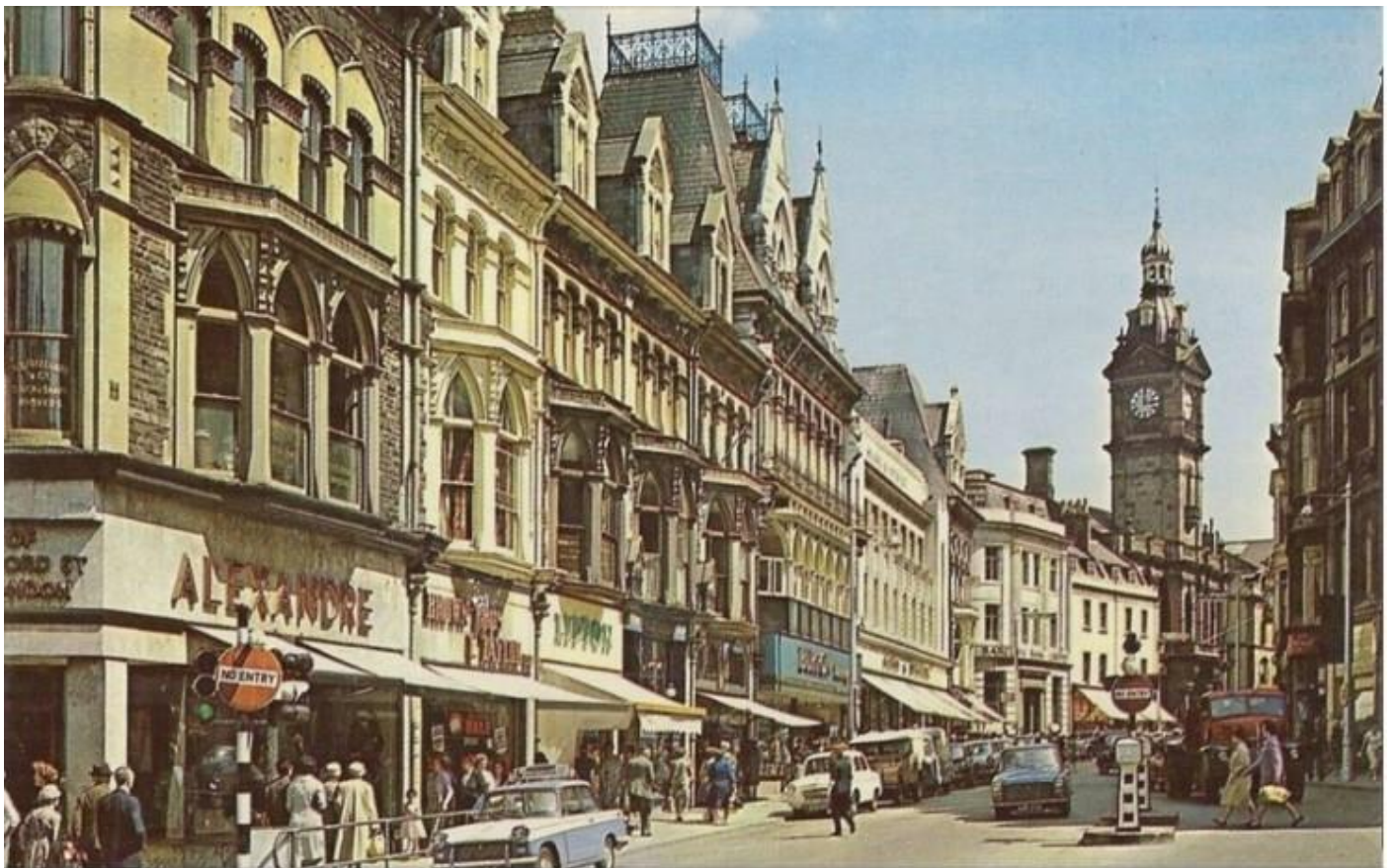


# DESERT ISLAND TIMES

*Sharing fellowship in*  
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No.18

17<sup>th</sup> July 2020



*Commercial Street, c1965*

*A MISCELLANY OF  
CONTRIBUTIONS  
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

## U3A Bake Off by Mike Brown

Having more time on my hands recently I thought, as well as baking bread, I would add cake-making to my C.V.

Here is a Bara Brith type recipe that is so simple to make and it's so much my type of cake that I don't think I'll bother buying one again. (And the quantities to use are in 'old money'!!)

### "CUP OF TEA CAKE"

#### Ingredients

8oz mixed fruit  
Half a pint of cooled strong tea  
Handful of dried mixed peel  
8oz self-raising flour #  
4oz granulated sugar  
1 small egg

# Tesco only had wholemeal SR flour (not to be confused ☹ with self-isolating flour - spell checker problem there! which of course means "No Flour At All!") but the wholemeal only enhanced the taste and made it quite rustic.

In a large bowl mix together the mixed fruit, mixed peel and sugar. Pour over the tea, cover and leave overnight to soak in the fridge.

Next day preheat oven to 160°C/145°C fan/Gas Mark 4. Stir the mixture thoroughly before adding the flour a bit at a time, then mix in the beaten egg and stir well.

Grease a 2lb/7" loaf tin and pour in the mixture. Bake in the centre of the oven for 50-55 mins. Insert a skewer to check it is cooked (it should come out clean) and leave to cool.

Slice and serve buttered (optional) with a cuppa.

No sweat!



## 1. Cryptic Crossword Pic'n'Mix Clues - Reversals by Angela Robins

I expect by now you are missing my Easypeasy Sessions on how to solve cryptic crosswords! Hmm?....

I explained, very basically, the concepts of the twelve different types of clues. If you have attempted a crossword from your daily newspaper, you will have realised it only included a few clues that were so simple: but they are helpful to get it started. Many would have been 'Pic'n'Mix Clues' which are a mixture of 'The Dozen' such as the Reversal Clue, e.g. Ward/ returned/ the raffle (4) = Draw.

Combined with other clues they yield whole words or single letters to form a composite answer. e.g. Singer somewhat better ONE Tends to retrospectively (5). = Tenor. 'Somewhat' hints it is a Hidden Word and 'retrospectively' to reverse it.

Or - Amount returning to crush rodent (8). = Mus/quash. 'Amount' is exchanged to 'Sum' and reversed and 'quash' is also a word exchange.

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

Try these clues - they are a mixture but all include the Reversal Clue element and a definition of the answer required. The answers are on page 8.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. In Aviemore Zoo turnover is thus rated for V.A.T. (4)           | Hidden Word                                |
| 2. The eruption holds back liquidated product (5).                 | Hidden Word                                |
| 3. Silk fabric some sell, utterly reversible (5).                  | Hidden Word                                |
| 4. And not coming back from seafront (3).                          | Hidden Word                                |
| 5. Came first turned immediately (3)                               | Word Exchange                              |
| 6. Return a favour for the artist (6).                             | Word Exchange                              |
| 7. Lout returned a young man (3).                                  | Word Exchange                              |
| 8. A shopping precinct going round animal (5).                     | Word Exchange                              |
| 9. Half rushed over to study group (7).                            | Word Exchange                              |
| 10. Serve your sentence, it is back in the top of St Paul's (2,4). | Word Exchange                              |
| 11(D). Random supporter came up with weird rarity (9).             | Word Exchange/Anagram                      |
| 12. Leap about with the Spanish dish (6).                          | A-Z Association                            |
| 13. King retires such strong beast to copy his page (5).           | A-Z association/Word Exchange              |
| 14. Encounters energy turning into admiration                      | Word Exchange/A-Z Abbreviation             |
| 15. Attempt to return iron to castle (6)                           | A-Z Abbreviation/Word Exchange             |
| 16. Trim back hard on hilarity (5).                                | A-Z abbreviation                           |
| 17(D). Ten plus nil to rise into gas.                              | Numbers representing letters/Word Exchange |
| 18. Reversing in/ jump initially/ in/air above/ he danced (8).     | Part Word/Word Exchange                    |
| 19. Arrest most of the backing group (3)                           | Part Word                                  |
| 20. Return the bed before the first payment owed (4).              | Part Word                                  |

## Death on the Usk by Nigel Speedy

Just one week into the job, Jessica Davies was about to have a murder on her hands.

Blithely unaware, she gazed across the River Usk from her second floor flat at the 'Steel Wave'. The world's second highest tidal rise and fall exposed large expanses of dirty brown mud at low tide. Not a pretty sight, she thought, feeling vaguely annoyed that the Usk Barrage plans had been turned down.

It hardly mattered now though. She was back, and with a promotion. Detective Chief Inspector at 35 wasn't to be sneezed at.

She'd been raised an only child, spoiled rotten by her dad, a police Sergeant in the Newport force. She followed in his footsteps straight from University as a beat constable.

The internal vacancies poster promised: 'the opportunity to serve in an area offering excitement and opportunities to develop your expertise', and she transferred to Leeds.

She quickly made detective constable. It suited her temperament. Her superiors noticed, and they put her on the fast track for detective inspector.

That promotion meant a move to Greater Manchester where violent crime was rising. There were 14 homicides and 12 attempted murders in her first year.

She instinctively knew how to get the best out of her team, and once on a case she couldn't switch off, always analysing, playing through the various scenarios; the 'what ifs'.

Her father's death had been unexpected, and with her mother alone and unwell, she applied for a transfer just as the DCI position arose. She was shortlisted, and got the job.

So here she was, back in Newport, host city of the Ryder Cup and NATO, perhaps finally about to live up to its promise of becoming 'The Gateway to Wales.'

She surveyed her slender figure in the mirror. At 5ft 10' she was taller than some of her male colleagues. Presentable but plain she thought, as she flicked the ends of her straight dark hair from her right eyebrow. Her mobile phone buzzed.

'Davies.'

'Evans here. Sorry to trouble you Ma'am, but a body's been found under the Transporter Bridge. Homicide.'

'Who's on the scene?'

'The finder, DI Jones and PC Crawley. Shall I say you'll attend?'

'Yes, right away, thank you sergeant'.

Jessica arrived to see a middle-aged man being driven away. She ducked under the crime scene tape. DI Jones advised that the finder would be making a full statement at the station.

'His dog found the body. It started pulling her wrist before he could call it to heel. He dialled 999 from the road.'

Forensics were being directed to the body, near the north-west caisson. The face of a woman in her late teens lay on its left side part buried in the mud. Several strands of long blonde hair were stuck to her right cheek, and a knife handle protruded from her neck just above her right collar bone. She wore blue jeans and a white sleeveless top. No shoes.

The suspended gondola of one of the remaining six operational transporter bridges was nearing the barrier on its last crossing of the day. It had three cars and half a dozen pedestrians aboard. Jessica quickly summed up the situation. 'Look, you've got your hands full here. I'll have a look around while you question them.'

She contemplated the body, then her gaze travelled up to the high-level walkway breasting the track between the steel towers overlooking the city. She knew that some visitors walk across to experience the spectacular views before returning by gondola.

She saw a woman's wedge shoe lying on a grating, then a movement caught her eye at the far shore. Someone was gingerly descending the zig-zag steel steps.

She radioed in. 'DCI Davies here. There's someone in a grey tracksuit leaving the Transporter Bridge on the east side. Have that person brought to me on the west side please.'

PC Crawley came over. 'Forensics say the body's still warm Ma'am.'

'Thanks constable. Is that a dog unit car about to leave?'

'Yes Ma'am. PC Andy Wade's going off duty.'

'Ask him to get some wellies on and bring his dog here, would you?'

'Yes Ma'am.'

Forensics were finishing up, and scenes of crime manager Johnson approached.

'Ugly', he said, 'and recent'.

'D'you mind if a police dog visits the scene?' asked Jessica as the dog-handler arrived.

'Don't see why not, he'll have to be quick though. The tide's on the turn, and we'll be removing the body before the water reaches it''.

'PC Wade, can you get your dog to sniff the knife handle?' asked Jessica. 'Not the body, just the knife handle?'

'Yes Ma'am.' And the pair moved towards the body.

Her radio buzzed. 'They've picked up a man, and they're on their way.'

'Thanks', she said, and turned back to Johnson. 'One of the forensic team might want to check the walkway, 'she pointed. 'That looks like a shoe'.

Her phone rang. It was her mother. Damn! She'd promised to visit.

'Hi Mum. Something's come up. I can't see me getting away for a while'.

'That's OK Jess, if you're busy'.

Jessica sensed that she needed to talk. 'I'm OK for a minute, d'you need anything?' she asked, watching the German Shepherd sniffing the knife handle. Andy Wade, feet planted wide in the mud, was keeping the dog on a tight leash.

'Nothing that can't wait Jess. Pop in when you can. Love you.'

'Love you too Mum, bye'.

Reinforcements were controlling the gathering crowd, and she saw that DI Jones was completing his last interview.

A patrol car pulled up with a man of around 40 in a grey tracksuit. Jessica sized him up. He seemed strangely attractive, with a square chin, blond wavy hair, a little tousled and slightly receding. As he stepped from the vehicle, she noticed that he was medium build, a few inches shorter than Jessica. No sign of blood on his tracksuit top. He had strong hands, with finger-nails bitten down to the quick. Unlikely to find DNA under those, she thought.

As he closed the car door with his left hand, she recalled that the knife had entered from the victim's right.

Jessica walked over. 'Sorry to trouble you sir, but we'd like to ask you a few questions.'

'What about?'

'You've just been over the top, haven't you?'

'So?'

'Alone?'

His smug reply was drowned out by the furious barking of the mud-spattered Alsatian, which was dragging his handler straight towards him with teeth bared and snarling ferociously. Andy pulled him up inches from the man, whose cockiness evaporated.

His shoulders slumped, his face took on a defeated look, and he blurted out.

'Look, I'm terrified of heights, and I froze at the top. I had to stop her laughing.'

Jessica interrupted. 'Could you stop there, sir?' Any confession would count for little unless she read him his rights. He stood passively until she had finished.

Jessica continued. 'You were saying sir?', nodding imperceptibly at PC Crawley, who began taking notes.'

He opened up completely. His name was David Walsh, a Pill boy, born a few streets away. The girl was Sandra, a Texan studying at Cardiff University on a day-trip to Newport. They'd met in the Waterloo Hotel across the road and he'd boasted of his local knowledge.

She wanted to go over the top of the Transporter Bridge, and his pride prevented him from admitting his fear of heights. He somehow managed to follow her up those 277 steps by not looking down, both hands gripping the handrails, but on reaching the top and seeing the river bank far below, he froze.

Sandra turned, and the young girl, who up to then had been hanging on every word of the experienced older man, seemed to change as realisation dawned.

A twisted smile appeared on her face, and she moved closer.

'Afraid of heights Dave? Pathetic!' Then came the laughter. He couldn't take it.

Pill was a tough area, and Dave carried a knife for self-defence. It appeared in his hand automatically, but the sight of it merely made her laugh even more.

'What an excuse for a man! Is that supposed to frighten me Dave? Pathetic!'

That word again – her last. She went over the rail backwards as he fell to his knees, and somehow crawled to the far side.

'Thank you Mr. Walsh,' said Jessica. 'We'll hear the rest at the station,' nodding at the two officers, who drove him away, just as another car pulled up.

Reporters, she thought, and turned to DI Jones. 'D'you mind dealing with the South Wales Argus?'

'Not at all Ma'am, and well spotted. No-one on the gondola saw her fall, so he might have got away with it. And using the dog like that was nothing short of genius'.

She managed to reach the driving seat before the blush came to her cheeks, and she pressed the speed dial.

'Hi Mum. Put the kettle on. I should be there in 10 minutes.'

### **First Love by John Williams**

sun blooms meadows as soft summer sings  
as we lie under limes by quiet water flow.  
gossamer kisses on lark wings soar.  
as dreamy days drift by for young lovers  
bumblebees buzz from hour to hour.

plump purple plums ripen on the bough  
the slow air heavy with bird song  
and the sweet scent of new-mown hay  
corn grows tall awaiting our fall  
as soft grey clouds shade the sun.



## Sudoku

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

The four puzzles get progressively more difficult.

No 1 is "Easy", No 2 is "Medium", No 3 is "Hard" and No 4 is "Evil". Good luck!

1. Easy

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

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

### Cryptic Crossword Pic'n'Mix Clues (page 3) - Answers

1. Zero. 2. Puree. 3. Tulle. 4. Nor. 5. Now. 6. Drawer. 7. Boy. 8. Llam a. 9. Semi nar. 10. Do ti me. 11(D). Arb itrary. 12. Pael la. 13. Xer ox. 14. E steem. 15. ef fort. 16 Mirt H. 17(D). X enon. 18. Ni j in sky. 19. nab. 20. deb t.



## **A Sojourn in Usk – Out of Lockdown at last! By Ann Anderson**

Since Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July we have been allowed to travel more than five miles from our homes in Wales. Always being one to take advantage of time to travel, I persuaded Michael, my better half, to break away from our delightful village of St Brides and take a short trip to the historic town of Usk. Usk's history extends back to being the earliest Roman legionary fortress in Wales, called Burrium and constructed around AD55. Eventually Caerleon took over as goods were easier to deliver there and not so much flooding occurred. The remains of the Roman fortress still remain near the River Usk.

We parked just off the main square and took an interesting walk up to the gate of Usk's 11<sup>th</sup> century Norman Castle which was, unfortunately, closed because of the virus. Usk Castle lies in ruin just behind the main road running through the town. It is nevertheless a delightful place to visit with giant lions balanced over the gates. We walked further up the hill through wooded lanes. It was here in 1405 a battle that was very important to the Welsh occurred.

In 1403 Owain Glyndwr controlled most of Wales. He was descended from the Princes of Powys, had been educated in England and even served in the King's wars with distinction. Wales in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century was a cowed nation and many people were discontented with the policies of Edward 1 in his subordination of Wales. Glyndwr returned to Wales after studying law and he had a good income and a fine moated mansion in Sycarth. The story tells that he fell out with one of his neighbours over land and could not get any satisfaction from the king. Finally he raised the standard outside Ruthy in September 1400 and was proclaimed Prince of Wales by his followers. Even Shakespeare in Henry IV described Glyndwr as "not in the roll of common men". Henry IV laid down severe laws against the Welsh, even outlawing their language and bards. This guerrilla war raged for around 12 years and Glyndwr razed Usk to the ground in 1403.

However, just behind Usk Castle in 1405 the battle of Pwll Melyn took place. Pwll Melyn means Yellow Pool, a reference to the water feature that still exists, albeit in reduced form, at the Castle Oak Pond. The Pwll that gives the battle its name was clearly on the line of retreat as numerous human skeletons have been recovered from it. Welsh casualties were heavy, with one source suggesting that 1500 were killed including Glyndwr's brother, Tudur. Glyndwr's son was captured and sent to the Tower of London where he died in 1411 and 300 prisoners were beheaded outside the walls of Usk Castle. This really marked the end of the rebellion in South East Wales but Glyndwr did carry on his campaign until at least 1409 when his wife, daughter and grandchildren were captured by the English at Harlech. Glyndwr, despite being given a free pardon in 1412, never did surrender and disappeared into history. One of his family did eventually become King of England as Henry VII was a descendant of his through the Tudor dynasty.

We walked on past the battlefield to the Old Station area through sunny, leafy glades and crossed the old railway bridge across the River Usk. A path alongside the river and playing fields, where lots of families were relaxing and having picnics and some paddling in the river-bank, took us back to the main bridge into Usk. There are lots of plaques on buildings in the main Usk Street which tell you where the original gaol, hospital and leper colony were situated as well as other historic buildings. It is a small town but even just after lockdown there were quite a few interesting antique shops open. Coffee was on offer in a flower-decked garden just off the main street and we succumbed to the bakery near the square and bought some delicious cakes for our tea, There is also a great fish-and-chip shop near the castle where we purchased our lunch.

Usk is also renowned for its flower displays and has won the Wales in Bloom competition. Even in the midst of a pandemic they have managed to live up to this reputation and the town was beautifully decorated with flora throughout.

There is a lot more to see in Usk and we intend to return soon to visit the Castle and one of the tempting restaurants when they reopen. We haven't seen the Norman church yet and the Garden Centre situated on the road back to Caerleon serves a very good afternoon tea too!



The River Usk at Usk Bridge

### **We May Not Be Meeting at Shaftesbury Street but .....**

Although the necessary closure of Shaftesbury Street has meant that none of our classes can meet as they normally would, some of our groups have found different ways of continuing their activities. This week we are focussing on our Ukelele Beginners group who, since the lifting of the embargo on travel from 6<sup>th</sup> July, have decided to meet on Thursday mornings in the bandstand at Belle Vue Park, Newport.

They met for the first time last week – when, mercifully, the weather was not too bad! Although the number of instrumentalists was lower than would be in class, those who were able to attend enjoyed a practice session which turned into something of a public concert! The café manager provided chairs and, as the practice got under way, so did the number of “passers-by” increase and Jackie Morgan (the group Convenor) was delighted to report that the performances received applause.

At the end of the session the players enjoyed a well-deserved, socially-distanced cup of coffee.

Thanks to Jackie Morgan and Linda Parker for the photographs and for the information about the group’s venture.





## Early Days in Bedford by Rob Wilkinson

Some of you will know that we used to live in Porthcawl, where my father ran the little steam train that ran from Coney Beach fair to the Harbour. But we moved from Porthcawl to Bedford when I was about 9 and stayed there for 3 years. I really liked Bedford; it had plenty of facilities, a lovely wide river, the Ouse, excellent places to cycle which weren't too hilly and a really good school, Goldington Green Primary, which I attended for nearly 2 years.

Memory is an unreliable narrator and I find it strange that I can remember four male teachers, but not one lady! My art teacher was Mr Jackson who helped us to make strange patterns with potatoes, the Head was Mr Greaves, with a pleasant smell of pipe tobacco near his office, my Year 5 teacher was Mr Shepherd, balding but kindly enough, but my favourite was Mr Richard Linger, my Year 6 teacher. I only found out that his name was Richard when I did the scoring for Bedford Town Cricket team, for whom he bowled. But he was a very fair, unruffled, authoritative teacher whom I greatly respected. Things got even better when I realised that being in an annex 300 yards from the main school meant that Mr Linger could extend the breaks and lunchtimes if he felt we had made enough progress.....and guess what we did in those breaks? Played cricket with a soft ball, of course! Another quirk of memory means that I can only remember three of the thirty pupils, one boy, Derek Wright, whom I helped on his fishing project after I'd finished mine on the Countries of the World, and two girls, Susan Cavill and Susan Kidderminster. Unusually, I preferred the blond, Susan Cavill, to her darker-haired friend, but when I got a message that the former loved me, I was far too busy playing cricket with 14 year olds on the common, than to have time for her...I was only 11!

The other highlight of being at Goldington Green Primary was becoming captain of the football team, playing at No. 10 and scoring lots of goals. I even made it onto the radar of the Bedford Town Under 11 team as reserve, though sadly I never made it onto the pitch, probably because having to wear my glasses meant that I could hardly head the ball! My memory reminds me of the funny occasion that Stephen Clarke forgot his shorts and was forced to play in a girls' skirt and the better moment when, unusually, my younger brother Martin was playing with me in a Cup Match against Putnoe P.S. and he gave me a brilliant pass from which I scored the winning goal. Happy days.

My final year in Bedford was not quite so good; I moved on to a very formal and strict Grammar School, which lacked the warmth and friendliness of Goldington. I played on the wing for the U12 rugby team, but got so bored and cold playing there, that I determined to transfer to outside half, which I did eventually.

Then there was the winter of 1962/63...that was a proper winter and I think Bedford got it worse than South Wales for we were always being told that there were no mountains between us and the Urals. I think the temperature dropped to minus 19 Celsius and I went down with a bad bout of pleurisy after we were stupidly sent out on a cross country run in freezing conditions. I think I was off school for a month and the pipes froze twice. Those were the good old days when the insides of windows were frozen hard.

Soon afterwards, my happy days in Bedford came to an end and we returned to the wetter, but less cold atmosphere of Monmouthshire. So, here's your memory test....how many of your fellow pupils can you remember from the last year of Primary School? Six or more would not surprise me and it's usually women who have the better memories!

### Wordsearches submitted by Barbara Phillips

Can you find the 15 words connected with HARRY POTTER in this grid?

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

Can you find the 12 musical terms starting with A in the grid below?

O	P	R	A	H	O	T	U	A
I	M	S	O	S	E	O	A	A
G	E	A	L	T	T	S	C	N
G	E	H	L	A	L	C	C	D
E	U	O	T	L	O	A	E	A
P	R	I	I	R	E	I	N	N
R	G	E	D	G	L	G	T	T
A	A	I	R	A	A	N	R	E
M	O	S	P	E	D	D	R	O
N	A	N	T	H	E	M	A	I
A	C	O	U	S	T	I	C	S

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Answers on page 18

**'The Saint' - A further response to articles by Gerald Lee (DIT 16) and Barbara Phillips (DIT 17)**  
**from David Jenkins**

It was Norman Kent who was killed by Rayt Marius in the novel 'The Last Hero' which was later retitled 'The Saint Closes The Case'. This was I believe the only explicit case of one of 'the good guys' dying.

I recall in early stories another assistant - Simon Templar's 'man' - his valet come chef come general dogsbody was Horace. Or more correctly 'Orace. As I remember he had an impressive moustache which was given as much prominence as the man himself.

My parents owned a newsagent in Cardiff for many years, and I had the luxury of reading magazines before they were put out for sale. I used to scour the motoring magazines seeking information on a particular red-and-cream roadster before eventually discovering that Simon's car, the Hirondele, was as fictitious as the character.

For me The Saint is forever linked with Roger Moore and the element within Marius' story arc of a death ray, an electron-cloud machine capable of turning anything to ash, links to his other great role, that of James Bond and adversaries set on destroying the world.

Another link arises concerning firearms. Roger Moore had an intense dislike of guns and detested having to portray their use. Simon Templar often spoke of his dislike of guns, much preferring to use his trusty throwing-knife. Diehard fans of Templar will recall that the knife was named Belle.

Barbara, you seem to have sneaked into my house for the photographs of your collection! I have similar shelves here holding the books. Especially surprising when you consider how long ago they must have been published, is the fact that we have the same imprint of 'Call For The Saint'.

Gerald, I laughed at your comment that the Val Kilmer film was 'at the very least embarrassing'. I'd regard even that dismissive opinion of the film as being unduly charitable!

**"And Now For The Shipping Forecast ..." by Mike Brown**

The Shipping Forecast has been riding the radio waves for over 90 years. As a small lad I remember listening to it around bedtime as I snuggled under the covers after a mug of something warm and prepared to be gently rocked to sleep. At first I didn't get it, but then neither did half the people who listened to it - that was its magic!

It is, of course, the weather conditions of 31 ocean regions around the U.K. First aired in 1924, the forecast has become to us land-lubbers a hypnotic litany of nonsensical seafaring phrases that has been likened to poetry or a prayer. It is 3 minutes to let the mind wander among monotonous tones - as familiar as the National Anthem or the solemn chimes of Big Ben.

Here are some of the most interesting extracts of an A-Z of Shipping Forecast Trivia I gleaned from a 2016 Radio Times article which also promoted a book by Nic Compton.

**A** - The loss of 200 ships during a storm in 1859 prompted the first maritime weather forecast which was published in The Times. More than half of those who died were aboard the steam clipper Royal Charter, which perished off the coast of **Anglesey**.

**B** - The **Bell Rock** lighthouse, serving the Forth Shipping area, is reputedly the oldest offshore lighthouse in the world. So expertly was it built that no structural changes have been made in the 205 years since.

**D** - One of the most evocative areas is **Dogger**, a large sandbank in the North Sea named after the Dutch 'dogger' boats that fished the area for cod.

**F** - Captain of HMS Beagle, Tory MP and governor of New Zealand, Robert FitzRoy created the 1st printed shipping forecast in 1859. Sadly he committed suicide just 6 years later. Amid much controversy the shipping area Finisterre was renamed FitzRoy in 2002; at nearly 200,000 square miles it is the largest of all the areas.

**H** - In 1949, while still being used as target practice by British bombers, the German island of **Heligoland** gave its name to a North Sea shipping area. Diplomacy triumphed and was later renamed German Bight.

**K** - "**Keeping Up Appearances**" is one of many shows to doff its cap to the forecast. - "I don't have an exact compass bearing to hand, but we'll be on the river near Oxford" - trumpeted Hyacinth while demanding a personalised forecast!

**L** - The daily reports are broadcast on Radio 4 **LW**. But for how much longer is unclear. Former presenter Peter Jefferson has said that because of the age of the transmitting masts the service might have to be retired.

**N** - **Nautical** predictions were 1st broadcast to ships in 1911 and on the BBC from 1924. Services were suspended during the 2 world wars.

**O** - As British as Bond, Brunel and Branagh, the forecast was celebrated in Danny Boyle's **Olympics 2012** Opening Ceremony.

**P** - **Phenomenal** is the term used to describe the biggest wave predictions - those over 14 metres. Smooth and slight are at the other, more comfortable, end of the scale.

**Q** - **God Save the Queen** is still played at the end of the 12.48am forecast, before Radio 4 says 'goodnight' and switches to BBC World Service.

**R** - Situated between the UK and Iceland, **Rockall** is also the name of an islet that became the subject of a territorial dispute. It was resolved in 1972 and retained by the UK.

**S** - **Sailing By** is the music that precedes the late-night bulletin. It's used by sailors searching for the broadcast and also several celebrities as a Desert Island Disc choice.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFdas-kMF74>

**T** - Off the coast of Portugal, **Trafalgar** is the most remote sea area which is only included in the 12.48am forecast.

**U** - North and South **Utsire** are named after an island off the west coast of Norway called Utsira. Why the spelling difference? Utsire is the archaic spelling.

**V** - is for **veering**. It means when the wind changes in a clockwise direction. If it goes anti-clockwise, it's a 'backing' wind.

**W** - **Wight** is one of eight sea areas named after islands. Sandbanks (Viking, Dogger) and estuaries (Cromarty, Forth) account for some others.

**X** - There was much **X-certificate** cursing among England fans when coverage of the final balls in the 2011 Ashes-winning match was halted in order to switch to the 12.48am forecast.

**Y** - Despite the many clever electronic systems for collecting weather data, most **yachtsmen** and women still rely on the forecast before setting off to sea.

**Z** - The final word goes to forecast reader **Zeb Soanes**. "Hearing the forecast is like a nightly census of the waters that surround us ... the listener tucked up in bed at home takes comfort that they are safe and warm offering thoughts to those battened down far at sea."

.....That is the end of the Shipping Forecast.



## What We Were Doing ... - Angela Robins

Three years ago a coach full of our members went on a short break staying at York arranged by what we now call The Out & About Group. *En route* we stopped for a quick lunch at Planters' Garden Centre, Tamworth. We then boarded the coach (which was now filling up with unwieldy souvenirs) and made our way to the attractive town of Beverley.

Most explored the narrow streets with its many distinguished houses built during the prosperous days of the medieval cloth trade, whilst others visited the Minster, a museum, or just relaxed outside the market square's cafes. We continued to our hotel at York where we all dined together each evening.

The following day we were dropped off in the heart of York City for a free day to explore at our own pace. We found traces of Romans, Saxons, Vikings and Normans in the gateways and walls. The gothic Minster, which dominates the city, rubs shoulders with lovely old Georgian and Victorian buildings.

In contrast the National Railway Museum moved us into the 20th century, paying tribute to York's importance as a railway centre from the early days of steam. There we could see an unrivalled collection of engineering brilliance and eight iconic engines including a Japanese Bullet Train and Britain's Mallard; the world's fastest Maglev and steam locomotive.

The next morning was spent at Castle Howard; one of the great palaces of Europe. We explored at leisure the sumptuous interiors which include decadent bedrooms, lavish drawing rooms, the stunning Great Hall and the vast Long Gallery. Then a stroll along the woodland walks to discover some of the temples, fountains and lakes in the 1000 acre parkland. After arranging our own lunches and a last visit to the garden shop for yet more plants, we enjoyed a leisurely ride home.





## My Childhood (and later) Memories by Dave Woolven

### **Holidays**

In the 1950s money was in short supply, mostly we went for day trips to Barry Island or Porthcawl. We occasionally had a caravan at Trecco Bay, Porthcawl (where I watched a caravan burn to the ground). But one time we went to distant lands - a caravan at Bognor Regis. The highlight was the visit of the Honey Cart. Each caravan had a chemical toilet in a little shed. The horse drawn Honey Cart would visit to empty said buckets. If the driver had been busy, his cart would be full and as it lurched along, 'it' would slop over. I wonder if he washed his hands before he had his sandwiches?

### **Childhood home.**

Until I married, I lived in a terraced house in Baneswell. These houses dated from the 1850s - no electricity. In the early 1900s each house was given 5 lights. The wiring was VIR (Vitrified India Rubber) the conductor was covered in rubber in a cotton sheath and the whole within wooden conduits. Lights were operated by super safe brass switches (you'd soon know if there was a fault). Over the years, the rubber would perish and the cotton would rot. Our house was one of multiple occupancy - we shared it with ten million black beetles, silverfish and mice who used to hold regular parties behind the skirting boards. The 'lav' was at the bottom of the garden - shared with everything on multiple legs, at night you had a candle in a jam jar which blew out just as you got to the door. No Andrex - squares of Daily Mirror on a string although we were a little posh, sometimes we had squares of Radio Times

### **Hobbies/interests.**

I've always been interested in railways from when I was running around in three cornered trousers. When I was made redundant (Well done, good and faithful servant, shut the door on your way out) I became a volunteer on the West Somerset Railway, working on restoring steam locomotives. I was able to go about once every 2 months for the weekend. Accommodation was in an old coach that in the long and distant past had been converted into a camping coach (remember them?). The WSR had acquired it for the volunteers - it had through flow ventilation - the wind whistled up through where the floor had been. Having worked all my life in heavy maintenance and with very high pressure steam, I had a fair idea of moving heavy lumps of metal that didn't want to be moved. I loved being told that "this will be awkward/hard/need several men/etc". With years of learning wangles, fiddles & dodges, a few bangs with a big hammer in the right place, a touch of the oxy lamp, or an extra chain block and I was able to do it.

If you are down on the South Devon Railway, look out for a 0-6-0 GWR Pannier Tank 6412 - I worked on and in it. If you see a West Country class express loco, 34046 Braunton out on the main line - that's mine, when it came in, it was touch and go as to whether it was beyond saving.

## Wordsearches (page 13) - answers

### **Harry Potter:**

Hogwarts; Ginny; Hermione; Hagrid; Dobby; Gryffondor; George; Nick; Dudley; Broom; Snape; Binns; Fred; Owl; Fang.

### **Musical Terms:**

Autoharp; Arpeggio; Andante; Accent; Alto; Allegro; Adagio; Agitato; Acoustics: Accordion; Aria; Anthem.



## **Composed by Women – the Long Road to Recognition by Neil Pritchard**

I'll begin with a question: How many women composers are you familiar with? That's a question I asked myself 5 years ago when BBC Radio 3 announced they were (for the first time) going to devote 24 hours of their schedules to women composers on International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2015. I must admit, to my shame, that my answer to the question was: a mere handful! After hearing some remarkable pieces by women composers on that day, I was amazed to think, how on earth could this music have been so neglected over the years in concert halls, on radio and TV and society generally? I decided to "Go Googling" as one does, and found a wealth of information about how women, both as performers and composers, were treated over the centuries by the men in their lives, and by the society around them. As you could probably guess; "Thereby hangs a tale", which I'd like to share with you. I've chosen 10 composers going back, would you believe, over 900 years to show you what great music they often produced, and to give you an insight into their lives and the obstacles they managed to overcome in pursuing their music. By the way I came across this interesting statistic recently: The International Encyclopaedia of Women Composers noted last year that there were 6,196 women composers worldwide!

As you might have expected women composers have had a tough time over the centuries, in comparison with men, in getting their music recognised and performed. This is well illustrated in the field of classical music, where even to this day it remains predominantly a male preserve. The list in 2015 of the "100 Most Inspiring Works" marking the 100th International Women's Day, featured not one female composer nor performer. Across Europe, 97.6% of classical and contemporary classical music performed in the last three seasons was written by men, leaving a paltry 2.3% written by women. But why? Is this the result of the patriarchy of the music business, the crushing influence of the composer's husbands, or is society at large to blame for such a skewed situation? I'll attempt to show you that all these played a part in the absence of women in the past from the music scene.

To give an example one of our most recent British composers Elizabeth Maconchy was told that as a student at the Royal College of Music, in the 1930s, she had been passed over for a valuable scholarship because she would "only get married and never write another note". She did get married, and had two children, but continued to compose. When she was 23, her work "The Land" was premiered at the Proms (prompting Gustav Holst to tell her husband: "Keep her at it!"), but it took her nearly a decade to find a publisher, and performances of her music have been few and far between to this day.

But this is not just a story about the husbands or patriarchal decision-makers in music. Society at large also stifled women; being a female composer or performer was seen as a highly questionable profession – often implying, in earlier centuries, sexual availability. As a woman, your options were limited, so marriage was a critical economic decision for most and was disregarded at their peril. One of the very few alternatives was to take the veil, a direction which, through chance, the 12th-century writer and mystic Hildegard of Bingen took. Hildegard of Bingen is now recognised as the first composer in history to have their music notated! She was a prominent example of a 12th century nun who, along with other nuns, wrote music for her own use. Who was she? Hildegard of Bingen was a composer and poet. But it's only recently that her songs, writings and remarkable life and visions have been rediscovered. She was born over 900 years ago (in 1098) and for most of her 80-plus years was shut away in an obscure hilltop monastery in the Rhineland. This remarkable woman has left behind a treasure-trove of illuminated manuscripts, scholarly writings and songs written for her nuns to sing at their devotions.

A recording of Hildegard's music, "A Feather On The Breath Of God", introduced the soprano Emma Kirkby (now internationally acclaimed) and Gothic Voices, in 1985, and became an unexpected "hit" leading to a revival of her music after many hundreds of years. Today we think of Hildegard as one of the first

identifiable composers in the history of Western music (most medieval composers were anonymous). Incidentally there was no mention of her music in any reference book before 1979 and she barely warranted an entry in the 1990 edition of The New Grove Dictionary of Music. Here's a wonderful example of her sublime music with Emma Kirkby singing an excerpt from "A Feather on the Breath of God": (The comments below the video say it all regarding this lovely music).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= NGTsdL2YzE>

Next we have the amazing real-life story of the Venetian composer Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677) who became one of the first women to have her music published in her own name. Born in 1619 in Venice, Barbara was the illegitimate daughter of the renowned poet Giulio Strozzi, and spent her life in very liberal circles within 17th-century Venetian Society. Her father encouraged her talents, arranging performances which would showcase her work and sending her to study composition with one of the leading composers of the day Francesco Cavalli. Most of her work is written for accompanied female voice. She was a capable lute player and developed a reputation as one of the best singers of the time for her performances at private concerts around the city.

Her music is striking for several reasons. First, and perhaps because of the influence of her poet father, Strozzi took tremendous care over the setting of the texts, creating a really intimate relationship between the words and the music. She was a big name in 17th-century Italy, hailed as the most prolific composer of printed secular vocal music in Venice. But frankly, it was amazing that she was ever a 'name' in the first place. Most women of the time were obliged to use a male pseudonym in order to get their creative works in print. Not Barbara, she put her own name to everything she wrote, making her one of the first female writers of secular music to publish in this way. And to top it all off, she was also a single mum to three children – apparently out of choice rather than necessity, which was virtually unheard of at the time. She was certainly a forward-thinking business woman who was independent and whose ingenuity shone through in her life and in her music. Full marks to her! Let's hear some music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cp4JtFOL-cc>

What beautiful singing. Now we move into the 18th century with the music of Marianne Martines. She was born in Vienna in 1744 and grew up in one of the world's most important musical circles. On the first floor of the house in which she lived, the Dowager Princess Esterhazy resided, while Esterhazy's son, the Prince, was the patron of Joseph Haydn who lived in the attic. Also, Pietro Metastasio, the court poet and opera librettist, lived with Marianne's family. Although Haydn was the poorest among the occupants in the large house, he soon became part of the active life which unfolded there. Haydn taught Marianne harpsichord and accompanied her to singing lessons; she also showed talent for composition.

By the 1760s, Martinez was writing large church works. She would compose around 200 pieces, including four symphonic masses, six motets, and three litanies for choir and orchestra. One of her masses, her third, was performed at the court chapel in 1761; it was a large work with more than 150 pages of score. But when Joseph II came to the throne, he reinstated an old rule against women "singing" in church. This meant two things: women composers like Martinez could no longer hear their works played in churches, and male castrati were substituted for women. This did not, however, stop Martinez from composing, and her fame continued to spread. (The practice of castrating young boys to ensure that their soprano voices would not change at puberty became popular in church choirs in the mid-14th century; by the 17th century, the vogue had spread to opera, and thousands of young boys, at their parents' request, were being castrated every year in Europe).

Martinez also became acquainted with the young Mozart in Vienna. Many believe that he modelled his 1768 Mass on one of her works. He also probably wrote his Piano Concerto in D major, for her. Her home was already a centre for musical evenings which everyone in Vienna wanted to attend, and even visitors from foreign capitals had heard of them. In 1796, Martinez opened a singing school in her home and

trained many professional singers. Throughout her life she remained close to the composer Joseph Haydn. She was active as a composer, performer, and teacher during Vienna's golden age and her contributions to the city's cultural life were significant. Although most of her music was forgotten in the next century, it has been revived in recent years, and her considerable creative ability has again been recognised. Martinez's reputation, as well as those of many women like her, suffered in the 19th century when it became fashionable to criticise feminine creativity and label it as inferior. She has, however, been restored to the important status which she once occupied in Vienna's golden age and again her compositions are played. I've chosen the Sinfonia in C major, to illustrate the quality of her music and to show the musical link to Mozart and Haydn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXiu1C26XPI>

What a delightful little piece with a superb performance by a group unfamiliar to me. The 19th century beckons, and we are about to enter the world of one of the great women composers - Clara Schumann. I think most people when the word Schumann is mentioned automatically think of her husband Robert. But she was ahead of the game before Robert came on the scene! One female composer I was aware of before "I saw the light" was Clara Schumann but, like many people, I simply saw her as the wife of Robert Schumann. I determined to learn more about her after hearing some wonderful piano music by her back in 2015. The more I read about Clara the more I was impressed.

She was a successful artist, capable of balancing motherhood with touring, married to a fellow musician and a truly independent woman! What I found most astonishing was her strength. I couldn't believe that she had managed to sustain such a long and busy concert career, spanning from childhood right into old age, along with having eight children, and a husband who slowly declined into severe mental illness, and eventually died in an asylum when still in his 40's. She was born in 1819 and had a difficult childhood. Her father, Friedrich Wieck, a very overbearing man, was set on creating a concert pianist in Clara – something particularly tough given that it was a male-dominated world at that time. From a very young age she had to spend hours each day practising, and much of her childhood was spent on the road with her father, giving concerts. It certainly was a hard life but she came through these trying times clinging on to her love of music.

She met Robert when he became a pupil of her father's. The two fell in love; her father forbade them from marrying but they exchanged love letters and met in secret. They did marry in Leipzig in 1840 – the day before Clara's 21st birthday. I find it mind-boggling to think that she had achieved so much at that age: she had already composed several works, including her Piano Concerto, and had been touring as a concert pianist for over half her life. It seems that most of Clara's compositions were actually gifts to her husband. He encouraged her to compose, and she in turn edited his works. In her music, I can definitely hear the influences of Robert, but she also has her own, unique voice. In fact, some people are quick to suggest that Clara was also influenced by Brahms (another classical music hero of mine) but since she was composing long before she even met him, I think it is fairer to say that it was the other way round.

Clara was first and foremost a superb pianist, considered for many decades to be one of the finest in all of Europe. She was known as the "Queen of the Piano" and displayed a fine technique and sustained a successful performance career for over sixty years. She was among the first to introduce the works of Chopin and Robert Schumann. She also satisfied the popular appetite for virtuosi romantic potboilers, and rediscovered works by Bach, Scarlatti, Beethoven and Schubert. Robert also frequently programmed her own piano compositions. Her skills as a composer and pianist enabled her to prepare excellent arrangements, transcriptions and critical editions of works by Brahms and Robert Schumann. The Piano Concerto is one of her finest works, written when she was 14 in 1833 and 12 years before Robert's Piano Concerto. Here's the final movement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrIG5LYD-5o>

Later in the 19th century in the US (not known for its composers at that time) Amy Beach arrived on the scene. She was the first American (of either gender) to succeed as a composer of large-scale musical

works. In itself this was a truly remarkable achievement. The most frequently performed composer of her generation, she became famous in both the United States and Europe. Amy Beach was born Amy Marcy Cheney, in West Henniker, New Hampshire, in 1867, during an era when the world of work was divided into two spheres, the private and domestic for women, the public for men. Gifted with perfect pitch, total recall, inborn ability at the piano and in composition, she knew even as a young child that “no other life than that of a musician could ever have been possible for me”. Yet her parents said no to a professional career for Amy. With hard work and determination she succeeded, despite the limitations imposed by family and society. Her childhood and early teens were devoted to piano studies. Her first private recital at the age of seven earned her a review in a local paper. Her mother “allowed” her to make her début when she was sixteen with a local amateur orchestra. In 1885, at the age of 18, she made her début with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, critics called her playing of Chopin’s Second Piano Concerto “perfect”. Marriage at the age of eighteen to Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, M.D., changed Amy Beach’s career path. Her husband, 25 years her senior, replaced her parents as authority figure. She agreed, after some resistance, to limit public performance to one annual recital. Composition, said Henry, was to be her life’s work. He even allowed her to publish her compositions, but under her new name, Mrs. H.H.A. Beach. Denied a teacher, she taught herself orchestration and composition with remarkable success. During 25 years of marriage, Amy Beach composed not only a symphony and the concerto but also songs, chamber, choral and solo piano music. Widowed at 43, she went to Germany to present her compositions and revive her career as a pianist, under the name Amy Beach. On her triumphant return to Boston in 1914, she devoted herself to concert tours and composition, completing the balance of her three hundred works, almost all published and performed. Long a hero to women composers, she died in 1944 in New York City at the age of 77. What a wonderful role model she was for so many women, not only in the US but throughout the musical world. My favourite work by her is the Gaelic symphony she composed in 1894; it was the first symphony composed and published by a female American composer. The piece debuted in Boston in 1896 to “public and journalistic acclaim.” I rate it on a par with the symphonies of Brahms and Dvorak composed around the same time. See what you think?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmlU1CfHcJw>

A composer who did get a lot of attention during her lifetime, but not for her compositions, was Ethel Smyth. Dame Ethel Mary Smyth as she later became, attained prominence as one of the most accomplished female composers in a male dominated environment, and as one of the main representatives of the suffragette movement. Smyth was born in 1858 to a wealthy bourgeois family, daughter of Major-General John Hall Smyth and Emma Struth Smyth. Against her father’s wishes she decided to pursue a musical career. In 1887 she entered the Leipzig Conservatory, staying for one year only after becoming disenchanted with the tuition and staff. Remaining in Leipzig, Smyth then took harmony and counterpoint lessons. During this period she met many of the most significant composers of the day, including Brahms, Dvořák, Clara Schumann and Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky was especially encouraging, describing Smyth in his memoirs as ‘one of the few women composers whom one can seriously consider to be achieving something valuable in the field of musical creation’.

Over the following decade Smyth lived and worked in several countries around Europe, gaining a breadth of experience that gave her compositions a European character. In 1890 she returned to England, making her debut as a composer of orchestral music with a Serenade in D at the Crystal Palace Concerts, while her Mass in D which premiered in 1893 brought her wide public recognition. From 1893 to 1910, Smyth focused much of her creative energies on composing a series of operas, which were performed with some success in Europe and North America – a considerable achievement for a female composer at that time. From 1911 to 1913 Smyth was closely involved with the English suffragette movement led by Emmeline Pankhurst. One of her compositions, The March of Women, was adopted as the anthem to The Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU). She was one of more than 100 feminists arrested for breaking windows in March 1912, for which she served two months in Holloway Prison. When her friend Thomas Beecham paid her a visit, he found her conducting (with a toothbrush!) through prison bars a memorable



performance of *The March of the Women*, sung by fellow suffragettes who were assembled outside the prison walls. I can imagine that being an amazing site and one to gladden the hearts of suffragettes.

During the First World War the suffragette movement suspended its activities and Smyth worked as an assistant radiologist in a French military hospital in Vichy from 1915 to 1918. These years were particularly difficult as she became increasingly deaf. She then concentrated much of her efforts on writing, becoming a prolific author of memoirs. The first of a total of eight volumes, entitled "Impressions That Remained", appeared in 1919. Smyth was actively involved in sport throughout her life. In her youth, she was a keen horse-rider and tennis player. She was also a passionate golfer and a member of the ladies' section of Woking Golf Club, near where she lived. After she died and was cremated, her ashes were, as she had requested, scattered in the woods neighbouring the club by her brother Bob. In recognition of her work as a composer and writer, Smyth was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) in 1922, becoming the first female composer to be awarded a Damehood. Smyth also received honorary doctorates in music from the Universities of Durham and Oxford. She died in Woking in 1944 at the age of 86. Her most famous and popular work was the opera *The Wreckers*. Here's the opening prelude: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BffbSd9nI4s&list=PLOGemDzLIT7kEg67KKobt6GxgyYTMvNfy>

The next composer, Florence Price, was the first African-American female composer to gain international recognition. Florence B Price was a composer, pianist and organist, thought to be the first female symphonist of African-American heritage. She composed over 300 works – symphonies, chamber works and songs noted for their lush orchestration and enchanting lyricism – that were performed by leading orchestras and performers. Her life was typical of that lived by middle-class African Americans at the turn of the 20th century. The youngest of three, Florence was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1888 to James and Florence Irene Smith. It was a time when anyone of African heritage in North America was seen as an under-class, no matter their status, so the impact of her remarkable parents can never be underestimated. Smith's mother was a music teacher and taught her daughter the piano. Florence's father, Dr James Smith, was a notable dentist and inventor of patented dental implements and was also a successful painter.

Florence Smith grew up at a time and place in the American South where middle-class African-American families could at least progress to a limited degree, which was certainly not the case for African-Americans in other parts of the US. At their Little Rock home, Florence's parents hosted many gatherings of African-American intelligentsia. She entertained her parents' high-profile guests on the piano. In 1903 at the age of 15 she left Little Rock to attend the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts where there were only one or two other students of colour (she won her place after following her mother's advice to present herself as being of Mexican descent). In just three years at the conservatory, she gained a soloist's diploma in organ and a teacher's diploma in piano, and she was the only one of 2,000 students to pursue a double-major in organ and piano. The principal, George Whitefield Chadwick, encouraged Florence to compose, which turned out to be life-changing advice. She took lessons in composition and counterpoint with composer Benjamin Cutter in her spare time and her early works included pieces for piano and organ.

After graduating, Florence Smith returned to the American South to teach in the town of Cotton Plant at the Presbyterian Academy for a year and then at Little Rock College. In 1910 she moved to Atlanta, Georgia and soon became head of the music department at Clark University, staying there until 1912. It was, again, a tremendous achievement for a woman at that time. Smith returned to Little Rock in 1912 to marry attorney Thomas Jewell Price. The couple had two daughters and one son, who died in infancy. Price (now her married name) was heartbroken and composed the song "To My Little Son" in remembrance of him. Despite her qualifications, Price was denied membership to the Arkansas State Music Teachers Association. Instead, she established her own music studio, teaching the piano, music theory and composing short teaching pieces for her students. Additionally, to counter her rejection, she founded the Little Rock Club of Musicians. But racial problems continued to escalate in Little Rock, leading to the

lynching of several African-American men in 1927. The Prices fled to Chicago for their safety and for a better quality of life. In 1932 her big break finally arrived when she won several prizes at the leading US Composition Contest: first prize in the orchestral category for her Symphony and first prize for her Piano Sonata.

Even with her relative success, Price struggled to keep a roof over her head and was saved from destitution by friends. She suffered from poor health for most of her adult life and was often in hospital. In May 1953 however, her work was gaining momentum, and she was about to fly to Europe to promote her music when she suffered a heart attack and died on 3 June 1953. Performances of her work declined from the late 1950s, but in the last few years there has been a resurgence. The time may have come when the roots of 'a truly American art music' will be re-examined and composers such as Florence Price will gain their true place among the great American composers. One of her most outstanding works is the Violin Concerto from which I've chosen the opening movement:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMRTUI-rNkc>

The turn of the 20th century saw a period during which a number of outstanding French women composers came onto the scene. Notable amongst these was Lili Boulanger born in 1894. As a Parisian-born child prodigy, Boulanger's talent was apparent at the age of two, when Gabriel Fauré, a friend of the family and later one of Boulanger's teachers, discovered she had perfect pitch. Her parents, both of whom were musicians, encouraged their daughter's musical education. Her mother Raissa, was a Russian princess who married her Paris Conservatoire teacher, Ernest Boulanger. Her father was 77 years old when she was born and she became very attached to him. Her grandfather Frédéric Boulanger had been a noted cellist and her grandmother Juliette a singer.

Lili accompanied her ten-year-old sister Nadia to classes at the Paris Conservatoire before she was five. Shortly after which she attended classes on music theory and studied organ with the leading organist of the day Louis Vierne. She also sang and played piano, violin, cello and harp. In 1912 Boulanger competed in the Prix de Rome (a leading international music competition) but during her performance she collapsed from illness. She returned in 1913 at the age of 19 to win the composition prize for her cantata "Faust et Hélène", becoming the first woman to win the prize. The cantata had many performances during her lifetime. Because of the prize, she gained a contract with the music publisher Ricordi.

Nadia Boulanger, realising the immense talent of her sister, focused her efforts upon Lili. After studying composition with her sister she studied with some of the leading teachers and composers in France including Gabriel Fauré. He was greatly impressed by her talents and frequently brought songs for her to read. Boulanger was greatly affected by the death in 1900 death of her father; many of her works touch on themes of grief and loss. Her work was noted for its colourful harmony and instrumentation and skilful settings of text. Aspects of Fauré and Claude Debussy can be heard in her compositions. Sadly from an early age she suffered from chronic illness, beginning with a case of bronchial pneumonia at age two, that weakened her immune system, leading to the "intestinal tuberculosis" that ended her life at the age of 24 in 1918. Although she loved to travel and completed several works in Italy after winning the Prix de Rome, her failing health forced her to return home, where she and her sister organised efforts to support French soldiers during World War I. Her last years were also a productive time musically as she laboured to complete works. In total she only finished 25 works. Her death left unfinished the opera La Princesse Maleine on which she had spent most of her last years. Here's an example of her wonderful original music conducted by her sister: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGr7iq1YN\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGr7iq1YN_Y)

Until very recently Rebecca Clarke was one of the most neglected women composers of the 20th century. It's worth noting that her male contemporaries did not generally suffer the same fate. Clarke was born in Harrow in 1886, to Joseph Thatcher Clarke, an American, and his German wife, Agnes Helferich. Her father was interested in music, and Clarke started on violin after sitting in on lessons that were being given to

her brother Hans. She began her studies at the Royal Academy of Music(RCM) in 1903, but was withdrawn by her father in 1905 after her harmony teacher Percy Hilder Miles proposed to her. He later left her his Stradivarius violin in his will. She made the first of many visits to the United States shortly after leaving the Royal Academy. She then attended the Royal College of Music from 1907 to 1910, becoming one of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford's first female composition students.

Stanford urged her to shift her focus from the violin to the viola, just as the latter was coming to be seen as a legitimate solo instrument. She studied with Lionel Tertis, who was considered by some the greatest violist of the day. Following her criticism of his extra-marital affairs, Clarke's father turned her out of the house and cut off her funds. As a result she had to leave the Royal College in 1910 and supported herself through her viola playing. Clarke became one of the first female professional orchestral musicians when she was selected by Sir Henry Wood to play in the Queen's Hall Orchestra in 1912. In 1916 she moved to the United States to continue her performing career. A short, lyrical piece for viola and piano entitled "Morpheus", composed under the pseudonym of "Anthony Trent", was premiered at her 1918 joint recital with cellist May Mukle in New York City. Her composing career peaked in a brief period, beginning with the viola sonata she entered in a 1919 competition. In a field of 72 entrants, Clarke's sonata tied for first place with a composition by Ernest Bloch.

In 1924 she embarked upon a career as a solo and ensemble performer in London, after first completing a world tour in 1922–23. In 1927 she helped form the English Ensemble, a piano quartet that included herself. She also performed on several recordings in the 1920s and 1930s and participated in BBC music broadcasts. Her compositional output greatly decreased during this period. At the outbreak of World War II, Clarke was in the US visiting her two brothers, and was unable to obtain a visa to return to Britain. She lived for a while with her brothers' families and then in 1942 took a position as a governess for a family in Connecticut. She composed 10 works between 1939 and 1942, including her Passacaglia on an Old English Tune. She had first met James Friskin, a composer, concert pianist, and founding member of the Juilliard School faculty, and later to become her husband, when they were both students at the Royal College of Music. They renewed their friendship after a chance meeting on a Manhattan street in 1944 and married in September of that year when both were in their late 50s.

Clarke has been described by well-known writers on music as the most distinguished British female composer of the inter-war generation. However, her later output was sporadic. She suffered from dysthymia a chronic form of depression. The lack of encouragement - sometimes outright discouragement - she received for her work also made her reluctant to compose. Clarke did not consider herself able to balance her personal life and the demands of composition: "I can't do it unless it's the first thing I think of every morning when I wake and the last thing I think of every night before I go to sleep." After her marriage, she stopped composing, despite the encouragement of her husband, although she continued working on arrangements until shortly before her death. She also stopped performing. Clarke sold the Stradivarius she had been bequeathed and established the May Mukle prize at the Royal Academy. The prize is still awarded annually to an outstanding cellist. After her husband's death in 1967, Clarke began writing a memoir entitled "I Had a Father Too" (or the Mustard Spoon); it was completed in 1973 but never published. In it she describes her early life, marked by frequent beatings from her father and strained family relations which affected her perceptions of her proper place in life. Clarke died in 1979 at her home in New York City at the age of 93. Morpheus is a fine example of her considerable talent:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_vZKrEOLYE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_vZKrEOLYE)

I couldn't look at women composers without mentioning Grace Williams. I've only recently been aware of her major contribution to Welsh arts and culture through the medium of music. She is one of those composers who grabs your attention the moment you hear her music - I'm a big fan! Grace Williams was one of the first professional Welsh composers of the twentieth century to attain significant national recognition, and many of her remarkably distinctive pieces are directly inspired by Wales and its culture.

Grace Mary Williams, who was to become one of the most important and influential 20th century Welsh composers, was born at the stroke of midnight on February 19/20, 1906 in Barry. The eldest of three children, Grace was encouraged from an early age to pursue her interest in music. Both parents were school teachers who loved music. As a schoolgirl, she began to show ability in composing music, and, encouraged by her teacher Miss Rhyda Jones, a former pupil of Walford Davies, Grace often sat on the beach at Cold Knap in Barry composing songs and dances. The sea would always be a powerful influence and inspiration in Grace Williams' life as a composer. In 1923, she entered University College, Cardiff on a scholarship, and while she found the social life at the school exciting, the music program was "deadly" for a would-be composer like Williams who found her enthusiasm stifled by academic exercises. After graduation in 1926, she moved to London to attend the Royal College of Music where one of her most important and influential teachers was composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, whom she called "Uncle Ralph."

In 1930, Grace Williams won the prestigious RCM Octavia Travelling Scholarship which enabled her to complete her training in Vienna with Egon Wellesz (1885-1974). After her return to London in 1931, the 25-year-old composer was appointed music master at Camden School for Girls and visiting lecturer at Southlands College of Education. Prior to World War II, she composed her most ambitious orchestral work, "Four Illustrations" for the Legend of Rhiannon based on the Mabinogion, and in 1941 her brilliant Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes was broadcast by the BBC. By the time the war ended, the deprivation and difficulties Williams experienced trying to earn money while spending her free time composing, had taken a toll on her. She was in poor physical health and hinted to friends that she might give up composition altogether. In 1947, doctors concerned about a persistent illness suggested that she return to Barry where she could be properly cared for by her parents. The move provided the change that Grace Williams needed, and she never returned to live in London.

By the age of 50, Grace Williams had found her own musical voice, one now influenced by old Welsh poetry and ballad singing. With her music in greater demand, she now began receiving commissions. She was able to put aside much of the necessary busy work that had provided her with an income and devote more time to composition. "You know," she wrote to a friend, "it was a marvellous sensation being asked to write something; someone wanting your music. Once I got going on it, the music absolutely haunted me.... Such was the elation of having a commission, the ideas flowed freely."

In the last 20 years of her life, Grace Williams composed music that marks her as a composer of importance in Wales. Her influence on younger Welsh composers was enormous, and she proved that it is possible to live in a small country and survive as an artist. In a land with a deeply rooted choral tradition, she helped place orchestral music on a new footing, and she brought to the concert hall a distinctly Welsh musical language. For her contributions to music, she was offered the OBE in 1966, but she turned it down. On her 70th birthday in 1976, she received tributes from admirers throughout the world, and the Welsh BBC broadcast a program of her music. Her major orchestra works had been recorded. Three months later, she experienced the first signs of what would prove to be a fatal cancer. Surgery and radiation therapy did not improve her condition and left her debilitated.

On January 25, 1977, she wrote a farewell letter to fellow composer Elizabeth Maconchy to tell her "...all along I've known this could happen and now it has I'm quite calm and prepared and can only count my blessings -- that I've had such a run of good health, able to go on writing -- and just being me with my thoughts and ideas and sensitivity. From now on it won't be so good but even so there are sunsets and the sea and the understanding of friends." What a very moving and wonderfully positive message. Grace Williams died on February 10, just nine days before her seventy-first birthday. And here is her most popular and enduring work, the Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFvw1qw9q-A>

## **BRUCE WELCH - A Life in the Shadows by Gerald Lee**

In my school days everybody was interested in pop music. 'Top of the Pops' was essential viewing. The magazines of the time were rather banal comprising mostly photographs and light weight articles. George Harrison among others expressed irritation at the stupid questions pop journalists asked him.

Similarly, many books on 'sixties music vary from the sycophant to the pseudo intellectual. At the end of the day, it is just 'pop' culture, easily digestible and accessible.

I still have an abiding interest in the music of that era. Rosalind and I went in 2000 to the 'Sixties Musical festival in Brighton, about which I wrote in a previous issue.

By chance I came across the autobiography of Bruce Welch of the Shadows on a book stand many years ago. It is one of the most interesting books I have read about the development of British music from the days of skiffle in coffee bars to the late nineteen sixties and seventies, when gradually pop music was taken seriously as part of British culture.

Another aspect of the book that I admire is the honesty with which he tells his story, from his early life in the north of England, through times as a struggling musician while still a teenager, to the success he shared as a collaborator with Cliff Richard and as a member of the Shadows. Most of all, he is proud that the Shadows as a group stand as an enduring institution and not just a backing group.

Bruce is quite candid in saying that learning that his parents were not married caused his long lasting depression. His mother died when he was young, so he was brought up by her sister Sadie. As a child he met his father only once when he spent two weeks with him and his wife. It did not lead to the formation of any bond. He only saw him again when he was seventeen. When he was successful, he called to see Aunt Sadie. She was uncomfortable and asked him to leave. Her sister and her husband were due to visit. Her brother in law did not know of Bruce's existence. Even though he was a household name as a member of the Shadows and drove a Rolls Royce, he was still a family secret.

As can happen, school friendships or chance encounters often determine the course your life. At a church fete in Liverpool, a schoolboy Paul McCartney was introduced by a mutual friend to an art student, who did not know the correct lyrics to the songs he was singing with his skiffle group on the back of a lorry. The singer was John Lennon. Out of that came the Beatles and one of the most successful song writing partnerships in history. Similarly for Bruce, he met Brian Robson Rankin at school. They shared an interest in music and after having entered a couple of talent contests they decided to stay in London and seek their fortune.

It could hardly have gone much worse in the beginning. They literally starved. Sadie was in an abusive relationship with a market trader, but she still managed to send the odd five pond note. They were lucky to have met Charlie Chester's son Peter. He invited them to visit his home where they really appreciated the food and home comforts. Their first recordings were with his group, the Chesternuts.

Skiffle was an entry into music for many aspiring pop stars. It was a basic form of music that did not require expensive equipment. As skiffle around Soho they encountered many future stars, Shane Fenton, who later became Alvin Stardust, Paul Gadd, also known as Paul Raven and later still Gary Glitter, Adam Faith, and Wally Whyton, later a radio and TV presenter.

By this time Bruce Cripps had adopted his mother's family name and become Bruce Welch. It also sounded American. As he barely knew his father the name was not important. Brian Rankin was now Hank B. Marvin. Still in his teens, he was already recognized as an outstanding musician. Another incident that did not seem important at the time was a visit Bruce made to the famous 2i's coffee bar in the summer of 1958. Bruce was filling in working the orange juice machine; Hank was at home. A singer came on stage, whom Bruce described as 'olive skinned, dark haired, moody, the essence of rock and roll.' When Hank

asked nonchalantly if there had been anyone special that night, Bruce replied a young singer who 'went down like a bomb.' It was Cliff Richard.

Their lives took a dramatic turn in the summer of 1958. Compared to the size of tours and record deals today, the business then was ridiculously casual. Cliff's manager was the eighteen-year-old John Foster. He needed a guitarist urgently for a tour. He went to the coffee bar hoping to find Tony Sheridan, who is remembered today as a performer in Hamburg with a backing group we all know, the Beatles. After two attempts John had almost given up, when he heard a young brilliant guitarist perform on stage. It was Hank Marvin. He immediately offered him the job. Cliff's first record, 'Move It' was doing well. Provided he could start next week, he could join the Kalin Twins tour backing Cliff Richard, who was a support act. The Kalin Twins were two American singers in the style of the Everly Brothers, over in the UK promoting their number one record 'When'. Hank was uncertain at first, then agreed, but only if his mate Bruce could come as well. John Foster agreed. A few days later they were introduced to Cliff himself in a tailor's shop in Dean Street, where he was being fitted for a shocking pink jacket to wear on stage.

The composer of 'Move It', Ian Samwell was also part of the backing group, then called the 'Drifters.' He wrote several other hits for Cliff, but then deciding his playing was not good enough, he became a producer and writer, responsible for among other hits 'Get Away' by Georgie Fame, another former skiffler from the 2i's days.

Their wages were twelve pounds, ten shillings a week, out of which they had to pay for their own accommodation and food.

The tour was a big success for Cliff. He proved a more popular act than the Kalin Twins. As a result, he was asked to move to a different spot on the programme. He displayed the streak of ruthlessness that has sustained him when others fell by the wayside. There was more publicity to be gained staying where he was upstaging the Americans. Whereas the Kalin Twins faded into obscurity, Cliff's career went into orbit.

Although 'Move It' only reached Number 2 in the charts it was the start of a career that it will be impossible to surpass.

When the Drifters released their single 'Jet Black' in the USA they discovered there already was a group with that name. Jet Harris, the bass guitarist, suggested 'The Shadows' as they were in the shadow of Cliff.

They developed their collaboration with Cliff further by writing material, touring and appearing in pantomime and films.

Before the Beatles did so, they were the first singer/songwriters to form their own publishing company. Paul McCartney regrets very much that the Beatles allowed Northern Songs to become a public company, then to be absorbed by ATV, and eventually to be bought by Michael Jackson, losing all their publishing rights.

Unfortunately, songs written for films had to be published by the producer's production company, so hits like 'Bachelor Boy' and 'Foot Tapper' are not owned by the composers. 'Foot Tapper' was the theme to Radio 2 'Sounds of the Sixties' until the departure of Brian Matthew in 2017.

The Shadows and Cliff were also innovators in the instruments they used. There were still many import restrictions. Their first Stratocaster had to be a personal import. It was unlike anything they had ever seen before. Cliff paid for it, although at the time of the book in 1989 Bruce was still using it. It cost the princely sum of £120, a fortune in 1959.

The Shadows guitarist Jet Harris was possibly the first to use an electric bass guitar in Britain. Sadly, alcohol and a major road accident destroyed his career. He continued to perform, but mostly he earned his living as a photographer.

Throughout the book it is Bruce's honesty that rings through. He does not claim to be a great musician himself. He acknowledges Hank as one of the greatest, but as an individual Bruce always aspires to be a complete professional. He cannot understand the appeal of punk music, where the musicians can barely



sing or play, nor how groups like the Rolling Stones can wear everyday clothes on stage. He refers to himself as the 'sergeant major' in the group, the driving force and organiser. He forced Tony Meehan out of the group for his lack of commitment, and Jet Harris for his alcohol problems. He even came into conflict with Hank when he became distracted by his religious conversion and began to turn up late for engagements.

The departure of Tony Meehan meant the group needed a new drummer. Still referred to as the 'new boy', Brian Bennet was offered £50 a week, double his salary, to leave a show with Tommy Steele to join the group. As a drummer he is under-appreciated: he is in fact an exceptionally talented composer and arranger, writing many theme tunes and incidental music for shows such as 'Dallas'.

Bruce is very honest about his own problems, including the stress touring had on his first marriage and the breakdown he suffered through overwork. At the heart of his depression is the thought that he never knew his father and only in later life did he learn his family history.

When he began working again after a short break from the Shadows, he established a reputation as a successful producer. He talks candidly about his affair with Olivia Newton-John, which finally ended his first marriage. When Olivia broke off their engagement, it led a real crisis in his life. More than ever he felt the lack of family support, and so turned to alcohol, and eventually attempted suicide.

They reconciled for a short time, but their attempt to renew their relationship failed. Eventually on the strength of the success from singles Bruce and John Farrer produced for her, Olivia moved permanently to the USA, where her career reached new heights, not least of all in 'Grease' opposite John Travolta.

Many will expect insights into Cliff Richard from the book. Although they worked closely together Cliff has always made clear he cannot share his life with someone who does not have the same religious commitment. Whereas Bruce admires the dedication and professionalism, he has reservations that Cliff can be a popular entertainer in an area of music about relationships, yet only has a deep commitment to his faith and keeps most others at a distance.

In the late 'seventies Cliff's career was drifting. Bruce became his producer and began to look for material as far removed from 'Bachelor Boy' and 'Summer Holiday' as possible. The result was a transformed Cliff, who was suddenly at the front musically. Great singles such as 'We Don't Talk Anymore' and albums such as 'I'm Nearly Famous' turned staid unexciting 'seventies Cliff Richard into a pace setter. Although the single 'Miss You Nights' was only a minor hit reaching Number 17, it revealed a new Cliff Richard using his full vocal range and with a depth of delivery not heard before.

After these three albums which had been agreed, Bruce had expected to continue with Cliff, only to learn indirectly he was no longer his producer. He felt that he had been badly treated, and that Cliff had again shown the ruthless streak that led him to refuse to shift places on the Kalin Twins Tour. Cliff argues the agreement for three albums was fulfilled, so whereas Bruce might be disappointed, he had no grounds to complain.

Similarly, with regard to Hank, although they were schoolfriends, when Hank decided after discovering the Jehovah's Witnesses, to cut himself off from his former life, Bruce felt confused. Hank's move to Australia with his second wife meant that as a gifted musician he sacrificed the chance to develop his talent further. Although Hank and Cliff have strong religious convictions, Bruce is sceptical in that their faith separates rather than unites them.

As well as providing an image of the early days of pop music before it developed into an industry divorced from its roots, it is a true assessment of his own life, not just his successes, but also his personal failures and disappointments.

He wrote his autobiography in 1989. About ten years ago he reunited with Cliff and the rest of the group for a final tour. Out of this came a final Cliff Richard and the Shadows single, the old Guy Mitchell song, 'Singing the Blues' and a live album. Some of the tracks I find more enjoyable than the studio recorded



originals. I am reluctant ever to say I have one favourite book or record. For me, a book should be 'a good read.'

Perhaps only a Cliff fan would ever think of reading the book today. It reminds us that every star is an ordinary man or woman with a personal life. Tony Curtis once said that it is only on a cinema screen that actors are twenty feet high.

Bruce and Cliff Richard have now reached the age of 80. It cannot be said that either has not lived a full life.

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The following contribution from Mary Stevens makes for very interesting reading! I can't remember a previous article specifically about employment – and certainly not one about an unusual local firm. It gives yet another theme for thought – I am sure that many of you will have stories to tell about your early days of employment. From comments I receive from our readers, the "reminiscences" of our members are always popular, both because we can all remember similar circumstances and because we learn something about our friends and, as in this article, something about an area of employment which we might have previously known nothing.

Again I would remind you that I need a continuing supply of material, So, please think about doing something similar to share with us all!

### **Does anyone remember when Newport had its own Football Pools? By Mary Stevens**

I know Cardiff had Littlewoods, but we had Western Pools. It was off Chepstow Road just where the railway bridge crosses the road and behind what is now a petrol station. I started working there in 1946.

I left Brynglas school on the Friday and started work there on the Monday. I was there about five years. It was pretty good because they kept us on all through the months when no football was played and paid us for doing nothing! They were pretty easy going - I remember I read 'Gone With the Wind' and that's a long read.

I earned £2 per week and thought I was well off. The bosses were three brothers by the name of Lewin. I enjoyed working there. We each had little printing machines that we called Joeys and it printed the name and address of the clients - that was the Monday and Tuesday job. We were each allocated areas that the pools coupons were sent to and I worked on Swansea, Liverpool and Scotland. I enjoyed seeing all the different addresses.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were very busy days as all the completed coupons were sent back in. We worked Saturday mornings only but all day Sunday (with no extra pay). There was no union so we just went with it. Everything changed when two girls were sacked (I can't remember the reason) and we went on strike in protest. It caused bad feeling with a lot of clients who stopped sending in their football pools and the company never really recovered. I think that was the end for Western Pools. I left shortly afterwards and spent a year working for M. Mole and Son (home of the Mole Wrench) before moving on to Standard Telephones and Cables where I stayed until I married.

I rode my bike to work every day and the roads were so quiet (a bit like lockdown). Happy Days!