

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

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SCHIZOSTYLIS
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*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

Always look on the bright side of life!

Watching the news day after day could make it seem like we are in a permanent spiral of doom. However, there is still plenty to be positive about, with some silver linings and good news stories cutting through the negative news.

For instance, when the Chelsea Flower Show was cancelled at the beginning of the lockdown, it meant there were many spare plants being held by gardeners. Some of these are now being planted in NHS hospitals, with colourful poppies and thyme decorating the quad in a Plymouth facility.

Here are five other reasons to stay positive whilst we get through this difficult time.

1. Global air pollution levels have dropped dramatically

In a case of silver linings, the nationwide shutdown caused by the coronavirus outbreak has led to big drops in air pollution across the UK's major cities, as new data analysis shows. Levels of toxic pollutants were likely to fall even further, scientists said, as traffic remained off the roads. And it's not just in the UK, but across the world that we are seeing these effects. Paul Monks, professor of air pollution at the University of Leicester, predicted there would be important lessons to learn. "We are now, inadvertently, conducting the largest-scale experiment ever seen," he said. "Are we looking at what we might see in the future if we can move to a low-carbon economy? Not to denigrate the loss of life, but this might give us some hope from something terrible. To see what can be achieved."

2. Many random acts of kindness

There have been so many random acts of kindness, too many to mention. Something about shared adversity seems to bring out the 'war spirit' in us, and we've had many examples of these kindnesses!

There's the kind-hearted man who has been leaving shoe boxes with gifts in the car park of the John Radcliffe hospital for NHS workers at the frontline of the Coronavirus. And of course, lots of people have been popping all over the country, volunteering to deliver food and medicine to those who are self-isolating in their neighbourhood. Not to mention the 750,000 people who have signed up to volunteer for the NHS so far.

3. A chance to slow down & strengthen your connections

Whilst many of us are in lockdown away from our wider families, it's a good time for us to strengthen our connections with our live-in families and partners. Taking the time to hug your loved ones, looking them in the eyes, enjoying long conversations – all of these gestures promote closeness and also boost oxytocin levels, the "cuddle hormone" that bonds people and also has a calming effect on your body. For those in isolation by themselves, FaceTime, Zoom, Houseparty and Skype all offer ways to stay in touch with your wider family and friends and keep loneliness at bay. It might not be quite the same, but you'll be surprised how even a short (video) chat can boost your mood!

4. Companies stepping up to the plate

TTP, a technology and product development company, is working with Dyson to produce 15,000 ventilators. It is believed the companies managed to create a prototype within 10 days, and it is hoped that the first ones will be in hospitals within weeks. But there are many more companies stepping up to the plate – BrewDog, a brewery and pub chain, has begun making hand sanitiser at its distillery to assist with shortages. It announced that these sanitisers will be delivered to NHS hospitals, as well as charities and shelters.

The founder of Nouveau Beauty Group is donating 100,000 items like face masks, gloves and hand sanitisers, which will be sent to healthcare workers on the front line. And John Lewis has donated £75,000 each to the charities Age UK, FareShare and Trussell Trust. This funding will be used immediately to assist the most vulnerable during the crisis, providing help to those in local communities who are self-isolating or facing food insecurity.

5. There are signs that Coronavirus could be slowing down

Life is returning to normal in China, with no new cases reported in Wuhan, where the outbreak began, for over a week. Shops and shopping centres are slowly reopening - although with strict limits on how many people are allowed inside.

With the infection rate the lowest it's been for two weeks in Italy, the UK is also reporting some good news. The UK's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance told a news conference that social distancing measures are "making a difference", with transmission of coronavirus in the community thought to be decreasing.

With so much to look forward to once this is all over, even the everyday things like hugging grandchildren or popping into town for a coffee, it's important that we all stay positive. We will get through this together!

Submitted by **Angela Robins and Mike Brown**

..... on the other hand

Just be careful because people are going crazy from being in isolation!

Actually, I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and all of us agreed that things are getting bad.

I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything.

Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant.

Mind, the iron soothed me as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing.

The vacuum was very unsympathetic... told me to just suck-it-and-see, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all soon blow over!

The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything, but the door-knob told me to get a grip.

The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me toyes, you guessed it.....pull myself together.

Easypeasy Cryptic Crossword Clues 2 – Angela Robins

There are twelve types of Cryptic Crossword Clues and here are some of the Acrostic type for your amusement. Remember to ignore the surface meaning of a clue - it rarely makes any sense!

Acrostic Clues give you a hint to take the first letters of a sequence of words, and a definition of the answer required (as in a straight crossword).

i.e. Initially / the ward inspection nurse / is one of a pair. (4). = Twin.

Examples of hints to use the first letters can be lead, head, initially, starting, capitals, for openers.....

Have a go at these examples they are so easy you won't need to be given the answers:

- 1 it's relaxing starting young or greater age (4).
2. Starting when ready expecting night bird (4).
3. Biters taking heads off tarantula eating extremely tiny hares (5).
4. Sign seen at start of any road running one way (5).
5. Garment chiefly hides in Jordan and Bahrain(5).
6. Beginners made one very interesting entertaining film (5).
7. Initially Transport and Buses League employees may sit around this (5).
8. Leading jam and relish container (3).
9. Collection of tools is initially kept in trunk (3).
10. Drink may ease any discomfort at first (4).
11. Small dog started pawing under gazebo (3).
12. Begin gathering all sticks for cooking fuel (3).
13. Primarily snivel or bawl to cry (3).
14. Original of husband's old diary holds bricks (3).
15. Slave from the outset seen enduring real fear (4).
16. For starters orchestra's conductor teaches eight this musical piece (5).
17. Leaders of other democracies deserve second chances (4).
18. Last Australian woman heads for the Police (3).
19. Garment first seen all round India (4).
20. Tree fluid starts scaring a permit (3).

The Green Thing

At the supermarket checkout the young cashier suggested to the older woman that she should bring her own shopping bags in future – plastic bags were bad for the environment.

The woman apologised and explained, “We didn’t have this green thing back in my young days.” The cashier responded, “That’s our problem today. Your generation didn’t care enough to save our environment for future generations.”

She was right – our generation didn’t have the green thing in our day. Back then we returned milk bottles, pop bottles and beer bottles to the shop. They were sent back to the plant to be washed, sterilised and refilled so the same bottle could be used over and over. So they really were recycled. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen and we replaced razor blades in razors instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got blunt.

But we didn’t have the green thing back in our day.

We walked up stairs because we didn’t have an escalator in every shop and office. We walked to the shop and we didn’t drive a motor car every time we had to go two streets.

But she was right - we didn’t have the green thing back in our day.

Back then we washed babies’ nappies – we didn’t have the throw-away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling 2200 watt machine – wind and solar power really did dry our clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from siblings, not brand new clothing.

But the young lady was right - we didn’t have the green thing back in our day.

Back then we had one television or radio in the house, not one in each room. The TV had a screen the size of a hanky, not one the size of the county of Yorkshire! In the kitchen we blended and stirred by hand – no electric machines to do the jobs. When we packaged a fragile item for the post we used wadded newspaper to cushion it, not polystyrene or plastic bubble-wrap. We didn’t burn petrol to mow a lawn, we used human push-power. We exercised by working – no need to go to a gym with electrically-operated treadmills.

But she’s right - we didn’t have the green thing back in our day.

We drank water from a fountain or tap when were thirsty not from a plastic bottle flow in from another country. We accepted that much food was seasonal and didn’t expect to have out of season products flown thousands of miles around the world. We cooked food that didn’t come from a packet, tin or plastic wrapping and we could even clean vegetables and chop salad.

But we didn’t have the green thing back then.

Back then people caught a train or a bus and kids walked or cycled to school instead of using the parental 24-hour taxi service. We had one electrical socket per room, not an entire bank to power a dozen appliances. We didn’t need a computerised gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2000 miles out in space to find the nearest fish and chip shop!

But isn’t it sad that the current generation laments how wasteful we oldies were just because we didn’t have the green thing back then?!!!!

Submitted by **Jean Comfort**

Ulsterisms – Gerald Lee

Number One

Language has always fascinated me. T S Eliot called it 'the eternal wrestle with words.' It reflects our history and influences. We may express the same idea in different ways, yet one way can give a slant that the other misses.

Before World War One there was an official inquiry into the bawdy language of music halls. Marie Lloyd showed how a serious poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Come into the Garden Maud' could have a whole new meaning with a little bit of innuendo and the right performer.

We talk of Standard English. It could be argued there is no such thing. In the United Kingdom many variations of English exist. Despite standardisation in Education and broadcasting, local dialects still thrive. Having grown up in Northern Ireland I know Ulster English has its own peculiarities. Throughout its history Ireland has absorbed many peoples. The spoken language even to-day demonstrates this diversity.

As I still dabble in modern languages may I start with some French influences. If you were 'in your desabelles' you are not fully dressed. If someone asked what you have been doing 'this weather' it could be because in French 'temps' means both weather and time. If you are wasting time you are 'foutering,' an equivalent in French to a rude word in English.

There is also a tendency to ram words together into one, so as to be virtually unintelligible. A common greeting is 'boutcha,' a contraction possibly of 'what about you?' You might answer 'grand.' Something correct is 'dead on.'

If you look dejected, you might have 'a face like a Lurgan spade.' This is not connected to the town of Lurgan, but to a long spade used to dig peat, hence you would have a long face.

A 'geg' is a joke, but also the person who tells it. If he is habitually funny, or a bit of a chancer, he might be described as a 'quare geg.' In the telling of a story someone might be referred to as 'yer man.'

Some other words are used in completely different contexts. A person who acts strangely is 'not wise.' Someone a bit dim is 'not too well educated.'

A religious person would be described as 'good living.'

My mother had a wonderful phrase to describe someone a bit daft. He would not know 'A (pronounced to rhyme with Ma) from a bull's foot.' I am afraid the comparison eludes me.

Like 'boutcha' there is always a tendency to run words together. It is a common trait in spoken Ulster speech to emphasise your point by saying, 'So it is,' or 'So I am' at the end of a sentence. This might be contracted to 'Soam,' meaningless to an outsider. Another example is the word for the Dole Office, 'Buroo,' probably derived from the words 'Bureau of National Assistance.'

Some phrases might seem as if they have origins in English but have roots elsewhere. When I heard the expression, 'there is no call for it,' I took it to mean it is not called for. In fact, it has a different origin from Gaelic.

Other phrases probably come from Scots English. Rather than ask what job you do you might be asked 'what's your trade?' 'Wee' is used frequently, not just to mean small but as a general word added in front of a noun. 'Wee man' does not necessarily mean someone small.

As we travelled more as students some of these differences could lead to embarrassing situations. In Northern Ireland you have two types of bread. A 'pan loaf' is one you would use to make sandwiches, more refined and soft, whereas as a 'plain loaf' is coarser, more suitable for toasting. When one of my school friends asked in a bakery for a 'pan loaf' the assistant was mystified.

Similarly, a 'gravy ring' is a round dough nut. For some unknown reason gym slippers are called 'mutton dummies.' Please do not ask me to explain, I just do not know any more than I know the origin of the word 'daps.'

English students could not understand why when they asked for a pint of bitter, they were given a pint of Harp Lager. I only ever tasted mild when I left Northern Ireland. The story that all the slops ended up in it seemed perfectly credible. I did not like it at all.

Of course, the Ulster Fry is famous, perhaps best known as the most unhealthy breakfast imaginable. You can still enjoy wheaten and potato bread, however, without having it fried with your bacon and sausages. You can even buy it sometimes in Tesco and Marks and Spencer.

The popular whisky in Northern Ireland is distilled in Bushmills, so I recommend a 'wee Bush,' or the more exquisite Black Bush, if the Titanic trip takes place in 2021. A great cure for a cold is Bushmills, with sugar, lemon and hot water in a glass, with a stirrer shaped like an oar to produce a magic brew. Who knows, it might even cure the Coronavirus?

The English Language

I enjoyed Gwyn Havard's article about the idiosyncrasies of our language [DIT 2, p6].

It reminded me that English lends itself particularly well to the kind of wordplay used in Cryptic Crossword Clues. These puzzles are fairly unknown outside of the English-speaking regions of the world. Foreign crosswords tend to have general knowledge clues.

It helps that we have approximately 250 - 300 thousand words in our language, compared to 100 - 135 thousand in Spanish, French and German.

Our language also has many influences from around the world. One word can be a noun, adjective and a verb whilst having various meanings and this leads to endless ambiguity. That is why solving these puzzles is like a linguistic workout for the mind!

Angela Robins

Laughter – the best medicine!

Joe Smith was interested in the concept of psychic phenomena; the concept where you suddenly hear from a friend who died 20 years ago. Very like second-class mail.

My great-grandfather was killed at Custer's Last Stand — he didn't take part in any fighting, he was camping nearby and went over to complain about the noise.

A ship carrying red paint -collided with another one carrying purple paint. Both crews are thought to be marooned on a desert island!

There was a fire at the Inland Revenue office in London, but it was put out before any serious good was done.

It was revealed in a government survey published today that the Prime Minister is doing the work of two men. Laurel and Hardy.

After a series of crimes in the Glasgow area, Chief Inspector McTavish has announced that he's looking for a man with one eye. If he doesn't find him, he's going to use both eyes.

A crate load of tortoises escaped while it was being removed from a train at Euston station. An inspector said, "Our porters tried to catch them, but they moved far too quickly for them."

A cement mixer has collided with a prison van on the Kingston bypass. Motorists are told to be on the lookout for 16 hardened criminals.

A vicar who rode his bike the wrong way up the M1 was asked how he managed to avoid an accident. He replied, 'God was with me' and was further charged for riding two on a bike.

In a drive to improve standards in service and hygiene, a West End hotel today dismissed a waiter for having his thumb in the soup. They also dismissed a topless waitress for two similar offences.

George Thrakes, the building contractor who was jailed last year for supplying millions of pounds worth of defective building materials to the Government, escaped from Wormwood Scrubs today when the front fell off.

We'll also be discussing the bread shortage, with a woman who has been throwing IOUs to the ducks.

You don't need a parachute to go skydiving. You need a parachute to go skydiving more than once.

Wife to layabout husband: You're not completely useless. You can always serve as a bad example.

You can never lose a homing pigeon. If your homing pigeon doesn't return, you've lost a pigeon.

The vicar, walking in his garden, saw his gardener pass a slip of paper to a suspicious-looking man stood by the gate. He intercepted the caller and saw that it was a betting slip. He called the gardener and said, "So, Smith, I see you waste your money on gambling. Foolish man! Doubly foolish man – *Silver Arrow* doesn't stand a chance anyway!"

How well do you know the U.K.?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 How far is it from Bridge Street, Newport to Downing Street, London?</p> <p>2 Whose statue is also in Bridge Street?</p> <p>3 What's the meaning of the name "Chepstow"?</p> <p>4 Before the Severn Bridges were built, what were the 2 places linked by ferry across the Severn Estuary?</p> <p>5 Name the famous birdlife sanctuary in Gloucestershire .</p> <p>6 Who is said to have come to a very painful end at Berkeley Castle in the same county?</p> <p>7 Which town in Gloucestershire has the most Roman remains?</p> <p>8 Which town did Thomas Hardy use as the basis for the fictional Casterbridge?</p> <p>9 Who was the Mayor of Casterbridge in the novel and who was his Scottish rival?</p> <p>10 What's the name of the most famous arch in Dorset?</p> <p>11 If you wanted to go to the Channel Isles by boat, which port would you have to use?</p> <p>12 Where is Tresco and why is it famous?</p> <p>13 Describe the flag of Cornwall.</p> | <p>14 What is the Cornish name for Cornwall?</p> <p>15 What is the most southerly point of England?</p> <p>16 What is the county town/city of Devon?</p> <p>17and what is the Devon flag like?</p> <p>18 Who wrote the book Tarka the Otter, mainly set in Devon?</p> <p>19 In which county is the story of Lorna Doone set?</p> <p>20 Name the only other country in the world, apart from Wales, that has a dragon on its flag.</p> <p>21 Which city was the capital of England before London?</p> <p>22 We know Harold Godwin lost the Battle of Hastings to William the Conqueror, but this was partly because he had fought another battle in Yorkshire which he had won. What was the name of the Battle site?</p> <p>23and whom did he defeat?</p> <p>24 Name the "almost island" off the coast of Northumbria that was a centre of learning for many centuries.</p> <p>25 Which is the only English football team that plays in the Scottish League.</p> |
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(Answers on page 14)

Sudoku

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

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 Campbells are coming – Stephen Berry

The Campbell Clan was a powerful family whose roots go back to the year 1263. They achieved power, influence and, perhaps more importantly, land, in the area of Scotland known as Argyll, to the north west of Glasgow. Like the other Scottish clans, they tended to argue frequently with their neighbours and were involved in many bloody disputes, one of the most well-known being the Glencoe massacre of 1692. They gained a reputation for being bloodthirsty and argumentative and became feared throughout the highlands. You may have heard of the song “The Campbells are coming”, one which apparently caused fear in those enemies who heard it!

In the late 1880s the phrase “The Campbells are coming” may well have been heard in south east Wales, but, far from instilling fear into the locals, the news was received with anticipation and pleasure. Were the south Walians anticipating an invasion? A take-over by the SNP? An opportunity to break away from the domination of Westminster?

The Bristol Channel, which, from just south of Penarth in Wales to just north of Weston-super-Mare in England, becomes the Severn Estuary and the River Severn itself, has for long been an effective barrier between the two countries, and even between those parts of Gloucestershire lying to the south and west of the city of Gloucester. Communication (other than that unreliably provided by boat) between the north and south shores below Gloucester was initially established with the opening of the Severn railway bridge between Lydney and Sharpness in 1879, followed in 1886 by the route through the Severn Tunnel, between Pilning and Rogiet, at which village Severn Tunnel Junction station was established. The first Severn Road Bridge was not opened until September 1966, the second following in June 1996.

Cross-water communication by boat was certainly established centuries before, but regular passenger services were sparse as there was little demand. All boat services were subject to interruption or delay caused by weather and tides, as the tidal range of these waters is the second largest in the world, approaching some 50 feet at the extreme. The opening of the rail links made cross-water travel much easier if not particularly cheap and certainly improved the lot of those who undertook business-related travel.

The land areas to the north and the south of the channel were, prior to the industrial revolution, broadly similar, with coastal plains of varying widths giving way to inland hills. To the south there were fewer valleys leading to the sea and the north side had nothing similar to the central Somerset plain. However, the late 1700s saw a population explosion in south Wales, where the large deposits of coal began to be exploited commercially, in combination with the making of iron. The result was the sudden and dramatic development of the valley towns of south Wales, with their pits, works and rows of terraced houses. In the Swansea area metal extraction and smelting added to the filth and pollution of coal and iron, and what had previously been small ports at Newport, Cardiff, Porthcawl and Swansea expanded rapidly with the opening of canals to bring the mined coal to ships for transportation from the area. As the volume of mined coal increased, so did the need for further port development and Penarth, Port Talbot, Neath, Llanely and finally Barry all became major facilities. Of course, there was a huge demand for labour, a demand which could never have been met from South Wales alone. However, conditions to the south of the Channel, where industries in Cornwall and agriculture across the whole of the south west of England were unable to sustain men in full employment, caused a large flow of people into the newly developing towns of South Wales. Although many came as labourers to work in the pits and metal works, others came as craftsmen and traders such as builders and retailers. This vast movement of people did not take place over a

short period of time; indeed, it happened throughout the nineteenth century and even, to a somewhat lesser extent, into the early years of the twentieth century.

A few local pleasure steamer operators had “tested the market” from 1885 and the results were encouraging. Messrs P & A Campbell, who had been operating steamers along the River Clyde in Scotland since 1887, were first chartered to run Bristol Channel pleasure trips in 1887 and began their own operations during the following year. They moved their operations in their entirety from the Clyde to Bristol in 1889 and immediately concentrated on developing a network of services across the channel and along its coasts (and sometimes both), in direct competition with the small operators of the time. Their steamers, and the catering facilities which they offered, were superior to those of their competitors, which undoubtedly explains the reason for their ultimate triumph in acquiring the monopoly of the steamer traffic, although it was still many years in the future before this was finally achieved.

Although Campbells attracted large numbers of passengers, these were inevitably residents of the towns and villages nearest to their ports of departure. They began to tap a whole new market when they started, in 1891, to run steamer trips from Chepstow to Weston-super-Mare and Ilfracombe in conjunction with excursion trains from Gloucester, Lydney and the Forest of Dean. Initially they were not particularly successful, mainly because the poorly-equipped landing stage at Chepstow was situated at some distance from Chepstow station and required a walk along a poorly-lit and rather rough pathway. As a result, in 1892 the steamers were rescheduled to start from Sharpness in conjunction with trains from Cheltenham and Gloucester. It was also possible to accommodate Forest of Dean and Lydney passengers, who travelled to Sharpness across the Severn railway bridge. The facilities at Sharpness were so much an improvement on those at Chepstow that the service was again offered in 1893 in conjunction with feeder trains from as far afield as Birmingham and Worcester.

Over the years the steamers served Chepstow, Newport, Cardiff, Penarth, Barry, Porthcawl, Swansea, Mumbles and Tenby along the northern coast of the channel and Sharpness, Bristol, Avonmouth, Portishead, Clevedon, Weston-super-Mare, Minehead, Lynmouth, Ilfracombe and Bideford along the northern coast on a fairly regular basis. Occasional excursions ran also to such places as Clovelly, Padstow and Lundy Island.

A very lucrative business was established with the Great Western Railway following the reintroduction of steamer services after the end of WW1 and following refurbishment of the steamers, all of which had been requisitioned for war service. The GWR provided a huge variety of through fares to southern coastal ports from a vast hinterland extending as far as Hereford and including most of the South Wales valleys. It was possible to take full day excursions, half day excursions, evening excursions and longer period tourist tickets and ordinary returns and a number of these were circular in nature – for instance, out from Cardiff to Weston by steamer, returning by rail via the Severn Tunnel. In addition to the occasional destinations mentioned above, certain trips were simply channel cruises, on which passengers could relax, take refreshment and even be entertained by a small musical group. Although facilities were also offered from the west country to South Wales, there were far fewer points of origin for rail travellers and the destinations in south Wales were generally less popular. However, the whole operation including both north and south coasts was vast and extremely popular.

Logistically it was an enormous operation. Having such a huge tidal range meant that different timetables had to be produced for virtually each day and this was certainly a major reason for having

such a large range of fares available. Half day excursions became popular with shop assistants who, in Newport at least, had a half day holiday on Thursdays. For them to avail themselves of a trip to Weston the tide had to be right for an early afternoon sailing on a Thursday – and then it depended on the weather! It was no fun crossing the Bristol Channel in a storm.

Who used the steamers? Initially it was principally the “middle classes” with more leisure time and more disposable income, although it was certainly not unknown for poorer people to flock to the steamers on public holidays. One pair of my great grandparents made a trip from Ilfracombe to Cardiff in 1891 on such an occasion; great grandfather saw an advertisement requiring a furniture salesman and he thought it would suit him. His application was successful and they decided to relocate. It was, though, the 1920s that saw a particularly large increase in popularity of the steamers. The “working classes” (a term which embraced a very large proportion of the inhabitants of the South Wales valleys) were generally enjoying a rather better standard of living than had been their lot in pre-war days and, although holidays as such were not affordable by many, day trips became regular features of the summer.

Yet again war interrupted success. The 1939 season continued more or less as normal, but at the end of that year the steamers were requisitioned for war service. The resumption of regular sailings came in 1946, though services were rather more piecemeal because of delays in reopening several of the smaller piers. Although austerity did not disappear immediately after the war, there was a distinct change in families’ expectations and aspirations. Many married women had had to take up paid employment during the war and continued to do so after it had finished, increasing family income substantially. This was now sufficient to enable a family to take a week’s holiday away, often in bed & breakfast accommodation, and, although foreign holidays were still generally a thing of the future, most now preferred to visit a resort rather more distant than Weston, rather more exciting than Ilfracombe, and for rather longer than the day trip which had been all that they had previously been able to afford.

All of this had a disastrous effect on traffic, though it went unnoticed at first. The decline gradually set in and economies had to be made. Unfortunately Newport was the first major casualty when, in 1956, the pier (situated in Rodney Road on the opposite bank of the river to Jays furniture shop) was closed and dismantled at the end of the season. My grandparents were devastated when they heard the news! It probably came as no surprise that operations at Newport were the first to be curtailed as it was a very difficult pier to work. Between arrival and departure a steamer had to “turn using forward and reverse gears” as the Highway Code specified for car drivers. It was not possible to perform the operation as a three-point turn, however! The river is narrow, with sloping mud banks and the pier could only operate for very limited periods of the day.

The steamer services from the other main piers continued to run until 1968, when they were replaced by motor vessels; all services finally finished in 1979, thereby bringing to a close just over 90 years of faithful and regular service.

The Old Typewriter - Ian Lumley

Jean had always known this job would fall to her. Although her brother lived locally, he had always been absolutely useless when it came to dealing with emotions, and this time was no exception. When she had flown up from the south of England to console her mother after her Dad had died, he couldn't even make the effort to be at their mum's house when she had arrived. She hadn't been surprised when he had said he couldn't fit in with her arrival, but it didn't lessen the angst it created in her.

There was no way her mum could cope on her own, once dad had died. On the practical front, the old lady didn't even know how to write a cheque out, and her increasing frailty had only recently been made worse by the diagnosis of Dementia. Difficult though the funeral had been, it was only the start of Jean's problems. The Council had readily agreed, following a medical report, that a place in a Residential Home was necessary to keep her Mum safe. What they couldn't do was say when, which one or, for that matter, how much it might cost.

A long and sometimes difficult phone call to Bill at home on the outskirts of Guildford was needed to make sure their daughter's school life could continue as normal in her absence. Bill had said 'do what you need to do for your Mum – I will take care of the rest here.' That response reminded her (if she ever needed to be reminded) why she loved him.

It wasn't just dealing with the council over the residential home arrangements that she needed to do. She needed to arrange for the council house to be cleared as soon as Mum had moved out. The 'we are on the side of the common people' language that the national party espoused at every turn, was not matched by the actions of their local officials. A four page list was provided of items which MUST be in the same condition as at the start of the Tenancy - over sixty years ago! A sink plug would cost her £20 if it needed replacing! Of course, she couldn't even start on clearing the house while her Mum was still there, it would just be too difficult for the old lady to see her home disintegrating before her eyes.

What she was able to do was begin to clear out the 'glory hole' – the wardrobe where they had kept things that would only rarely be used. Xmas decorations and the like were bagged and disposed of without her mum being aware. It wasn't until her Mum had been placed in the home several weeks later, that she started to empty the rest of the cupboards. That had entailed several trips to the 'tip' and she was nearly finished when she uncovered the box at the bottom of the Glory Hole. Her old Olivetti portable typewriter! She smiled at the memory of her dad buying the thing when she had gone to university all those years ago. She had tried to tell him that the university would have machines that she could use for her degree in Commerce, but he wouldn't listen. He had wanted her to have the best that he could buy. She had used it a few times and then it had gone into the glory hole when she had married and moved away. She had said it was silly for him to keep it. She would use the typewriters they would have at her work and, like many miners, he had hands on him like dinner plates. Anything as delicate as using typewriter keys was well beyond him. He wouldn't listen, though, and it went into the hole – to rust she had thought.

She was about to put it in the boot of the hire car along with other rubbish for yet another visit to the Refuse Depot, when she thought she should maybe open the case - for one last trip down this particular memory lane. As she did so, a small black and white photograph floated down onto the floor. She picked it up. It was a picture of her - one taken a long time ago when she still wore glasses before she had been operated on as a seven year old to cure the squint.

As she opened the case fully she saw that there was a piece of paper caught between the rollers. She knew that her mother would not even have been able to open the case, so this must have been her dad, although he had never once, in all these years, ever said anything to her about using it. She gently moved the paper up through the rusting mechanism, frightened she might tear it. Her eyes steadily misted up as she read the words written so long ago:

I loved you
from the first touch of our hands.

When I held you in my arms,
the purpose of my life became suddenly clear
and I was at last complete.

I cherish each word you give me.
I remember each thing you do,
the way you turn your head, the way you look at me.
Your smile lights up the room and your presence lights up my life.

I know it can't be for long,
so I treasure each moment for the magic that it is.

You are from another world,
a world I can share for only a brief moment in time,
a time in which to create memories
that will last a lifetime.

There was no name at the bottom of the page, but that didn't matter. If there had been, she knew that it would have said **DAD**.

How well do you know the U.K.? (Quiz, p.9) - Answers

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 145 miles | 14 | Kernow |
| 2 | Sir Charles Morgan | 15 | Lizard Point, Cornwall |
| 3 | Market place | 16 | Exeter |
| 4 | Aust and Beachley | 17 | White cross on green background |
| 5 | Slimbridge | 18 | Henry Williamson |
| 6 | Edward II | 19 | Somerset |
| 7 | Cirencester | 20 | Bhutan |
| 8 | Dorchester | 21 | Winchester |
| 9 | Michael Henchard and Donald Farfrae | 22 | Stamford Bridge |
| 10 | Durdle Door | 23 | Harald Hardrada of Norway |
| 11 | Poole | 24 | Lindisfarne (Holy Island) |
| 12 | The Scilly Isles; famous gardens | 25 | Berwick Rangers |
| 13 | White cross on black background | | |

Music inspired by Poetry and Prose – a selection from Neil Pritchard

Music, prose and poetry have been closely linked from medieval times to the present day. I have selected examples of prose, poetry, and music (on YouTube) which I hope will raise the spirits in these trying times. This poem is by Ian MacMillan, a contemporary Yorkshire poet:

YOU CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MUCH POETRY

Every day you need your breakfast
And Every day you need a rhyme
Start the morning with a cuppa
And Every morning's poem time!

Poetry's essential, just like porridge:
Poems will make you smile, not curse
So I say start every morning
With a fine Full English Break-verse!

And so to the music, inspired by prose and poetry. Some of the following music, on (YouTube) will reflect the times we're living in, but all the music i hope will "calm the troubled breast". Click(below the videos) on SHOW MORE for more information on the individual piece of music.

1. Bring Him Home performed by Alfie Boe, John Owen-Jones and more.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrVOXROkV1U>
2. Purcell - Dido & Aeneas - When I am laid in earth (Dido's lament) Elin Manahan Thomas.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGQq3HcOB0Y>
- 3 Wayfaring Stranger - Andreas Scholl and Edin Karamazov.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4XnkZFCe1c>
4. Copland - Old American Songs - I Bought Me a Cat – Warfield.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ms2Dr7Fw6qQ>
5. Vaughan Williams - Sea Symphony 3rd movement. (Choral, poetry of Walt Whitman).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w51xQW6i90k>.
6. Finzi - Let us Garlands Bring - Bryn Terfel.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRVR4e1U-18>
7. Billie Holliday - Summertime.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYUqbnk7tCY>
8. Dame Janet Baker - Linden Lea.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLcvwz0uwKI>
9. Peter, Paul and Mary - The first time I ever saw you.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6x3mRbZo3k>
10. Freddy Mercury and Monserrat Caballe - Barcelona.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1fiOJDXA-E>

Snippets from Newport's History

1847. One of the more obnoxious parts of Newport was known as Friars' Fields, situated at the end of Llanarth Street and extending for some distance along the river. It contained many small derelict houses, connected by narrow alleyways filled with heaps of unscavenged refuse, and was the habitat of criminals, prostitutes, destitutes, gin swillers and other unsavoury characters of the underworld. Alive with rats and other vermin the whole area was a thorn in the flesh of the authorities, even the police dared not enter its precincts. Anyone who was foolish enough, did so at his peril, and was often stripped and robbed and in some cases never seen again.

The winter of **1878-79** was one of the worst on record. The town was bleak and uninviting; much unemployment and poverty caused great distress to many of the inhabitants. The Mayor established a Newport Relief Fund and soup kitchens were provided for the needy. There were complaints that every hundred yards or so one was accosted by men, women and children soliciting alms. Coal stealing was on the increase and many children were involved. Magistrates looking at the youth of the culprits before them, invariably treated them leniently and merely ordered them to undergo a short imprisonment in the cells and a whipping.

Magistrates fined a grocer in Commercial Road, the sum of fifteen pounds for selling an abominable compound called "butterine". The Borough Analyst said that it contained only five per cent butter and the remaining ninety five parts consisted of varieties of grease and other deleterious materials.

1880s. Under a newspaper article entitled "Matrimonial Bliss" it was stated that Mr. Francis Williams, residing in Marshes Road, was savagely assaulted by his wife when she threw a lighted lamp at him, the contents of which set his hair on fire burning nearly the whole of it off. When the fire was extinguished it was noted that he had a nasty cut on his forehead and he was taken to the Infirmary for his injuries to be attended to.

1922. The extent of virulent infections in the town is bad but not quite of epidemic proportions. Topping the list are: diphtheria, scarlet fever, whooping cough, measles, tuberculosis, typhoid, sleeping sickness and puerperal fever.

1927. The council decides not to build the Alway and Ringland Estates. [This entry perhaps needs some explanation. Some five years before it had proudly built and opened "Somerton Garden City". The houses were a mixture of semi-detached and short terraces and each had front and back gardens and a bathroom and indoor toilet. Streets were tree-lined and there were some areas of grass. Though Newport had not suffered much war damage, there was a housing shortage and the estate did much to alleviate overcrowding. It was obviously felt that there wasn't sufficient demand for housing to extend the scheme at this time, although the distinctive style of houses, which still exist in Somerton, was repeated elsewhere in the town. Alway estate materialised during WW2 and Ringland estate in the 1950s].

1928. Lord Tredegar donates to Newport his deer park at Cardiff Road to be dedicated as Tredegar Park.

THANK YOU to all contributors and readers.

PLEASE keep material coming in – we are achieving a variety of genres and a variety of topics – but there is plenty of room for more! If your submitted material does not appear immediately it has been stored for future use. The aim is for each edition to have variety within itself.