

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No.26

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Switzerland - Walensee lake taken from Gäsi
Photograph taken by Sue Berry (one of Stephen's cousins by marriage who lives near here)

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

The Hoarder

A poem by one of our former members, now no longer with us, Eddie Needs

I'll put this away for the children,
it's a pity to throw it away.
I'll put it with some of the others,
it's sure to come in handy one day.

I'll find room in the attic for this one –
they don't make these things any more.
I'll wrap it in plenty of paper
and lie it down flat on the floor.

This should just about go through the trapdoor,
with a shove and a pull with some rope,
there is nowhere else we can put it
so let's try once again and just hope.

I'll layer a few more of those thingees
and take a few cuttings of these.
I'd better sow some of those whotzitz
and grow a few more little trees.

Now the attic and shed seams are bursting,
in the garden are more odds and ends.
But it seems that the children won't have them -
instead they may well go to friends.

For half of the kids have departed
to lands that they feel are more just.
In the meantime our odd bits and pieces
will get thicker and thicker with dust!

Many thanks to **Pat Fackrell** for forwarding this to me for inclusion.

And now for a bit of fun! The Pig Personality Test

The pig personality test determines your personality type based on the unique way you draw a pig.

You need not show the results to anybody else, so there is no embarrassment involved! The Craft group (plus your Chairman) tried this out last Friday – and the results were both accurate and hilarious.

The instructions are easy to follow. Take a piece of A4 paper and a pencil or pen. Draw a pig.

That's it! No further guidance, just draw a pig.

The results can then be compared with a table giving details of the traits according to various features of your drawing. This appears later in this edition of DIT, but **DON'T LOOK AT THE RESULTS BEFORE DRAWING YOUR PIG!** For that reason I am not going to say on which page the table appears!

The Games People Played - Angela Robins

Many of us remember visits to Barry Island as children. It was a more arduous journey before the motorway was built. I can remember the traffic jams in Newport on a Saturday and saying "Are we there yet?" at St Mellons, and "I can see the sea!" at Rumney (I still do!). When we got to "the island" it took several circuits around the one-way system to find a parking space whilst waiting for the coaches to reverse into their spaces. Once a year we would visit with my father's Work's Outing although my father, who was a bit of a petrol-head, preferred to drive us instead of going on the coach.

Playing on the beach and building sand-castles was a great release, but not so good when you cut your sandy foot on the rusty metal spades we had then. They got rusty because they were always taken home to be reused for future trips - we weren't a 'throwaway society' then.

I thought it was great, on those occasions, that we joined the other families at the Merry Friars for a roast dinner, instead of having a gritty warm boiled egg and a SPAM sandwich picnic.

Afterwards all the boys would receive a cricket bat and the girls would be given a tennis racquet, both with a ball. So, my two brothers and I could not have a tennis match with one racquet but we could play cricket with two bats and balls! As they say - Life's a Beach!



This photograph clearly wasn't taken on a day such as Angela describes – I don't think I have ever seen the beach with so few people on it!

With a very keen eye or a strong magnifying glass it is just possible to make out the large white numbers painted on the walls of the ramps leading to and from the beach. I can always remember, every time we went to Barry Island, being told the number nearest to where we "made camp" and being asked to repeat it just in case I should wander and get lost in the crowds. I never did get lost – I was too afraid to wander too far away in case I missed out on an ice-cream!

A Day in the Life: The Beatles Story part 1 by Neil Pritchard

Fancy a bit of groovy nostalgia, be prepared to be turned on big time. I'm going to hit the music running with the Beatles' rise to fame from the late 1950s to 1970. Along with many others, I didn't realise at the time when they disbanded, how their music would, remarkably, have an influence on contemporary classical composers. Sounds crazy, well many classical music academics, composers and musicians have acknowledged how the Beatles played a key role in pioneering a whole new form of music. It has meant that since the Beatles there have been lots of overlaps developing between the classical and the popular (known as Crossover Music). Artificial barriers have been breaking down between types of music, leading to the betterment of music as a whole. From a standing start, knowing only a handful of chords between them, John Lennon and Paul McCartney turned themselves into the most influential composers of the late twentieth century. None of them received any formal musical education! Their music wasn't just immensely popular, it also proved that traditional western harmony – the main building block of European music – still had plenty to offer. (Even though avant-garde composers had turned their back on it in the 1950s and 1960s to produce music that to most people proved to be a "giant turn off"). They also transformed the recording studio from a dull box where you recaptured your live sound, into a musical laboratory, of exciting and completely new sounds. This was one of the most crucial advances in the way popular music was to be produced. More than anyone, Lennon and McCartney prefigured this trend. They showed that the old musical forms could be refashioned and refreshed, to make music that was both exciting and popular, and sophisticated and new. Not bad going for two boys who met at a local church fete and taught themselves their instruments. So let's go back to the beginning.

Before John, Paul, George and Ringo became the Beatles, they were simply four teenagers from Liverpool. Never could John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr have imagined they would go on to form one of the most successful groups in modern history, influencing the popular culture in not only music, but also fashion, film and as a massive global phenomena. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, it was difficult to imagine a band, hailing from the relatively poor city of Liverpool, getting a gig in the thriving London music scene of the south, let alone exporting their eventual homegrown success to a world eagerly opening up to the counter-culture movement of the '60s and the rock 'n' roll revolution in pop music. A fateful meeting between two music-loving teenagers in 1957 is where it all began. Sixteen-year-old rhythm-guitarist Lennon, the son of a merchant seaman, was performing with the Quarrymen, a skiffle band booked to perform at events at a church fete in Woolton, Liverpool. While setting up their instruments for the evening performance, the band's bass player introduced Lennon to a classmate, 15-year-old McCartney, who would join in on a couple of numbers that night and soon would be offered a permanent spot in the Quarrymen.

McCartney, the son of a former band-member and nurse, would play his first official event with the group in October, but things didn't go exactly as planned. "For my first gig, I was given a guitar solo on 'Guitar Boogie.' I could play it easily in rehearsal so they elected that I should do it as my solo," McCartney said in a Beatles documentary. "Things were going fine, but when the moment came in the performance, I got sticky fingers; I thought, 'What am I doing here?' I was just too frightened; it was too big a moment with everyone looking at the guitar player. I couldn't do it. That's why George was brought in."

George Harrison, the son of a bus conductor and shop assistant, joined the Quarrymen as lead guitarist at age 15. Influenced by rockabilly (which blended the sound of country music with that of rhythm and blues, leading to what is considered "classic" rock and roll), his guitar style would help shape the group's early sound. Though still performing as the Quarrymen, Lennon, McCartney and Harrison would go on to form the core that would soon become the Beatles. I'll begin the music with their first recording, a version of Buddy Holly's classic song, "That'll Be the Day", recorded by The Quarrymen on 14th July 1958 at Percy

Phillips' Studio, in Liverpool. On this day, The Quarrymen made what would become known as The Beatles' first recording.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4_LMMKq8Hw

Throughout 1958 and 1959 the Quarrymen gigged whenever they could, including local parties and family events such as the reception for Harrison's brother's wedding. Professional bookings included venues such as the Casbah Coffee Club in Liverpool and Hippodrome in Manchester. The name of the band was in flux during this period, which would witness the group play under the names Johnny and the Moon Dogs as well as The Silver Beetles and The Silver Beats. An art school student and friend of Lennon's, Stuart Sutcliffe, was brought into the band to play bass. Sutcliffe and Lennon are often credited with coining the name The Beatles, though various stories abound on the actual origins. The name that would become synonymous with modern music was a combination of beetles and beat, hence The Beatles. Forging a friendship that would become the basis of their singer-songwriter partnership in the future, Lennon and McCartney would often go away together, playing acoustic sets in small pubs. "John and I used to hitch-hike places together," McCartney says in: "Paul McCartney: Many Years From Now" by Barry Miles. "It was something that we did together quite a lot; cementing our friendship, getting to know our feelings, our dreams, our ambitions together. It was a wonderful period. I look back on it with great fondness".

In 1960 and the first half of 1961, the group performed at venues including social clubs and dance halls around England and Scotland, but keeping a regular drummer was proving to be difficult. "We had a stream of drummers coming through," Harrison recalls. "After about three of these guys, we ended up with almost a full kit of drums from the bits that they'd left behind, so Paul decided he'd be the drummer. He was quite good at it. At least he seemed OK; probably we were all pretty crap at that point. It only lasted for one gig, but I remember it very well. It was in Upper Parliament Street where a guy called Lord Woodbine owned a strip club. It was in the afternoon, with a few perverts – five or so men in overcoats – and a local stripper. We were brought in as the band to accompany the stripper; Paul on drums, John and me on guitar and Stu on bass." When their residency at the notoriously rough Grosvenor Ballroom in Wallasey (near Liverpool), was cancelled, in part due to regular outbreaks of violence among the crowd, the Beatles looked abroad for work. Having success in Germany with a different band, the Beatles' manager Allan Williams thought Hamburg could prove a successful destination. The only problem was they lacked a drummer.

On short notice, they recruited Pete Best, whom they had seen play at Casbah Coffee Club. Lennon, Harrison, McCartney, Sutcliffe and Best left England in August 1960. Playing regular gigs at the Indra Club, the larger Kaiserkeller and the Top Ten Club in Hamburg was the making of them as a group. "It was Hamburg that did it," Lennon recalled. "That's where we really developed. To get the Germans going and keep it up for 12 hours at a time we really had to "hammer it". We would never have developed as much if we'd stayed at home. We had to try anything that came into our heads in Hamburg. There was nobody to copy from. We played what we liked best and the Germans liked it as long as it was loud." The Beatles performed in Hamburg on and off from 1960 through 1962 with engagements back in Liverpool interspersed. It was at a performance at a hometown venue the Cavern Club where Brian Epstein first saw the group play. Epstein was curious after hearing mention of them in his family-owned record store and in the pages of Mersey Beat magazine. He returned to take in the show a few more times and on December 10, 1961, Epstein approached the band about managing them, and a five-year contract was signed in January 1962.

That year would prove to be momentous for the Beatles. On April 10, Sutcliffe died of a brain haemorrhage. June 6th marked the first time the group would record at EMI Studios located at Abbey Road in London. Produced by George Martin, who would go on to be extensively involved in their first albums, they recorded four songs: "Love Me Do," "Besame Mucho," "Ask Me Why" and "PS I Love You." Martin was impressed with the group but believed Best was not up to the job as drummer. Epstein fired Best on

August 16 and replaced him with 21-year-old Ringo Starr, the son of local confectioners who had been playing with bands in the area. Starr made his debut with The Beatles two days later. Time to see a fully restored video of "Love Me Do" from 1963. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JWI_wUOQc4

Epstein saw the potential of the band, not just in their hometown but far beyond, especially now that the core four members were in place. He cleaned up their image and began to work in earnest to promote them. The band's first U.K. single, "Please Please Me," was recorded in November 1962 and released in January 1963. It topped the U.K. charts and began a trend that would see 11 of their 12 studio albums through to 1970 reach No. 1 in the U.K. Their first UK album was released on 22 March 1963, following the success of the singles 'Please Please Me' and 'Love Me Do'. Eight of the "Please Please Me" album's 14 songs were written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney (credited here as McCartney-Lennon). At the time it was unusual for a group to write their own material; The Beatles, however, swiftly revealed to listeners that they were anything but a run-of-the mill band. The quality of the songs on the LP was testament to their ambition and musical knowledge, and the willingness of the Parlophone Record Label's staff producer George Martin to try to get the best from them. And this he did, effectively capturing highlights from The Beatles' live set.

The sound that had wowed audiences in Liverpool, Hamburg and beyond was most evident in the album's final track 'Twist and Shout', full of boundless energy and with famously hoarse vocals from John Lennon. The group's versatility, meanwhile, was shown by R & B ballads 'Anna (Go to Him)' and 'Baby It's You'; and McCartney's love for pop standards ensured a place for 'A Taste of Honey'. But it was the original songs that set The Beatles apart from their peers. Opening song 'I Saw Her Standing There' was one of McCartney's earliest songs, yet after dozens of performances in sweaty basement clubs and dance halls it was something of a rock powerhouse. 'There's A Place' and 'Ask Me Why' showcased their talents for melody and harmony, 'PS I Love You' and 'Do You Want To Know A Secret' displayed the group's lighter side, while the title track 'Please Please Me' was simply one of the most exciting pop songs that 1960s listeners had heard.

Towards the end of 1963 the Beatles manager, Brian Epstein, travelled to the United States and secure a booking for the band on The Ed Sullivan Show. On 7 February 1964, the Beatles left the UK with an estimated 4,000 fans gathered at Heathrow, waving and screaming as the aircraft took off. On landing at New York's John F. Kennedy Airport, they were met with an uproarious crowd estimated at 3,000. They gave their first live US television performance two days later on The Ed Sullivan Show, watched by approximately 73 million viewers (34 percent of the American population). "It was very important," McCartney recalls of the milestone. "We came out of nowhere with funny looking hair, looking like marionettes or something. That was very influential. ... It's like, 'Where were you when Kennedy was shot?' I get people like the American actor Dan Aykroyd saying, 'Oh man, I remember that Saturday night; we didn't know what had hit us – just sitting there watching Ed Sullivan's show.' Up until then there were jugglers and comedians like Jerry Lewis, and then suddenly, the Beatles!" Beatles biographer Jonathan Gould writes that it was "the largest audience that had ever been recorded for an American television program". The next morning, the Beatles awoke to a largely negative critical consensus in the US, but a day later at their first US concert, Beatlemania erupted at the Washington Coliseum. Back in New York the following day, the Beatles met with another strong reception during two shows at the classical music venue Carnegie Hall. The band flew to Florida, where they appeared on the weekly Ed Sullivan Show a second time, before another 70 million viewers, before returning to the UK on 22 February.

The Beatles' first visit to the US took place when the nation was still mourning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy the previous November. Commentators often suggest that for many, particularly the young, the Beatles' performances reignited the sense of excitement and possibility that momentarily faded in the wake of the assassination and helped make way for the revolutionary social changes to come in the decade. Their hairstyle, unusually long for the era and mocked by many adults,

became an emblem of rebellion to the burgeoning youth culture. The group's popularity generated unprecedented interest in British music in the US. The Beatles' success in the US opened the door for a successive string of British beat groups and pop acts such as the Dave Clark Five, the Animals, Petula Clark, the Kinks, and the Rolling Stones, to achieve success in America. During the week of 4 April 1964, the Beatles held twelve positions on the Billboard (US) Hot 100 singles chart, including the top five. This is a number you may be familiar with, taken from their first TV appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jenWdylTtzs>

The "Please Please Me" album maintained the top position on the Record Retailer chart for 30 weeks, only to be displaced by its follow-up, "With the Beatles", which EMI released on 22 November to record advance orders of 270,000 copies. The LP topped a half-million albums sold in one week. Meanwhile their profile was about to hit the Big Time with a major film. United Artists Records, encouraged their film division to offer the Beatles a three-motion-picture deal, primarily for the commercial potential of the soundtracks in the US. Directed by Richard Lester, A Hard Day's Night involved the band for six weeks in March–April 1964 as they played themselves in a musical comedy. The film premiered in London and New York in July and August, respectively, and was an international success, with some critics drawing a comparison with the Marx Brothers. United Artists released a full soundtrack album for the North American market, combining Beatles songs and Martin's orchestral score; elsewhere, the group's third studio LP, A Hard Day's Night, contained songs from the film on side one and other new recordings on side two. The album saw them, according to one observer "truly coming into their own as a band. All of the disparate influences on their first two albums coalesced into a bright, joyous, original sound, filled with ringing guitars and irresistible melodies. That "ringing guitar" sound was primarily the product of Harrison's 12-string electric Rickenbacker guitar (a prototype given to him by the manufacturer), which made its debut on the record.

TO BE CONTINUED

 **PUZZLE PAGE**  - **Mike Brown**

ONLY CONNECT

Your task is to sort the 16 words below into four groups of four connected words. You will find that some words fall into more than one category, but there is only one correct solution.

Animal	Hutch	Britten	Tumbler
Coop	Stravinsky	Gonzo	Stable
Ravel	Beaker	Cage	Scooter
Stein	Kenel	Miss Piggy	Glass

WORD PUZZLE

Figure out what these 7 words have in common.

BANANA	DRESSER	GRAMMAR	POTATO
REVIVE	UNEVEN	ASSESS	

POINTLESS

Fill in the blanks to name 5 famous UK homes.

B _ E _ H _ I _ _ A _ A _ E
 C _ A _ S _ O _ T _ _ O _ S _
 H _ W _ R _ H _ _ R _ O _ A _ E
 C _ _ T _ _ . _ O _ A _ D
 _ O _ U _ N A _ _ _ Y

Answers are on Page 9.

More Nonsense!

David Jenkins

Gerald Lee's article in Desert Island Times issue 25 brought to mind a few songs, poems, recitations and such, dredged up from amongst distant memories.

I recall my father used to sing this – one of many variations of the lyrics. The tune is similar to that of Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn (*which fits it beautifully!* – Ed).

There was a man who had two sons
And these two sons were brothers
John Andrew was the name of one
And Andrew John the other

Now these two sons are dead and gone
They died from eating jelly
John Andrew died upon his side
And Andrew John his belly

Based on an infamous line in literature, the following recitation gave my sisters and I some amusement:

It was a dark and stormy night,
and the rain came down in torrents.
The Captain said to his mate
'Tell us a yarn, Bill.'
And he did.
And the yarn went as follows...

It was a dark and stormy night
and the rain came down in torrents.
The Captain said to his mate
'Tell us a yarn, Bill.'
And he did.
And the yarn went as follows...

And so on, and so on. You get the idea. Repeat ad nauseam!

One from slightly later years. I'm not sure if this was an actual song by Cardiff City supporters or if it was invented to irritate them. Or maybe to wind-up the skinheads who were numerous when I was in my teens. (Sung to the tune of 'Tiptoe Through The Tulips'.)

Tiptoe to the Grange End
With me flick-knife
And me bover boots
Come tiptoe to the Grange End with me.

As an aside, in his article Gerald quoted a piece which combined a limerick and a pun. The other day I saw the following snippet, which also combines two poetic forms:

There was a young man
from Cork who got limericks
and haiku confused.

Stephen Berry

In the days of my junior school education (in the 1950s) we were taught English grammar and our constant companion was a small book entitled "First Aid to English". One section which I always enjoyed was that called "Absurdities" and two which stick firmly in my mind are:

'Twas in the month of Liverpool
In the city of July,
The rain was snowing heavily
And the streets were very dry.

The elephant is a bonny bird
That flits from bow to bow.
It makes its nest in the rhubarb tree
And whistles like a cow.

And two Limericks whose origins I cannot remember:

When cavorting amongst the tall pines
Don't forget to sample the wines.
They grow in a cup
From which one can sup
Before seeking mustard from mines.

There once was a girl from Tibet
Who went out to buy a new pet.
She asked for a bear
From – she didn't know where
So a new pet she never did get!

Gwyn Havard

Another Limerick!

There was a young lady from Ealing,
Who walked upside down on the ceiling.
She fell on her neck,
And she cried out "By heck,
It's a very peculiar feeling".

Puzzle Page (page 7) - Answers

ONLY CONNECT

Muppets:	Animal	Gonzo	Scooter	Miss Piggy
Drinking Vessels:	Beaker	Glass	Stein	Tumbler
Composers:	Britten	Cage	Ravel	Stravinsky
Animal Shelters:	Coop	Hutch	Kennel	Stable

WORD PUZZLE

The words become Palindromes when their initial letter is taken away.

POINTLESS

Blenheim Palace, Chatsworth House, Haworth Parsonage, Castle Howard, Woburn Abbey.

Brinkers by Judith Nash

On one of my local walks I visited Magor Nature Reserve where I was surprised to see a sculpture of a woman.

I have since learnt that the sculpture is that of a Brinker woman and was created by the sculptors Melanie Bastier and Sarah Hatton. It is approximately 2.5 m high made using a steel framework and steamed white and brown willow.

A Brinker is a person who owns land on one side of a reen, wall or pill. The name being derived from a person living on the brink or border. Local Gwent archives list both men and women as Brinkers. The sculpture represents a Brinker named Anne Williams, who died in 1723, and who owned land next to Mark's Ditch, Whitson and Cliff Reen, Goldcliff. Traditionally Brinkers would use a scythe to clear vegetation in order to keep the waterways open to prevent them from flooding.

Although I have yet to see them, two more sculptures can be found at Blackrock (one of an engineer, the other of a fisherman). All three sculptures are part of the Living Levels Sculpture Trail.



A Little Brain Teaser (DIT25, page 19) - answer

The railway ticket I illustrated in DIT25 attracted a number of responses and everyone spotted that the ticket bore the date 2nd June 1953, the day of the Coronation of our Queen. It was generally agreed that an early start from Bristol would have been necessary, though this particular ticket was for a special excursion train and most ordinary traffic (particularly freight traffic) was suspended or very much reduced on that day. A non-stop journey from Bristol to London took around 1³/₄ hours. Allowing time to get from Paddington to anywhere in London, an arrival at Paddington no later than 9am would seem reasonable; and we are therefore talking about a start at around 7am. Interestingly the ticket is 1st class – doubtless a “special special” for the Lords and Ladies and others of their ilk, so it is likely that cars would have been awaiting the arrival of this train at Paddington – the passengers would not be heading for the Underground!

A Model Railway with a Difference by Dave Woolven

I guess that when most of us old wrinklies were kids (we were kids, posh people had children), our dream was to be an express steam engine driver, in charge of one of those highly polished beasts (not so much the scruffy little goods engines). These drivers were the best of the best. The nearest most of us came to achieving this ambition was our model train sets. We were all familiar with Hornby (near scale), Triang (plastic), and Trix (laughable). As we grew older, we ended up where we were pushed. Also growing older, other things claimed our attention – motor bikes, cars, girls, mortgages, wallpapering, nappies. But the lure of steam didn't die for some. It was either join a preserved railway or build your own loco.

Newport has its own miniature railway. It was formed in 1947 with a track at St Mellons. Unfortunately, a very rough Council estate was built right next door; the track and site were being constantly vandalised and a club day was spent repairing the damage. It reached the point when the club was forced to move, half of the members going to Cardiff, the other half to the Glebelands where, in the 1960s, they built the longest raised track in the UK – over 3000 feet. At the end of the 1990s we were told that our site was needed for the new Glan Usk School (to replace the Durham Road Schools). The Council offered first one site, then another, then another; each time the Council changed its mind. Eventually in 2000 we moved onto our new site, an old abandoned 5½ acre allotment, still at the Glebelands but at the other end. We have now laid 1000 feet of dual gauge ground-level track, built a club house which has a gents, ladies and disabled toilets, a kitchen area where tea and a bun can be had, a station, the foundations of a signal box and the foundations of a 1/3rd acre boating pond. We have plans to add much more track.

The locos on this track are nothing like the Hornby locos of a couple of generations ago. These are all hand built and they have fires in them which make real steam. Many of these engines weigh from ¼ ton up to 2 tons (note:- 'tons' not ridiculous tonnes). Building is complicated and expensive with no room for error. Obviously a well-equipped workshop is essential. Rough castings have to be machined to accuracy of less than the thickness of a human hair. Boilers are made from expensive sheet copper – one slip and it's scrap. Before a boiler can be fitted into a loco, it has to go through rigorous safety tests by an inspector licenced by an insurance company. If it passes, safety valves and pressure gauges then have to be examined and passed. It is all safety – safety – safety. Boilers have to be re-examined every 3 years. Visitors are welcome to bring their locos but they must produce a valid test certificate before they are allowed on the track. It's great fun watching first time visitors to our track. Most clubs only have short tracks but with ours the drivers have to learn to fire while the engine is moving. Also, with long straight sections of track, drivers can 'thrash' (full speed) their locos (not allowed if they have passengers). Visitors can't get enough of our track – as I painfully found out! It's a club rule that a club member has to ride at the back of the last carriage as a guard. Billy Muggins got the job with one visitor. The trucks were almost full leaving about 6 inches of seat, so I had to sit on the back-rest. The driver loved our track so much that he did 10 circuits = nearly 2 miles – when I prised myself off my perch. My poor *derriere* must have looked like a hot cross bum (oops – typo – bun)!

In normal times we are open to the public on the first Saturday of the month (weather permitting) from Easter to October, 1pm to 5pm. We have ample car parking, a club house with toilets and a kitchen for tea and buns. We have a portable track to take to events - it's 110 feet long and each section weighs 1 cwt – alas most of us are past our sell-by dates and it's a case of "Dicky ticker and tricky truss" ('Allo 'Allo). Anyone interested in joining us is welcome to come to our natter nite meetings on a Wednesday or Saturday (play time) if only to revive the talk and smell of oily steam – see what you think of us. To find us – down Bank Street (last left off Caerleon Road just before the M4 roundabout coming from town), over the hump-back bridge, turn right past the bowls centre, under the M4, follow the road to the right. Parks orders are that the barrier by the bowls centre be kept locked except on our open days. At other times visitors will be met at the barrier. Contact us on www.newportmodelengineering.uk for more information.



John Abbott on his Black 5 – this weighs ¼ ton.



Keith Morris with one of his traction engines.



John Abbott – station with roof and safety barriers.



Chris Lewis-Cooper with his traction engine



John Abbott is building this 13-foot monster – the American Mikado class. You won't be running this around on the dining room table!



Bob Foster on his narrow-gauge quarry loco. Tony Hall is following on the battery Hymek



One of our visitors filling the tender with water. All loco have to carry coal and water



Chris with his steam lorry



A GWR loco



At a rally. Every one of these traction engines was hand-built in garden sheds.

A Yuletide Treat from Barbara Phillips

Some of you have admired my mince pies in previous years, so as we (probably) won't be able to share them this year, here's a recipe. The original was from Raymond Blanc's "Blanc Christmas" which he autographed for me about a hundred years ago ...

However, there were some things in the original that a lot of people can't eat due to medication restrictions, e.g. grapefruit, cranberries, allergies. If you can eat them, and are certain that anyone you share the pies with can eat them, then add them back in.

Planning Ahead: The mincemeat can be made a couple of months in advance, if kept cold and airtight. Once cooked, the mince pies can be kept up to 5 days in an airtight container in the fridge, or frozen. Once thawed, simply refresh the pastry in a warm oven for 10 minutes, add clotted cream and serve. **!DO NOT MICROWAVE!**

Barbara's Mincemeat (should make about 30, depending on the size)

150g Bramley apples, peeled and finely chopped
125g currents
150g sultanas
40g mixed peel
150g dried apricots, finely chopped
(30g dried cranberries)
60g nibbed almonds or chestnuts
zest & juice of two oranges (or 1 orange & 1 grapefruit)
250g muscovado sugar
10g mixed spice
5g cumin
½ cinnamon stick, powdered, or 10g ground cinnamon
nutmeg to taste (beware some people are allergic)
100ml dark rum

- Put all dry ingredients into a large, clean, dry, bowl.
- Peel & chop the apples. (Do not use mechanical chopper, as it generates too much juice and will probably ferment!)
- Stir well.
- Add the juice & rum and stir again. And again. Encourage any visitors to have a stir.
- Cover bowl loosely with clingfilm and put in a cool dry place (fridge is ideal if you have room) and leave for about 24 hours before bottling.
- Put into clean, dry jars, seal and label.

So far, so good. This is a vegetarian recipe and is vegan until you get to the pastry. If you don't want the alcohol, then use extra orange juice, but again beware of it fermenting.

Raymond Blanc's sweet shortcrust pastry should make enough tarts for the above batch of mincemeat.

250g unsalted butter
125g icing sugar
2 egg yolks, size 3
500g plain flour

To finish: take an egg, size 3, beaten, and icing sugar

- * Mix together the butter & icing sugar until they are completely blended.
- * Add the egg yolks and LASTLY add the flour.

Knead until you have a smooth dough, leave to rest for at least one hour before using.

To make the tarts:

Preheat the oven to 190° C, 375° F or Gas Mk5

Roll out the pastry to just under 5mm thick. Cut out 30 rounds just a little larger than your tart moulds (or paper cases). Make another 30 rounds a little smaller, or use a star shape cutter.

Line the tart moulds, paper cases, or whatever, with the bigger rounds of pastry. Fill to the edge with mincemeat. Brush a little beaten egg around the edges of the top and stick them on the top of the filled base. Brush with a little more beaten egg then bake in the centre of the pre-heated oven for 25 minutes until golden brown.

Once cooled enough to handle, transfer from moulds to a wire rack and leave to get completely cold before sprinkling generously with icing sugar. (Obviously if you can't wait that long, then sprinkle with the caster sugar instead and devour while still warm).

One final word of warning: because of the alcohol and sugar, the filling will remain very hot for longer than you might expect.

Barbara's pastry

Formula is:

50:50 unsalted butter to Trex
2/3 fat to flour

So: e.g. 4oz butter, 4oz Trex = 8oz, therefore 12oz flour

Plus a couple of drops of very cold water to bind. It is very easy to put in too much water

I've never really worked out how much pastry to make to accommodate how much mincemeat, but RB's proportions would undoubtedly work.

Veggie friendly but not vegan due to butter. I tried it with vegan spread - not a success!

It sounds very simple, doesn't it?

BUT: Beware adding too much water; you could add more flour but it spoils the proportions. The resulting pastry is very short, so you could have difficulty if you roll out too much at a time. It will be easier to remove from the tin if you use paper cases, and leave them in the cases to freeze/serve.

Wrap the pastry in cling film and let it rest in the fridge for about 30 minutes before using.

Preheat the oven to 190° C, 375° F or Gas Mk5 and bake for about 15/20 minutes. Sprinkle with icing sugar once cooled.

BEWARE! The mincemeat will be very hot indeed, even once the pastry has cooled.

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

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

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

Pig Personality Test – what does your drawing tell you?

Orientation of Pig

	Facing Left	Facing Forward	Facing Right
Top of Page	You are optimistic and extroverted. You expect the best from every situation. You believe in tradition and always remember important dates.	You are optimistic and straightforward. You expect the best from every situation. You welcome discussion and play devil's advocate.	You are optimistic, innovative and active. You always expect the best from every situation. You are not the best about remembering important dates.
Middle of Page	You are realistic and extroverted. You take on life with logic and reason. You believe in tradition and always remember important dates.	You are realistic and extroverted. You take on life with logic and reason. You welcome discussion and play devil's advocate.	You are a realistic, innovative, and active. You take on life with logic and reason. You are not the best about remembering important dates.
Bottom of Page	You are pessimistic and extroverted. You expect the worst from every situation. You believe in tradition and always remember important dates.	You are pessimistic and straightforward. You expect the worst from every situation. You welcome discussion and play devil's advocate.	You are a pessimistic, innovative, and active. You expect the worst from every situation. You are not the best about remembering important dates.

Detail of Pig

Level of Detail	Personality Trait
Few Details	You are impulsive and willing to take risks. You are not bothered by the little things.
Many Details	You are analytical, thoughtful, cautious, careful, and often distrustful.

Features of Pig

Feature	Personality Trait
Four Legs	You are secure and stick to your ideals. You may also be stubborn.
Fewer Than Four Legs	You are insecure, uncertain, or are experiencing a change in your life.
Large Ears	You are a good listener.
Small Ears	You are a bad listener.
Long Tail	You are satisfied with the quality of your sex and love life.
Short Tail	You are not satisfied with the quality of your sex and love life.

What We Were Doing . . . - Angela Robins

Last year members of our Gardening & Wildlife Group enjoyed an excursion to the historic town of Carmarthen, which is believed to be the oldest town in Wales.

From the old Quay, narrow winding lanes led up to the gatehouse of a ruined Norman castle. The many splendid houses and elegant buildings around the Guildhall Square testified to the town's distinguished past and the County Museum supplied an in-depth account of its history. The large market and pedestrianised shopping precinct provided convenient shopping and welcoming tea shops.

They then travelled on to the Llanelli Wetlands through the beautiful countryside. Created on the site of an old steelworks, its 450 acres of lakes, pools and lagoons are set in peaceful surroundings. With stunning views over the estuary and the Gower, the place is a haven for some spectacular birds, some of which are rare or endangered, and also countless dragonflies, kingfishers, orchids, oystercatchers, butterflies, barn owls, and egrets can be seen.

As you can see in the photograph, members also had fun learning the crane's mating dance.

----- X -----



----- X -----

A man walks into **Euan's** local with a young crane and they sat next to Euan at the bar. The man orders a beer each for himself and the young crane and puts his hand in his pocket and pays with the exact amount of change.

The next day Euan sees the pair at the bar and again they have a beer each for which the man pays with the exact amount of change.

This becomes a daily routine until two weeks later Euan can't hold back his curiosity and says "Excuse me sir, how do you manage to always pull out of your pocket the exact amount of change to pay for your drinks?"

The man answers "Well, several years ago I found an old lamp in the attic and when I rubbed it a genie appeared and offered me two wishes. My first wish was to always have the correct change in my pocket to pay for anything I want."

Euan was impressed, "That's brilliant, even better than asking for a million pounds as you will always be safe from scammers! One other thing sir - what's with the young crane?" to which the man replied "My second wish was for a cute chick with long legs!"

Driving a Steam locomotive by Alan Fry

The reminiscences corner in DIT 23 took me back a few years to my own days as a young railway enthusiast, especially the references to doing a spot of driving. I was born into a railway family. Grandfather Fry was a driver, his youngest son was a fireman (obviously later on a driver too); whereas my father (the eldest) was a fitter and turner at the Llanelly engine sheds. Just to complete the picture, the middle son was a fitter's mate at a smaller shed at Pantyfynton. So I really broke with tradition when I chose to work instead in the steel industry, starting off as a trainee metallurgist in a local foundry that was literally next door to the engine sheds. I grew up knowing most of the railmen by name, so was never short of catching someone's eye when out doing some loco-spotting and scrounging a lift back to shed or pottering around the shunting yards at Sandy or Llandeilo junction. But, with first class contacts at home, there were some rides I was able to relish, the best one was when I actually took the controls for the return run home.

I show this picture because most of my rides were on this type of loco. I've never ridden this one but show



it because it is the loco described by Dave Woolven when he was a volunteer on its rebuild (DIT 24) before it ended up on the South Devon Railway where it now works. Towards his retirement, this is the type my Grandpa usually drove, over the route between Llanelly and Llandovery, a section of the Central Wales Line - Swansea to Shrewsbury. I was 13 years old going on 14, when he invited me to make the whole trip with him on the footplate, and I didn't have the heart to disappoint him by saying "no" (believe that and you'll believe anything!) Now unlike SJB, I never made records in photo or diary form of the day, so I have

no idea of date, just that it was a beautiful August day in 1952, when I stepped aboard the engine, just starting to blow off, waiting in the bay platform of Llanelly station. The 2-coach train had barely got to Bynea, the first stop, when my Grandpa said, "I suppose you'd like to try to drive". Needless to say my reply was an enthusiastic affirmative, and then came the conditions. No one can become a driver until he/she has been a fireman (actually one starts as a cleaner until a firing vacancy occurs) so I was told to observe very carefully, because the shovel would soon be mine, and there followed a crash course from the fireman in how to keep the engine adequately supplied with steam. In fairness I did not have to fire the thing all the way to Llandovery, but thoroughly enjoyed learning where the firebox was every time I turned around with a shovel loaded with coal, on a floor that felt like the cakewalk at Porthcawl fairground. There was time to view some of the scenery but that was not important because watching the driver's actions was, I hoped, going to be crucial at some point. The track being single line meant tokens had to be exchanged to enter each new section and sometimes this was done on the move (slowly) at a signal box or from a waiting station master. We travelled up the line smokebox first, so I thought we would be going home bunker first. But no! When we came to do the run-round at Llandovery for the return journey we pulled onto a turntable. We all climbed out of the cab and I expected to be included in the push to turn the engine. I was wrong because the fireman connected the train vacuum pipe to a connection on the turntable,

jumped back into the cab and used the vacuum brake lever to actuate a motor on the turntable to make it rotate. I had never seen one of these before. There was nothing like this at the engine shed roundhouse at Llanelly, where the crews had to provide their own muscle power to turn engines. Then we were on our way home, and true enough I was allowed to operate the controls I had been watching so carefully. Given the all clear, with the engine in full forward gear, I shut off the vacuum brake and pulled up on the regulator, we were away. Accelerating quite rapidly, after about half a minute, the regulator was closed and the large reversing lever (something like a lever in a signal box) was eased back to just short of mid-point, and the regulator set to maintain a normal running speed. These locos were not fitted with speedometers so I had no idea how fast we were going, but it seemed much too fast (just like when one drives a car for the first time). The next thing was to stop and follow orders at the appropriate time. The regulator was closed, the reverser was moved back into full forward gear and the train was allowed to coast under its own momentum into the station. Applying very gentle braking by using the vacuum brake lever, the train rolled very gently to a stop in the correct position at the platform. Of course, all the while, quiet words of instruction were guiding me with what to do, and when to do it, and so it continued from station to station. By the time we were half-way home, I had the moves well worked out and was able to keep a lookout for signals and speed restriction and SW (sound whistle) signs as well. It is about 30 miles between Llanelly and Llandovery. I don't know how long the trip was, and as I said, I kept no record. But who keeps records when one is living the dream uppermost in most boys' minds? Wow! I'm driving a steam engine!!!

Incidentally you can view 6412 in action at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rKclAYr3N4>

News from the Welsh Film Industry - submitted by Pat Fackrell

The Welsh Film Industry has decided to step up its game. They plan to remake many well-known films but with a Welsh flavour to them. The following are all planned for release next year.

Trefforest Gump	Who killed Roger Rarebit?
Catantonia on a Hot Tin Roof	Who Aberdares wins
Cwmando	Live and let Dai
American Weirwolf in Llandudno	The full Ponty
The Lost Boyce	Dai Hard
Twin Leeks	Independence Dai
A Bridgend too far	The Wizard of Oswestry
Wild Swansea	License to Rhyl
The Pembroker	Crocodile Tondu
Saving Private Rhian	My left Saundersfoot
Evan can wait	CasaBlaina
Gowering Inferno	In Beddgelert with Madonna
Be Neath the Planet of the Apes	Cool hand look you
Ystalyferea Baby!	Look you Bach in Bangor
Cerys' Hereos	A Fishguard called Rhondda
Huw Green was my Valet	Reservoir Gogs
Anglesey with Dirty Faces	Sheepless in Seattle
Caerphilly Dreaming	The Eagle has Llandudno
An American in Powys	The Magnificent Severn
The Dai who loved me	Haverfordwest was won
The Prisoner of Rhondda	Dial M4 Merthyr

This seems a pretty comprehensive list, but can you think of any appropriate additions? Send them in if you can!

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 COLOURS in this grid?

D	B	W	J	Q	S	N	N	G
T	E	L	O	I	V	S	R	T
T	A	E	L	D	I	E	T	N
A	U	V	G	S	E	O	Y	T
B	E	R	I	N	C	A	E	E
R	L	G	Q	I	A	D	L	S
N	S	U	R	U	A	R	L	I
O	T	P	E	J	O	C	O	R
L	A	R	O	C	D	I	W	E
A	I	N	A	V	Y	N	S	C
S	E	O	P	U	R	P	L	E

No. 2 Can you find the 15 words that can follow WILD in the grid below?

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

Answers are on page 29

British Light Music – an Introduction by Stephen Berry

The term “light music” has become widely established and is often taken to be the opposite of another well-established term, “classical music”. Neither term is correctly used and neither particularly well understood! If anything, light music stands between “serious” music (to give it a slightly more apt term) and “pop” music (including jazz) and often derives its elements from both of these *genres*.

Light music was something well understood by Haydn and Mozart – both of them wrote quite a lot of it! – but they stand amongst the greats of the “serious” movement. They composed for the occasion, often under the patronage of an influential person who employed them, and this is something which, in a slightly different guise, was also the case with British light music. Indeed, most “serious” composers could and did produce lighter pieces

Britain was quite a late developer in the field of music. Being an island and a country quite distinct from its European neighbours did mean that continental influences were not as marked, though it is certainly not true to say that they were absent or that Britain was a country without music. The operettas, popular across Europe and poorly imitated in Britain, achieved a high degree of sophistication and fame when Sullivan joined forces with Gilbert to produce the Savoy operas. The waltzes of Johann Strauss influenced a similar home-spun product and the military, with its marching bands, created a demand for marches. What had a greater influence in the rise of British light music was the rise of the holiday at its spa towns and developing seaside resorts. Orchestras were established on piers, promenades, in winter gardens and in park bandstands and a repertoire of pieces had to be provided for their audiences. The very nature of the holidaymaker was to extract as much as possible from the limited time available (possibly just a day for many) and in order to do this, each entertainment needed to be brief. A symphony concert lasting for two hours would not suit the average person who might want to spend only 30 minutes or so before moving to the next delight. What was needed was a series of shorter pieces – and many pieces of light music are, indeed, of an average of 5-6 minutes duration – so that a listener might enjoy five or six different pieces before moving on.

The next major development was cinema and, up to the late 1920s, most cinemas had an orchestra to provide appropriate music as the films were silent. This is an area often forgotten or looked down upon and yet it was one of the most difficult jobs an orchestral musician could undertake. Fast-moving action demanded fast moving changes of mood and tempo and, while it was difficult enough for a pianist to keep up with these changes, imagine trying to keep some 20 players moving quickly from scene to scene!

By now radio broadcasting was firmly established and the BBC Light Programme provided an almost continuous stream of light music, essentially for workers on production lines or who undertook other repetitive work. It had a huge following – particularly “Music While You Work” with its instantly recognisable signature tune “Calling all Workers” composed by one of the greatest light music composers, Eric Coates. As indicated earlier, works are still written under patronage – these days the BBC and film companies!

The 1920s also saw the phenomenal rise of the recording industry and the length of piece was ideal for the 78s then available, which could cope with anything from a few minutes to eight minutes satisfactorily.

Fears have been expressed that light music is dead. I rather think that this is a fear that has been greatly exaggerated. It is true that we no longer have many pieces of the pre-war specification of five minutes, but the establishment of a multi-million pound film industry has provided much opportunity for the development of light music into film scores, some of which (Dr Zhivago and the Star Wars films for example) have become as famous and as popular as any pieces of light music in the past.

So what are the key features of light music? Rather than try to launch in with an explanation, let me first attempt to outline what serious music entailed at the time when light music was established. Under Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, large-scale works for orchestra (symphonies) or orchestra and solo instrumentalist (concerti) and smaller orchestral works (e.g. overtures) were developed in terms of form.

Melodies were firstly stated, then developed, extended, and varied and finally restated. This was done to a fairly standardised formula and the miracle is that the music is so good that the listener need not appreciate the form to appreciate the music. Composers used a fairly standard orchestra and whatever instruments were prescribed by the composer remain the same today.

We have already seen that pieces of light music might last for around five to six minutes on average and this is insufficient for the “serious” formula to be used. The emphasis changed as a result and this may be summed up in a definition offered by Andrew Gold, who was head of the BBC Light Music Unit from 1965 to 1969. It read: “Light music is music where the tune is more important than what you do with it.” Light music is about melody first and foremost, but the best of it also has exceedingly clever orchestration.

Serious music cannot easily be played by an “ad hoc” orchestra – it requires the players specified by the composer at the time of composition. By their very nature, seaside orchestras might be short of certain instruments and it soon became the norm for orchestral players’ music to be “cross-cued” so that, for instance, if the oboe was missing, any oboe solo could be played by a flute or clarinet. The first violin part contained most of the necessary cues for the higher-pitched instruments while the cello part did likewise for lower-pitched instruments. Most of these orchestras included a piano – not as a solo instrument but to “fill in” for absent instruments and to fill out the sound when few string players were available. The result was that light music could be played and enjoyed in almost any combination of instruments, making it extremely versatile.

Some of the best amongst British light music composers are:

Richard Addinsell (1904 – 1977) Much of his output was film music, probably the most famous being the Warsaw Concerto from “Dangerous Moonlight”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbb-jozEdUQ>

Kenneth Alford (1881 – 1945) Although not exclusively a composer of marches, it is these for which Alford is best known. Without a doubt, his most famous march is “Colonel Bogey”.

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

John Ansell (1874 – 1948) Most of Ansell’s output has long disappeared from the regular repertoire, but his Plymouth Hoe, a potpourri of nautical tunes, is still heard occasionally.

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

Hubert Bath (1883 – 1945) Here is another fairly prolific composer who is mainly remembered for one outstanding contribution to light music – the Cornish Rhapsody, written for the film “Love Story”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48kM1CURIdY>

Ronald Binge (1910 – 1979) Ronald Binge was a first-rate composer with an extensive output. Amongst his most famous pieces are 1. Dance of the Snowflakes, 2. Sailing By and 3. The Watermill, but the piece that is probably the most universally known is 4. Elizabethan Serenade.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dt3iAj0-f0&list=PLv0ZJFJWeLMmkiN7zvySE69XJnlqO36fh>

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

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

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4XgbIhIOvk>

Eric Coates (1885 – 1957) Definitely in the top five of British composers of light music! Rather than give a small amount of information now I will contribute an article for a future edition of DIT.

Trevor Duncan (1924 – 2005) Although one of the more prolific composers of light music of his generation, Duncan is probably best-known for the first movement of his “Little Suite”. This was used as the signature tune of a famous BBC series of the 1960s, though music from the other movements was also used at appropriate times during the various episodes. Can anyone name the series and tell us anything about it?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ruo2gm6yx8>

John Foulds (1880 – 1939) John Foulds was a composer who ventured into serious music – and even experimental areas such as quarter-tone composition, but his most endearing are in the light *genre* without a doubt. Of these, the Keltic Suite in three movements contains his most famous piece – it is the second movement (A Keltic Lament) initially for solo cello and harp with a repetition for full string orchestra and harp. The two outer movements are very evocative of Scotland and its music, the last movement reaching an exciting climax. This suite is a high point of my time as conductor of Newport Concert Orchestra when we gave a performance of it in Christchurch Parish Church!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiK24TwJXpw>

Edward German (1862 – 1936) Edward German was one of the few composers who “crossed the house”, starting out as a composer of serious music but switching to light when in his thirties. A number of his more famous pieces are from incidental music he wrote for theatre productions and the operetta “Merrie England”, but he wrote one very substantial orchestral piece which nevertheless constitutes light music – his “Welsh Rhapsody” of 1904. This takes five popular Welsh songs and treats them symphonically and is well worth a hearing. This is another piece I have conducted in Christchurch Parish Church and the thrill of building up the orchestral sound in the finale – Men of Harlech – has to be experienced to be believed!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0fJnGBzKvE>

Peter Hope (1930 -) Although Peter Hope’s output of original compositions is not large, what he has composed is worthy of a high place in the list of excellent British light music. His most well-known work is the suite “The Ring of Kerry” in three movements; the link takes you to a recording of the complete suite and another of his suites, “Irish Legend” – a work I only discovered today when looking for a recording of the Ring of Kerry! What a discovery!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2hEh8RxBc8> (Ring of Kerry first and then Irish Legend from 09:22).

Albert Ketelbey (1875 – 1959) As with Eric Coates, definitely in the top five of British composers of light music! Rather than give a small amount of information now I will contribute an article for a future edition of DIT.

Ernest Tomlinson (1924 – 2015) Ernest Tomlinson really did compose “across the board” in terms of style but he was a prime mover in keeping the spirit of light music alive when it might so easily have disappeared. Those of us who love light music owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. His contribution to this short article is a piece he wrote in 1983 (the most recent included here) and entitled “Kielder Water”. Inspired by the reservoir of that name in Northumberland the piece was written just two years after the completion of its construction and a year after its official opening. The reservoir was not completely full until the following year. The music captures the peace and tranquillity of this remote place.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53OKUmtU7Pc>

Haydn Wood (1882 – 1959) A prolific composer, particularly of songs, of which he composed around 200. By far his most famous is Roses of Picardy, which is often heard at Remembrance events.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmIB6VM6e24>

All of the recordings I have linked are good modern recordings of these works and we are indeed fortunate that some of the smaller recording companies first took the plunge into this *genre* and that the public response was so good that they were encouraged to produce further superb recordings of these excellent works.

These works are certainly some of the best examples of the light music *genre* but they are in no way lightweight. The orchestration is superb and the orchestral effects that these composers have produced with their intuitive grasp of blending instrumental sounds – in much the same way as the artist achieves effects of darkness and light by the skilful blending of different colours – often brings a tingle to the spine! If I were to be banished to a desert island, it would have to be a large one to accommodate all of the music I would have to take (forget the rule of 10!) and all of these would be amongst that collection – as indeed they are now. Amongst this list you will find music describing parts of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland – an armchair holiday for lockdown. Happy listening!

My Life in Belfast: Part Two - The Grammar School by Gerald Lee

Before the days of catchment areas, when your parents signed the forms to sit the Eleven Plus, in Northern Ireland they also received a list of schools. Each school showed its fees and the proportion covered by the Local Authority. In some cases, this was all of them, in the others variable amounts. In essence, this was another aspect of selection by willingness and ability to pay. Methodist College Belfast charged fees, yet it still attracted pupils across a wide range of the social spectrum. With my confirmation letter that I had passed the Eleven Plus, I also received notification that Methodist College had accepted me as a pupil in the 1962 intake.

The school had some prestige in Northern Ireland. It claimed to be the largest Grammar School in the UK with 2,000 pupils. A former pupil was James Ellis, Sergeant Lynch in 'Z Cars.' Chris Barrie, better known as Rimmer in 'Red Dwarf,' was in more recent times Head Boy of the school. He said his first comic impressions were of a history teacher who had a strong nasal way of speaking. He claims the teacher once caught him unawares, doing an impression of him.

The school had a traditional rivalry with Royal Belfast Academical Institution, 'Inst', not far away in the town centre. It was part of the folklore that many years ago, a café in the town centre was wrecked in a confrontation. There was great satisfaction that 'Inst' had to pay for the damage.

In September 1962, having attended an introductory evening at the school, life changed when I found myself full of trepidation outside the school gates, wearing my new school uniform, along with the other new entrants, including one from my former primary school in Woodvale.

At the parents' evening we met our class teacher, Mr Gillen, but it was still a mystery in what set we would find ourselves. I was not sure how I felt: I was in the top set, Form One A. Methodist College was located in South Belfast, away from the working-class industrial areas of East and West Belfast. The Malone area was considered rather posh, with its own way of speaking with an exaggerated politeness.

Opposite the school was the Botanic Gardens with a Tropical Ravine and Victorian Greenhouse. My father and I used to go there on walks at the weekend. On 'Who do you think you are?' Bruce Forsyth learned that his grandfather had designed them. The Ulster Museum and Queen's University Belfast were close by. Seven years later I would enrol as a student in the Faculty of Arts at Queen's University, and after another four years in 1973, graduate with an honours degree in Modern and Medieval History.

Although the school was nominally Methodist, the Methodists, even among the Protestants, were not the biggest denomination. It began life as a training school for Methodist Clergy, then very soon afterwards a school. I often describe it as 'pagan' beneath the veneer. There were even a few Roman Catholic pupils and members of staff. Two girls who had been expelled from St Dominic's School for Girls for spreading left wing literature, joined in my sixth form year. Two of my best friends from the school are Jews. We still remain in touch.

Just before we started, the classrooms had been renumbered. Everyone was confused. An art teacher gave us wrong directions and we arrived late at our first house meeting.

We were kitted out with our books and homework diary and learned the names and nick names of the teachers. Religion was called Divinity. Our teacher, Miss Eames, was the aunt of the future Church of Ireland Archbishop, Robin Eames. She had a peculiar style of dress with a shirt and tie, which seemed strange, until I saw someone dressed like that in an episode of Miss Marple. She had been a missionary

and was proud of the fact that on the way to India she was the only person to decline an invitation to join the other passengers in the bar for a social evening, because she did not drink.

Older pupils used to wind her up about the missionaries. She had little good to say about other religions. Each desk had a Bible with a desk and row number. Often at the end of class someone would accidentally walk off with a Bible. A messenger would arrive at the next class and the guilty person, usually very embarrassed, would find it in his bag.

One teacher I came to appreciate later was Mr Bown, who taught French and German. My aptitude for languages came from his excellent teaching, although sadly, he never related very well to his pupils. He retired before we did our A Levels. His leaving speech was brilliant, witty and gently poking fun at his colleagues. The language labs had just been completed. He imagined his colleagues sending problem classes there. It was a side to him that we seldom saw in class.

Other teachers terrified us, in particular Mr Reid, who taught us history and who was also my House Master. He was a very big man with a booming voice, you froze when you heard it.

He later held a senior position in Irish Rugby and became head of a girls' comprehensive school, after which he became Principal of another Grammar School in Belfast. This was despite once giving a talk on Comprehensive Education to the Current Affairs Society and talking about 'Civil Rights for School Children' and the unfairness of children from the same family not being able to attend the same school.

The house system was meant to engender a love of sport and competition. Unfortunately, I was not a sporting type and only took part because I had to. When playing rugby, I was often confused when the teams changed sides at half time. I remember running in the wrong direction and even being behind the other team's posts. Northern Ireland has a harsher climate. Once we played rugby during hail stones.

We also had PE classes. In the sixth form this included playing football. My friend Peter Weil was like me when it came to sport, not at all interested. His parents had been Jewish refugees and were languages teachers. Peter therefore had a certain confidence that, as the son of a teacher, he could take more liberties, such as totally ignoring the game and instead talking to me about his career plans.

His ambition was to go to Cambridge and then to work for the BBC. He did both. For a while he was Terry Wogan's producer and head of BBC in the North of England. When he failed to become Head of Features at the BBC he worked independently as a producer. He is even mentioned in Eamon Holmes' autobiography. Peter's hobby was collecting puppets. Eamon Holmes recalls how at meetings Peter would toss ideas around in his head by talking to the puppets, until one day Eamon's patience snapped and he threatened to throw the puppet out the window.

There was only one teacher with whom I did not have a good relationship, and that was my geography teacher, Mr Chapman. He was a dry, humourless sort of person. There were never many laughs in his class. It was mainly because of him I abandoned geography after my third year.

Our paths, however, crossed again in a strange way. Within the school there was a house system. I was in Kelvin House with Mr Reid my House Master. The pupils of each year elected a form representative. I am not sure if I was elected every year. However, in the sixth form we had a new House Master, Mr Cowan, after Mr Reid left.

One day he summoned our year for a meeting to elect a form representative. The new house master was very different from Mr Reid, in fact, quite a nice man. Again, I was elected, this time unopposed.

A few days later I saw Mr Cowan in the corridor. As was my habit, I kept a distance. He spotted me and called me by my first name. Instinctively I wondered what I had done. Instead of that he said it was clear I had support from my year, so he was going to nominate me to be a prefect.

I nearly asked if he was sure, but it was approved and I received my silver badge. As it happened Kelvin House had only two prefects in the following year. Our House Master changed again, this time to Mr Chapman. I am sure he was not happy. He would have remembered me from the junior school when we were never really on good terms. It was his decision how the House Captain would be chosen. Some House Masters appointed the House Captain and some allowed an election. It was easier if there were any Oxford or Cambridge candidates doing an extra scholarship year, as they would be the most senior. Mr Chapman decided to allow a vote, which I won easily.

In time he came to appreciate me. I tried to be active as House Captain with all members of the house, especially the new intake. At the end of the year in the school report he was very complimentary about me and how I had brought a spirit back to Kelvin House. I was proud to have been House Captain because I was chosen by my peers and that it worked to my credit.

I generally tried to be unobtrusive but did not always succeed. Some odd situations caused laughter. I was useless at anything above basic maths but found myself in the class that did Additional Maths as well. We used to copy the answers to the homework as the teacher, Mr Creighton, wrote them on the board.

One day Mr Creighton decided to collect in the books. At the next class he asked who had not received theirs back. It was just me. I wondered if I was in some sort of trouble.

He was a big man and walked over, so he was looming over me. He asked if the book he was holding was mine. I said yes. He replied that it wasn't, it was his, and held it up. Where it said 'name' instead of my name I had written 'Mr Creighton.' The class had a good laugh. I actually passed the O Level Additional Maths with a Grade 6. A pass, if not a very good one.

Peter's parents taught languages. Peter was rather extrovert and liked to be noticed. I knew his mother, Mrs Weil, better than his father. She still spoke with an accent and had some odd expressions. One was to use German Grammar and say, 'both is correct,' or say 'klar' in a sentence instead of the English 'clear.' She tended to pronounce fanatic as three syllables, like in the word 'lunatic,' and say 'mizzled' for misled. Like all driven people she could not understand why everyone else did not think the same as she did. However, she was a very committed teacher and wanted her pupils to do well.

English was a favourite subject. Here I felt the school let me and others down. Our teacher in the sixth form was frequently absent. I hope it would not be tolerated today. When he finally finished on bad health grounds, we were well behind in the A Level course. A young teacher came, who I must say was very gifted, and although new to teaching, she did an excellent job retrieving the situation. It is a situation that should never have been allowed to happen.

Despite being a prestigious school, it had its share of poor teachers; fortunately, I avoided most of them.

In 1968 Methodist College Belfast celebrated its centenary year by raising a fund to build language labs, a chapel, and a sixth form centre. The language labs were opened first, and we began to have classes in them. One day Peter's mother decided to test us on the homework, so we sat in the labs while she posed the questions from her booth. On this occasion I had done the homework well and knew the answers. The trouble was my voice carried across to the others' booths. Some said afterwards they were struggling to answer some of the questions when they heard me giving the answer. Weil was very cross, even though it was not deliberate.

Something similar happened in French. Our teacher, Mr Maxwell, did not quite have full control over the labs. Sometimes you were aware that he was listening and that everyone else could hear you as well. We were replying to set questions. One was, 'Ou jouez vous pendant l'heure de dejeuner?' {Where do you play at lunchtime?} We were supposed to reply, 'Dans la cour.' {In the playground} I was not trying to be funny. I replied, 'Je ne joue pas.' {I do not play} Everyone heard it and laughed. I was embarrassed.

There were great celebrations for the centenary. As well as the language labs the school built the Chapel of Unity in the grounds. From time to time form and house assemblies were held there. On special occasions the chaplain held services there, the most memorable for many being our last day in June 1969. It was quite an emotional occasion for most of us, the end of a chapter in our lives.

There were many events to mark the centenary. As prefects we were conscripted into acting as guides. Peter had an idea to mount a puppet show of 'Dido and Aeneas.' I was not involved. Apart from him, no-one treated it very seriously. He even tried to interest our local television stations, without success.

One Friday evening we were organised to lead parties on conducted tours. The plan was that we would form groups of two, each with a party of ten or so visitors. One would lead and the other 'sweep' the stragglers. David and Jeffrey Lecky were twin brothers, almost identical in appearance and both Cambridge candidates in Modern Languages. They did not like too many jokes about being identical twins, such as sharing a passport, or a teacher saying it would be better if they did not work together as guides as it might confuse the visitors. I knew them well enough to tell them apart, so I teamed up with David. I would lead and he would 'sweep.'

The plans did not work well. Very few finished with even half the number they started with. Two girls had none. David and I did better than most with about eight. Mrs Weil said I had been bossy!

A girl called Rosalind Craig, who was in my year, but not in any of my classes, and I, took some people round the school on another occasion. Rosalind later married Brian Bloomfield, who was a geography teacher. I met Brian in 2016 at the Somme Celebrations, which he was attending as Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. He was amazed I recognised him in a crowd of 10,000 people and after nearly fifty years. The chain of office was a big clue. Rosalind and I had renewed contact a few years before this event. We continue to exchange emails and speak occasionally on the telephone. We may meet next year if the Belfast trip takes place and there is an opportunity to catch up.

Grammar schools often justify themselves as bringing opportunity to all social classes. A comment the headmaster made was very tactless. While on the one hand he was saying the school covered a wide social range he made a comment which I thought ill-judged. He said he did not want the centenary appeal just to be something they discussed at the golf club, which I felt was a contradiction of school values.

The teacher who made the biggest impression on me was Mr Terry, my history teacher. I hope I follow his example. He was a man of great courtesy and knowledge. In particular, he was also very precise about the correct use of English. I never stop revising anything I write, always looking for bad grammar or lack of clarity.

As a student I often attended meetings of the Historical Association, a link between the University and the teaching profession. Mr Terry would always speak to any former pupils and maintained his usual courtesy and respect.

With its location near the university in relatively peaceful south Belfast, the school barely acknowledged life in the less well-off areas. When I told Mr Terry, the Troubles were affecting my life and that of my family, he spoke about living in the 1930s as if it were comparable. He was surprised when I said I had

experienced the Troubles where I lived, and that, in travelling to and from the university, I sometimes encountered disturbances.

From my current perspective and having now reached the advanced age of seventy, I sometimes reflect on my time at Methodist College Belfast. In many ways it was a great benefit to me. If I had not gone to a grammar school, I would not have had the opportunity to study languages. I met some wonderful people, who became lifelong friends and with whom I am still in touch. Peter and his brother Stephen endowed a modern languages block in memory of Mr and Mrs Weil on the site of the language labs. It is hard to believe it was so long ago that we watched the original labs being built. Mr Maxwell, our French teacher, warned us once if we did not work harder, we could end up working on the site with the workmen building the languages block.

At school Peter always fancied a girl called Sharon, who was one of the best-looking girls in our year. Most thought he was keener than she was.

Through Friends United he renewed contact with her. After five marriages between them, and more than a half century, they married recently in Belfast and have now returned to live in Northern Ireland. Peter holds seminars bringing schools together to discuss the Troubles and increase understanding, whilst Sharon is an office holder in the Former Pupils Society.

But yet at the same time I feel a certain unease. My brother, my sister and I benefitted from the Eleven Plus system and selection at eleven to go to a Grammar School. It enabled us to continue into further education. We are, all three of us, university graduates. Yet for those who failed or did not sit the Eleven Plus, it did not give any path into further education or training. Most of my parents' social lives were centred round a church in a working-class area. There was a barrier between those who went on to Grammar School education and those who did not. It could be acute in the same family where children could not attend the same school.

One big step for me was when we moved residence from the Shankill to the Springfield areas. It was a house to which I could invite friends. Although on the one hand the grammar schools created opportunity, they also created a social divide. In the very first episode of Coronation Street, Ken Barlow is struggling with this dilemma that he is more educated than his family and those he grew up with.

Northern Ireland still has its Grammar Schools. Under the coalition rules, every party has to agree on policy. The result, I am told, is more than one system running simultaneously. Methodist College Belfast does not have a boarding department any longer. Some years ago, as a result of funding cuts, the Headmaster had to decide whether to retain the Preparatory Department or the Boarding Department. He chose to keep the Preparatory Department. When Rosalind and Brian first married, Brian was a boarding master. The block where they lived now lies empty.

It is the friendships I treasure most. Sadly a few of my old friends have now passed away, but for the most part it was a worthwhile experience. I have never felt inclined to join any 'Old Boys' or Former Pupils Societies, but I am sure the school still plays a major role in the community of Northern Ireland.

Wordsearches (page 21) - Answers

Colours:

Silver Turquoise Purple Violet Orange Navy Green Cerise Apricot Yellow Coral Blue Jade

Wild:

Horse Duck Fire Rice Card Boar Rose About Dog Flowers Thing Animal Fowl Cat West

Talking Points (started by Stephen Berry!) – responses to DIT 25

Dave Woolven and Hannah Parker have come up with the correct solutions for both of the photographs – I must try and find a more difficult one for the second in future!

The first is that portion of Dock Street (now Upper Dock Street) from its intersection with Skinner Street up to the Old Green. The block of shops on the right are still with us, but everything else has changed. Beyond the shops can be seen a lower range of buildings, behind which was an area known as the Corporation Yard. It had a series of small warehouses; by the time this photograph was taken in the late 1930s, at least half of these were disused, suggesting that the area was due for redevelopment. However, the start of war in 1939 meant the suspension of any such work and the area was still in partial use for a few years after the war. By 1950 it had been redeveloped as the bus station for the NCT town services, though it was not big enough to accommodate the buses for all routes. Those buildings beyond the yard were demolished in the 1970s with the Old Green redevelopment, and, turning something of a full circle, the old bus station was brought back into use as just that, when the previous bus station was reduced in size as part of the Friars Walk development! It had been a car park in the intervening years.

The second photograph is of the Presbyterian Central Hall in Commercial Street, almost opposite St Paul's church. Its use was far more than that of a church though – it was a first-rate concert hall. The picture shows a large choral performance – possibly Messiah or Elijah – with a massive chorus and orchestra. To the right of centre at the rear is one half of the organ. The other half, a mirror image externally, was just out of sight to the left. The great church closed in 1962, though the building still exists and is quite recognisable from the back – stand by the stage door to the Dolman Theatre and you can't miss it! The organ was then purchased by St Paul's church and moved across the road in 1963. At the time I was having organ lessons from the Cathedral organist, Charles St Ervan Johns. He died suddenly in July 1963 and I then started having lessons at St Pauls on this magnificent instrument, as the organist there was a work colleague of my mother. Later, when doing the performance element of my degree, I used this organ for part of my assessment. When St Pauls closed for the first time, the organ returned to Leeds, where it had been built, and was installed in Leeds Grammar School. Another near full circle!

... and this edition's challenges!



The first photograph shows a scene which is still recognisable today. Location and any memories of this area, please? The second is far more difficult and this not particularly auspicious building had quite an interesting history. Where is it in this photograph, where did it first move to, and where subsequently?