

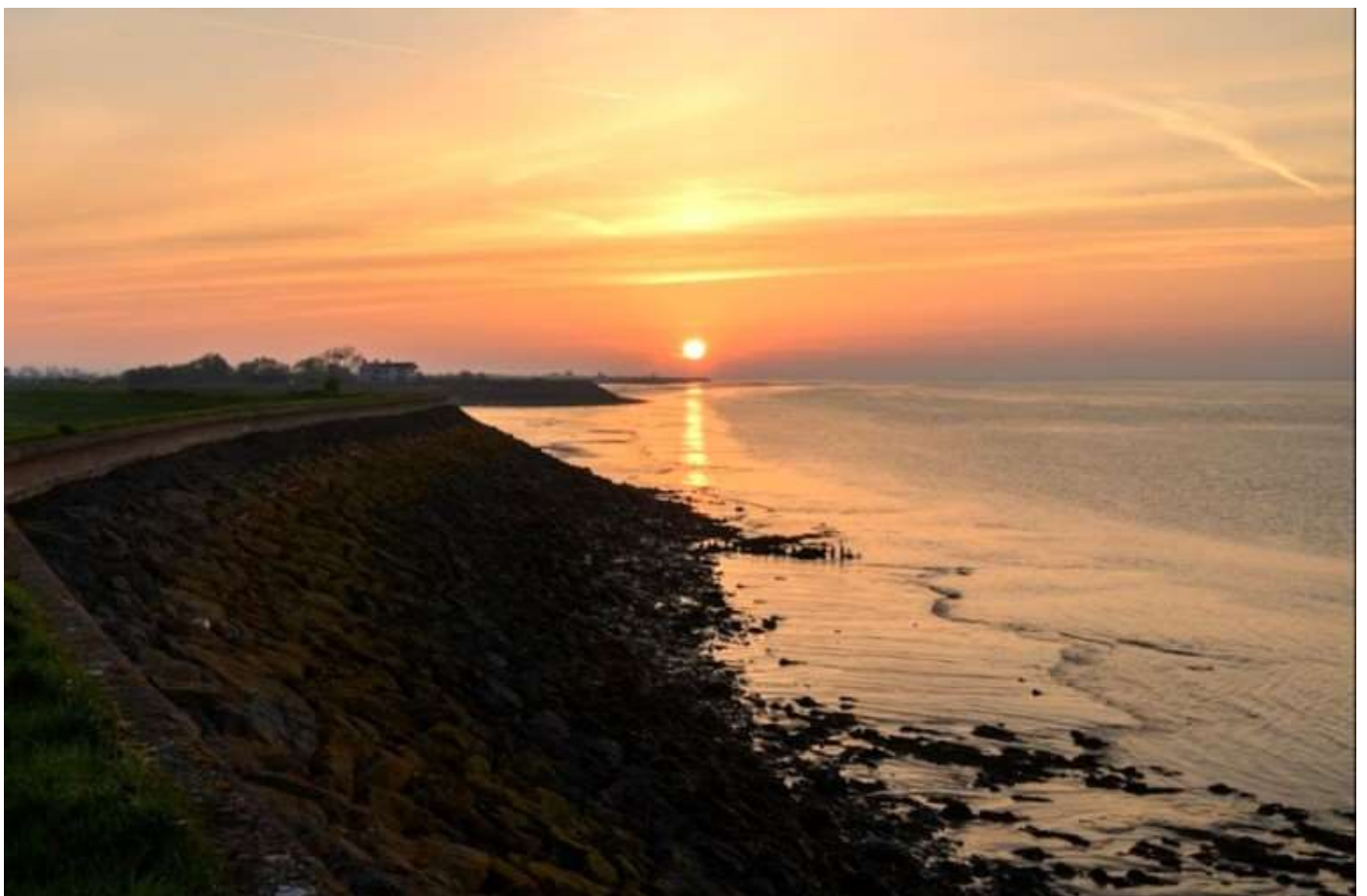
DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in

NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No.23

9th October 2020



Sunrise over Goldcliff

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

Cryptic Crossword 6. Pic'n'Mix Clues - A-Z Abbreviation and Association Clue

Angela Robins

Many Cryptic Crossword Clues are 'Pic'n'mix Clues' which are a mixture of 'The Dozen' types of Clues, such as the A-Z Abbreviations and Associations Clue.

i.e. Take a note/this morning/to mother - a Greek letter (5). = G/am/ma

G is a musical note (A-Z Association) / a.m. and ma are A-Z abbreviations.

Combined with other clues they yield whole words or single letters to form a composite answer.

e.g. In France I need to change a soul that is envious (7) = Je/alous

Je is an A-Z Association (French for I) /alous is an anagram of 'a soul'.

or - Thanks for teetotaller with glasses for design that's skin deep (6). = Ta/tt/°° Ta and tt are A-Z Abbreviations and °° represents spectacles!

Contact me on 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 A-Z Abbreviations and Associations Clue element and a definition of the answer required, as in a straight crossword. The answers are on page 26.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Grieves / left before /morning /and sent away (7). | Anagram |
| 2. British /roast prepared /by student /in correctional facility (7). | Anagram |
| 3. Retail problem put right by an advertisement (7). | Anagram |
| 4. New padre with time to leave (6). | Anagram |
| 5. Look and listen between H and J (3). | Homophone |
| 6D. Searches for Eliot's initials under half the antiques(6). | Part Word |
| 7D. Handel's priest to end quiz with fuss over king (5). | Pt Wd+Word Exch |
| 8. Boys call Mayday around start of night (4). | Part Word |
| 9. Old cloth to start rubbing silver (3). | Part Word |
| 10. Dodge Chopin piece avoiding piano right (5). | Part Word |
| 11. Call up first lady to accept the go ahead (5). | Word Exchange |
| 12. The restaurant is cold and used by an adolescent (7). | Text+Word Exch |
| 13. Encourage for example groan oddly (3,2). | Hidden Word |
| 14. West saw every other Violet droop (4). | Hidden Word |
| 15. Stray US soldier returns in a frock (7). | Reverse+Word Exchange |
| 16. Graduates before long sit around this musician (10). | Wd Xch/Anagram |
| 17. Saccharin is nicer around Newcastle area? On the contrary (9) . | Wd Xch+Reverse |
| 18D. Be first to support former partner (5). | Nos. Representing Letters |
| 19D. Vicar put one hundred for learner on dodgy grey (6). | Nos./Anagram |
| 20. For example:- nothing for self (3). | Nos. Representing Letters |

Apology!

The photograph on the cover of DIT 22 was miscaptioned. The caption provided was "The Wye Valley looking south from Redbrook. The famous "Autumn Tints" of the Wye Valley and Wentwood."

The photograph has been "in stock" for some months now and that caption came with it, though I can't remember the source. I deliberately held it back until the first issue of Autumn and, although the "tints" are definitely correct the location is not – it is a northwards view from Yat Rock at Symonds Yat. Thanks to Julie Fry for putting me back on track!

It's a Small World by Julie Fry

While it is a fact that the Earth is 40,000 kms. around the Equator, and that means many places are vast distances apart, I have come to believe that our world is smaller than we think.

You could say it all began with a bus journey. We were on a 2 day stopover in Los Angeles en route to a touring holiday in Australia and New Zealand. We had done the usual Hollywood Tour arranged through the hotel, but on the second day wanted to visit the Getty Museum independently. When I went to the desk clerk for information about public bus routes he was horrified. (so it really is true that everyone goes by car in LA). Having assured him that if there was a suitable bus route nearby we would use it, he did reluctantly tell me that it would involve 2 buses. It meant a change in Santa Monica, where we needed to walk 2 blocks for the bus that would take us to the museum.

This we did, and while anxiously waiting on the sidewalk, began to wonder were we at the correct bus stop. A voice behind us assured us that we were, and then asked "What part of Wales are you from?" The man in question already had a pretty good idea as he was from Merthyr Tydfil – only 3 miles over the mountain from Llwydcoed where I lived as a child. Our accents were almost identical, even though he had lived for some years in LA.

When you recall that Los Angeles is one of the most spread out cities in the world, what are the chances for this encounter. I still think it was remarkable!

Later that day, on our journey back through Santa Monica, we had time for a stroll along the famous board walk. To my surprise Alan greeted a couple who were resting on a bench. It seems he recognised them as they had been sitting near us on the plane out from London. Two chance encounters a few hours apart. They were returning home to New Zealand via Sydney. They invited us to visit them when our touring would eventually take us near to their home-town of Wanganui on North Island a few weeks in the future. However when we did eventually meet up, it was in Wellington where they were spending a weekend Xmas shopping (it being the end of November). So we had new friends and familiar faces to share a very enjoyable evening in their hotel. I remember a dessert of Xmas pudding New Zealand style, and Alan remembers lots of talk about rugby. It was inevitable that the conversation would include that most famous match when Llanelli beat the All Blacks on 31st October 1972 - final score 9 – 3. The decisive moment in that match, was when All Black Lindsey Collins' clearance kick to touch was charged down by Llanelli centre Roy Bergiers, who followed it up to score a try. With the successful conversion Llanelli led by 6 points. The rest is history! Our host indicated across the restaurant with his head and said that Lindsey Collins was sitting a few tables away.

That day in 1972 the pubs in Llanelli really did run dry. Unfortunately we missed it as we were already living and working in Monmouthshire. All the excitement of that day can be viewed on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0Kv9FXqs1k>

The coincidences kept coming on that holiday. Some days later we were in Rotorua, the geophysical centre of New Zealand. Anyone who has been there will remember the smell! Like all tourists we had spent the day looking at rivers of hot water and lots of geysers both of water and boiling mud. For the evening we had booked a visit to a traditional Maori long house. We were to be picked up outside our motel, one of hundreds in Rotorua. Imagine my surprise, when stepping up into the small bus, I saw a familiar face! Initial reaction on both sides was "what are you doing here?" She was a lady from Hampshire who we had met numerous times on previous Winter holidays in Mallorca. The last time had been on one of our regular group walks, when she had stumbled on rocks and sprained her ankle. So yet again, on the other side of the world, we spent a memorable evening with a friend, learning about the Maori way of life. The coincidence is all the greater, as not only were we in the same town, on the same day, but had both chosen that same tour out of dozens on offer.

Our last encounter involved a car rather than a bus.

Here I need to explain that when we flew from Sydney to Christchurch on South Island our only forward

planning had been to book the first night in a B&B. This was in Ancient Times when a guidebook and a small road atlas were all that we needed for a touring holiday. Plus the ability to phone ahead each day for the next night`s accommodation.

Our plan had been to walk into one of the international car hire firms after breakfast on day 2 and book a one way hire from Christchurch to Auckland on North Island. Our host kindly used his local knowledge to send us to a small garage where it was possible to hire a `local` car. We could drive it around for the next 2 weeks and then drop it off in Auckland, its home-town. The car might be 2 or 3 years old, but the cost was less than that of the big firms.

So, at the end of the holiday, we needed to drop the car off at a local garage in the suburbs of Auckland. We did this, and were met with yet another familiar Welsh accent. This time the young man had emigrated from Bargoed some years before. We had lived for over 20 years in nearby Blackwood, so he was delighted as we really were from his home turf.

So on that holiday, the furthest we had ever travelled, we never felt that far away from home. Now you see why I believe the world is smaller than you think.

The Getty Museum opened in 1997 and is well known for its architecture, gardens and views overlooking Los Angeles. I couldn`t agree more as the buildings and the views are what I remember most. The exhibits inside were also well worth our bus trip! Google the Getty Museum and see for yourself.



Entrance Hall



Museum Gardens



View over Los Angeles

A Staycation Day Out - Newport - Mike Brown

A walk around Newport can be just as interesting as Dundee, Truro or Welshpool. Here are some extracts from an amalgamation of four Town Trails produced by Newport CBC.

- 1.** Newport is situated at the lowest crossing point of the River Usk which is noted for its great tidal range and Town Reach is the best place to view its attractive bridge that was built in 1924. Also the Castle can be seen from here; it was constructed in the early 1300s to guard the river crossing. Here was also one of the busy wharfs that was still in use well into the 1970s. It now provides the setting for the Steel Wave which commemorates Newport's past history of steel making and seafaring.
- 2.** The mosaics in the adjacent subway commemorate the use of the wharfs by paddle steamers; a nearby wall within the Old Green roundabout depicts some of the locomotives and canal barges which passed through this area. The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal was built in 1796 along the route now occupied by the dual carriageway beneath. Coal exports from the wharfs were responsible for much of the growth of Newport. Across the footbridge is another subway and more mosaics depicting a variety of stalls once found in the local Provisions Market.
- 3.** Outside the entrance to the Provisions Market stands 'This Little Piggy', a life size bronze pig produced in 1993/94 by the then Town Sculptor Sebastien Boyesen.
- 4.** The Provisions Market was built in 1854 and is an early example of a large span cast iron frame building. Passing through it and into High Street, the 16th century Murrenger House can be seen; it was possibly the town house of the first High Sheriff of Monmouthshire. This is the oldest section of the town centre; look up the street, for it is worth noting the variety of building styles, from the Dutch gables of the former Argus premises to the Victorian classical style of Newport Arcade. In the other direction, McDonald's illustrates a Venetian Gothic style of architecture. Throughout the rest of the tour look up occasionally to see some fine listed buildings of varying artistic styles of architecture, which often go unnoticed, above the modernised shop frontages. The properties were once grand houses and as the leases came up for renewal in the 1890s the Tredegars, who owned them, saw an opportunity to make more money by converting them into shops with offices above.
- 5.** On to Westgate Square: the imposing buildings at each corner form a harmonious group of Victorian buildings that illustrate the craftsmanship of that era. The statue of Sir Charles Morgan is situated in Bridge Street. He was considered to be a great public benefactor to the locality and contributor to the agricultural, economic and industrial development of Newport during the 19th century.
- 6.** The Westgate Hotel is the historical site of the tragic finale of the 1839 riots, and adjacent are the bronze Chartist Sculptures. The three groups take their title from the motto of the Chartist Convention - 'Union, Prudence, Energy.'
- 7.** Further along Commercial Street, at the junction of Llanarth Street, the three new corner buildings preserve the strong vertical emphasis of their predecessors.
- 8.** Even further along is the "What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare . . ." statue that commemorates the life and work of the Newport born poet W. H. Davies. The work represents a spirit figure enshrined within the body of the tree of life. The birds are symbols of thought and imagination that signify the essence of the poet's creativity and freedom of expression.
- 9.** Near the end of the street is St Paul's Church, it is unusual in that it's east-facing and therefore the altar end fronts the main street. The grandiose steps and arches look like the main entrance but are actually a sham.
- 10.** At the end of Commercial Street is the modern Mariners' Square on a large traffic island. The memorial (another Boyesen) represents the spirit of merchant seamen. Three 'feet' at the base evoke images of shipyards and the nautical environment with an anchor and winding gear. The column represents a lighthouse.
- 11.** Returning to St Paul's Church, a newly created public square can be seen opposite, in this area of regeneration. Decorating the walls are six mosaics that focus on the contribution of Newport women to Britain's development and history including the Suffrage campaign.

12. Turn into Palmyra Place and then up the left-hand side of Park Place. Here are some fine town houses that belonged to wealthy people. There is also a curious cylindrical structure which is a listed Edwardian electricity sub-station.

13. Victoria Place, nearby, was built in 1844 for well-to-do merchants and although it is Victorian in age, it is Regency in style. The two terraces are well preserved and occasionally used as film sets.

14. Turning left up Stow Hill and to the top of Vicarage Hill, here there is a panoramic view of the docks, the Bristol Channel and the Transporter Bridge. The high level walkway is regularly open and visitors can climb to the top following in the footsteps of the many workers of over one hundred years ago who climbed up twice a day just to save the halfpenny charge for the gondola ride.

15. At the top is St Woolos Cathedral, a building of considerable antiquity. The name Woolos is a corruption of Gwynllyw, the Celtic Ruler who founded a mud and wattle oratory here in the 6th century. The present cathedral consists of a 12th century Norman church within a later Medieval structure, greatly restored in Victorian times and with a recent eastern extension.

16. Heading back down on the east side there is a small park on the left which was the original graveyard for St Woolos but was separated when trams started using this route at the turn of the last century. The panoramic views from the park stretch from Wentwood to Mynydd Maen and Twmbarlwm.

17. Walking further down on the higher pavement, it passes between the quaint Alms Houses that were built as a memorial to Queen Victoria in 1901 and the former St Joseph's Convent, a group of buildings that have been converted into apartments.

18. Returning to the bottom of Stow Hill, this is the site of the West Gate to the town which was in existence and used as a lock up until 1797.

19. It is highly recommended to visit the Central Hall in the public area of the Civic Centre to see the murals painted by Hans Feibusch. They form a sequence to tell the story of Newport from the Celtic era to 1964. An information leaflet is available from the Reception.



CREATIVE WRITING - David Jenkins

We are comparatively fortunate as it's possible for us to carry on with our weekly meetings. Not physically of course in these strange and demanding times, but out in the realms of cyberspace. Our weekly sessions continue via Zoom. It's been a steep learning curve for us all but the group is now well-versed in operating the system and meetings continue (almost) as before. Personally I miss the opportunity of physical meetings, but Zoom is the nearest practical alternative we have at the moment, and it enables us to maintain some sense of near-normality as we keep the group running.

Creativity is in some ways like a muscle. Unless it is exercised it might wither. To avoid this we share suggested writing prompts which hopefully spark an idea for a piece of work which can be presented to the group during a later session. I've always found a fascination in hearing how different people will take varied slants on the same prompt. Give the same single suggestion to a dozen creative minds, and you'll get twelve different stories!

As an example, I wrote the piece below in response to a prompt - 'Somebody wakes up in a pool of water'. As usual there were widely differing ideas based on the suggestion. The prompts aren't an exercise to be followed strictly, they are simply designed to spark an idea. To slightly misquote a line from 'Pirates of the Caribbean' - they're more what you'd call guidelines. So, if you've ever thought that a few words might give you ideas then perhaps you're a creative writer and hadn't realized the fact. In which case why not consider joining us?

'Wet Here, Isn't It?'

It's a dream, all just a dream.' The words drifted through Ken's sleeping mind, accompanied by other phrases such as 'lucid dream'. It was a knack he'd developed in his twenties. For a writer it was a great advantage to be able to push a dream in a different direction, explore a different avenue if the dream was becoming unpleasant or didn't seem to be sparking any creative thoughts. Lucid dreams, and a notebook next to the bed ready to jot down the dreams and any resulting ideas as soon as he woke – that was the way he had made his living for years though he never admitted it during interviews or book signings. Even his agent and publisher were unaware of the source of most of his inspiration.

These lucid dreams always began the same way. He would see himself asleep, then in the dream he would wake, though his physical body still slept.

Think I'll stick with this one for a while, his conscious mind decided, and closed down the mental process which would allow him to change the course of the dream. He was swimming in a pool of water. It felt as though it were a pond or pool but oddly enough the water had a tang of salt to it. He tried to reason out how that could be. Maybe he was in the Dead Sea? Or perhaps he was in some sort of spa, forking out a not-so-small fortune to get dunked in a tank of artificial sea water?

He wasn't alone. Swimming nearby was a mouse which oddly enough was about the same size as Ken himself. Or, he reasoned, maybe he was the same size as the mouse. He spotted a few other birds and animals, all of roughly the same stature. It was quite comforting at first, swimming around with lazy strokes. Then a sense of dread began to coalesce as the creatures began to look around with expressions of fear on their faces.

'What's wrong?' he asked the mouse.

'The Maker of The Pool will soon arrive, bringing more tears.' the creature replied, pronouncing the words as though they were a title which demanded a response of sheer terror. 'Alice approaches.'

'And, pray, who is Alice?' Ken enquired.

'Alice isn't a who, Alice is a what. Alice is a terrible disease. You might recall that Christopher Robin went down with it.'

Oh my god, thought Ken. This scene has been brought on by all this pandemic stuff. Time to get out of it. He manipulated the dream to reveal a door which he went through. He saw his own physical body, sleeping soundly. Sleeping Ken closed his eyes then re-opened them.

He woke in a pool of water and sat up, soaking wet and shivering in the night air. He nudged Mags and she half stirred, muttering only. 'Not again! Why don't you just think about Theresa May. That should put a stop to your urges.'

Rather exasperated, he nudged her once more. 'Wake up, will you?'

She did so, looking quite indignant as well as rather damp and bedraggled. 'What the hell happened?' Mags frowned as she idly picked at a long false fingernail glued in place.

'That's what happened,' he said, grabbing the offending digit. 'You left these bloody talons on and you've punctured the water bed. We'll have to clean up, and there'll be endless paperwork with the insurance company and...'

'Oh for goodness sake Ken, it was an accident! Just an oversight. It can all be sorted out. Don't make such a fuss. Get real!'

Get real, he thought, No, I won't do that. I'll get out of here, and into another place instead. His eyes closed, he concentrated and opened his eyes once more.

He awoke in darkness, surrounded by fluid. It was warm and soothing, moving around him gently as it washed about in response to a muffled double thud, repeated every second or so. And he could hear, somewhere above where he floated totally immersed, what sounded like a gigantic bellows. Drawing air in, pushing air out. Lub-dupp ... lub-dupp ... lub-dupp. He realized where he was. *Oh no, I don't want to go through being born again. Someone out there is waiting to smack my backside for no reason. I'll have to go through it all again, learning to walk and talk and not pee myself. And puberty once more? I think not... I need to move forward a bit.'*

He closed and opened his eyes. He'd gone far too far forward in time. He woke in a pool of liquid. A figure in white approached. 'Mr Jones, your catheter has come out. We'll have to fit another one won't we?' He peered through failing eyes at the figure. He could make out a badge – Fiona, nursing assistant, Broad Horizons residential and nursing home.

'Why am I here? Where is Mags?' His own voice sounded thin and weak. And the tone was that of a petulant child.

She frowned and let out a small sigh. 'Now now, don't upset yourself, not again. Mags isn't here anymore, remember? We told you that before. She's not been here for some time.' Fiona smiled, though the smile was tired and didn't have the energy to climb as high as her eyes. 'Tell you what. Once we're done with the catheter, how about a nice glass of warm milk? Just a small one. And one of your tablets so you can sleep.'

'Sleep? I don't want to sleep!' He tried to sit up and was dismayed as he looked down at the aged, withered arms which didn't have the strength to lift his own body upright. Fiona had called someone else across to assist her. His voice, feeble, almost unrecognisable to him, repeated the objection, 'I don't want to sleep...'

Oh yes I do, the watching Ken thought. *I don't want to see the end any more than I want to relive the beginning.* In the dream his eyes closed, and opened once again.

He awoke in a swimming pool beneath a perfect blue sky in which the blazing sun flew high. *This is more like it, he thought. I can stay with this dream for a while.* He and Mags played in the pool, dozed at the poolside, drank Sangria as they watched others enjoy the Mediterranean day. *Definitely much better,* he thought, finally satisfied with where his dreams had taken him. Certainly more pleasant than the holidays they usually managed, stuck on a campsite somewhere in Wales. After another glass of Sangria, in his dream Ken fell asleep.

Physical Ken woke in a pool of cold water. He sat up, muttered a few choice phrases, looked around, and nudged Mags.

'Sod off,' she mumbled in her sleep. 'I've got a headache.'
He nudged her again. 'It's been raining.'
'So what's new? This is Britain in summertime.' Mags grumbled.
'The sky is clear now.' he continued.

She half-opened one eye for a moment, took a glance around. 'Yes it is. And the moon is up. Go back to sleep. Dream about werewolves or maybe vampires and write something about them. But just do it quietly, will you?'

'Rain's stopped now,' he said, sloshing around, 'and everything is soaked.' He nudged Mags once again, to make sure he had at least some of her attention. 'What does that tell you?'

'It rained. Everything got wet. Big surprise.'

'Well he said, it tells me that dreams are better than life sometimes...'
He broke off as he heard her huff a sound of irritation. He knew she'd be thinking he was about to go off on what she called 'one of his pompous rants.' But he carried on. 'It tells me that sometimes life can be really, really annoying.'

He looked around at their sodden belongings. Everything was in place, as it had been before they went to sleep, with one notable exception. 'But mainly' he added, seeing the pools of rainwater, seeing the moon and stars above 'it tells me that some bastard has stolen our tent.'

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Effects of Hugs - submitted by June Wilkinson via Jackie Kerr

Facebook Page for Sacred Dreams is:

[1m5 oAhtSpouepcuotrcnisl or2dec018gdr](#)

N.B. For WINDOWS users

If clicking on the blue link above does not work for you, then instead: 1. Highlight the blue link by dragging your mouse across it; 2. Right click in highlighted area; 3. Select "Open Hyperlink" from the dropdown list.

The average length of a hug between two people is 3 seconds. But the researchers have discovered something fantastic. When a hug lasts 20 seconds, there is a therapeutic effect on the body and mind. The reason is that a sincere embrace produces a hormone called "oxytocin", also known as the love hormone. This substance has many benefits to our physical and mental health, helps us, among other things, to relax, to feel safe and calm our fears and anxiety. This wonderful tranquilizer is offered free of charge every time we have a person in our arms; cradle a child; cherish a dog or a cat; dance with our partner; get closer to someone; or simply hold the shoulders of a friend.

A famous quote by psychotherapist Virginia Satir goes, "We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth." Whether those exact numbers have been scientifically proven remains to be seen, but there is a great deal of scientific evidence related to the importance of hugs and physical contact. Here are some reasons why we should hug:

1. STIMULATES OXYTOCIN

Oxytocin is a neurotransmitter that acts on the limbic system, the brain's emotional centre, promoting feelings of contentment, reducing anxiety and stress, and even making mammals monogamous. It is the hormone responsible for us all being here today. You see this little gem is released during childbirth, making our mothers forget about all of the excruciating pain they endured expelling us from their bodies and making them want to still love and spend time with us. New research from the University of California suggests that it has a similarly civilising effect on human males, making them more affectionate and better at forming relationships and social bonding. And it dramatically increased the libido and sexual performance of test subjects. When we hug someone, oxytocin is released into our bodies by our pituitary gland, lowering both our heart rates and our cortisol levels. Cortisol is the hormone responsible for stress, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

2. CULTIVATES PATIENCE

Connections are fostered when people take the time to appreciate and acknowledge one another. A hug is one of the easiest ways to show appreciation and acknowledgement of another person. The world is a busy, hustle-bustle place and we're constantly rushing to the next task. By slowing down and taking a moment to offer sincere hugs throughout the day, we're benefiting ourselves, others, and cultivating better patience within ourselves.

3. PREVENTS DISEASE

Affection also has a positive effect on the reduction of stress which prevents many diseases. The Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine says it has carried out more than 100 studies into touch and found evidence of significant effects, including faster growth in premature babies, reduced pain, decreased auto-immune disease symptoms, lowered glucose levels in children with diabetes, and improved immune systems in people with cancer.

4. STIMULATES THYMUS GLAND

Hugs strengthen the immune system. The gentle pressure on the sternum and the emotional charge this creates, activates the Solar Plexus Chakra. This stimulates the thymus gland, which regulates and balances the body's production of white blood cells, which keep you healthy and disease free.

5. COMMUNICATION WITHOUT SAYING A WORD

Almost 70 percent of communication is nonverbal. The interpretation of body language can be based on a single gesture and hugging is an excellent method of expressing yourself non-verbally to another human being or animal. Not only can they feel the love and care in your embrace, but they can actually be receptive enough to pass it on to others, based on your initiative alone.

6. SELF-ESTEEM

Hugging boosts self-esteem, especially in children. The tactile sense is all-important in infants. A baby recognizes its parents initially by touch. From the time we're born our family's touch shows us that we're loved and special. The associations of self-worth and tactile sensations from our early years are still imbedded in our nervous system as adults. The cuddles we received from our Mum and Dad while growing up remain imprinted at a cellular level, and hugs remind us at a somatic level of that. Hugs, therefore, connect us to our ability to self-love.

7. STIMULATES DOPAMINE

Everything everyone does involves protecting and triggering dopamine flow. Low dopamine levels play a role in the neurodegenerative disease Parkinson's, as well as mood disorders such as depression. Dopamine is responsible for giving us that feel-good feeling, and it's also responsible for motivation! Hugs stimulate brains to release dopamine, the pleasure hormone. Dopamine sensors are the areas that many stimulating drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine target. The presence of certain kinds of dopamine receptors are also associated with sensation-seeking.

8. STIMULATES SEROTONIN

Reaching out and hugging releases endorphins and serotonin into the blood vessels and the released endorphins and serotonin cause pleasure; negate pain and sadness; decrease the chances of getting heart problems; help fight excess weight; and prolong life. Even the cuddling of pets has a soothing effect that reduces stress levels. Hugging for an extended time lifts one's serotonin levels, elevating mood and creating happiness.

9. PARASYMPATHETIC BALANCE

Hugs balance out the nervous system. The skin contains a network of tiny, egg-shaped pressure centres called Pacinian corpuscles that can sense touch and which are in contact with the brain through the vagus nerve. The galvanic skin response of someone receiving and giving a hug shows a change in skin conductance. The effect in moisture and electricity in the skin suggests a more balanced state in the nervous system – parasympathetic.

Wordsearches submitted by Barbara Phillips

Words can run forwards, backwards, diagonally or vertically, but always in a straight line.

No. 1 Can you find 13 PEAK words in this grid?

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

No. 2 Can you find 13 words associated with CASTLES in this grid?

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

Answers are on page 22

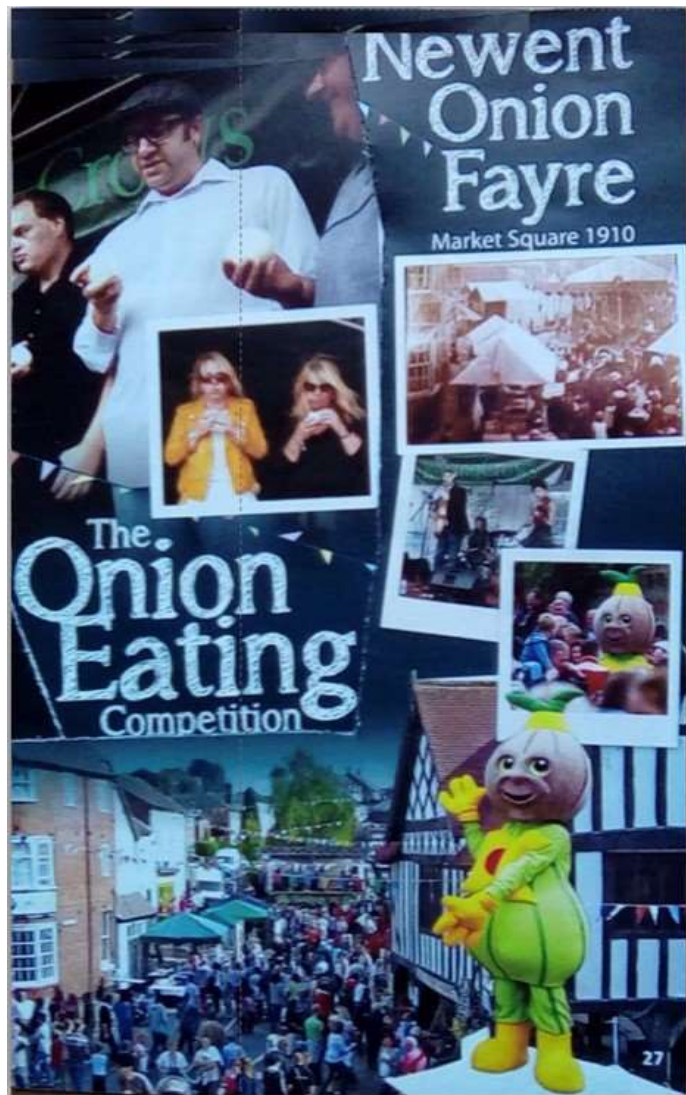
What We Were Doing . . . - Angela Robins

. . . for several years the Out & About Group has arranged a coach trip to visit the Onion Fayre at Newent: until early in the 20th Century, Newent Fayre rose to such importance that it set the onion price over a huge area, but then the war years caused its demise.

In 1996 it was revived as a free-to-enter festival, and our members go to enjoy the live music, street entertainers, fairground, exhibitions and lakeside activities. There is also time for some retail therapy at dozens of stalls and we must not forget the Onion Eating Competition!

Our members love this trip so much that it has become an annual event in their calendar.

-----X-----



On the way home from the Onion Fayre **Euan** stood up on the coach and told some one-liner jokes:-

What can you make from baked beans and an onion?
Where did the onion go to have a few drinks?
What is a Hobbit with a healthy appetite?
Some people cry when cutting up onions
What is round, white and giggles?

Tear Gas.
The Salad Bar.
Lord of the Onion Rings.
they shouldn't get so attached!
A tickled onion.

A Ray of Light in the Darkness - Music in a Different World by Neil Pritchard

When the lockdown began I don't think any of us could have foreseen the grave consequences that the pandemic would bring to our creative industries. For obvious reasons our attention was on more pressing issues. But as things have unfolded the plight of the arts and cultural world has become more apparent, and the need for action to be taken to protect livelihoods and our cultural heartland. Can I begin by saying I'm not in the business of "gloom and doom" when approaching this subject, so as well as being guided by realism I will try to paint a positive picture for the future of the arts, and in particular the music scene. I would encourage you, if you have the means, to check out what's happening in the music world online. You never know, it may help to raise your spirits. First of all some basic facts. Not only did arts and entertainment contribute over £100 billion to the UK economy before the lockdown, but publicly-funded arts organisations continued their behind the scenes work to support the cultural sector. Give a thought to our musicians, most of whom have lost their livelihoods overnight. They are part of a vital, interconnected structure that we take for granted – and we are on the brink of losing it for good. The world of classical music could be deemed irrelevant; or it could be part of a new time where culture is deemed essential for bringing people together, and for personal wellbeing. In other words, by providing an essential service!

So what does the future hold for music and the arts? The Musicians' Union has revealed that UK musicians, across the board, have lost an estimated £14m in earnings so far due to the impact of coronavirus. The organisation, which represents 32,000 people working in the UK music industry, has recently surveyed more than 4,000 of its members. 90% said they have already been affected. Job opportunities have also reportedly plummeted by nearly 70% on the same time last year. The union, which has pledged £200 grants for out-of-work musicians, is calling on the government to do more to support freelance workers, of whom there are many in the music business. General Secretary of the Musicians' Union, Horace Trubridge, said: "Music is one of the few certainties we can rely on to provide happiness and relief in tumultuous times. But musicians – whether they work in theatre, teaching, orchestras or gig-playing – are feeling the full financial force of this global disaster. Already, we have seen job opportunities drop by more than two thirds, and sadly this will only accelerate. Whether it's the closure of venues, cancelling of events or closing of schools, there will be huge ramifications for musicians – many of whom are self-employed and have zero support to fall back on." Trubridge added: "We hope this fund goes some way to providing a small amount of relief to our members, but we urgently need the government to provide clarity on what wider support will be available and we call on the record industry to play its part too.

I'm going to focus on the positives that have been happening to bring new life to classical music. From world-famous artists putting their concerts at our fingertips, to musicians giving us rare personal insights into their off-stage selves, measures taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 have changed our experience of classical music radically. Musicians have adapted quickly to the new situation and are providing ample entertainment – from showing us how they're practising, to live-streaming their very best performances and, recently, with socially distanced indoor and outdoor live concerts. Classical music is going online and being seen by more people. More classical music venues, organisations and artists are making their concerts and productions available to watch online than ever before. Measures taken to stem the spread of COVID-19 have seen public events unable to go ahead, venues closed and musicians behind doors self-isolating for safety. Luckily, there are hours of concerts already available online or pre-recorded. Here's an example from a well-known Welshman in fine voice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10ITp5DTvzQ>

Given the present situation, that's an example of online music at its best, and notice it's had over 17,000 viewings and some great comments. We move on to another example from the online world. When their concert performances of Richard Strauss' 'Also Sprach Zarathustra' was cancelled as the coronavirus pandemic intensified, players from the Orchestra of Opera North decided that the show must go on – virtually. Richard Strauss' 1896 'tone poem' is one of the most famous pieces of music of all time, thanks

to Stanley Kubrick's use of its blazing opening fanfare in 2001: A Space Odyssey, and its borrowing since then by everyone from Elvis Presley to the World Wrestling Federation would you believe! Its celebration of humanity's questing, resourceful nature appealed to Opera North's Principal Cello Daniel Bull and Principal Viola Macedo Sampaio, as they worked out how they could bring forty of their colleagues together, and under social distancing restrictions, to perform its opening five minutes. They got in touch with Swedish conductor Tobias Ringborg, who had been due to lead the concerts at Huddersfield and Leeds Town Halls, to see if he could help.

"The idea sounded rather crazy", says Tobias, "but it kind of fitted in with how crazy the world is right now, so I thought we had to make it happen. But how could I, here in Sweden, go about conducting a large orchestra in England, with each member recording their parts individually? I contacted my dear friend and chamber music partner of almost 30 years, the extraordinary pianist Bengt Forsberg. On 21st March we met in a gorgeous little wooden church in Stockholm, where Bengt runs a chamber music series, and did a couple of takes with my phone camera turned on me, as I conducted him on the piano. I sent the film back to Opera North and wished them luck!" Next, Daniel and Lourenço sent the film of Tobias conducting the piece to 40 of their colleagues, each of whom donned full concert dress and recorded their parts individually at home. They filmed themselves in kitchens, spare rooms, gardens – even, in the case of percussionist Chris Bradley, as they took their daily exercise. "They sent their recordings back to us, and we added instrument by instrument, part by part, until this amazing 'performance' took shape", Daniel says. "It has really felt like watching a huge building being constructed, and with Tobias' musical vision as a starting point, the resemblance to the creative process of an actual rehearsal and concert has been remarkable. It's not been short of its challenges, but in these times, it has meant that we've all been in regular contact, and that we are still able to make music together, even when sitting at home in our living rooms!"

"Also Sprach Zarathustra is my favourite piece of all time", says Lourenço, "so when Dan told me about this idea I jumped at the opportunity! This project has been incredibly meaningful to me as I have been away from my home country for a long time now and in these circumstances, I still don't know when I will be able to visit my family back in Portugal. It just brightens my day to feel that Opera North as a company is fighting this challenge and doing so together. The reason we all make music is to connect with one another and with our audiences, and it couldn't feel more empowering to continue doing what we love most in these unprecedented and difficult times." What a remarkable achievement. Since this online performance at the beginning of the pandemic there have been many many other examples, with larger groups of musicians, and their popularity has grown reaching audiences that wouldn't usually attend classical music concerts. And so to the Strauss: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt8FhIVmR8M>

Welsh National Opera have also gone along with many others and got on board the online journey, with a chorus of 36 singers in a well known Welsh piece. Plus they have also produced a host of online Operatic excerpts. During these challenging times Welsh National Opera have been determined to keep music alive and have been working hard behind the scenes to find ways of continuing to bring opera to as many people as possible. Their Director has said "we want to make the enchanting world of opera accessible to a younger audience, sharing our passion and love of opera with children and families who would not normally have access to it." They have a wonderful website which has loads of videos and activities for families with young children to do during Lockdown, all linked to the world of Opera. They make the point that we might be living in an age where children like to spend time with their gadgets and video games, but our favourite adventures are those that happen offline, together as a family.

To quote: "If you are looking for fun, learning and engaging activities to do with your children, you have come to the right place. All our activities are available at no cost and are free to print and share. "Included amongst them are: 10 Play Opera activities for 4 to 9 year olds, such as "Birds and butterflies bunting", linked to the opera The Magic Flute by Mozart. To learn all about the story they tune into Play Opera (on the website) and use the resources to make their own Magic Flute themed props at home. They colour in the birds and butterflies and secure them to a long piece of string, to make your own bunting which you

can hang on your wall or pop in a window to cheer up passers-by. They wiggle the string to see them dance, just as the animals dance when Prince Tamino plays them a tune on his magic flute. They need to print out PDF files, from their computer, for the birds and butterflies. They then find two PDFs with different colours for the birds and two PDFs for the butterflies, one coloured, and one for them to decorate themselves. They have the opportunity via a YouTube link to access the music of Birds and Butterflies. It sounds great fun, I must remember to suggest that my grandchildren have a go! As an example of their online performances here's the Papageno duet from Mozart's The Magic Flute:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VY20s0TnYVA>

At a local level Sinfonia Cymru have used online performances and are planning more in the coming months, but they are also appealing for donations when they give these concerts. The mission of the orchestra is simple: to give outstanding young musicians the very best start to their professional careers. Opportunities for young musicians are sparse and highly competitive. Their players are the outstanding performers of their generation - the world-class stars of tomorrow. They are given the opportunity to develop their creativity, their confidence, their musicianship, and also enjoy the company of fellow musicians. One current member of the orchestra explained it in this way "Sinfonia Cymru has provided me with some unforgettable experiences that have crossed boundaries of musical genres. These projects have led me to make decisions about my career that I might not have done otherwise. I have been able to work with artists and peers who have inspired me to venture further down the path of creativity and to explore and expand my musical horizons in ways that I would never have known were possible."

The organisation is based in Cardiff and they're not your average orchestra - they do things differently. For a start, all the players are under 30. Many of them take the helm and lead projects, moving between classical and modern styles, exploring their creativity and challenging norms. This is music the way it's meant to be experienced, as I can bear witness. Over the years they have made regular appearances at the Riverfront and have given concerts that bring a special spark to their music-making, creating some truly memorable performances. Sometimes they are traditional in their approach to concerts – performing everything from small string ensembles to full symphony works. On the other hand, they love pushing musical boundaries with intimate musical performances in a range of styles – jazz, soul-funk, world music and much more. The best bit is that they bring this new generation of live music to the people of Wales and the UK. Their mission is to develop these exceptional young musicians and give them the opportunity to truly launch their careers. In doing this, they bring awe-inspiring live music and an unflinching atmosphere to people in unexpected settings. I make no apologies for bringing to you a lockdown piece which I have already included in one of my previous music stories. It's brilliant, and a fine example of what can be done to present talented musicians in a humorous setting in these trying times. Welcome to the Red Hot Chili Peppers Meets Sinfonia Cymru - with "Can't Stop":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-SqHAsLgGQ>

To develop some of the issues I raised earlier about the ways that are needed to save the arts, it's worth referring to some other things happening to keep hope alive. Organisations are trying to entice more people into the music world. With world-famous venues like The Met and Royal Opera House offering up streamed concerts, where you can experience performances from inside venues you may not otherwise have visited? It's a wonderful way to experience world-famous venues and tick them off your bucket list without breaking the bank and having to leave the couch! When two of the world's leading soloists, the violinist Nicola Benedetti and the trumpet player Alison Balsom joined with other leading musicians and wrote to Boris Johnson, they implored the government to support freelance musicians. In doing so, they drew attention to their current plight and their near-total loss of work following concert cancellations and venue closures. They also reminded the government that "music is integral to our human experience, and our creative industries are a significant force for good in our country." This situation includes whole orchestras. Director of the Association of British Orchestras Mark Pemberton explains: "British orchestras are heavily dependent on earned income from ticket sales, international tours and recordings. With the forced closure of entertainment venues and recording studios, that income has plunged to zero."

New funding initiatives have sprung up – such as those by Help Musicians, Performing Rights Society (PRS), Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT), Arts Council England and Spotify, the digital music service. The latter recently announced they will match donations made to Help Musicians, PRS and other organisations currently raising money for musicians during the coronavirus pandemic. But, Pemberton says, while this funding will help with short-term cash flow, “it will not solve the long-term damage” and could go a lot further.

To return to new initiatives put in place by music groups. The use of social distanced concerts indoors and outdoors has become more common over the last 3 months since some restrictions have been relaxed. One such is by the Victoria Salon Band who are based in Cardiff. They held a series of free bandstand concerts in Canton and Penylan in June. Formed in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic by five local musicians, the ensemble hopes to help bring entertainment and culture to the local community in a safe and responsible way. They are hoping to present a mix of opera, classical gems, pop classics and family favourites. William White, who plays the clarinet, said: “We are all freelance musicians and as such, our entire work diary and way of life evaporated almost overnight when the pandemic hit. With all of us usually performing in concerts multiple times a week, it has been quite disorientating and distressing to have not been able to work at all for almost five months. We started with a small pop-up concert in Victoria Park in June for 'World Make Music Day' and were overwhelmed by the positive response. People brought picnics and enjoyed the music at a safe distance in the wonderful surroundings of the park, with many asking if the concerts could become a more regular event.” The Victoria Salon Band performed at the bandstands in Victoria Park in August as part of its "The August Stay-cation Series". Donations could be accepted on the day and could also be made online. More concerts are planned in the Autumn.

It's great to see this sort of initiative bringing classical music to the people, it's to be hoped that they can continue into the foreseeable future. Here's a collection of short clips from this concert, to show how it can be done outdoors. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54iMiuso4Nw>

A number of groups up and down the country have also been organising a variety of socially distanced concerts and performances, in an attempt to reach out to local communities and new audiences as they grapple with the sense of the new normal. I'm going to look at a number of these initiatives starting with one of the leading chamber groups in the UK - the London Mozart Players (LMP). They organised a series of three socially distanced classical music concerts in Summer 2020. They were one of the first orchestras to reunite to perform together as lockdown eased. 'LMP Live!' was filmed live and streamed on Facebook and YouTube in partnership with Classic FM. LMP performed music from the LMP chamber repertoire in three unusual venues – Westfield Shopping Centre in London; St Giles Cripplegate in London; and Mansfield College in Oxford; and were joined by celebrated soloists Tasmin Little and Jennifer Pike.

The London Mozart Players has been the resident orchestra at Croydon's Fairfield Halls for thirty years, and in September 2019 enjoyed a gala concert to celebrate the Halls' reopening. As Croydon's resident orchestra, the ensemble has shown a growing commitment to the borough's cultural life. In 2016, during the closure of Fairfield Halls for refurbishment, the orchestra took classical music to new and unusual venues across Croydon in its award-winning three-year series #LMPOnTheMove. This saw the ensemble pushing the perceived boundaries of classical music performances in the borough, welcoming new audiences and partnerships. Events included a live film score played on top of a shopping mall car park; a house music concert with young DJ/producer Shift K3Y; free concerts in libraries for children; and a whole series of other musical initiatives in the borough.

As one of the original pioneers of orchestral outreach work, LMP has enjoyed a host of relationships with schools and music hubs across the UK (and recently in Dubai and Hong Kong), working with teachers and heads of music to inspire the next generation of musicians and music lovers. As well as working with schools, LMP continues its long-established tradition of promoting young up-and-coming musicians. Nicola Benedetti, Jacqueline du Pré and Jan Pascal Tortelier are just three of many young musical virtuosos championed early in their careers by the orchestra. The LMP enjoys a special relationship with its audience and has thriving Friends and Sponsors programmes. LMP is the only professional orchestra in the UK to

be managed both operationally and artistically by the players. As you might imagine they were ahead of the game when it came to innovative concerts, and therefore were able to perform in a variety of indoor settings to great effect. Other groups have followed in their footsteps. The concert they put on for the re-opening of the Westfield Shopping Centre in June is an example of the playing of the highest calibre.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlHVpWn1wPw>

How about some Water Music, no not Handel, but a pianist on the waters of Venice. Would you believe that he actually played a grand piano on a small boat, giving local residents a real treat with an outdoor concert floating down the Venice canals. Sounds crazy but it's one way of bringing music to the people! The guy concerned is Paolo Zanarella. He was born in Campo San Martino in Italy in 1968. Always passionate about music, as a self-taught he began playing the piano at the age of nine. He has always paid particular attention to the musical models of European classical music, drawing continuous inspiration for his own compositions. However he remained self-taught - he didn't therefore obtain any academic qualification at the local Music Conservatory. From 1988 he produced numerous compositions for piano, organ, songs and pieces for choir, until the presentation in 1999 of the musical: "The Road to Success" written for the theatre company *Giovani Musical*. At the same time, he loved to devote himself to musical improvisation which soon became a new way of presenting his piano music to the public.

Ever since Italy's lockdown measures were put into place to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, the usually bustling Grand Canal has been much quieter than usual, but now the soothing sound of a grand piano rings out over the water. In the mesmerising video, we hear Paolo Zanarella (who likes to call himself "the out of place pianist") say: "Another small gift for you all... I'm currently leaving Venice but I wanted to be with you for another minute. I hope this doesn't disturb you..." He then adds that it's his mission to take music out of the concert hall and bring it to streets and squares, where everybody can enjoy it. Zanarella's wonderful one-hour display, which took place on Saturday 16th May at 6pm, is clearly a welcome distraction for many – as the barge floats past ornate buildings and under bridges towards the lagoon, passers-by can be seen waving and clapping him on. But this isn't the first time he's chosen to perform in the great outdoors – he's also been spotted pitching up his piano in leafy forest settings. Judging by his spectacular playing and striking backdrop he's certainly achieved just that:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHpjiZcgw0M>

It will be interesting to see if there are any more water based music concerts in the offing - the mind boggles!

Back to dry land and a look at this year's Promenade Concert season. They too have had to change with the times. This year the Proms has had to re-think its traditional programme. In the year that the Proms turns 125 years old, the 2020 season has brought the spirit of the Proms to music-lovers at home with treasures from the archive and with some great live performances. In challenging times, the Proms continues its annual festival consisting of 8 weeks of world-class performances by the world's greatest classical musicians of the past and present. The first 6 weeks were on Radio 3, with some on BBC 4, featuring past recordings of some of the most memorable concerts from the last 60 years. In the final 2 weeks of the season, live (socially distanced) performances were successfully delivered (to an empty hall) and broadcast on Radio 3 and BBC 4. (They are still available on BBC Sounds and BBC iPlayer).

Live streaming (simultaneously recording and broadcasting in real time) has been looked at by many music organisations, at present, as a possible way forward. Such concerts are certainly one solution to the present problems — albeit one which leaves orchestras footing the cost of putting on the production. Without the benefit of selling tickets, not all organisations have the funds to do this. The BBC has been able to do so for obvious reasons. This year's Proms comprised a mixture of socially-distanced formats, opening with the BBC Grand Virtual Orchestra, where performers contributed from their respective locations, and ending with a Last Night held at the Royal Albert Hall - minus audience. These were live streamed on the day and made available later on BBC Sounds and iPlayer. The Proms was launched in July with a performance by the specially created BBC Grand Virtual Orchestra, comprising over 350 musicians from the BBC Orchestras and Choirs. They performed a completely original arrangement of Beethoven's

9 symphonies, created by Iain Farrington. Farrington describes his work as “taking Beethoven's music and putting it in a musical washing machine to see which colours run”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jRBF3K2r98>

I'm aware of Drive-In movies. but drive-in classical concerts are new to me. But if you think about it, they are another way of engaging with audiences at present. In the next video the performers in question are sisters from Germany: Danae and Kiveli Dörken, and they have been putting on Drive-In concerts in Germany recently. Danae Dörken is among the elite of internationally acclaimed artists of the new generation. As you'll hear on the video she has stunning technical skills, exceptional charisma and a great depth of musical thinking. Born in 1991 she was a uniquely gifted talent at a very young age. Danae received the support of Lord Yehudi Menuhin when she was seven, and soon began to cause a stir at major European venues. Following her studies, she soon became a regular guest of major orchestras. Of Greek descent she founded the Molyvos International Music Festival (MIMF) in 2015, together with her sister on the island of Lesbos. Amidst the dramas of the European refugee crisis and European financial crisis, her festivals have become a major contribution to strengthening the connections with classical music in Greece. Danae's service to classical music and the Greek island of Lesbos has been repeatedly covered by major media outlets including German, Austrian and Swiss national television programmes.

Kiveli Dörken was born in 1995 and received her first piano instruction at the age of five. From 2003 until 2012, she was a student at the Music Academy Hannover in the department for young highly gifted musicians. Then came a First Prize at Germany's leading music youth competition. In 2005, she obtained the First Prize as youngest participant at a Piano Competition in Croatia, followed two years later with a major International Piano Competition. Kiveli made her orchestra concert debut at the age of eight. She has performed at all the leading concert halls in Germany and many other prestigious venues. She also performs chamber music with the Szymanowski Quartet. Her busy schedule has involved touring throughout Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Spain, Greece, China, the UK and US. She particularly enjoys performing piano works with her sister Danae which she does regularly. In 2007 she had the honour of performing for the Dalai Lama, and for the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in June 2009 in Washington D.C. This shows what a reputation she has built up over the years. But of course, at present she and her sister have been unable to continue with live concerts in the way they did previously. However, one way they have kept up with their audiences is through online concerts, and with a series of Drive-In Concerts.

I've chosen a Drive-In Concert to illustrate how superbly they play as a duo. On this video you hear extracts from their performance, plus how they prepare for the concert and how they "chill out" afterwards.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJTMMs_c7Xc

It's great to see such high spirits, and what fantastic playing. It's definitely got the Wow! factor. Before I bow out a few final words: Crucially, we know our orchestras and community of musicians will continue to help shape the recovery strategy, as they work together to imagine how they might return to playing in venues for an audience. The composer Benjamin Britten said in a 1964 lecture that he did not write for posterity but wanted his music to be of use to people in the here and now, in the community in which he lived and worked. I think that we can be emboldened by his example in recognising the true potential, the 'usefulness' of our musical culture to help rebuild our society right here, right now, in the wake of trauma. I'm ending on a high note with a piece taken from a series of videos involving 121 music tracks and 75 musicians from 11 countries covering 3 continents.

I think that's a record during this pandemic. The group that put it together are the aptly named Corona Orchestra, and yes they have gone viral with this and other pieces.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCd9kBw0s8c>

Here's a local example of bringing, in a small way, music out of the concert hall to ordinary people:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54iMiuso4Nw>

There are other examples up and down Wales where music groups are attempting to reach out to their local communities, one of which is in Brecon.

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

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

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

PLEASE keep your contributions coming in – there are a few new projects that can be shared by all, as a few sentences will make a viable contribution – see pages 22 and 30.

The day that Albert Einstein feared most has arrived! submitted by Greg Platt



Planning their honeymoon.



A day at the beach.



Having dinner out with your friends.



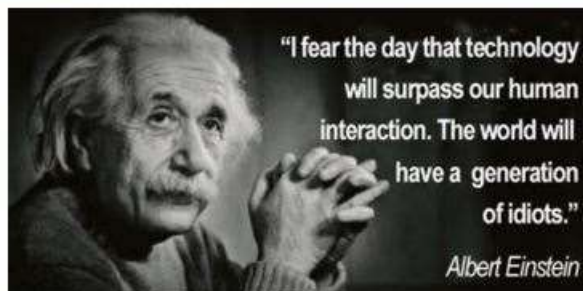
Out on an intimate date.



Having a conversation with your bestie.



A visit to the museum.



It's here!

Talking Points (started by Stephen Berry!) – responses to DIT 22

The photograph of Queen's Square and the Lyceum Theatre prompted the following responses:

From Dave Woolven I well remember the Lyceum although somewhat differently to you. We peasants sat up in the Gods. We queued for what seemed hours in Bridge St waiting for the side (riff-raff) entrance to open. Then the long, long climb to the Gods. The seats (if they could be so called) were concrete steps running the full width of the galley. Each alternate step had a wooden plank - this was the seat. Those behind stepped onto the back of your coat and dropped orange peel down your neck. I never had the chance of going into the Queen's but I recall looking through the kitchen windows in Baneswell Rd - the steamy heat and smell wafting out. Outside the Queen's was a 'Gent's'. On the steps going down was a penny in the slot weighing-scale. One of the lads lifted the foot plate and found a penny, after that, the word went around and all the local kids were obliged to seek more treasures.

From Pam Cocchiara Seeing the picture of the Queen's Hotel brought back very happy memories for me. I spent two years there as a Receptionist/Bookkeeper before leaving to live in Sussex after I married and during that time met many interesting people such as tennis stars Lew Hoad and Ken Rosewall. On one memorable occasion we had a visit from the actor Clayton Moore in full costume, complete with mask, as the Lone Ranger! There were huge crowds waiting to see him and no, he didn't bring his horse Silver nor his faithful side kick Tonto. Happy days!

DIT 22's easier photograph showed Commercial Street with the old Town Hall and its famous clock tower. **Dave Woolven** comments that this was "another of Newport's treasures lost to the demolition hammer only to be replaced by a faceless, featureless concrete box." One small incident from my family story has been passed down as far as my grandchildren so far, though no doubt it will go further in due course! My mother, as a schoolgirl aged around 11 was in town on her own one day and she needed to find out the time. Being somewhat short-sighted she peered up at this clock, screwing up her eyes to make out the position of the hands (yes, she really did have poor eyesight). She was seen by passers by who thought that something must be happening, and they too stood looking up to the heavens. Quite a substantial crowd had gathered before my mother slipped off to catch her bus home! Out of sheer devilment she repeated this a few times afterwards – always with the same result.

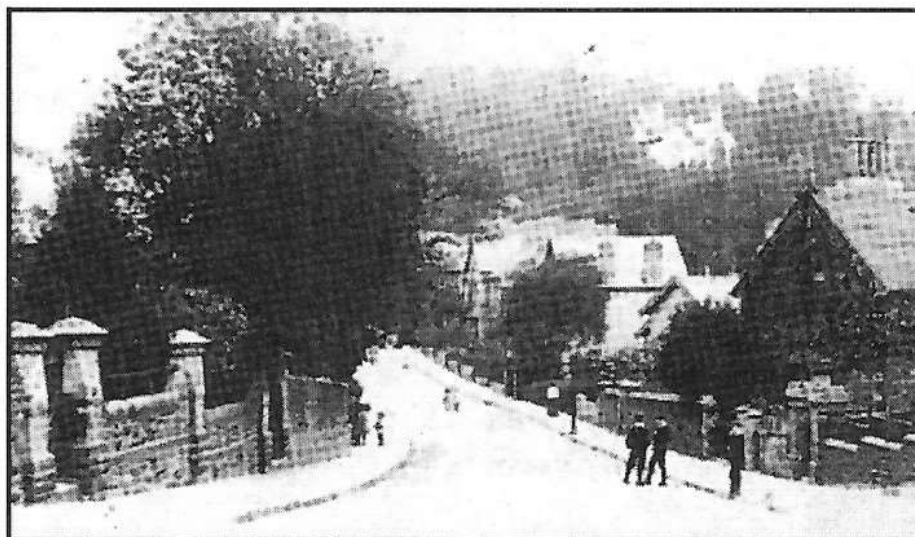
DIT 22's harder photograph showed the Globe Inn on Chepstow Road in Maindee. It is still there, though it is no longer a pub. Dave Woolven comments that "there were two Globe Inns – the other one on the corner of Llanarth Street and Canal Parade. The photo, which dates to 1920s / early 1930s, is the one on the corner of Chepstow Rd and Probert Place, mine host was J W Carwardine." This was just one of Maindee's many public houses – it was possible to get drunk by drinking one pint in each along the main road alone! In the 1920s and 1930s – and even as late as the 1960s – Maindee was a small town as far as the variety it had to offer the shopper. Like most similar out-of-centre shopping areas it went into a gradual decline from the late 1960s onwards, partially when a number of shops were demolished to make way for the widening of Wharf Road and its junction with Chepstow Road. Probert Place was and is a narrow road connecting Chepstow Road with the junction of Glebe Street and Livingstone Place and had only two properties in it – the Maindee Cottage Mission church and Clarke's scrap metal yard. On the opposite side of Probert Place on Chepstow Road was Bastick's shop. The street directories referred to this shop as "toys, china etc" which greatly undersold what they had to offer! They were a good all-round hardware shop and also stocked many items of ironmongery. They certainly kept long trading hours, opening at 8am and closing at 7pm during the week but at 10pm on Saturdays. My father left school at the age of 14 and his first job was as an errand boy at this shop. He did this for two years until he was old enough to start work at Orb Steelworks. I have another story connected with this but will keep it until next time as it is relevant to one of this edition's puzzle pictures. Watch this space!

Talking Points (started by Stephen Berry!) – new challenges for DIT 23

The easier picture this week is a well-known Newport street and this view is certainly still recognisable above shop-front level. There was a very well-known local gathering place out of sight to the left of the photograph which will prompt memories I am sure!



Now for a much harder one. This is a poor quality photograph but is the only one I have ever seen showing this road and, more particularly, the house (the white shape amongst the trees). Where is this road (still recognisable apart from the absence of the said house) and what happened to this house?



Word searches (page 11) - answers

PEAK – Summit, Acme, Top, Tip, Zenith, Pinnacle, Crown, Brow, Apogee, Apex, Maximum, Crest, Cap.

CASTLES – Rampart, Keep, Cannon, Tower, Guard, Portcullis, Dungeon, Moat, Turret, Gatehouse, Ruin, Stone, Well.

The Battle of the Somme 1916 by Gerald Lee

For several years I have been interested in the First World War. Until this year, every summer Rosalind and I have made visits to the battlefields in France and Belgium.

The Battle of the Somme sums up many of the impressions we have of World War One, in particular the loss of life on a massive scale for very little gain. It was the first real taste of battle for Kitchener's army of volunteers, recruited from all parts of Britain and its empire. The regiments were identifiable with particular areas of the country. Lord Derby, the minister in charge of recruitment, had given an undertaking that those who joined together from clubs, work-places and from towns and villages, would serve together for the duration of the war in 'Pals' battalions.

In all, from the army recruits enlisted throughout the empire, most had only vague ideas about the war aims. The Anglo-Irish poet, W B Yeats, wrote a poem about an Irish airman with the lines,

'Those I fight I do not hate, Those I guard I do not love.'

My own particular interest is that many men from Northern Ireland who had enlisted into the 36th Ulster Division fought at the Somme. My father, who was born in 1908, could remember the young men in uniform walking down the Shankill Road in West Belfast on their way to France. Women handed them fruit and cakes to take with them, perhaps knowing that the predictions of a quick victory had already vanished and that many of them, their brothers, sons, and fathers, would not return.

Growing up in Northern Ireland, I can remember church services at the beginning of July to honour the dead. It was said that every family in NI had lost a member at the Somme. My father was a member of the Orange Order, so my family used to go to watch the parades on 12th July. The first lodge in the procession comprised the surviving members of the Ulster Division, by the nineteen-sixties frail and elderly men. There was great anger in Northern Ireland that when the much-acclaimed BBC series 'The Great War' was broadcast in 1964, the episode on the Somme did not mention the Ulster Division.

The battle had originally been planned in 1915 at a conference in Chantilly. Since late 1914 the war had developed into a kind of stalemate with each side dug in behind trenches that ran all the way from the Channel coast to the Swiss Border. To break the stalemate, it was decided that a major offensive would begin in the summer of 1916. This would include an attack from the east by the Russians. Haig, the British commander would have preferred to fight in Flanders. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, had advocated an attack on the Dardenelles to force Turkey out of the war as a means to end the stalemate. It ended in failure and an ignominious withdrawal. As the war progressed the view that the war could only be won on the Western Front became dominant.

The situation changed when the Germans launched an offensive at Verdun on 21st February 1916. Verdun was not of great strategic value. However, the fortress of Verdun came to symbolise the French war aim to not just maintain the integrity of France, but to regain the lost provinces of Alsace Lorraine, ceded to Prussia in 1870 after the Franco-Prussian War. The French committed 78 divisions to holding Verdun, which they did at a terrible cost of 315,000 casualties. Generals Petain and Nivelle became heroes and the slogan, 'Ils ne passeront pas,' they shall not pass, became a rallying cry.

When the German parliament passed resolutions in favour of a negotiated peace, France and Belgium opposed any such moves. The German terms would almost certainly have included more of their territory being ceded to Germany.

To relieve the French at Verdun, the Somme offensive was brought forward to 1st July 1916. To prepare for the battle, the allied forces began a bombardment on 26th June. One and a half million shells were fired at the German lines with the intention of destroying German defences, including miles of barbed wire. Twelve British divisions attacked from the north and five French divisions from the south. Under the original plan, forty French and twenty five British divisions would have been committed. As a result of the battle at Verdun the offensive on 1st July 1916 was on a smaller scale. The objective was to penetrate as far as the German second line on the first day.

The troops found the barbed wire had not been destroyed. After some early gains, the battle continued until 18th November with at the very most six miles of territory gained. The 1st July 1916 is recorded as the worst in the history of the British army. There were 57,470 recorded casualties, including 19,240 dead. The battle exposed many weaknesses in the British Army. Many shells were the wrong type or simply did not explode. Even today there are occasional deaths caused by unexploded bombs in the former battlefields. The German tactics to retreat and counter-attack were much more effective. The British found the German trenches superior and gave better protection, although the Germans probably had the advantage of a less waterlogged terrain.

When you look at numbers the full horror strikes home. In the pre-attack bombardment one and a half million shells were fired. At Verdun in one day the Germans fired one million shells. In the four months that the battle raged the British suffered 415,690 casualties, the French 202,567 and the Germans 434,500, although not all at the Somme. It is estimated that British casualties at the Somme exceeded 350,000. Many smaller nations also took part. Newfoundland, not at that time part of Canada, suffered 710 losses at Bapaume in a pointless attack which had already seen the defeat with heavy losses of the Enniskillins. The Newfoundlanders lost all their officers. In the context of a small island, this was a substantial part of a generation.

As the battle progressed the weather deteriorated. It needed 12 horses to drag a field gun from the mud. Some aspects of the battle gave a foretaste of modern warfare. In an attempt to break the stalemate Winston Churchill, among others, advocated a new field weapon, which became the tank. On the formation of the coalition, Churchill was demoted from the Admiralty to the non-departmental post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He still remained active in planning. In September the first tanks in history were deployed at Thiepval Ridge. Of the original 49, 14 broke down and 17 failed to reach their objective. With a crew of 8, weighing 28 tons, and a speed of 3mph, a tank should have been able to cross a ten foot trench and plough through barbed wire and other obstacles. The heat inside was unbearable and despite the armour the tanks were still vulnerable. It was only in the following year at the Battle of Messines that tanks played a major role, when commanders learned to co-ordinate tanks with infantry.

It is incredible also that in the period of mechanised warfare on 20th July, cavalry was used in a surprise attack. In the age of the machine gun it was clearly futile, yet at the start of World War Two the Poles used cavalry against the Germans, with predictable results. Another major innovation was the use of the newly formed Royal Flying Corps. Initially aircraft were used for reconnaissance. The British lost 782 aircraft. Against this the Germans lost only 164 in combat, and 264 were forced down. Probably the Germans husbanded their resources much better. To justify their losses the allied generals claimed the main benefit of the aircraft was the support it gave to troops on the ground.

The weather deteriorated into the autumn with the perennial problem of mud. The British took advantage of a temporary improvement in November when frost hardened the ground. On 13th November General Gough led the final offensive of the battle with 44,000 experienced troops. The Somme battle ended on 18th November, most of the gains being made in the final stages.

So, did the battle succeed? The French could claim success at Verdun, although the battle lasted until 16th December, a month after the end of the Somme. The allies failed to take Peronne or Bapaume. It is possible the Germans suffered fewer losses, but whereas the allies had the resources of their empires, the Germans were being gradually drained by the allied blockade. Even without the American entry into the war, the Germans could not win. Their final offensive in 1918 at best would only place them in a better position to negotiate a peace treaty. Both sides wanted a conclusion to the war before the Americans joined the conflict. The USA, with its seemingly unlimited resources, would be able to dictate the terms of the peace treaty, which might not suit Britain with its naval superiority, and France and Britain with their empires.

In 2016 Rosalind and I were successful in the ballot to attend the commemoration of the Somme Centenary. It was a great honour to feel part of the celebrations at Thiepval. Among those attending were

Prince Charles and the princes William and Harry. France was represented by President Hollande, and the Irish Republic by its president. A former president represented Germany. Prime Minister David Cameron represented the British government, and Admiral Tim Lawrence the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The actors Charles Dance and Joely Richardson gave readings from the war poets. Young soldiers from regiments that had taken part in the battle read extracts from letters, which was particularly moving, especially that from a nurse to her family, read by a young serving female soldier.

The French government deserves credit for their efficiency in organising the event. Each visitor had a bag with a packed lunch and an official guide, even a waterproof poncho. There was a full supply of refreshments and comforts through the day. Sadly, the weather was unkind to us.

Through Friends Reunited I had renewed contact with some school friends. I received a rogue email with the name of a girl I knew, also called Rosalind, from my year in school. From that we stayed in contact. She is now a well-known community worker in several groups such as the Women's Institute, Mothers' Union, The Church of Ireland, and works on behalf of those with special needs. Recently in recognition of her work she was awarded the BEM. We had lost touch after leaving school in 1969, but I had heard she had married a teacher, Brian Bloomfield, who is well known in Northern Ireland for his role in rugby, education and local politics. Before we went to France, Rosalind told me Brian had been appointed Mayor of Lisburn, their local town. I had not seen him since 1969, the year I left school, and he joined the teaching staff. Geography was my least favourite subject: my last geography teacher and I never seemed to see eye to eye, although circumstances were to play a strange hand; maybe another story. It was a great surprise when I spotted Brian not far away from us. The chain of office was a strong clue! He had barely changed in fifty years. I introduced myself as 'the person who had been emailing his wife.' He was amazed I recognized him. He was in France to lay a wreath on behalf of the town of Lisburn. There was not much time, so we could only have a brief conversation and a quick photograph, which my Rosalind took. It was a wonderful memory of that day. We are still in touch and perhaps may even meet in the future, virus permitting, if the projected U3A Northern Ireland trip takes place.

World War One is a massive subject. The war changed the world in so many ways. A map of Europe after the war resembles the world we would recognize today. Nation states replaced the Empires of Austria-Hungary and Turkey. The British, who gained new commitments through its mandates on parts of the Middle East, published the Balfour declaration, which eventually led to the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 (after World War 2), as a Jewish national home. The Arabs felt betrayed that they did not enjoy the rewards they expected from fighting the Turks.

The Somme symbolises the excesses of the war, most notably the loss of life. It is striking to me how in a global conflict each soldier can be identified from his grave with a locally recruited regiment. My father telling me he could remember seeing the young men in uniform marching to France down the Shankill Road in West Belfast, brings home the realization that each one had a family and a home. There was a Shankill Company within the division identifiable with our local area in West Belfast. Should you ever make a battlefields trip I would recommend a visit to the Ulster Tower (see photo), one of many memorials to local divisions. It is a copy of a tower in Northern Ireland and also comprises a small museum and bookshop.

The 38th Welsh Division also fought in the battle at Mametz Wood. In 1987 the Western Front Association commissioned the sculptor David Petersen from Newport Art College to erect a memorial at Mametz. The sculpture depicts a red dragon on a three metre stone plinth. The dragon is facing the wood and tearing at barbed wire. In preparation for the centenary of the battle, the Welsh Assembly paid to have it refurbished. It is one of many places to visit.

The 'Great War' series is still being shown on British television. It was perhaps the last time such a series could be made while there were still survivors to share their memories. The BBC made the series in collaboration with the Imperial War Museum and the national broadcasting corporations of Australia and

Canada to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the war. Michael Redgrave was the narrator; Emyln Williams was the voice of David Lloyd George.

Being filmed in black and white makes you feel the bleakness of the war. Technical innovation overcame the problem of jerkiness in old newsreels.

My thanks to Stephen for continuing this newsletter.



The Ulster Tower



Gerald and Brian Bloomfield, Mayor of Lisburn

Cryptic Crossword Clues (page 2) – Answers

1. L/a.m./ents 2. B/orsta/L 3. Traile/R 4. Depar/T 5. Eye 6. Ques/TS 7. Z/ado/K
8. S.O./n/S. 9. R/ag 10. (p R) elude 11. Ev/O.K./e 12. C/an/teen 13. e.g./g on 14. W/ilt
15. D/IG/ress. 16. BA.s/soon/ist 17. Sweet/EN/er 18. Ex/1st 19. C/L/ergy 20. e.g./0

Coming Face-to-Face with the Ancestors by Dave Woolven

Following redundancy in April 1993 I joined a group sorting, identifying and cataloguing pottery found at the Roman Fort and Town of Caerleon. The group was run by a learned Doctor of something or other. I was given a bag of bits among which was something the size and shape of a cotton reel complete with hole. On asking, said Dr said it was an inkwell – ‘no way’ says I, ‘the ink would run straight through’. Again the Learned Gent says ‘inkwell’ – I said if it was the ends would be scratched where it had been pushed around a desk. To shut me up, he got out his Big Book of Learned Words – and found that it was the vent off a cooking steamer pot! He had a bit of paper from Uni saying that he was a clever chap, the only paper I had, had Andrex on it. Thick as Two Short Planks, Dopey Dave was mightily chuffed. While there, it was mentioned that volunteers were needed at the Hereford dig. Hereford is about 40 miles from me so I could only manage, at the most, one day per week. I joined the dig which was down to the 1300s level in April and stayed until the dig finished in September/October.

The Hereford Cathedral wanted to build a visitor centre to hold the Mappa Mundi and the Chained Library plus a visitor shop, all on 3 floors. As they couldn’t build up because it would have obstructed the front of the Cathedral, the only option was to go down. As it was a known historic site, Hereford’s two resident archaeologists, Richard and Nic, were called in. They recruited paid archaeologists and volunteers. The Cathedral had to pay the costs of the excavation and an agreed sum of money was set aside for it. As I understood it, money was taken out of the fund during the dig by the Cathedral to pay for other things with the result that funds ran out and the last few weeks of the dig were rushed by 2 or 3 diggers. Also pressure was brought to bear to finish the dig, so the work could start on the visitor centre. The only bells they wanted to hear were the ones on the cash registers.

The dig took place on what had been the Cathedral graveyard. I was told that during the 1700s / 1800s they were ‘burying’ people by laying them on the ground and covering them with soil until the new ‘ground level’ was over six feet above the original ground level - very smelly. At the time of the excavation the ‘tump’ had long since been removed and the area grassed with not a gravestone in sight.

As the excavated pit got deeper, it had to be reinforced with heavy steel beams and railway sleepers. There was also a weather cover over the dig, but all the time I was there we had scorching hot days, so much so that panels had to be removed from the roof to try to cool the diggers.

The population of Great Britain in Saxon to early Medieval times has been “guess-timated” to be around 3 to 4 million. If you have English roots then there is a good chance that one of the people in the following pictures could be your direct ancestor. If you lived to reach 35 to 40 years of age, then you had a long life.

- Photo (1) Rest in Peace
- Photo (2) Test bores were done before the dig started, this person got hit twice
- Photo (4) Piles of bones that were dumped when older graves were cleared
- Photo (3) This chap hadn’t finished decaying when he was slid down into the pit, his head had become separated from his body
- Photo (5) You hadn’t to be squeamish – I had to lay under the girder on the bones to excavate (my spade and helmet)
- Photo (6) The Saxon wall. These skulls were given ex Army helmets to protect them when they were sent for examination
- Photo (7) A tiny child and a baby
- Photo (8) Pit

As the end of the dig approached, the paid archaeologists left for other work, leaving just the two Hereford City professionals and me. We had reached the ‘natural’ (untouched ground level) but just to be certain, Nic and Richard started to ‘wreck out’ a quarter of the pit, I was told to do another quarter. The first swipe of the mattock I gave the shout “Ay up – I’ve got a skellie”. Nic and Ric had to leave what they were doing to lift my skellie. They told me to do another quarter. Same again, another skellie. At this Nic said that if I found another skellie, they would blow my car up!!



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2



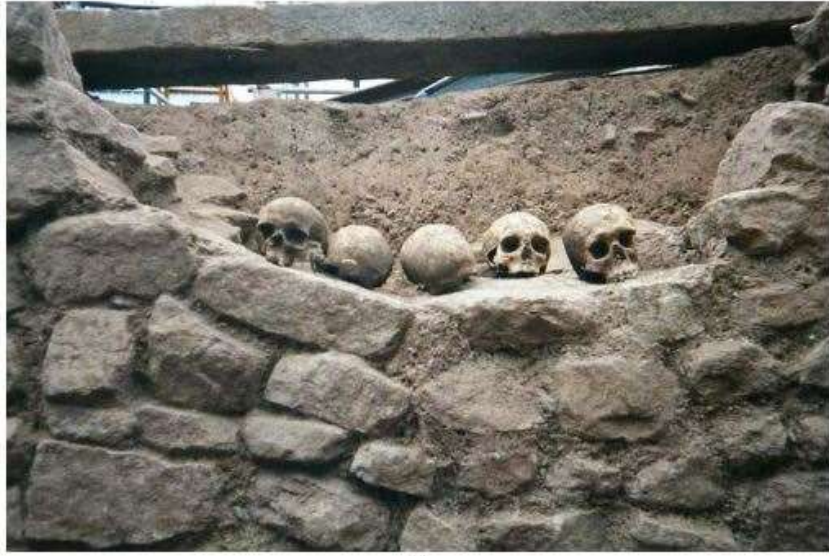
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5
28



6



7



8

Reminiscers' Corner

Following a casual remark made by a member I met a few weeks ago and with whom I had a very welcome socially-distanced “catch-up” – and a chance email from another member – I thought it might be interesting to introduce a new area to DIT. There is no special theme to be explored, but if your memories are such that they have stayed with you, there is every chance that they will be of interest to others. More than that, they may serve as a trigger for somebody else and all contributions are welcome!

The honour of being the first to contribute to this area goes to **Doug Watkins**. Doug thought that what he had to say would make me green with envy – it did! He says: “We moved to Rogiet (called Roggiett when we moved there from Glamorgan in 1943) and my father was at that time a fireman on the banker link, based at Severn Tunnel Junction. [*The bankers were the locomotives which provided assistance to heavy trains going through the Severn Tunnel, with its steep gradients up from the lowest point – Ed*]. Young lads at that time used to wander far and wide but mainly up the woods or down the moors. So one day I chanced to be over at the railway station when my father on a light engine was passing. He called over to see if I wanted to ride with him and naturally I jumped at the chance. He was banking a coal train over to Pilning and coming back as a light engine. So here I was on the footplate on the spare seat going over. Then on the way back and before we entered the tunnel, he and his driver asked me if I wanted to drive, so there I was carefully ensuring that I wasn't going down too fast, and controlling the speed going back up. There was no such thing as Health & Safety in those days! I think a few of the village boys did the same thing at other times.

In an earlier article you mentioned the Pullman which was still running during my early working days at Standard Telephones. I had to travel up to London from time to time. At that time a full breakfast was 4/6d. STC was a particularly mean outfit, so when I put a chit in for 4/6d, the chap in charge of expenses nearly had apoplexy until I showed him the receipt. Luckily I got a job at RTB where money was no object. I had five great years in the research department there before I moved on.

I certainly would have welcomed the chance to drive a locomotive, but that opportunity never came my way, I'm afraid. It was possible to ride on the footplate of a steam locomotive, if the driver was a friendly fellow (and many of the older men were), and the longest ride that a friend and I ever managed was from Gloucester through Ross-on-Wye to Hereford in 1964, the year that this line closed. It was quite eventful – particularly going through the tunnel at Longhope in the pitch black. The only light was coming from the firebox of the engine. Because the engine was close to the end of its working life and in a poor condition, we had to stand at Weston-under-Penyard Halt (in the middle of nowhere!) while the engine got up steam for the rest of the journey! The highlight of the trip, though, was when the fireman took out rashers of uncooked bacon and rolls from his box and fried the bacon on his coal shovel! He gladly shared the food with us – and it must rank as the best bacon roll I have ever tasted!

I have already written about train journeys I made in the mid 1960s, memories that will remain with me for ever. However, before I took a real interest in railways and their history (from September 1960 when I started attending St Julian's Boys Grammar School and met my most memorable teacher, Ernie Rees, who taught Geography. He was himself keenly interested in railways. He really did encourage me and, as you will realize, quite literally changed my life. I was a traditional “train-spotter” from 1958. For those two years my long-suffering parents were encouraged by me to take Sunday trips out in the car to pass through places with engine sheds! I think I visited almost every shed in South Wales, Sunday being a day when almost all engines were idle, staff at sheds (if any) had little to do and were happy to either accompany me around or let me wander by myself. As Doug says, no Health & Safety in those days – even if no staff were in attendance, it was always possible to gain access as there was no security whatever at country sheds. Those were the (very happy!) days! **SJB**