

DESERT ISLAND TIMES

Sharing fellowship in

NEWPORT SE WALES U3A

No. 5

18th April 2020



Calm Waters by Ian Lumley

*A MISCELLANY OF
CONTRIBUTIONS
FROM OUR MEMBERS*

NEWPORT U3A ONLINE GARDEN SCHEME.

As we are all self-isolating, I expect like us, many of you have been taking advantage of the glorious weather and been busy in your gardens.

As we are not able to visit any gardens that would have participated in the National Garden Scheme, maybe we could have our very own scheme.



To start us off here is a photo of our garden. Because it faces north it doesn't get any sun in the winter and it is at its best in Spring. We've been giving the patio its annual Spring clean, and because of the unseasonably warm temperatures we have already had several al fresco meals! We really look forward to the Lilac, Bridle Wreath, Azalea and other Spring shrubs blossoming and using our 'garden rooms'.

We have several 'art installations' dotted about - in the right hand border you can see Craggy, a metal owl. We bought him at Cragside National Trust property whilst on holiday in Northumberland - but where to put him?

Whilst walking one day through Grove Park, Malpas we came across a huge pile of sawn logs from an old tree, left there by the groundsmen for wildlife to make their homes. We thought "they won't miss one" and carried one off to our car. When some walkers approached we dropped the log and stood nonchalantly looking skyward studying the birds! We positioned it in the border and attached Craggy to it. Initially the garden birds were wary of him, but they soon came back and he's become a favourite perch for our resident robin! Craggy looks very much at home there and is such a picture when the Weigela is in bloom behind him.

The bird song is lovely to hear and many are building their nests now and feeding their young, but I do wish the starlings wouldn't pinch the primroses to line their nests! We put wisps of kapok around the garden and very quickly they are snaffled by the sparrows to line their nests.

Please join in our Online Garden Scheme and email a photo to Stephen. It could be of your garden, or a particular area of it that you like, or an especially attractive plant, or the balcony pots of Spring bulbs. Over the following weeks we'll be able to see nature carrying on regardless, unaware of the world's plight.

Mike Brown and Angela Robins.

Spanish Conversation

Do you fancy practicing your Spanish? Steve Atkins and Maureen Canellas are happy to chat either via Skype or just on the phone. It would be a practical conversation on any subject to help keep up your basic knowledge whilst in lockdown. Get yourself ready for that delayed holiday!

Maureen is happy to keep a morning free for a chat, which is suitable to you.

If you are interested, or want more information, drop a line to maureen.canellas@yahoo.co.uk

Easypeasy Cryptic Crossword Clues - 4. - Angela Robins

Perhaps the most misleading aspect of Cryptic Crosswords is the insertion of words that have more than one meaning. These clues are the very essence that make Cryptic Crosswords as we know it - Cryptic!

There are many words in our complex language that are spelt the same but have entirely different meanings, and sometimes even pronounced differently. Consider these:

FAIR = blond, amusement park or unbiased.

LIGHT = bright, lamp or not heavy.

WOUND = cut or coiled.

These words are playfully used by crossword compilers to deliberately deceive us into reading the clue in the wrong context!

e.g. This 'flower' is the biggest in Africa (4). = Nile (flow-er)

You will develop an awareness of this and recognise the differences.

A good indication that the Double Meaning Clue is in use is that it will appear suspiciously straight! It is probably the most commonly unsolved clue, and it is very frustrating when you find the answer and realise what seemed an impossible clue, when read differently, is really quite simple!

Have go at these. The answers are at the foot of page 6.

1. Get down from here (5,4).
2. Place to learn to drive (4,6)
3. This will tell the time (8,5)
4. A definite benefit in court (9)
5. This box is free of charge (4,7)
6. Will supervisor become hangman (8)
7. A tower in port (3)
8. Bar food (9)
9. Staff's emblem (4)
10. Play girl (7)
11. A spanner at Chepstow (6)
12. Top drawer from Holland (3,4)
13. He has a stable job (6)
14. Play time (5)
15. Clock used to get soldiers ready (3,5)
16. Digital sign of approval (6,2)
17. Startling revelation exposing our pupils (3,6)
18. There is always work on hand for these (11)
19. Solitary nipper (6,4)
20. In the main, it's right (9)

Contact me at valdemos2@gmail.com if you would like to receive my weekly easy cryptic crossword that I send out to my group.

WRONG BUS – RIGHT BUS

A Short Story by **Martyn Vaughan**

John rushed into the bus station, nearly slipping on a piece of gherkin that a careless burger muncher had dropped on the greasy ground, right next to a piece of ketchup smeared bun.

The annoying cooing of the pigeons seemed everywhere - which was not in the least surprising as the birds themselves were everywhere, scattering in all directions as he ran along the concourse and then immediately landing behind him to carry on pecking at scraps. The harsh smell of the diesel engines was unpleasantly mixed with the stink of cooking oil that was spilling out of the ubiquitous fast food joints that had replaced the friendly, family-owned shops of John's youth.

As he ran, he remembered kindly Mr. Blenkinsop leaning over the counter and saying "Speak up boy. Is that cheese you're asking for? What sort of cheese, boy – speak up!" Whenever he thought about Mr. Blenkinsop he couldn't help but think of that gentleman's nose and how it had terminated in a kind of fleshy bulb covered in a spidery network of very fine thread veins, looking remarkably like a map of the drainage basin of the Amazon that John had seen in his school geography atlas.

Those days were gone of course. There was nothing now except garish plastic signs glaring in vivid technicolour, usually with a picture of the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty on them somewhere.

He rushed on. It was a dull grey day with a fine mizzle blurring everything together into a misty, Impressionist watercolour painting in which nothing stood out clearly. To add to his difficulties John had mislaid his glasses and had to rush out without them. Normally he didn't travel by bus but with his aged vehicle having just failed its MOT he had no choice. In the dim mizzle all the green-liveried buses looked like mossy rectangular rocks glimpsed through fog.

He found what seemed to be the right bus and as he climbed on, by squinting he was just able to count out the right fare into his wet hand and tipped them into the receptacle. The machine buzzed and spat out a ticket which John failed to spot in his myopic confusion. He sat down in the nearest unoccupied seat, next to what seemed to be a female figure.

After a few seconds he became aware of a strangely familiar scent emanating from his fellow passenger. Unbidden, it conjured up a vision of the bright blue Mediterranean Sea with white and blue buildings, many crowned with small domes, crowding up a hillside which overlooked that sea and the vast lagoon into which it was confined.

He remembered that he'd been talking to a young woman there with flowing golden hair and that they had agreed to meet up for coffee later in the afternoon but when the time had arrived he discovered that he had got lost in the narrow alleys and when he had finally found the café of course she was not there.

The sights and smells came flooding back, the strong black coffee, the lemons, the ouzo. If only ...

"Excuse me," a pleasantly modulated voice to his right suddenly said, "But don't I know you?"

He turned to be confronted with pleasant oval face, framed with hair the colour of ripe barley.

"It's John, isn't it? Don't you remember me? It's Laura. We met on Santorini in May."

Laura! That was her name!

“Yes, yes, it is,” he spluttered, wishing he could see her clearly so he could be sure he wasn’t making a fool of himself with a total stranger who also happened to be called Laura, “Fancy meeting you again. What a coincidence!” In his confusion he made as to push his spectacles further up his nose, forgetting that he wasn’t wearing any.

She frowned slightly. “Didn’t you stand me up?”

He flushed with the memory of his humiliation and stutteringly gave his explanation.

She smiled and even in his myopic dimness it was as if the sun had broken through the mizzle. “Well, if you’re still offering that coffee...”

John gave a relaxed grin. This day was turning out to be distinctly better than he had been expecting. “Why not – there’s a lovely little coffee shop a short walk from Swansea market and we...’

Her smile vanished. “What are you talking about John? What’s that supposed to mean?”

A sudden realisation hit John. Had he got the numbers on the bus the wrong way around? “This is the bus to Bristol, isn’t it? I’m on the wrong bus!”

She gently took his hand in hers. “No, you’re on the right bus John. The one with me.”

There's Rosemary (thats for remembrance) - "Hamlet"

Those of you who were still in a Monmouthshire school in 1969 would have received a handsome book of poems all written by pupils throughout that county to commemorate the Investiture of The Prince of Wales.

I still have my copy entitled There's Rosemary.

Here is one of the poems written by Patricia Carthey of Bassaleg Grammar School. I wonder if anyone knows her? She may even be one of the many Newport U3A members called Pat! [I’m afraid not, Angela – Patricia Carthey married a John Fraser in the summer of 1976 (Ed.)]

LIFE IS A MANY SPLENDURED THING

All the world's nature's creation
And by way of nature's law
Every day's a re-creation
Of the day that went before;
Every hill a limitation
Of a mountain soaring high,
Every stream an imitation
Of the river running by.
And each bird that flutters by
Or stops to chirp and sing
Reminds us that life really is
A many splendoured thing.

I think the words are very poignant at the moment as we all struggle to hang on to lives.

Angela Robins.

Some thoughts on staying at home – submitted by Greg Platt

I'm sure many of these will resonate with our "Stay at Home" Group!

- Half of us are going to come out of this quarantine as amazing cooks. The other half will come out with a drinking problem.
- I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.
- I need to practice "social-distancing" - from the refrigerator.
- Still haven't decided where to go for a holiday - the Living Room or the Bedroom.
- Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pyjamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
- Home-schooling is going well. Two students suspended for fighting and one teacher sacked for drinking on the job.
- I don't think anyone expected that when we changed the clocks we'd go from Standard Time to the Twilight Zone
- This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dog. We laughed a lot!
- Quarantine Day 5: Went to this self-service restaurant called THE KITCHEN. You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place is still in business.
- My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant lately that when I pee it cleans the toilet.
- Day 5 of Home-schooling: One of these little monsters called in a bomb threat.
- I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the rubbish. What should I wear?
- I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to Puerto Backyarda. I'm getting tired of Los Living Room.
- Classified Ad: Single man with toilet paper seeks woman with hand sanitiser for good clean fun.
- Day 6 of Home-schooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year" I'm offended.
- Better 6 feet apart than 6 feet under

Wishing all a "Happy Isolation" – See you happy and well soon.

Cryptic Crossword Clues (page 3) - Answers

1. Eider Duck 2. Golf Course 3. Speaking Clock 4. Advantage 5. Flat Battery 6. Executor 7. Tug .
8. Chocolate 9. Leek 10. Actress 11. Bridge 12. Van Gogh 13. Ostler 14. Tempo 15. Egg Timer
16. Thumbs-Up 17. Eye-Opener 18. Manicurists 19. Hermit Crab 20. Starboard.

Ulsterisms Part Two by Gerald Lee

In my first article I described some particular features of English as spoken in Northern Ireland.

May I just correct a misprint in the name of the spade. It is a Lurgan spade. It does not have any connection to the town of Lurgan but is derived from a similar word that relates to a long spade for digging peat.

Many colloquial terms can relate to displeasure, not just the long face like a spade. There are some phrases describe feelings well. If you look upset, you might be asked, 'Who ate the sugar off your bun?' In your annoyance you might feel 'scundered.' If you are in a stressful situation you would say it has 'my head turned.'

To bring a person back to common sense he would be told 'to catch himself on.'

'Bake' or 'beak' is a common term for mouth. In rougher areas a parent chastising a badly-behaved child would threaten to 'rattle his beak.' A less polite order to shut up might be 'shut your bake.' An alternative is to 'knock the pan out of someone,' or to 'have your head in your hand.'

Every city has its rough areas. Belfast is not an exception. Tig is a common playground game, where the person who is 'on' has to chase the rest, until he manages to touch someone who is the next one 'on.' To prove how rough area there is the saying is 'they play tig with hatchets.' I have never actually seen that, but it conveys the idea.

Pronunciation is always a problem, both for visitors and natives. Newsreaders invariably pronounce the town of Strabane incorrectly. The final 'e' is not pronounced, so it should rhyme with 'ban' rather than 'bane.' However, Wales has its own share of difficult place names, such as Ynysybwl.

Northern Ireland celebrates its contribution to World War One with street names that puzzle the residents. My primary school was located in Cambrai Street. It was usually pronounced in a way that rhymed with Jeremiah.

A nearby street was named after the Victorian prime minister Benjamin Disraeli. No-one thought about the difficulty this might cause the residents. Usually it was pronounced as Diz-erelli.'

The word 'massacre' always caused a problem. Often it was pronounced as 'mass-a cree'.

There are other strange phrases. In her light summer attire, a woman would be 'in her figure.'

Of course, Malapropisms abound, such as the 'nuclear detergent'

In a TV interview a politician described his opponent's reaction to his defeat as 'sour cheese.'

Many Ulster people are also a bit naïve. My neighbour was asked by a hospital doctor if she drank alcohol. She confirmed she did, 'Every Christmas I have a glass of punch.'

There is a story I heard about a girl who had rather a sheltered upbringing. She worked in a pharmacy. When a male customer asked for a well-known contraceptive whose name began with a 'D,' she reputedly suggested he try the decorating shop next door.

Sometimes the meaning is there even if the whole sentence is nonsense.

Where else would plastic fruit be described as 'let on bananas?'

In medical terms 'with' is used to identify the part of the body that is causing the trouble.

The 'Belfast Telegraph' had a wonderful columnist who collected these idioms. Some wonderful gems are 'I have lived with this leg for seven years.' If you have a mobility problem you might have said, 'I cudden get in the car with my legs.'

A child going to a football game might be told 'not to come running home with a broken leg.'

I hope this gives some more ideas of how, like 'Wenglish', different parts of the country take liberties with the English language. I hope in my next article to demonstrate this further with some more 'Ulsterisms.'

INVICTUS by W.E. Henley (1849 to 1903)

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced or cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

*Henley had one leg amputated at the age of 12 but lived stoically until his death at 53.

Submitted by Rob Wilkinson

A Challenge, an Appeal and some Thanks

I would still like to have some more lists of "favourites" (the Desert Island Challenge) but this week I am offering a far more local challenge.

We will call this the **50 Mile Challenge**. To enter it you will need to research and submit details of a day out to be taken within an approximate 50 mile radius of Newport. There **MUST** be some tangible reason for your journey – an interesting town, historic building or the like – or could simply be a very scenic drive. Give as much detail as you can – and, importantly, give some clue as to stopping points for comfort, refreshment and whatever else you fancy! I hope you will have fun revisiting (via the internet) some favourite places, but your day out could be an inspiration for all of us when we are again let out!

An appeal – more material for DIT, please! You've seen quite a spread of subject matter, so whatever takes your fancy – please share with all of us!

Finally, my **grateful thanks (1) to Gwyn Havard**, who is reducing large files to more manageable sizes – this allows us to include more photographs. My laptop may have the wherewithal to do this, but I certainly can't work out how to do it in a straightforward and memorable way, but Gwyn has the magic touch (or the right software!) and willingly undertakes this task for us; **(2) to all contributors of material**. I know from the emails I receive each week how much your giving up your time to do this is appreciated by your fellow-members; and **(3) to all readers** for making production of this worthwhile.

Music written for and about children (Part 2) – Neil Pritchard

Music written for children does not always depict the joys of childhood. In the case of Gustav Mahler, the Austrian composer, they express the sorrow on the death of a child. Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children) is a song cycle composed in 1904 for voice and orchestra. The original *Kindertotenlieder* were a group of poems written by the poet Rückert in 1833, in an outpouring of grief following the illness (scarlet fever) and subsequent death of two of his children. At the time he wrote the work Mahler was no stranger to the deaths of children. His friend Hefling writes, "Such tragedy was familiar to Mahler, eight of his siblings died during their childhood".

In 1904, when Mahler resumed the composition of the interrupted work, it was only two weeks after the birth of his own second child. This upset his wife Alma, who "found it incomprehensible and feared Mahler was tempting providence." Alma's fears proved right, as four years after the work had been completed the Mahler's daughter Maria, aged four, died of scarlet fever. Mahler wrote to a friend "I placed myself in the situation that a child of mine had died. When I really lost my daughter, I could not have written these songs". The third of the songs (*Wenn dein Mutterlein*) is particularly moving. In this the suggested recording is historic – one made by Kathleen Ferrier with Bruno Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ferrier - *Kindertotenlieder* 3 - *Wenn dein Mütterlein*

One of the most popular piece written for children, and one which was, for a lot of people, their first introduction to classical music as a child, is *Peter and the Wolf*, a "symphonic fairy tale for children". This is a musical composition written by Prokofiev, the Russian composer in 1936. He was commissioned by the director of the Central Children's Theatre in Moscow to write a musical symphony for children. The intention was to introduce children to the individual instruments of the orchestra. The first draft of the libretto was about a Young Pioneer (the Soviet version of a Boy Scout) called Peter who rights a wrong by challenging an adult. As well as promoting desired Pioneer virtues such as vigilance, bravery and resourcefulness, the plot illustrates Soviet themes such as the stubbornness of the un-Soviet older generation (the grandfather) and the triumph of Man (Peter) taming Nature (the wolf). The first performance of the work was at a children's concert in the main hall of the Moscow Conservatory with the Moscow Philharmonic in May 1936.

Prokofiev, while touring the West in 1938, visited Los Angeles and met Walt Disney. He performed the piano version of *Peter and the Wolf* for "le papa de Mickey Mouse", as Prokofiev described him in a letter to his sons. Disney was impressed and considered adding an animated version of *Peter and the Wolf* to *Fantasia*, which was to be released in 1940. Due to World War II, these plans fell through, and it was not until 1946 that Disney released his adaptation of *Peter and the Wolf* narrated by Sterling Holloway. Suggested listening is the film version from 1946.

Prokofiev: *Peter and the Wolf* - Disney Story.

[The classic version, beloved of so many British schoolchildren of the 1950s, was released by HMV in 1950 and used a very famous name of the era as Narrator – Wilfred Pickles! Also on YouTube. (Ed.)]

A unique, entertaining and educational piece of children's music is Benjamin Britten's "*The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*". The piece is a great way to get to know the individual components of the orchestra, and it's also a fantastic listen. Benjamin Britten takes you on an epic tour of the instruments of the orchestra, with some of the catchiest and most charming music ever composed! The work, subtitled *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Henry Purcell*, is based on a simple hornpipe from Abdelazer, a play

for which the English composer Purcell composed the incidental music in 1695. Britten uses this theme to show off the colours, ranges and characteristics of all the instruments of a modern symphony orchestra.

In the introduction, the theme is initially played by the entire orchestra, then by each major family of instruments of the orchestra: first the woodwinds, then the brass, then the strings, and finally by the percussion. Each variation then features a particular instrument in depth, generally moving through each family from high to low. So, for example, the first variation features the piccolo and flutes; each member of the woodwind family then gets a variation, ending with the bassoon; and so on, through the strings, brass, and finally the percussion.

After the whole orchestra has been effectively taken to pieces in this way, it is reassembled using an original fugue which starts with the piccolo, followed by all the woodwinds, strings, brass and percussion in turn. Once everyone has entered, the brass is re-introduced with Purcell's original melody.

The work was originally commissioned for the British educational documentary film called "Instruments of the Orchestra" released on November 1946 and featuring the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. In this performance the composer Benjamin Britten conducts the London Symphony Orchestra to add a special magic to his own music.

Britten: Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra - Benjamin Britten conducts the London Symphony Orchestra

How to finish? That's the question. Well what better way than with music for a work composed in the 1980's with a child at its centre. That is for the landmark film ET by John Williams. E.T. (the Extra-Terrestrial) is a 1982 American science fiction film co-produced and directed by Steven Spielberg. E.T. is the tear-jerking story of the special friendship that develops between Elliott, a lonely young boy, and a wise kind visitor from another planet who becomes lost on Earth. As Elliott attempts to help his extra-terrestrial chum contact his home planet so that he might be rescued, they must hide from scientists and government agents determined to get their hands on the friendly little alien. This results in an adventure greater than anything either of them could have imagined. Released in 1982, by Universal Pictures, E.T. was an immediate blockbuster, surpassing Star Wars to become the highest-grossing film of all time.

Considered one of the greatest films ever made, it was widely acclaimed by critics as a timeless story of friendship. To match the originality of the film John Williams created one of the finest film scores ever written. Stephen Spielberg is quoted as saying "Without John Williams, bikes don't really fly. Nor do men in red capes. There is no Force. Dinosaurs do not walk the Earth. We do not wonder. We do not weep. We do not believe. John, you take our films, many of them about our most impossible dreams, and you make them real for billions of people." (No prizes for guessing these films!)

E.T. is one of those films that will always hold a special place in the hearts of those who experienced it first-hand in 1982 for it evoked the perfect emotional response for what audiences craved, that is "Hollywood movie magic". So I'll complete my musical journey of childhood with the end credits from the original film conducted by the composer John Williams.

John Williams: ET - Film End Credits

MAY THE MUSIC BE WITH YOU!

Sudoku

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

A FEW MOTORING FACTS submitted by John and Beth Smith

The price of petrol is low – and we are itching to fill up and get travelling again! Lockdown prevents us from doing this, but we can dream! Anyway, here are a few motoring facts to ponder.

The year 1896 didn't start too well for motorist Walter Arnold. On 28 January of that year Arnold became the first driver in the world to get a speeding ticket. Mr Arnold was caught whizzing through Paddock Wood in Kent at the mind-blowing speed of eight miles an hour!

1896 was not a good year for Mrs Bridget Driscoll of Croydon either. That poor lady became the first pedestrian to be knocked down and killed by a motorcar. The driver didn't see her until it was too late and, Mrs Driscoll, so panic stricken that she stood motionless in the path of the car, was struck. Although the car was travelling at just four miles an hour, the lady died because a wheel fractured her skull.

Of course, we are all very familiar with (not to mention grateful for) the cat's eye! Invented by Yorkshire businessman and inventor, Percy Shaw, this reflective stud was patented in 1934. In 1935 Shaw set up a company to manufacture his invention and, as we well know, the rest is history!

In July 1958, the first Parking Meters appeared in London. The charge was sixpence an hour for the first two hours, ten shillings for the next two hours, and two pounds after that.

In 1960 Traffic Wardens made their first appearance on London Streets. A Mr Frank Shaw was the first to issue a ticket. He put the ticket on a Ford Popular illegally parked outside a West End Hotel. However, magistrates waved the fine because the driver was a doctor attending a guest who had suffered a heart attack.

However, according to Wikipedia, the first parking restrictions were put in place in Nineveh circa 700 BC! The restrictions pertained to the sacred main processional way through Nineveh. The oldest parking signs ever discovered read "*Royal Road - let no man decrease it*". The penalty for parking a chariot on this road was death, followed by impaling outside one's home! That certainly knocks a £70 fine into a cocked hat.

From Bath to Blaina part 2– Stephen Berry

Another collection of local sayings which will hopefully raise a smile!

I'd just settled down when I heard the doorbell ring.

I don't know where Fred is working now, but I think he worked for Tescos previously.

They'll be home soon – I'd better start preparing the meal.

She promised to visit Mrs Hughes but she completely forgot about it.

You look dirty after playing in the back lane!

He's very slow in the uptake.

Occasionally I feel very violent towards him!

Have you got sufficient tomatoes?

I'll go for it shortly.

She has a rather strange group of friends.

He's received a hefty fine for speeding – he must have been travelling at a high speed.

They will find things difficult now that Joe has been made redundant.

I was delayed in the shop and missed the bus.

I told her not to go out but it was useless.

He didn't say that? Surely not!

Margaret Smith is always very smartly dressed.

Rhys Edwards has died – he wasn't very old was he?

My son is a British Legion committee member.

I'd no sooner sat down than the **door went**.

I don't know where Fred **works to** now, but I **fancy** he was **down** Tescos last go off.

They'll be **yer now just** – I **better get the food going**.

She said **she'd go to Mrs Hughes's** but it **went cleean out of 'er 'ead!**

Yoo're **like the road** after playing **up the gwli!**

Duw, he's proper **'alf-soaked** – too slow to catch a cold!

There's times I could **'it 'im sick!**

'Ow you off for tomatoes?

I'll fetch it **now in a minute**.

She do **knock about** with a **funny** bunch.

He've **been done proper** for speeding – must 'ave been **going a tidy lick!**

It's a **poor look-out** for 'em now Joe's **'ad 'is cards**.

I **got held up** in the shop and **lost** the bus.

I told 'er not to go but I **might as well 'ave talked to the wall!**

'E didn't say that, did 'e? **Never!**

That Maggie Smith's always **dolled up to the nines!**

Rhys Edwards 'ave **'ad 'is lot** – he wasn't **no age**, was 'e?

Owwer lad's a **big noise down the Legion**.

I am going now.

The baby's just spilled his drink. Oh well, it doesn't matter.

John was extremely pleased to be invited to the party.

We've had strange weather today.

What do you think of X? He's certainly strange!

Joan's cakes are not as good as Jane's.

When your aunts arrive I would like you all to help prepare their meal.

It's raining very heavily.

They live at the top of the hill – it's quite a climb from the town.

There's something very wrong with the television – it's a lost cause, I'm afraid.

I like pink but I prefer red.

They haven't invited me, but I wouldn't go now anyway.

There'll be trouble when your father gets home!

He's learning his father's business and doing rather well at it.

He was very shocked when he was sacked for regularly being late.

He didn't get the job he'd applied for with Arriva Trains. He was extremely disappointed.

Go and wash your hands.
Give that handkerchief a hand-wash.
Go and wash your hands and face thoroughly.

I'm **off** now.

The baby's **slopped** 'is drink. Well, it's **no odds**. [OR Well, **what's the odds?**]

Johnnie was **in 'is oils** to get the party invite.

It 'ave been a **funny ol' day** today.

What d'you think about X? Duw, 'ee's **on 'is own!**

Joan's cakes **en't a patch** on Jane's.

When you anties come I wanse you all to **pitch in** and get **theyre grub** on the table.

It's **raining pouring!**

They live up the top – it's a mighty old **pull up** that trip from the town.

There's **summat radic'ly wrong with the telly** – I'll **afto give it up as a bard job**.

Pink **I do like** but red **I do rather**.

They 'aven't **arsked** me but I wouldn't go now **any road**.

There'll be **ructions** when youer dad do get in!

'Is dad's **learning 'im the bisness** an' 'e's **shaping up tidy** with it.

It shook 'im rigid when 'e **got 'is cards** for **tardiness beyond**.

'E never got that job e'd **gone for on the line** – **real smack in the chops** that was for 'im!

Go and **swill** youer 'ands.
Give that **'ankie a quick swill through**.
Go and 'ave a **tidy swill**.

Desert Island Challenge

These are a few of my favourite things..... Ann Anderson

Favourite Films

Shawshank Redemption
It's a Wonderful Life
Dr. Zhivago
The Hunger Games
Silence of the Lambs

Casablanca
White Christmas
Bridget Jones Diary
Gone with the Wind
The Magnificent Showman

It was taking me such a long time to decide what are my favourite films. We go the cinema regularly and there are so many old classic movies and musicals that I love that it is an impossible task. I decided, therefore, on a mixture of old and new but I am an old romantic at heart.

Favourite music

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (Rachmaninoff) - from the movie 'Somewhere in Time'
Barbara Streisand - The Way we were - from the movie 'The way we were'
Keene (Tom Chaplin) - Somewhere only we know.
The Beatles - Eleanor Rigby
Elvis Presley - Its now or never
Mario Lanza - Because your mine
Frank Sinatra - A very good year
Michael Buble - Haven't met you yet
The Bee Gees - How Deep in your love
Puccini - Nessun Dorma sung by The Three Tenors

Very difficult again. I love all music except rap so again I have gone for a mixture of old and new.

Favourite work of art

Sunflowers by Vincent Van Gogh (Arles 1889)
The Last Supper by Leonardo De Vinci - in Milan
When did you last see your father - William Yeames 1878 - now in Liverpool
The Blue Boy - Thomas Gainsborough (1770) - now in California
Mona Lisa - Leonardo De Vinci - now in the Louvre, Paris
Poppies - Claude Monet 1873
The Sistine Chapel - Michelangelo - 16th Century, Rome
The Fighting Temeraire - Turner 1839 - Now in the National Gallery, London
Mont-roig Vineyard and Olive Tree - Joan Miro
Going to the Match - L. S. Lowry 1959

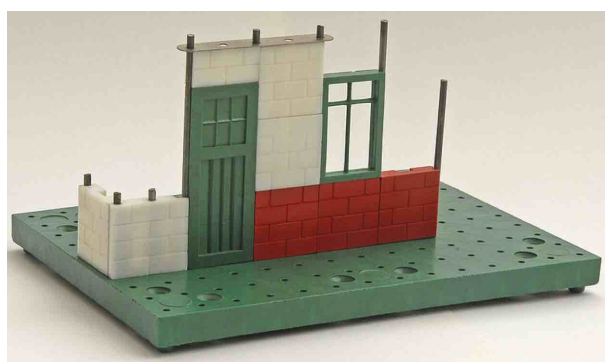
This again is very difficult. I have had the fortune to view some of my list, The Mona Lisa in Paris and the Sistine Chapel in Rome and number 9 I chose because Mont-roig is near my Spanish home and we go there often. I would also include Banksy, Reynolds and Picasso and also all the paintings we have in our lounge here in Newport which we have collected over the last 50 years, but then my lists would be never ending. I was lucky to study art history with Open University in my youth so tend to prefer the masters.

“For boys and girls of all ages” – by Stephen Berry

So read an advertising slogan of the 1950s! How many of us still have our favourite childhood toy in our possession? I suspect not too many of us!

My favourite was BAYKO (the firm using this particular slogan). A friend at Infants’ school had a set and, as soon as I saw it and saw its possibilities, I set my mind on having a set myself. This arrived as a Christmas present in 1955.

BAYKO was an English building product invented by Charles Plimpton in 1933. The name derives from Bakelite, the commercial plastic from which its component parts were made. It became a worldwide brand between 1934 and 1967. Bayko was one of the world's earliest plastic toys to be marketed, though it relied also on steel rods and strengthening bars and resin-bonded paper floors. The concept involved using the rods set out to the shape of the building to be constructed in a base consisting of square grids of holes spaced at $\frac{3}{8}$ inch centres. Individual parts – sections of wall, doors, windows etc – had grooves along the edges so that they were slid into position and held in place by the rods.



Basic construction elements:
base, rods and parts, from the 1950s.



Pre-war model – note the dark colouring
and thick base

In the original sets bases and roofs were brown; walls were brown and cream; and windows were a very dark green, but by 1937 the 'true' colours of red and white walls, light green windows and red roofs were established, though bases were still brown.

A period of radical change was heralded in 1938 with the introduction of new decorative parts. However, the war saw the suspension of production as the factory turned over to war-effort products. Post war the standard colours were retained but bases became green. When production started up after the war four sets (numbered 0, 1, 2 and 3) became available. For each of the first three an 'X' set could be purchased to upgrade the set to the next largest. In 1952 the peak was reached when set 4 was introduced, together with set 3X, in which almost all of the former decorative parts were included. Plimpton began the move to polystyrene parts, gradually, from the mid 1950s onwards as these were cheaper to produce. The colours remained the norm until 1959 when, coming under great pressure from other construction toys that appeared on the market, Meccano took over, changing the colours to red and cream bricks with yellow windows and grey bases. However, decorative parts were generally discontinued and one-piece roofs replaced by flat-roof pieces.

Eventually four Meccano-Bayko sets went on sale from the end of 1960, numbered 11 to 14 to avoid being confused with the Plimpton sets. In 1962 Meccano introduced its own decorative pieces, including opening French windows, large shop windows and pantile roofs, together with a new "Set 15" which included them all.

By 1963 Meccano Ltd also began feeling the pressure of competing toys, even though the models Bayko produced were more realistic architectural constructions. Meccano continued manufacturing Bayko sets and spares until 1967.

Over its lifespan, both Plimpton and Meccano Bayko was exported across the world, and, from initially being a toy, it later attracted a modest adult following that increased after the brand was discontinued in 1967. Any serious BAYKO enthusiast will have a substantial collection of parts and will be a freelance designer and architect, producing unique and interesting models. For this large – and, indeed, predominantly – adult following, there is a Collectors' Club and a number of recognised dealers in second-hand parts and sets.



A model of a detached house built from a 1950s Set 3.



The model to which all aspired!
Built from Set 4

An entirely new range of products appeared in the first decade of the 21st century and commercially produced plans for bigger and better buildings are in production. However, the real joy is one of creativity, using a large collection of component parts to produce something unique. There is a decided parallel with the hobby of completing jig-saw puzzles, although, of course, that hobby produces only one set result for each puzzle completed.

My original 1955 set was a set 2, but for my birthday six weeks later I received a set 2X to take me up to set 3. The following Christmas gave me a set 3X – and I had arrived at Utopia! I now have four complete sets 4 from the 1950s, a set 15 from the 1960s, extra parts from these eras and a smaller collection of pre-war parts. Though not in regular use, I can often be found “dabbling” in construction during winter months and might yet find some time to develop some new models during this coming summer. As a hobby I find it creative and therapeutic – there is a definite satisfaction in completing a unique model!

If anyone is thinking of taking up this fascinating hobby, the latest prices I have suggest a 1950s set 4 will cost you around £170; a 1960s set 15 £190. Pre-war sets are quoted in four-figure sums and even individual parts can reach very high prices!

Do you have a favourite toy that you could share with us? Whatever it is, please let us know and give us all a few moments of nostalgia!