

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in

NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No.29

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Another great local landmark to visit (when we can!) – Chepstow Castle

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

News Round-Up

Firstly I must let you know of the death of one of our founder members, Margaret Arthur, who passed away on 10th January at Claremont Nursing Home in Pillmawr Road, Malpas. Margaret had been a resident there for quite a number of years, but was an active member of U3A until she moved there and was the founder of our choir. Although Margaret used to enjoy the concerts given by the choir in the home, for the last five years or so she has suffered from ever-worsening dementia and sadly had no memories of ever having been its Musical Director.



As seems to be the case at the present time, I have nothing to offer in the way of predictions for the future which offer any guarantees! I have heard of several of our members who have already received their first jab and others who have imminent appointments. It does also seem that we are, in Wales, on track to meet the target date of 15th February for all of us who are 70 and over – subject, of course, to a continuing supply of vaccine. At our recent Zoom Committee Meeting we spent quite a time taking stock of where we are at present and looking at future possibilities. Zoom is becoming more popular and roughly a quarter of our groups are “meeting” by this means now. Obviously it is more appropriate for some activities than others, but I would encourage everybody to try joining a session – it really does help to see friends as well as hear them! Last summer we were fortunate to be able to meet outdoors in socially-distanced groups and the weather was kind to us. We have no predictions regarding the weather nor on the lifting of restrictions, but, if both are favourable, we propose organising outdoor events at regular times in different locations – for instance, Belle Vue Park and Beechwood Park make ideal spots in west and east Newport respectively. There are various possibilities for such meetings and we would welcome any ideas that you might have for operation and content, though all would be primarily of a social nature.

Our groups that are presently meeting using Zoom are French Debs, French Intermediate, French Literature, Italian, Welsh, Meditation, Choir, History, Craft, Creative Writing and Family History. Should you wish to join any of these sessions, please contact the relevant Convenor via our website for details.

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 2 by Stephen Berry

THE PARISH OF CHRISTCHURCH UP TO 1841

Following the creation of the parish of Christchurch and its various manors, a much tighter system of administration became necessary. Though, inevitably, much documentation has perished over the years, sufficient remains to give a good overall picture of the development of the area as a whole and of pockets of it in some greater detail. One fact emerges quite clearly; the parish as a whole remained relatively stable in terms of development until the early nineteenth century, when the slow, but irrevocable, changes began. These would barely have been noticeable at first - just the addition of a cottage or two here and there. Indeed, even in 1841, things would still have appeared much as they had always been; let us, then, look at the parish between its creation and 1841.

Together the Manors of Lliswerry and Libeneth covered most of the land in the southern part of the parish. Of the two, the name of Libeneth seems to be the older, though nowadays it exists only in the name of a road in the Somerton district of the town, while Lliswerry continues to be used for a large (if not-too-precisely defined) area and for a number of institutions within that area.

Libeneth appears as *Lebund* in Liber Landavensis and as *Lebinid* in the Book of Llan Dav, both of which deal with the lands of the See of Llandaff in pre-Conquest times. Until the formation of the Diocese of Monmouth in 1921, all of the parishes now contained in this Diocese belonged to the Diocese of Llandaff. In the early 13th century *Lebennhet* was the property of Morgan ap Howel, Lord of Caerleon. He died in 1248, at which time the manor was worth around £20. It would seem that the manor should have descended to Sir Morgan ap Meredydd of Tredegar (House) but it was seized by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Hertford and Gloucester. On his death in 1295 it appears as *Lebenet and Leswry* and was worth £32/16/4d. Whether *Leswry* had previously existed as a separate Manor is unclear; perhaps it was created by dividing the Manor of *Lebenet* or by the addition of further lands.

At this time it descended to Margaret, Gilbert's daughter, and the wife of Hugh de Audley. Her daughter and heir, Margaret, married Ralph, Earl of Stafford. Thereafter the Earls of Stafford, later Dukes of Buckingham, were Lords of the Manors until Edward, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, was beheaded on Tower Hill on 17th May 1521 and the manors were forfeited to the Crown.

They later became part of the dowry of Katherine Parr upon her marriage to King Henry VIII and reverted to the Crown upon her death in 1548.

By 1572 the two manors became separated. In this year Queen Elizabeth I granted Lebenith to John Frost and Edmund Walker, who sold it to Sir William Herbert of St Julian's, though it would seem that he was the lessee under the Crown and that his position was that of chief steward and keeper of the courts.

Lliswerry (*Lleswere* in the grant) was granted by Queen Elizabeth I to Sir William Herbert in January 1583 and in December of that year he was appointed chief steward. The Rent Roll for 1583 is an interesting document, recording different spellings and a number of district names which have survived to the present day. We have Llebynedd, Llyswiri, Lliswiri, Liswhiry, Lliswhiry, Llyswyry, Traston, Lady Meade, Ladyhill, Lakes, Vispoll, Vispool, Coldrey and Somerton.

In 1631 ownership of the Manor of Lliswerry had passed to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London and in July of that year they granted a lease to three citizens on lands called Ladyhill and Longditchwall in the Manor of Lesewery.

The manors passed to Parliament after the death of King Charles I, when the country was under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. The 1652 Surveys show the annual value of the Manor of Liswerry to be £24/4/8d and that of Lebenith to be £15/17/6d.

In 1655 the lordships of the manors had come to Henry Rumsey of Sudbrook. The record of the Court held in May of that year is illuminating in that it names the jury and gives a limited amount of other information. From it we find that, of the 12 jurors, only four were from the parish - Richard Harris of Christchurch, gent; William Philip of Christchurch; James Giles of Christchurch, gent; and William John of Liswerry. It is noticeable that two of the Christchurch jurors were described as gentlemen, the other two presumably being tenant farmers. Additional place names appear in the rent roll presented at this court - Long Ditch Wall, Broad Meade, Fair Oak, Ringley and Runley – the last two probably different versions of the same name.

At the restoration of King Charles II the manors reverted to the Herbert family.

At the court held in June 1725 some further information is given. The commons of Liswerry manor are Liswerry Common, to the south west of Liswerry village and Fishpool Common, lying by the north end of Liswerry village. Within the manor of Llebenyth the commons are Pensarn Common and Somerton Common. Both manors had a pound, into which the cattle of any trespassers (persons who were not tenants of the manors but who permitted their cattle to graze on the commons) were impounded.

Traston Manor was a much smaller manor within the southern part of the parish. In 1540 it was recorded as the lifetime property of Catherine Parr, the last wife of King Henry VIII, though two years later it had passed to Sir William Morgan of Pencoed Castle, Llanmartin. It passed to his son, Sir Thomas, and grandson Sir William, but upon his dying without issue it came under the control of the Herberts of St Julian's. It seems as though parts of the manor were sold off at an early date, for, in 1562, Charles Somerset of Suffolk had a bill in chancery complaining that Margaret Pewes and John Giles were the lessees of a messuage (dwelling house with outbuildings) and 50 acres of land in Tresbi in the parish of Christchurch (which property had been part of the manor of Traston); and that rent had been withheld and he could not regain possession. Certainly it would seem that, by 1581, much of the manor had been absorbed into the adjoining manor of Liswerry. In his will of 1610, Philip Jones of Christchurch leaves to his son William, lands and tenements in Traston; and to his wife Marie, land at Fynon Eva or Eveswell. However, the name Traston was given to two farms - Great Traston and Little Traston - until just fifty years ago, both farms since having disappeared under the development of the Monsanto plc plant when construction started in 1947. Great Traston farmhouse was retained by the company as offices until the early 1990s when demolition became necessary.

The reference to **Lakes** relates to the two farms known in more recent times as Lower Lake Farm and Upper Lake Farm. Lower Lake, just at the old parish boundary with Nash parish, was demolished about 20 years ago but Upper Lake was demolished some 30 years before that. Early in 1996 the site, sandwiched between the SDR and the Gwent Tertiary College grounds, was cleared, and the old driveway was subsequently absorbed into the access road to Dunelm and Aldi.

Long Ditch Wall, which was not a wall as such but a lane, is now the A4810 to Magor and the Glan Llyn development and was previously the main driveway into BSC, Llanwern. The lands mentioned were doubtless fields which adjoined this lane, and which have disappeared under the developments of the last sixty years. The Long Ditch was one of the many ditches cut to drain this land after the building of the sea wall at Goldcliff.

Broad Meade is one of the few ancient field names to survive development as Broadmead Park, a residential area just south of the main railway line and west of the SDR opposite the Tesco store.

Vispool, later **Fishpool** is the ancient name for the hamlet which lies to the south of Chepstow Road and close to the present-day St Gabriel's R.C. Church. The name Fishpool was used in the census of 1841 but by 1851 **Bishpool** was in use. The original village lies in a sheltered spot and still provides something of an oasis of calm in an otherwise busy neighbourhood. The area seems only ever to have had a few small-holdings and later, market gardens and dairies; certainly it never seems to have had any farm of the sizes to be found elsewhere in the parish. Since the second world war, of course, there has been a slight shift of emphasis with the spread northwards of the Bishpool Estate – firstly a development of prefabricated bungalows which were, at the end of the 1990s, replaced by brick-built modern bungalows.

Pwlpan Manor, extending roughly from Llanwern (Hartridge) High School to Llanwern village, was the property of Llantarnam Abbey, founded in either 1175 or 1179. The lands at Pwlpan were added to those of the Abbey at foundation, and in the *Taxation Ecclesiastica* of 1291, Pwlpan Grange is the Abbey's most important possession in terms of arable and general value, accounting for half of the value of the landed property. The Grange of Pwlpan was leased in 1533 by the Abbot of Llantarnam to Lewis Blethin, who was still a tenant there in 1554. Llantarnam Abbey was dissolved on 27th August 1536 and the lands passed to the Morgan family of Llantarnam. The orchard at Pwlpan Farm contains some sort of enclosure, and there are also extensive foundations awaiting excavation. The garden is known as Chapel Field and the barn is considered to be the Grange Chapel, at which the monks would have held services while working the Grange. The exterior architectural features of the south wall would seem to support this contention.

A little to the north of Pwlpan Manor was **Milton Manor**, comprising the two farms of Great Milton and Little Milton and the area around the Milton public house in what is known as Llanwern Village. This manor originally belonged to Goldcliff Priory, passing firstly to the Morgans and subsequently the Hanbury family. This small manor was subsequently purchased by Viscountess Rhondda of adjacent Llanwern Park.

To the north of Milton lay the Manor of Coldrey or **Coldra**, which was one of those given around 1113 by Robert de Chandos to his newly founded Goldcliff Priory. It included most of the land in the north eastern corner of the parish except for Mount St Albans. Three ancient farms bore the name Coldra - Coldra, Coldra Coch and Coldra Bach. The family of Van, later to settle in Llanwern, first lived in Coldra. Lewis Van was sheriff in 1634 and died in 1636. His great grandmother, incidentally, was drowned in the great flood of 1607. Within the manor lay the farms of **Draenllwyn** and **Little Bulmore**.

Maendy (*stone house*), or **Maindee**, was an estate within the manor of Lliswerry. It was of reasonably ancient origin, for it was sold by Sir Charles Somerset, 6th son of the 4th Earl of Worcester, to John Rosser of Caerleon on 5th June 1615 for £600. The estate comprised 3 houses, 3 cottages, a barn, 7 gardens and 104 acres of land. In 1771 it was the home of William Kemeys. He died in 1807 and it passed to Charles Kemeys-Tynte of Cefn Mabli. The estate remained in his hands until 1850 when it was sold off.

Fair Oak is mentioned in the rent roll of the Manor of Libeneth for May 1655. The farm itself was situated on the hillside above what is now Maindee Square, the drive following the line of Albert Avenue and the house being roughly at the junction of Albert Avenue and Fair Oak Avenue. The barns and yard lay below, behind the present Crown Street, and the fields of hay and pasture surrounded the house, with rougher grazing and woodland above and below.

Mount St Albans was named after Alban, the first British Christian martyr and a friend of our local martyrs, Julius and Aaron. A chapel dedicated to St Alban in the extreme north eastern part of the parish was bestowed on the priory of Goldcliff by Robert de Chandos in 1113 and continued as a place of worship until at least 1495. Nothing further is heard of this area until 1624, when Walter Powell of St Albans in the parish of Christchurch made his will. The Powells lived there until 1716, when they leased the property to others. Thereafter it appears to have been a house of large proportions and a fairly extensive estate.

Tresbi is mentioned in a bill in chancery of Charles Somerset, dated 1562. This refers to land in the parish of Christchurch, formerly part of the manor of Traston. This implies that *Tresbi* is not merely a misrendering of Traston, but that it was a separate place within the manorial lands. The name is not found as such elsewhere in the parish, the closest being Treberth.

Fynon Eva or, to give it its English name **Eveswell**, lay on the northern side of the present Chepstow Road, roughly at the foot of Batchelor Road. Certainly a well or spring existed here until relatively recently, for it was latterly fed into a horse trough and was doubtless a welcome stopping place for the hard-working animals passing between Newport and the more distant parts of the parish and beyond. However, this was, until only just over 120 years ago, a very sparsely inhabited part of the parish, the only buildings being those of Eveswell Farm and its cottage.

Ringley and **Runley** would appear to be the same and relate to the area we now know as Ringland Top. This is the hill between Bishopool and Llanwern, on which Ringland Primary School is built, and which has been largely built over with the expansion of the Ringland Estate.

St Julian`s was, as now, the area in the north west of the parish. Although a precise boundary cannot be defined, roughly speaking it is the area to the north of Constance Street and Duckpool Road, west and north of Christchurch Road as far as Christchurch Cemetery and west of a line taken down from there to the Caerleon Road. A chapel dedicated to Ss Julius and Aaron (situated, with St Julian`s House, near Cumberland Road) was, together with the St Julian`s lands, given to Goldcliff Priory in 1113. By some means which are not clear, it passed into the possession of Sir William Herbert, 1st Earl of Pembroke during the 15th century. The house, which survived until the early 1980s, was built by his third son, Sir George Herbert, on the site of the old monastic buildings. The Herbert family, through intermarriage, acquired lands and interests in many places outside Monmouthshire and, with the death of Elizabeth, the widow of Edward Herbert, in January 1718 they ceased to use St Julian`s House for themselves. Elizabeth had remarried three times since the death, in 1678, of Edward Herbert. Her fourth husband, Isaac George, who survived her, continued to live at St Julian`s until his death in 1730, presumably under a life tenancy since no mention of the property is made in his will, though he does bequeath the property Coldra Fach (in the parish) to his daughter. After the death of Isaac George, the whole of St Julian`s was let as a farm. Subsequently it passed through the hands of others, including the Vans of Llanwern and the 8th Duke of Beaufort, until 1860 when the estate was bought by Joseph Firbank, the railway contractor, who built for himself a new house (known as Upper St Julian`s) near to Elaine Crescent.

Belmont was a part of the St Julian`s estate, consisting of Belmont House, Ysgubor Fach Farm and a further 264 acres of farm and woodland. In 1814 the property was sold to George Hall, a Newport solicitor, whose widow was still living there in 1861.

Pwll yr Hwyaid, or **Duckpool Farm** was a farm on the St Julian`s estate, situated just off the Caerleon Road opposite the Methodist Chapel. Though the farm itself disappeared under the development of this area from the late 19th century onwards, the farmhouse survived until around 1960, latterly being used as a social club. The only tangible reminders of this property still in existence are a few outbuildings, fairly heavily altered, to the right of the road leading past the Spar shop and, off York Road, a short lane which still bears the name Farm Lane.

Ladyhill and **Lady Meade** are in the same locality, the former being the hill which divides Chepstow Road and Always; and the latter being the lower hillside down towards Aberthaw Road, on which much of the Always Estate has been built. It therefore adjoined the old village of Lliswerry. Further reference to this area will be made in a later instalment.

Fund-raising for Sycamore Ward at St Woolos Hospital, Newport – Marion Murphy

I am pleased to say, I raised an amount of £320 for the Alzheimer's Sycamore Ward at St Woolos, Newport.

I would like to thank everyone for their support in buying my cards during the lockdown period when we could meet outdoors, enabling me to sell my cards.

The Alzheimer's Ward at St. Woolos engages in various activities with musical instruments on the wall, which people can touch, and nostalgic photographs to encourage people to remember.

Donations such as these enable the ward to keep up their good work and to add to the activities to help people cope.

Each card I craft is unique. I am always designing new cards with a variety of themes. My cards include birthday, Christmas, anniversary, sympathy, milestone, and get-well cards.

This year I look forward to resuming my fundraising for charity when circumstances allow.



Some examples of Marion's beautiful handiwork

Our choir is a frequent visitor to Sycamore Ward in “normal” times – it is our greatest regret that we were unable to visit in 2020 and that we weren’t able to perform at what is one of the major highlights of our year, the Christmas Concert and party on Christmas Eve. The staff are wonderful and Marion’s superb handiwork will contribute greatly to the valuable work they carry out there. Please support her in this fundraising if you possibly can!

Monument Valley by Julie Fry

Located on the Arizona-Utah border, the Monument Valley Territory belongs to the Navajo Indian nation. American settlers moving west in the 19th century never came here, yet most of us are familiar with the distinctive wide-open spaces and vast rock formations.



These are the Mittens and Merrick Butte



View from Gouldings Lodge at sunrise

It was the film Stagecoach, starring a then largely unknown actor John Wayne, that introduced this scenery to the wider world. The film director John Ford was looking for outdoor locations when he was shown photographs of Monument Valley by Harry Goulding and his wife Leone. They ran a trading post in the valley. The film, made in 1939, was a huge success, making both John Wayne and the scenery of Monument Valley famous. John Ford went on to use the same locations over the next 20 years. His name is now synonymous with the valley.



The horseman is posing on what has become known as John Ford's point, a regular photo shoot opportunity for tourists.

In the films, the hero was usually trapped on this platform, on a cliff edge in dire peril. In reality the drop is nowhere near as precipitous. It was all accomplished by the clever camera angles, as the next photo shows. Both photos were taken from the same spot.



While we were there, we were lucky to see the valley floor turning green (it had rained just before we arrived). It is surprising how many different shades of green there are.



Our tour along the 17 mile loop road showed us evidence of very early settlement in the valley.



If this has whetted your appetite to find out more about this region and the films made, start with Harry Goulding, then films like "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon". Happy browsing!

Yesterday my husband thought he saw a cockroach in the kitchen. He sprayed everything down and cleaned thoroughly. Today I'm putting the cockroach in the bathroom.

Poetry during Covid-19 – Alan Barrow

You have a choice,
one can raise the voice
for your word to be heard
above the scant crowd,
and you can be proud
of keeping your social distance
without assistance, resistance or persistence.
The voice demonstrates
beauty and powers
even during self-isolating hours.

Regular cleaning has
always had a meaning
yet there is something
quite surprising
as one analyses
hand sanitising.

Personal protective equipment
that is PPE
it is not quite for me.
But I am aware
that we be seen
to have equipment
and our hands clean,
whilst we await
our shipment of vaccine.

In these unprecedented times
we must forget mere rhymes,
we must be harden.
So I did, I chose
to bury my muse
in the garden.

As soon as I did
there was this
seemly sensation.
I was invited
for a first
Covid 19 vaccination

Whatever your views,
it was I who sadly chose
to bury my muse.
Come snow come rain,
things will never be
the same again.

Sudoku

Each row and each column must 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		3
3		5		2		1	6
	1		3				9
1			2	7		3	
	6		8		1		4
	7		3	5			2
6			8				9
9	4		7			2	5
5		8		1			

2. Medium

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

3. Hard

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

4. Evil

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

Don't forget the Hobbies and Interests challenge – just a paragraph will do if you don't feel like writing a full-length article. I'm sure many of you have interesting and unusual pastimes – please share them!

The Viola Story (part 2) by Neil Pritchard

In the early part of the 20th century, more composers began to write for the viola, encouraged by the emergence of specialised soloists such as Lionel Tertis. Englishmen Arthur Bliss, Arnold Bax and Ralph Vaughan Williams all wrote chamber and concert works for Tertis. William Walton and the Hungarian Béla Bartók wrote well-known viola concertos. Also the German composer Paul Hindemith wrote a substantial amount of music for the viola; being himself a violist, he often performed his own works. Claude Debussy's Sonata for flute, viola and harp composed in 1916 was a trail blazer and inspired a significant number of other composers to write for this combination. Arnold Bax wrote a number of Viola Sonatas with a range of other instruments. One fine example was the Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp.

Bax made his reputation as the composer of elaborate post-romantic orchestral scores, including seven highly individual symphonies, orchestral tone poems, concertos, choral music, but also much chamber music, piano music and songs. After the First World War, Bax emerged as a major figure, as these scores began to be heard in quick succession. In the 1920s and 1930s he was considered to be the natural successor to Edward Elgar. However, since his death in 1953, his music is rarely heard, which is a great pity considering its quality, demonstrated in the Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp. In the mid-1920s a new musical influence had entered Bax's life, when harpist, Maria Korchinska, became active on the London concert platform, encouraging him to write for the instrument. The first musical outcome of this was Bax's four movement Fantasy Sonata, which is dated April 1927 and was first performed at a concert of his chamber music at the Grotrian Hall in London, on 10th June that year. Bax takes the harp and viola and treats them as the perfect romantic medium, writing for the two with great feeling, always aware of what the instruments are capable of: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q82e7D-Ux40>

The finest concerto written for the viola was written in 1929 by William Walton - it's my personal favourite. Sir William Walton is one of the leading 20th century English composers. He was born in 1902 in Oldham near Manchester, into a musical family. His parents were both musicians, a baritone and a contralto. At an early age he showed musical promise, singing in his father's choir, and at only ten he won a scholarship to sing in the choir at Christ Church Cathedral, in Oxford, where he remained for six years. There he received musical instruction as a singer, and also learned to play piano and violin. He also received encouragement and financial support for his early composition works. Walton entered Oxford University at 16. At the university library Walton had the opportunity to study the works of Debussy, Ravel, Prokofiev and Stravinsky, and at Oxford he befriended several poets including Siegfried Sassoon and, most importantly for his future, Sacheverell Sitwell. Walton was sent down from Oxford in 1920 without a degree or any firm plans. Sitwell invited him to lodge in London with him and his literary brother and sister, Osbert and Edith.

Walton took up residence in the attic of their house in Chelsea, later recalling, "I went for a few weeks and stayed about fifteen years". Thanks to them, Walton enjoyed financial freedom that enabled him to compose, and they provided a lively cultural environment. During this time he attended the Russian ballet, met Stravinsky and Gershwin, listened to jazz and for the first time travelled to Italy, a very important experience for him. Some compositions from this time are Façade, on a poem by Edith Sitwell, the Sinfonia Concertante and choral work Belshazzar's Feast. The viola concerto was composed in 1928-29, when he was only twenty-six and it brought him a great deal of notoriety. From the 1930s he composed music for films, patriotic ones during World War II, the First Symphony and a violin concerto for Heifetz. Other important compositions are two Coronation Marches, one for King George VI and one for Queen Elizabeth II. While travelling for a conference in Argentina, he met the 24 years younger Argentinian woman who would become his wife. They married two months later in 1948, and then went to live in Italy, on the island of Ischia near Naples where, over the years, the Walton's built a luxurious villa with a marvellous garden.

After hard work, in 1954 the opera *Troilus and Cressida* was completed. It was successful both in London and the USA, but not as well received in Italy. The composer's self confidence was weakened by this. Walton composed less, also because of health problems, but continued to travel to conduct his own works, visiting Australia, New Zealand and Russia. During his life Walton received several awards for his work, including an honorary degree from Oxford University, and a knighthood and the Order of Merit from the Queen. He died in 1983 on Ischia. Walton's Viola concerto was one of his most important early works. Sir Thomas Beecham, the conductor, had suggested that a piece by a rising star would attract the great British violist Lionel Tertis. Unfortunately finding that the score looked too 'modern', Tertis sent it back by return of post, though as soon as he heard the concerto he realised his mistake and became devoted to it. At the premiere in the Queen's Hall, London, on 3 October 1929, the soloist with the Henry Wood Symphony Orchestra, and with Walton conducting, was the leading German composer Paul Hindemith. Here's the first movement: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NC8lhLN_z0

During the years from the 1930s to the present day the viola has at long last got the recognition it deserved, and there have been many composers who have turned to it for inspiration. One area I was unaware of, before I began putting this piece together, was the way the viola had been used as a vehicle for popular music. This ranged from folk music through jazz and into pop music. Before I look at the popular scene, I'm going to look at a work by Béla Bartók the Hungarian composer, inspired by his native folk music. Bartók continues to be one of history's most misunderstood composers. The suggestion of programming Bartók's music in concert is routinely met with hand-wringing and worries of not being able to fill the seats in the hall. The problem I think is due in part to Bartók's striking individuality and innovative musical voice. Bartók created a unique sound-world of exotic mystery, which sounds as imposing, even dangerous, today, as it did in the early 20th century.

Born in Hungary in 1881, Bartók began his musical training with piano studies at the age of five, foreshadowing his lifelong love of the instrument. Following his graduation from the Royal Academy of Music in 1901 and the composition of his first mature works, Bartók had a breakthrough moment in his early 20s. He heard a peasant woman singing folk songs and from that point on he collected, recorded (on an Edison phonograph) and notated hundreds of songs from small villages in rural Hungary and Romania. He did this together with fellow composer Zoltan Kodaly and the two of them ultimately preserved an entire culture. His discovery of these folk songs would be the defining factor in the development of his unique style and voice. The best known of all his folk-related compositions are the Romanian Folk Dances. Bartók's immersion in this music lasted for decades, and the intricacies he discovered from catchy melodies to fiercely aggressive rhythms, exerted a great influence on his own musical language. In addition to his composing and folk music research, Bartók's career unfolded amid a large schedule of teaching and performing.

The great success he enjoyed as a concert artist in the 1920s was offset somewhat by difficulties that arose from the tense political atmosphere in Hungary. As the spectre of fascism in Europe in the 1930s grew ever more sinister, he refused to play in Germany and banned radio broadcasts of his music there and in Italy. A concert in Budapest in October 1940 was the composer's farewell to the country which had provided him with so much inspiration and yet caused him so much grief. Days later, Bartók and his wife set sail for America. In his final years, Bartók was beleaguered by poor health. Though his prospects seemed sunnier in the final year of his life, his last great hope - to return to Hungary - was dashed in the aftermath of World War II. He died of leukemia in New York on September 26, 1945. The Romanian Dances are like a beginner's guide to his music, there were many versions of the work, but this version for viola and piano is my favourite: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4Uzqc-9ZGs>

Wasn't that a lovely performance?

It shows how the many virtues of the instrument are captured by this work.

The viola has found a role in popular music in the last 40 years with some excellent examples of arrangements, and an increasing number of original pieces. I'm going to complete my journey through Viola-land with a couple of examples from the vast range of music now available in performances and online, which show the wide opportunities that have opened up for the viola and electric viola. Today, viola makers experiment in all directions, from ancient designs to the most modern acoustics. Viola makers have also taken an electric turn, with electric amplification of bowed strings introduced as long ago as 1920 by American jazz player Stuff Smith. This was a long time before it became popular in the 1990s. Another invention was the addition of a fifth string to the viola. Seeing the scope of their instrument increasing, viola players can now embrace the possibility of playing both the violin and the viola! Today we don't know in which direction the making of stringed instruments will follow in the future. One thing is certain: the viola has been and always will be fertile ground for experimentation. The jazz scene has welcomed the viola and the electric viola as worthy additions to the violin and guitar. As you'll hear in the next piece I've chosen, the viola is ideally suited to the medium of jazz. One jazz violist who has made a major impact in recent years is Benjamin von Gutzeit, one of only a handful of true jazz violists worldwide. He was born in 1983 in Bochum, Germany, into a musical family. His father is a well-known music academic; his mother is a pianist; and two of his siblings are classical string players. He began his viola studies at the age of four, starting on a very small violin that was fitted with viola strings. He received instructions from his father until age twelve when he became the student of violist Emile Cantor of the Orpheus String Quartet.

He consecutively won the 1992 and 1994 German Youth Competition Jugend Musiziert, which led to a solo concert tour in Japan. At age fifteen, he developed a fascination for popular music and took up playing the electric bass in addition to viola. From 2001 to 2004 he studied at the Bruckner Conservatory in Linz, Austria, under the tutelage of jazz violinist Andreas Schreiber. In 2004 von Gutzeit moved to Holland to further his jazz studies at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, with saxophonists Ferdinand Povel and Jasper Blom and guitarist Jesse van Ruller. He became an active participant of the Dutch jazz scene and performed with numerous groups. He was sought after at prominent concert venues and festivals such as the North Sea Jazz Festival. In 2010 he moved to New York City (supported by scholarships of the Dutch Music Foundations) and became the first violist to earn a Master's Degree from the Jazz department of the Manhattan School of Music. For 8 years he's been a member of the Turtle Island Quartet. Since its inception in 1985, the Turtle Island Quartet has been a leading light in the creation of bold, new trends in chamber music for strings. Winner of the 2006 and 2008 Grammy Awards for Best Classical Crossover Album, Turtle Island fuses the classical quartet with contemporary American musical styles, including jazz. You'll hear this clearly in this piece, with Benni von Gutzeit on Viola.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfllwC-S1j8>

Finally to a young black man who has done a lot to popularise the viola.

Drew Alexander Forde (aka ThatViolaKid or TVK) is a fiery, passionate performer who gives his all to audiences. He has been open to all areas of music and has a reputation for being one of the finest violists in the world. Growing up in Peachtree City, Georgia, USA, Forde began playing the viola at age 12 when the orchestra teacher enticed him with promises of Disneyland and a rendition of the Spongebob Squarepants theme. With everyone else gravitating toward the violin, the cello, or bass, Forde decided to stray from the most popular instruments and chose the viola. Forde admits that it was his sense of competition that compelled him to practise hours every day, a habit that paid off when he was accepted into Georgia's All-Star Orchestra, just two years after picking up his instrument. From there, he developed his talent further and was accepted into the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program, which provided him with funding for summer festivals, auditions and private lessons.

The mission of the Talent Development Program is "to identify and develop musically gifted and motivated, African American and Latino classical music students, for acceptance in top music programs in preparation for careers as professional musicians, with the goal to diversify the field of classical

performance in years to come." While working on his Bachelor's Degree in Viola Performance at Mercer University, Forde decided to dive into the world of Instagram, with the purpose of making classical music accessible and fun for younger kids who were starting to play. He gave himself the title ThatViolaKid (TVK) and started the #PlayHomiePlay hashtag to inspire musicians to upload short clips of themselves playing passionately and authentically, mistakes and all.

"I realised that pursuing classical music might not be what most black people are doing, but it doesn't make it any less authentic," Forde continues. "I had to tell myself, I'm not doing anything wrong. I may be shattering perceptions, but because I feel so strongly about music, I know other people can feel strong about this too."

Forde's outgoing personality is bolstered by an ability to connect listeners with the deeper human experience behind each piece. You've suffered heartbreak? So has Mozart, and he put it into a song. You're in love and aren't sure how to properly articulate it? Bach was in the same boat, and you can listen to his musical love letters. This is an excellent message to send out. He believes classical music requires listeners to feel and actively engage in the often-wordless compositions, but just like today's pop songs, symphonies and cantatas carry human messages and emotions. While it's not the conventional path of a classical musician, the social media strategy is paying off. His passion for music and his enthusiasm for and empathy with his audience, has created an intimate relationship between creator and listener. By rooting for Forde to succeed, followers invest themselves in the classical music world. This, Forde believes, is what will prolong the classical music scene into the future. "The reason why classical music is failing is not because classical music is terrible, it's because classical music is failing at storytelling," Forde concludes. "I want to be a classical music storyteller and I want to be a liaison that personalises and empowers people to take ownership of classical music. He's doing a great job in opening up classical music to new generations and, in doing so, is saying music should have no boundaries. Just listen to this mighty fine playing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJrcf9uXd6U>

Cryptic Castle - Angela Robins

Solve the Cryptic Clues which also include a definition of the answer, as in a straight crossword clue. So anyone can have a go at this puzzle. Each answer is an Anagram of the word above - give or take a letter. Cover up the hints to make it more fun!

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

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------|
| 1. Walk at unhurried pace when tea runs out. | (Anagram) | _____ |
| 2. Worry about rebellion. | (Double Definition) | _____ |
| 3. Piano adjuster sounds fishy. | (Homophone) | _____ |
| 4. Go off theatrical performance. | (Double Definition) | _____ |
| 5. Bolt fastener is a crazy person. | (Double Definition) | _____ |
| 6. Broadcasts aren't relative. | (Homophone) | _____ |
| 7. Tease astronaut about abandoning Rosa. | (Part Word/Anagram) | _____ |
| 8. Absentee is a bit of a real social worker. | (Part Wd/Word Exchange) | _____ |
| 9. One left tournament out of fit of temper. | (Part Word/Anagram) | _____ |

The answers are on Page 22

A Good Deed by Pam Cocchiara

The temperature had dropped considerably during the night and there was a thick layer of frost. Now the sun was shining, the sky was clear blue and although still very cold, it looked set to be a fine day, the sort of weather that seemed fitting for an optimistic start to the New Year.

Edward prepared to go to the local shops for the daily newspaper. From the hall cupboard he took out an anorak and then replaced his slippers with a pair of sturdy lace-up shoes. Taking the car keys from the hook on the wall he opened the front door. In the driveway the car was still frost-covered and he made a sudden decision to go to the newsagents on foot. It wasn't that far away after all. Putting the keys on the hall table, he put the anorak back into the cupboard and replaced it with a tweed overcoat.

He strode off down the street, swinging his arms, breathing in the fresh, cold morning air. How good it felt. He should do more walking he decided, especially now, after the excesses of the festive period. Yes he thought, this could be a New Year resolution. He was well aware of the ephemeral nature of these resolutions, how they would melt away almost as quickly as this early morning frost, but his euphoric mood on this lovely day made everything seem achievable.

As he turned into the road where the cluster of small local shops was situated, he saw a shabbily dressed man coming towards him. Edward noticed his clothes, the woollen scarf wound around his neck, ends tucked inside a grey pinstriped jacket, slightly too large for his thin frame, and the matching trousers hung loose. He wore a grey knitted bobble hat, pulled down over his ears to meet a beard of almost the same colour. A plastic carrier bag was looped over one arm and he walked with shuffling steps in worn and cracked shoes, chin down, elbows tucked in close to his sides, so as to conserve body heat.

"Poor old devil," thought Edward, "he must be frozen." He felt a pang of guilt, warmly wrapped in his own snug, comfortable clothes. "I ought to give him something, some money."

As the man made to pass him he called "Wait a moment!" and the man paused. Edward looked again at the man's chapped lined face, at the thin inadequate clothes and a feeling of benevolence welled up in him. On a sudden impulse he shrugged out of his overcoat and folding it over one arm, he held it out.

"Here, take this."

The man looked at him with an expression of disbelief and made to walk on.

"Please wait" Edward said, "Look, I don't mean to offend you, but it seems as if you could do with a warm coat."

The man reached out and touched the coat tentatively with a dirty fingerless-mittened hand.

"Please" urged Edward, "I'd like you to have it, really."

The man put the plastic bag down on the pavement. He took the coat with both hands and stroked the material gently before putting it on. He turned the collar up then smiled at Edward as he pulled the sides of the coat together, wrapping it tightly round him.

"Oh, that's just the ticket that is. Thanks gov'nor. You're a saint, that's what you are, a proper saint." Embarrassed, Edward muttered "It's nothing, you're welcome I'm sure" and head down walked quickly on. It was no great sacrifice what he'd done he thought, after all he had plenty more clothes at home. Nevertheless he felt a surge of warmth, a feeling of quiet satisfaction for this charitable action.

It was almost as cold inside the newsagents as outside and the man behind the counter was warmly wrapped up. Shivering now, Edward quickly picked up a copy of The Telegraph and placed it on the counter as he reached for his wallet. With a sudden sickening feeling he remembered - his wallet, his overcoat pocket.

Leaving the paper on the counter he rushed out of the shop and looked wildly around. There was no sign of the man. Then to his right he noticed the small alleyway that ran around the rear of the shops. Some way down, the man was looking at items in a skip, picking through wads of paper and cardboard cartons. Edward ran up to him. He laid a hand on his shoulder.

“Thank God I found you” he said, “you’ve got my wallet.”

The man turned a startled face to him. “Wallet? What you mean?”

“My wallet, it’s in the pocket.” He pointed. “My coat, remember I gave it you just now.”

“There ain’t nothing there” said the man, “I looked. I always look in the pockets, Mate, first thing I do.”

“Of course it’s there” insisted Edward and he reached out. The man drew back from the searching hand.

“I tell you there ain’t nothing there.”

“But there must be.”

In loud, definite tones the man said, “I ain’t got your bleeding wallet.”

Edward remembered a recent newspaper article about how a pickpocket or a thief would steal something and then, almost immediately, pass it on to a confederate, a partner.

“Your partner, where is he?” His voice was raised.

“Partner, what bleeding partner?”

“The one you gave my wallet to.” Now he was shouting. “Where is he?”

“You’re mad you are, stark raving mad.”

Edward felt a surge of anger. With both hands he reached out and grabbed hold of the coat, pulling it towards him. The man struggled to keep his balance on the icy cobbles underfoot, then fell, almost pulling Edward down with him. He hit the side of the skip with a thud then sprawled motionless on the floor.

“Oh my God.” Edward froze. “I’ve killed him.”

Then, to his relief, he saw movement. The man pushed himself up into a sitting position with both arms, then turned onto his knees and got shakily to his feet. Edward moved forward to help, but the man pushed him away and started to shout.

“You’re mad, bleeding mad. I’ll have the law on you.” He was waving his fists in the air. “I’ll call the police. I’ll have you up for assault I will.”

Edward panicked. He turned and ran out of the alleyway. He could hear the man’s shouts fading behind him as he ran but he didn’t stop until he reached his own street. Gasping for breath he hammered on his front door until his wife opened it. She looked in amazement as, red faced and sweating, he stumbled in over the doorstep, pushing past her, then stopped dead.

His car keys were where he’d left them on the hall table and, next to them, his wallet.

Talking Points (started by Stephen Berry!) – responses to DIT 28

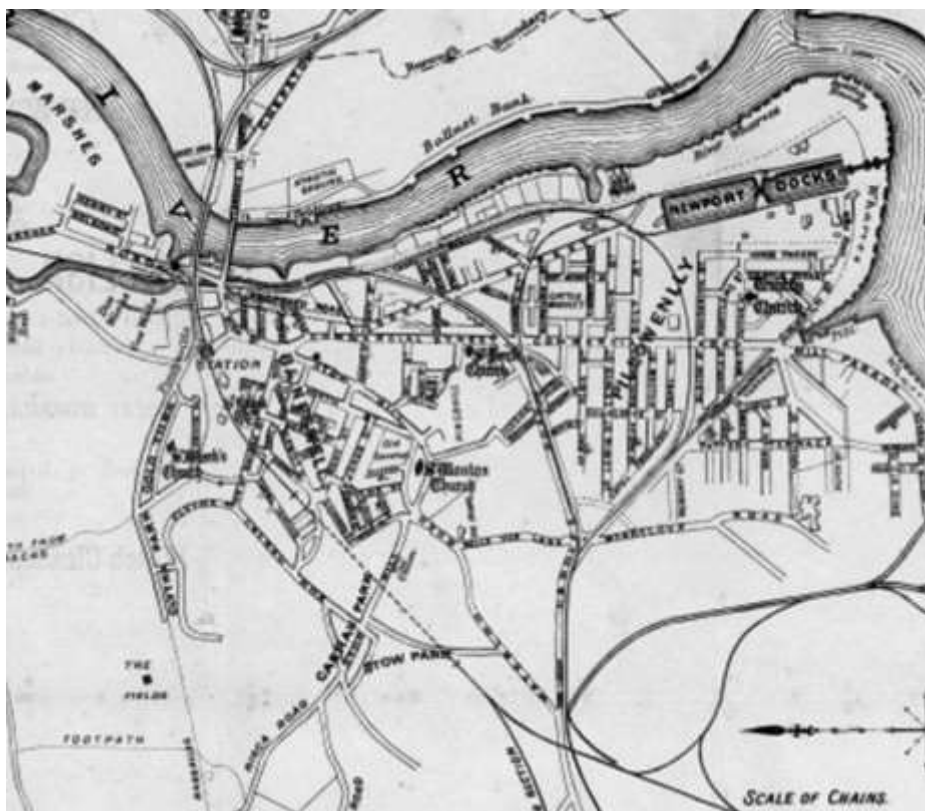
Yet again a good number of responses to the first photograph were received – and again every one was correct!

Roger Lewis has provided a very informative note on the photograph, which was of the road and railway lines outside the Royal Gwent Hospital. The houses are still recognisable, but the railway lines have been replaced by a road on the house side and a widened Cardiff Road on the other side.

The railway line was originally part of the rail network created by what eventually became in 1848 the Monmouthshire Railway & Canal Company. The company opened the canals from Pontypool and Crumlin to Newport in 1796.

The high volume of mineral activity in the area kept the company in good financial health for many years, but it failed to keep abreast of competing developments, and, faced with unforeseen major loss of business, it sold the rights to operate its network to the [Great Western Railway](#) in 1875. The GWR developed the network until, in the period after 1918, road competition increasingly abstracted passenger and non-mineral goods traffic. Passenger operation ceased on 30th April 1962.

Looking east beyond the wagons in the picture, the line continued towards Newport, dividing just prior to Commercial Street. One half ran along Ebenezer Terrace to join the riverside line from Pontypool in the Eastern Valley. The other part of the line ran along what is now George Street; the two sides of George Street remained separated by double railway lines until about 1930. The lines then crossed Dock Street and ran into the Town Docks. It was here that a station called Newport Dock Street existed. It served the GWR line in the Western Valley, the Brecon & Merthyr Railway trains from Brecon and Rhymney and the London & North Western Railway trains from Tredegar and Nantybwhch. This was closed in 1880 when trains were diverted via a new connection to the GWR main line close to its tunnel. Dock Street station was finally demolished in the 1960s. A loop line continued back to Courtybella Terrace to re-join the line from the Western Valley. Part of that loop is now used as a car park for the Royal Gwent Hospital. Some members may recall the level crossing at the bottom of Belle Vue Lane where the railway line crossed Mendelgief Road. This line also had a connection to the Alexander Dock.



Hopefully it will be possible to provide an article on the railway system across Newport, formerly far more extensive than it is now!

Roger has also provided a very interesting explanation of the second photograph. To start with, it is not our Newport at all – it is Newport, Shropshire! The actual location is the Aqualate Hall estate, which had been requisitioned by the Army during WW2 as a military transport depot. At the end of the war, the desperate housing shortage was somewhat relieved in the short term by using the Nissen huts to house families. The same situation applied across the country and similar Nissen huts at Malpas Park were used in the same way. This is the location that was given in the caption to the photograph when I received it – and it must be said that the lie of the land was very similar, so it was an honest mistake! However, it does highlight the housing issue at this time, partially covered in my earlier article on the Newport prefabs. The crisis was not new, of course – the 1920s saw similar crises. At that time almost anything that provided some degree of protection from the elements was pressed into service. Notable sites in Newport were the side of Lady Hill; above the post-war Alway Primary School where a number of ancient railway carriage bodies were “parked” and inhabited; and the Black Ash Field, behind the Lysaght Institute, where a shanty town of tin shacks spawned a settlement worthy of the third world. I know of at least one grounded railway carriage body which was still inhabited at the start of the 21st century!

... 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 not a location you could easily find today! Can you provide any stories or information about this building or its immediate neighbours, please?



50 Mile Challenge - Barry by Mike Brown

A walk around Barry is a great way to discover more about its history and can be done anytime of the year. This 6 mile trail starts at the Town Hall and can be completed in sections; it could easily make three enjoyable days out.

Barry grew from three small villages into the largest town in Wales due to the development of its world-famous docks during the 19th century. The Town Hall is in Holton Road which is still the main shopping area. It is one of many listed buildings to be seen on this trail. Adjoining it is the Public Library which was built with money donated by the American millionaire, Andrew Carnegie.

The port of Barry was built to deal with the worldwide demand for coal. In 1889 it was the largest enclosed port in the world. A world record was achieved in 1913 when more than 11 million tons of coal was exported through a single port. Due to the decline of coal, business was replaced with oil and imported bananas. The Dock Office building was designed in Neo-Baroque Renaissance style with a calendar theme: 365 windows, 4 floors, 12 porch panels, 52 marble fireplaces, 31 steps on the main staircase, 7 lights above the doors and 2 circular windows in the entrance hall represent the sun and moon. Also in the vicinity is the Hydraulic Pump House which will play a significant part in 'The Quays' regeneration project of Barry's waterfront. There are 2,000 homes being built, a hotel, retail outlets, play spaces, waterside cafes, bars and restaurants, which will give it a cosmopolitan air. The Dock also provides a spectacular setting for events including visits from Tall Ships, sailing regattas and festivals.

Barry High Street is one of the oldest commercial districts and has shops and boutiques with individual character and a thriving nightlife. The 14th century castle remains can be found on high ground overlooking the Bristol Channel and could really only be described as a small, fortified manor house. It is situated on the road to Porthkerry Country Park which lies in a valley of woods and meadows with nature trails leading down to the pebble beach. The large, impressive viaduct has 16 arched spans over 100 feet tall. The steep steps of the Golden Stairs afford fine views of the Bristol Channel and lead over to Cold Knapp. It is reputed that a pirate's treasure of gold coins is buried there. The Knapp Beach's pebbles were driven up here during a great storm in the 17th century and the area behind became marshy as the streams became dammed. It was developed into a boating lake in the 1920s in the shape of a Welsh harp. One of the most well-known buildings at that time was Bindle's Ballroom which secured a reputation as one of the most well designed and contemporary dance halls in South Wales.

Watch House Bay with its attractive tower once marked the entrance to Barry's Old Harbour: a flourishing port when the area was an island. When the tide is out, it is possible to walk among the beached boats to Barry Island. Barry Island was a good place for breeding sheep and cattle, growing cereal and later a good source of rabbits. Francis Crawshay of Merthyr built a hotel here and a pier for his yacht. In 1873 they were sold and tourism was introduced, and the rest as they say, is history! The Pleasure Park was one of the most famous in the country from the 1920s with more than 50 attractions, and the nearby railway is located at a restored Victorian station where visitors can travel by steam train to the Waterfront development on high days and holidays.

A coastal path leads from Whitmore Bay to Jackson's Bay and the Sailing Club. At low tide carboniferous limestone, formed 350 million years ago, is exposed on this Site of Special Scientific Interest.

St Baruc's Norman Chapel was built on the grave of the Irish Patron Saint of Cork. He drowned here while fetching a book from Flat Holm. It is said the Town of Barry takes its name from that Saint.



Cryptic Castle (page 16) – Answers

1. Saunter 2. Unrest 3. Tuner 4. Turn 5. Nut 6. Aunt 7. Taunt 8. Tru(e)/ant 9. Tantrum

January – submitted by Pat Fackrell

'Twas the month after Christmas and all through the house
 Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.
 The biscuits I'd nibbled, the brandy I'd taste,
 All the holiday parties had gone to my waist.
 Then I got to the scales - there arose such a number!
 When I walked to the shops (less a walk, more a lumber)
 I'd remember the wonderful meals I'd prepared,
 The gravies, the sauces and beef nicely rared,
 The wine and the pudding, the bread and the cheese
 And the way I'd never said "No thanks!" but "Please!"
 As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt
 And prepared once again to do battle with dirt
 I said to myself, as only I can,
 "You can't spend the winter disguised as a man."
 So – away with the last of the sour cream dip
 Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip,
 Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
 Till all the additional ounces have vanished.
 I won't have a biscuit – not even a lick,
 I'll want only to chew on a celery stick.
 I won't have hot puddings or Welsh cakes or pie,
 I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.
 I'm hungry, I'm lonesome and life is a bore,
 But isn't that what January's for?
 Unable to giggle, no longer a riot,
 Happy New Year to all and a very good diet!

What We Were Doing - Angela Robins

Four years ago Stephen Berry started the Family History Group, which is continuing to grow in popularity.

Members use specialist websites - all have made surprising discoveries, and there's much excitement when they manage to go back yet another generation!

As yet, disappointingly, they have not turned up any scandals - though Stephen's great great grandmother was sentenced to 14 days hard labour for smashing six windows in the Dulverton Workhouse! Another interesting discovery was that two of the members' ancestors lived in the same village in Somerset at the same time; so they would have known each other too. Also, another ancestor alive in the early 1700s was common to two of our members. It's a small world!

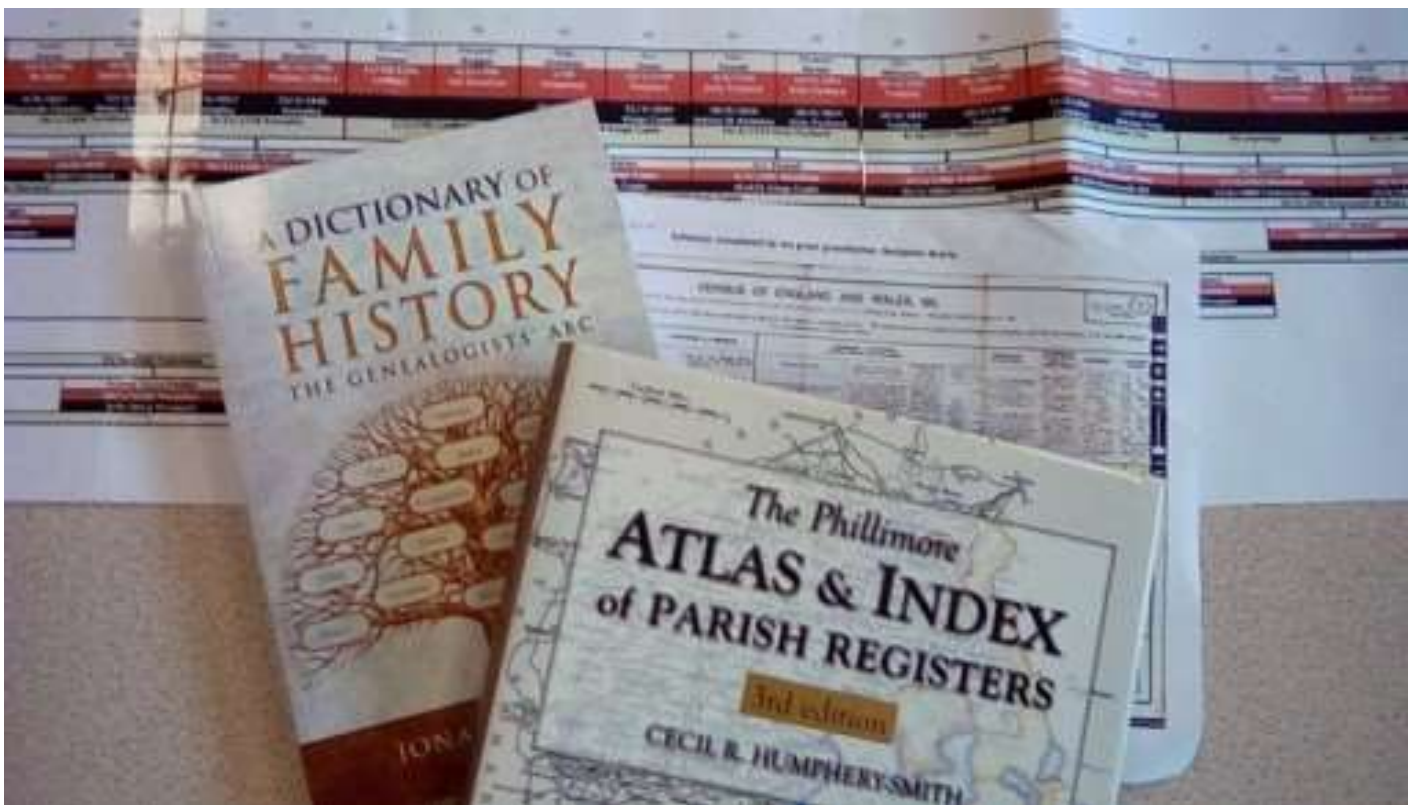
Although the focus is on furthering members' family trees, the group has also worked on 'problems': real situations where answers are not obvious, in order to learn more advanced research techniques. These are proving popular and enable members to undertake research at home or at libraries, whilst the more experienced members share their experience with the newcomers.

-----X-----

Euan anxiously left the U3A Family History Group and called to see his mother. "Mum, am I adopted?" he asked. "No, of course not, why would you think such a thing?" she retorted. Euan showed her his genealogy DNA test results which showed no match for any of his relatives, but a strong match for a family that lived on the other side of the city. Perturbed, his mother went into the garden to speak to her husband.

"Honey, Euan has done a DNA test and . . . and . . . I don't know how to say this . . . he may not be our son."

"Well, obviously!" he replied "It was your idea - you remember that first night in hospital when the baby did nothing but cry and scream and cry and scream. On and on, and you asked me to change him?" he continued. "Well, I picked a good 'un, I reckon. I'm ever so proud of Euan!"



Understanding Engineers – submitted by Mike Williams

Understanding Engineers 1

Two engineering students were riding bicycles across a university campus when one said, "Where did you get the great bike?"

The second engineer replied, "Well, I was walking yesterday, minding my own business, when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike, threw it to the ground, took off all her clothes and said, "Take what you want."

The first engineer nodded approvingly and said, "Good choice: The clothes probably wouldn't have fitted you anyway."

Understanding Engineers 2

To the optimist, the glass is half-full.

To the pessimist, the glass is half-empty.

To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

Understanding Engineers 3

A priest, a doctor, and an engineer were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers. The engineer fumed, "What's with those guys? We've been waiting for fifteen minutes!" The doctor chimed in, "I don't think I've ever seen such inept golf!" The priest said, "Here comes the green-keeper. Let's have a word with him." He said, "Hello George, what's wrong with that group ahead of us? They're rather slow, aren't they?"

The green-keeper replied, "Oh, yes, that's a group of blind firemen. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime!"

The group fell silent for a moment. The priest said, "That's so sad. I'll say a special prayer for them tonight." The doctor said, "Good idea, I'll contact my ophthalmologist colleague and see if there's anything she can do for them." The engineer said, "Why can't they play at night?"

Understanding Engineers 4

What is the difference between mechanical engineers and civil engineers? Mechanical engineers build weapons. Civil engineers build targets.

..... and Finally:

Two engineers were standing at the base of a flagpole, looking at its top. A woman walked by and asked what they were doing "We're supposed to find the height of this flagpole," said Sven, "but we don't have a ladder." The woman took a spanner from her bag, loosened a couple of bolts and laid the pole down on the ground. Then she took a tape measure from her bag, took a measurement, announced, "6.5 metres," and walked away. One engineer shook his head and laughed, "A lot of good that does us. We ask for the height and she gives us the length!"