

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in
NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No.28

12th January 2021



A great local landmark to visit (when we can!) – Raglan Castle

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

2021 – A New Hope?

We are almost in the realms of science fiction at the moment, so perhaps it is apt to suggest that this year might provide a new hope as did one of the greatest of the sci-fi movies, the first issued in the Star Wars series which received this title. Like the Star Wars story, the way is not going to be easy but at least there is hope with the roll-out of the three vaccines we have at present and the possibility of others to come. We know from the opinions of the health experts that the NHS is under tremendous strain at present – and that is something that everybody should remember, as it affects all other hospitalisations. But even in this area there is much hope, as new remedies to reduce COVID hospitalisation times, and a far greater expertise in handling COVID cases since the first wave, have given at least some much-needed breathing space for our dedicated health professionals.

We still seem to be as far away from reopening at Shaftesbury Street than ever and I wish I could be more optimistic about this. I receive daily “briefings” from the Welsh Government (who seem to have taken a cautious approach throughout) and it is certain that they are not going to remove restrictions lightly; indeed, even when some degree of normality returns, it is not likely to be a full return to pre-COVID times.

Anxious as we all are to progress, I must warn you of potential “scams” that the unscrupulous are already dreaming up. If you are waiting for a vaccine you will be contacted by NHS officials, possibly your surgery, but you cannot “jump the queue” by paying anybody for this service. I’m not suggesting that any member might be tempted to do this, but you might know somebody who would be tempted. Please advise them accordingly! Be particularly careful that you do NOT give out any personal information (particularly financial) as the NHS doesn’t need to know where you bank! I have a few other dubious things that I am trying to investigate before passing on, but I will email anything that seems particularly urgent.

Thank you for the kind comments about the **Musical Hamper**. Clearly a good number of you enjoyed dipping into the Christmas classics!

We are still hoping to send a sizeable donation to support the Serennau Children’s Centre at High Cross. Details about this have been published previously – please see DIT 27 page 2. Although we can’t keep open the donation period for too long, given current circumstances we would like to finalise our donation by 31st January. Please support this excellent local charity if you are able.

ZOOM MEETINGS

You will be aware that some of our groups are meeting using Zoom – at the moment French Debs, French Intermediate, French Literature, Italian, Welsh, Meditation, Choir, History, Craft, Creative Writing and Family History groups have booked slots. Should you wish to join any of these sessions, please contact the relevant Convenor via our website for details. We are also setting up a “Social” group to replace the ad-hoc meetings that have been taking place at various venues since the summer. The prospect of winter weather looming means that these gatherings are not really viable, and this will go some way to maintaining contact for the next few months at least.

We have also been invited to join Cwmbran U3A Zoom sessions – they have access to DIT – and they currently have them in History, Poetry, Quiz, Gardening, Viewpoints, Short Stories, Open Mic, Memory Lane and Craft. If anyone is interested, please contact any one of these 3 people for details:

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Newport East of the River Usk part 1 by Stephen Berry

The few published histories of Newport concentrate on the area west of the River Usk, for the very good reason that the river itself formed the eastern boundary of the town and the area beyond Newport Bridge was rural in the extreme.



This map (Ordnance Survey, revised c.1961) shows the area which subsequently became the ecclesiastical parish of Christchurch and which gradually became part of Newport, the process being finally completed on 1st April 1974. The boundary of the ancient ecclesiastical parish is shown as a thicker black line and it will be seen that the River Usk forms the western and most of the northern boundaries of this roughly square area of nearly 9 square miles. The southern border dodges around somewhat but this was almost certainly because of the ownership of the pieces of land that were incorporated into the parish. The eastern boundary seems strange by modern standards, but this boundary was adjusted westwards in 1929 to transfer the developments of the 1920s and 1930s to the parishes of Llanwern and Langstone. Caerleon-ultra-Pontem ('The Village') remains within Christchurch parish.

The early history of the area of Newport east of the River Usk (the area that was, in the future, to become the ecclesiastical parish of Christchurch) is somewhat shrouded in mystery, though it may be inferred that there has been settlement within the area for at least four thousand years. It was around 7500 BC that temperatures rose following the last great ice age, and this led to the establishment of forests. Reforestation of the land led to the evolution of animal life-cycles and food chains which caused the landscape to take on a much more modern appearance. Into this landscape came the first human beings - nomadic, hunting groups searching for sufficient food to sustain themselves and their families. Such groups could not be settled in any one place or area, since it was necessary for them to follow migrating prey and to take account of changing weather conditions. It was not until around 4000 BC that Neolithic man, pursuing newly discovered agricultural techniques, first began to establish permanent settlements. Possibly this period saw the first settlers arrive in this part of the country.

Archaeological remains discovered in the area suggest that the earliest settlers came from such areas as Brittany and the Iberian peninsula by sea, such remains corresponding with others found in those areas. Some 2000 years later, new arrivals brought with them the technology for working copper and so started the era known as the Bronze Age. A burial mound from this period has been discovered at Langstone, which is close enough for us to assume that settlements existed also within the boundaries of the later parish of Christchurch.

During the century before the birth of Christ there was fairly large-scale movement from the continent of Europe into many parts of South Wales and it is at this period that the Iron Age tribe of the Silures emerge, a prominent feature of their settlements being the hill forts such as those found at Twm Barlwm, north west of Newport, and Llanmelin, north of Caerwent. However, it is also clear that they were dependent upon coastal traffic and that they held sway over the coastal plains as well as their fortified camps. They were a ferocious race, giving trouble to any who attacked them, and have been the means of providing considerable evidence of the next group of settlers to visit this area, the Romans.

In south-eastern England the Roman invaders had experienced a fairly easy time conquering the local inhabitants, resistance crumbling quickly. However in the lands of the Silures, resistance to Roman invasion was at its fiercest and the process of domination, which started around 50 AD, lasted for nearly thirty years. Even then, there was only an outward semblance of the Silures having been subdued, for a massive military presence of perhaps some 30,000 men was required in the area to enable Rome to rule. We must be thankful that our forerunners were so belligerent, for the extensive settlements required by so large a military force have given us much of our evidence for the early post-Christian occupation of the area, an occupation which might have been very much smaller or even non-existent under other circumstances. The establishment of the bases at Caerleon and Caerwent might be thought to have ended hostilities in the area, but this was not the case. There is evidence that further defences had to be erected, showing a lingering tendency to hostility and a consequent slowing-down of the processes of complete integration. We have direct evidence of a Roman presence within the parish of Christchurch, for in the early 20th century Roman remains, including coins, were found close to the Lliswerry pond. Of course, passage through the parish was an established fact, since the road from Caerwent to Cardiff constructed by the Romans, followed the route of the present Catsash Road from Catsash to Christchurch, running then along Christchurch Road, Church Road, Caerleon Road and Clarence Place to Newport Bridge, then a fording point. From this road, near to Mount St Albans, a road ran down the hillside to the Bulmore Road just beyond Caerleon-ultra-Pontem, while from Christchurch a road ran north via Black Ash Path to Caerleon, and to Usk via Bulmore Road. Christchurch was a crossroads, for a road also ran in a southerly direction before turning eastwards through Llanwern and Bishton. It is, of course, extremely likely that there would have been other roads running towards the sea, for the Romans are credited with the first attempts to build the sea wall and to drain the marshlands of the Caldicot Levels, and the fact of the

discovery near Lliswerry pond suggests that possibly one of these roads was the one which subsequently became Bishpool Lane, Dents Hill, Lliswerry Road and Nash Road.

It may be assumed that, by 300 AD, there was a Christian tradition in this area, for it was at this time that the two martyrs, Saints Julius and Aaron, were put to death at Caerleon. Shortly after this a church was built in their memory close by the site of St Julian's House, between the modern Caerleon Road and the River Usk and just north of the M4 / Caerleon Road interchange. The lands at that time seem to have passed into the hands of local British kings, though in the sixth century these lands were donated to the See of Llandaff, the rents passing to the Bishop. The boundary of the lands concerned would appear to be (roughly) from Caerleon Bridge to Catsash, then back along the Catsash Road and Christchurch Road to a point at the top of Beechwood Park and finally along the line of the M4 motorway to the riverbank. We have evidence of another church within the parish, also built in memory of an early martyr, Alban. This church was just to the north of the Catsash road and just west of that hamlet, by the house known as Mount St Albans. There is, therefore, direct evidence of links with Roman times in names bestowed on parts of the parish then and which still survive in recognisable forms today.

Within a relatively short time after the martyrdom of Julius, Aaron and Alban, however, Christianity became the accepted religion of Rome. The Celtic church became a thriving organisation, though it differed in many respects from its continental counterpart, even in such fundamental issues as the dating of Easter and the celibacy of its clergy. It certainly predated the English church and, as a foundation, has a completely separate history. We have no knowledge of its workings within this area; indeed, following the withdrawal of the Romans in the 5th century, we have, apart from the gift of lands to Llandaff mentioned above, virtually no knowledge of any happenings in Christchurch until after the Norman conquest.

It was in the post-conquest period that the foundations of church administration were laid down and divisions of the land into units known as parishes took place. Clearly such major innovations did not take place overnight, but it is also clear that south east Wales was dealt with soon after the victory at Hastings in 1066. Indeed, Edward the Confessor had introduced Norman knights to the area some fifteen years earlier in an attempt to create a strong frontier province in Herefordshire. The border lands between England and Wales had a long history of trouble and William moved rapidly after the conquest at Hastings to secure the border. He created the large border earldoms of Chester, Shrewsbury and Hereford, building castles at strategic points. At Chepstow, construction of the castle started in 1067 and William extended his influence into South Wales relatively quickly. The succeeding years were, however, far from peaceful. The King, the English Lords at the border, and the Welsh Princes, all struggled for power within the region. It can only be a matter of conjecture as to the feelings of the occupants of this area; presumably their lives were largely unaffected by the many power struggles of the mighty.

There is no evidence to suggest what existed within the parish at the time of the Norman conquest. It is likely that King William 1st himself passed through it in 1081 on his visit to St David's, but there is nothing to suggest any settlement existed at that time and no mention of Christchurch appears in the Domesday Survey of 1086. However, any cross-roads was a likely nucleus and such a strategic point as Christchurch, which commanded open views in all directions, would have made it an obvious nuclear point.

That we have no evidence for any pre-Norman church does not, of course, mean that one did not exist, for many early Norman churches were constructed on sites which had been hallowed for many years; the curious southward loop in the road, taking it around the churchyard rather than through it, suggests that the ground had previously been holy ground. Christchurch was certainly an early Norman construction, for in 1113 it is mentioned in the Goldcliff Charters as "the church of the Holy Trinity by Caerleon" and was one of the grants made to the priory on its foundation. This grant was made by Robert Chandos, Earl of Caerleon. "Master William of Christchurch" signs documents in 1222, 1234 and 1240 and, some time

later, is elected Bishop of Llandaff. Since the dedication of the church seems to have been “Holy Trinity” right from the very first, we may assume that the name “Christchurch” properly applied to the parish.

Church buildings exist so that congregations may meet in them to worship and the original Norman church building at Christchurch seems to have been a fairly large building by the standards of the time. The first post-conquest church would probably have been much smaller than the present structure, having only nave and chancel, without aisles, and with at most, a small western tower. Characteristically, the church would have been dark, relying for its illumination on narrow windows, deeply splayed within its thick walls. The east wall of the chancel contained three narrow lancet windows, the filled-in bases of which still exist in the outside wall, while the north and south walls of the chancel each had a single lancet window, the one in the north wall still exists. Its principal (and possibly only) doorway was on the south wall, the exterior of which is typically Norman and highly decorated. The stone with which the church was built seems to have been quarried and brought from the Forest of Dean.

Considerable work appears to have been carried out in the early 13th century, the lower portion of the present tower and the north and south aisles of the nave dating from this time. The large east window, replacing the three single lancets, would date from the late 14th or early 15th century, the west window presumably being treated at the same time. The aisles were apparently completely rebuilt in the early 15th century, being lengthened into the chancel to form chapels, at which time the tower was heightened to its present height and the north and south porches added. It is possible that the rood loft and screen, dividing the chancel from the nave, were added at this time. Though the entire structure was destroyed, either at the reformation or during the period of the Puritans in the mid-17th century, the staircase in the north wall and the openings high in the nave walls through which the loft passed, still exist and serve to show just what a massive structure the whole building must have been. Some of the panels from the screen survived destruction and were subsequently incorporated into the choir stalls; however, these perished eventually in the disastrous fire of 1949. An anachronism is to be found in the south chancel chapel; in its south wall is to be found a piscina (a decorated basin in which the communion vessels were washed, the water draining away into the consecrated ground of the churchyard) whose style of decoration proclaim it to be 14th century. The ornamented strips which flank it are from an even earlier period - probably the 13th century. Since the chapel itself was built in the 15th century, the implication is that these came from elsewhere - probably a redundant chapel.

As has already been mentioned, the church was granted in 1113, by Robert Chandos Earl of Caerleon, to the Priory of Goldcliff, on its foundation. Until 1349 the church was served by the Benedictine monks from Goldcliff, having no resident incumbent. The distance involved and the travelling conditions which must have been encountered, particularly in the winter months, strongly lead to the belief that the monks would have lodged at the church rather than journey daily; and this belief is supported by the fact that the tower has, at what might be described as first-floor level, a room with a fireplace and a small “squint” by which it is possible to see into the interior of the church.

The tithes of the parish, after the grant to Goldcliff, were taken by the Priory. When, after 1349, vicars were appointed to serve the church, their stipend was paid out of these tithes. Some 120 years later, the Priory of Goldcliff was finally given to Eton College and the tithes and right of appointment of vicars to the parish passed to the college authorities. Tithes had largely disappeared by the mid 19th century; and the right of appointment has, since the disestablishment of the Church in Wales in 1921, been in accordance with the rules of the Church in Wales. Maintenance of the chancel of the church still rests with Eton College, however.

We have no precise information of any further additions or alterations to the fabric, except that, at some stage a mortuary chapel was built at the end of the south aisle and against the wall of the chancel.

A report published in the "Western Mail" of Tuesday, 13th February 1877, records a serious incident:

"A destructive fire broke out on Sunday night at 11 o'clock in the fine old parish church at Christchurch. This edifice is situated on the brow of a hill and was conspicuous for miles around. The church was heated by means of a stove and it is supposed that overheating caused the conflagration. About 11 o'clock the fire broke out in the roof which was totally destroyed, and the church generally was left a mere wreck. The Newport Constables went out with an engine and hose and water was carried a long distance. The engine remained on the spot all night, but the fire had obtained too much hold to prevent the great destruction which followed, and the fine old edifice has been left a ruin. It is a remarkable fact that on Christmas Day, 1859, a similar event had occurred, when the roof of the church caught fire through overheating."

Despite the tone of the newspaper report, damage seems to have been confined to roof and furnishings. However, a third fire (almost certainly an arson attack) was "successful" when a much more serious blaze took hold of the building on 5th November 1949. This time it completely destroyed all but the tower, the south porch and Norman doorway, the external walls and certain stone features. This presented a very real problem, for it was no small task of restoration that was involved, but a full-scale rebuilding. It was decided to create a church which matched the old one in size and, as far as possible, character.

The roof was simplified, as was the tracery of all windows except for the east and west windows, whose tracery was of a high order aesthetically and was therefore recreated. The design of the interior in no way sought to emulate what it replaced. Although the chancel chapels retain their individual altars, the sanctuary step runs continuously from north to south walls, the whole floor of the sanctuary being one large area. The High Altar is free-standing and behind it, forming a reredos, is the magnificent east window, the stained glass of which depicts the Te Deum. All in all, the rebuilding produced a building of great beauty and dignity, and the sympathetic incorporation of as many ancient features as could be salvaged, has produced a building far richer in history than many churches which were "restored" by misguided enthusiasts during the Victorian era.

The tower of the church would be expected to house a number of bells, and indeed it is suggested that there were originally at least six, which were capable of being rung. Now, however, only two remain, both cast by John Palmer of Gloucester in the year 1661. They are both clamped within a stout frame and can only be struck.

Adjoining the churchyard is the building now known as Church House, built in Tudor times and retaining many architectural features of this period. It has been suggested that this was originally the priest's house - the vicarage - and this is possible, its size making it ideal for the family of a married clergyman. Pre-Reformation clergy were, of course, generally unmarried; and the Reformation took place in Tudor times. It later served as the first inn out of Newport on the coach road to London, the point at which the additional horses provided for the three steep rises between the bridge and Christchurch were detached and at which no doubt welcome refreshment stops were made.

Across the road from the church is the single storey church hall. This, however, stands on the site of the parish tithe barn, which was used for storing those tithes which were provided in kind rather than in cash. The circular area adjoining the hall and now serving as a car park for the Greyhound public house, was originally the parish pound, into which stray animals were impounded until redeemed by their lawful owners upon payment of a fine. This was not the only pound in the parish, for certain of the manors with land within its boundaries had their own pounds for those animals straying on manorial common land.

The next part of this History will look at the various parts of this large parish, many of which can be traced back to Norman times with names that can still be found today.

Pets Corner submitted by Barbara Phillips

1. Who wrote an elegy for his canary, Matthias?	John Keats Robert Browning	John Clare Matthew Arnold
2. Which actor took in stray cats in Los Angeles?	Viola Davis Salma Hayek	Penelope Cruz Octavia Spencer
3. Who sued for custody of her pet collie?	Lucille Ball Grace Kelly	Doris Day Elizabeth Taylor
4. Which Roman wrote an ode to Corinna's pet parrot?	Horace Ovid	Lucan Virgil
5. Who named his cat and dog Murphy and Watt?	Samuel Beckett Flann O'Brien	James Joyce W B Yeats
6. Which 19 th Century French poet had many cats, including one called Cléopatre?	Charles Baudelaire Arthur Rimbaud	Théophile Gautier Stéphane Mallarmé
7. Which hero kept a pet snake "5 cubits" (2.2 metres) long?	Achilles Hector	Ajax Odysseus
8. What name did Picasso give the pet owl he used as a model?	Pablo Ubu	Aldo Luis
9. Which Norwegian artist made a painting of his pet Airedale terrier?	Lars Hertervig Peder Severin Kroyer	Edvard Munch Erik Werenskiold
10. Which boxer kept three white Bengal tigers?	Joe Frazier Evander Holyfield	George Foreman Mike Tyson

Answers are on page 10

Points to Ponder as we move into 2021 submitted by Mike Williams

1. The most useless thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
2. 2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.
3. The world has turned upside down. Old people are sneaking out of the house and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
4. This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came to my house and told my dog.... We had a good laugh!
5. Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pyjamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
6. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
7. I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
8. I need to practise social-distancing from the fridge.
9. I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip out to the bins!
10. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go into a bank with a mask on and ask for money!

What We Were Doing by Angela Robins

Two years ago three members of the Creative Writing Group participated in a literary programme that was presented by Gill Garrett at the studios of NH Sound radio station. They found the experience very enjoyable, particularly seeing the technical side of producing a radio programme.

The group meets weekly to explore an interest in writing, and its members find they have plenty to write about, having years of experience of work, family life and travel.

Occasionally they have visits from writers such as Carol Gunter who has published hundreds of short stories in magazines and has also had her stories read on Radio 4. These visitors have inspired our members to publish their own anthology of poems and short stories called 'Musings.' There are a few copies left in the storeroom: contact Pam Cocchiara if you would like to purchase one.



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Euan (a U3A Creative Writer) receives a parrot for an early Christmas present from his wife, **Juanita**. "You can teach him to recite your poems and he could give a rendition at the U3A Monthly Meeting" she suggests. However, the bird has a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary: every other word is an expletive. Euan tries hard to change its behaviour: plays soft music, recites his poetry, but nothing works.

He yells at the parrot, shakes it, and finally, in a moment of desperation, he shoves it in the freezer. For a few moments he heard the bird squawk and then a deathly silence. Euan's frightened he might have injured the bird, so quickly opens the freezer drawer.

The parrot calmly steps out onto Euan's extended arm and says, "I believe I've offended you with my rude behaviour. I will endeavour to correct this problem. I am truly sorry and beg your forgiveness".

Euan is dumbfounded at the bird's change in attitude but before he can say anything the parrot continues, "Might I inquire as to what the turkey did?"

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

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

Rectangular Ship

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

Pets Corner (page 8) – Answers

1. Matthew Arnold 2. Penelope Cruz 3. Elizabeth Taylor 4. Ovid 5. Samuel Beckett
6. Théophile Gautier 7. Ajax 8. Ubu 9. Edvard Munch 10. Mike Tyson

The College Boy - Gerald Lee

In 1969 my life changed again. I wanted to go to university, although I was not sure what to study. For a while I thought about going to the NUU, the New University of Ulster in Coleraine, which had recently opened. I suppose I took the safe option and applied to Queen's University Belfast.

The university was only about a hundred yards from Methodist College. We were all familiar with the Lanyon Building, the rather imposing main part of the university on University Road, a picture of which hangs on my wall at home.

Naturally, a large number of people I knew in school also went to QUB. It was strange in the beginning. At school everyone used surnames. Suddenly we all had first names, or versions of them. My friend Nigel was a short stocky character with spiky hair. He was known as Noddy, until he asked people to stop when he became a barrister.

Another change was you could dress as you liked with hair as long as you wanted. Suddenly we all had beards and moustaches, cultivating the hippy look fashionable at the time.

It may seem strange if I say it was the first time I had ever met Roman Catholics in daily life. The Church always insisted on having its own schools and even its own teacher training colleges. Before the Troubles began, we did have some interschool contact in sport and school societies. It was a new experience to be educated together and meet on equal terms.

QUB had a rather antiquated system. Most English universities had adopted a system where all degrees led to honours in three years. At QUB we had a First Arts year where you took three subjects. After the first year you could apply for honours. If you did not want to do an honours degree, or were refused, you would complete a general unclassified degree in two subjects and graduate after three years.

Out of caution I decided to keep to the subjects I knew, so chose English, History and French. These were popular subjects, so lectures had hundreds of students. It was a real change from school. One of our English lecturers was the poet Seamus Heaney. He had just published his first book, 'Death of a Naturalist.' He lectured on Yeats and T S Eliot. He did not impress me very much at the time, either as a poet or a lecturer.

In French we were taught in seminars. We struggled with Existentialism and the theory of the Absurd. The word 'existential' is very fashionable now. I wonder if the people who use it know what it means? Of all the departments History seemed the most friendly, so at the end of my first year I applied for history honours, which I have never regretted.

The selection included an interview, the purpose of which I did not understand at the time. However, in year two, in 1970, I was an honours history student at the start of a three year course.

You also had to choose a subsidiary subject. For reasons I am still vague about, possibly because my friend Graham from school had become an enthusiast, I chose archaeology. It was said the purpose of having a subsidiary subject was like in Snakes and Ladders, a route back to a general degree if you failed.

Archaeology was so different from any other subject I had ever studied. There were certainly plenty of interesting characters, often bearded with woolly jumpers and anoraks, used to living in the wild, scraping away at ancient burial sites with a one inch trowel.

We sometimes had interim exams, usually known as class-tests. The first one I did in Archaeology was so bad I thought of not handing in the paper. The lecturer had added comments such as 'rubbish,' and 'do some work.' I even managed to spell Archaeology wrong.

Either I did some work, or they might have wanted rid of me. I passed the exam, so my degree certificate actually shows archaeology as my subsidiary subject.

My school friend, Graham, was a real enthusiast and became a lecturer in Archaeology. I still have an interest, but it is not a deep one such as I still have in history.

Graham was on the committee of the Archaeological Society. We had many interesting trips to sites, mostly across the border in the Irish Republic. One of our members had the rare distinctions of being both a former priest and a former bus driver. He was the perfect choice to drive the minibus. We had many enjoyable weekend trips, sampling local brews as well as visiting ancient ruins.

The treasurer decided to stand down to concentrate on his degree. It did not do him much good as he had a third. One function of a committee is to self-perpetuate, in other words, try to rig the elections. Although I had only studied Archaeology as a main subject for one year, I still belonged to the society and went on trips. Thus, I became Treasurer of the Queen's University Belfast Archaeology Society.

On occasion I even chaired meetings with visiting speakers, which I found useful in my career and my involvement with other groups such as the Trade Union and Newport Local History Society. One talk I remember well was a Scottish Professor, who had interesting theories about Stonehenge. He asked if everyone could hear him. A few said no, so he asked why they did not move forward? With his Scottish accent and complicated mathematical configurations, most of us were lost.

It was customary to take speakers to a dinner, which was a nice perk as we had some good restaurants in the university area. Usually we would pay for the guest and share the rest of the bill from what we were allowed to spend on entertaining, between the committee members present.

The Troubles did spill over to the university. It was not a time I remember with much pleasure. However, among ourselves in the department we tried to maintain good relations. One of my best friends was Seamus Leonard, who was President of the Catholic Students. Some seemed surprised at our friendship, one theory being that as a Protestant waster and a Catholic waster we had more in common than any sectarian divide. Years later I saw Seamus on TV. He was head of a school in South Belfast, which had become the Catholic middle-class area of the city.

It was after the summer of 1971 that the situation changed radically for the worse. Some friends and I had gone to the USA that summer. It was horrible to see our home-town the centre of a conflict broadcast to the whole world. Percy Street, just off the Shankill Road, where my family lived until 1966, was the scene of one confrontation. It was heart-breaking.

One of my memories is travelling every day to QUB and passing the Europa Hotel in Great Victoria Street. It was the former site of the Great Northern Railway Station, backing on to the Sandy Row Area, a place mentioned in Van Morrison's music. There was a wire fence round the hotel entrance, behind which were minibuses with the names of many UK and foreign broadcasting companies. I remember as a child crossing the bridge behind the GNR and the strong smell of tobacco from a local cigarette factory, a pleasant smell until it is smoked.

In our younger days we complained that life was uneventful, now it was too much the opposite way.

My mother worked at a shop in the town centre. They would constantly have to evacuate because of bomb scares. It is a truism to say many innocent people suffered and died. On one day two dustmen were killed. They certainly did not deserve to die emptying bins. Unfortunately, just one example of the tragic waste of life.

Most of all I remember the feeling at university of being part of a big institution. Anywhere you went you would see someone you knew. I never felt lonely.

There were always events or meetings open to the whole student body. Two guest speakers above all impressed me, both men of God in rather different ways. The American evangelist Billy Graham came on a visit. He was an outstanding speaker, without any tricks of oratory or notes, just a conviction and a smooth controlled delivery. Even to someone not religious he was an impressive speaker.

Another preacher of a very different kind was Ian Paisley. He spoke twice in the Students Union. In his own way he was an accomplished orator. He began to speak. His voice boomed and the first reaction from the audience was to laugh. It broke the ice, as clearly there were many hostile to him.

He obviously directed his style and message to his audience. Ridicule was also one of his ploys, this time directed at Brian Faulkner, the leader of the Unionist Party. He derided him as the 'Cassius Clay' of the Unionist Party. Clearly for better or worse reasons, he could sway an audience. At Westminster he was regarded as one of the best speakers.

Like all practised speakers he had the gift of handling hecklers. He even wrote a book on public speaking, which unfortunately is no longer in print.

The pity is that with all his abilities he was the 'Doctor No' of NI politics who opposed everything, until he had the top job himself. One biographer sums up Paisley's problems as never having been in an educational environment with a free exchange of differing views. This same criticism could be made of many, not just in Northern Ireland.

My friend Graham and I were awarded a grant to live away from home in our last year because we lived close to troubled areas. With several English students we shared a house in Fitzroy Avenue, which features in Van Morrison's song 'Madam George.' All of us were in our last year and so concentrating on our finals, but we did have some light-hearted moments. A lorry going past dropped two long planks of wood, which we salvaged and placed on the stairs. With a tray you could slide down the stairs. Any visitor who asked what the planks were, had to submit to the ordeal of a trip down the stairs sat on a metal tray. Usually the trip was accompanied by a scream, but never any injuries. For a short time, when he found himself homeless, Seamus stayed there when most of the English students had gone home at the end of term.

QUB had a cultural life as well. The Queens Festival was a model for other universities. Originally it was an English student, Michael Emerson, who conceived the idea. It was a week of varied cultural activities, with some humour too.

Stanley Unwin was once a guest. Somehow, we managed to nab him to speak to the Current Affairs Society in my last year at the grammar school. He was wonderfully entertaining, able to switch from normal conversation to gobbledygook in an instant. Mr Terry, the history teacher, asked if James Joyce was an influence. Stanley Unwin agreed he was and was able to quote a line of Joyce. Although his dialogue was effortless, in one film the writers wrote a script, which seemed unnecessary when he was so fluent. He also recounted how on a TV prank he was asked to interview a professor who did not realize he was the victim of a practical joke.

With the Troubles it became more difficult to attract outside artists. A lecturer in the History Department, Michael Barnes, took over the running of the festival. He was able to produce a festival to the usual high standard using mostly Irish artists. George Melly was a personal friend of his and agreed to come.

The novelist Margaret Drabble is one speaker I remember, and the guitarist Julian Bream. Other groups within the university performed music or drama. I could never follow the dialogue, but my friend Richard, who studied languages with me at school, and I, went to some plays in German and French performed by students.

Michael Barnes also helped to found the Queens Film Theatre, which Richard and I often attended. It was a moderate sized hall close to the Lanyon Building. Very often it would show foreign films or more Avant Garde type films. I do not like to leave any production early after having spent the money on a ticket. There was one film, 'Satyricon,' which proved too much. I could not understand it and just gave up and went to the bar.

One incident I remember well. I was walking back to the Students Union. There were roadworks at University Square near the History Department. I stepped off the pavement and felt myself flying in the air, landing in the mud. I was covered in wet mud all down my back. I could not go home as there was no

bus service, so had no choice but to go to the bar to meet the rest of the gang. Naturally, I had loads of questions.

The lack of reliable public transport led to my buying a little Vespa 90, which became a sort of trademark just as my MX5 is today. I never passed the test, working on the basis with so much unsolved crime, me on my Vespa would be far down the list. However, a police minibus did overtake me once when I was giving Graham a lift. When asked who had the full license, I had to admit neither of us. I received a warning, but no conviction.

In the History department we also had some trips. I became interested in reading about Oswald Mosley as part of my British Three Course, which ended at 1939. There was a history congress in Wexford held annually. I was asked by our organizer if I would do a talk, which I delivered in 1973.

The talk went well. It was a really enjoyable few days mixing with students from all over Ireland.

Of course, we all drank a fair amount as well. The alcohol duties south of the border made it more economical to drink spirits. By the time we returned home we were thoroughly exhausted.

My next talk on Oswald Mosley was not until 2015, to Newport Local History Society. Since then I have spoken to many local history groups and just hope normal activity can resume in 2021 to catch up on meetings that had to be cancelled.

We sat our final exams in early summer 1973. For our finals we had to sit exams on three years work. Some courses ran in alternate years, so it was a couple of years before we sat the final exam on some papers. Today most would protest that the exams were not staggered, but that was the system then. We had three papers on British History, two on Irish History, and an option, a special subject, plus a paper on historical documents. My option was 16th century Europe. I was the only one doing that paper with Dr Bossy. I was annoyed at the limited choice of questions but was told by him it was one of my best papers. Sometimes you can do better in a difficult exam. It draws more from you.

The choice of Special Subject included some in other departments. My friend Graham did his option in archaeology and a special subject on medieval coins, which involved both history and archaeology.

I had to make a late decision on my special subject as the course I wanted was not running. There was a course on Victorian Novels, originally intended for students doing joint degrees with English. It became available to History Students in 1972, so I opted for that. It was a good choice. Reading the novels was a break from pure history. I had always liked Dickens and grew to understand him much better. My favourite book of all was 'The Old Wives' Tale' by Arnold Bennett. It was a true reflection of life. We all have moments of drama, and sometimes heroism, but even routine can be interesting, and we all have to accept the passage of time.

Writing was always something I enjoyed. At university you had to acquire the art of expression in a limited number of words. Professor Warren liked my essays so much that he read them to other tutorial groups. Once though after reading an essay and remarking how well I had condensed complex medieval negotiations between king and barons into one sentence, he said that there was just one problem. It did not answer the question! He himself used to write articles for the 'Observer' when they covered history topics in the supplement, so he knew the difficulty in keeping to an agenda, although he acknowledged it was well paid and that helped.

Conveying an idea within a restricted space or time is an art. It is a problem any speaker or writer knows. You know so much, but that can be a disadvantage.

Eventually the exams came round. We were all very tense and under strain. In those days, most students had 2:2 honours. There were not many 2:1 degrees awarded, and first class degrees were exceptional.

While we were waiting for the results, I had the unwelcome news that I had to have a viva voce. This was an oral examination in front of the external examiner in cases where you were between two divisions.

With the stress of worrying about my parents and coping with the Troubles it was anything but welcome. All I remember was how nervous I felt.

Eventually the results were published. I had the 2:1 I coveted. It was a mixture of relief and excitement. I remember trying to drive my Vespa home feeling 'on top of the world.' I insisted that both my father and my mother attend the graduation ceremony. My mother had usually attended such occasions with one of my aunts. This was special. It was my parents who had sent me to a grammar school and then to university. I wanted them both to be there.

I would always recommend to any young person to go to university. It broadened my mind. Starting from the area I described in my first article, it took me to an environment where discussion and learning were the order of the day. You were encouraged to challenge ideas, if only to make the other person better justify his opinions.

The Troubles did intrude. On several occasions the conflict spilled over into life at the university, but I still look back with satisfaction at a time of my life that still means a lot to me.

Inventors and Inventions – a Quiz from Pam Cocchiara

1. Invented in 1899, what piece of bent wire replaced the pin and the ribbon?
2. Which new leisure activity was handed to the world on a plate by an American pie company?
3. What was the first British car designed to bring motoring to the masses?
4. In which country was table tennis invented?
5. Which familiar feature of underground stations first appeared in 1894 as a joy-ride at Coney Island?
6. Who invented the miners' safety lamp in 1815?
7. What was the name and nationality of the man who invented dynamite?
8. What is the underwater equivalent of RADAR?
9. After a foggy drive in 1933, what did Percy Shaw invent and patent?
10. What hooded jacket invented by the Inuits have we adopted as an item of everyday clothing?
11. What amber globe was named after the 1931-37 Minister of Transport?
12. What form of transport was invented by Sir Christopher Cockerell?
13. What is the name given to an unmanned spacecraft on an exploratory mission?
14. What close fitting garment was named after a 19th century French trapeze artist?
15. Who, in 1835, invented a waterproof material consisting of cloth coated with India rubber.
16. What is the self-adjusting device on a car safety belt?
17. Which computer whiz kid developed the C5 car?
18. Which artist first sketched out the idea of the parachute?
19. James Hargreaves' invention revolutionised the cotton industry. What was it called?
20. What did Samuel Colt invent in 1836?

Answers are on Page 20

Playing Second Fiddle to the Second Fiddles – The Viola Story (part 1) by Neil Pritchard

Ah! the viola, an unjustly treated instrument, if ever there was one. Can I declare that I'm a great fan of the instrument and I'll attempt to show you what captivating sounds it produces, as well as doing a trip through its history. The viola is like the classic middle child - seemingly always overshadowed by the feistier "younger" sibling violin or its more bossy older sibling, the cello. Through it all, the viola is there, content to add its own unique depth to the family dynamic, while receiving little acclaim. The viola has had a rough time over the years, being the butt of a lot of "put down" so called jokes. It is thought that jokes about viola players actually originate from the 18th century, when viola parts were often rather bland, and as a result, talented musicians were more enticed by other instruments, leaving weaker players to take on the viola. Sadly, those jokes still kick around today. However, there are many wonderful, albeit often overlooked, viola works worth listening to, as I'll attempt to demonstrate. Nowadays, there are plenty of reasons to doubt the childish jibes. Thanks to virtuoso soloists and amazing orchestral musicians, the viola has plenty of champions. Why, then, do these jokes remain so popular?

Let's go back in time. A possible answer comes from an essay, written by flautist Johann Joachim Quantz in 1752. He said "Generally the viola is not considered very important in music. The reason for this is that it is seemingly only played by people with mediocre musical skills, or not talented enough to become distinguished on the violin; or that this instrument gives too little advantage to those who play it, and for this reason skilled musicians don't want to work with it." Quantz attributes to viola players a label that will stick to them, that they are nothing but failed violinists. The academic defends his theory by portraying a vicious cycle: viola players are mediocre, hence composers don't even try to highlight the instrument, and as a result, the bland scores keep the artists stuck in their mediocrity. And Quantz concludes with a mortal blow: "If they could be bothered, they could have more luck by making their way little by little; instead most of the time they stagnate until the end of their days." According to this theory, viola players are the scum of musical society and are destined to die out miserably, smothered by off-key notes.

Although there are no official records that let us verify Quantz's statement about the mediocrity of the viola players of his time, a quick look at the scores from that era allow us to better understand his remarks. Until the middle of the 18th century, the main type of chamber music was the trio sonata, an ensemble where two main tunes were set against each other, in more or less equal terms, accompanied by a bass and a harpsichord. The tunes were often entrusted to two violins, creating basically a quartet with harpsichord, but more interestingly, without viola. When, later on, the string quartet became the essential core for orchestral music, composers at first did not know what to do with the viola, using it as more or less successful harmonic filler that did not encourage the development of the instrument: viola players remained the muffled minority in the orchestra.

In the second part of the 18th century, a few early large concertos helped the progression of the viola, but without allowing it to escape the cumbersome shadow of the violin. The clearest example of this paradox is the famous Sinfonia Concertante by Mozart, where violin and viola are, for once, on the same level. In this innovative work, the composer resorted to subterfuge, recommending that the viola player tune their instrument a semitone higher than usual to achieve a brighter sound. So, to be able to compete with the violin, the viola needs to contradict its very nature? The viola ranges over 4 octaves as with the violin. However the viola can sound notes that are 4 steps lower than the lowest note on the violin. This range of sound puts the viola right in between the violins and the cellos. Here's an example of what the viola is capable of. This was the first Viola Concerto that was composed. It was by the Baroque composer Telemann in 1716. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMpzPMkrALM>

Wasn't that a wonderful performance by the violist, and what outstanding body of young musicians to accompany her. The viola is probably the oldest of today's main stringed orchestral instruments, pre-dating the cello, violin and string bass. However, it is easily the least familiar of the group. Part of the reason is because of the mostly supportive roles the viola has played in the history of orchestral music, where it typically was used as a harmonic instrument, adding harmony notes to chords, rather than as a

solo or melodic voice. Though many composers appreciated the sound of the viola, they did not give it the same scale of solo repertoire as the violin. The first violas emerged in Italy around the turn of the 16th century as experimental instruments combining the virtues of previous instruments that were played with a bow. The most important was the viola da braccio, which means "viola played on the arm", not under the chin. The first actual visual evidence that we have of the viola is one that is painted into a famous fresco in the Santuario di Saronno's Dome near Milan, along with a number of period instruments of the violin family. The fresco dates from the 1530s, but you can clearly see angels bowing away on instruments shaped roughly like modern violin family instruments. The one that looks most like a viola is beautifully painted around the ribs (sides) with gold.

There were two primary craftsmen who produced the first violas like our modern versions: Gaspare da Salo of the Brescia region and Andrea Amati of the Cremona region. Both of these gifted instrument makers were born in the first half of the 16th century and brought great fame to their home cities with their innovations. Amati was a favourite of the King of France, Charles IX, who asked him to build over 30 violas for his own royal musicians in the 1570s. Fortunately, examples from both their instrument shops have been preserved. At this time, instrument makers were experimenting with all manner of stringed instruments, trying to find the best combination of tone, size, shape and range to suit the trends at the time in orchestral and court music. The question of whether the violin or viola pre-dated the other has been hotly contested. However, some have argued that the construction of the word viola, which is used in the Italian names for all the string section instruments, could be an important clue. Violin and violoncello (the Italian for "cello") are both rooted in the word "viola." Since the viola is considered the master instrument name, it follows that the other instruments were later inventions that were based on the viola. But no one knows for sure. Gradually, the ranges of the string section began to mirror the ranges of the human voice: bass was the cello, alto and tenor were the viola and the soprano was the violin. What's really interesting is that because the viola covered more than one range, violas typically outnumbered the other instrument types in small groups.

By the time Telemann composed his Viola Concerto, the violin was pre-eminent and the viola was in the main not considered by composers as worthy of a role as a concerto instrument. However, there were exceptions, as in the case of Carl Stamitz. He played violin in the court orchestra at Mannheim in 1762 and was also a viola player there, before leaving for Paris in 1770. He spent several years in Paris (with his brother Anton, also a violinist and composer), then toured widely as a virtuoso after 1777, spending time in England and The Hague, where on one occasion he shared the stage with then 12-year-old Beethoven. In 1794 he became conductor of the orchestra at the German town of Jena. Even with this position and despite his continued activity as a composer, he was unable to pay off his debts before his death. As a composer, he was the most productive of the Stamitz family; he wrote a large number of instrumental works, including symphonies; concertos and concertante works; and quartets, trios, and sonatas. Stamitz was one of the few composers in the late 18th century to write for the viola. This is the first movement of a version of the concerto for viola and piano: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI6okSo0Acg>

When violists are asked how they chose their instrument, most have one of two answers: either they loved the violin but preferred the lower and deeper sound of the viola, OR they were drawn to the cello but couldn't imagine having to carry it around all the time. In both cases it's the rich sound it produces that appeals to most violists. The viola really found its feet as a solo instrument in the 20th century, but that's not to say earlier composers weren't alive to its beauty. Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante is a piece for violin, viola and orchestra in which the violin and viola have equal billing. Let's go back to the late 18th century. By 1779 the 23-year-old Mozart was chomping at the bit to break free from the restrictions imposed by his employer in Salzburg, the Archbishop Colloredo. His recent tour westward to Mannheim and Paris had proved of decisive importance; it apparently stirred a desire to experiment with some of the instrumental forms and styles Mozart had been encountering. One result was the Sinfonia Concertante, a work that bursts with the joy of exploring new instrumental sound combinations and possibilities. It also marks a sort of turning point, in essence summing up much of what Mozart had achieved to date as an artist. Not

long afterwards - and in part on account of indulging in purely pleasurable creative endeavours, at the expense of his duties as court organist, he was summarily dismissed by his boss (as he sardonically puts it in a letter, "with a kick on my arse") and left Salzburg for good to live in Vienna.

The use of the name *Sinfonia Concertante* indicates a sort of hybrid form between the symphony and the concerto - what, later in the 19th century, would be labelled a double concerto for violin and viola. Like Haydn, Mozart exploits his rather modest orchestral ensemble to the maximum; there's no percussion, nor flutes nor Mozart's beloved clarinets, but he divides the violas into two for a richer string blend. For many, this piece represents the grandest of Mozart's string concertos, surpassing the five official violin ones. At the same time, the viola is no "second fiddle" here. Mozart's choice of the viola is telling: although an excellent violinist, he himself loved to play viola in string quartet ensembles, enjoying the perspective of being "in the middle." One unforgettable aspect of the *Sinfonia Concertante* is the remarkable partnership and equality shared by both soloists and the beautiful sound blend they create. The *Sinfonia Concertante* is in part about an extraordinary abundance of ideas and new sounds, and it proved to be ground-breaking and one of his finest works. The second movement illustrates this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKgS5LoSQPw>

Between the Mozart concerto and the 20th century, the viola wasn't the instrument of choice for composers. When it came to the string quartet it found a role beginning in the 1760s with Haydn and Mozart's quartets, but its position was to provide a sort of support to the other instruments, without being able to shine in its own right. In the second part of the 18th century, a few early large concertos helped the progression of the viola, but without allowing it to escape the cumbersome shadow of the violin. With the advent of Romantic music in the early 19th century, again there was little interest amongst composers in writing for the viola. Only a few sonatas and concertos were produced during the 19th century, most of them by lesser-known composers. A notable exception was the French composer Hector Berlioz. When the famous violinist Niccolò Paganini commissioned him to write a viola concerto, the French composer refused to write a work that was a violin substitute. In *Harold in Italy*, composed in 1834, Berlioz gives us a work where the viola shines as a rather sad anti-hero. Berlioz understood the unique qualities that can be given to the viola, something he would theorise about, ten years later, in his *Treatise on Instrumentation*: "Out of all the orchestral instruments, the one whose excellent qualities have been neglected the most is the viola. It is just as agile as the violin, the sounds of its low strings having a particular bite, its high notes shining with a mournfully passionate accent and its general tone having a deep melancholy, different from that of the other bowed instruments."

In 1833 Paganini heard the *Symphony Fantastique* at a concert in Paris and congratulated Berlioz on it. After this concert Paganini told Berlioz about a big Stradivari viola he had and asked Berlioz to write a concerto for him, as he said he was too ill to compose. Berlioz was a bit hesitant because, he said, to write a concerto for such a great virtuoso, a composer should be able to play the viola, and he didn't. But Paganini insisted that he trusted him. Berlioz started writing and when the first movement was complete Paganini wanted to hear it. He was a bit disappointed because he said "there is not enough for me to do, I should be playing all the time". Paganini didn't like it and never played it. Berlioz went on writing without worrying about having to write for a virtuoso, ending up with symphony based on his memories of Italy.

Eventually *Harold in Italy* was performed at the Paris Conservatoire in 1834 by the principal viola of Paris Opéra, and several times in the following years, always with great success. A few years later, Paganini was in Paris again and attended a concert including the *Symphony Fantastique* and *Harold in Italy* conducted by Berlioz. After the concert Paganini went to see Berlioz and told him he had never been as touched as by *Harold*. He then knelt and kissed Berlioz's hand. A few days later Paganini sent his son to Berlioz's home with a letter. When Berlioz opened it he read this message: "My dear friend, Beethoven being dead only Berlioz could make him live again; and I who have heard your divine compositions, so worthy of the genius you are, humbly beg you to accept, as a token of my homage, twenty thousand francs. Can you imagine what a pleasant shock this was for Berlioz, considering that for the composition of his *Requiem* one year earlier he was paid 3,000 francs. I've chosen the wonderful opening movement which shows off

the viola to great effect: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-fKI-RAm1w>

One other major Romantic composer who did write a work for the viola was Robert Schumann. Before I discuss the piece he wrote, a bit of background about the man. Robert Schumann was born in Germany in 1810, the son of a bookseller, publisher and writer, he showed an early interest in literature and was to make a name for himself in later years as a writer and as editor of a music journal. In 1828 he entered the University of Leipzig, where attention to his studies was at best intermittent. He was eventually able to persuade his parents that he should leave university and be allowed to study music under the well-known piano teacher Friedrich Wieck, whose own energies had been directed with some intensity towards the training of his own daughter Clara. She was a pianist of prodigious early talent. Schumann's ambitions as a pianist were frustrated by a weakness in the fingers, while his other musical studies had, at the very least, lacked application.

Nevertheless, in the 1830s he wrote a great deal of music for the piano, often in the form of shorter pieces, with some literary or autobiographical association. There was an affair with one of Wieck's pupils, later broken off, but by 1835 he had begun to turn his attention to Clara Wieck, nine years his junior. Friedrich Wieck had good reason to object to the liaison. His daughter had a career before her as a concert performer and Schumann had shown signs of instability of character, whatever his abilities as a composer might be. Matters were taken to an extreme when he turned to the law, in order to prevent what Wieck saw as a disastrous marriage. It was not until 1840 that Schumann was eventually able to marry Clara, after her father's legal attempts to oppose the match had finally failed. The couple married in September, remaining first in Leipzig, although journeys took place for concert appearances by Clara. She was generally accompanied by her husband, whose position was considered of lesser distinction. In 1844 they moved to Dresden, where it seemed that Schumann might recover from the bouts of depression that he had suffered in the earlier days of marriage.

Here again no official position seemed to offer itself, and it was only in 1849 that the prospect of employment arose, this time in Düsseldorf, where Schumann took up his position as director of music in 1850. Mendelssohn had enjoyed an uneasy relationship with the Düsseldorf authorities, and Schumann, much less skilled in administration and conducting, proved even less able to cope with the difficulties that arose. The pressures on him led to a complete nervous breakdown in 1854, and his final years were spent in an asylum where he died in 1856. His love of literature informed a lot of his music as in the work he composed for viola and piano in 1851 - "Märchenbilder" (Fairy Tale Pictures). It was published in 1814 and we know it as Grimms' Fairy Tales. Rapunzel is the source of the first two pieces, with Rumpelstilzchen dancing about in the third and 'Sleeping Beauty' at rest in the fourth. The gentle first piece leads to a march-like second piece, its progress briefly interrupted by something more lyrical. The third brings a love duet between piano and viola, and the fourth returns to the rhythms of the second, while bringing reminiscences of the first piece: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ofF7-RZeYs>

The works of Romantic composers tended to explore the high notes and aim for higher sound power. Because of this, stringed instrument makers replaced the gut strings of the Baroque instruments with metal strings, causing ever higher tension on the neck of the viola. The neck itself got longer and thinner, to make playing easier and better manage the high register. The chin rest appears, facilitating the increasing virtuosity of the musician. Finally, French bow maker François Tourte created what we now recognise as the modern bow. The stick becomes longer, lighter and concave, allowing a more precise bowing action and a balanced, gentle, flexible and continuous sound. If the viola achieved recognition in the middle of the 19th century, viola players have not earned an equivalent acknowledgement, and the jokes at their expense keep circulating. In the musicians' hierarchy, the viola remains a sort of spare wheel for the violinist. It was not until 1894 that a viola course was offered at a music college, in this case the Paris Conservatoire, officially recognising the importance of a specialised learning path, separate from the violin. From then on, the first great viola masters started to appear at the four corners of Europe: Lionel Tertis (England), Paul Hindemith (Germany), Maurice Vieux (France) and Vadim Borisovsky (USSR).

STUDY EASY/ STUDY HARD by Rob Wilkinson

The ending -ology usually means the study of something. Here are 20 words which end in -ology. Some are quite easy and some really hard. How many do you know?

1. anthropology
2. campanology
3. cardiology
4. cytology
5. entomology
6. eschatology
7. gerontology
8. graphology
9. herpetology
10. mycology
11. oenology
12. palaeontology
13. pathology
14. philology
15. psephology
16. Sinology
17. speleology
18. vexillology
19. sophology
20. Trumpology *

*Suggested answer for number 20: "The study of lies, deceit and idiocy".

Other answers will be found on Page 21

This might raise a smile (from Ivy Forkin)



This will bring back memories (from Roger Lewis)



Inventors and Inventions (page 15) - Answers

1. Paper Clip
2. Frisbee
3. Austin 7
4. England
5. Escalator
6. Sir Humphrey Davy
7. Alfred Nobel - Swedish
8. SONAR
9. Cats' Eyes
10. Parka
11. Belisha Beacon
12. Hovercraft
13. Probe
14. Leotard
15. Charles Mackintosh
16. Inertia Reel
17. Clive Sinclair
18. Leonardo da Vinci
19. Spinning Jenny
20. Revolver

Extracts from The Gwent Villages Book. - Angela Robins

Here are some more interesting facts gleaned from the above which was compiled by W.I's throughout Gwent and is one of The Villages of Britain series published in 1994.

Mathern nestles near the River Severn and is dominated by its church and Bishop's Palace. The church was built in the 7th century: St Tewdric, to whom it is dedicated, had been king of the Celtic kingdom of Morgannwg. In old age he became a hermit, but was called out of retirement to rally the kingdom's armies to fight the Saxons. Tewdric won the resulting battle but received a mortal axe-blow to the skull. He was refreshed at the place which is now St Tewdric's Well and the church was built nearby after he died. The well is maintained by the council, attracting many visitors annually. Nearby is the Bishop's Palace, formerly residence of the bishops of Llandaff (at least five are buried at the Church). The most famous of these was William Morgan who completed the translation of the Bible into Welsh in 1588. Since 1954 the palace was owned by British Steel who used it as a conference centre, and for important guests to stay there when visiting Llanwern steel works. (The listed building was recently sold for almost £3 million).

Rogerstone: In the early 12th century Roger de Berecholles dwelt at Rogerstone Castle; a corruption of Roger's Town. Since then several industries set up on that land. An old iron foundry was replaced in 1885 by Guest, Keen and Nettlefold's nail factory and mills until they moved to Cardiff in 1937. In 1939 the Northern Aluminium Company built a modern factory and the De Havilland aircraft company produced the wings of the Hurricane fighter planes close-by. These were made of aluminium from their neighbour's factory. Some 9,000 people were employed in the factories, many 'bussed in' from Brynmawr, Abertillery and Caerphilly etc. During WWII three German bombs were dropped on the village; eighteen people and some cattle were killed. Because of the importance of the two factories, the villagers suffered the indignity of a smoke screen. Hundreds of crude-oil burning stoves were placed along the main road and were lit at nightfall. Thick, black, greasy and obnoxious fumes were emitted and no-one would venture out after dark unless it was absolutely necessary.

St Arvans is a rural village situated at the gateway to the picturesque Wye Valley, where tourism began, and visitors came to see Piercefield. This estate was purchased in 1736 by Colonel Valentine Morris of St Vincent who acquired his wealth in the Windward Isles. His son, also named Valentine and his wife began to lay out the grounds with several named views: The Alcove, The Grotto, The Double View, Lover's Leap and Wyndcliffe. He allowed tours of the estate twice a week. In 1924 Chepstow Racecourse was opened in Piercefield Park. During WWII it was used as a landing strip and a maintenance depot for the forces. Valentine's mansion was used for target practice; the ruins of it still remain today. The famous views can still be seen whilst exploring The Wye Valley Walk.

Whitebrook is one of the most attractive villages in Gwent and shows little of its industrial past, but a closer look reveals old paper mills converted into residential properties and greatly enhanced by the remaining mill ponds. There is a record about a paper mill's outing dated 1880: 'The workers and their families embarked early in the morning in a trow (barge) which drifted down the Wye on the falling tide to Chepstow, then sailed across the Severn to Bristol via the Avon. Their destination was the "Llandoger Trow" inn and the zoo. The return journey made use of the reverse currents, the rising tide carrying the trow smoothly upstream via Tintern to Whitebrook. 'What a blissful outing. The return journey could not have taken less than 12 hours.'

ANSWERS TO STUDY EASY/STUDY HARD (page 20)

1. The scientific study of human societies.
2. The study of bells.
3. The study of the heart.
4. The study of cells.
5. The study of insects.
6. The study of the end of the world.
7. The study of ageing.
8. The study of handwriting.
9. The study of amphibians and snakes.
10. The study of fungi.
11. The study of wine making.
12. The study of fossils.
13. The study of disease.
14. The study of written language.
15. The study of election results.
16. The study of China.
17. The study of caves.
18. The study of flags.
19. The study of wisdom.

PUZZLE PAGE - Mike Brown

ONLY CONNECT

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

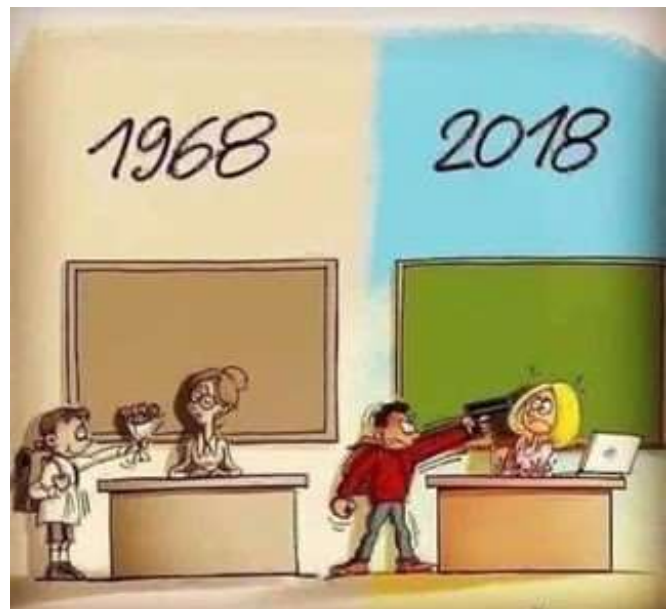
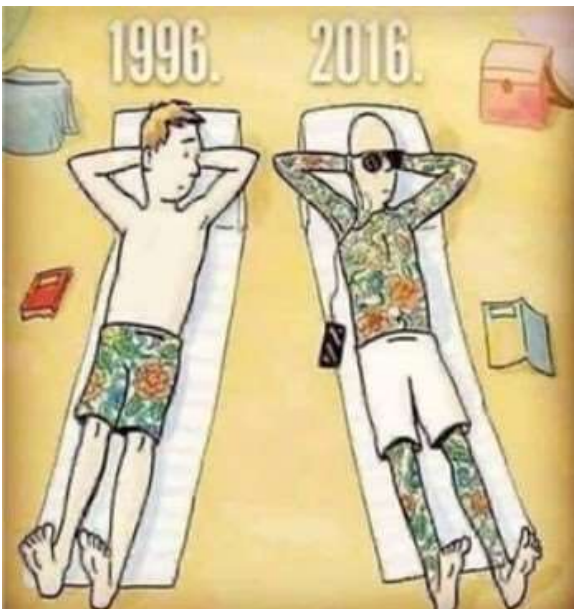
Bastille	New Forest	Hanoi Hilton	Peak District
Snowdonia	Beaver	South Downs	Rat
Groundhog	Alcatraz	Squirrel	Independence
Sing Sing	Gopher	Die Another	Dartmoor

CAN YOU MAKE IT ALL ADD UP? (in £/s/d)

A STONE
A BICYCLE
A SINGER
PART OF A GORILLA'S LEG
A MAN'S NAME
A KIND OF PIG
THE SUN, MOON & MARS
A LEATHER WORKER
50% OF A PAIR OF PANTIES
A ROYAL HEADDRESS
HIT REPEATEDLY
AN UNWELL SEA CREATURE

Answers are on Page 24

The Generational Gap – Then and Now submitted by Mike Williams



Can you help, please?

I am always looking for new material for Desert Island Times! Aside from our usual content I would like to ask readers to contribute a paragraph (or more if you feel so inclined!) on a hobby or hobbies that you particularly enjoy – and possibly which you have had more time to undertake of late! It may be something you have done since childhood or a relatively new interest – we would love to hear about it!

Talking Points (started by Stephen Berry!) – responses to DIT 27

A good number of responses to the first photograph were received – and every one was correct! Although this particular view could not be obtained nowadays and virtually every building in it (except for those in the extreme distance and somewhat indistinct in this photograph) has been demolished, it is a somewhat iconic view of Shaftesbury Street from the point at which Mill Street joined it towards Brynglas. Angela Robins did question where the Methodist Church is and indeed it is not obvious. The apex of the roof is just visible at the same level as the words “Ice Factory”, - to the left of centre and just underneath the arm of the only long-arm left-facing lamppost! As the church is now plainly visible in a leafy setting – and indeed in splendid isolation – it shows just how much the surrounding area has changed in the past 50 years. Angela went on to say, “I spent many a painful commute to and from Cwmbran in traffic jams here. So bad was the traffic from Llantarnam, before the Malpas by-pass was opened, that we rarely got out of second gear all the way to Newport. For this reason, my father felt comfortable allowing me to drive his car whilst I was still a Learner. My clutch control was excellent!”

The second photograph was, contrary to my expectations and prediction, extremely difficult and only one correct answer came in – from Roger Lewis. The road is actually Summerhill Avenue, which runs from Victoria Avenue to Christchurch Road and is well-known to many pet owners as the location of the Summerhill Veterinary Practice. Two pairs of the semi-detached villas on the right have been demolished to provide space for the practice and its adjoining car park, but the other villas are there, though their present appearance is less impressive than in the photograph! Roger says, “Schooling for me commenced I think in September 1949, when I would have been about 4 and a half. I recall my mother telling me how excited I was that I was starting. I now realise she would have had other thoughts! My first school was at Church Road Infants, Church Road, Newport and the headmistress was a Miss Price. I remember her because she taught me how to read, but spelling was and has been for all my life, an art that I have not excelled at. However, I am still a great book reader and will be forever in her debt.

Church Road School was a mixed infant school; segregation did not start until age 11 when I went to St Julian’s High School. In the first few years I would either have walked or gone on the bus to Church Road with my mother, but by the last year in infant school, when I would have been about 7, I and the other pupils would make our own way home to St Julian’s Road, either by the number 1 bus or by walking up the steep Christchurch Hill. The journey by foot would have taken some 20 to 30 minutes. Near the Church Road school in Bishop Street was a small bakery and I, together with the other school children, used to buy after school for a halfpenny, a small bread roll, fresh from the oven. Needless to say, the smell of warm fresh bread is a lasting memory. (A halfpenny is 480th of a pound, which shows how much money has become devalued!) If we did spend our bus fare, then we would have to walk home. Sometimes we would go via Summerhill Avenue and wait at Victoria Avenue for the bus to come. We would then hang on to the rear bumpers of the bus to help us up Victoria Avenue which was and still is very steep. The bus struggled to go up the steep hill and the bus conductor was not amused at our antics. The bus was probably only able to manage 5 to 10 miles an hour.”

I (SJB) have many memories of Summerhill Avenue – we lived in the Woodland Park area for 28 years and I always found it easier to drive to town via Woodland Road, Summerhill Avenue and Church Road rather than waiting at traffic lights at the foot of Victoria Avenue or trying to turn right in Maindee Square! However, what is now Summerhill Nursing Home has a special place in my life. In the mid-1960s I formed my first orchestra but we needed somewhere to rehearse. One of my friends actually lived in this house and we decided that we would ask him to play the triangle for us! When he agreed, we then asked if his mother would allow us to rehearse in their lounge – and she agreed! It was a perfect venue with refreshments available and the triangle-player went on to study percussion and still plays in various orchestras and bands in the USA, having emigrated there in the 1970s. It was a real win-win!

... and this edition's challenges!



The first photograph shows a scene which is still recognisable today, though some things are dramatically different! Location and any memories of this area, please? The second is far more difficult and not at all recognisable. You may not know where it is exactly, but it represents a solution that was found to address the housing shortage in the post-war years. Can you provide any stories or information about this type of housing anywhere in Newport, please?

📄 Puzzle Page (page 22) - Answers 📄

ONLY CONNECT

' ___ Day' Film Titles:	Bastille	Groundhog	Die Another	Independence
Prisons:	Dartmoor	Alcatraz	Sing Sing	Hanoi Hilton
National Parks:	Snowdonia	South Downs	Peak District	New Forest
Rodents:	Beaver	Gopher	Squirrel	Rat

CAN YOU MAKE IT ALL ADD UP?

14 lbs = 14-0-0.	Penny Farthing = 0-0-1¼.	Tenor = 10-0-0.	Ape Knee = 0-0-0½.	Bob = 0-1-0.
Guinea = 1-1-0.	3 Far Things = 0-0-0¾.	Tanner = 0-0-6.	Half a Knicker = 0-10-0.	
Crown = 0-5-0.	Pound = 1-0-0.	Sick Squid = 6-0-0.	TOTAL = £32/17s/8½d	