'dog' rather than 'hound' must lose some of its impact.

Edgar Wallace was extremely popular in Britain between the wars. One source claims a quarter of all books sold were Edgar Wallace thrillers. Apart from 'King Kong' most of his work is now forgotten. In Germany his books remain extremely popular, even today. They are still made into TV adaptations and films.

Another favourite on TV were the Father Brown stories by G K Chesterton, now having a revival on British television.

British and American TV shows were much followed, in particular the 'Avengers,' perhaps due to its Englishness. The German name was 'Mit Schirm, Charme und Melone,' with 'umbrella, charm and bowler hat.' The character of Steed was particularly fascinating. The show had won an award. In a recorded message Patrick Macnee introduced his new assistant, Tara King, to be played by Linda Thorson. Diana Rigg, like Honor Blackman, had been seduced by the James Bond movies, something which Honor Blackman later said she regretted.

The highlight of the trip was seeing the 'Urfaust' in the Hamburg theatre. Theatre and cinema were much more respected then in Britain. Smoking was banned and everyone was dressed smartly.

By the end of the visit we had all struck up friendships with our German families. The final ritual at the Schulze household was to be weighed to see how much weight I had gained.

Herr Schulze was a dental technician. His hobby was to make his own jewellery. He gave me a ring, which I still wear, and a brooch for my mother.

I was especially pleased that I also received the prize for good progress, a book by a young German author. I still have the book at home and enjoyed reading the poetry and plays.

For a couple of years Frank and I corresponded. Later in 1968 I stayed with my sister in Edinburgh and sent the Schultzes some Scottish shortbread. Alas, Frank was rather a dilatory correspondent, so I never knew if they received it.

Gradually over time we lost touch, but I shall always have fond memories of my stay in Buxtehude.

In German Buxtehude is like Timbuktu, a term for a far-off unreal place. The grandfather in Barry's family said he once tried to buy a ticket to Buxtehude. The Clerk in the booking offer thought he was making fun. But yes, it is a real place and one I shall never forget.

I did not continue my German studies after A Level except at evening classes and U3A. Richard did his degree in modern languages. Sadly, due to mental illness he can no longer work. We renewed contact through Friends Reunited several years ago. We still write to each other in German. When I worked, I occasionally did translations for colleagues in difficulty over travel or shopping.

My subject at university was history, but languages will always be part of me. When we travel, I love to try to speak the local language. It once saved us when we were lost in Majorca, but that will be another story for the newsletter.



The Seal of the town of Buxtehude

NOTE: Although this account may well form a part of the "Traveller's Tale" series, Gerald has clearly written it in response to the new series of challenges set out on page 30 of last week's edition. It is an excellent start to this new (and, I hope, long) series of personal experience articles and I would encourage others to follow in Gerald's footsteps (though, in this case, not literally!)

Curtain Rods

After 17 years of marriage, a man dumped his wife for his young secretary.

His girlfriend demanded they live in the couple's million-pound mansion in leafy Surrey and since his solicitors were cleverer than his wife's, the girlfriend got her way. The ex-wife had just three days to pack up and move out.

She spent the first day packing her belongings into boxes, crates and suitcases. On the second day, a removal company came in to collect her things. At the end of the third day, she sat down for the last time at their beautiful dining room table by candlelight, put on some soft background music and feasted on a pint of prawns, a jar of caviar and a bottle of chilled Chardonnay.

When she had finished, she went into each and every room and deposited a few half-eaten prawns and a couple of shells dipped in caviar into the hollow of the curtain rods. Then she tidied up, washed, dried and put away her plate and glass, and left.

When the husband and his secretary moved in, all was bliss for the first few days. Then slowly the house began to smell. They tried everything; the whole place was cleaned, mopped, scrubbed and aired. The skirting boards were removed to check for dead rats or mice; carpets were steam cleaned; air fresheners hung like Christmas decorations. They had to move out for a couple of days while Rentokill let off gas canisters under the floors, and they even replaced all the very expensive wool carpets, but still the smell got worse. Friends stopped coming to visit, tradesmen and repairmen refused to call, the household staff handed in their notice. Finally the couple couldn't stand the stench any longer and decided to sell up and move.

A month later, even after cutting the price in half they couldn't find a buyer for their stinky house. Of course word got around the estate agents, and eventually they refused to return the couple's calls. Finally he had to take out a huge mortgage to satisfy his secretary's demands for an equivalent house. About this time the ex-wife called the man and asked how things were going. He told her the saga of the house. She listened politely, said that she missed her old home terribly and would be pleased to have the house back.

Knowing that his ex-wife had no idea of how bad the smell was, he agreed to sell the house to her at about a tenth of its market value, but only if she was to sign the papers that very day. She agreed and within the hour his lawyers delivered the paperwork.

One week later, the man and his girlfriend stood smirking as they watched the removal company pack everything to take to their new home . . . including the curtain rods.

The moral of this story? Smell hath no fury like a woman's prawns!

Barbara Phillips

An Amazing Offer from Dave Woolven

In the late 1990s, the then Headmaster of St Woolos Primary School, Mr Keith Beardmore (now the Rev Keith) asked me to collect the memories of past pupils for a millennium project. I also sought memories of the Newport they knew as a child - the earliest memory was WW1. The anticipated dozen or two pages ended up at 600 - all sold for PTA funds. The present Head Miss Heather Vaughan asked me if I could do something to raise funds for the school. The result is a CD containing these memories in 157,000 words and 432 pages!

It doesn't matter if you didn't go to St Woolos or even live in Newport, conditions in the 1920s to 1950s were the same everywhere. I am selling the CD for £5, cheques to "St Woolos PTA Fund". Dave Woolven. 2 Aspen Way, Malpas Park, Newport, NP20 6LB.

My poem last week (Let's All Drink to the Lockdown) was a warning about over-indulgence of alcohol whilst confined to our homes. But taken in moderation alcohol is one of the pleasures of life and wine is my choice of drink. Over the last few weeks it's been great to enjoy a glass or two with a meal without the worry of driving home afterwards. However, it would be so much more enjoyable in the company of friends and I look forward to the time when that's possible.

Pam Cocchiara

The Joy of Wine

On the choices of drinking, I need to define
The enjoyment I get from a nice glass of wine.
It could be Chianti,
Maybe Asti Spumante
But wine adds to my pleasure each time that I dine.

I enjoy all types of wine but it must be said,
Though I like White or Rose, I much prefer Red.
Drunk in moderation
It induces elation
Though to avoid excess it's a fine line you must tread.

On all of its properties I could expand,
Taste, colour, its smell (that's 'bouquet' if you're grand!)
But I never would choose
A thick mug for my booze,
It must be a fine glass that I hold in my hand.

The ancient Greek gods thought a lot about wine
And its ritual use was considered divine.
To afford sanctity
To a Greek deity
A libation of wine would be poured on the shrine.

Your religious beliefs might be Episcopalian
Maybe Methodist to whom alcohol is something quite alien
But the Greek God Dionysis
Can offer you vices
For a pleasurable pastime that could be Bacchanalian.

On holiday in Spain on the Costa Brava,
You may find that you're offered a bottle of Cava.
It has a faint echo
Of Italian Prosecco,
And spurts from the bottle like volcanic lava.

As glass after glass washes down your paella
You may start to feel you're a helluva fella
And should you meet a
Dark-eyed senorita,
The Cava will help you find words you can tell 'er.

Champagne is a wine with bubbles spumescent.
When poured into the glass the result's effervescent.
The extra fermentation
Creates a sensation
That's heady and joyful, much more than just pleasant.

Your personal intake yourself you must measure,
A glass, a magnum or a Nebuchadnezzar.
Its taste is sublime,
Can be drunk any time,
A celebratory do or just at your leisure.

There's one thing however that I should explain;
You must never, but never, mix grape with the grain.
Mixing wine with hard liquor
Will get you drunk quicker,
And the temporary pleasure is not worth the pain.

On each New Year's Eve when I hear glasses clinking
And friends toasting each other "Good Health!" I start thinking.
As our arms intertwine
And we sing Auld Lang's Syne
I look forward to another good year of wine drinking.

ALL THAT JAZZ. Another Favourite Jazz Selection by Mike Brown

ART BLAKEY (1919-1990) Art Blakey escaped the tumult and danger of the coal mines and steel mills of Pittsburgh into a life of music, carrying with him a volcanic force. He channelled his energy into drumming, leadership, teaching and the development of talent. He became a prime mover in post war jazz. Blakey often told folk that he had no childhood. At fourteen he was working among the blast furnaces in the daytime, moonlighting in clubs as a pianist, leading a professional dance band and trying to finish high school. He was a husband and father at fifteen. He said that he switched instruments when another Pittsburgh youngster, Erroll Garner, showed him up at the piano so his boss at the club ordered him to play the drums. In the mid 50's, he became founder and leader of the "Jazz Messengers", a group that he was associated with for the next thirty-five years. It soon became known as an incubator of talent. Art Blakey's instruction in the essentials of jazz and life helped to shape dozens and dozens of musicians. Many of them, in turn, became bandleaders and style setters, influencing the course of future jazz music.

MOANIN' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cv9NSR-2DwM>

LIVE IN PARIS <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EO8PDMFkdq8>

WYNTON MARSALIS Wynton Marsalis was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1961, son of a pianist and music teacher. His three other brothers are all jazz musicians. He was named after Wynton Kelly the famous jazz pianist. He received his first instrument at the age of six from Al Hirt, a trumpeter friend of his father but didn't take it seriously until he was twelve. Then he studied classical music at school and jazz at home with his father. In 1979 he moved to New York City to attend the Juilliard Conservatory intending to pursue a career in classical music. A year later he toured Europe as a member of the Art Blakey band the Jazz Messengers and remained with Art until 1982. He changed his mind after this, concerning his career, and turned to jazz. At the age of 22, in 1983, he became the only musician to win Grammy awards for both jazz and classical music in the same year. In 1987, he helped start a jazz Summer

concert series at the Lincoln Centre in New York. The success of this led to 'Jazz at Lincoln Centre' becoming a department at the centre. By 1996 it became an independent entity with organisations such as the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera. He became artistic director of the centre and musical director of the band the 'Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra'. Marsalis has a special relationship with the small medieval French town of Marciac and has appeared at its jazz festival every year since 1991. In 2011 Wynton and blues guitarist Eric Clapton performed together in a 'Jazz at Lincoln Centre' concert.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBJ-MmTA-eU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhP6mPvd1lc>

CHARLES MINGUS (1922-1979) One of the most important figures in 20th Century American music, Charlie Mingus was a virtuoso bass player, accomplished pianist, bandleader and composer. Born in a military base in Arizona in 1922 and raised in California. His earliest musical influences came from the church, namely choir and group singing and from hearing Duke Ellington on the radio. When he was eight years old he studied double bass and composition in a formal way whilst absorbing local music from the great jazz masters. His early professional experience in the 40's found him touring with bands like Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory and Lionel Hampton. Eventually, he settled in New York, where he played and recorded with the leading musicians of the 1950's, such as Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and Duke Ellington himself. One of the few bassists to do so, Mingus quickly developed as a leader of musicians. He was also a fine pianist who could have made a career with that instrument. By the middle of the decade he had formed his own publishing and recording companies to protect and document his growing repertoire of original music. He also founded the "Jazz Workshop", a group which enabled young composers to have their new works performed in concert and on recordings. Mingus toured extensively throughout Europe, Japan, Canada South America and the USA until the end of 1977, when he was diagnosed with a rare sclerosis and confined to a wheelchair. Although he was no longer able to write music on paper or compose on the piano, his last works were sung into a tape recorder. From the 1960's until his death, Charles Mingus remained in the forefront of American music. When asked to comment on his accomplishments, he said that his abilities as a bassist were the result of hard work but that his compositional talents came from God.

"GOODBYE PORK PIE HAT" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxz9eZ1Aons>

"THE BLACK SAINT AND THE SINNER LADY" Full Album <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFA0FYQo0Gg>

THELONIOUS MONK (1917-1982). Thelonious Monk was born in North Carolina and when he was four the family moved to New York where he remained until he retired. He took piano lessons as a child and in his teens played around New York at house parties and bars, doing a lot of freelance work. Early in the 40's he became the house pianist at Minton's Playhouse. Among the innovators of the changing music scene at this time, Monk would rank as one of the most influential. Along with such musicians as trumpeter Dizzie Gillespie and drummer Kenny Clarke, new ideas for different harmonic progressions were beginning to evolve in an attempt to get away from standard jazz musical formats. As far as Monk was concerned, though, the commercial aspects of music were of no interest: he was engrossed in his compositions and it was a select few (audience and musicians), who knew where he was going. This didn't bother him: all that mattered were new ideas for his music. It was at this time that he wrote some of his most enduring compositions. The early 50's were not a good time for Monk, when he was refused a cabaret licence by the authorities, after all, he had to perform to live! However, a change of record label and some notable recordings produced a new-found and wider interest in Monk's work and by 1957 he was resident at the Five Spot Cafe in NY, (The authorities having relented). His importance in the jazz field was now firmly established by the fact that his compositions were seen as standard works, to be mastered and built upon by aspiring jazz musicians. Monk was a master painter of sound, transcending bad pianos, noisy bars, sweet-sugary tunes, uninspired rhythm sections and the passing of time. He was a transformer, turning whatever he liked into Thelonious Monk. He was neither dated nor contemporary, neither in nor out, because his strength was such that he needed only and forever be Thelonious Monk.

"BLUE MONK" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrKpffh8TY8>

"MONK'S DREAM" (Full Album) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icFRHJ9VZaw>

BILL EVANS (1929-1980) The pianist William John Evans played a major role in the history of modern jazz. He grew up in Plainfield, New Jersey, the son of Harry and Mary Evans. His father was of Welsh descent: his mother's ancestors were coal miners from the Carpathian Mountains. His first piano teacher was his mother and he also studied the flute and violin. He graduated with a music teaching degree in 1950 and then went to live in New York where for a brief period he worked in the area, before he was drafted into the army and played flute in the 5th Army Band. Returning to civilian life and the piano, Evans seemed to burst on to the jazz scene: his first recordings from 1956 revealed a fully formed technique, characterised by lush harmonies, sensitive phrasing and inventive improvisation. In 1958, Evans joined Miles Davis in what proved to be an historic collaboration. He was a key figure (he wrote the track "Blue in Green") on the famous "Kind of Blue" album, regarded by critics as the greatest jazz record, where his playing there was an influence on jazz pianists for years to come: the way he built and connected chords and improvised melodies gave his playing a romantic quality that contrasted with much of 1950's Bebop. Classical composers such as Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel and Aleksandr Scriabin were influences along with jazz pianists Bud Powell and Horace Silver. His output was affected, at times during the 1960's, by heroin addiction, but he recovered with "The Bill Evans Album" in 1971. Over the course of his career, Evans won multiple Grammy Awards and reached wide audiences with TV and festival appearances, as well as recording and club dates. He was considered to be the most important jazz pianist of his generation, being an enormous influence on younger players such as Herbie Hancock, Chick Cores and Keith Jarrett. He became addicted to drugs again, this time cocaine, shortly before his death in 1980.

"BLUE IN GREEN" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoPL7BExSQU>

"WALTZ FOR DEBBIE" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH3GSrCmzC8>

"YOU MUST BELIEVE IN SPRING" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTIKzkdtW9I>

Wordsearch – Jam (page 13) - answers

The answers, in no particular order are:

SET; DAMSON ; CONSERVE; PLUM; FLAVOUR; STRAWBERRY; LABEL; PRESERVE; PECTIN; JAR; PEACH.



MUSICAL JOURNEYS - Meet the Mendelssohns: (Felix And Fanny) by Neil Pritchard



Brother and Sister Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn relied on each other to shape their very different musical careers. I'm going to illustrate how that occurred as their lives unfolded. I'm sure you've noticed but generally musical talent tend to run in families. Think of Rufus and Martha Wainwright, The Jackson 5, The Everly Brothers, Brian, Dennis and Carl Wilson (of The Beach Boys), and what about Classical Composers: Joseph and Michael Haydn, J.S Bach and older brother Johann Cristoph, and Robert and Clara Schumann. But long before most of those musical siblings, there were the Mendelssohns — Felix and Fanny. Fanny, in particular, has been unjustly neglected until very recently, when her music has begun to get the recognition it deserves. In many ways both her and Felix broke new ground and were major influences on composers of the romantic period, such as the Schumann brother and sister, Brahms and Liszt to mention a few. Again, only recently, has that been fully acknowledged in the classical world.

The Mendelssohns grew up making music together in Berlin at the beginning of the 19th century. Felix, younger by four years, became one of history's most brilliant composers. Fanny, a strong-willed pianist, but worried about her worth as a composer, has been overlooked. Still, as Felix's career soared and Fanny struggled to publish her pieces, the two remained close as the picture bears witness. The connection between Fanny and Felix was more than brother and sister, they were soul mates, although there were problems in their relationship to do with Fanny's role as a composer. I have selected 5 works from each of the composers that illustrate a range of their music, coupled with insights into their life and music. I'll be looking at each composer in turn, starting with Fanny. I hope that the music I have chosen will show you what remarkable composers they were. Let's begin with some of Fanny's earliest works Here's a selection of 4 songs written when she was 14 in 1819 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGewduXlzLM>

I think you'll agree that those songs showed incredible maturity for a young teenager. How did she get to this position at this early age? Fanny was born in Hamburg on 14 November 1805 and learned to play the piano when she was a child. She was taught by her mother, who in turn had been taught by a student of J.S. Bach's. Fanny could play all 24 Preludes from Bach's The Well-Tempered Clavier by the time she was 13. Her father, Abraham Mendelssohn, hired the conscientious Carl Friedrich Zelter to teach his children music theory and composition. Fanny soon became known to the Mendelssohn's circle of friends and acquaintances not just as an excellent pianist, but also as the composer of songs(lieder) and piano pieces. While Felix's education included lengthy travels, during which he was able to try out the roles of conductor and pianist, he also become acquainted with the famous musicians of the times. Fanny however was faced with many restrictions. A case of " A woman's place is in the home" unfortunately. At the age of 14 her father reminded her that she had to concentrate on her future role as a wife and mother. Her father was tolerant, rather than supportive of Fanny's musical talents, writing to her in 1820: "Music will perhaps become his (Felix's) profession, while for you it can and must be only an ornament." Her musical activities didn't reach beyond the bounds of the Mendelssohn's circle. Public concerts and the publication of musical works were not deemed to be womanly activities. In an attempt to make her compositions known beyond the inner circle of family friends she made presents of copies of her lieder and piano pieces to friends and acquaintance. Restricted to the domestic realm, the majority of Fanny's compositions were piano pieces and lieder which could be performed in the concerts held at the Mendelssohn's home.

Nevertheless, Fanny was able to reach at least a small circle of concert-goers by presenting her works in the “Sunday Musicales”, which were established during the early 1820s. Her father Abraham Mendelssohn hired musicians to play in these concerts which took place at the Mendelssohn's home every other Sunday from 11am. to 2pm. This gave both Felix and Fanny a chance to perform works by earlier and contemporary composers, and to try out their own works in a semi-public setting with a hand-picked audience. In 1829, when Felix left home to embark upon his first extended trip to England, the “Sunday Musicales” were not continued. In the spring of 1831 Fanny, who by then had married Wilhelm Hensel (in October 1829), decided to reinstate these concerts. She conducted and accompanied her choir, which consisted of about twenty singers, joined by instrumentalists who were friends of hers. They performed high-level performances of oratorios, opera arias and chamber music by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber and the Mendelssohn's. Here she was also able to make her own works known. These concerts became increasingly well attended over the years with Fanny presenting her works for piano solo, her lieder, duets, choral songs, a Piano Trio, as well as the Orchestral Overture of 1830. The première of the work was given by the Orchestra of the local Theatre: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SX1-wNcrzsk>

Early on, Fanny helped Felix with structuring some of his pieces. Later, Felix was supportive of his sister, but like their father discouraged her from actually publishing her music. Her talent was obvious to everybody. Her brother Felix knew it; he published half a dozen of her songs under his own name and declared them better than any others he knew. A series of songs by Fanny that were published under her brother Felix's name, included a song called ‘Italien’. This caused some embarrassment when, at a reception in Buckingham Palace, Queen Victoria told Felix Mendelssohn (who was by then the Queen's favourite composer) that she would sing her favourite song by the composer and began to sing ‘Italien’. Felix confessed that it was actually the work of his sister. Fanny displayed remarkable creative impulses and composed over 500 pieces in the space of thirty years. That certainly was remarkable achievement. One year, with a toddler at her feet, she nursed the family through an epidemic of cholera, and then wrote it out in a ‘Cholera Cantata’. What an amazing woman she was! So there's not much doubt about her commitment either. And yet, her adored little brother Felix, the international musical superstar, who encouraged and supported many other women as composers and performers, who knew her better than anybody, who trusted her judgement above all others – her brother would not approve of her desire to be a published composer, and have a life in the European musical world. There appears to be no record of why he did this, but there has been a lot of speculation that their father's negative views of women composers held sway with Felix.

Also it's worth noting that Fanny, whose talent and intellect were so formidable that even the best musicians were terrified of playing for her, was apparently only frightened of one man; and that man was Felix. Until 1829, when she was twenty-three and he was twenty, they were inseparable; they learned together, practised together and showed each other their work before making it public. Then, in April 1829, when Felix went off on a Grand Tour to give him the inspiration and experience he needed to become a famous composer (remember, in those days, if you didn't hear music live you didn't hear it, and most works were only performed a few times). Fanny, meanwhile, stayed home to prepare for marriage to a man she hadn't seen for seven years (but as in all the best fairy tales, turned out to be the hero). Her fiancé, Wilhelm Hensel, declared he wouldn't marry her unless she carried on composing. So it was he, not Felix, who kept her going after that. They got married in 1829 and she was henceforth known as Fanny Hensel. Felix pretty much disappeared from her life apart from letters and the odd visit. And that was the thing Fanny found hardest. Without Felix to listen, criticise but also encourage, Fanny frequently found it hard to believe in her own talent, or see any point in continuing to write music that, as far as she knew, neither she nor anybody else would ever hear. And yet she did, which shows her incredible resolve to continue with her composing career. In doing so she inspired other women to follow her path and she was the first woman to do so on a significant scale. And so on to music in the form of the String Quartet composed in 1834: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MExAO8CFg1k>

We move on to the late 1830's. Fanny only made her public performance debut in 1838, at the age of 33, when she performed her brother Felix's Piano Concerto No.1, this performance was highly praised, but as with so many aspects of her life it didn't manage to enhance her public profile. In 1839 the Hensel family was finally able to fulfil a long-standing wish: they spent a year travelling in Italy. This year was among the happiest in Fanny's life. In Italy she finally received recognition for her work beyond the family circle and became acquainted with various musicians who thought highly of her work and were supportive of her creativity.

The young French composer Charles Gounod (famous for his opera Faust), for example, wrote the following, "Mrs Hensel was an extremely learned musician and played the piano very well. Despite her small, slight figure she was a woman of excellent intellect and full of energy that could be read in her deep, fiery eyes. Along with all this she was an extremely talented pianist". After returning to Berlin, Fanny composed her most important piano work, the biographical cycle *Das Jahr* in 1841. During the period in which she lived Fanny was the only composer to use the idea of depicting each of the twelve months of the year musically, which she did in this work. And so to "June":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGPWL5HQxIk>

It was only in the last year of her life that Fanny, encouraged by the family friend Robert von Keudall and despite her brother's explicit objections, found the courage to start systematically having her works printed. Thus, in 1846 lieder, choral songs and piano pieces appeared with the opus numbers 1 to 7. She finished her last song on the day she died, at the age of forty-one. Within six months, Felix was dead too, quite possibly in part from grief and guilt. Here was the vivid, passionate voice of a woman who was deeply confident of her own talent, irresistibly driven to express it, and yet terrified of not being good enough, of being thought show-offy, or pushy, or any of those other words that are still too often used of women who behave like men.

To end this section on Fanny Mendelssohn I'm going to look at one of her finest and most original works: the *Hiob Cantata*. This was composed in 1831 (when she was only 26) and is a dramatic and expressive portrayal of Job's suffering as a test of his belief in God. The most amazing aspect to this work is that although she was fundamentally a Romantic composer, this work is written in the Baroque style (such as Bach's music), and it is no exaggeration to suggest that this work cannot be significantly exceeded by anything that J S Bach composed. It's a marvellous testament to this great composer.

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

(Two interesting footnotes: 2010 experts discovered that a work that had been attributed to Felix Mendelssohn since the 1970s was actually by Fanny. It had its first performance under her name on International Women's Day, 8 March 2017. Radio 3 from 2015 has celebrated International Women's Day with 24 hours of music by women composers and that has included works by Fanny Mendelssohn. This has done a lot to bring her music to the attention of a wider public and has encouraged concert promoters to include her music in their concerts).

And so to Felix. His short life (February 3, 1809 - November 4, 1847) for the most part justified his name: Felix, which means "happy, lucky" and from which we get the word "felicitous." (I'm sure by now you can think of a certain cat by that name!). It's interesting to note that the family had not been short of a "few pennies". They were born into a wealthy banking family. Also their grandfather was the great German Jewish Enlightenment philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn. Felix (later baptized Jacob Ludwig Felix) showed an early aptitude for music. Fortunately, he had parents willing to let him become a musician, and he received the finest training. As I've already mentioned Felix and Fanny's teacher was Carl Friedrich Zelter. Zelter gave him thorough, but very conservative, instruction. Felix was encouraged to follow Bach and Mozart, but not Beethoven. Nevertheless, the boy found out Beethoven for himself, and formed a deep appreciation and love of Beethoven's final period, particularly the middle and late piano sonatas, much to Zelter's puzzlement. His early music (up to roughly 1824, when he was 15) is incredibly accomplished for a child, but he began to write masterpieces from 15 onwards, in a form that began to change the course of musical history. Works of this period include the *Harmoniemarken* for band (1824), the *Octet*

(1825), and the Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream (1826). The Octet is a very original piece, generally acknowledged as Felix Mendelssohn's first masterwork.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivMD1UsswoY>

With these three pieces, he became one of the most important early Romantic composers. Felix's music blended Romantic sentiment and fantasy with a sort of clarity and poise you hear in Mozart's music. He became associated with a strand of composers that included Robert Schumann and reached its peak with Johannes Brahms. His exposure to Bach led to him conducting the St. Matthew Passion in 1829. This was an immensely influential performance that took Bach out of the exclusive hands of specialists and into a more general public sphere and helped to popularise Bach's music after years of neglect. Felix began to perform throughout Europe as a conductor and as a pianist to great success.

In 1829, he made his first trip to England where his composing and playing found a rapturous audience. Indeed, one can say that Mendelssohn dominated English music in the 19th century as completely as Handel had done in the 18th. He also made a tour of Scotland where he began work in 1830, at the age of 20, on his Hebrides Overture and "Reformation" Symphony. The Hebrides Overture is an early example of romantic music. It's a tempestuous one-movement work, inspired by the composer's visit to the Hebrides Islands off the west coast of Scotland. First performed in 1830, the piece was revised many times by its composer and premiered (as Overture to the Isles of Fingal) in London in 1832. (Fingal's Cave is one of the best known of all the caves in Scotland, situated on the uninhabited island of Staffa in the Inner Hebrides, Argyll), you'll see it, in all its dramatic splendour, in the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyZ5cHUaiBI>

Between 1830 and 1832 Felix travelled in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Switzerland and in 1832 returned to London, where he conducted The Hebrides and where he published the first book of the piano music he called "Songs Without Words", completed in Venice in 1830. Felix, whose music in its day was held to be remarkable for its charm and elegance, was gradually becoming the most popular of 19th-century composers in England. His main reputation was made in England, which, in the course of his short life, he visited no fewer than 10 times. At the time of these visits, the character of his music was held to be predominantly Victorian, and indeed he eventually became the favourite composer of Queen Victoria herself.

To return to the "Reformation" Symphony. Despite its numbering and opus number, Felix's 'Reformation' Symphony was actually his second symphony for full orchestra, predating his 'Scottish' and 'Italian' Symphonies. He began it in December 1829, just after returning to Berlin from his first visit to the Britain. His intention being to use it to mark the following year's 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, the assembly which had defined the core beliefs of Lutheran Protestantism. A number of factors conspired to prevent it from fulfilling this purpose, however, and the symphony was eventually premiered in Berlin in 1832. It may seem odd that a Jewish-born composer should have chosen the Protestant Reformation as a subject, but religious tolerance had been strong in the Mendelssohn family, at least since his grandfather had helped Prussian Jews obtain social equality. What is more, Felix and his siblings were baptised into the Christian faith in 1816.

There may have been a musical impulse for the work too. As I've already mentioned. since his mid-teens Felix had studied and enjoyed Bach, including some of the vocal works that at the time were considered impractical to perform. He had himself composed a number of works based on Lutheran hymn tunes (or chorales). In this context, a symphony with a finale based on one of the best-known of all chorales—Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God)—must have seemed a natural enough progression. It is very rarely performed these days, which is a great pity as I think this is one of the finest symphonies ever written and deserves to be heard in its entirety. With that in mind I have included a recording of the last movement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnOcorHS7w8>

What an incredible work for a 20 year old! As you might imagine there was a lot more to come over the next 16 years of his life. Like many composers before him Felix could not rely on his compositions to "pay

the bills". He needed a "day job"! He found it in Düsseldorf in 1833 becoming Director of Music for the city. As part of his job he was expected to conduct sacred music, this led to performances of large choral works by Handel and Haydn, and to an interest in trying an oratorio himself. The result, St. Paul in 1836, proved immensely popular and established him firmly in the forefront of contemporary composers. Although less popular today, it is still considered a milestone in the development of the choral music. Unfortunately he encountered problems with "the power that be" in Düsseldorf and this prompted Mendelssohn to look for other employment. During this same period of time a concerted effort by several members of the board of directors for the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra was underfoot to entice Mendelssohn to be their conductor.

He was appointed in 1835 and served as director until 1847 (the last year of his life), during which time the orchestra was transformed into a cultural institution. Idolised from the beginning of the 1835-36 concert season, Felix the conductor displayed a great passion in his quest for musical perfection and established a broad orchestral repertory. His outstanding musical accomplishments at the Gewandhaus were publicly acknowledged and supported by Schumann. He sponsored several premières including Schumann's first, second and fourth symphonies as well as his own E minor Violin Concerto and promoted fundraising through benefit concerts. The Violin Concerto proved to be one his most enduring work, along with his wedding march, which is the one work by Mendelssohn that the general public will be familiar with. I've picked the slow movement <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOd26lbPc8o>

Felix continued to produce a number of outstanding chamber, sacred and orchestral works in the 1840's but he was often working long hours as conductor and composer and this, as well as the death of his beloved sister Fanny, led to a series of strokes and finally death at the early age of 38. Among the works left incomplete, there were fragments of a third oratorio, Christus, which arguably could have become his greatest, and an opera, Die Lorelei. During his lifetime Felix was regularly compared (with good reason) to Mozart. He won the championship of only one composer - Robert Schumann, and by the 1880s his reputation predictably began to sink. (Mind you this was nothing compared to the fate of Fanny's music which was only revived in the last 10 years). Wagner in the 1870's had singled out Mendelssohn as an icon for decadence in his notorious essay "On Jewishness in Music."

George Bernard Shaw, in a classic example of love-hate, made him the poster-boy for Victorian gentility. However, he praised the early music as that "of a very young composer astonishing the world by a musical style at once fascinating, original and perfectly new." In the Thirties the Nazis systematically tried to erase the composer from German music. The fact that he was baptised Protestant and that the family had converted in the 1820s (taking the name "Mendelssohn-Bartholdy," to distinguish themselves from all those "lower-class Mendelssohns") made no difference, of course. Ironically, religion wasn't that big a deal to Felix himself. Despite his many sacred works, he generally approached the subject either as a practical musical matter or as drama. His conversion was more a matter of pleasing his father than anything else.

The work I'm going to end with is Elijah, one of his last works completed in 1847. Mendelssohn's oratorios Paulus (St. Paul, 1836), Elijah (1847) and Christus (1847) proved to be the most successful and enduring oratorios produced during the nineteenth century. Because of his close links with this country they played a key role in the revival of choral music in this country, influencing composer such as Parry, Stanford and Elgar amongst many others. At the time of its first performances in 1846, Elijah was hailed as one of the great oratorios, alongside Handel's Messiah. The impetus to complete the work came in the form of a commission from the Birmingham Music Festival. This again shows how his works were much sought after in this country. Felix true to the principles of his grandfather—felt that the work should be sung in the language of its listeners. A translation into English was therefore prepared for the premiere. Elijah tells the story of the prophet with imposing grandeur, inspirational orchestration and beautiful arias, recitatives and choruses. This great piece requires mighty orchestral and choir forces with over 400 musicians taking part, including a large orchestra and over 300 singers. I've chosen a passage from a recording with a "strong Welsh connection"! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXB33PhDBus>

When I Get Really Old by John Williams

I'll wear open-toe sandals and never wash my feet
and learn how to cheat at cards.
I'll buy a new hat every day of the week
and forget to pay my council tax.
Brush back my hair into a spikey spike
and become the oldest punk in Newport town
French kiss all the old dears
as they play at scramble in the U3A.
Miss-tune my battered old ukulele
and sing a thousand miles off key
When in company, I'll lick my plate clean
just to see their eyes glare and faces gape.
Oh God! Wait a minute if you please,
I did all that yesterday, eating faggots and jam.

STRESS – relieved by Bernard Hiscocks!

The confusion created when ones
mind overrides the body's basic
desire to choke the living daylight
out of someone who desperately
needs it !!!

Labyrinth – negotiated by Rob Wilkinson

Labyrinthine, maze-like, our minds wander,
Meander, through paths of delusion,
Self-deception, doubt, recrimination-forever
Searching for simplicity, that single track of unity
That dissolves duplicity, halts hesitation
Connects....
Those myriads of momentary images.

